

**TRANSITIONS IN THE WAITAKERE LABOUR
MARKET: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

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INTRODUCTION

Research Background and Outline

One of the major problems for policy makers wanting to address a host of labour market issues is the absence of sound empirical knowledge on the functioning of the labour market at the micro-level of households and firms. Most of the relevant research has been confined to macro economic analyses derived from what is acknowledged as a limited database, principally the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). However, the significance of fusing individuals and households should not be underestimated. Research that treats the households as a unit tends to under-estimate the actions and aspirations of individuals as well as the significance of power differentials within the household. Conversely, research that treats the household as atomistic individuals divorced from any collective reality, negates the highly complex rules and practices that govern the behaviour and actions of the household. As in any other social organisation, households involve power differentials which are derived from market and work situations originating from inside and outside the home and from agreements which are forged between individual members of the household. The organisational behaviour of individuals in households is at the centre of this study, because these behaviours vary between sections of the population and they change over the lifecycle of the household.

Although there is evidence to show that the burden of unemployment falls more heavily upon some individuals and groups rather than others (Task Force, 1994; Shirley et al, 1990), there is limited knowledge of the processes that operate within regional labour markets and even less information on the dynamic relationship between individuals, households and paid employment. We do not know the basis on which individuals make decisions about economic participation and we are not able to say how various factors impact on these decisions. It was this set of deficiencies in labour market information which prompted the current study.

The research programme on Labour Market Dynamics and Economic Participation, which has been funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST), has been specifically designed to study labour force dynamics and transitions. This was one of the major deficiencies in labour market statistics identified in the 1993 review conducted by Dennis Rose (1993:39). In focusing on the micro-level of households and individuals, the aim has been to generate a new set of data based on an innovative methodology which examines the labour market 'transitions' experienced by individuals as they move from one labour market status to another. Such transitions include those from unpaid to paid work, from unemployment to work, and from training to employment. The reverse transitions are of equal interest. An emphasis on the interface between households and employment has meant that the research programme can explore how individuals make decisions about access to, and participation in, the labour market. Being set within the context of the 'lifecycle' has allowed a particular emphasis on identifying how household attributes, perceptions and incentive structures impact on individual choices and options. As part of this, the influence of factors such as age, education, ethnicity, gender, income, regional location and work experience can be assessed. From a theoretical perspective, the study is aimed at complementing our existing knowledge as to how labour markets

clear and why. In relation to policy, it should provide valuable information that can be used in addressing unemployment and in designing targeted labour market policies.

The approach that was used in this study can be divided into two distinct phases. The first phase involved the administration of a structured questionnaire which was designed to gather basic household data. This was followed by interviews with individuals drawn from a smaller random sample of the households involved in the initial survey. A life events and work histories matrix was developed during these interviews and in-depth information was gathered on the attitudes and experiences of individuals in the labour market over the ten-year period, 1987 to 1997.

The research programme was conceived as an exploratory study of three distinctive labour markets. In 1995-96, Hawkes Bay was surveyed and this region was followed in 1997/98 by West Auckland (Waitakere) and Tokoroa. Each of these regional labour markets appears to be quite distinctive and it is anticipated that each region in turn should provide valuable insights into the functioning of labour markets at the micro level of individuals and households. This report details the findings of the qualitative analysis of interviews conducted in West Auckland. The area concerned corresponds to that administered by Waitakere City and represents a population base of approximately 140,000, including significant Maori and Pacific Island populations, along with a diverse range of migrant groups. The socio-economic mix varies from affluent commuter suburbs to areas containing semi and unskilled workers with moderate to high levels of unemployment. The area contains an important manufacturing and light industry base in addition to a wide variety of service industries. Located within New Zealand's major urban centre, West Auckland (Waitakere) represents a labour market that appears to be more fluid, and less well defined (in geographic terms), than either Tokoroa or Hawkes Bay.

Phase one of this research programme saw a random sample of 802 households in the West Auckland area drawn from Household Labour Force Survey panels generated by Statistics New Zealand. These were then surveyed using a specially developed questionnaire that was designed to secure information on the labour market behaviour of individuals and households while at the same time ensuring some compatibility with the quarterly HLFS Survey conducted by Statistics New Zealand. The findings of this phase have been reported in detail in a separate working paper, Shirley et al, 2000b. From this original sample a subset were again randomly selected to participate in the second phase of the research programme that involved semi-structured in-depth interviews. These were conducted in 67 households and from the interviews profiles and work histories were developed for 89 people, 46 of whom were female. Married or de facto couples made up 56 of the 67 households and children were present in three quarters of these. Both partners were interviewed in only a small number of couples, but often the development of a profile for a person who was not interviewed was possible using information provided by their spouse or partner. Another four households comprised single parents (all female) with children. Collectively, then, almost 70% of households had children in them at the time of interview. The remaining seven households were made up of men or women in various living circumstances: flatting (2), boarding (1), living with other family members (1) and living alone (3). Only one person in each of these households was interviewed. An acknowledged shortcoming in this report is the inability to conduct any analysis based on ethnicity due to problems with aspects of the data collection in Waitakere City.

The findings from this phase of the research programme have been organised into key areas for presentation in this report. These areas are based on major points of transition. Firstly, there is some brief discussion of three themes of general interest that emerged from the interviews. These are:

- ◆ Perceptions of the economy
- ◆ The role of social networks in the labour market
- ◆ The impact of ageing on employment.

Then the issues of welfare and unemployment are considered. Whilst not always coexistent, these two issues are often closely interrelated. Hence, they are dealt with together. Welfare is examined in relation to people receiving

- ◆ a mix of sundry benefits (Sickness and Widow's Benefits, Accident Compensation¹ and National Superannuation).
- ◆ the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB),
- ◆ the Unemployment Benefit (UEB),

Transitions between different benefits and those involving people moving into or out of welfare are explored, whether from or to employment, education and training, or unpaid work. A final section examines the experiences of unemployed people who were for various reasons were not receiving welfare payments of any sort.

The section on education and training considers a wide range of programmes and courses, but of principle interest are part-time or shorter courses, and full-time programmes. The latter are broken down into tertiary courses run by polytechs, universities and private providers, and training and work placement programmes provided for the unemployed. Transitions into and out of such programmes are explored, as are the outcomes of undertaking them. A brief examination of workplace based training is also undertaken. In addition, the work histories of school leavers are discussed in this section, though a broad analysis is undertaken, examining more generally their patterns and experiences of unemployment, paid work, and welfare, as well as any education or training that they undertook.

Unpaid work is dealt with in two ways. Firstly, it is considered in terms of domestic responsibilities – caring for a home, children, families, dependent relatives and so on. The discussion is predominantly organised around the care of children which fell, almost exclusively, to women. As well as exploring their transitions in relation to paid and unpaid work, how women balanced and co-ordinated these dual responsibilities is also examined. Their experiences of transitioning back into the workforce after being away caring for children are also considered. A second area that is examined under this heading focuses on unpaid work of a voluntary nature in the community (schools, sports clubs, voluntary organisations etc). A great deal of voluntary work is associated with children so not unexpectedly women are heavily involved. Also touched on are the connections between voluntary work and paid employment.

¹ Whilst there are significant differences between ACC and the other welfare benefits considered here, given the nature of this study the similarities are sufficient to allow its arbitrary inclusion in this section.

Though the unqualified term ‘work’ is often taken to imply paid employment, as the preceding sections demonstrate, work can take a number of forms. Similarly, paid work can be of various types and this section considers self-employment, and paid work that is full-time, part-time, and casual. The last type includes a brief look at informal paid work. Transitions might be into or out of, as well as between, these forms of work.

The final section examines a number of patterns of transition that are not covered elsewhere. These include people’s profiles that have no transitions – where people maintained an unchanged work profile across all, or most of, the ten-year study period – and those who had relatively stable histories with only minor or minimal changes. As well, this section looks at profiles that involve relocations including time-limited travel (such as the O.E.), relocation within New Zealand, immigration and emigration.

As well as detailing the findings of the qualitative study conducted in the Waitakere region, this working paper begins by canvassing two important facets of the research programme. Firstly, there is an exploration of the concept of transitions, as employed in this study. Then the methodology used to gather and examine the interview data is outlined and discussed. This involved the use of life and work histories, semi-structured in-depth interviewing, and a range of analytical tools. Both of these are also considered in greater detail in a forthcoming working paper.

‘Transitions’ – Concept and Methodology

Though the term transition is frequently used in labour market analysis and discussion, what is contained in this choice of word is a wealth of contextual detail. By its very nature, a transitional perspective emphasises the dynamic quality of such markets and focuses on “flows and not stocks” and can “reveal and explain patterns ... during the lifecycle of individuals or groups” (Schmid et al, 1999:268). Thus, although our use of the term transition incorporates the common meaning of the word – a movement or shift from one state or point to another – we develop the concept more fully to achieve such an emphasis and focus. In doing so we seek to identify the array of starting points and outcomes that can make up a transition and unpack the mix of contexts, influences and processes that are integral to any shift. The result is a detailed analysis of change at the micro-level of the labour market.

Such analysis is important for a range of reasons, one being that the labour market itself is undergoing significant change. Schmid et al (1999:268) conceptualise these changes, in part, as a greater blurring of the borderlines between gainful dependent labour market work and other productive activities. They note that the “‘standard labour contract’ is fading, but we do not know yet which new standards will develop”. A transitional focus serves as one approach to analysing these changes. However, since paid work no longer necessarily forms the outcome of, or even the motivation for, some transitions, for approach to be valuable it also becomes necessary to understand work in its broadest sense.

People’s work experiences across any period can be summarised in their work histories that are, in turn, composed of their work profiles – the combination of work activities that they were involved in at any one time. Transitions are changes to those

profiles. Whilst thinking of transitions easily brings to mind shifts such as a move from unemployment to paid work, our use of this concept also encompasses more subtle and multi-layered change. Thus, transitions need not only occur when one type of work is substituted with something else or when there is a complete shift from one status to another. Rather, they can be signalled by the changing composition or shifting balance of activities within the mix of people's various work responsibilities. That is, when a person's work profile is altered but not necessarily completely changed nor entirely replaced.

The broad notion of work adopted here means that it would be highly unlikely that a person's profile could be described in terms of just one role. Though many of those interviewed in this study certainly seemed to have a predominant role or responsibility, blurring was evident as each person also took on other secondary roles or activities. Accordingly, when change occurs – at either primary or secondary level – we need to consider how different aspects of a person's profile complement, compete or conflict with one another as a result of any shift. Importantly, we also need to be alert to continuity. The maintenance of stable profiles and periods without change can be of equal interest and significance. In general, work histories were usually quite dynamic, though there was wide variation in the frequency, nature and degree of any changes, and people often demonstrated phases of relative stability or volatility.

Transitions can occur in a range of ways. In some cases they were forced on people while others were made by choice. Though certain transitions were sudden and complete – such as when a person lost a job – the study also revealed transitioning that was prolonged as people worked progressively towards a longer-term goal through intermediate shifts. Such shifts, though transitions in their own right, can also be seen as parts of a larger process. As such, they could be disjointed and unanticipated or show varying degrees of continuity, coherence and predictability. In each case there is undoubted value in focusing on the intermediate steps – which was, itself, a significant part of this study – but by drawing these into a larger or longer-term picture, equally important insights are generated.

The context in which transitions occur also forms an integral part of understanding and describing them. Context can be viewed on a number of levels and in relation to a range of factors and perspectives. These levels take in considerations beyond the household – to the local community, the industry or sector, and to the regional and national situation. Various perspectives – such as social, cultural, economic and political viewpoints – might be considered at any level. Factors that could be addressed include issues such as gender, class, ethnicity, age and so on. The subjective as well as objective dimensions of transitions – that is, the experience of the transition from the perspective of those involved as well as how it appears to an observer – also need to be incorporated. Even if transitions appear by name to be of a similar kind, their objective circumstances can still be very different. Consider, for example, all the variations possible under the heading of 'redundancy'. The subjective dimension provides insights into how individuals and their families understand, experience and respond to the transition.

Whilst each person's transitions, profiles and histories can stand alone and be analysed separately, they also inter-weave to form a larger picture that exposes the intimate

relationships between the actions of spouses and partners. It is not hard to see how one person's transition can affect others in the household. However, there can also be a complex inter-relationship between the transitions of spouses and partners. An obvious example would be how couples organise the care of children and other unpaid work, and consequently engage in paid employment. To adequately account for this, the household rather than just each individual must be considered. Doing so generates more complex but complete pictures.

Having given some depth to the notion of transitions, it is now possible to briefly describe how the interview data were collected and analysed. In considering the methodology employed in this part of the research programme it is worth noting at the outset that both retrospective and prospective longitudinal studies have their own sets of advantages and difficulties (Dex, 1991). A retrospective study – the approach adopted here – creates particular problems in ensuring detail and accuracy in people's recall that is compounded by the length of any period under study. Against these difficulties such an approach offers the opportunity to gather quite detailed data from an extended time frame during a relatively short interview. To maximise the quality of information it becomes important to develop and employ an interviewing strategy which aims to both minimise the problems associated with this approach whilst building on its strengths.

Using skilled interviewers is one important part of such a strategy, as is the interview process. To create the most favourable circumstances for recall, the interviews began with people recollecting major life events during the preceding ten years. These life events then served as cues to help the person recall their work history over the same period. This allowed a matrix of their personal and work histories across time to be progressively built up. Over the course of the interview more detail was added to the matrix. Such an approach clearly aided people's recall and allowed them and the interviewer to more accurately identify the timing of events and to build a detailed picture of these. It also helped the ongoing checking and clarifying of information.

Following Miles and Huberman (1994) a more condensed matrix that provided a graphical summary of a person's work history across the ten year study period was developed using the interview materials. Recorded on each were the person's work profile at the start of the decade and any subsequent changes. Each person's work history was organised into two parts. Firstly, there were the activities that they engaged in primarily or on a full time basis. Then there were additional or secondary activities. In adopting this approach, though, particular activities were not automatically privileged over others, but each was situated according to the how the person described and 'rated' it. So, paid work, education and training, and unpaid work could all be considered primary or secondary activities depending on the person and the household, as well as their circumstances and perceptions. When the matrices of adults in the same household were combined they created a work history of the household as well.

From the work history matrix we can identify individual transitions. Whilst such a summary format is useful, the detail of these transitions is not apparent in it. To provide this, each transition was described and analysed. A template was developed to aid and standardise this process and it canvassed many of the aspects alluded to in the preceding discussion of the concept of transitions. Table 1 outlines the factors

considered in each transition. As is apparent, information was gathered not solely in terms of the individual but also in respect of the household. The wider context was also considered.

Table 1: Factors considered in analysis of each transition.

- ❑ The characteristics and mechanics of the transition – what sort of change occurred and how – are described.
 - ❑ The process by which the transition occurred – how decisions were made, across what timeframe, who was involved and so on – is detailed.
 - ❑ Any factors that may be relevant to the process are acknowledged. These include:
 - Individual and household
 - Attitudes, values & beliefs
 - Milestones (e.g. birth of a child)
 - Individual considerations (e.g. a person's desire to work)
 - Family considerations – not childcare (e.g. elderly relatives needing extra care)
 - Childcare considerations
 - Financial considerations
 - Education & Training
 - Skills & Experience
 - Other Issues such as
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Welfare considerations (e.g. was the person eligible for a benefit or what were the abatement provisions)
 - Structural & Contextual Issues
 - Workplace level
 - Industry level
 - Locally and Regionally
 - ❑ The impact of the transition – what outcomes it generated for the individual and the household (expected and unexpected) are considered. This includes the significance of the transition – what the change meant for the individual, the household, and possibly the workplace.
 - ❑ Quotes from the interviewee or someone else in the household that illustrate aspects of the above points are included.
-

General themes, that had some bearing on the concept of transitions, were also identified from the interviews. Quotes that reflected aspects of a particular transition, a type of transition, or that related to the themes were gathered to support and illustrate the analysis. However they were used, quotes were particularly important given that one of the goals of the study was to create a narrative that, whilst focused on labour market transitions, drew heavily on the actual experiences of people.

When applied to each of the interviews this process yielded three distinct yet inter-related summaries for each person:

- ❑ the work history matrix for each adult in the household;
- ❑ a set of templates that detailed each transition for each person;
- ❑ individual/household synopses of key themes and issues.

These spanned the following decades in each area:

- ❑ Hawkes Bay – 1985 to 1995,
- ❑ South Waikato – 1987 to 1997,

□ West Auckland – 1987 to 1997.

In these forms the data were now accessible for further analysis. This involved, firstly, the progressive drawing together of transitions of a similar kind. Initially, broad categorisations based on the entry or exit points of a transition were developed. The process then moved onto refining these larger categories into groups and sub-groups. These were subsequently analysed to identify common and contrasting characteristics. The comparison was based on the various features captured on the template. As well, sets were broken down further and analysed on the basis of individual (gender, ethnicity and so on) and household characteristics. What is hopefully evident is that a transition could be categorised and examined according to a number of criteria. The outcomes of applying this methodology, as have been presented in various reports, can be broader, more general findings and those that relate to narrower, more specific issues. Having transitions as a unit of analysis enables not only a strong qualitative emphasis but also allows some quantitative analysis, such as a comparison of the numbers and frequency of particular transitions for various groups. The work history matrices of people and households were also a focus of investigation. Like the transitional templates they too could be collated, based on various criteria, and analysed accordingly. Finally, the themes that had emerged in the interviews were considered for how they could enrich aspects of the transitional analysis and provide areas of separate interest and discussion.

1. THEMES

Three issues were given sufficient attention in the interviews to warrant some separate discussion. They are presented at this point as they have some relevance to issues that follow. These issues canvas the role and importance of social networks in getting and changing jobs, the issue of age and its impact on a person's employability, and look at people's view of the economy and its affect on the labour market during the study period.

(i) *The Economy*

The survey period takes in a time of significant change and turbulence within the New Zealand economy. Despite this, many of those interviewed reported that they experienced little or no direct impact of this, and/or they offered no comment on this. A small group, however, either felt or observed first hand some of the negative effects of these difficult economic times. Two key events were specifically mentioned and they occupied positions at either end of the survey period. One was the 1987 sharemarket crash, and the other was the Asian financial crisis.

People frequently described a sense of uncertainty about the economy that often was not tied to specific factors but was a more general reflection of the instability of the times.

[It] seems to be one crisis after another. ...You just don't feel very confident. ...This Asian thing hasn't helped I suppose. ...[In] the last 18 months, it is the uncertainty more than anything else. ... I might not have a job next week. Although that is probably . . . pessimistic. But that is how you feel about it. ...yes well I am still working you know and we tend to sort of like, we are busy one week and slack the next.

Others experienced more tangible and devastating impacts through the loss of employment. Sometimes this was more than once, such as in the case of this man in the construction industry. His wife recounts the difficult times they experienced after the 1987 crash.

The building industry crashed and he was a carpenter. So there was no work and he was made redundant. Then we had to go on the dole. ...He would look for other work. ...Depending, depending what was going. You know he'd pick up what he could and then he was made redundant again. But then it was back on the dole.

Like him, many of those forced out of work were the victims of economic factors. Some lost jobs as companies laid off staff as a result of restructuring their operations and organisation. Whilst this was often in response to economic conditions, restructuring became a common process that private and public enterprises undertook in the pursuit of greater efficiency and better cost effectiveness or profit. The redundancies that usually accompanied this process meant higher unemployment, creating greater competition amongst job seekers. This new immigrant experienced this first hand.

We came at the worst time in 1990. ... I never thought it was a job to get a job. It was quite depressing. I was new and you know there were a lot of

Telecom laid off and so I'm competing against them and their mates and their knowledge and things like that.

Difficult economic times after the sharemarket crash lay behind the decisions of a couple of those interviewed to close or sell their businesses. In the first instance, the problems one man had in finding work for his company and getting his outstanding accounts paid, encouraged him to return to being an employee. The other man reported that he had survived difficult periods but had also enjoyed buoyant times after setting up his business in the early 1980s. However, the after effects of the crash, combined with a number of other factors, saw him elect to sell up.

My partner, my partner had reached over '60 and he wanted to retire. We'd been hit by a few bad debts after the stock market crashed. Some of our clients were in the finance world in property development and that and we copped a few bad debts and the business really needed refinancing and modernising and so it was either refinance and modernise or sell up, get our money and do something else and at his age we decided to sell up and we, the people who bought it are still going today and exactly that and yeah making a go of it. So a lot of the decision was sort of ... semi-forced on us but not really we could have refinanced and gone on but under the circumstances we were getting a bit weary after 12 years.

The flow on effects from those experiencing the direct impacts of these difficult economic times meant that many others could also be affected. Thus, though this next man actually escaped the major impact of a downturn in the rural sector, his story illustrates this interconnectedness. He and his wife had owned and run a pub in a small town. For personal reasons they had sold up just as farmers were beginning to experience very difficult times as a result of high interest rates, reduction in subsidies, and poor returns due to low commodity prices and the high rate of the New Zealand dollar.

We were very fortunate it was just over the time, all the farming community, when all these big, big interest rates were coming up and farmers were really taking a hammering. ...And in fact if we had stayed there another year, we would have had difficulty selling the pub because the farming community really got, it really got hammered. ...Yeah, but they were all closing. The cheese factory was closing, the shearing and all the fences and that was it. There was just no work down there and when we went though there in 1991 and oh it was like a ghost town. All the cafeterias were closed yeah quite sad. So it was a good move, we were lucky that we sold at the right time.

As their comments indicate, many in business and those who worked for them were not so lucky.

(ii) Networks

People employed a range of strategies to get work. These included the expected approaches of checking job advertisements and engaging with public or private employment agencies. In over a third of households (34.3%) people also mentioned that they made use of social networks. For this group of people – over a quarter of those profiled (28.1%) – such networks were a very important part of the process. As

this man implies, he had excellent qualifications but his networks were also a critical part of the process.

I have a good CV and a lot of people know me up here anyway, so I had no problem getting a job.

Given the negative assessments made of the New Zealand Employment Service, for many of the unemployed networks were an important adjunct to official channels.

The role of networks varied amongst those interviewed and they could be viewed or used differently, depending on circumstances. Thus, in some instances networks were the key factor in getting a job; on other occasions they might be used in conjunction with other approaches. Comments by two people illustrate how networks can blend with other strategies.

Well I looked through the paper and the NZ Herald is quite good, they have a wide selection and I actually just let the word out on the airport that I'm looking for a job but nothing came up that I was appreciating at the time so I eventually went out and through another friend who got me a job as a labourer on the construction site.

[I was] going to the Employment Services, going through the papers thoroughly and keeping my ears open and you know making sure that everyone I knew, knew I was looking.

Though networks didn't always open up opportunities – the last woman quoted got most of her jobs through advertisements – they were still an important part of many people's job seeking armoury. As this woman had been made redundant four times, knowing she was exploring all possible avenues for work contributed to helping her cope with this extraordinary number of lay-offs. Though far less common, occasionally people relied solely on networks. For example, a man in the computer industry never sought out new jobs but was offered or heard about opportunities via the various contacts he had built up over time. So too did a woman who was looking after two children and only looking for limited part-time opportunities. She seemed content to just depend on her network of contacts – built up socially and through her professional background as a pre-school educator – to make her aware of these. Any income she generated was not essential to the household, which undoubtedly also meant that her job seeking could be less pressured.

