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# **Unemployment: Its Meaning and Impact in Contemporary Society**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Psychology at Massey University

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# Abstract

Unemployment is a continuing concern within Western society that has been linked to material deprivation, social isolation, restricted agency, lowered future aspirations, and a range of negative health consequences. This thesis investigated unemployment in the Hawke's Bay region. The objective was to gain an understanding of the impact of unemployment and its meaning to a sample of employed and unemployed respondents. In conducting this investigation it was important to set the historical and social context, because the meaning of unemployment, strategies for addressing it, and its impact are historically variable across different periods in New Zealand's history. Official definitions, public policies, and public conceptualisations of unemployment from the 1840s to the 1990s were examined, as a means of backgrounding this thesis. Two main frameworks for conceptualising and addressing unemployment were identified. The first relates to liberal ideologies about the free market, including the principle of less eligibility. The second reflects socialist ideologies about the need for state intervention to assist those who are unable to look after themselves. In further establishing the context for this thesis, a review of psychological research into unemployment from the 1930s to the present day revealed that the primary focus has been on its impact. It is argued that the impact of unemployment and the ways it is coped with vary according to factors such as people's perceptions of their situation. Therefore, there is a need for research into both the impact and meaning of unemployment.

This thesis set out to contribute to the existing psychological literature by providing further evidence of the impact of unemployment and complementing this evidence with an analysis of the meaning of unemployment. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques were utilised as part of a multimethod research design, which was grounded in two main studies. Study One involved a quantitative survey of 177 employed and unemployed participants on various

psychological dimensions, including affective connotation (meaning), anxiety, relative deprivation, perceived social conflict, and values. This study had two main objectives: to provide an understanding of the psychological meaning of employment status in employed and unemployed groups; and to investigate whether interrelationships existed between employment status and various psychological dimensions. Overall, both employed and unemployed groups displayed similar patterns of response. These groups expressed values and interpreted target concepts relating to a person's employment status in a comparable manner. This may be owing to either a shift in public perceptions of the unemployed, where they are now seen in a more favourable light, or a self-report bias. However, there were some key differences between employed and unemployed participants' responses. The unemployed group reported significantly higher levels of relative deprivation, perceived social conflict, and anxiety. Unemployed participants' viewed themselves as being less competent and skilled, and reported living in more adverse circumstances than employed participants.

Key psychological dimensions from Study One, such as the meaning of unemployment, relative deprivation, and perceived social conflict, along with additional dimensions were then investigated in a qualitative study. Study Two explored the social meaning systems unemployed people drew on to make sense of their situation and to explain the ways they live with unemployment. Twenty-six unemployed people took part in semi-structured individual interviews. Of this group, 21 also took part in one of three focus group discussions. This study focused on the experiences of the unemployed and the ways they made sense of the consequences of unemployment. Even though the findings were presented under two main categories, meaning and impact, unemployment was assigned meaning in terms of its impact as an unhealthy state. The unemployed's accounts provided complex and insightful explanations of the causes and consequences of unemployment. Participants generally resisted being labelled with negative stereotypes that stigmatise the unemployed as inactive dole bludgers. However, there was a tendency to draw on such stereotypes to stigmatise others and justify

one's own legitimacy as a proactive member of society. Participants drew on a mix of individual and communal assumptions to make sense of unemployment, its consequences, and their situation in life. A prominent theme was financial hardship and the life struggles associated with life on the dole. Participants provided explanations of the ways they asserted themselves in the face of social stigma and persistent negative societal perceptions. In doing so they emphasised the ways in which unemployment restricts people's agency and can lead to health problems and social conflict.

These two studies revealed how unemployment is predominantly an alienating and socially isolating experience. Common social belief systems within society still stigmatise the unemployed as lazy dole bludgers. This thesis supports calls for considering both material and psychosocial factors when exploring the consequences of unemployment and developing adequate responses. In light of the fact that there are no signs of a significant reduction in the level of unemployment, this thesis provides a timely reminder that social phenomena such as unemployment have very real consequences on people's lives. Emphasis needs to be placed on unemployment as both a social and an individual phenomenon as a means of reducing tendencies towards victim-blaming.

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# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Chapter One      Thesis Overview</b>	
1.1 The Importance of Meaning and Impact	1
1.2 Unemployment in the Hawke's Bay	4
1.3 Thesis Structure	6
<b>Chapter Two      Unemployment in New Zealand</b>	
2.1 Historical Context of Unemployment	9
2.1.1 Unemployment from 1840 to the Beginning of the 1930s' Depression	10
2.1.2 From Unemployment Relief to Full Employment (1930 to 1967)	12
2.1.3 The Re-emergence of Unemployment (1968 to 1983)	18
2.1.4 Social and Economic Restructuring (1984 to 1998)	19
2.2 Who is Considered Unemployed	23
<b>Chapter Three      Unemployment: Theory and Research</b>	
3.1 Research Undertaken in the 1930s	30
3.1.1 Stage Approach	33

	<b>Page</b>
3.2 Unemployment Approaches Since the 1970s	36
3.2.1 Social-environmental Approach	36
3.2.2 Agency Approach	46
3.2.3 Social-cognitive Approach	50
3.3 Overview of the Impact of Unemployment	53
3.3.1 Societal and Family Consequences	54
3.3.2 Individual Consequences	57

**Chapter Four            The Present Thesis: Research  
Objective and Design**

4.1 Research Objective	63
4.2 Overview of Methods Used in Unemployment Research	71
4.3 The Multi-Method Research Design	74
4.4 Considerations for Research with Unemployed Groups	77

**Chapter Five            Study One - The Meaning and Impact  
of Unemployment: A Comparison of  
Employed and Unemployed Groups**

5.1 Research Problem and Purpose	79
5.2 Psychological Dimensions	80
5.3 Aims and Hypotheses	86
5.4 Method	88
5.4.1 Developing Measuring Instruments and Data Collection Procedures	88
5.4.2 Background Variables and Psychological Measuring Instruments	92
5.4.3 Sample Description	100
5.4.4 Procedure	106
5.4.5 Data Transformation	110
5.5 Results	110
5.5.1 Analyses	110
5.5.2 Results for Multi-item Instruments and Comparisons Between Employed and Unemployed Groups	112
5.5.3 Correlations Between Psychological Dimensions	127
5.6 Discussion	129

**Chapter Six            Study Two - The Unemployed's  
Accounts of the Meaning and  
Impact of Unemployment**

6.1 Introduction	141
6.2 Method	145
6.2.1 Individual Interviews and Focus Group Discussions	145
6.2.2 Participants	148
6.2.3 Procedure	149
6.2.4 Thematic Analysis	152
6.3 Findings	153
6.3.1 Meaning	153
6.3.2 Impact	175
6.4 Discussion	197
6.4.1 Meaning	198
6.4.2 Impact	203

**Chapter Seven        Conclusion**

7.1 General Conclusions	209
7.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research	212
7.3 Policy Implications and Recommendations	214

<b>References</b>	217
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<b>Appendices</b>	241
-------------------	-----

# List of Tables

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	Frequencies and Percentages for the Employed and Unemployed Groups on Global Background Variables ( $N = 177$ )	102
2	Frequencies for the Employed and Unemployed Groups on Global Background Variables and Reported $\chi^2$ ( $N = 171$ )	103
3	Frequencies and Percentages for the Employed Group on Specific Background Variables ( $n = 86$ )	104
4	Frequencies and Percentages for the Unemployed Group on Specific Background Variables ( $n = 91$ )	107
5	Factor Structure for the Semantic Differential's Bipolar Adjectives for Both the Employed and Unemployed Target Concepts	114
6	Factor Structure of Trait Anxiety	117
7	Factor Structure of the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire	118
8	Interitem Correlations Between Individual Items for the Social Conflict Measure	120
9	Factor Structure of the Goal and Mode Values Inventories	121

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
10 A Comparison of Employed and Unemployed Groups Regarding Goal and Mode Value Subscale Scores (Means and Standard Deviations) and Independent <i>t</i> -test Scores	122
11 Factor Structure of the Work Aspect Preference Scale	124
12 A Comparison of Employed and Unemployed Groups Regarding Work Aspect Preference Scale Subscale Scores (Means and Standard Deviations) and Independent <i>t</i> -test Scores	126
13 Bivariate Correlations Between General Values and Work Values (range <u>N</u> = 159-171)	128