It is possible to view how networks operated in two broad ways. The first involved people being alerted to vacancies or job opportunities via their social contacts. However, most people reported that these friends, family members, and other associates played a much more active and extensive role. In addition to informing people of jobs it was not unusual for them to also let a potential employer know about the availability of a person and offer some sort of recommendation. Some went so far as to help arrange an interview, and others exerted whatever influence they could to support the appointment of the person they knew.

When a position came up through the company ... [my friend], he'd actually you know like told this guy about my position and things like that ... and so he jacked me up with the big boss there and we had a chat at the end and I more or less started straight away.

In this way, networks proved to be much more than simply an alternative or addition to the job section of the newspaper.

It was highly unusual for people to cultivate a relationship specifically with the idea that this could be useful for getting them work at some point. Rather, networks that proved useful in employment terms were most often relationships that existed for a range of other reasons. Occasionally, though, this was done deliberately. The man, who worked in the computing industry, for example, purposefully deliberately maintained a wide network specifically with future employment in mind.

A range of associations and circumstances formed the basis of networks. Family, friends and other acquaintances were obvious sources. So too were former co-workers and even previous employers themselves.

I had no intention of going back to work. I had applied for one job that suited me, it was part-time hours. Then I got a ring from the ice cream factory again and they said what are you doing and I said just enjoying life, doing the housework, doing the washing and the dusting and they said do you want to come back to work for us. I said not really but if you want a hand I will come on out there.

Neighbourhoods, church, service, voluntary and social organisations, as well as sporting groups were all places where networks were formed and nurtured. In order to get a little casual work this man made use of his contacts in a sporting association. Though he doesn't specifically refer to it, this was augmented by him living in a small seaside community.

You see a lot of people in the surf club have their own building businesses so I would just put my name around with them and if they needed a labourer for a day or two they'd just ring me up the night before and that's how I worked for two or three years.

In trying to find a new line of work, another man also made use of people he knew through sporting contacts. Though they didn't actually help him get work, they did contribute to the process and provided him with valuable information.

I didn't want to go back into painting and decorating. I'd had enough of that. I'd had a few friends that were in real estate that I knew though the squash club and yes, I thought well why not. ...I went and saw a friend of mine who I'd scuba dived with, he belonged to the diving club I belonged. He said to do a real estate paper you actually had to go into the job. So you had to have someone that would respond to you. So I went to [a real estate company] at Royal Oak, this chap I knew there, and he said he would give me a job.

Finally, it was a friend who provided the necessary introduction to this line of work. As well as their own array of contacts, it was not uncommon for people to have access to and to be able to utilise the networks of others because of their relationship with the intermediary.

I knew a friend who knew the owner and she said, "Oh, they're looking for a cashier". And so I went and saw them.

Another network that many people called upon was based on the professional contacts they had built up over time. Though these did not necessarily signal deep and lasting

friendships and sometimes emerged almost incidentally, they could be an extremely important and vital ingredient in getting work at some later point. From the interviews it also appeared that they were very durable, as this example show.

Basically I was referred by someone. It's the only job I went for where I didn't go for an interview and didn't approach them. They approached me cause they'd heard that I was in the job market and one of the guys, one of the top guys there, I used to work with many years ago ...[He] used to be a chef at Air New Zealand and he had heard that I was, and he just rang me up out of the blue.

The value of such networks was evident in a range of ways. Every time one woman was looking for work as a social worker she was made aware of suitable openings through peers in the profession. In another case, the woman had given up her job as a health worker to have a baby. Soon after she was offered casual teaching at a local polytech through contacts in her professional network. Having done extremely well in his under-graduate year, a young man was able to get employment and continue study through contacts he had established at university. This rescued him from a full-time job which had promised but never delivered on study leave so that he could continue with his Masters degree.

My supervisor of studies was the head of department and he had impressed with the work that I had done. ... so basically when I told him that I was leaving to take up full-time work because I had no money he said well you go and do that and if I can find you a job that will get you enough money to live on will you come back and finish? And I said well I'm not sure if you can do that and so ... while I was working ... he made me three job offers and finally we managed to come up with one that was attractive enough to make it worthwhile.

By way of closing, it is interesting to consider what impact not having social networks could have. Though some of the immigrants who arrived in this country during the study period had little trouble getting work, others struggled with employment. As will be seen in the section on immigration, they often acknowledged that a lack of networks put them at a disadvantage. When immigrants later changed jobs, often these subsequent moves were eased by the existence of networks that they had been able to establish since living in this country.

(iii) Age

The effects of ageing on work participation was, in different ways, an issue of concern to a small group of people. A couple of people put the problem very plainly. In both cases their views arose as a result of their own experiences. One woman began a long and ultimately unsuccessful search for work once being granted a work permit two years after immigrating to this country to be with family. Her husband had become ill during this time and could no longer work. According to a number of prospective employers, her employability was significantly hindered by one key factor.

I looking for job then I went lot of place and they say your age is much you can't get no job.

Even the New Zealand Employment Service appeared to agree with this assessment.

I went [to NZES] and I sit down and talk to him and he say you look your age is much I don't think someone going to take you.

Whilst this woman was in her late fifties at the time, the next case involves a woman who, despite being in her forties, still felt that age was a factor in her struggle to return to paid work after rearing a family. Unlike the previous example, she inferred this as employers did not openly come out and tell her.

Well, they don't tell you, but I think my age works against you. Once you're over 40, "that's it" sort of thing.

She was unable to find the kind and hours of work that suited her current situation despite having spent two years studying part-time by way of retraining and preparing for this transition.

Those already in paid work were sometimes concerned that age was an issue in relation to being able to continue to do the type of work they did. This man worked with sheetmetal and had already suffered a couple of serious injuries. There were other factors besides the danger that made him wary of doing this till he retired.

I don't want to be doing it till I'm 65. ... the factory is freezing cold [in winter], 'cause that the nature, it's an all steel installation. You've got about three rollers out all the time so it gets fairly hot in the summer.

A builder was similarly concerned by the physical nature of, and risks involved in, construction work.

I'm sick and tired of [it], construction work is very dangerous.

Despite contemplating a change of careers, he recognised some obstacles such as the costs of retraining. Another man also recognised the limitations that age brought in certain occupations.

As you get older there are lots of things you can't do.....physical things you know.

However, from his own experience he also felt that age itself could be a barrier to making dramatic career changes late in life.

I have tried to move into other fields but as you get older it becomes very difficult and a lot of people have got better qualifications, they are younger and . . . and have got better qualifications and that seems to be quite important these days.

In discussing his preference not to engage in ongoing education and training, another man indicated that he was less motivated to devote much time and effort to training at this stage in his life. He had been very active in and receptive to training initiatives when younger, but now could no longer see the point.

Even these few comments indicate that age, in different ways, was an important matter for some of those interviewed. As one man noted, some of the problems people encountered have led to legislation.

Now they have brought laws in to say that you can't discriminate against a person's age.

However, on occasions people's experiences ran counter to the very intention of such laws, and in other instances the issues were outside the gambit of any legislation. Though only dealt with extremely briefly and superficially in this section, the remarks and issues presented here indicate that in relation to employment, age presents as a

complex and multi-faceted issue, one of growing significance given this county's ageing population.

2. WELFARE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Introduction

Welfare and unemployment, both separately and together, are major contemporary issues in this country. Obviously there are clear connections between the two, with many people who are unemployed also receiving welfare. However, this is not necessarily the case. There are, for example, instances where people are receiving welfare for reasons other than unemployment, such as single parents who receive the DPB. Even many of this group will likely become active in the labour market at some point. Alternatively, there are people who are unemployed and not entitled to or not receiving any welfare payments. Examples include people who are unemployed but ineligible for welfare because their partner or spouse is in paid work, or women in relationships who have been out of the workforce caring for children and are now actively looking for work. This section deals with issues to do with welfare and unemployment both separately and in relation to one another.

Of the 89 people who were profiled, 21 (23.6%) received some form of benefit during the study period. This was made up of nine women and 12 men. When interviewed these people were resident in 20 households (30% of total) – in one household, a couple were both receiving national superannuation. The types of benefits that people reported getting were:

- ◆ Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB)
- ◆ Unemployment Benefit
- ◆ Accident Compensation (ACC)²
- ◆ National Superannuation (NS)
- ◆ Sickness Benefit (SB)
- ◆ Widows' Pension (WB)

As this study covers a ten-year period, people may have had a range of experiences at different times depending on their circumstances. For instance, a small group had more than one episode receiving welfare – all in relation to the unemployment benefit. As well, three women received more than one type of benefit. In one case the person received the unemployment benefit before moving onto the sickness benefit to care for a seriously ill husband and then, following his death, she received the widow's benefit; another had separate episodes of receiving the unemployment and sickness benefits; and the last went from the sickness benefit, whilst pregnant, onto the DPB.

The following discussion is organised according to benefit types.³ Since only small numbers of people received the last four types of benefit, they are considered together. The DPB and UEB are examined separately. Following the section on the UEB some discussion is undertaken on people's experiences of unemployment more generally, with attention to those who did not receive the UEB.

² Though not a benefit in the strict sense, the nature of this assistance bore sufficient similarities to be considered under this heading.

³ As this study covers a ten year period, apparent inconsistencies in people's experiences of the welfare system (such as differing entitlements) may be explained by changing regimes across time.

(i) *Other Benefits*

A group of nine people received the Sickness Benefit, Widow's Benefit, or ACC. As well, one of the men who was interviewed retired during the study period. Along with his wife, who had been solely involved in unpaid work since their children were born, both received National Superannuation. One woman, who had immigrated with her husband to be with their adult children, transitioned between benefits. The couple had had to wait two years to qualify for work permits but at the end of this time the man was very ill and couldn't work. The woman was unable to find employment and qualified for the UEB. After a year or so she transferred to the Sickness Benefit in order to care for her husband before he died. Following this she moved onto the Widow's Benefit. as she had become unwell herself and given her past difficulties in finding employment she felt it was unlikely that she would get work .

The peculiar nature of benefit regulations accounted for two of the other three people who received a Sickness Benefit during the study period. Both were pregnant and when they could no longer work they became eligible for this benefit until the birth of the child. One woman received this for only a few weeks before going to live with her partner. In the other case the woman also transitioned between benefits, moving from the sickness benefit to the DPB at the birth of her child. The only male in this group had been forced to give up paid work when he suffered a small stroke. He was an extremely well qualified and valued employee of a shoe manufacturing company. Indeed, he was able to leave his job and travel for lengthy periods on a regular basis yet always be offered his old job back upon his return. Thus, after taking the necessary six months off work to fully recover and rehabilitate, he was able to return to his job without any problems.

Of the three people who received ACC at some point, two had had work-related injuries. The exception was a woman who had been involved in a serious motor accident and had been off work for six months. Despite only having been at her job for a similar period prior to the accident, the company she worked for had kept her job open. She was returning to paid work on a graduated basis and was up to 30 hours per week when interviewed. It was also her intention to resume some work related study as soon as she was able.

Each of the two people with work related injuries – a man and a woman – had very different conditions and experiences. The man worked with sheetmetal which, he said, always carried some level of risk. He had cut himself quite badly at one point, nearly amputating all his toes, and was off work for over two months. Though he made a full recovery, he had become increasingly worried about being in this risky occupation as he aged. Despite these concerns he was still employed in his trade when interviewed. The woman developed Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) through her work. This occurred after a major restructuring of the unit she was in and involved computerisation of many tasks and a shift in premises. Unfortunately the new premises and furniture were not suited to the heavy emphasis on computing and the company failed to adequately respond to problems that quickly appeared amongst staff. Consequently, she very soon became severely disabled and was off work for periods, though she had several attempts at returning on reduced hours and the like. At one point, though she couldn't actually do anything, she went into work each day simply to keep up a routine. Despite sensing that the company would like her to, she

refused to resign as she felt her employers were in large part responsible for the seriousness of her condition.

The place [I worked in] was full of it, they've been sued so many times by the Labour Department, the Labour Department would in fact not come and inspect my desk, the OSH officers refused because they were sick of attending that building so I had to pay someone to come and see me privately to sort out what was wrong with the work station and they wouldn't supply ...because it was going to cost an awful lot of money.

After a couple of difficult years she was declared unable to work, though this decision is revisited on a regular basis. When interviewed it seemed highly unlikely she would return to work at any time in the near future.

(ii) Domestic Purposes Benefit

Seven women (33.3% of welfare recipients; 7.9% of all those profiled) received the DPB during the ten years under study. Despite quite commonly held negative perceptions about those receiving this benefit, only one of this group made reference to these issues.

The only thing I didn't like was the stigma attached to it, and there was and probably still is one attached to it.

Rather, the matters that they raised had more resonance with those on any type of welfare, or with women in any circumstances trying to balance paid and unpaid responsibilities.

The break up of a marriage or relationship was the reason for all but one of the women receiving this benefit. In the exceptional case the woman went onto the DPB briefly whilst she waited for her partner to relocate from the South Island. Once this occurred she lived with him and no longer received the benefit. Only one woman entered the study period already receiving the DPB. Four of the seven, including this woman, stopped receiving it during this time, having been on it for between two and a half, and five years. The reasons for moving off the DPB usually involved the formation or reconstitution of a relationship. Of the two exceptions, one involved a woman with two children. When one of them went to live with their father and the other left school at age eighteen, she was no longer eligible for this benefit. The second exception occurred when the women returned overseas. Three women remained on the DPB when interviewed. Although this had only been for a few months in one instance, the other two had been receiving it for about four and a half, and nine years.

Most of these women found living on a benefit quite a struggle. Even though she did acknowledge the need to be careful, this woman managed to cope much better than others.

I did cope, I managed, I budgeted and that's why I get annoyed at these women today, I really do, I coped and managed and had a fairly good life.

Her experience was the exception, however. The more usual feelings were summed up by this next woman.

Yeah well, if you know anything about benefits, you just survive.

It was this struggle that sometimes lay behind the decision to engage in some form of paid work. Occasionally personal motives were evident and sometimes there was a mix of reasons.

I sort of wanted to get out of the house, being on my own and financially, it was both basically.

Regardless of the drives, such a move had to be weighed against various factors. For instance, there was the effects of abatements to consider. The stress and demands of coping with work on top of caring for children – and without the support of a partner – also had to be kept in mind. Like lots of parents, particularly mothers⁴, many of the women in this group also committed time to being voluntarily involved in their children's activities. On top of their various other commitments this could make for additional demands.

The difficulties coping with paid and unpaid work as a single parent are well illustrated by one of the women who did child care in her home. Though at first glance this would seem to offer some positive benefits in that she did not have to 'go out to work', and whilst it looks superficially just like an extension of what she was doing for her own children, there were negative aspects as well.

I was finishing care with two children at 2.30 in the afternoon and then I was racing off to School to pick up the next lot at 3.00 which I had until 5.30 so it was like full-time work, 5 days a week. Quite draining. Emotionally draining rather than physically draining because there were always children to pick up and cuddle and particularly the two twins. They had a lot of emotional baggage that came with them everyday. With having two pre-schoolers of your own you know you've got a lot on your plate as it was without the emotional baggage of others.

As a result she was planning to give this type of work up.

Despite the difficulties, all but one of the women engaged in paid work at some point whilst receiving the DPB. The only one not to was the woman who only briefly utilised this benefit waiting for her partner to relocate. The age of children often conditioned this participation influencing the type and hours of work. As has just been seen, caring for other children was an option when children were younger, and more than one person did this. In one case, this followed the woman experimenting with some evening work. However, she found it was not just the babysitting that was difficult to arrange.

One reason I gave up the Foodtown job was because [my daughter] was missing me and I mean it was only part-time and I was missing putting her to bed at night.

For a woman who had spent many years renovating a house, a shift into the city which coincided with her daughter starting school allowed her to get a part-time job in an office which she kept up till leaving the country. With older children, the last woman could consider various forms of work. She had done casual courier driving during the week whilst they were at school and then taken on evening work in a restaurant.

⁴ See section on voluntary work for more on this.

A number of reasons lay behind her desire to work, but considerations regarding the future were prominent.

My daughter was getting older and so it was time to get off the benefit and get back into the work force.

Other women were also mindful of this time. For example, one woman thought she might do some training utilising the favourable entitlements available to those receiving the DPB.

While you are on a benefit you can train. The boys I looked after ... their mum was training to be a nurse so I can do, I do have that option.

When interviewed, however, she was content to adapt to her new circumstances having only recently separated. Even if she was able to train or work longer hours in the future, particularly once the children were at school, she realised that there were other things to consider.

I still have the other costs. The cost of having them in care after school and things like that and the thing is women don't earn as much as men.

As another woman found, even with some training, getting work could still be hard. Once her youngest child had started school she undertook a two year part-time course in office skills at the local polytech. Although she quickly got a temporary position for three weeks after the course finished, she had been unable to find a permanent part-time job that matched her childcare needs. Despite the skills she now had, one aspect that made getting work difficult, she felt, was her lack of experience. The longer she was without work, the harder it became. She also considered her age a factor.

Well, they don't tell you, but I think my age works against you. Once you're over 40, 'that's it' sort of thing.

As well, she had to compete against so many others in similar positions.

A lot of mothers want part-time work and there are a lot of applicants ... for each job. ...One job back in January, there were 40. Another one, February, there was 30 for that one.

In closing, a single case highlights various issues discussed thus far. This woman's marriage broke up at the same time that her youngest child was starting playcentre. She became heavily involved in helping at, and managing this organisation. Utilising her work background and training she was also able to work a few hours per week.

I was part-time teaching for 2 to 4 hours a week but really my life revolved around being involved with play centre, both attending sessions and taking an active role in the running of play centre. ...It is voluntary yes. But it was actually taking the energy of full-time employment.

As her son neared school age she also took on some study at university to improve her work prospects, though by this time she had reduced her involvement in playcentre. After the first year of the course she began a new relationship and stopped receiving the DPB. In addition she got a full-time position as a school guidance counsellor, which was partly the result of her study up to that point. She opted to study part-time after this. Even this short vignette captures the demanding mix of responsibilities that, though willingly undertaken, all had to be managed by a single parent. They

emphasise the competing goals of ensuring the ongoing well being of children and the parent in various dimensions, whilst considering and preparing for the future as well.

(iii) The Unemployment Benefit

A small group of only eight people (38.1% of welfare recipients and 9.0% of all those profiled) received the Unemployment Benefit (UEB) during the study period. This was made up of six men and two women. Two men and one woman were single at the time this occurred; the remainder were married with all but one of the five couples having children under 18 years. No-one entered the study period already in receipt of the UEB benefit, but three people were still receiving it when interviewed. One of these three had only been receiving it for a few weeks and another managed some part-time work on top of the benefit. The third person was one of the people with numerous episodes considered shortly. Of those who moved off this benefit, three went onto paid work and two to another benefit. People had received the UEB for between two months and three and a quarter years in total, though the latter was spread across several episodes. Single episodes lasted between eight weeks and two and a half years, with an average of just under a year. Whilst most of this group had just the one episode, two of the single people had three each. Their circumstances are worth examining in a little more detail as they represent polar opposites in many ways.

One, a young man, left school as soon as he turned 15 years and went to work as a builder's labourer. Apart from being sure that he didn't want to be at school he had little idea of what he wanted to do. After three months he left this job to work as a cleaner in a family business. This, too, lasted just a few months and he subsequently became unemployed. Although he was not old enough to receive the UEB, he was no longer living at home and so qualified for a special benefit – the Independent Youth Benefit.⁵ During the 18 months he was on this benefit he completed a graphic art course as he felt this might be an area of interest. He was quickly placed in a job with a desktop publishing company but decided he didn't really enjoy this type of work after all. So, with a break of only a few weeks he began a further 18 month period out of work. He used this time to independently completed his 6th Form Certificate and started another training course, this time a year long programme in arts and drama. However, he admitted that this course was really just to pass the time! This second period on the UEB was ended by NZES placing him in work in a factory. He considered this his first real job and remained at it for a year but, as it offered few prospects and poor pay, he again returned to the dole.

No I wasn't interested [in work]. ...I just didn't want to work. ...I would rather just do nothing than be at work and having – you know you just feel real, you just feel like you are losing out on life, being stuck in a factory, that's why I left.

This negative attitude to work, born out in many of his actions and in the remarks above, was countered by other remarks he made.

I know how to work but ... Like I want to do something that interests me.

⁵ Given his circumstances and history this has been treated as the unemployment benefit.

He also realised that remaining on the UEB long-term was not a positive option. Unfortunately it seemed that his lack of qualifications and poor formal work history would make it difficult for him to get work he enjoyed and was well remunerated for. Informally he had a more impressive involvement in work as he had numerous under-the-counter jobs whilst receiving welfare. These included painting and factory work. Without tax and on top of his benefit this made for attractive earnings.

There was a job what I was doing, I was helping in a carpet factory getting \$20 an hour, just working about 2 hours in a day, so I was taking home about \$200 a week plus it is now \$160 for the dole. I was getting \$360 week and yes it is just really easy.

As a result, unlike others who were interviewed, he did not experience too many difficulties managing on the UEB. Clearly this would not help any transition into paid work. The combination of these various factors made his future very uncertain – he was rather vague on what he saw ahead and he remained unemployed when interviewed. Despite being the youngest person in this group and having only turned fifteen halfway through the survey period, he had already accumulated the longest time on the unemployment benefit. His situation was not helped by his ability to rather easily circumvent regulations and opt out of paid work and back onto the UEB through the help of an acquaintance who worked in the welfare agency.

This was in contrast with the woman who was also unemployed a number of times after being made redundant on each occasion. She was also made redundant from a part-time job though this didn't result in her receiving welfare. Consequently, looking back, she makes the rather wry observation:

I have got the joy of being made redundant 4 times in under 2 years which is quite discouraging.

Her set of episodes all occurred soon after she completed an accountancy qualification. Ironically, she had been in settled full-time work and studying part-time but had swapped to full-time study to speed up the process of getting qualified which, she hoped, would benefit her employment prospects. It proved quite a financial struggle so she completed the last paper whilst in full-time work. However, this job lasted only four months before she was unemployed for a similar period. She then worked for another seven months prior to a further two months out of work. Finally, she managed a five month stretch of employment before once more being made redundant. She soon discovered she was pregnant and, feeling that few employers would want to take her on at that point, she only made limited efforts to search for work. As her pregnancy progressed she switched to the sickness benefit; once the child was born she lived with her partner, thus ending her time on welfare. This was undoubtedly a difficult period for her and she realised that she was not alone.

[By the fourth time] I was pulling my hair out at that stage. It's just as demoralising but I think now looking back on it, I think it's just sort of, at the time it was happening to lots of other people, it wasn't just happening to me and I think it sort of happens to lots of people who have been with companies for years and years and often it's the instance of when you're sort of, someone is reasonably new in the company but that you know they're last on, first off type of idea. But it still doesn't make it any easier to deal with.

On top of her qualifications and previous experience, her willingness to work and efforts in this regard certainly seemed of some benefit to her getting work, even if it was not to last. Though restructuring was the reason given for each redundancy, only in the first instance was this clearly the case. She was particularly sceptical of this being the cause in the last instance, feeling instead that she was the victim of ‘office politics’.

Two other people went onto the UEB from paid work, also through redundancy. In one case the man had some warning that this was to happen and had been planning to start his own business with an acquaintance. However, this plan collapsed at the last moment and he was forced onto the UEB for about four months. Eventually he found work in his trade though, as will shortly be seen, this was a difficult transition. The second case involved a man made redundant from working on the wharves after 13 years with the company. This occurred just prior to the interview. No redundancy was paid and he was still seeking work.