### **List of Tables in Appendix C**

C1 Crosstabulation for Gender Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	259
C2 Crosstabulation for Ethnicity Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	259
C3 Crosstabulation for Marital Status Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	259
C4 Crosstabulation for Education Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	260

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
C5	Crosstabulation for Level of Income Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	260
C6	Crosstabulation for Skill Level Showing the Row Percentages and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups	261

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	The Cuba Street Riots in Wellington, May 1932	15
2	Schematic Representation of Two Assumed Relationships Between Environmental Features and Mental Health	42
3	A Diagrammatic Representation of the Connections Between the Different Components in the Thesis	76
4	The Directions and Rating Scale Developed for the Semantic Differential	95

# List of Appendices

<b>Appendix</b>		<b>Page</b>
A	Pilot Study One	241
B	Summary of Problems Identified in Pilot Study Two and Three	255
C	Crosstabulation Tables for Table 2	259
D	Employed Background Questions - Study One	263
E	Unemployed Background Questions and Full-item Questionnaire - Study One	267
F	Information Sheet - Study One	279
G	Feedback Letter - Study One	281
H	Individual Interview Protocol - Study Two	283
I	Focus Group Discussion Protocol - Study Two	287
J	Information Sheet - Study Two	289
K	Consent Form - Study Two	291
L	Feedback Letter - Study Two	293

# Chapter One

## Thesis Overview

Unemployment is a continuing social concern and topical component of life in New Zealand. A wide range of ideas exist about how it is caused, who is to blame, and how it should be addressed. Unemployment has not only persistently attracted extensive public attention and debate, but has also been the subject of considerable academic research into its impact on the lives of individuals and their families. This thesis contributes to such research by investigating the psychological meaning and impact of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay region. Chapter One provides an overview of this investigation. The first section presents a brief introduction to the field and a justification for the present focus on the meaning and impact of unemployment. Section Two briefly provides an explanation for conducting the research in the Hawke's Bay, and background information on the extent and nature of unemployment in this geographical region. The final section presents a preview for each subsequent chapter.

### **1.1 The Importance of Meaning and Impact**

The rationale for this thesis can be explained in terms of the persistence of high levels of unemployment in New Zealand and a number of international studies that have linked unemployment to material deprivation, social isolation, restricted agency (for a definition of agency see Chapter Three, Section 3.2.2, p. 46), lowered future aspirations, and negative health consequences (Bartley, 1994; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1995, 1997; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Hammarström, 1994; O'Brien & Feather, 1990; O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1979; Patton & Noller, 1990; Warr, 1987; Winefield, Tiggemann, Winefield & Goldney, 1993; Whelan, 1992). The negative impact of unemployment has been documented in psychological research since the 1930s (Bakke, 1933; Jahoda,

### *Overview*

Lazarsfeld & Zeisel, 1933, English translation published in 1972) and is well supported in the contemporary literature (Fryer, 1995). However, further academic research is needed to increase knowledge of the processes involved, to understand why these processes occur, to keep unemployment on the political agenda, and to improve the lives of the unemployed.

Although research has persistently found that the consequences of unemployment are predominantly negative, these consequences are not universal. Negative consequences of unemployment have been found to vary in relation to a range of factors such as gender, social support, financial circumstances, living arrangements, previous employment experiences, and people's subjective perceptions (Feather, 1990, 1997; Fryer, 1997; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Kieselbach, 1988; Macky & Haines, 1982; O'Brien, 1986; Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). Generally, unemployed people are placed in a position of relative poverty (McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Whelan, 1992). Yet, as recent writing in the area of social and health inequalities has shown (Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996), the impact of material circumstances and relative deprivation is mediated through people's perceptions of their situation. The meanings people assign to their material and social circumstances play an important role in influencing the impact of unemployment (Fryer & Payne, 1986). If one is not distressed about becoming unemployed and sees it as an opportunity to develop other facets in one's life, the impact of material deprivation may be less severe. Conversely, as is more often the case, feelings of injustice, social stigma, and personal inadequacies can contribute to the higher incidence of health problems among the unemployed. Therefore, when investigating the impact of unemployment a focus on meaning is appropriate because the impact of one's situation is mediated through one's subjective perceptions (Fryer, 1995; Wilkinson, 1996).

Within many industrialised societies being employed is a central source of normal identity (Kelvin, 1980, 1994). Many people perceive and judge others on the criteria of what they do for a living. When unemployed, a person often

lacks a socially approved role and the positive (self-) evaluations that go along with employment. This position in society tends to be one of lower prestige, which generally does not provide a feeling of full membership in society (*cf.* Kelvin, 1980, 1984; Warr, 1987). In terms of status and identity needs (McFadyen, 1995), the unemployed are not only deprived of material prerequisites; they often lack a range of positive self-perceptions and are often judged in relation to negative societal stereotypes (see Appendix A: Pilot Study One by Cullen, Shouksmith & Habermann, 1997; McFadyen & Gray, 1995). Being placed in such a situation can lead to reduced social cohesion, which has been linked to increased social conflict, crime, and inequalities in health (Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew, Penkower & Bromet, 1991; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson, Kawachi & Kennedy, 1998; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998).

With persistently high levels of unemployment in many industrialised societies, negative perceptions of the unemployed still permeate public consciousness. Modes of self-perception in individuals and groups are related to the ways unemployment and unemployed people are perceived by other groups, such as those enjoying full employment (Cullen et al., 1997). Negative perceptions of the unemployed tend to be based on personal attributions. They may easily be organised into more lasting attitudes and stereotypes, which are often unjustified (Winefield et al., 1993). Such perceptions include the idea that the unemployed are lazy and therefore inferior people who could get a job if they really wanted to.

Such perceptions are no longer considered to be influenced by personal experience and attribution alone. Societal communication systems, including the mass media, constitute the primary means by which evaluative perceptions are circulated and attitudes or ideologies about employment status are promoted or negated. In a critical analysis of New Zealand news reports, Leitch (1990) identified two primary ways in which the unemployed were perceived: as victims of the wider social transitions (external attribution), or as

## *Overview*

dole bludgers (attribution to the person). It was found that youth unemployment was predominantly associated with the victim category while long-term unemployment was associated with dispositional factors of personality. Such perceptions about the unemployed are developed within a social and historical context, and in relation to various social belief systems. It is important for research to explore these belief systems in addition to people's experiences, perceptions and circumstances, if psychologists are to develop an adequate understanding of the meaning and impact of unemployment.

### **1.2 Unemployment in the Hawke's Bay**

Participants in the present research were drawn solely from the Hawke's Bay region (Hastings and Napier districts). This region was selected because of its accessibility and familiarity for the researcher and because it reflected general patterns of work, redundancy, and unemployment in New Zealand.

The Hawke's Bay is a semi-industrialised rural region on the East Coast of the North Island, often referred to as the *Fruit Bowl of New Zealand*. It has a large concentration of agricultural, horticultural, pastoral farming, and forestry industries. Hastings and Napier districts have a population of 58,675 and 55,044 people, respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 1998a). Residents in this region have experienced a number of large-scale redundancies over the last twelve years. Significant events include the closure of two freezing works: 1,500 workers lost their jobs at Whakatu in 1986 ("1,500 jobs to go with closure at Whakatu," 1986); and 1,000 jobs were lost in April 1994 when Tomoana (Weddel New Zealand Ltd) closed (Banks, 1994). Since 1996, the region has seen a number of successive closures of industries including Bay Maid Milk ceasing operation (40 jobs lost) ("Work dries up at milk station," 1997) and Lion Breweries closing down (52 jobs lost) ("Lion pulls plug on brewing at Hastings plant," 1997). These examples show the continual loss of work in traditional sectors within the region contributing to persistently high levels of unemployment, a situation further exacerbated with hailstorms in the region

destroying orchard crops ("\$12m apple loss in hail," 1996) and a drought in 1998 ("Farmers struggle over living costs," 1998; Worthington, 1998).