One man received the benefit during a one year course he did in security work.⁶ As he derived a small income from caring for his ailing grandfather, he usually managed without a benefit when he was not working. However, on this occasion after six months out of work he registered as unemployed specifically for the purpose of doing this training programme. He had left his job after being unjustly accused of theft and could not register any sooner. After completing the programme he got security work for a time though he soon found this not to his liking. Despite being subsequently out of work this the only time he received the UEB.

The other three people in this group all went onto this benefit following their settling in this country. For one couple and their two children, this was a return home at the beginning of the study period after a couple of years living in the UK. The husband immediately registered as unemployed upon his return. Whilst looking for work he took the opportunity to do some courses in computing which he felt would be particularly useful.⁷ He also did some under-the-counter labouring to supplement the benefit. After eight months he managed to get a production assistant’s job in a food processing company. He ended up remaining with this company virtually the entire survey period and gained a series of promotions, holding various management positions at different times.

The other two recipients qualified for the UEB after immigrating to this country. One older couple came to stay with their adult children and decided to settle here. However, they had to wait two years to get work permits. When these were finally issued the husband was ill and unable to work. His wife began to look for a job but found it particularly hard and so was forced onto the UEB.

I looking for job then I went lot of place and they say your age is much you can't get no job and by that time my husband was sick so I have to look after him so I went in unemployment benefit.

The employment service agreed that her age was a problem.

⁶ More detail on the training available to people receiving the UEB is provided in a later section.

⁷ As for footnote 4.

I went [to NZES] and I sit down and talk to him and he say you look your age is much I don't think someone going to take you.

Eventually she gave up searching in order to care for her gravely ill husband and they transferred to the Sickness Benefit.

The final case is that of a doctor who immigrated from Bangladesh. Six months later he returned home to marry and the couple then settled in New Zealand. Despite the Immigration Service allowing him to immigrate based on the high points that his medical qualification earned him, the Medical Council declined to register him as a medical practitioner until he had successfully completed a series of demanding examinations. A number of doctors who had qualified overseas and been allowed to immigrate were similarly affected. This became a prominent political issue. Because he could not work, he was allowed to receive the unemployment benefit. After about a year he took on part-time work as a financial supplement and to help improve his English. The extra money was important to pay for the high examination costs.

Like the others in this group, this man was extremely keen to work and to get off the unemployment benefit. The obvious exception would be the young man who was discussed first, though even he displayed some desire to work. The others showed this keenness in a variety of ways. In order to get some experience, the man who had returned from the UK was willing to work on no pay for a trial period.

I came down for an interview, got taken on and I mean, I said to the person I'd done these computer courses, I need the chance to use these skills and even if you want to take me on for a week and don't pay me, I'd just prove myself 'cause I just wanted to get that job. I was quite determined. She took me on anyway but she didn't pay me for the first week, that's handy and yeah the rest is history really, I'm still here.

Once he was taken on, he accepted being paid less than he earned on the dole to consolidate this experience and develop a work history.

So I took [the] job ... as assistant to the Production Manager when it was really small and that was for less than I was getting on the dole and I only planned to be here for about a month or two months.

As has been noted, things turned out very different.

The woman who was repeatedly unemployed demonstrated her desire to work not only through getting jobs each time she was laid off but also, despite the setbacks, in how she went about this.

Well it's a bit demoralising but I think it's one of those things that takes time when you've got to sort of be prepared for the fact that it will take time. ...Yes, Going to the Employment Services, going through the papers thoroughly and keeping my ears open and you know making sure that everyone I knew, knew I was looking.. ...Yeah I was probably a bit discouraged but you've still got to get out and do it, so you just get up and pick yourself up and went on with it.

Though only out of work once, the man who was intending to start his own business was also very active in his search for work. Again this was despite the difficulties. Once more it is his wife who recounts what happened.

...[He] went through quite a long time of interviews and never actually finding a job, the job that he actually finally got was through a consulting

agency. ...And going to agent after agent and never actually getting anywhere with them they'd come and take all your details, wanting your CV and all your details and all the rest of it and you never hear back from them. Because often they'd advertise an engineering position one day and you go along and they say that one's been sold, but we'll take all your details and all the rest of it and we'll let you know and the other time was times when you did go for interviews and you never hear back whether you been successful or unsuccessful that type of thing. That was actually very hard.

Though she was unable to get work, the older woman described an attitude shared by her family regarding independence and work.

We want a job, we want to do it. My son and daughter, they came over here, they not wait for benefit or something. Straight away one of my son come over and the unemployment centre say you can't get a job you go on benefit. My son say no I don't want to go on benefit, so he went and looked at job. In one week time he get a job.

Circumstances, however, meant that she was forced into receiving a benefit. Similarly, the doctor from Bangladesh was also extremely keen to work in his profession. When practising medicine he described himself as very committed and he was desperate to get the chance in this country. Ironically, his greatest fear was that the employment agency would force him into other full-time work. This would mean he could not study for his examinations and this would thwart his aspirations to be a doctor in this country.

Though his particular case was compounded by the high costs of sitting examinations, like the others on the UEB he found life quite a struggle. Hence his part-time job. The single woman with numerous episodes describes this sense of struggle quite well.

You've got to have some money coming in and it's not ideal but it's still some money. ...[But it was] extremely difficult. I had some help from my family but it's just not really enough to do anything you know I mean you haven't even really got enough to pay your bills let alone to eat. ...I was in a flat yeah I managed to stay in the flat but it was you know a bit of an uphill battle.

This may be what, in part, prompted some of the others to engage in under-the-counter work.⁸ The older woman found that staying with family and her approach to housekeeping helped her cope.

It was not bad. Because we not spending lot of money, no house. Always I cook my own food and no drinking or smoking, nothing so we are not spending more money. And that time I am staying with my daughter.

Others were similarly careful but, as has been seen, they were more often less positive about the experience and, reflecting their particular circumstances, found life much more difficult. Consider how this woman describes her husband being out of work:

He was unemployed for 4 months, it seemed an awfully long time at the time, 4 months with a young baby and a husband without a fulltime job.

⁸ This is looked at in the section on Casual Paid Work.

(iv) *Unemployment*

Slightly more people than those who were receiving the UEB, spent time unemployed but not receiving a benefit. These were people who had been in paid work, and who either gave up or lost these jobs. They had no income from any paid work and described themselves as not working.⁹ Naturally, those who immigrated to this country and who had no job arranged, spent various amounts of time settling in, looking for work, or organising training and educational opportunities. However, the focus here is on people who were employed prior to the time out of work. This gives us eleven people, nine of whom were men, who were unemployed for periods of between one and six months.

On top of the difficulties that all those who were out of work experienced, this group also had to manage without any assistance from the welfare system. This ineligibility for welfare was for a variety of reasons: a voluntary decision to give up paid work; the earnings of spouses or partners exceeding a certain limit; or the imposition of a stand down period due to the receipt of redundancy payments. In a few cases, even when people were forced rather than chose to be out of work, they appeared to have a secure financial position. One man took three months off after having been made redundant before he began his job search, and a woman took a three month break before looking for work after being laid off (to spend time with a relative visiting from overseas). On top of a financial situation that accommodated this, her job had been part-time and a secondary income to the household. Her husband remained in full-time work. For the others without such a secure financial position, the loss of paid employment and being ineligible for any assistance to compensate for this was hard to cope with. Dropping to one income and/or having to use up a redundancy payment with no certainty when work would eventuate were both difficult situations. This created a very stressful and demanding time for individuals and families.

In only three cases did the transition out of paid work occur voluntarily. The first saw a woman give up paid work for three months to organise her wedding. She got further full-time work fairly easily when she was ready to return. Having run his own business for a number of years, another person became an employee of the same company when he sold up. After four years in this role he gave up the job to take a well earned break and travelled overseas for a couple of months. He experienced two more instances of being unemployed but these were out of his control. In one case he was made redundant and without a job for a month, while in the other the fixed term contract he was on ended. He was still out of work at the time of interview. His financial situation meant that he was ineligible for welfare on each occasion but that he could manage periods like this without an income.

Though far less secure, the third person also seemed to cope financially with periods without any paid work. Because he provided some care for an ailing grandparent, his extended family covered his living expenses.

⁹ Whilst many women would fall into this category, they often characterised this transition as a shift into unpaid work. The two women in this group were clear that they were “out of paid work”.

Granddad would give me money if I needed it, or for food and stuff like that ... I survive. I just don't go out as much.

He had worked full-time for six years after leaving school, managing a couple of seamless changes in employment. However, the following five years were far less stable. Whilst he had proved very capable of getting new jobs, and later of getting temporary work, there were long times during this second period when he was unemployed. His shifts in work and willingness to give up jobs seemed to reflect his attitude to work.

I'm not really fussed in what sort of work I do. I suppose the main thing is, as long as I'm happy in what I'm doing ...I'm just that sort of person I can't really stick to one job sort of thing.

As was detailed in the previous section after his first six months without work he applied for the UEB so that he could move straight into a training programme for security officers. This episode had occurred when he left his job after being accused unjustly of theft. Following the training course and some work he got through that, he was again unemployed for about five months. Friends subsequently helped him get a full-time job but a dispute with the manager saw him quit just a few months later. He then kept himself occupied with some fairly steady casual work before his family more formally employed him to care for his grandfather.

The others in this group were forced rather than opted out of paid work. Redundancy, sometimes precipitated by the collapse of a business or company restructuring was the usual cause of this. One man pre-empted the inevitable once he heard that the company was to close, and resigned to look for work. Though he actually left before being laid off, his experiences neatly illustrate this process where, firstly, roles are restructured and then, eventually, done away with, often by contracting work out.

[The company] shed half of our staff, tripled our work load, and you couldn't do your job as you knew it and you couldn't modify it to a point where it was becoming, it wasn't a security job any more, really, it was more like a gate keeper. ...[Then they] were going through what everybody else was going through, contracting work out. They knew they could bring in a private security firm at a much cheaper rate ... and that is when they looked at everybody again and they started getting rid of everyone. They got rid of us and brought in a private security firm and then their trouble started.

In another case, a man survived successive and often large scale restructuring within the organisation he worked for as it moved from a government department, to a state owned enterprise and, finally, to a privately owned company. Whilst he recognised the benefits of much of this restructuring and re-organisation, he eventually tired of the continual change.

I guess people, or most people get in a comfort zone ... you used to leave school, start a career and expect to be in that job when you retire in 40 years time. That has gone. It's not necessarily a bad thing, but I guess sometimes changes are forced on you. ...Again they had restructured in 1990 ... and there was a lot of changes from that time. 1996 again there was a major restructuring and I decided that this time I wanted out and took early retirement ...at that point.

He too was not made redundant but his comments are used to illustrate the climate of change that existed during much of the study period.

As was seen in the discussion on those receiving the UEB, being forced out of paid work is a difficult experience for most people. This was no less true for this group. As the exception, this man maintained a positive attitude to being laid off.

I looked at the positive side of things. All the redundancies in the early 90's, 91, 92 when every company was closing and redundancies, I said why ... one off paper thing. That is part and parcel of life. So I took it positively

It was more usual for others to be far more negative and affected.

When I was made redundant you loose your confidence and I went to a couple of interviews and the interviews were terrible, my CV was great but I mean the interview were an just disaster cause I was sort of at that stage I didn't really want a job.

I had a breakdown. I could not work for 6 weeks. I couldn't work for 6 weeks. I got nervous breakdown, I was just sitting and crying. I was so mad, I came home, I screamed at my little boy, I screamed at my wife.

As this last quote shows, the impacts of being laid off flowed through to others in the household. Often the very unpleasant nature of the actual process of a business closing can make this whole time even more difficult.

Then one day we came out [to work] ... We didn't know anything. Next minute we were, all the cops were down underneath and security was down the bottom. They told us ... that was our last day on the premises and to come back Monday. ...come back and pick up our tools, and then yeah, so we called in on Monday and a new contractor was on the job. ..we just received our pay on the street.

Though in this case wages that were owed and some form of redundancy were paid, this was not always the case. Despite the various negative effects and impacts of being laid off, this group – like most of the others who were out of paid work – displayed a keenness to work that was evident in their efforts to find jobs and was borne out in the high success they had in finding employment.

Summary – Welfare and Unemployment

This section has focused on the experiences of people who were receiving some form of welfare and/or were unemployed. The small numbers in receipt of the Sickness and Widows' Benefit, National Superannuation, and ACC meant that their experiences could only be briefly outlined. Though similarly small numbers of people received either the DPB or UEB, their concentration in a single benefit made some more detailed analysis possible.

Those who were unemployed and receiving the UEB for some time during the study period represent a range of experiences. A variety of circumstances lay behind this transition: some were forced onto the UEB after being laid off, others when they couldn't get work after resettling in or immigrating to this country, and a couple of people eventually received the UEB after giving up full-time work for personal

reasons. The length of time they spent unemployed lay somewhere between a few weeks several years in total. Whilst no-one entered the study period unemployed, three people were still receiving the UEB when interviewed. Of those that had transitioned off welfare, all but one had found full-time work. Though expressed in a variety of ways, a common feature amongst those receiving the UEB was their keenness to work and efforts in this regard. A similar experience was the sense of struggle that life on a benefit was for all this group, and their families.

The two case studies of individuals with multiple episodes of unemployment throw up some interesting contrasts. Whilst each was out of work several times, in one case these were all enforced against an element of choice in the other. Each displayed different attitudes to the experience. The woman's repeated redundancies were difficult times during which she kept active in her search for work. As a result she had shorter periods out of work and reasonable success finding work each time. The young man showed a marked ambivalence towards paid work: whilst recognising the detrimental effect of long term unemployment, the type of work and level of pay that his lack of qualifications and limited experience equipped him to get left him very dissatisfied. Consequently, his episodes out of work were often by choice as he became disgruntled with his situation. Whilst it would be easy to claim that the woman's better circumstances were the result of her holding formal qualifications and having established some work experience, her repeated unemployment also shows that both these offer no guarantees.

Interestingly, the group who was unemployed but not receiving the UEB was larger than those who qualified for welfare in the same circumstances. With only a small number opting to stop work, most became unemployed through enforced transitions, particularly redundancy. Like those receiving the UEB, this group were keen to get work and proved successful at this. They also experienced many of the same negative impacts of being unemployed. Not qualifying for any welfare assistance brought additional uncertainties. Though this was often due to their financial situation – a spouse or partner already in work or having been paid redundancy – they still experienced difficult and stressful times.

The experiences of women receiving the DPB counter some of the common perceptions about those receiving this benefit. All but one went onto this benefit after the break up of a relationship. Except for one woman who was only briefly on this benefit, all the others had engaged in some form of paid work. To some degree most acknowledged that life on a benefit was not easy and this was often what lay behind their efforts at getting some form of work. Many also had in mind considerations about the future and a couple spoke about possibly undertaking some training. It is important to note that any work or training had to be balanced against the needs of their children and could create significant demands on the women. In this respect, the age of children seemed to be a crucial factor in determining the nature of participation in other activities. Whilst one woman had been receiving the DPB for nine years when interviewed, the average length of time that people had been on this benefit was four and a half years. Though in one case the woman was only briefly in receipt of the DPB as she waited for her partner to relocate, those who had moved off it had been receiving welfare for between two and a half, and five years,.

Despite the range of experiences and circumstances of those interviewees who were unemployed and/or in receipt of some form of welfare, some common themes can be identified. Firstly, life on a benefit was frequently described as a struggle and receiving welfare was viewed quite negatively. Secondly, whilst their particular situation was highly influential, most people were keen to get off welfare and/or to work.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Introduction

A range of issues relating to education and training were raised in numerous interviews. In general terms, most people who talked about education and training recognised its importance in relation to a person's employability. Of those who had left school with few qualifications, some made later efforts to get these or to do some sort of training. As will be obvious shortly, a number of adults at various stages of their lives undertook education and training as a means of changing careers, enhancing their present work opportunities, or to better equip themselves to return to paid work after a time away. Though such positive views and attitudes were widespread, a small group made some cautionary observations. These included the view that education and training offered no guarantees of work and that it was not the single solution to unemployment. Others were concerned about how experience had come to be devalued, though there was a sense that this might be being reversed.

The following discussion begins with an examination of the experiences of school leavers during the study period. Following this, people's involvement with education and training is considered according to the delivery mode of the programmes and courses that they undertook. This is broken up into:

- part-time education and training
- full-time education and training
- training that was undertaken by some of those who were unemployed
- workplace based education and training

(i) School Leavers

The transition from school is one that is interesting to examine. The particular nature of this study means that subsequent transitions could also be tracked. Five interviewees (5.6% of all those profiled) left school at some point during the study period and had been away from school for between one year and almost the entire ten years. This group was made up of three men and two women. The highest qualification gained was Sixth Form Certificate and, at the other end of the scale, one person left school without gaining any formal qualifications. This group were in either fifth or sixth form when they made this transition with the youngest only 15 years old.

For almost all the school leavers this move seemed motivated by an intense dislike of school, though one was more unhappy with the curriculum delivery than with school as a whole. He was the only person to have a clear and firm idea of what he wanted to do. Because he preferred to concentrate on his aptitude for and interest in computing, and not have to bother with other subjects, this young man left after the sixth form to do computing studies at a local polytech.

Well school wasn't doing pretty much what I wanted and it wasn't going in my direction and I knew I wasn't going to be good at Math's or anything and I wanted to go with computers, you know that sort of thing and I got a

huge score in computers and a couple of friends had decided they were going to go and do it and so I decided that yeah, that was a good idea.

He had already completed the first year when interviewed. Even at polytech he found that he still had to deviate a little from his desire to only study computing as he had to undertake associated courses in business studies. Once these were completed he would have more control over his course of study. Initially he had held a part-time job for a few hours a week in a supermarket. This was to allow him to buy a car and once he had achieved this he left. Apparently he was not been enamoured of the pay or attitude of other employees, and he “didn’t really need the job that badly”.

The other school leavers all left without any firm plans or settled ideas as to what they wanted to do. Despite this they all managed to get paid work soon after, though their subsequent work histories were often less settled. Although one woman had some tentative ideas about what she might do when she left school, circumstances conspired to take her in a different direction. After spending a little time in paid work she became less keen to do any training. Instead, after some casual catering employment she moved into office work.

I went quite wayward when I left school. ...I was only 16 so things change and your ideas change and after a while I just decided that I didn’t want to go and do any tertiary education and I was quite happy to – I seemed to be pretty lucky at getting jobs.

This luck was useful as she was laid off three times during the study period, and made two other voluntary changes of job. Being laid off began with her first job which was in the catering section of an airline. She had got this through her father who worked there. Unfortunately she started just as massive restructuring was underway. After a series of changes she was in settled employment when interviewed, though only working part-time as she recovered from a serious accident. An ongoing casual job in a shop proved extremely important in her work history as she increased hours when out of other employment and reduced them when she had a full-time job.

Like the woman above, one of the men had a rather fragmented work history, with periods of no paid employment and a number of shifts which were most often voluntarily made. He was able to rely on a family trust to provide living expenses when he was out of work, though this was in return for the care he provided to his grandfather. His first job had also come about through a relative. Overall, though he worked hard, it seemed that he felt paid work wasn’t the most important aspect of his life and doubted he would ever settle at any one thing for too long.

I’m not really fussed in what sort of work I do. I suppose the main thing is, as long as I’m happy in what I’m doing and I’m pleasing everybody else I suppose. ...Well I figured because I’ve already done, maybe I could try something different you know, I’m just that sort of person I can’t really stick to one job sort of thing. Like my uncle and my aunt they’re, like my uncle ... I think he’s going on 25 years. Aunty has been at Inland Revenue ... for over 20 you know and I don’t know how they do it but they just stay at one job.

Another of the men also had a chequered work history, spending over three of the five years since leaving school on the UEB.¹⁰ Like others he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do despite being keen to leave school. His ambivalence in relation to paid work is evident in him voluntarily giving up jobs on occasions to return to the dole. He made the following comment after quitting a factory job he had held for about a year.

No I wasn't interested [in work]. ...I just didn't want to work. ... I would rather just do nothing than be at work and having – you know you just feel real, you just feel like you are losing out on life, being stuck in a factory.

Despite these remarks, elsewhere in the interview he made it clear that the problem was finding work that interested him and that earned him reasonable money. Nor was he entirely averse to work as he periodically worked under-the-counter in a range of jobs whilst receiving the UEB. He also realised that education and training were important and he had made use of training schemes through the employment service as he could not afford polytech programmes.¹¹ Recognising that he had left school with limited qualifications he spent a year whilst unemployed getting 6th Form Certificate. He remained unemployed when interviewed.

The only other woman, whose motives for leaving school seemed less bound up in a dislike of the education system, had a much more settled work pattern once an initial period of uncertainty passed. She took a short office systems training course straight after leaving to enhance her skills and employability. Like another woman who had left school just prior to the study period, she felt that some form of bridge between school and work would be helpful.

I didn't really want to start work directly from 6th form, [I] wanted some training. [It was] one of the reasons ... I was interested in doing shorthand/typing.

However, as a result of doing the course she decided office work was not what she wanted to do. Shortly thereafter she got a fill in job working in a staff cafeteria but hated this and left quite quickly. Given that she was so unsettled she decided to go on a working holiday, and lived and worked in Queenstown for six months. During this time she decided to train as a nurse and returned to her home town to do this. However, as she had limited academic qualifications from school she had to do some preliminary papers at university before being accepted. Later, after registering and working as a nurse, she would also train and practise as a midwife.

Though she had left school prior to the start of the survey period, the circumstances of another woman illustrated the changes that can occur for school leavers. She had been very keen to train as a hairdresser and willingly waited for an apprenticeship to become available. Even a wait of two years for this to happen did not deter her. After completing her three year training she decided that this was not what she wanted to spend the rest of her life doing and she never worked as a hairdresser again, preferring to get office work instead.

¹⁰ His work history is discussed in more detail in the section on those receiving the UEB. This also explains how he managed to qualify for the UEB despite voluntarily leaving jobs on occasions.

¹¹ More comment on such courses is made in a following section.

(ii) *Part-time Education and Training*

Education and training that was not full-time took on many forms and was undertaken by fourteen people (15.7% of all those profiled) – three men and eleven women. This type of training or education was usually chosen as it fitted with people's other responsibilities. For example, all but one of the women did this whilst caring for children, and most often on top of some part-time work as well. The exception was a woman who was studying for accountancy qualifications while working full-time. She reversed this pattern for a year – swapping to full-time study and part-time work – before completing the last paper whilst again in full-time work. A desire to get qualified sooner motivated this change, but other pressures were behind the return to full-time work.

Going to full-time study wasn't too hard, it was trying to manage with a lot less money that was difficult. But you're sort of trying to see that the end reason why you're doing it rather than you know in the meantime. ...I had a little bit of savings but I didn't have take any allowances or anything like that. ... I tried to make my study my priority. But it was a little bit stressful financially but I managed.

Being made redundant from one of her part-time jobs forced her to consider a return to full-time employment.

Financial pressures were behind one of the men making a similar transition. He had studied full-time for a Bachelors degree and then enrolled in a Masters programme. However, with a young child whom his wife cared for, he was becoming increasingly financially stretched, and so he opted to get a full-time job and study part-time.

I was running out of money ... so I applied for a job and I got a job at [a government department]. ...Now I'd done three papers in my Masters degree by the end of [the year] and I took two papers part-time. One in the first half year and one in the second half year.

Part of his employment contract allowed him the necessary time off to attend university. His subsequent experiences illustrate that these sort of arrangements might appear fine but can turn out to be far from satisfactory.