A large number of individuals, families, and communities are affected by unemployment in this region. The 1996 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 1998b) reported 5,370 people were unemployed<sup>1</sup>. At the end of November 1996 the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES) reported 3,624 registered unemployed in Hastings and 3,468 in Napier (Anonymous NZES, personal communication, January 20, 1997). The Census data further identifies specific ethnic differences within national unemployment statistics. European New Zealanders were reported to have the lowest unemployment rate (5.4%) compared to Asian (14.0%), Pacific Island (16.2%), New Zealand Māori (17.5%), and other ethnic groups (23.6%) (Statistics New Zealand, 1998b). The author acknowledges these differences among the unemployed, but the aim of this thesis was to look at the meaning and impact of unemployment for the group as a whole, not for specific ethnic groups<sup>2</sup>.

This thesis was also initiated as a result of the researcher's first-hand experience of the effects of unemployment on herself, her family, and friends, due to her coming from a low socio-economic background within the Hawke's Bay region. When unemployed, the researcher informally interacted with a diverse range of unemployed people. These interactions led to the initial formulation of this thesis. Acknowledging the value of such interactions Jahoda

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<sup>1</sup> The 1996 Census identified Hawke's Bay as the region with the sixth lowest unemployment rate in the North Island. However, the Census was taken when seasonal work was abundant and the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES) was finding short-term employment for large numbers of unemployed people.

<sup>2</sup> A research project investigating the impact of unemployment on Māori is being conducted by Fiona Cram and colleagues (Cram, 1997). Howden-Chapman and Cram (1998) also provide an accessible discussion of the links between health inequalities, unemployment, and ethnicity not explored in detail in this thesis.

### *Overview*

writes, "direct contact with people and the situation under study is the best source for discovery and new ideas, the best safeguard against overlooking the unexpected" (1982, p. 357). These personal experiences helped the researcher to understand the issues involved from the perspective of those experiencing unemployment, as well as the perspective of academic theory.

### **1.3 Thesis Structure**

Chapter One provides a brief introduction to this thesis. It has established the importance of unemployment research and a focus on its meaning and impact. Reasons for selecting the Hawke's Bay region, including its familiarity and accessibility to the researcher and recent examples of unemployment in the region, have been outlined.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the historical and social context of unemployment in New Zealand. This overview is structured into four historical periods within which varying levels of unemployment and state intervention are evident. These periods stem from 1840 to 1929, 1930 to 1967, 1968 to 1983, and 1984 to 1998. Chapter Two establishes the research context and explores various societal belief systems pertaining to the ways unemployment is understood and addressed. It is an important chapter because the way unemployment is understood and dealt with does not emerge in a vacuum. The construction of unemployment is an inherently social process that impacts on the lives of individuals and their families, the wider community, and society as a whole.

Chapter Three presents a critical review of the theoretical focus, strengths, and limitations of four psychological approaches to unemployment. Owing to unemployment being an historically variable phenomenon there has been limited research during periods of full employment (Furnham & Lewis, 1986). Therefore, this chapter focuses on two historical periods where the levels of unemployment have risen to such a level as to stimulate psychological research. In a review of the 1930s literature, particular attention is given to

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's Stage Approach. This is followed by an exploration of research conducted from the late 1970s onward. Three main approaches emerging during this second period are: the social-environmental approach, as seen in Jahoda's Latent Function Model of Employment and Warr's Vitamin Model; the agency approach exemplified by Fryer's Agency Restriction Model; and the social-cognitive approach exemplified in Feather's application of Expectancy-value Theory. Chapter Three then provides a review of the main findings linking unemployment to various negative consequences. The impact of unemployment is outlined in terms of societal, family, and individual consequences.

Chapter Four outlines in more detail the focus of this thesis and the research design utilised. Key psychological dimensions including meaning (affective connotation), relative deprivation, health, psychological anxiety, perceived social conflict, and general and work values are discussed. Chapter Four then presents the multi-method research design utilised to investigate the meaning and impact of unemployment. This involved a pilot study using a word association technique, a main study using quantitative questionnaires, and a second main study using semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions. Justification for the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is provided. Briefly, quantitative methods were used to establish the significance of key psychological dimensions, and qualitative methods were implemented to add depth to the main quantitative findings (*cf.* Popay & Williams, 1996).

Chapter Five presents the first main quantitative study, which had two primary objectives: first, to survey the psychological meaning of employment status in different social groups (employed and unemployed people); second, to investigate whether inter-relationships exist between employment status and affective connotation, relative deprivation, anxiety, perceived social conflict, and values (general and work values). The results of this study are structured into two parts. Part one presents multi-item results and compares the employed

### *Overview*

and unemployed groups on each dimension. Part two investigates the inter-relationships between each of the psychological dimensions. Concluding this chapter is a discussion which links key findings to the academic literature. The findings from this study contributed to the design of the qualitative study.

The qualitative study is presented in Chapter Six. The main objective of this study was to investigate unemployed people's accounts of their situation and to further explore the meaning and impact of unemployment for this group. Twenty-six unemployed people took part in semi-structured individual interviews. From this group 21 participants then took part in one of three focus group discussions. Chapter Six presents the thematic analysis within two main sections, meaning and impact. This chapter closes with a discussion which relates the key findings to previous research.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with a discussion of the main findings and conclusions from the two main studies. Limitations of this thesis and future research recommendations are also outlined. Key conclusions are discussed in relation to trends in unemployment research and social policy. Overall, this thesis adds to academic knowledge of unemployment in New Zealand and voices the unemployed's accounts which, in spite of providing rich illustrations of the meaning and impact of unemployment, are often ignored.

## Chapter Two

# Unemployment in New Zealand

The following chapter sets the social context of this research. It is necessary to place a psychological investigation of unemployment within an account of the historical and social context in which unemployment occurs. By exploring what has happened in the past, and the circumstances leading to the present situation, an improved understanding of unemployment, its meaning, determinants, and impact, can be developed. Historical developments influence the meanings assigned to unemployment and how it is dealt with today. In Section One official policy initiatives and public conceptualisations of unemployment from the 1840s to the 1990s are examined. Section Two provides definitions of who is considered to be unemployed or employed. The definitions presented are important as they show how unemployment is linked to value-laden processes, which reflect social ideologies, particularly those emphasizing individual responsibility. Such ideologies are not new and reflect the re-emergence, in recent years, of ideas evident in the 1800s. Concluding this chapter is a brief summary which links the main historical themes identified in Section One to endeavours to define unemployment explored in Section Two. Through an investigation of how unemployment has been conceptualised in the past, this chapter provides insights into why unemployment is conceptualised and addressed in specific ways in contemporary New Zealand society.

### 2.1 Historical Context of Unemployment

Periods of varying levels of unemployment and state intervention are evident from 1840 to 1998. This section briefly identifies significant events and policies within which understandings of the causes of unemployment and interventions for dealing with it have emerged. This historical overview begins with the

## *Unemployment in NZ*

development of, and responses to, unemployment from 1840 to 1929. Next, the development of unemployment relief and full employment from 1930 to 1967 is examined. Third, the re-emergence of unemployment from 1968 to 1983 is outlined. This account leads to a discussion of social and economic restructuring from 1984 to 1998, which has seen a resurgence of ideas from late last century.

### *2.1.1 Unemployment from 1840 to the Beginning of the 1930s' Depression*

Unemployment has been a feature of New Zealand's history to varying degrees since annexation in 1840. Initially the New Zealand Company was responsible for the establishment of settlements in New Zealand (Rice, 1992). The Company wanted to use "immigration and speculative investment to establish colonies that recreated conservative, hierarchical, and agrarian communities" (Cheyne, O'Brien & Belgrave, 1997, p. 24). Immigrants were lured by false promises of employment and high wages. However, there was a critical shortage of employment and, as a result, increasing levels of unemployment. Immigrants were determined (even resorting to violence) to make the New Zealand Company keep its promise of work<sup>3</sup>. As a result, the Company was reluctantly forced to establish a public works policy. Although the work and pay conditions were poor and stigmatisation resulted (Mulengu, 1994), this policy created a precedent for responding to unemployment which has re-emerged throughout New Zealand's history.