Well I had to go through all sorts of things just to do my studies part-time and I had to sign up a bond and the arrangement was that I would get half a day off a week to go and study and additional item in work time where I could actually study university work and the [department] would look after my fees on completion of my paper and in return they had a bond as to if you left the department within a certain amount of time after completing the study that you would have to pay them some money. What happened was I never ever got the fees. I never ever got the time and when I left I hadn't actually completed anything.

A prolonged dispute over the bond did not end in his favour. He left to go to a part-time job at the university that allowed him to work full-time on his thesis and complete his post-graduate qualification.

One of the other two males worked part-time for two years to also complete a masters level qualification. He had immigrated to this country three years earlier and felt that an MBA would compliment the professional engineering qualification he held. Having easily obtained work after arriving here he was keen to enhance his future prospects.

This seemed to have been worthwhile, helping him not only move to a more senior position but also to get further work when he was made redundant. The remaining man's case reflects aspects of the other two men's circumstances. He, too, had immigrated to this country and his study was also intended to enhance his work in the area of quality management. It was supported by his employer but, unlike the experiences of the earlier case, he had no difficulties. This course only lasted a few months.

As has been noted, virtually all the women engaged in this type of study in fairly similar circumstances. In one case, the woman continued with part-time post-graduate study after returning to full-time work. She had earlier completed a bachelors degree part-time whilst working full-time as a teacher. After the birth of her child she had five years without study. Once her daughter went to school, this woman began a Master's degree part-time. A year later she returned to full-time teaching but as a guidance counsellor, a role the Master's study had assisted her in getting. At this time she also decided to swap to a Diploma course as managing all her responsibilities was extremely demanding.

I was enrolled for a masters degree and I swapped to a diploma . . . because I find the stress of combining parenting with full-time employment and study too large.

Though this woman already had a profession to return to, she had decided to change directions slightly away from teaching and into guidance counselling. Thus, her study was a preparation for this shift and the return to full-time work. Other women used part-time education and training for this purpose. One, who had done office work prior to and after having children began training as a teacher part-time. This was specifically aimed at improving her future prospects. Though the course was part-time and two of her children were at school, having a young baby made studying quite challenging.

The two older ones are at school. ...I've worked out my timetable s that everyday I'm home to pick the up after school, except for one day I'm a little bit late, but two mornings I've got an early start. So for the rest of the week I drop them off and pick them up. ...My husband was working a 4 to midnight shift ... so he had baby during the day while I was at college and then we swapped. ...It's not really an issue now cause he's at home as well. ...We've got supportive parents, so we're very lucky. ..We drop them off with [his] parents or my mum. ...A lot of the time it's only for an hour or two. You know because I'm not there all day, I'm only there for one or two lectures at most.

When she was interviewed her husband was more available to help as he had just been made redundant.

In another case the woman had older teenage children and was preparing for the time when she would return to paid work having cared for them as a single parent. To this end she completed a part-time course in office systems over a couple of years. Though she got some brief temporary work immediately after this, she was struggling to find settled employment. As was noted in the section on the DPB, she felt that the competition amongst women for jobs, particularly jobs that suited childcare needs, was intense. Though only in her forties she also felt that her age was a factor working against her. The course undertaken by another woman was less directed towards work

but none-the-less important. She had immigrated to this country with her husband and child from China, where she had been a tax accountant. After a short time here she took a part-time job in a dry cleaners to help financially. However, she realised that mastering English would be critical to settling into this country, so she gave up the job to take language classes part-time. This left her available to look after her school age daughter. These were ongoing when she was interviewed.

Having been out of paid work for many years caring for her family, another woman decided to use university study as a means of getting some sort of qualifications for returning to the paid workforce. She realised that it would be a tough transition and that she would need to be well prepared. Despite initially finding it hard to settle into study after so long away, she coped well with university. As she was managing a couple of papers per year she realised that it would still be some time before she graduated. When combined with the fact that there was no pressure on her to engage in paid work, she saw that it was more likely she would use the qualification in a voluntary capacity.

For other women, the education and training they did was related to work they were already involved in. Two of them who had school age children were involved in teacher aid training on a part-time basis. They had got jobs in this area through the voluntary work they had done at their children's schools. As one woman laughingly put it,

I used to be up there all the time anyway so they decided they'd better pay me. Cause I'm up there all the time doing something.

As she also noted, doing some additional training was one way to enhance your skills and improve your employability. Simply going to work each day and doing a good job was not enough.

I'll get more kudos and I'll probably have, you know, it's kind of a um, a more of a valued opinion. You become a little more desirable if you're looking for another job 'cause they know you've been taught some things. They don't have to teach you anything

One other woman had been involved in education and training related to her work. Soon after having her first child she was offered casual lecturing in the health field she was trained in. This grew into a part-time position over time. As her lecturing responsibilities grew she realised that she had to have more than a basic qualification and so did a Masters degree over four years part-time. To add to her qualifications she then did a tertiary teaching diploma. With the help of her mother she had been able to combine work and study with family commitments.

Another woman, though she had worked for the same employer since immigrating to New Zealand at the start of the survey period, had had some changes to her role. Since taking on a management position she had been continuously involved in education and training of some sort. Firstly it was part-time training as a counsellor to fit with the restructuring of the workplace that she had instigated. Then she moved on to do some management training to help with her senior role, again part-time. Though her daughter was a teenager, having recently separated she found full-time work, part-time study, and single parenting a demanding combination.

I do find working full-time and being a full-time mum and studying very difficult. ...It takes a whole semester to do one paper and I feel some times that I'm going to be retired by the time I get this management degree.

In the final case, although she was married and working very limited hours, this woman also expressed some reservations about being over committed by taking on any extra study. She also had much younger children and had been out of the paid workforce caring for them for 18 months before she returned to kindergarten teaching for a few hours a week. Building on this background she had developed a small business running music classes for pre-schoolers and as part of this she attended a range of short courses in related areas. However, despite being keen to do further advanced training she was wary about the impact this would have on her primary role.

I am quite interesting at looking at a course for autism but apart from that I'm not really thinking of doing anything. The reason I didn't do it was because again, my commitment to my children and my husband, really because the hours and the scheduling of lectures and being available didn't fit into the family at all and this is doing only a few papers and I had to get my priorities right.

Given its compatibility with other responsibilities and its usefulness in enhancing people's employability, part-time study was an important approach to gaining skills and qualifications for a number of people. The predominance of women in the group can be largely explained by these factors. Like the three men, the women took some form of education and training in order to improve their skills, knowledge and employability. Whilst some took courses related to the work they were already doing, for others this was an important part of preparing and enhancing their prospects for a return to paid work after time away caring for children. Mirroring the men again, the women opted for part-time courses as a means to combine study with other responsibilities. However, while the males worked full-time and studied, the women usually managed a range of activities such as caring for children, voluntary work and paid employment of some sort.

(iii) Full-time Education and Training

Training and education that involved full-time commitment, even if only for short periods, is dealt with in this section. Excluded, however, are those courses that are run specifically for the unemployed. Though they are often full-time programmes, the nature of such courses sees them considered separately in the next section. Nine of the people interviewed (10.1% of all those profiled), six of whom were male, were involved in full-time education and training. Though a few people did courses that lasted only a couple of weeks, most undertook programmes that ran for between one and three years. In one case the course would last four years. Programmes were undertaken at universities, polytechs, and private institutions. University courses were in engineering, commerce, science, health, and social work. Nursing, midwifery, and engineering related programmes were taken through polytechs. Two people did secondary teacher training. Short office systems courses (2), and theological training

were done through private providers. Finally, one woman completed a hairdressing apprenticeship.¹²

Three people took their courses directly or soon after leaving school. One other person could be added to this group since he went straight to university after completing two years of missionary work for his church. Each also went on to do later full-time study and training. Once the man who had returned from his missionary work had his commerce degree he began a Masters programme and, as was discussed in the preceding section, he did this part-time for a while after getting a full-time job when things became financially difficult. However, he opted to return to full-time study when offered a part-time job at the university. Another of this group had already done one of the three years of her hairdressing apprenticeship at the start of the study period. Despite having had a long held dream to be a hairdresser, once she completed this training she never worked in the field again. She found it quite boring and poorly paid. Instead she took a short course in office skills and moved into this area, maintaining steady work subsequently.

Though she had done a full-time office systems course of a few weeks duration straight after school with the intention of working in this area, another woman decided that it wasn't what she wanted to do. Instead, she spent six months working casually in a hotel in the South Island before deciding to train as a nurse. However, she first had to do some university papers to improve her academic background. At university she met her future husband who had gone there from school and as studying social sciences. When both had completed their courses they relocated to Auckland to work. After a year of nursing the woman went on to complete her midwifery training. Her husband never utilised his degree, preferring to concentrate on being a freelance musician. After returning from their O.E. and having had their first child he took a one year full-time course to train as a secondary school music teacher in order to provide a more stable income. His wife described the situation:

The practicality of the musician work comes and goes, its seasonal so it's quite hard to budget in some ways. ...[So] he went to Teachers' College, which is just wonderful. ...He finds that very fulfilling and he's very gifted. ...I was very, very happy to see him doing what really made him happy. ...Teaching will be far more stable in salary.

He continued with a little freelance music work at times.

Although he had gone to university straight from school, like others the musician also took on some full-time training later in his life. Each of these people made a voluntary choice to retrain or extend their qualifications, giving up jobs, reducing or tailoring their hours of work to do this. Even the man who had been made redundant after many years working as a technician for a telecommunications company chose to study full-time rather than just get another job. Like a small group of others, his study signalled a change of direction. He had elected to do a science degree at university, thereby fulfilling a long held interest. Other changes included the sailor who swapped the

¹² Though not exactly the same as the other courses, since it involved being paid to train, this course is included here for a couple of reasons. Firstly, over the course of her training this woman attended full-time block courses at polytech. Secondly, for the remainder of the time, she was working full-time in a training situation. Finally, this section seems to provide the most logical location to discuss her experience. In doing so the different character of her programme is acknowledged.

Navy for Bible College and, in a less dramatic shift, the woman who moved from being a research scientist to a secondary school teacher. Having studied up to Maters level in New Zealand, she had gained her PhD in the United States and worked there for four years as a scientist. When various circumstances brought her back to this country she realised she would never be able to get this type of work here and so decided to retrain as a teacher. She describes the rationale for making this change.

I knew that what I wanted to do at that time was not available in New Zealand because I had canvassed that. So I decided on a career change rather than settling for something second best which would cause dissatisfaction to me.

Two others undertook full-time study that augmented their existing qualifications. One man gained advanced engineering qualifications that he hoped would offer important opportunities and options later.

What it allowed me to do was instead of working long hours like I normally do it um, get me further up in a managerial stage in a company. Like consultants as opposed to contracting and like plan ahead. Well I was trying to plan ahead so I no longer get my hands dirty, and a bit more time with my ex-partner and kids

In another case a new immigrant returned to polytech to study engineering in order to establish his qualifications in this country.

Over two-thirds of those who trained later in life were married and had children at the time. Rather than access for school leavers or the question of student loans, it was in respect of this group that the issue of costs in relation to training and education received the most attention. In one case the costs proved prohibitive for a married man resettling in this country. As will be discussed in the next section he was able, instead, to utilise training assistance for the unemployed. An older man, who was concerned by the physical demands and risky nature of the work he did, was also keen to retrain. However, costs were an important consideration, though he wasn't adverse to getting a student loan if necessary! Interestingly, his wife was retraining in early childhood education at this time.

The circumstances of those with families who did undertake study or training full-time meant they faced considerable challenges in terms of managing and financing the study and replacing the income they were unable to earn. The man doing the additional engineering qualifications had his own business which he worked at part-time whilst studying and which seemed to provide an ample income. For the couple where the husband was studying theology, they seemed reasonably content. Though his not working created some significant changes, his wife worked full-time and, as she describes it, they managed.

We're on one income. We've gone from a double income to single income. ...Well I suppose it's a sacrifice isn't it's a financial sacrifice that you accept and you go with because students don't get paid to train anymore like in my day I got paid to train as a teacher so um yeah. ...He gets about \$24.00 per week but what it means is that we just have to watch your spending and um you go without. But that's okay. We're better off than a lot of other people. We've got a home, we've got another home so we're doing all right. It's only for 3 years.

She could work close to full-time hours as one child was at school and the other at Kohanga Reo during the day.

It seemed more of a struggle for others. The man who had immigrated with his family had to cope with full-time study and work part-time during the school year and full-time during the holidays. In addition to some casual work as a musician, the music teacher was entitled to allowances and other benefits. In comparison, the man doing the science degree was not. Though his wife only worked part-time (25 hours per week), this disqualified them, though they had received some assistance when she was on maternity leave.

At that time when I went on maternity leave we were actually entitled to, think I was actually entitled to, I know that I got some sort of benefit like an unemployment benefit. Yes I am sure it was but that was only for like the time I was on maternity leave. Because my husband was not working as well as myself. ...[Now] no student allowance because of my earnings, even though I work part-time, he still doesn't qualify.

Despite the struggles and hardships, the person doing the study as well as their partner/spouse seemed willing to make the necessary sacrifices.

Studying full-time could be a struggle even for those who were single. This woman had begun her business studies certificate part-time, but then decided to speed up the process by going full-time for a year so that she could benefit sooner from having additional qualifications.

Well going to full-time study wasn't too hard it was trying to manage with a lot less money that was difficult. But you're sort of trying to see that the end reason why you're doing it rather than you know in the meantime. ...I had a little bit of savings but I didn't have take any allowances or anything like that. ... I tried to make my study my priority. But it was a little bit stressful financially but I managed.

On top of savings she 'managed' by holding a number of part-time jobs. To reduce any future debt she has chosen not to take out a student loan. When she had problems sustaining this part-time work, she finished her last paper whilst back in full-time work.

Whilst a third of this group were still studying, the others had moved onto paid employment, though the nurse/midwife was only working casually whilst caring for her child. She had achieved settled work in both professions prior to this. Although he hadn't used his original degree, her husband, the musician, now seemed settled teaching music. The other secondary teacher, who had transitioned from being a scientist, appeared to be still undecided as to whether this was what she wanted to do. The Masters graduate in commerce had made steady progress in his business career and was considering future moves to enhance this. Whilst the hairdresser never continued past her apprenticeship, the short office skills course she did lead to long term steady employment in this area. Getting additional qualifications hadn't yet fully realised the changes that the engineer had planned, but he felt that they were still possible.

(iv) Education and Training for those on the UEB

As has been noted, some of those who received the UEB got involved in training courses that were available to people in these circumstances.¹³ As one woman noted, however, these courses were pitched at a particular group. This is apparent as she talks about the employment service.

I just sort of feel that they [were] sort of more orientated to people who have either been unemployed for a long time or who haven't got much in the way training and things like that, that's just sort of the feeling that I got. ...It's um I think just sort of the help that was available you know that they sort of had courses and things that people could do but you had to have only done two School Cert. subjects so you know and people who have done more than two School Cert. subjects, they don't need any help.

Since she had a business certificate she felt excluded from such courses. Intriguingly, despite her qualification she was made redundant and received the UEB three times. Three people did qualify and make use of these courses.

One was a man who had returned with his family from a time living in the UK to resettle in this country, and another was a young man with several episodes of unemployment. Both recognised that some form of training was necessary to enhance their employability. However, neither could not afford training through polytech and the like. This forced a very pragmatic decision in the former instance.

I didn't have any money for training, I knew the best way to get training was to be unemployed, to get computer training, so I used the system really.

As his case illustrated, getting the skills was only half the battle and he was willing to take a big gamble to get the necessary experience by working for a short time without pay and then earning less than the dole for a period. The long term benefits he eventually achieved – settled long term work with the same company and advancement and promotion to senior positions – seemed to vindicate the taking of these risks.

The other case involving the young man demonstrates that quite a range of interests are catered for in these courses – from computing to graphics to drama. He didn't really consider these types of course as valuable or reputable as polytech programmes. When combined with his ambivalent attitude to work he treated them as just something to do.

Something to do to fill in time. ...After the courses you don't, you come out with a certificate and that but it doesn't really count until you go to tech and stuff I guess.

That said, and given that they were all he could afford, he made use of them and was still considering doing further training this way.

Like I want to do something that interests me. ...[I might] request another course so I thought I might follow it up.

¹³ The section on those receiving the UEB provides additional detail about the people who feature here.

Despite the low value he placed on these courses, the graphics one had lead to work (even though he elected not to carry on with this). Similarly, the computing courses the other man did played a part in his getting a job.

Work was also the outcome of the security officer training that one of the other unemployed men did. Indeed, as the man described it, the course was very much targeted at helping people get employment and had strong links with the industry.

On the course that I was doing mainly they put you through like interviews like how to go through an interview and stuff like that which is really good 'cause I could brush up my skills and that for interviewing 'cause all my other interviews were sort of a bit rough but you know I sort of like got on there. But that security place was quite good being an up front sort of base and that and they sort of like showed us how to do it, all the interviews and that and they had people that actually come looking for security guards and so when they heard that someone was looking for security guards they'd actually find the best from the course and they'd actually asked if we'd like to have a look and even if we didn't want to, we'd actually go and do work experience and stuff like that, and that sort of gave us the idea of what we were doing.

Though he had long held a goal of getting into personal security (bodyguards), and whilst he got various types of security work including this speciality, ultimately he found that he didn't really enjoy this type of employment as much as he thought he would. Consequently, he gave it up and though not working for periods he did not return to the dole.

(v) *Workplace Education and Training*

A small group of people made reference to education and training provided at or through their workplaces. Though not a lot of comment was generated on this issue, given that it rounds off the whole discussion of education and training, a brief exploration of this topic is undertaken. All but one of those who commented were men. This type of training and education took two general forms:

- (1) in-house programmes run by the employer
 - directly through a company trainer or training department or
 - provided by an external provider either on-site or external to the workplace.
- (2) external programmes or courses promoted by the employer
 - provided by outside providers and
 - attended by individual or groups of employees
 - supported by time off, funding, or both.

In either case, these can be generic or more workplace specific programmes or courses. It seemed that training of these types were a growing feature of many workplaces.

The second form covered arrangements that allowed employees to attend education and training during work time. One of the interviewees made just such arrangements

when appointed to a full-time position so that he could continue with his Masters' study.

Well I had to go through all sorts of things just to do my studies part-time ... I had to sign up a bond and the arrangement was that I would get half a day off a week to go and study and additional time in work time where I could actually study university work. ...they would look after my fees on completion of my paper and in return they had a bond as to if you left the department within a certain amount of time after completing the study that you would have to pay them some money. What happened was I never ever got the fees. I never ever got the time and when I left I hadn't actually completed anything and so technically the bond didn't apply but they just took the whole lot out of my holiday pay and were going to send me an invoice for the balance. And I wrote them a letter and said this is just a little bit on the nose. you are charging me a bond when the conditions don't apply and you haven't yet met your side of the bargain and in the end they kept my holiday pay and left it at that.

Though such arrangements often work well, his experiences reflect the difficulties that can sometimes arise.

Most people were quite positive about or at least accepting of work place training. The only woman spoke about it as a provider – she managed a small health service – and as a recipient of the training she organised and encouraged.

It happened as the service changed. Where we use to have a group of nurses and a group of counsellors and just through really natural wastage, we – when I say we, me and the present administrator at that time – looked at multi-skilling people. So, if we are short on the counselling side, we have nurses who have the knowledge of counsellors. ...I've always been a person who practices what I preach ... so I brought the idea to all the new staff that started and everybody including myself when to theoretical counselling classes as well as doing on the job training.

Others who held positive views spoke of the importance of such opportunities to kept pace with change and innovation in their areas of work.

I've done a lot of training with the company, most of it management training. ...I've done some short courses in management training, ah health and safety issues. Yeh, all relevant issues to help you of the job occupation.

One man who was had entered the IT sector many years ago reported a heavy reliance on workplace based training.

I don't have any tertiary qualifications. The only training I've had is on the job scene. Well on the job, but actually like some of it has been, you know, institutional type kind of thing provided by the employer.

A couple of those who made reference to workplace based training were less enthusiastic or interested than the others. For one man, this was because in his job such training made no difference to his wages and conditions.

It was probably an option to do courses but at that stage it wasn't going to do any ... improving ... no increase in pay or anything like that.

Consequently he avoided it. In the case of another man, his lack of interest was driven by a more general dislike of formal training and education.

Management course and that ... that's a waste of time though ...It is with me ...Yeah, I picked up different things, but I'm not academic put it that way.

Though he had worked for the same company over three decades, he had held many different positions. Included in these were the initial stages of a number of apprenticeships which he never completed. Despite this, he had become a valuable, multi-skilled and senior member of the company. Indeed, it seemed that his value to the company was in his versatility, and wide range of skills and knowledge accumulated across time.

Summary – Education and Training

This section has examined a range of issues in relation to education and training. After considering some general views on the importance of education and training, the experiences of school leavers were considered. The discussion then moved into looking at different types of education and training. These were part-time, full-time, for the unemployed, and workplace based.

A small group of five people had left school during the study period. They had made this transition between one and ten years before being interviewed. Despite the uncertain times that the study period encapsulates all but one of these people left school with limited formal qualifications and few ideas about what they would do. The exceptional case involved a young man who immediately went to polytech. Though all the others got work, their subsequent patterns of employment across the years showed some variation. Two had quite chequered employment histories, though one managed quite lengthy periods of work. Another had unsettled work for a time before getting stable and permanent work. The last person worked casually for a year before embarking on her nursing training which marked the beginning of a fairly stable general career path.

Part-time study took various forms and formats. Clearly part-time study was chosen because it could fit with other responsibilities and this was likely why it was predominantly undertaken by women, almost all of whom were caring for children with some working as well. For the three men and the one woman without children it sat well with their full-time paid employment. Whilst some of the women used part-time study and training to prepare for a return to work or to support a change in work directions, many people – men and women – were studying or training in areas related to their work. This was to consolidate or enhance their skills and prospects. Despite its fit with other responsibilities, some people reported that part-time study could place considerable demands on people already heavily committed.

A range of courses and providers also featured in relation to those undertaking full-time employment. Whilst a couple of courses only lasted a few weeks, the majority were between one and four years duration. A third of this group did their training directly or soon after school. All went on to do later full-time education and training as well. The others undertook their courses whilst married and with children; this also applied to the second qualifications the last two men acquired. Though one man had been made redundant prior to embarking on a varsity course, like all the other adults even he chose to engage in full-time study. Most opted to do this as a way of

retraining, but a couple were enhancing their existing qualifications. Overall, studying full-time proved to be very worthwhile in terms of securing employment

Although it might be expected that tertiary fees and student loans would be of primary concern in relation to the question of costs for education and training, the main issue raised in this regard was actually quite different. It centred on people who were engaged in or contemplating study as adults. They commented on the effects of high costs on their participation, and the financial difficulties that studying as an adult, often with a family, could create.

Also of a full-time nature but considered separately were courses for people who were unemployed. Given their circumstances, people who were out of work were often unable to afford polytech, university or other tertiary training. These courses offered a way for them to gain some training to enhance their employability. Indeed, these programmes were often closely integrated with employment opportunities. For the three people concerned the courses they completed proved quite useful in getting work. The final area considered in this section was education and training that occurred in workplaces. Like the programmes for the unemployed only very small numbers of people made mention of this form of training. Most reported that it was a growing feature of workplaces and it took a range of types and formats, from time off work for study to fully funded and provided courses in the workplace. Though most people were accepting and some even enthusiastic about this type of training, occasionally people were more cautious or negative.

4. UNPAID WORK

The very nature of this study and the use of transitions as the unit of analysis have deliberately ensured that work is considered in its broadest sense. Adopting such a broad view of work allows this analysis to move beyond just looking at paid activities. This has already been apparent in the preceding discussions around education and welfare. We now turn to the area of unpaid work, which has been broken into two general areas: voluntary work and unpaid domestic work.

(i) *Unpaid Domestic Work*

The focus of this section is on work for which people received no paid income and which occurred in the private sphere, predominantly in the person's own home. Whilst most people perform some unpaid activities in a household, the interest here is on people who clearly identified a primary or significant role involving unpaid work. Also considered are the overall organisation and distribution of unpaid work within households and the relationship of this to people's association with and movement into and out of paid work. This allows shifts between paid and unpaid work as well as how people managed various combinations of both to be examined. Almost half of the 89 people who were profiled reported that unpaid work played a significant part in their pattern of working for some time during the 10 year study period. They may have been involved solely in this or done it in conjunction with paid work or other unpaid activities, such as voluntary work or education and training.

(a) *The Nature of Unpaid Work*

The principal types of unpaid work focused on here includes caring for children and care of a home. Whilst the former was virtually always done by parents, in one instance a woman became heavily involved in looking after her grandchildren. Though some of those interviewed reported making use of their extended families to assist with childcare and the like, this was the only interviewee who reported this markedly different sort of involvement. She and her husband had decided to immigrate to New Zealand to be with their children and their families. However, they could not work for two years and so stayed with a daughter during this time. In return she undertook a range of unpaid activities within the household that allowed her daughter to engage in paid work.

I am looking after the children, they got two children and one is going kindy, the small one, I am taking him to kindy, just helping my daughter because I am staying there, cooking the food.

In another case, as well as looking after her children and the home, a woman extended her role to include caring for her ageing father-in-law who lived nearby. Though not involving children, two men clearly identified a significant involvement in unpaid work. The younger of these had been caring for his grandfather for many years. He did this on top of any paid work. As his grandfather's needs increased late in the study period, a family trust paid him a small wage to provide this care. In the second case the man took on the majority of domestic responsibilities when the couple returned from a trial settlement overseas. They were near retiring age and he had decided he

would probably not bother returning to paid employment. His wife had been offered her old job back soon after they returned and was working full-time. When he too was enticed back to his former job – initially on a part-time basis – he reluctantly agreed, but continued to manage the domestic chores as well.

I had no intention of going back to work. ...Then I got a ring from [my previous employers] and they said what are you going and I said just enjoying life, doing the housework, doing the washing and the dusting and they said do you want to come back to work for us. I said not really but if you want a hand I will come on out there.

Once this job increased to full-time he relinquished these chores and his wife became responsible for them, despite also working full-time. Aside from these variations the predominant pattern of unpaid work revealed in the interviews was centred on both the care of the children *and* the home and was apportioned between partners or spouses. It is in relation to this pattern that the interviews provided most data and which is the main focus of this section.

(b) Organisation of Unpaid Work

Unpaid work of this sort was, for those who were interviewed, organised along very traditional and gendered lines. Women, with only one exception, described having primary responsibility for this. Even in the outstanding case, circumstances were only briefly altered and were somewhat forced on this man. He took on primary responsibility for caring for his young child and the home when he was made redundant. His wife already worked close to full-time. When he found full-time employment about six weeks later he emphasised that he continued to share the household and childcare responsibilities equally with his wife. In all the other cases involving couples with children, the demarcations were clearly orientated around the women taking primary responsibility in this area. This is clear in the proportions of men and women involved in unpaid work with 40 of the 44 people who identified a significant role in unpaid activities being women. This is not to say that men did not play roles in this regard and, sometimes, like in the case just quoted these could be substantial. However, women's activities in any other area were premised, first and foremost, on their consideration and attention to issues relating to childcare. One woman made this very explicit.

I think I have always been responsible for raising [our daughter] ... I took full responsibility of arranging child care around the job that I did.

In most cases this was implied rather than stated so baldly. It was born out in the alterations women made to any paid work as a result of having or caring for children and the implications time away from the workforce for this purpose had on their return to paid work. Similarly, it could be seen in what they had to do to balance paid and unpaid responsibilities.

None of the men who were interviewed indicated that their paid work was secondary to an unpaid role caring for children. In one instance a man reported juggling his casual self-employment to fit in with collecting his children from school. However, his full-time job was not affected. Even in the case mentioned earlier, whilst the man could do more whilst not working he did not actively adjust his work because of this

or tailor work he eventually found to suit these demands. The skewing of unpaid work, especially the care of children, towards women seemed to be accepted by all the couples interviewed as 'the way it is' or should be. Given these arrangements, it follows that other unpaid responsibilities were assumed by women.

I have a couple of days off. So one of those days I do the house cleaning and the shopping, I do the cooking ... I probably run the house and organise the children.

(c) *Paid and Unpaid work*

Whilst women held a prominent role in childcare, the very traditional pattern of them being exclusively involved in this activity was less evident. Certainly they may have maintained this over periods but seldom over any extensive timeframe. The two exceptions were families where the children were already adults. In both cases, the women had not engaged in any paid work since the birth of their first child. On top of their unpaid work in the home they had both been involved in voluntary activities related to their children. Once their children got older, each had considered the question of paid work. One woman described what had happened to her.

I was a housewife just at home and I was looking after the family that's all. ...probably by that time I'd probably thought I may like a small job but we decided that, I decided that it wasn't feasible for what I wanted ... I've always been at home for all the family so we just wanted to carry on that way.

The other woman was similarly committed to bringing up her children. Once they got older and the eldest left home she began to consider what she might do. After so long out of the workforce she felt the need to equip herself with skills before attempting to get a job. With some prompting from family and friends she took up university study and this had continued over the years. Given the time it would take her to get her degree she adjusted her thinking and decided she would eventually use it in a voluntary capacity. In both cases, the women's husbands appeared comfortable with their patterns of work. Indeed, the husband of the second woman helped out round the home now that he had semi-retired so that she could have more time to study. Neither women felt under any pressure from their husbands to work, though later one woman makes the point that the extra money would have been useful. To this she counters that her being at home brought its own rewards. In contrast to these two women a few others worked throughout the study period on top of caring for children. This was possible, in the main, as their children were older.

Women had varying times off after the birth of a child before returning to paid work. Some, with work they could do at home or that was only a couple of hours a week, returned after only a few weeks. Most took between six months and three years off, though a small group did not engage in paid work for between six and eight years. Women often had to manage numerous separate transitions into and out of paid employment as they altered their work involvement to reflect their changing commitments. In order to balance the often competing responsibilities of paid and unpaid work, women took on all manner of work. By far the most common was part-

time employment; less common was casual work.¹⁴ The reliance on these sorts of work by many women in similar positions often made for lots of competition for jobs.

A lot of mothers want part-time work and there are a lot of applicants ... for each job. ...One job back in January, there were 40. Another one, February, there was 30 for that one.

Women sometimes combined more than one part-time job or mixed casual and part-time work. Occasionally self-employment was utilised. This couple found that running a couple of businesses – one full-time that the man managed, and one part-time that the woman looked after – meant that she could be available for the children.

The vending machines were just sort of like another side sort of income, part-time job so one of could do that and look after the kids.

The least frequent option was full-time employment. This was obviously because of the double demands this placed on women. In this case the woman even tried to add studying as well.

I find the stress of combining parenting with full-time employment and study too large.

She made this comment to indicate the reasons why she was reducing the study to part-time.

A range of motives lay behind a return to paid work. Even one of the women who had not engaged in any paid work recognised the most usual benefit.

Like everybody, I could have done a lot more if I'd had gone to work 'cause we'd have had more money to spend.

This was a commonly cited reason for woman taking on some form of paid employment. Having a child created many dramatic changes for couples. Though financial issues were just one set, they were an important one. Indeed, money pressures brought about by one partner not working whilst they cared for children was the most commonly cited financial concern. The experiences of this woman were not unusual.

We had strong pressure on us as far as I was basically a full-time mum and any money that I was earning was just pennies and we were surviving on a single income and it wasn't a very high single income. It was a big adjustment for me because I was use to having my own money and all of a sudden I had none.

Given the critical nature of some of the couples' monetary situations, it is perhaps better to characterise financial motives in such circumstances as imperatives. Other motives of a more personal nature were also, less frequently, given.

Intellectually I would like to do something.

I wanted to get back into it so [the part-time job] was to get me back into the work.

¹⁴ Both are discussed in more detail in separate sections dedicated to these forms of paid work. Significant attention is paid to women's participation in these discussions.

I feel very boring actually. I'm not use to staying home this long. I've been working until I conceived him and then I left work.

This next woman experienced very strong personal drives to engage in some form of work, but with two small children and a new born baby, even she could not envisage how she could cope just yet.

To try and fit everything in at this stage I am not thinking about it. I get these urges when the babies are six months as you can tell. But it is diabolical at the moment.

Regardless of the motives, returning to work whilst caring for children demanded many considerations. The type and hours of work often were often conditioned by the needs of the children. So too was the timing of any engagement with paid work. Though most would wait longer than the woman just quoted (who got "urges" to work around six months), her comments signal the issue of children's age as an important marker for women's participation in paid work. One of the other women quoted above had a one year old baby at the time. Despite her desire to work at some point, she felt that neither she nor her child were ready at that time.

Say when he gets a little bit bigger. About three years old. Maybe when he is going to school. But not at the moment.

Whilst this woman indicates that a return to work can be considered at any point, as she and the next mother note, school was often the key indicator.

I decided that I was going back to work. She was getting close to going back to school.

Not only were children older but their attending school meant particular hours were available for work. Unfortunately, the last woman's plan were scuttled when she unexpectedly got pregnant. What this reminds us is that women often had to balance paid work with the needs of more than one child. Thus, if school was the marker, then it often meant that all the children had started school before work was considered. This is clear in the next case. Although she had begun to do some occasional relief teaching, this woman's return to regular work was conditioned on the circumstances of her youngest child.

I didn't work during the day much until my youngest went to school and then I went back, he went to school and I started doing a bit more work.

Like teaching, other work could match school hours. This woman could juggle her hours to suit the school day and had some flexibility to do any extra work at home.

I'm employed to do 3 days a week, but work between the hours of 9 to 3 and I do preparation at home, so its 3 days a week, I do marking and those sorts of things.

Despite the significance of school in relation to women working, many chose or were forced by circumstance to engage in paid work much earlier than this time. As will shortly be seen, a range of approaches were adopted to cope in these situations.

Having children at school did not automatically do away with all the problems. For many years, someone still had to be available when school finished. This usually

meant tailoring work to the school hours. The availability of her husband due to the shifts he worked meant this woman could work longer hours.

I started work in when our youngest started school. ... [My husband] worked shift work at the time so I was able to work full-time so there was someone home after school. ...[Then] the kids were playing up after school, [my husband's] shift had changed ...after school[the children were] without anyone at home, so initially I worked part-time.

School holidays and times when children were sick also needed to be managed. As the first woman quoted in this section made plain, this was almost always the woman's responsibility. Just as the above quote demonstrates that it was the woman who adjusted her work pattern when circumstances changed, so too women had to be available or make arrangements for these other times. In another case, the hours this woman worked were predicated on her husband being available on his days off (midweek) to collect the children from school. This had, he said, a detrimental impact on some casual work he did on his days off. As such, this was the only example of men's work being so affected and it had only minimal implications.

I had to juggle our times for the kids for when they came home from school. I had to juggle my second job. ... It gets pretty hard. I get behind.

Being self-employed in this casual work meant he had this flexibility and he went on to note that he usually catches up with the work at other times. His full-time job was not affected in any way and other arrangements were made when he was not on days off.

Whilst working and caring for children may have brought financial benefits, as has been hinted at it also brought its own set of demands and costs. The woman who had opted not to work acknowledged this.

We felt that me being at home, that was worth more than having money.

A number of issues had to be weighed up, therefore, in women considering taking on paid employment. Against the financial gains and any personal drives were beliefs about how children should be cared for.

We needed the money you know and I promised that I was going to be a full-time mother and by hook or by crook I was going to keep that on.

I haven't wanted to put my children into child care without me being around ... why should someone else look after my kids. ...I made that commitment a long time ago and I feel that I need to follow that through a bit more yet.

Often it seemed a difficult balancing act weighing such competing considerations.

Then there were the challenges of balancing paid and unpaid responsibilities. These were responded to in a number of ways. A few women elected to work hours when their partners were available to care for the children. This might mean weekend or evening work.

When I've taken jobs I've thought to myself, what job can I do that won't disturb the family life too much. That's why I'm working at night, working weekends is quite good, and that will ultimately in some way give a benefit

as well. ...I don't do anything if it's gonna disrupt life too much because the family comes first.

[My wife] has a small part-time job at the moment but the criteria for her is that she won't look at any jobs that will have an impact on the family. At the moment she is stacking shelves at the supermarket which happens in the evening when the kids are asleep.

Despite its attractions, weekend work meant that families had less time together, which was one reason for this woman's dislike of it.

It wasn't convenient but we needed the money so I had to do it.

Another issue was the narrower range of work available out of hours. For example, whereas many women got office and administrative work, worked in schools, or resumed professional occupations during the week, at weekends and in the evenings less skilled work tended to be more prominent.

If ordinary hours were worked then women employed all manner of strategies to provide care for their children. It has already been noted children attending school, and even pre-school, provided times when work could be taken. Others took on jobs and then arranged the care of their children around this. Often a mix occurred. As these quotes show, friends, family, and paid services were all utilised. The woman, who earlier talked of her six month "urges" to engage in paid work, used a range of approaches to childcare.

I would [sometimes] have to employ a baby sitter. With the hairdressing the children were in daycare and in the afternoon cause the hairdressing was a full day and in the afternoon they went to playcentre where I had friends that looked after them. So yes it was a lot of running around and a lot of organisation.

Flexibility in the workplace was often very helpful, as were considerate employers.

And I'm just probably fortunate I've got a job where I can juggle it a bit. ...Can juggle my days. ...When she was born I had about six weeks off and then I went back one day from 9 till 2.30 and I took her with me until she was about nine months old and then I put her in a Day Care play group, oh it was a Day Care private kindy one day a week until she was about two and then she went two days a week. And then when she was three and a half she'd started state kindy. So then I just worked when she was at stake kindy.

My youngest one he use to come with me when I first started there ... The women that I worked for made sure that my hours fitted around that because that was something that I wanted to keep doing.

Though less common, job sharing clearly offered some possibilities but depended on two people maintaining similar patterns of work.

When he was born, I didn't work at all for the first 12 months and then I jobbed shared with another friend who also had a baby about the same age for about 6 months or so. ...We are neighbours and our babies were the same age and so we would work half day each and swap children. Then I got involved like community Play Groups and stuff like that. ... I think my friend might have done more work and I think she wanted to do more and I didn't really want to do more and so we stopped the job sharing part.

What is also evident in these quotes is that working placed great demands on women in terms of managing both employment and the organisation of childcare. This couple found these costs too high and consequently they made a number of changes to the type and hours of employment the woman worked.

Well after [our daughter] was 2 she started work. It added a new dynamic. She worked, I worked, we both came home tired, daycare, really at the end of the day we looked at it and really we weren't much better off and [our daughter] was getting watched by somebody else and then when we had [the next baby] we decided that that is not what we want and we wanted a situation where she would stay home and look after the kids instead of work and so she went in and got some cleaning contracts and she would work on the weekends.

Though, as already pointed out, weekend work can have negative features, the way this business was developing the woman was becoming increasingly involved in supervising rather than cleaning. According to the husband, this seemed to signal more time for the family.

Given the difficulties that face women in trying to balance both paid and unpaid responsibilities, another woman also wondered whether she could capitalise on skills she had and develop a business that could provide a little income and a easier fit with her childcare needs. Given her background in early childhood education, this proved very realisable.

When my older boy I took him to a music group and I sought of liked some of the things that she was doing and I kept thinking there was a lot more that you could do and I kept thinking that it was something that I could take my children to.

Consequently she ran a pre-schooler music programme one morning a week. Another couple, as indicated in an earlier quote, had also developed self-employment opportunities as one way for the woman to cope with paid and unpaid responsibilities. Whilst initially she had been directly involved the cleaning, over time the business had developed so that she held a supervisory role which freed more time for the family.

Tied in with the process of engaging in some form of employment was negotiating the return to paid work. One of the older women who had been out of paid employment for many years recognised the difficulties and disadvantages she faced. So too did this woman who had been out of paid work for five years.

It's been a while since I've been doing any paid work. I'm just at the moment starting to look for paid work again so I suddenly realised how long it's been since I haven't been working.

Another woman, who had been out of paid employment for over eight years, was taking a very pragmatic approach to her return.

I was applying for jobs that I saw in the paper just to start getting in the swing of it ...thinking a few months done the line that that's what I was going to do. ...I contacted a number of agencies to see what sort of work there was.

However, an unexpected pregnancy thwarted her plans and she decided to remain home until the new baby was born.

Maternity leave proved to be a means to maintain employment opportunities. Of course this was not paid so it did not help people's financial difficulties and as it secured a job for a maximum of only twelve months it meant women had to return to work while their child was still quite young. All five of the women who reported utilising maternity leave returned before the year was up.

For those interviewed professional qualifications and previous experience seemed to be two keys to easing the return to work after a period caring for a child. Those who had worked in offices as secretarial, accounting and clerical staff seemed able to find similar work that suited their requirements. Similarly, a background in areas such as social work, teaching (all levels) and nursing proved valuable in transitioning back into some form of paid work. The last two offered a variety of options – relief or casual work, part-time and full-time positions, as well as limited contracts.

Whilst many of the women interviewed seemed to have qualifications or experience to turn to, those without these opted for less skilled activities such as cleaning or shop work. Occasionally these options were necessary regardless of a person's background in order to find work that suited their other commitments. As has been discussed in another section, some women engaged in some form of part-time education and training. This was either to better equip themselves for a return to paid work, to enhance existing qualifications, or to allow them to take a new direction. Often this was done on top of paid work and was in addition to their unpaid responsibilities. Combining these various responsibilities frequently created demanding combinations of work and study.

If it was decided that the woman would not work, financial pressures often meant that the alternative was for the husband to markedly increase their working hours to compensate. Even where women were bringing in a small extra income, men might still opt to work longer hours. This husband described what he had to do for the family to survive financially, and some of the effects.

My wife was pregnant and she wasn't able to work and I was working harder and harder. ...[I was working] 12 hours on a Saturday quite a bit because I wanted all the overtime. ...So my fuse was a bit shorter. ...It gets a bit strenuous but you can't have your cake and eat it too I guess. But I've been making more of an effort to get home by 5 or 6 at night and then I do my other work after 9.00 o'clock at night so I get to see the kids and my wife

In another case, the wife spoke of her reaction to her husband's increased commitment to work when their child was born – he was working about 70 hours per week.

I'm not very happy with the hours but it's necessary for us to be able to survive on the one wage.

Summary – Unpaid Domestic Work

Around half of the people interviewed reported a significant role in unpaid domestic work. This mostly involved care of children and the home, though occasionally no children were present in the household and sometimes roles with extended family were mentioned. Despite the high numbers involved, this was almost exclusively a

female domain. Whilst both parties in a relationship usually made some unpaid contribution to the running of a household and caring for children, it was women who identified this as their primary responsibility. This appeared to be accepted in all couples as the way it should be and was borne out by women's participation in other activities being premised on or significantly affected by their unpaid responsibilities. Even the four men who reported some reasonable involvement in unpaid work did not experience anywhere near this same level of impact.

As this suggests, unpaid work was not undertaken in isolation. Having primary responsibility for the care of children often drew women into voluntary work. For varying periods, almost all the women combined their unpaid and associated voluntary work with different forms of paid employment and, sometimes, education and training. Though financial pressures were commonly cited for women engaging in some form of paid work, personal motives were also prominent. Having to balance various responsibilities often meant that casual or part-time work and sometimes self-employment work was chosen. Any return to paid work could be problematic for women depending on the time away from employment, the type and hours of work they were seeking and their previous qualifications and experience. Shorter absences and better qualifications and experience seemed to enhance their chances. Some chose to undertake education and training to assist their return. Alternatively, to get work that suited their needs women took lower skilled jobs that offered the hours they were after. Maternity leave, though securing a job for a year, offered no income during that time and women opted to return sooner than twelve months. As often more than one child was involved, women had to manage a shifting involvement in other activities as they responded to the changing needs of their family and this frequently meant coping on more than one occasion with a return to paid work after time away.

The age of children often influenced the timing, level and nature of participation in other activities, especially paid work. Once they were attending daycare, for example, and school especially, women felt more able and available to engage in work or study. Of course, they still had to contend with sickness and holidays and they employed a range of strategies to ensure children were cared for at these times and when their work hours did not match the times children were at school and the like. This balancing of various responsibilities could therefore be quite challenging and demanding. Sometimes, to reduce these problems, women worked when their partners were available to care for children. Though solving one set of problems this reduced time that the family spent together. So, too, did the practise of men working increased hours to make up for financial shortfalls when the woman stopped work to care for children. It also reduced the time they had available to contribute to unpaid work.

(ii) Voluntary Work

Voluntary work can take on a range of forms and levels of commitment. Its make up and distribution amongst those interviewed is examined in this section. Given it was frequently associated with children, and often done by women, this section has some overlaps with the previous one on unpaid domestic work. Also considered is the relationship of voluntary work with other activities. It is worth noting that even though a specific inquiry was made about people's voluntary activities, some people may have considered that what they were or had been involved in, or the nature of that

involvement – transient or very limited participation for example – may not have been worth mentioning.

Just over a quarter of people who were profiled reported some voluntary involvement during the 10 year study period. Women made up over 60% of this group. This involvement often predated the beginning of the study period. It was not uncommon for it to continue across the entire 10 years under study. Though a couple of people were only involved for a few weeks or months, most people had a much longer involvement, with the average around eight years.

A range of activities were undertaken, over half (~58%) of which had some connection with people's children. Three quarters of these saw people having some sort of involvement at schools, pre-schools, playcentres and the like. This ranged from helping out, teacher aiding, fundraising, committee work, and one parent doing the gardening. Whilst the involvement of children often conditioned the participation of their parents in voluntary work, occasionally people carried on with these activities even though their children were no longer participating.

Yeah it was a family thing. I got involved with them when they were little and I ended up helping the First 11 at school and when they left school, it was just a natural progression. ...I'm still doing it too. ...I'm now just involved in club as administrator and sort of a committee man. ...a bit of refereeing and that sort of thing. ...I didn't leave it, they just grew up.

The remaining activities related to children were associated with sports. An assortment of other activities outside of those connected with children made up the remaining percentage of voluntary activities. Most were of a service nature, with church-related activities constituting a notable proportion.

The patterns of male and female participation show some interesting differences. Nearly 85% of the activities women were involved in were the result of their children's participation through either school or sports, particularly the former. On the other hand, voluntary participation in some way associated with their children made up only a third of men's activities. Men's participation in paid work most often prevented them from being involved in school activities; their more common role was coaching sports teams. Three times as many women as men were involved in more than one form of voluntary work across the ten year period. This was most often a seamless progression from one child-centred association to the next – say from playcentre to school, for example. Sometimes a sporting role was also added. In comparison, the two men with more than one involvement presented with very distinct and separate interests.