During the 1840s and the 1860s the dominant social view was liberalism<sup>4</sup>. An individual and their family rather than the state were held responsible for

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of unemployment in New Zealand during this period, see Mulengu, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Liberalism is a theoretical framework in which society is conceptualized as a mass of individuals who are free to compete for the control of resources within a free market (For an extensive review of the historical development of liberal and neo-liberal ideologies, see Cockett, 1994).

welfare. Unemployment was seen as one's own responsibility because it was thought to result from an individual's inadequacies. Such a view forms the basis of what is referred to as the principle of less eligibility. This principle states that because unemployment is the individual's fault they are not entitled to the same financial resources as someone who is employed. Initiatives established under this principle such as work schemes are still evident today. An unemployed person could not obtain financial assistance greater than those payments achieved by the lowest-paid labourers (Tennant, 1989). In order to justify assistance some form of labour was required.

Against a background of increasing demands from settlers, rising levels of unemployment, and a recession, Vogel (Prime Minister and Colonial Treasurer) introduced the Public Works and Immigration Bill in 1870 (Fraser, 1986; Thomson, 1998). This bill heralded a move to link immigration to a national programme of public work schemes. It is important to note the form of employment provided by Vogel was short-term, thus termed relief work (Mulengu, 1994). Following the passing of this Act unemployment declined. After Vogel resigned Atkinson became Prime Minister. As part of reducing rising public expenditure, Atkinson's Government (a conservative government) cut the government's expenditure on public works in 1878. This significant reduction of funding led to a resurgence in unemployment against which the unemployed protested (Rice, 1992; Thomson, 1998). In response to such protests the government further stigmatised the unemployed as undesirable elements of New Zealand's society (Mulengu, 1994), and the public works programme collapsed.

Atkinson's Government initiated the classification of the unemployed into two groups, the deserving and undeserving. The deserving would accept any form of work and any rate of pay, whereas the undeserving would not work for pay under certain rates and were labelled as lazy dole bludgers who had failed to make adequate provision for themselves and their families (Mulengu, 1994). This distinction was central to the stigmatising of the unemployed by the

## *Unemployment in NZ*

government and more affluent members of society (these issues will be further explored in the theoretical context of Chapter Three).

The effect of successive depressions from the 1850s to the 1880s, and the departure of many skilled unemployed workers to Australia led to the election of a Liberal-Labour party in 1890 (Fraser, 1986). The Liberal-Labour Government (led by Ballance) injected a significant amount of state expenditure into unemployment relief, in the form of state job creation, as part of the provision of social welfare policies (Thomson, 1998). It passed the Department of Labour Act in 1891, which led to the creation of a national employment agency which was also responsible for monitoring the incidence of unemployment. It is important to note that the department was clearly designed to cope with seasonal unemployment (Mulengu, 1994), and the government was still reluctant to accept responsibility for finding people work (Cheyne et al., 1997). This was still perceived to be primarily an individual's responsibility in the ensuing years.

During World War One (1914-1918) a high proportion of New Zealand's workforce was mobilised to fight. The British Government had requisitioned New Zealand's primary products and as a result New Zealand enjoyed a financial boom and full employment. At the end of the Imperial Requisition (1920-1921), trade was resumed but there was a decline in market prices (Rice, 1992). As a result, farmers increased their productivity and profitability by using machinery. This meant that a high percentage of rural workers were rendered redundant and sought employment in the towns. Unemployment again emerged as a serious problem and the state again resisted accepting responsibility for finding or creating work for the unemployed (Rogers & Sharp, 1977).

### *2.1.2 From Unemployment Relief to Full Employment (1930 to 1967)*

The Great Depression from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s saw unemployment rise to unprecedented levels (for an extensive review of the

1930s depression see Robertson, 1978 and Simpson, 1990, 1997). Rogers and Sharp (1977) present official statistics which show the rapid rise of unemployment. In 1920 there were 4,000 unemployed men; in 1930 there were 22,000; in 1931 55,000; in 1932 the numbers had risen to 74,000, reaching 79,000 the following year. These figures may have underestimated the extent of unemployment. As Member of Parliament Elizabeth McCombs argued at the time:

Take, for instance, the question of unemployment. So far as that question is concerned the Government of this country seems to have withdrawn into a kind of mental euthanasia. It sits there sublimely satisfied that all is well. ... The official figures ... register eighty thousand unemployed. These figures do not include women. If we include women and youths we find that the number is practically double; ... add to those the number of people who are in employment but who are working only half time or part time, and earning no more than relief rates of pay, and we will find that they total practically as many as the total registered unemployed (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 1933, p. 157).

As with previous governments, the United-Coalition Government of 1928 (led by Ward) continued to treat unemployment as a temporary phenomenon (Mulengu, 1994). The fiscal policy proposed by Forbes for dealing with the depression in the 1930s was to reduce government expenditure. This form of retrenchment affected business confidence and caused cutbacks in other sectors of the economy. These orthodox measures reduced the public's spending power and increased business failures and unemployment (Robertson, 1978). It is important to note that the United-Coalition Government had the financial resources in the Consolidated Fund to create relief work for the unemployed but it was directed by the ideology of self-reliance (Rogers & Sharp, 1977).

Mounting pressure from the unemployed and the Labour Party forced the United-Coalition Government to pass the Unemployment Act of 1930. Under the Act an Unemployment Fund and Unemployment Board were established.

### *Unemployment in NZ*

The Unemployment Fund was raised from a special tax levied on adult men and from the Consolidated Fund (Robertson, 1978). Relief payments to unemployed men were made on the condition that the individual was seeking work (the deserving poor). No provisions were made within the Act for unemployed women and Māori (Rogers & Sharp, 1977). The main principle Forbes sought to apply was 'No pay without work'. A series of schemes was developed to provide work through local bodies, in forestry and other public work projects (Sharp, 1975). The number of unemployed climbed steadily and with it the difficulty of finding relief work increased. The stresses caused by the depression drove many of the unemployed into despair (Simpson, 1990, 1997), and in 1932 led to rioting in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin (Robertson, 1978). Figure 1 presents a photograph of the Cuba Street Riots in Wellington. By 1933 the government had to abandon its 'No pay without work' policy and introduced a sustenance allowance. This was the first government funded unemployment benefit in New Zealand.

During the Great Depression, or what was termed the sugarbag years, the general public had gained an awareness that unemployment was not caused by individual inadequacies, but by the retrenchment policies of the state and wider economic factors (Robertson, 1978; Simpson, 1990). The public called for a more humane approach to dealing with unemployment where the well-being of the individual, family, and community was taken into account.

In the 1935 election Labour (led by Savage) defeated the United-Coalition Government. This Labour Government consisted of urban and working class MPs. Its landslide victory reflected the general public's dislike of the Coalition's retrenchment measures, and support for policies insulating New Zealand from overseas economic pressures, and for the provision of social welfare (Shirley, Easton, Briar & Chatterjee, 1990; Simpson, 1990).

The Labour Government introduced moderate socialist policies, which gave the state a strong interventionist role. Labour proposed a Keynesian approach,



**Figure 1.** The Cuba Street Riots in Wellington, May 1932.

**Source:** New Zealand Free Lance. (May 1932). *Rioting unemployed workers being dispersed by police* (Ref No. 1/2-101110; G). Wellington, New Zealand.

Note.

<sup>a</sup> Permission has been obtained from the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand. This image is protected with strict copyright restrictions, and may not be further reproduced without written permission from the Alexander Turnbull Library.

which stimulated economic growth and encouraged the development and diversification of secondary industries to produce a balanced economy (Rogers & Sharp, 1977; Shirley et al., 1990; Simpson, 1990). After taking office the government immediately implemented measures to improve the standard of living for all New Zealanders and to create employment. It abolished relief work by transferring unemployed men to public works and state housing projects at normal wage rates. Those individuals who were unable to work received an increase in their sustenance allowance. These two policies not only provided short-term relief but full-time employment at standard rates of pay (Rogers & Sharp, 1977). The Labour Government had undermined the principle of less eligibility which had been a central aspect of unemployment policy since the 1840s. One important development that epitomized this move was the introduction of the Social Security Act of 1938 (Robertson, 1978; Sharp, 1975; Simpson, 1990; Trlin, 1977 ).