For most of those interviewed voluntary work had little connection with paid employment, aside from how the latter might affect participation in the former. Only four people described a stronger association. One young woman helped out on school holiday programmes and reported that occasionally she was a paid staff member rather than a volunteer. A Turkish immigrant would do interpreting on both a voluntary and paid basis. In two other cases, the involvement women had with their children's school helped them get part-time work. One of them got a position as a teacher aide whilst the other initially worked in the canteen before moving into this area as well. As one of them put it,

I used to be [at the school] all the time anyway so they decided they'd better pay me. Cause I'm up there all the time doing something.

Summary – Voluntary Work

Just over a quarter of those interviewed reported some participation in voluntary work with 60% of this group being female. Many people reported a fairly stable involvement with an activity or organisation. Whilst a range of activities and associations were identified, the majority were related in some way with children. Schools provided the bulk of these (through teacher aiding, volunteering, coaching, fund raising and committee work for example) and sporting clubs the balance. Women usually participated in voluntary work of this kind that involved their children. Two thirds of men, on the other hand, were involved in activities not related to their children. Compared to men, women were also more likely to have more than one voluntary role over the years and this usually was the result of children moving from pre-school to school and taking part in other activities. The predominance of women in voluntary work and the types of activities they were involved in is a reflection of their primary responsibilities towards childcare outlined in the previous section. In two cases this eventually lead to paid work for the women, but other than these instances voluntary work created few links to employment.

5. PAID WORK

Introduction

The generic term work has often been taken to imply only paid employment. However, as is now commonly accepted there are many types of work and an individual's pattern of working can combine many forms, each at different times or in various combinations at the same time. In employing transitions as the unit of analysis for this study one of the aims was to draw out and explore the diversity of work experiences that individuals had. That said, paid work is still a significant feature of many people's lives and in this study only two people had not been involved in any form of paid work for the entire study period.¹⁵ Their experiences have been outlined elsewhere in this report, in the sections on Unpaid Work and No Transitions. These two women had both been married and had assumed primary responsibility for caring for their children, prior to and throughout the study period. These children were all adults at the time of the interviews and all but one had left home. Neither woman anticipated any participation in paid work in the future. All the other people profiled, though they reported different levels of stability in terms of their employment, had spent varying lengths of time in some form of paid work during the study period. The following discussion regarding paid work is broken down according to different types: self-employment, full-time, part-time and casual work. The latter also includes a brief examination of informal paid work.

(i) Self-employment

Self-employment proved a popular option, with just over a fifth of all people who were profiled describing at least one period during the study decade when they worked this way. Only a quarter of these twenty people were women. In five cases people had two businesses. Whilst three involved separate instances of self-employment, in two of these people managed the twin enterprises at the same time. One man established two part-time businesses and the other pursued a sporadic involvement in property development alongside a growing retail and repair business. Couples often helped one another with businesses that one of them was self-employed in, and in three instances each partner had their own business. Two couples described their businesses as jointly run, and one of these couples managed half a dozen businesses between them across the ten year period. The types of enterprises that were undertaken are presented in Table 1.

¹⁵ A third woman also had no involvement in paid work. However, she had only been in the country for a few months and since her husband worked overseas and she had a young child to care for, it seemed unlikely she would consider paid work at present.

Lunchbars/Cafés x5	Distribution Service
Cleaning x3	Property Promotion Service
Sharemilking x2	Property Development
Engineering x2	Surfing repairs and supplies
Public Relations Company x2	Marine Supplies
Farm	Vending Machines
Musician (teaching, session, band work)	Fruit and Vegetable Supply Co.
Catering	Leather Processing
Secondhand Books shop	Property Maintenance
Stationery supplies	Music Therapy

Of the twenty nine enterprises that were in operation during the study period, over half (~58%) were still in business at the time of interview. Those that had ended had operated for between eight months and ten years, with an average life span of almost three and a half years. Though a couple of the businesses that were ongoing at the time of interview, had only been in existence for six months to a year, all the others were at least two years old. Well over half had been operating for five years or more and a quarter breached the ten year mark. The average for this group was just over seven years.

Two of these ongoing businesses do need some additional comment regarding their longevity. One, a property development company, grew out of the owner's residence in a small seaside community.

Ever since we first moved [here] which was about '72, we have also at various times bought properties ... and renovated them, or bought pieces of land and made a package out of it by building something on it and selling it on, so that was another thing we had ticking away on the side.

As is apparent, this was an intermittent business activity, carried on in the couple's spare time. In the other case, the man had been self-employed as a musician for over twelve years but in a range of ways (e.g. performing in a band, doing session and backing work, and teaching) and to varying degrees (casually, part-time and full-time). During this period there had also been a 14 month gap when he and his wife travelled overseas. At the time of interview, he had recently trained as a secondary school music teacher and was working in a school. However he still did casual work as a musician for pleasure and to supplement his income.

Whilst this man's self-employment as a professional musician was unpredictable and uncertain, like a couple of others – though in different areas – he worked this way in large part because of his talents and passion. Commonly, others had more pragmatic reasons or motives. Most were driven or prompted by a range of factors. Four of the women, who each had small children, chose self-employed activities in order to help fit paid work with their other responsibilities. Each was involved on a part-time basis.

I took [my older son] to a music group and I sought of liked some of the things that she was doing and I kept thinking there was a lot more that you could do and I kept thinking that it was something that I could take my children to.

As a result, this woman started and ran a pre-school music therapy class on a single morning per week. As well as looking to build on her background in early childhood

education, she was also mindful of longer term opportunities for when she would have more free time to work. The second woman and her husband had run a series of businesses. When they shifted from a rural area to Auckland, they purchased a café, and a vending machine company. Although the woman originally managed the café and her husband the vending machines, when they sold the former to purchase a bigger enterprise they swapped. As she had just become pregnant, this had particular benefits for the woman.

The vending machines were just sort of like another side-sort of income, part-time job, so one of us could do that and look after the kids.

The other two women ran cleaning businesses. In both cases they had initially been involved in the actual cleaning, but had gradually and deliberately grown the business so that they were now managing a small staff. The benefits were clearly described in one case by the husband.

Well after [our daughter] was 2 she started work. It added a new dynamic. She worked, I worked, we both came home tired. ...really, at the end of the day we looked at it and really we weren't much better off and [our daughter] was getting watched by somebody else and then when we had [the next baby] we decided that that is not what we want. ... we wanted a situation where she would stay home and look after the kids instead of work and so she went in and got some cleaning contracts and she would work on the weekends. But it allowed us time together and that is what she does now and she got some people working for her.

The motivations of the second woman resembled these to a point, whilst the progress of her business was remarkably similar.

We started a cleaning business because of the other children. We had no relatives in New Zealand. We didn't have anyone that I could leave, that I felt comfortable leaving the children with when they were so small and it suited my, I was here for the children at school times and I could be here although I was still cleaning. ...I did start off physical cleaning until I built up my client base but then after that I stepped back and did the paper work and I got someone else to do the donkey work. So it suited me to be at home, I am still working that is the main reason.

Like a few others, this women had also been motivated to engage in self-employment by having grown tired of the job she was in. This was either in relation to the work they did, or due to a lack of freedom and/or opportunity. A couple of people were also tired of the change and restructuring that characterised many organisations. Some people described an urge to test themselves in new circumstances. It was not uncommon for one of the motives to simply be the desire to try working for themselves. This man put it as simply as that.

I was working for someone and I wanted to work for myself.

Only a couple of people directly mentioned the hope that self-employment would see them financially better off. Even when mentioned, such as in the following example, the hopes were fairly modest.

We were getting a bit low on money then and everyone use to come and ask me would I come and help them and it just started getting a little bit to much, so I made it into a business.

This business involved maintenance work that the man did on days off from his full-time job.

In different ways, some people saw the emergence of their business as the result of circumstances. For one man, a hobby and interest opened up a modest business opportunity that grew quite well. He had been surfing for many years and then, together with his daughter, had become involved in coaching this sport.

From that it was really sort of how our little surf shop developed. Because people would learn to surf then say can you look out for a good surfboard for me, so that we found that we started you know looking for surfboards that would make good learning boards or, and, um, I always done my own ding repairs, so we just started doing repairs as well so it goes hand in hand with that, and it sort of from there... we've um, developed into making our own boards on the property, both long boards and short boards. ...Yeah, and we sell longboards, shortboards, bodyboards. We've hire boards that we hire out, wetsuits and flippers and we stock all the essentials that people need for surfing. ... Yeah, we've added a shop to the side of the garage. ...um, basically we're open 24 hours a day.

In contrast, this Turkish immigrant felt he had no other option but to start his own business. He had lived in New Zealand for a number of years but returned home after having marital difficulties. When he came back to this country to be with his sick son, he realised he would have to stay for a while, but could not get work. With few options and no money he started a small enterprise.

Zero finance ... and so I started selling vegetables to restaurants and that took me a year and a half.

This proved to be hard work but the company has grown considerably. It has become quite a large and profitable venture.

Though this man had no background in this business or industry even, others brought an array of knowledge, expertise, training and experience – their human capital – to the ventures they started. This could take two forms: general and specific (Brudel et al, 1992). The circumstances of one of those who were self-employed will help illustrate the difference. This man had retired after many years in the banking industry and deliberately opted to run a business that had nothing to do with this industry.

When I left, well I guess I have but when I left the bank in 96 I'd had enough of banking, I'd done it for 39 years, I didn't want to know about banking.

However, though he had no background in the catering industry he was still able to draw on a range of business skills and acumen – his general human capital - to run the company he bought. These were undoubtedly important to the moderate success he enjoyed. After a couple of years, he recognised that he could capitalise on all those years of in the banking industry – his specific human capital. Consequently he was selling the catering business and looking to start a new venture.

I've put [it] on the market and I am going to go back into mortgage like mortgage broking, well that's the thinking.

Other examples illustrate the use of specific human capital. There was the case of the qualified engineer with many years experience who set up two engineering businesses,

the second specialising in a very particular market. As this illustrates, highly specialised expertise can be very profitable.

I've specialised in the one area ...I built designed and mobile hot asphalt plant, it makes tar for the roads. And the company that specialises in making then actually gets me in now to do theirs and sort their problems out. And when all the other industries sort of are not getting as much work as they'd like to, ours has taken off. Its quite involved, branching in to the Australian market... tends to be a shortage of skilled people in that area

Similarly, a man with many years experience in public relations, started two companies in this field. Three colleagues¹⁶ pooled their particular skills and experience from different areas of expertise to establish their own business.

There are 3 partners in it. There is myself and the other 2 guys. One is a technician, the other is production and I'm sales and so we thought well the 3 of us go together and do our own thing.

Whilst in these two cases, this capital was substantial, it was sometimes more modest but still important. Such was the case with a couple of the women. One, who ran the cleaning business, based her decision to start this enterprise on some experience as a cleaner for a company. Similarly, another woman purchased and ran a lunchbar after working as an employee in one for a number of years. This helped her realise that she "could do this". This capital could also be gained more informally. The man who started his own surfing business gained most of his knowledge and skills over years being involved in the sport and trial-and-error doing his own board repairs.

In other cases, the person's human capital could be more generally useful. Though lacking specific knowledge, skills and experience in particular areas, some people were able to instead draw on their broader background. Many years as an accountant and business manager in a range of areas was the basis for one man to start two part-time ventures in areas where he saw opportunities, but in which he had no specific experience. Other felt able to make transitions into self-employment based on their background. For example, there was the man who had many years earlier managed a hotel with his wife and who swapped real estate for running a bookshop. Similarly, a couple who, having managed their own sharemilking operation and farm, took on a café when they moved to Auckland. Though they had no experience in this area, they were still able to draw on their success managing businesses in other areas and certain general skills they had developed as a result.

The first cafe was okay it seemed like something we could do, a good way to learn something and then after running it we really enjoyed it, really enjoyed the people and you know it seemed like quite a good job to do.

Whilst the accountant's businesses failed to take off, the couple enjoyed good success. The bookshop was proving to be an enjoyable and successful business, as well as a welcome change in lifestyle.

A small number of business were established to be run jointly by a couple. This was clearest in the case of the couple with numerous ventures. Their sharemilking, farm and cafes all required the involvement of both partners, though the amount of this varied. The nature of farming, according to the woman, was heavily dependent on the

¹⁶ Only one of whom was interviewed.

contribution of wives. However, for periods she reduced what she did on the farm and got work in town. The first café they bought was predominantly run by her with some help from her husband, who ran his own business supplying vending machines. This was reversed for the second café. As she had recently had a baby she was better able to manage the periodic re-stocking of the vending machines. The cleaning business run by one of the women was also initially a joint enterprise. Although the husband worked elsewhere fulltime he helped establish the business by also working with his wife for two years.

This couple had earlier had a cleaning franchise which he had predominantly run but which his wife had helped with. As distinct from a joint business, such a pattern where one party runs a business but receives varying degrees and types of help or support from their partner, was repeated in only a few cases. The woman who ran her own lunchbar, for instance, was also actively involved in what she clearly identified as her husband's marine supply business. Whilst not employed elsewhere, this was quite a formal arrangement, with her working regular hours and helping in various ways, mostly related to office work. Once she had her own business she naturally reduced her involvement though she still did his accounts in the evenings. Sometimes, the input could be hidden such as when partners provide greater care for the children to allow the other person to devote themselves more to the business. Given that the interviews were not targeted at self-employment, these aspects and the precise contributions of the partner were not always clearly and fully elicited.¹⁷

Although most people acknowledged that being self-employed could be hard work, most also enjoyed the freedom and challenges. Of course, this depended on the nature of the business. Take these comments from one of the interviewees talking about his experience of managing a country pub with his wife some years before the survey period.

Yeah, it was hard work, it was literally a 7 day week job. You were up at 8.00am; you were there till midnight everyday. ...Yeah, it was hard work, we never saw each other, you know. [My wife] would be upstairs and I would go upstairs at six o'clock, she'd have dinner ready for me, she would come down.

Compare this with his shift from selling real estate to running a small bookshop some years later.

It's fabulous, relaxed, no stress. I open at 9.00am, I close at 5.00pm, I come home and that's it. I don't have to go to the phone till 10.00 - 11.00 at night, it's just wonderful. And I've got into a nice routine, I like swimming so I go down to [the] pool every morning about 7.30am and swim and get down to the shop round about 8.30am. Go and have a coffee at the café and open the shop about quarter to nine.

Uncertainties regarding income and ongoing security were occasionally raised by people. Again this depended on the nature of the business and people's personal circumstances. For example, the sometimes erratic work that a musician's life entails was difficult but bearable whilst he was single or when his wife was working, but less

¹⁷ A working paper drawing on data from the Hawkes Bay region conceptualises this involvement of spouses or partner's in the other person's self-employment venture in terms of social capital in the family (Firkin, forthcoming).

so when he and his wife had a child. At this point he opted for the security of being an employee. Though confident of his abilities and the likely success of the business, this next man acknowledged that his setting up a venture with two other people caused his wife some anxieties.

[My wife] was sort of apprehensive. ...Apprehensive because you've got a stable income and you know that it comes in every week. Starting up on your own you've got to put in extra money and you don't know whether or not it is going to work or not and so she was sort of apprehensive but now she is okay.

Whilst a couple of people either kept their business as a sideline or were able to gradually build it up over time, despite the uncertainties most gave up other work and embarked full-time on their business. Indeed, virtually all the men came from full-time employment. During this time many had the income from a partner or spouse to rely on. The women tended to combine their self-employment with other responsibilities. Raising any necessary finance did not seem problematic for any of the group who were interviewed.

Whilst just over half the businesses people engaged in were ongoing at the time of interview, the remainder ended during the study period. For those who moved into paid employment following this closure, this appeared to be a relatively easy and seamless transition. More than half of the closures of one venture marked the beginning of another. In all but two of these the shift from one business to the other was immediate. Such changes were made as people looked for new challenges, better prospects or a business that they were more interested in. In the two instances where there was a break between businesses, the original closure was prompted by economic factors.

[I] went into partnership with a colleague of mine, we were riding the crest of '88 share market sort of wave of success, and then the whole thing crashed. ...So after the crash, what happened after then? '87 - '88 the full gravity of the situation hardly hit any body till '89, late '89, and bills weren't being paid and no more work was available so late 1989 I went back and worked for somebody else.

I wanted to see if I could make it by myself by running my own business. ...[but] the trading conditions got a little bit tougher at that stage.

This did not put the people concerned off trying again and their second attempts – both largely in exactly the same businesses – were more successful and ongoing. This was likely due, in part, to the experiences they had gained earlier. Though still experiencing difficult times in response to fluctuations in the economy, both businesses seemed more robust and likely to continue.

Economic conditions, in conjunction with other factors, lead to one of the other businesses being sold.

My partner had reached over 60 and he wanted to retire. We'd been hit by a few bad debts after the stock market crashed. Some of our clients were in the finance world, in property development and that, and we copped a few bad debts. ...the business really needed refinancing and modernising and so it was either refinance and modernise or sell up, get our money and do something else. ... we could have refinanced and gone on but under the circumstances we were getting a bit weary after 12 years. ...at his age we

decided to sell up ... we had to make a decision here, it was semi forced on us but not really.

Through foresight, one man managed to sell up before any major financial problems arose. By closely monitoring the business he had identified impending problems. In the case of two more enterprises – both belonging to the same man – they failed to become financially viable. The business one man entered into turned out to not be what he wanted to do and he soon gave up any active participation but continued to hold a financial interest. About a year later he relinquished this as well. All these people easily found paid employment, though the men who sold up either to avoid problems or because he found he disliked the business were both willing to initially accept part-time positions in order to be able to get other work and exit their businesses as soon as possible.

(ii) Full-time Work

Some parameters on the following discussion of full-time employment need to be established at the outset. In this section, full-time work is established by both the hours of work and the nature of the employment. Thus, a person employed casually, even if they work 40 hours or more, would not be considered in this section. Nor would some one working two casual or part-time jobs that also reached forty hours per week. Similarly, whilst those just discussed in the section on self-employment often reported being employed full-time in businesses, they are not included here. The transitions that involved paid full-time work were in the form of movement

- ◆ between full-time jobs
- ◆ into full-time employment from welfare, education and training, other paid and non-paid activities or a combination of these
 - this included an increase in hours if already in paid work
- ◆ out of full-time employment into welfare, education and training, other paid and unpaid activities or a combination of these
 - this included reducing one's hours if already in full-time paid work.

Whilst only two people had no experience of any form of paid work during the study period, a considerable number of people did not engage in any full-time employment during this time. However, it is necessary to make some qualifications about this group. For instance, four of these 22 people (~25% of all those profiled), though they hadn't been full-time employees had each worked full-time hours (and likely more) in their own businesses. One woman had only been in the country a short time when interviewed. She was caring for a child and, since her husband worked overseas, it was unlikely she would look for paid work. A couple of other immigrants had been here much longer but despite their desire and considerable efforts had still been unable to find full-time work. In one case this was because of registration problems with the Medical Council and this man worked part-time on top of his UEB. The other person had been unable to get work and eventually gave up the search to care for her ailing husband. When he died she went onto the Widows Benefit. Two students, one at school and another at polytech, had both had part-time jobs but understandably not full-time work. The remaining cases, which represent the bulk of this group,

comprised women who were primarily engaged in the care of children and who worked part-time or casually as opposed to full-time.

Of the nearly 75% of interviewees who worked full-time during the study period, a small group maintained very stable patterns. Three of the group are considered in the section on *No transitions* and another person who started their own business on top of their full-time job maintained full-time employment with the same employer for the entire period. About 10% of those interviewed managed to have an unbroken period of ten years full-time employment but made at least one, and up to three, changes in employer or job. They had a range of professional and trade backgrounds. Another person had retired eight years into the study period after working as a technical teacher for most of his working life.

The circumstances of transitions involving full-time work (and indeed any transition for that matter), were made up of a range of factors. Prominent factors that influenced transitions involving full-time work included:

- Childcare
 - Having and caring for children
- Change in personal/family circumstances
 - Children getting older
 - Other relatives needing care
 - Break up of a marriage or relationship¹⁸
- Redundancy, dismissal and the end of a contract
- Injury and sickness
- Relocation and travel
 - The “O.E.”
 - Relocation within N.Z and overseas for a variety of reasons (family, lifestyle, work opportunities etc)
- Prior to or following an education or training course
- Workplace factors
 - Changes to owners, employers, conditions, wages etc
 - Setting up own business
- Choice and preference
 - Seeking or being offered:
 - Improved pay and conditions
 - Better opportunities, promotion & advancement
 - Taking on a preferred type of work or desire for change of work

These factors, alone or in combination, were the principle reasons that people identified for giving up full-time work or reducing their hours, changing full-time jobs, and taking on full-time work or increasing their hours.

¹⁸ Even though this could be seen to fall into the childcare responsibilities category, it is specifically included as such an event can demand radical changes to people’s employment that would not be necessary if they were in a relationship and sharing care of a family.

Some simple analysis can be made about the nature of these moves. Of all the transitions that involved full-time work, about a fifth involved people moving between full-time jobs. These were overwhelmingly (just over 80%) the result of people choosing to do this. This was most prompted by a desire to improve pay, conditions or prospects but maintain the same type of work. Occasionally, unhappiness with the present workplace or employer lay behind the move, or people wanted to change the type of work they did. The balance of transitions between jobs were forced on people – in all but one case through redundancy – but in each case people immediately got further full-time employment.¹⁹

The remaining transitions were split fairly evenly between people transitioning out of or into full-time employment, though the former occurred slightly more frequently. Of those who moved out of full-time employment, about a fifth were women stopping work to have and care for children. Just over a third shifted to another form of paid employment, the majority changing to part-time or casual work. A whole array of reasons for this were given: for example, by choice, whilst studying, as a prelude to developing a business, following retirement, and as the only form of work a person could get after being laid off. The others who changed to another form of paid work embarked on self-employment, usually in the hope that it would bring more interesting, challenging and rewarding work. A small number of people left full-time work to travel or relocate, and to take up study. A couple of those doing courses had taken on full-time programmes as adults and, after many years in a particular job, were retraining. Whilst a few people voluntarily opted out of paid full-time work for a time, about 10% were forced out because of redundancy and could not immediately get work. Only about a third of these qualified for welfare.²⁰ A handful of others were forced onto welfare by sickness or injury.

The proportion of women who entered full-time work from caring for children was less than that which opted out of work for that purpose. Whilst the parameters of the study period might mean that the exit and re-entry of every case was not captured, the more likely interceding factor was that some preferred a return to part-time or casual given their additional responsibilities. Indeed half of the women who returned to full-time work having spent time caring for children had already engaged in these forms of work. Their children tended to be older. A few women returned directly to full-time employment despite having very young children. Besides the women with children, others who moved from part-time or casual to full-time work were looking for increased hours or had been unable to get full-time work until that point. A handful of people took on full-time work after the closure of their own business – half of these failed and the others were sold or taken over. The shift from some form of education and training into full-time work was made by almost a fifth of people in this group, that is nearly twice as many as made the reverse move, and is likely due to the proportion of school leavers finishing school or courses and taking up employment. A similar number of people got full-time employment after immigrating to this country, returning from extended travel, or internal relocations. The largest group, almost a quarter, made this transition after an enforced or voluntary period of unemployment.

¹⁹ The key here is immediately, that is these transitions involved no or only brief periods out of paid work. Those transitions, for example, where people were made redundant and received the UEB are clearly not included.

²⁰ Both groups are considered in the section on Welfare and Unemployment.

They were equally distributed between those receiving welfare and those not eligible for this.

(iii) Part-time Work

Not quite half the people profiled engaged in at least one episode of part-time work during the study period. Each episode could be characterised by one or more jobs – that is, someone might work two part-time jobs at the same time or move from one to another without a break. Half of this group had just the one episode and the one job during that time. People remained employed part-time for varying times between the whole ten year period and about three months. Although just over half of the part-time jobs lasted one year or less, more than a quarter were maintained for longer than two years. A majority of this last group exceeded five years duration. People worked between 3 and 35 hours per week part-time, though in a couple of cases the combination of two part-time jobs put the total hours at more than 40 per week. One man, though employed part-time, regularly averaged in excess of 50 hours per week with overtime. Around 60% of jobs were for 20 hours or less per week, with two thirds of these between 10 and 20 hours per week.

This form of employment was heavily skewed towards women's participation with nearly three quarters of the 41 people in this group being female. For over two-thirds of this group of women, their participation in this type of work was conditioned by their unpaid responsibilities, in particular, the care of children. This includes women who were in relationships and those caring for children as single parents. As was demonstrated in the section on Unpaid Work, it was virtually always women who adjusted their paid involvement to the fulfil childcare responsibilities within a family. That is, any participation in paid work would most often be primarily conditioned by these childcare commitments. Also apparent in that section were the predominantly financial, but often personal motives for taking on involvement in paid work. Thus, as a response to these motives and in order to balance both paid and unpaid activities, a number of women interviewed had undertaken part-time paid work. Though this form of work clearly offers some benefits in these regards, a range of difficulties arise or still persist. These, too, have been discussed at length in the earlier section.

Given that for many women this form of work had to be balanced with the care of children, it is not surprising that this group had higher numbers of people with more than one part-time job or episode of employment. Indeed the cases where people had the most numerous episodes or jobs belonged to women in this group. This was likely due to women having time away from work to have and look after young children, as well as adjusting or changing their hours of work according to the needs and ages of children. This was further complicated when more than one child was involved. Ironically, this group also had a small number of the more settled part-time employees. These women had been in single jobs for between five and ten years having established stable mechanisms and patterns for balancing their paid and unpaid responsibilities.

Only a tiny number of women moved from part-time to full-time work but, when this did occur, in almost all the cases the part-time job was closely or directly related to the full-time position and it occurred when the children were older. In other cases, even

when their children had reached an age when women could contemplate full-time employment, some of those interviewed chose to remain working part-time, though they often worked at least thirty hours per week. In a couple of cases, women moved from part-time work into part-time self-employment and, to further minimise the impact on their children, two of these women worked on weekends.

The other women and men who were engaged in part-time employment undertook this particular form of work for various reasons. Almost all the members of this group had only the one episode and job. The common image of people with a 'secondary' part-time job on top of their main employment was only seen in four cases, two of which involved people being self-employed and two with a full-time job. Two other people supplemented benefits with some part-time work. Another popular image, that of the student with a part-time job was a little more common. Following caring for children, this was the next most frequently cited reason that people gave for working part-time, though they only made up just over 12% of the whole group. This included a couple of teenaged students as well as three adults.

Though their circumstances varied, another small group had a common loose connection through using part-time work as an interim measure whilst they tried to get more settled, permanent and full-time employment. For a couple of men, this occurred after they gave up being self-employed. One man, after a period of unsuccessfully seeking full-time jobs, took part-time work whilst continuing his search. However, as he managed up to 50 hours per week in this position he became quite settled in it. After about a year the business failed but his boss helped him find a full-time permanent position. One of the people working part-time and receiving a benefit was also a recent immigrant. He had been forced into part-time work as a market researcher as the Medical Council would not recognise his qualification as a doctor. When not working he was studying for the examinations that he would have to take to get registered in this country. A woman also accepted a part-time position as she settled into a new part of the country after relocating with her husband due to his work. Later she got Having had some time off work following a serious accident, another woman was working part-time as she undertook a graduated return to full-time work. This was being managed by ACC.

(iv) Casual Work

Though not as commonly reported as part-time employment, casual work featured in 19 people's profiles – just over a fifth of all those interviewed. Almost half this group had two casual jobs during the study period. This type of employment displayed some strong similarities with the make up of part-time work: casual employment was skewed towards women's participation with over two thirds of this group being female, and more than 85% of the women did casual work whilst having primary responsibility for childcare. Men took on casual work to supplement other income whilst self-employed or in full-time work, as a source of income whilst not working or retired, and as an addition to the UEB. People held casual jobs for between one month and eight years. Almost 60% were maintained for up to 12 months; three quarters for two years or less. A diverse range of jobs were reported – for example catering, office work, nursing, teaching and childcare.

Unsurprisingly, financial motives lay behind most people's decision to engage in casual work. Given the flexibility inherent in this type of work, the choice of casual employment was often based on the need to fit in with other responsibilities. This is apparent in the cases of women with children. Two of them provided childcare from their homes on a casual basis. Though intermittent in quantity and frequency, it could still be demanding work.

I was finishing care with two children at 2.30 in the afternoon and then I was racing off to School to pick up the next lot at 3.00 which I had until 5.30 so it was like full-time work, 6 days a week. Quite draining. Emotionally draining rather than physically draining because there were always children to pick up and cuddle.

One of the self-employed men explained that his developing business took quite a bit of time and casual teaching offered him the ideal income source as he could pick and choose when to work, matching this with what was happening in his business. The choice of this type of work was sometimes based on the lack of other viable options. An immigrant with professional qualifications was forced to take any jobs he could find after failing to get suitable full-time work. This included part-time dishwashing and casual interpreting work.

Casual work proved an important part of one woman's profile. She was made redundant three times in the seven years after leaving school. Each time she was able to fall back on a casual job she had had since college. Her work in this varied, depending on circumstances, between just a few and 30 hours per week. She sometimes did this on top of a full-time job as well. When combined with her living at home for a couple of the episodes of redundancy, this job meant she could manage without going onto the UEB.

Illicit Work

Casual employment also provided the small number of illicit work opportunities that a handful of people acknowledged. For most these represented very intermittent efforts to generate a little extra income. The types of work included catering, childcare, housecleaning and gardening. Though they were also formally employed, two married women with children would occasionally do some 'under-the-counter' work. One of them also did this whilst receiving the DPB. Another woman, along with her husband, had to wait two years for a work permit after immigrating. Though they stayed with family – in return for which she contributed to the household's running – they still had no income apart from savings. Hence her periodic involvement with catering in the local ethnic community.

The struggle that life on a benefit can be, was very apparent in one case. Having recently returned from the UK with his wife and two children, this man spent eight months receiving the UEB while he sought work and did some training courses.

Yeah it was hard, very, very hard. It was hard but if you had too many bills, you couldn't cope. ...So I mean we didn't have, we're not extravagant and you've just got to budget right really. I mean it wasn't easy.

Consequently he felt that doing a little undeclared work was necessary for the well being of the household.

Now what also happened in that time, my brother had his own business, he was landscaping and I was working for him for cash which helped.

However, he also realised the risks that he was taking.

Then when I, it was near the end of the second course I went, because I'd been earning a fair amount of money cash, I thought I'd better get a job to get on the straight and narrow, because you'd get investigated after a while and if you get caught it was pretty serious.

As a result, he gave up the undeclared work not long before he got full-time employment.

The other person who worked this way failed to see either the risks or the inappropriateness of this strategy. He had had two lengthy periods of unemployment, during which time he received the UEB, in the five and a half years since he left school. He was beginning his third period when interviewed. The two episodes of unemployment had been broken by two periods of work totalling a couple of years. He displayed an ambivalent attitude to working – at one point wondering why he should be stuck in a factory all day. However, his involvement in illicit work of just this nature, seemed to be at odds with this view. What appeared to be the key was the low wages he earned as a result of having very few skills and no qualifications. Unfortunately, working 'under-the-counter' on top of his benefit meant that the cash he had in his hand could never match what he would command in the workplace as a formal employee.

There was a job what I was doing, I was helping in a carpet factory getting \$20 an hour, just working about 2 hours in a day, so I was taking home about \$200 a week plus it is now \$160 for the dole. I was getting \$360 week and yes it is just really easy.

This would make accepting any job without the benefit as a supplement very difficult. Though he stuck it out for a year, this seemed to be the reason he eventually gave up a legitimate factory job.

I would rather just do nothing than be at work and having – you know you just feel real, you just feel like you are losing out on life, being stuck in a factory.

Summary – Paid Employment

Paid work of various forms was considered in this section. Apart from two women, all the other people profiled had some experience of paid work in one form or another during the study period. Whilst about a quarter of those interviewed spent no time in full-time employment during the study period, the particular circumstances of some or the short time they had been in this country helped explain their inclusion in this group. The bulk of people in this category were women who were caring for children. Like others, they had been involved in casual and/or part-time paid work. Out of the 75% of interviewees who had been involved in full-time work, a small group displayed very stable patterns of employment.

About a fifth of transitions related to full-time work involved swapping one full-time job for another. Reasons for this mostly centred on people's desires to improve wages, conditions or prospects within the same or similar field. The remaining transitions were fairly evenly split between shifts out of or into full-time work. The former was often prompted by women stopping work to have and care for children. Other rationales for this included decisions to voluntarily change to other forms of paid work – such as self-employment or part-time work – or to stop work altogether. This might have been done so that a person could study, or for lifestyle reasons. Travel and relocation were also factors, and a number of people were forced out of full-time work by redundancy. The circumstances behind moves into full-time work included women returning after caring for children, often after engaging in other forms of paid work. Either out of choice or because they were unable to get full-time work, some had taken on casual or part-time paid work but moved into full-time jobs at a later point. Others made this move after a period of unemployment, usually through redundancy. The closure of their own business, the end of a course, and the return to or settlement in this country were also factors in some cases.

Quite a reasonable proportion of those interviewed tried some form of self-employment during the study period and this took a wide range of forms. Three quarters of this group were men. Whilst most businesses were run by individuals, partners and spouses were often involved in various ways and some businesses were jointly operated by couples. A small group had more than one business, either at the same time or at different points during the decade under study. Over half the ventures were still operating at the time of interview and many of these were well established and settled enterprises. In more than half the closures the decision to end a business was made in order to start a new one. Financial problems and personal choices were the major factors in other closures. When this occurred people seemed to find full-time employment fairly easily. Naturally a wide range of motives and reasons lay behind the decision to engage in some form of self-employment. All the women ran businesses in order to provide work that suited their other responsibilities. Men reported becoming self-employed to follow an interest or passion, to provide greater stimulation and challenge, and to test themselves. They virtually all became self-employed from full-time jobs. Financial rewards were seldom mentioned by people as a primary motive. Those who were self-employed reported that the experience meant hard work and often a degree of uncertainty, yet most seemed to enjoy the experience. Usually people's background, skills, qualifications and experience equipped them in some general and/or specific ways to undertake particular businesses. Occasionally self-employment emerged as the result of circumstances rather than deliberate planning and intention.

Almost half of those interviewed had at least one period of part-time work during the study period. Though fewer people were involved in casual work, this was undertaken by about a fifth of interviewees. People worked in a wide range of jobs and across a broad spread of hours of work in each of these types of work. Though the very nature of casual work makes it difficult to precisely determine the hours worked, around 60% of those engaged in part-time employment worked between three and twenty hours per week, with the majority of these people working between ten and twenty hours. Part-time and casual jobs were maintained for various periods. Just over half the part-time positions lasted between one and twelve months, whilst around 60% of casual jobs fell

into this time frame. Many part-time jobs were held for considerable periods, with over a quarter lasting more than two years, and the bulk of these for longer than five years.

Financial considerations lay behind most people's involvement in casual or part-time work, though personal motives were also reported. Because they fitted well with women's other responsibilities, in particular those involving childcare, both these forms of employment, and part-time in particular, were heavily skewed towards participation by females. Despite being useful in balancing involvement in the paid and unpaid domains, engaging in casual and part-time work, especially, still created considerable demands on women. Whilst men chose casual work in order to supplement other income sources, a much wider array of circumstances helped explain the use of part-time employment by people other than mothers.

Casual work also provided a small group of people with undeclared employment. Here, too, it was financial circumstances that prompted them to take the risk of doing under-the-counter work. In the majority of instances, this was to supplement a benefit. Most cases involved fairly limited or intermittent instances of this type of work and the amounts earned were quite small. However, one young man was quite active in supplementing his benefit this way.

6. OTHER TRANSITIONS

(i) *No Transitions*

Though this section is titled 'No Transitions', it considers not only those with unchanged work histories between 1987 and 1997, but also those who experienced relatively few or very minor changes during this time. It was quite unusual for any of those interviewed to have an entirely unchanged work history across the whole ten year period. Only two people, a man and a woman, would fit this description. The male ran his own marine business. This was something he had always wanted to do and, having been in business for about twelve years at the time of the interviews, he seemed both content and successful. The woman was involved in unpaid work in the home. She had given up paid employment at the birth of her first child devoting herself full-time to the care of the household. Part of her role involved voluntary work at the children's schools but this had dwindled as they got older. When interviewed all her children were adults and living away from home. As she described it, though she would have liked a job, various factors worked against this happening.

I was a housewife just at home and I was looking after the family that's all. ...Yes I suppose so, I probably by that time I'd probably thought I may like a small job but we decided that, I decided that it wasn't feasible for what I wanted and with [my husband] being a teacher, his hours were odd, being a teacher rather than just a 9 - 4, a technical teacher so um his hours were odd and also the school holidays, even though he worked at home, he was at home and I've always been at home for all the family so we just wanted to carry on that way.

It's unclear why her husband's job made things so difficult. As with so many couples it was a matter of weighing up priorities.

Like everybody, I could have done a lot more if I'd had gone to work 'cause we'd have had more money to spend but we felt that me being at home, that was worth more than having money.

Though their roles remained largely the same, another four people had some changes to their profiles. At the very minor end of the scale is another woman who had given up paid work when she had her first child. As well as four children she also provided care for elderly relatives. When her youngest started secondary school she began considering a return to paid work. However she realised that this would be difficult having been out of the paid workforce for over 25 years and with no formal qualifications. Friends encouraged her to start some continuing education courses at university and, despite her initial apprehensions, she had been doing two papers a year ever since. Her children were supportive, as was her husband who had also taken on more domestic duties since retiring from the Police. Without any pressure to take on paid work, she had changed her plans slightly.

Well if I get this degree finished ... I would probably be about 60. ...I would have then had a better education, um I might be able to help more in a voluntary capacity.

The other three people were all men and each was employed full-time. Though they worked for the same employer throughout the study period, each had some fairly

substantial changes to the positions they held or the work they did. Take the rather extreme case of one man who had been with a joinery company for 36 years. During that time he reckoned on having held between 20 and 40 different jobs within the firm. From lowly beginnings he rose to the top of the company.

I started off an Apprentice Joiner. ...Started sweeping the floors, cleaning the toilets, making the cups of tea, things that apprentice's don't do nowTwo years later I went glazing for six months. ...Yeah, then I went 18 months building. Came back into the factory, we started commercial joinery. So we did that and got onto finger jointing and moulding. I took over production, that's when I did locksmith then, growing. I set up the con course, another factory, set that all up, came back into production. Five years as General Manager, now I'm doing development work. ...And a lot of other things in between that.

The key for him was the willingness of the company to let him shift jobs; had he been made to stick to one role he would never have stayed. It was a two way street though.

I've had my freedom there. ...I've been looked after. ... I've got talents and they exploited them, well ...made the best of them.

Another of the men made far fewer changes, but through a willingness to invest in education he had risen to a senior level on the production side of the company he worked for. He had immigrated from the UK at the start of the study period, having organised a job before arriving in New Zealand. This was in the same line of work – quality control in the engineering/manufacturing industry – though he had to update his qualifications. Like the previous case he felt he was well paid but that this reflected his willingness to train and work hard.

I am probably one of the highest paid guys there apart from the actual management. So I suppose I have done ok. I have put some effort into it, going to college and I have been prepared to do all the things.

Though reasonably content, he had thought about a change of job. However, against the prospects that a change offered, there would likely be losses in terms of pay, benefits, holidays and conditions. He also felt that such major shifts were more difficult as people got older. Consequently he remained employed at the same workplace for the whole ten year period. Given that the problems he saw regarding his age would not diminish, he was likely to may remain there longer still.

Age was also an issue for the last man in this group, though in a slightly different context. When interviewed he had been in the Air Force for 16 years, initially as a fitter and turner – a trade he learnt in the service – and then for the last seven years as helicopter aircrew.

I was enjoying the Air Force but, um, getting a bit bored with what I was doing, um, wanted a change.

Few employers could provide such a radical change within the same 'workplace'. Though he really enjoyed this role he realised that service life and crewing helicopters, in particular, was difficult for families. People considering leaving the services face difficult decisions, however.

It gets harder and harder for you as an individual to make a break and um get a job beyond the age of 40. ...[Can you] retrain and have an employer who would want to take you on? So you're looking at being self-employed

more than re-employed. ...Ah yes I've got that big hurdle to come ... I don't really want to stay in the Air Force beyond 20 years. It's too late, getting too late. You have to look at being self-employed or do something rather menial. ...It's a great job ... but you can't make a full career out of it ... so I've got to look at something that will take me through until retirement.

Thus, though his work pattern had been fairly stable, when interviewed he was beginning to consider what future options he had outside the Air Force that utilised the skills he had developed.

A larger group of those who were interviewed described only one transition in the ten year period. A wide range of changes were undertaken by these fourteen people (eight men, six women). For four people this marked a move between jobs. Only one of them continued in the same sort of work. He had immigrated from the Philippines at the start of the study period and was keen to get work as soon as possible so that his wife and family could join him. With no pre-arranged work he 'cold-called' companies soon after arriving and quickly got a position. His particular qualifications and wide experience were obviously highly sort after. After about nine months, having established himself and his family, he began looking at other jobs. He found one that offered more opportunities and better remuneration, and this employer also helped him with his residency application. These conditions plus the availability of ongoing training all contributed to him feeling very settled in this job.

The other three people who changed jobs all altered the type of work they were doing. One man went from managing an auto spare part business to driving a concrete delivery truck. Another gave up being a bank manager to run his own business. Despite the stability that his profile implies, he had experienced a significant amount of change. Though he had approved of, survived, and even prospered under the radical and frequent restructuring his bank went through – from being state owned to privatised – he gradually tired of the constant change and uncertainty. After so long with the industry he also wanted a break from banking or any related activity and so bought a catering business. This was on the market at the time he was interviewed and having had a few years away from the industry he now planned to utilise his talents and knowledge.

When I left the Bank in 96 I'd had enough of banking, I'd done it for 39 years, I didn't want to know about banking I feel that ... although I've [now] put [the catering business]t on the market and I am going to go back into mortgage like mortgage broking, well that's the thinking.

The only woman also seemed motivated by having had enough of a particular job and she left to work as a real estate salesperson. Her husband described this process.

She really was a bit tired of doing the same old, she was becoming the dragon in the office. You know you do though, and she just thought she'd like a change. She could do her job standing on her head and really it was becoming to be a bit of a bore.

As he was already established and successful in this industry he was able to help her make the transition. She very quickly became successful.

Another subset of people with just the single transition were women who were mothers. One moved out of full-time paid work at the birth of a child. She did this as soon as she married in order to care for a step son. Then she and her husband had their own child and she was unwilling to contemplate paid work till this child was at school. With both children she was heavily involved in voluntary work at their schools as well as through her church. Just prior to being interviewed she had begun readying herself for re-engaging in paid work of some sort when she unexpectedly became pregnant and so did not feel the move was worthwhile.

The single transition made by the other women was just this move. Though the time and nature of the work varied, three of them engaged in part-time work on top of their unpaid responsibilities. They had combined both paid and unpaid work for between three and six years. One woman, a kindergarten teacher, went back to teaching once the youngest of her two daughters was at school. She had just six weeks off work at the birth of another child and was able to take the baby with her initially and then used daycare. Her motivations seemed predominantly personal though she acknowledged the additional income would provide for the extras they wanted their children to have. Personal motives also seemed to drive a similar transition with another woman who got part-time work when her youngest was aged three years. Reflecting a common pattern the third woman waited till her youngest child was at school. She had been heavily involved in voluntary work at the children's school and this became a part-time paid position for her.

The remaining people had a whole range of single transitions. One woman, who had been working as a nurse part-time for two years since arriving in the country with her husband, took the opportunity to work full-time when a position became available. After 13 years working on the wharf one man was made redundant just prior to being interviewed. Another man retired. Two people got extra casual employment on top of other paid work. One of them turned a hobby helping people with property maintenance into a small business on his days off from being a fire-fighter. The two remaining people had moves associated with education and training. One left school to study at polytech and took on a part-time job as well. The other was made redundant from Telecom after many years service and decided to pursue a long held desire to study science at university. He was in his last year when interviewed.

Summary – No Transitions

The study period covers a fairly volatile time in terms of the labour market in this country. Despite this, a little under a quarter (~22.5%) of those profiled maintained very stable work histories with, at most, only one major change. For those in paid work, the satisfaction they gained in different ways from their work appeared important for maintaining this stability. The role women had in caring for children had, in different ways, some impact on the changes – or lack thereof – that some made. It was not uncommon for them to wait for their children to be at school before considering a return to work. This meant five years (or longer if there were more than one child) without a substantive change to their profile. Alternatively, the type and hours of employment were often built around the children's needs meaning that women were reluctant to make changes if they found suitable work. Age proved to be

an interesting and influential factor in conditioning change or stability in three people's profiles.²¹

(ii) Relocations

Though it covers people in a wide range of circumstances, this section has been rather pragmatically termed "Relocations" since it deals with those who made transitions based on travel. They have been grouped into three categories: people who immigrated to New Zealand; those who moved within this country; and others who travelled away from New Zealand for extended periods. The last group includes people whose intention was purely to travel, as in the 'O.E.', and those who left this country with the intention of settling overseas long term. Obviously, the interviews captured those who had returned during the study period. Whilst some had also left during this time, others had departed prior to 1987.

(a) Immigration

In fourteen households people reported immigrating to New Zealand during the study period. Just two from this group were single when they made this move. Those who had immigrated had been in the country between one and nine years. Whilst a great deal could be written about the experiences of this group, given the focus of this study on work and transitions, the discussion here will be limited to these issues. Amongst the many reasons given for immigrating, some people hoped that New Zealand would offer better work opportunities.

People in only two cases had arranged work before their arrival in the country. One of these families had only been in New Zealand for a couple of years when interviewed. They had immigrated after the father/husband had organised a job through a construction company that had been recruiting in the Cook Islands. He had extensive experience in this industry. On arrival he found the work role, wages and conditions less than what was promised but reluctantly accepted these in order to get settled. Just over a year after arriving, the company he worked for closed. He managed to quickly find other work but the wages and conditions were even worse. Despite this, he felt that life in New Zealand still offered his family a great deal. They coped by budgeting very strictly. However, after 23 years in the construction industry he was somewhat tired of doing this type of work, and believed it was a hard and dangerous life for an older man. Consequently, he was considering other work options.

In the other case, the couple had been considering immigrating somewhere for quite a long time and had made extensive use of their networks to make their choice.

The company I worked for in England, three or four guys had come out here over a period of time, think one of them's sister lived here, so he went out here and liked it and said oh it is quite nice out here and then somebody else came – so that was sort of like the thing. When we thought about actually going somewhere else and . . . Australia, New Zealand or Canada, even South Africa and the guy who we knew who lived in South Africa at the time was talking about . . . his daughter lived in Gisborne at the time

²¹ This is discussed as a more general theme in the opening section of this paper.

and he said oh you don't want to go to South Africa . . . [He was] really keen on going to New Zealand – sounds pretty good.