The Social Security Act stemmed from Labour's concern for all New Zealanders and for the redistribution of wealth in society. The Social Security Scheme was based on the ideology that every New Zealand citizen was entitled to the social provision of well-being (for example: a public health system, adequate living standards, and full employment; Shirley et al., 1990), and to be shielded from the effects of unemployment, incapacity, and old age. It included a policy of full employment and the right to work.

[*The Act*] emphasised the maintenance of a healthy community where all New Zealanders may live a healthy and productive life. Health was not limited to treatment of the sick, but rather the creation of a social and economic environment in which individuals might live healthy and productive lives (Shirley et al., 1990, p. 24).

The Social Security Act introduced sickness benefits, emergency benefits that were payable in special cases of hardship, and a National Superannuation Scheme. The object of the Act was to provide economic stability and remove the general public's fears that what had happened during the depression might

### *Unemployment in NZ*

recur. All New Zealanders came under the umbrella of the welfare state, from the cradle to the grave (Rogers & Sharp, 1977; Trlin, 1977).

After the 1938 election Labour's financial balance had reduced significantly and it had to adopt a policy of exchange control and import selection (Rogers & Sharp, 1977). However, World War Two made it easier for Labour to adopt a siege economy, which helped the government exercise a high level of control (Mulengu, 1994; Rice, 1992). The war had made it possible for Labour to attain full employment as many of the unemployed volunteered for military service or were absorbed into industry.

Although Labour was voted out of office in 1949, a full employment policy was firmly entrenched in New Zealand social policy up until 1967. With its low levels of unemployment New Zealand was identified internationally as being one of the leading welfare states in the world (Shirley et al., 1990).

#### *2.1.3 The Re-emergence of Unemployment (1968 to 1983)*

New Zealand's economy became closed to maintain its full employment policies. Agricultural exports (milk, butter, cheese, meat, and wool) were New Zealand's primary source of overseas revenue, and were being sold almost exclusively to Britain. From 1973 New Zealand's exports to the United Kingdom began to decline as a consequence of Britain entering the European Economic Community (EEC) (Shirley et al., 1990). This meant that New Zealand was forced to substantially readjust the economy (Cheyne et al., 1997). As a result of this, and a world recession, registered unemployed in New Zealand increased from 312 in 1960, to 2,894 in 1975, to 50,136 in 1984 (Statistics New Zealand, 1996).

Rising unemployment levels, declining employment opportunities in the private sector, and public opinion forced the National Government (led by Muldoon) to implement job creation schemes (Mulengu, 1994). Shirley and colleagues argue that these schemes "were frequently ill-conceived, expensive, and often

poorly managed" (1990, p. 30). The schemes focused on attempts to correct perceived individual limitations instead of providing the unemployed with training and skills that could have enabled them to obtain a job. By this time the National Government had begun to distance itself from the unemployment problem by rationalising it. The Government argued that unemployment resulted not from a lack of job opportunities, but from the unemployed's lack of appropriate skills and work experience (Mulengu, 1994). This reflected the return of the notion of individual responsibility.

The re-emergence of neo-liberal ideology could be seen in media reports and the general public's perceptions of the unemployed as "work-shy ... dole bludgers" who "don't want to work" (Dasler, 1982, p. 20). Such victim blaming continued to grow despite evidence of a lack of jobs in the labour market (Mulengu, 1994).

What differentiated National's response to unemployment from that of previous governments was that the job creation schemes no longer had the creation of permanent employment in the public sector as their primary goal. National had tightened up eligibility requirements in accordance with the principle of less eligibility and maintained the attitude that some of the unemployed were less deserving than others (Cheyne et al., 1997). In sum, National viewed unemployment as a useful weapon to discipline trade unions, to keep wages down, and to secure increased efficiency and productivity from the work force (Mulengu, 1994).

#### *2.1.4 Social and Economic Restructuring (1984 to 1998)*

A snap election in 1984 saw the replacement of the Muldoon National Government by the Lange Labour Government. The New Zealand public expected Labour to preserve and extend the existing job creation schemes. Instead Labour inaugurated a dramatic programme of economic reform which was based on the premise that Muldoon's economic management had brought

### *Unemployment in NZ*

the country to economic ruin (Cheyne et al., 1997). Roger Douglas, Minister of Finance, abandoned interventionist policies in favour of a neo-liberal model based on the belief that the free market would redress existing economic problems, including unemployment. The economy was opened to the international market and almost all government support for industry and agriculture was removed for the first time since the 1930s (Shirley et al., 1990).

Unemployment continued to rise, from 38,419 in 1985 to 63,922 in 1987, climbing to 123,565 in 1989, and reaching 139,625 the following year (Statistics New Zealand, 1996). Labour continued the shift in explanations for the cause of unemployment away from structural and economic determinants to individual inadequacies. Although the rate of unemployment had increased, the government did not accept responsibility. Unemployment had been redefined as an outcome of an individual's failure to successfully compete in the labour market. In addition, a dominant group of Labour ministers appeared to accept Treasury's view that the failure to obtain employment was a result of low skill levels and motivation (Shirley et al., 1990). Labour had clearly shifted policy responses to unemployment from job creation to cheaper alternatives such as ACCESS Training Schemes (see Ferguson & Miller, 1983<sup>5</sup>) and targeted benefits (Cheyne et al., 1997).

In the 1990 general election a landslide victory for National showed the public's rejection of Douglas's policies, commonly referred to as Rogernomics (Cheyne et al., 1997). Unemployment was high and the economic recovery had not eventuated. National, led by Bolger, continued the market-reform process initiated by Labour (James, 1992). This involved dismantling the welfare state. In April 1991 Mrs Jenny Shipley, then Minister of Social Welfare, announced benefit cuts in response to a perceived fiscal crisis. The benefit for a single

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<sup>5</sup> Ferguson and Miller (1983) provide a critical account of ACCESS training courses in Christchurch, New Zealand.

unemployed person aged between 20 to 24 years was cut from \$143.57 to \$108.17 per week (Cheyne et al., 1997).

The benefit cuts were premised on two arguments. First, the cuts were considered a necessary means of reducing people's dependence on the state. Shifting the emphasis from social welfare to income support paralleled National's neo-liberal philosophy that poverty and unemployment were caused by individual rather than societal failure. By reducing income support, the government argued, there would be more incentives to join the workforce and people would become more self-reliant (Cheyne et al., 1997). Reflecting the earlier liberal principle of less eligibility, National claimed that a gap needed to be maintained between benefit levels and wage rates. Mrs Shipley stated:

... we consider that current [*benefit*] rates are too high in relation to what can be earned in the workforce, and that they act as a barrier to self-help. For too many there is too little financial reward for their efforts to support themselves. It is critical that the incentives be improved. It is therefore important to set benefit rates, especially for those who have the best chance for finding work, at a level which encourages them to compete for work opportunities (Campbell, 1991, cited in Cheyne et al., 1997, p. 183).

The outcome of such thinking was to reduce benefit levels rather than to increase basic wage rates.

This statement also summarises the second argument, namely that individuals should take responsibility for themselves and their families, and not rely on the welfare state. Mrs Shipley acknowledged that a safety net was required (for the deserving poor) but the individual and the family must take responsibility. She stated:

The Government reaffirms its commitment to protect those who are unable to protect themselves. It will provide sufficient assistance to maintain individuals and families in the daily essentials of food, clothing, power and housing at a decent level. Assistance will be closely targeted on genuine need and people will be expected to support themselves when they have the ability to do so (Shipley, 1991, p. 13).

## *Unemployment in NZ*

The impact of benefit cuts was further exacerbated by the introduction of market rentals for state housing. As a result of such developments the majority of the unemployed have no discretionary income and live in relative poverty (Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997).

The state's willingness to continue down the path of privatisation, deregulation and user pay charges, and its increased emphasis on individual responsibility were shown in Mrs Shipley's address to Parliament which introduced *The Code of Social and Family Responsibility*:

[*This code is based on*] six key social policy principles ... firstly, that everyone has a responsibility to themselves, to their community, to other taxpayers, and to society; secondly, that taking part in paid work underpins economic independence; thirdly, that work expectations and income support obligations should be linked to a person's capacity and ability to work; fourthly, that Government social assistance must be designed to encourage people to help themselves; fifthly, that Government assistance should focus resources on those most in need; and, lastly, that Government social services will work to strengthen families (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 1998, p. 6494).