However, to be allowed to immigrate the husband had to have work organised, so he began searching the 'New Zealand News' and was eventually successful in getting a job in his specialised field of quality assurance. They came to New Zealand at the start of the survey period and he has remained with the same employer ever since. He was one of the people who are discussed in the section on *No Transitions*.

All but three of the remaining cases can be clearly seen as having had no work arranged before their arrival. These exceptions are dealt with first. One involves a family from Hong Kong. The man continues to run a business from there whilst his wife and daughter live here. He commutes to New Zealand two or three times a year. Then there is a case where only the teenage son was interviewed and no details regarding the family's circumstances were elicited. Finally, the third case involves a single parent who travelled from the UK to be closer to family when her marriage broke up. She had not intended to work as she was caring for her daughter, though she did get a part-time job for a short time before returning to the UK after five years in this country. She returned to New Zealand a couple of years later to resettle with her second husband who worked overseas much of the time.

Of the nine households without prearranged work, it is interesting to consider the outcomes. In one, an older couple had to wait some time for work permits, having originally intended to only visit family. They couldn't work during that two year wait but the wife felt they made a contribution to their extended family.

I am looking after the children, they got two children and one is going kindy, the small one, I am taking him to kindy, just helping my daughter because I am staying there, cooking the food.

Once their permits were approved the husband took ill and couldn't work, and the wife was unable to get a job. Age was a major factor, she felt, in employers not being interested in taking her on. She was eligible for and received the UEB whilst looking. Eventually she had to devote herself to caring for her husband until his death, and they received a sickness benefit during this time. Following this she transferred to a widow's benefit and gave up her work search as she herself had become ill.

In half the remaining eight households, people got work almost immediately upon arrival. This includes both the husband and wife in two couples. Two others took a little longer: one man elected to take part-time work as a stop gap, though he worked long hours in this job despite the designation of it as less than full-time; the second man struggled to find work but managed after a couple of months. In another two cases people eventually engaged in paid work, but it was vastly different from what they had been doing in their country of origin. A doctor from Bangladesh was unable to register here despite gaining sufficient points to qualify for immigration. This was due to an incompatibility between immigration regulations and Medical Council rules. Naturally he was very upset by what had happened to him and many others. Though he was working towards obtaining his New Zealand registration it is a long, difficult and expensive process. He qualified for the UEB and supplemented this, after eighteen months, with part-time work as a market researcher. He could not manage any full-time work as this would not allow him to adequately prepare for his registration examinations. The job allowed him to improve his English as well. In the other case, a

couple who had immigrated from China had also experienced problems getting work. The husband had begun a polytech course in engineering and worked part-time as a storeman. His wife, a tax accountant in China, had been so keen to work she took a part-time job in a dry-cleaning business for a time before giving it up to start an English language course. She also cared for their daughter. Language difficulties were one reason she gave for not being able to contemplate similar work in this country; she also thought that business practises would likely be quite different.

Whilst the people who easily or eventually got work in their fields had substantial qualifications and experience, (nursing, engineering of various sorts, cabinet making, building, and sales), these didn't necessarily guarantee work and other factors seemed quite influential. One of the men who got work after a couple of months talked about the types of difficulties that confronted him.

We came at the worst time in 1990. ... I never thought it was a job to get a job. It was quite depressing. I was new and you know there were a lot of Telecom laid off and so I'm competing against them and their mates and their knowledge and things like that because I was strictly right off the boat you could say and I didn't have that network which is very, very vital.

This was the first time he had been unemployed, which compounded his situation. Comments from the wife of another man illustrate how contacts already in this country can help make up for some of these deficiencies.

He didn't need to search for the job actually. [He got it] through a friend who is a builder also and he got him in to what he is doing now

Though the wife of the first man had family in this country, this did not provide the kinds of networks that he needed and he simply had to put a lot of effort into getting a job. He eventually found work he was qualified for, despite getting quite desperate at one stage.

I was getting to the point where I would have taken anything anyway. I was going to get me a lawn mowing round.

Like him, most people in his position used all sorts of approaches: they scanned newspapers, cold-called companies, used private placement agencies and enrolled with the New Zealand Employment Service. So keen was one man that he earned the ire of the NZES.

I knocked on the doors of all the employment offices and I was told even there you are not supposed to be here. Your employment office is Three Kings ...[I] lived in Royal Oak.

His persistence paid off eventually, however, when he got a part-time position.

Such persistence was again useful when he, like another of this group, was laid off. Both managed to find work quite quickly. In reinforcement of a point just made, one of them noted that the networks and contacts he had built up whilst working in the country had made subsequent transitions easier. The others who immigrated were able to maintain very stable employment which, for a couple of them, spanned virtually the entire ten year study period.

(b) Extended Travel and Emigration

A number of people travelled overseas during the study period, either for an extended period or with the intention of permanently settling in another country. They were out of New Zealand for between two and eight years. The former category is made up of people whose time out of New Zealand was lengthy but prompted by travel, study or work rather than resettlement. Each always intended to return. Despite their intentions, those who fitted into the second category returned for a variety of reasons. These two couples and a young woman are considered first.

One couple and a single woman made up those who left and returned during the study period. The couple together with their 21 year old daughter went to the United States. Each gave up full-time jobs with the intention of retiring in America. They had become disillusioned with New Zealand's political, economic and social directions. However, after a year they decided they didn't like where they had settled and so returned. Although both were happy to not work back in New Zealand, the husband was enticed back into his old job as a security guard. Initially he took this on part-time and looked after the home, but soon he was working full-time. So too was his wife who was also offered her old job back as soon as her employers heard she had returned. The single woman had planned to live and work in Australia after completing her hairdressing apprenticeship. Her sister lived there and she had arranged a job. However, she got very homesick and returned after only five months. Once back, she decided not to return to hairdressing as she didn't really enjoy this type of work. Instead she enrolled in a refresher course in office skills and got work after a couple of weeks.

Another couple with two young children left New Zealand prior to the study period to settle in Scotland, where the woman originally came from. Like the older couple discussed above, this family decided to emigrate because of concerns about the direction the country was taking. They were away for two and a half years. However they decided to return after becoming increasingly concerned about their own and their children's prospects in the UK, as the economy and employment situation there was quite bleak. Initially they wondered if they had made the right move as the husband could not get work for about eight months. Over this period he did a little under-the-counter gardening work to supplement the UEB benefit. He willingly did training courses hoping to equip himself with valuable computing skills, but became desperate and despondent when no work eventuated.

I came down for an interview, got taken on and I mean, I said to the person I'd done these computer courses, I need the chance to use these skills and even if you want to take me on for a week and don't pay me, I'd just prove myself 'cause I just wanted to get that job. I was quite determined. She took me on anyway but she didn't pay me for the first week, that's handy and yeah the rest is history really, I'm still here.

He gradually worked his way up through the ranks to hold a series of management positions. Though he would now like a change he feels somewhat tied to the job because of family and financial commitments.

Four couples, three men and one woman made up the group who left New Zealand for extended periods to travel overseas. This was prompted by a variety of reasons. Two of the men had left prior to the study period, though they returned under very different

circumstances. One man had just come back from Papua New Guinea where he had been employed on a short-term contract as an engineer in 1987. It was hard work in difficult conditions but the money was excellent. Upon his return he easily got work in his field and the rest of the study period was filled with fairly frequent changes involving either full-time employment, self-employment or part-time work plus full-time study, all related to his engineering background. The second man returned from a two year stint of church missionary work in Australia just over a year into the study period. As he had gone into this straight from secondary school, he immediately began a university based business degree. He went on to do a masters degree, though he had some problems completing this. Because of financial difficulties he had got a full-time job and intended to study part-time. However, his workplace never kept to the study agreement and he was grateful to a lecturer who organised part-time work at the university that allowed him to resume full-time study. Once he completed this he went on to a job in the marketing field, gaining some promotion and shifting to Auckland over the next four and a half years. His church involvement continued to be a significant feature of his life.

One of the couples made the traditional O.E. to the UK and Europe during the study period. They lived and worked there for about 14 months before returning home. As she was pregnant at this time, the wife only worked casually once they were back. Having qualified as a nurse and midwife before they left, she was easily able to get work. Her husband was a self-employed, freelance musician. With the prospect of a baby he opted to take on more predictable work teaching music privately rather than the uncertainty of band and session work. A few years later he opted to train as a secondary school teacher to add another layer of security to his employment. The wife describes the change.

The practicality of the musician work comes and goes, its seasonal so it's quite hard to budget in some ways. ...[So] he went to Teachers' College, which is just wonderful. ...He finds that very fulfilling and he's very gifted. ...I was very, very happy to see him doing what really made him happy. ...Teaching will be far more stable in salary.

He still kept up occasional casual work in the music industry.

About a year after getting married a second couple spent twelve months working and travelling in Australia and Samoa. The husband had taken a year's leave of absence from the Navy and the wife had resigned from a social work position. They both worked in Australia for about nine months before having an extended holiday with family in Samoa. This had only ever been planned as a year long trip. Though the husband returned to the Navy for a number of years, he would later embark on theological training. His wife was pregnant upon their return. She spent the ensuing years oscillating between periods of paid work as a social worker and time at home with the children.

One man who was interviewed, together with his partner, embarked every few years on travel odysseys of twelve months or so. This usually meant selling up their home and living off the proceeds. Once they returned they would gradually build up their resources again. He was fortunate to be a very well trained, skilled and respected designer in the footwear industry, and he was readily re-employed by one company each time he returned. Despite the stability and certainty that his background provided, near the end of the study period he had embarked on a radical career change, and

began working as a caregiver in a rest home. This occurred after a period of self-employment running a café. Finding that he didn't like this type of work he moved on but remained a financial partner for a year.

The last couple relocated to Australia when the husband was transferred by his company. For him this was a return home having settled in this country with his New Zealand born wife in 1984. They spent three and a half years in Australia – 18 months in Sydney and the balance in Brisbane. He held senior posts in both locations, managing various aspects of the company's operations. His wife had been looking after the children prior to the move and she did not resume paid work till after they returned to New Zealand. This return was prompted by both personal and business reasons – the woman was keen to come back and her husband was offered an opportunity based in New Zealand but looking after the company's interests in North America and Asia.

Given the current interest in what is termed the “knowledge economy” and concerns in this country over the “brain drain”, the single woman's case is interesting to consider. She had studied at university in New Zealand to Masters level and then obtained a scholarship to complete her PhD in the United States. She realised she would have to study and work overseas as no work in her specialist area of bio-technology existed in this country. To return to New Zealand would have meant doing other, less specialised and ground-breaking, work. After graduating she immediately got work with a company that assisted her with remaining in the States due to her particular skills.

America, where I went to study, has a lot of bio-technology companies ... it is at the forefront of what had I trained in. ...So when I left [university] and got the job, I was still learning, if you like, and doing what I really wanted to do and I can't do that in New Zealand.

After a couple of years she was promoted and transferred with the company to another state. However, the business's direction was changing to an area that she was far less interested in. When her long-standing personal relationship ended she decided to make a break and return to New Zealand. Knowing she wouldn't be able to get work in this country that was anything like what she had been involved in overseas, she made a difficult decision and trained as a secondary teacher upon her return. She was still undecided if it was the right move when interviewed, having only taught for a couple of years at that point. Even with three other teachers in her family she was still surprised at the long hours, heavy load of administrative work, and the low pay compared to her previous role.

Finally, there is the case of an immigrant from Turkey, who arrived in this country in 1982. Like others in his position he struggled to get his professional and technical qualifications, and associated experience recognised. As a consequence, he had to make do with largely unskilled work.

Firstly when I arrived of course I couldn't get a job and it was hard work for first time. I was doing under the table at restaurants. ...as dishwasher. After that I worked a couple of days in hotels and cleaned the floors. ...I wanted to find a better job. ... Later on with I started with my first proper job at a plastic factory. ... I was a process worker basically. ...plastic sheets and welding them together later on. ... I worked there a whole year

and after that I find my other job in a similar job in a plastic factory but the pay was better.

Eventually he was able to use some of his skills as a government researcher. Around the middle of the study period he began to have marital difficulties and elected to return to Turkey where he lived and worked for a year. He wasn't sure how long he would have remained away had his son not taken ill. Again, upon his return to New Zealand, he ran into problems getting suitable work. This time he took a gamble and set up a small business supplying vegetables to restaurants. Though he had little backing he worked hard and the business gradually expanded. It had moved throughout the North Island and he was contemplating expanding to the South Island at the time of interview.

(c) Domestic Relocations

Ten people in eight households relocated within New Zealand during the study period. Whilst most people only made one such move, one man made four shifts in the decade under study and a few of others moved twice. The motivations for these shifts were fairly evenly split between personal and work related reasons. The former covered lifestyle and personal choices. One couple, for example, wanted to send their child to a particular type of school that was only available in Auckland. Though they came from a farming background they were keen to live in an urban setting and seemed to adapt quite easily. Whilst they had little experience in other forms of employment, they were willing to take a gamble and purchased two businesses that they could each run. These seemed quite successful. Of the other two people in this category, one had work arranged before he made the move, and the other woman shifted at the end of a contract. Although she had no job, the company she had been involved with in Wellington gave her work once she was settled.

Another couple seemed to combine personal and work reasons in their shifts. Soon after leaving school, the woman went on a working holiday to Queenstown with a friend. After six months as a maid in a hotel she had decided to train as a nurse and returned to the Manawatu. She met her future husband at university and after they had graduated they both moved to Auckland. This seemed to be motivated in part by individual preference and also by work prospects.

Those shifts that were clearly work orientated can be divided into two groups. Firstly there were company transfers. Whilst one man had little choice the others seemed to elect to make the moves to improve their conditions or status. In one case a man working in the computing industry made three moves across five years with his company, each time to pursue a promotion or what he considered an important opportunity. Another person had been employed in his company's Tokoroa office but felt that he had few prospects if he remained there.

[I was] trying to get a promotion but it was very hard to get recognised down in Tokoroa when the head office was in Auckland. It took a little while but eventually I got my promotion. ...So we went to Auckland ...even though I got a \$15,000 pay increase but my spending power didn't increase at all but it was really I wanted the recognition that the job that I was doing was important.

This move appeared to have paid off in a number of ways but he continued to carefully evaluate his future options inside and outside the company.

The other type of work related relocations were not the result of company instigated transfers. In the above case the man had originally moved from Christchurch to Tokoroa for his initial job with the company whilst the last move the person in the computing industry made was to change companies and return to Auckland. In another case the man involved obtained an engineering contract for his fledgling business that required him to live and work in Wellington for a year.

Although almost half the shifts were undertaken by people when they were single, the remainder involved couples. In two cases – the couple who moved from farming in the Waikato to self-employment in Auckland, and the couple who shifted to Auckland at the end of their studies – both partners were active in the shift. In the others the shift was driven by the male and seemed to be accepted by the female partner who had to adapt accordingly. The last two shifts the man in the computer industry made were while he was married. His wife was also in this industry and on the first occasion she went to work for him. Later she had her own consultancy business that she could run wherever they were located. The wife of the man who seemed to have little choice in being transferred was herself in part-time work when this happened. Her employer arranged for her to continue doing these accounts ‘by post’ for a time, but she found this increasingly difficult to manage and so found other work. Finally, in the case of the man who got work in Tokoroa and then transferred to Auckland, his wife was not in paid work and looking after their children throughout this period.

Summary – Relocations

This section has provided discussion on people who, during the study period, immigrated to this country, travelled overseas for extended periods, or relocated within New Zealand. It also considered people who emigrated from New Zealand to settle elsewhere but returned after a time. Though the return had to occur during the decade under study, the departure may have been at other times.

People in a fifth of households indicated had immigrated to New Zealand during the study period. Whilst work was not a consideration in three cases, better employment prospects or opportunities alongside a range of other factors were motives for others to settle in this country. Despite the prominence of work issues, only two people had jobs arranged before they arrived. As one case illustrated, even this pre-arranged work was sometimes not without its problems. Although all but two of those looking for full-time employment eventually found it, they had a range of experiences. For about half of the remaining group this was fairly easy, but two took some time to get jobs. Another pair struggled for various reasons although they did take on some form of work. Except for these last two, the others were able to maintain fairly settled and continuous employment. All showed a keenness to work and were very active in trying to find employment. Although qualifications and experience were very useful in relation to getting work, they provided no guarantees.

People in eleven households left New Zealand with the intention of either settling elsewhere or spending an extended period outside of the country. The latter might

have been prompted by travel, work or study and these people always intended to return. They made up nearly three quarters of these cases. Whilst some managed their time out of the country by having the security of transferring with their current employer or being on leave from their job, others took much greater risks such as the couple who periodically sold everything to fund their extended periods of travel. When work or study was the motive for travelling, this was pre-arranged by people. Resettlement overseas was most often prompted by dissatisfaction with New Zealand. The decision to return was generally bound up with difficulties experienced in the country of destination and its failure to live up to expectations. Regardless whether their departure from New Zealand was intended to be permanent or temporary, virtually all these people seemed to manage the return well, getting work or moving into study without problems. Even the couple of people who did struggle eventually found settled employment. Having particular skills, experience or networks seemed to aid this.

A small group of people, either alone or as couples, relocated around New Zealand during the study period. Though most people only made one such move, it was not unusual for someone to move twice. A range of reasons were given for these shifts and they could be divided into work, personal motives, or a mix of both. Those relocations prompted by the former were either the result of company transfers or people seeking work elsewhere; they were usually intended to improve remuneration, status or prospects. Though both partners in two couples appeared to co-jointly prompt the shift, for the other couples this move was initiated by the men and accepted by and adapted to by the women with little apparent difficulty. Whilst those moves undertaken for work related reasons meant that jobs were consequently arranged, if other motives were at play most people still had jobs organised before making any shift.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to those theoretical and empirical studies that are based on macro-economic constructs and national trends, this research programme focuses on the way in which labour markets function at the micro-level of individuals and households. This has been achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, a detailed conceptualisation of the idea of transitions was developed. Then, using in-depth interviews with individuals, life events and work histories were constructed, allowing us to record the patterns and details of transitions over time. This revealed an extremely complex set of interactions which govern relations between individuals, households and the labour markets. It formed the raw data on which this qualitative analysis of the West Auckland labour market in the period 1987 to 1997 is based. Whilst much of what has been presented here will likely only reinforce what is already well established in the existing literature, statistics and research, the strength and value of this report lies with the detailed accounts of people's actual experiences which have been tracked across a considerable timeframe. Since each section of this report has already been summarised, rather than revisiting these points, by way of conclusion a series of themes are presented which address the central issues of this research.

The study period was characterised by ongoing change and a sense of uncertainty amongst those who were interviewed. Though this was apparent in a number of ways, perhaps the clearest evidence came in people's references to restructuring in workplaces and the all too common experience of redundancy, that frequently accompanied such reorganisations.. Despite, or perhaps because of this, many people maintained quite stable patterns of employment. It did not prevent others making voluntary shifts. These might have been between jobs to improve wages, conditions or prospects, usually in the same field. Others left paid work to study and to travel. Regardless of the unsettled nature of much of the decade under study, a sizeable proportion of people also embarked on the relatively risky path of self-employment during this time, sometimes more than once.

Education and training were prominent themes in this study, often as people tried to cope with a changing labour market. This took various forms, from part-time courses to full-time programmes, as well as workplace based training, and courses and placement programmes for the unemployed. Surprisingly, given the economic climate of much of the period, school leavers as a group had little firm idea of their work or study direction when they left school. Despite this, they all managed to engage relatively easily in paid work though their subsequent patterns of stable employment were variable. Though some undertook education or training directly or soon after school, quite a large number of those who engaged in full-time study were adults, often with children. Indeed, the question of costs in relation to education and training focused not on student loans and the like but on the difficulties experienced by these older students as they struggled to cope financially. Though age was sometimes seen as a negative aspect in terms of people's employability, it did not stop this considerable number of people advancing their qualifications and, more often, retraining completely, despite their demanding circumstances.

The flows of people in and out of this country draws a range of people's experiences into a theme based on migration. Our geographic isolation together with other structural features prompted or forced some people to leave these shores for various

reasons - to travel, study or work overseas for extended periods, and in some cases to resettle in another country. Both the couples who made the latter decision came back after becoming dissatisfied with the destination country. The former options usually necessitated employment in this country being relinquished but the return was usually negotiated quite successfully by all, with most getting work quite quickly, and even those who struggled somewhat soon became re-established. Particular skills, experience and networks all seemed influential. On the other side of this two way flow, were the sizeable number of people who immigrated to this country. This group was predominantly made up of families rather than individuals. Employment was seldom pre-arranged. Qualifications and experience were undoubtedly useful but proved no guarantees in regards to work, with those gained overseas sometimes being undervalued. Language difficulties and a lack of social networks were occasionally cited as impediments. All but two of those looking for fulltime employment eventually found it, but they had a range of experiences. Though most found work fairly easily, a couple took some time. Once they had full-time jobs, this group usually maintained fairly settled and stable employment histories. The comments made above regarding social networks in relation to New Zealanders resettling and new immigrants arriving in the country can be expanded more generally since, regardless of the circumstances of people looking for work, these networks proved an important factor for a sizeable number in helping them secure employment.

The common experiences of those who were unemployed and/or receiving some form of social assistance often undermined many of the popular but negative preconceptions about those on welfare. This was especially true of the women receiving the DPB, an often much maligned group. Those who were unemployed placed a high value on paid work and felt its loss acutely. Virtually all of them demonstrated a keen desire to work and proved successful at getting jobs. These characteristics were also evident in people receiving a range of benefits and seemed to account for the success they achieved in this regard rather than the low level of benefit. Instead of acting as a driver to get work this appeared to only add to the sense of struggle experienced by those coping on some form of welfare.

Gender emerged as a strong feature of the analysis. The gendered division of labour remains remarkably enduring, particularly in relation to childcare responsibilities. Women had primary responsibility for this and it had significant impacts on their participation in paid employment. For example, they often disengaged from paid work for periods and then had to manage a return to employment. This might have to be done several times. When working they had to balance paid and unpaid responsibilities, and this proved extremely demanding for many. Because any paid work was often conditioned on their unpaid responsibilities, part-time and casual employment were heavily skewed towards women's participation. If education and training was used as a means to aid a return or enhance one's prospects in relation to paid employment, part-time courses were the norm, with women again strongly represented in the group doing these. Whilst producing some benefits, this was another activity to balance with their unpaid responsibilities and sometimes with paid work as well. So too was their prominent role in voluntary work, the bulk of which was associated with children. Once more women's primary role in relation to child care prompted their over representation here. Voluntary work did offer occasional connections with paid employment opportunities it must be added. Considered from

another angle, childcare can be seen as a highly significant factor in relation to the distribution of work within and outside households, and between men and women.

Though focused on the Waitakere City area, given that this region is part of greater Auckland, some interesting contrasts with the other regions under study are possible. Most obvious is that whilst people lived in the area, they could work, study, and spend their leisure time in many other parts of the isthmus. Of course, many of those interviewed both resided and worked within the Waitakere area. One of the interesting tasks that lies ahead is a comparison of the qualitative findings from all three regions. This will not only illustrate common areas but will also throw up further contrasts between regions. While many findings will likely be applicable across all the regions and beyond – like those relating to gender, as outlined above – others will no doubt more specifically reflect the region under study.

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