This attempt to gather public support for conservative policies optimises recent changes in social and employment policy reflecting the continued emphasis on individual responsibility. The burden of responsibility is placed on the individual by tightening up eligibility for assistance, in order to reduce state dependency. However, this approach does not address the causes of unemployment outside an individual's control. Accordingly, benefit cuts and the 26-week stand down for Income Support, which were introduced on the premise that they would act as work incentives and reduce unemployment, have failed.

The failure of these policies is reflected in the persistence of high unemployment. The New Zealand government measures unemployment in four slightly different ways with the New Zealand Census, Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS), the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES), and the New Zealand Income Support Service (NZISS) statistics (Section 2.2 will define who are the unemployed). First, the Census is a five-yearly count of everyone

in New Zealand. The 1996 Census undertaken in March recorded 136,506 (5.1%) people as unemployed (Statistics New Zealand, 1998b). Second, the HLFS, a quarterly sample survey, recorded the official unemployment rate as 119,300 (6.6%) and the total number of jobless as 194,100 in the September quarter, 1997 (Statistics New Zealand, 1998c). Third, NZES statistics recorded a nation-wide total of 187,582 registered unemployed (Statistics New Zealand, 1998b). Finally, NZISS's recorded for the 1997 financial year 140,628 unemployed and 11,567 people who received the training benefit (Department of Social Welfare, 1997; People who received a training benefit were not included in the unemployment figures). The above figures highlight that unemployment in New Zealand has recently reached unprecedented levels. The neo-liberal expectation that the market will provide has not been fulfilled. Rather, recent government policies have led to unemployed people living in adverse conditions and to increased social inequality between the rich and poor (Kiro & St John, 1997). Because the benefit levels are so low the danger is that the unemployed will be unable to change their situation and will be imprisoned within a poverty trap. A widening gap of income inequality exists between different social groups and may result in increased social conflict (Cheyne et al., 1997; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Wilkinson et al., 1998; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). This may be reflected in the Hawke's Bay where reported crime increased from 27,966 in 1996 to 28,785 in 1997 (Police National Headquarters, 1999).

## **2.2 Who is Considered Unemployed**

Official definitions of who is considered to be unemployed are important as they form the basis of initiatives for dealing with unemployment and assessing its extent and impact. Leitch points out that historically the meaning of unemployment has changed:

The word unemployment was first used in the sixteenth century to describe the state of objects which were not being put to use. By the seventeenth century, the meaning had been extended to include people as well as objects. This was done, however, only in the sense of people who were not doing anything at the time

## *Unemployment in NZ*

in question rather than of those who had no work to do. Both the reaper and his scythe resting on a haystack at lunch time could, therefore, have been described as unemployed. By the end of the seventeenth century, unemployment had appeared in its modern sense as denoting the state of not working because there was no work to do. The earlier definition of unemployment as voluntary idleness has lingered on in New Zealand. This distinction between those who choose not to work, (the dole bludgers), and those who have no work to do (the victims) is blurred in the process (1990, pp. 27-28).

This account of the meaning of the word unemployment highlights its historical specificity, and how notions of deserving (victims) and undeserving (dole bludgers) are often evident in contemporary understandings.

Questions about who is considered to be unemployed and how to measure unemployment in New Zealand are controversial and complex (Pernice, 1992). From a psychological standpoint, various researchers have used different definitions for unemployment (Feather, 1990; Jahoda, 1982; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985; Warr, 1987). Most psychological research on unemployment has utilised a bureaucratic definition (Pernice, 1992; for a discussion of other psychological definitions see Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). A bureaucratic definition specifies certain criteria by which people are classified as being unemployed (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). These criteria generally include not being in paid work, but actively seeking and immediately available for paid employment, as well as being registered as unemployed, and thereby entitled to a benefit. This type of definition is used by the New Zealand Government in four slightly different ways, which result in different estimates in the extent of unemployment.

First, the Census and the HLFS define an individual as unemployed if they are not in paid employment, are actively seeking work (for example approaching employers and employment agencies), and are available to start work immediately (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment, 1994). Second, the HLFS also includes a broader measure of unemployment called joblessness, which includes "people who want work but are not immediately available to take a job or who are not actively seeking work" (Prime Ministerial Task Force

on Employment, 1994, p. 10). This definition is derived from the standard definition proposed by the International Labour Organisation so that international comparisons can be made between different OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. Third, the NZES records the registered unemployed as "those who have registered with NZES as unemployed and seeking work" (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment, 1994, p. 10). Finally, the NZISS records the number of people who receive the unemployment benefit. Those people who are not considered to be in the labour force, or unemployed are: primary caregivers, retired people, students (over the age of 15 years, at school or enrolled in tertiary institutions), and people not in paid work or seeking work (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment, 1994). These bureaucratic definitions are somewhat arbitrary and are primarily administrative tools (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment, 1994) based on political criteria as to who should be entitled to a benefit (according to the principle of less eligibility).

As stated above most New Zealand research investigating unemployment has utilised a bureaucratic definition, where the unemployed participants are registered with NZES (Pernice, 1992). However, there are a number of individuals who are excluded by such definitions. An unemployed person who becomes discouraged and stops actively searching for work will be counted as not in the labour force, rather than being unemployed, even though they may regard themselves as being unemployed (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). Another example is an individual who leaves their employment on their own accord and who has to stand down (for up to six weeks) before being able to apply for the unemployment benefit (Anonymous NZISS, Personal Communication, January 20, 1998). Such a person is not included in the unemployment statistics. Furthermore, a person attending a state-run training scheme for the unemployed is not counted as being unemployed but as being in training.

All of the above definitions overlap in some way and are relevant to the particular circumstances for which they were devised. However, they do not

### *Unemployment in NZ*

fully capture the phenomenon of unemployment (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). Jahoda prefers a social-psychological position where "all who have not got a job but would like to have one or who when they have no job are dependent on some financial support from whatever source for their livelihood" (1982, p. 13) are defined as unemployed. The definition used for the unemployed in this thesis follows Jahoda and includes those aged between 16 to 60 years.

A relevant question at this point might be how voluntary work fits into such a definition. Jahoda (1982) observes that work and employment are often used interchangeably and proposes that unemployment should be contrasted with employment, not with work. Therefore differences between the two terms should be highlighted (Jahoda, 1982; Warr, 1987). Correspondingly, Warr (1987) argues that work can take many forms. These forms can be both in and outside paid employment. Warr defines work as "an activity directed to valued goals beyond enjoyment of the activity itself". These activities can vary from a "momentary exertion" in a short space of time or to activities that can be sustained over a very long time. These "sustained" activities are linked to a "network of social roles and institutions" (1987, p. 57).

In contrast to definitions of work, Feather (1990), Jahoda (1982), and Warr (1987) define employment as work that involves a contractual relationship between the employee and the employer, in which there is an exchange of economic (material) rewards for labour. Drawing on this definition of employment a person can be defined as unemployed because they are not in paid employment even though they may undertake volunteer work. This definition although limited was adopted for the employed group and was extended to include people who were self-employed.

The previous sections of this chapter have traced the main historical developments relating to unemployment in New Zealand. Generally, the four periods reflect the establishment of notions of individual responsibility, a shift to a focus on social and economic factors, and the resurgence of emphasis on

the individual at the present time. This history reveals a clash between notions of individual and communal responsibility.

The principle of less eligibility, according to which the unemployed are differentiated between those who are deserving and those who are undeserving of assistance, is entrenched in present government initiatives. The policies of the first Labour Government reflect a shift from the traditional belief that unemployment was the individual's fault to the belief that unemployment was caused by market forces. Labour's policy initiatives were aimed at allowing the unemployed to have dignity and access to full-time employment. Over the last two decades such policies have been undermined by successive governments who have adopted monetarist free market policies.

Today, the National Government continues to argue that the individual should take increased responsibility for their employment, health, and retirement (neo-liberal ideology), with minimal state intervention. This shift in policy has meant a more impoverished life for the unemployed. Benefit cuts and the tightening up of eligibility for a benefit have increased the extent of poverty within New Zealand (Kiro & St John, 1997; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997). The continuation of existing policies is likely to reinforce this trend, with consequent differentials in well-being for the individual, their families, and the community as a whole (Cheyne et al., 1997).

The present chapter reviewed two competing explanations, individualism and communal responsibility, which have dominated political and academic discussions in New Zealand. These explanations influence New Zealanders' perceptions of the causes, meaning, and impact of unemployment. Now that the historical context of unemployment in New Zealand has been established, there is a need to situate the present investigation within the international unemployment literature. The following chapter explores psychological approaches used in unemployment research.

## Chapter Three

# Unemployment: Theory and Research

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold: first, to review major approaches to unemployment research, which inform the present thesis; second, to present evidence on the impact of unemployment; and third, to set the theoretical context for the research aim outlined in Chapter Four. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the level of unemployment is historically variable. Since the 1930s international research into unemployment has been directly related to its prevalence in a given society (Feather, 1997). Research has primarily been conducted during periods of high unemployment to establish its effects and impact (Furnham & Lewis, 1986). International interest in unemployment research subsided during a period of economic prosperity, from the 1940s through to the late 1960s (Kelvin, 1984). The re-emergence of high levels of unemployment in the 1970s sparked renewed research interest in the 1980s. Owing to the limited amount of research conducted from the 1940s to the late 1960s, researchers in the 1970s and early 1980s initially adopted approaches developed in the 1930s. Subsequently these earlier models have been revised in the light of empirical findings and wider shifts in psychological theory. In addition new approaches have been proposed. This chapter critically reviews the foci, strengths, and limitations of the major psychological approaches to unemployment. Beginning with the 1930s, particular attention is given to Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's (1938) influential stage approach. Next, the focus shifts to approaches guiding research from the 1970s. Three approaches will be outlined: the social-environmental; agency restriction; and the social-cognitive. These sections lead to a review of the evidence on the impact of unemployment.

### **3.1 Research undertaken in the 1930s**

It may be tempting to discount research undertaken during the Great Depression on the grounds that it was conducted so long ago. However, 1930s research has provided rich insights into the effects of unemployment that are still applicable today. Studies conducted in the 1930s have been an important source of ideas "about the functions of work and employment and about the economic and psychological factors that underlie the negative effects that unemployment can have" (Feather, 1990, p. 10). Research conducted in the 1930s has shaped the focus of unemployment research over the last two decades and is therefore worthy of consideration.

Research conducted in the 1930s was initiated to explore the effects of unemployment. Two researchers, Bakke (1933) and Jahoda (1942, 1979, 1981, 1982; Jahoda et al., 1933/1972), are often identified as key figures in establishing unemployment research. Both of these researchers emphasised the importance of pre-unemployment conditions and provided extensive accounts of the effects of unemployment on specific communities (Fryer & Payne, 1986). Bakke and Jahoda wanted to complement the limited official statistical information, with numerical data, and qualitative understandings of the impact of unemployment.

Bakke (1933, 1940a, 1940b) conducted two influential field studies. In the first study (1933; 1940a) he investigated the effects of unemployment on working-class men and their families in Greenwich, London. The second, a longitudinal study (1940b), investigated the effects of two factory closures in New Haven, Connecticut. In both of these studies Bakke utilised a multi-method design combining quantitative and qualitative techniques (see Chapter Four). Structured individual interviews, participant observations, time diaries, public document analyses, and questionnaires were used.

Bakke's (1940a; 1940b) research, extensively reviewed by O'Brien (1985), revealed that unemployed men were not idle as had previously been assumed.

Most men continued to fulfil their time in a meaningful way, by continuing to search for a job. Bakke noted that over time many of the men became discouraged and exhausted, and that they experienced a reduction in self-confidence and social contact as a result of unemployment. These factors were in turn linked to the negative impact of unemployment on mental health, motivation, and self-esteem. He also found that many of the men and their families became somewhat resilient and developed ways of coping with the negative consequences of unemployment. One factor identified as moderating the negative effects of unemployment was the existence of family and social support. In these early studies Bakke emphasised the influence of psychological and situational factors. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of previous employment experiences and poverty, as possible explanations for variations in the severity of the consequences of unemployment. He concluded that "the long arm of income, as it places people almost automatically within certain fields of possible achievement, is a factor constantly to be reckoned with. Income, steadiness of income, skill, education, all of these are the high fences which surround the fields" (1933, p. 45).

This theme of financial hardship continued in the work of Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel (1933/1972). These authors initiated their research with a study of a village just outside Vienna called Marienthal. Marienthal contained one, textile plant whose closure caused mass unemployment in the village. After the closure, Jahoda and colleagues investigated the social and psychological fabric of the community, using an extensive array of what are commonly referred to as quantitative and qualitative techniques (Jahoda et al., 1933/1972). Their main findings were that unemployment was quite distinct from having increased leisure time. Unemployment was found to lead to decreased social contact, and the disintegration of time and family structures. Generally, a situation of helplessness (*cf.* Seligman, 1975) occurred which adversely affected social relationships. These researchers also found that income levels, previous life experience, hardiness, and the existence of social

### *Theory and Research*

support were significant factors in determining the severity of the impact of unemployment (Jahoda, 1979).

The Marienthal study provided evidence for four categories of attitudes which resulted from unemployment: "unbroken, resigned, apathetic, and in despair" (Jahoda et al., 1933/1972, p. 81). Jahoda and colleagues argued that these attitudes were ordered sequentially on a continuum that could be used to predict when a family would suffer additional negative effects. A downward shift along the continuum was said to be directly related to a reduction in income. Jahoda proposed that apathy and despair were "probably but two different stages of a process of psychological deterioration that runs parallel to the narrowing of economic resources and the wear and tear on personal belongings. At the end of this process lies ruin and despair" (Jahoda et al., 1933/1972, p. 87).

After Marienthal, Jahoda conducted a second study, in 1938, of 400 unemployed miners in Monmouthshire in Wales (1942, 1987). Within this community initiatives were implemented to address the financial consequences of unemployment. The miners were encouraged to join a Subsistence Production Society (S.P.S.) where they produced goods to supplement their living. As with the Marienthal study, Jahoda found that most of the men were resigned to the idea that they would not be able to obtain future employment. However, in contrast to Marienthal, "nothing worse than resignation was found" (Jahoda, 1987, p. 13). Jahoda attributed the lower levels of negative consequences to the generous unemployment allowance miners received and to the S.P.S. These initiatives provided the miners with a higher standard of living, possibly some discretionary income, and direct social interaction. This study provided evidence for the benefit of direct interventions aimed at providing material and psychological resources as a means of minimising the impact of unemployment.

The Marienthal study has been identified as a seminal step in unemployment research. It has been described as "unique for its time" and exemplifying "what can be achieved" (Feather, 1990, p. 10) in academic research. Both Bakke and Jahoda were pioneers in providing extensive accounts of the effects of unemployment on individuals, their families, and communities. Key findings include the character of individual and social consequences, and the importance of people's subjective understandings and material circumstances. The categories or stages identified by Jahoda were subsequently explored in Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's (1938) review, which resulted in the development of a three-stage account of unemployment. This model has been influential in shaping unemployment research to this day.

### *3.1.1 Stage Approach*

In the 1930s the dominant notion postulated by researchers was that an individual's psychological well-being progressively deteriorated through a number of stages or phases in response to becoming unemployed. The most influential notion of psychological responses to unemployment was Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's (1938) Stage Model. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld reviewed European and North American research on unemployment, published from 1930 to 1938, and found several common stages that people experienced after becoming unemployed. Individuals were said initially to experience a stage of shock, which was followed by an optimistic job hunt. If they were unsuccessful at finding employment a second stage of pessimism leading to distress occurred. The final stage involved the fatalistic adaptation to being unemployed.

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld had not identified a theory of unemployment but a framework for describing the psychological deterioration often accompanying unemployment. Progression through the three stages was assumed to occur as the length of unemployment increased (Feather, 1990). A number of stage accounts proposing different stages of unemployment have been proposed in

### *Theory and Research*

the ensuing years (Hopson & Adams, 1976, cited in Hayes & Nutman, 1981; Kaufman, 1982). Empirical studies from the 1930s, 1970s, and 1980s have supported the notion that a person progresses through a sequence of stages after becoming unemployed (Hayes & Nutman, 1981; Jahoda et al., 1933/1972; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985; Swinburne, 1981).

One important aspect of Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's findings, which is often given less emphasis but has been supported by empirical research, is that individual differences moderate the impact of unemployment. The importance of these differences is that they are thought to influence the amount of time spent at each stage. Most researchers do not identify specific durations for each stage because individual differences will impact on when and in what order the stages occur (Daniel, 1974; Hill, 1977; Jahoda et al., 1933/1972; Sinfield, 1981; Stokes & Cochrane, 1984).

In support of the stage approach, Warr and Jackson (1984) found significant associations between three health change measures (general, psychological, and physical health) and length of unemployment. The fastest deterioration was reported six months after an individual's unemployment had begun, after which a levelling-off occurred. Epidemiological studies have established a relationship between long-term unemployment and high levels of psychological distress (Fryer, 1985). A study undertaken by Platt and Kreitman found levels of attempted suicide were related to the duration of unemployment in Edinburgh. The main pattern which emerged was a "high rate associated with the initial shock, an improvement during the subsequent more optimistic phase, and progressively worsening rates during the latter stages of pessimism and fatalism" (1985, p. 122).

Other studies have been less supportive of the stage account (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). A series of longitudinal investigations by Winefield and colleagues (1993) examined the relationship between psychological health and duration of unemployment in a sample of more than 3,000 Australian school-leavers,

over a ten-year period (1980 to 1989). Winefield and associates (1993) argue that the stage approach may be more applicable to mature people than adolescent school leavers, as the stage approach focuses on reactions to job loss and the processes involved in adaptation during unemployment. This approach does not explain the psychological impact of unemployment for those such as school leavers who have never had a job.

A number of longitudinal studies comparing employed and unemployed groups have also investigated the relationship between unemployment duration and affective reactions. The results are somewhat contradictory. Warr, Jackson, and Banks (1982) found no general relationship between duration of unemployment and affective reactions. However, long-term unemployment was associated with lower psychological distress. Another study undertaken by Feather and O'Brien (1986) explored the psychological health of the unemployed over time. They identified increases in depressive affect, but argued there was no evidence of apathy, fatalism, or adaptation to being unemployed. However, they did find decreases in perceived competence, life satisfaction, and activity levels.

There is both confirmatory and contradictory evidence for the stage approach. Conceptual contradictions and limitations of this approach have been identified by a number of researchers (Ezzy, 1993; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1985; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). After providing a detailed review of the stage approach Fryer concludes that it is "conceptually" and "methodologically flawed" (1985, p. 271). Fryer and others argue that the nature of each stage, the criteria used to distinguish each stage, and the number and length of the stages have not been agreed on. Fineman proposes that it is "unclear whether the unemployed *experience* moving in and out of phases, or whether the phases represent mere labels of convenience for the observer/investigator. Furthermore, it is possible that phases may loop, or be cyclical, rather than linear" (1983, p. 11, italics in original). Criticisms of the developmental paradigm in psychology are applicable to the stage approach to unemployment

### *Theory and Research*

(Fryer, 1985). One of the main criticisms is that the stage approach attempts to systematically account for the unemployed's experiences, which can lead to them being treated as an homogenous group (Ezzy, 1993), despite the emphasis on individual variation in 1930s research. Furthermore, it has not been established whether all individuals move through a uniform set of stages, whether the stages are sequential, or if the stage process is applicable to all age groups, or types of unemployed.

In sum, although providing valuable insights and contributing to early research efforts, the stage approach does not provide an adequate explanation of the processes involved in the negative consequences of unemployment. This approach can lead to the neglect of differences such as age, skill level, experiences, regional traditions, and material circumstances (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985), which may lead to variations between individuals and groups.

## **3.2 Unemployment Approaches Since the 1970s**

The amount of research attention given to unemployment has increased since the 1970s. In response to limitations in the stage approach, three other approaches have been developed during this time: the social-environmental (Jahoda, 1979, 1982; Warr, 1987), the agency restriction (Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1995), and the social-cognitive (Feather, 1990, 1992; O'Brien, 1986).

### *3.2.1 Social-environmental Approach*

The social-environmental approach subsumes two prominent models which attempt to explain the psychological effects of unemployment: Jahoda's (1979) Latent Function Model of Employment and Warr's (1987) Vitamin Model.

#### *Latent Function Model of Employment*

After Marienthal, Jahoda (1979, 1981, 1982) moved away from a stage approach and proposed a Latent Function Model of Employment, which, Fryer (1986) argues, is more adequately described as a deprivation theory of

unemployment. Jahoda argued that the psychological meaning of unemployment could not be considered in isolation because unemployment deprived an individual of various beneficial by-products which were typically gained through employment. According to Jahoda employment is a social institution which has both manifest and latent consequences. Manifest consequences are deliberately planned and taken-for-granted consequences of employment. For instance, a fortnightly pay packet allows an individual to earn a living. Jahoda did not elaborate further on these manifest consequences. Instead she concentrated on latent objective consequences, which are unintended by-products, not purposefully planned. She argued that people derive five positive latent consequences from employment:

First, employment imposes a time structure on the waking day; second, employment implies regularly shared experiences and contacts with people outside the nuclear family; third, employment links individuals to goals and purposes that transcend their own; fourth, employment defines aspects of personal status and identity; and finally, enforces activity (Jahoda, 1981, p. 188).

These latent consequences were used to explain the motivation to work in industrialised societies even when work conditions were adverse. They were also used to explain the psychologically destructive consequences of unemployment (Jahoda, 1981). Jahoda (1979, 1982) argued that the five latent consequences of employment represent a link with reality, and that when an individual becomes unemployed they may be in danger of being overwhelmed by fantasy and emotion. The unemployed person is thought to be deprived of some or all of these latent consequences, which meet basic psychological and physiological needs for the majority of people.

Jahoda's model has been a prominent approach used by numerous researchers to investigate the effects of unemployment (Fryer, 1986). For instance, Henwood and Miles (1987) investigated whether Jahoda's Latent Function Model of Employment was generalisable to both men and women residents in Brighton, England. Like Jahoda, they argued that employment gave people "access to certain categories of experience (ACE)" (Henwood &

### *Theory and Research*

Miles, 1987, p. 96; similar to Jahoda's five latent consequences), often denied to people not in formal employment. They further assumed that these experiences were important for an individual's psychological well-being.

Miles (1982, cited in Henwood & Miles, 1987) reported results from a sample of 300 unemployed men. The results indicated that five ACEs existed. The most significant differences were found for men's levels of well-being and the way they utilised their time. This finding is supported by the work of Swinburne (1981), who found that unemployed people who had been used to a structured time schedule while employed as professionals experienced increased difficulty with their time when they became unemployed. Seabrook (1982) also identified the absence of structured time as the most important latent function and proposed that without it boredom, monotony, and desperation occurred. Furthermore, Henwood's (1983, cited in Henwood & Miles, 1987) cross-sectional comparison of levels of ACEs in employed and unemployed groups found a positive relationship between employment status and ACEs. The employed (male and females) scored significantly higher on all ACEs than the unemployed group.

Several researchers have presented empirical findings which do not support Jahoda's model (Ezzy, 1993; Feather, 1990; Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). These researchers also criticise some of the underlying assumptions inherent in Jahoda's institutional view (Fryer, 1995). Jahoda developed her model based on what needs, besides economic ones, a job should fulfil in order to be a satisfying one. She implied in her model that a bad job was better than no job at all. However, some workers are happy to leave their jobs because of over-rigid structures and stressful work conditions, which may contribute to a range of health problems (Cooper & Payne, 1978). These workers may be employed under conditions (especially in New Zealand under the Employment Contracts Act) which are dissatisfying (Fryer, 1986). Warr and Jackson (1984) present evidence that some people who had become unemployed improved their levels of physical health and psychological

well-being. Winefield and colleagues (1993) have consistently found that young people employed in jobs that they view as unsatisfactory are no better off psychologically than the unemployed. Jahoda's model cannot explain situations of under-employment<sup>6</sup> which can also lead to feelings of stigma, stress, and low self-esteem (Fineman, 1983, 1987; O'Brien, 1986). These criticisms raise serious doubts about key assumptions in Jahoda's model, particularly the universality of the positive character of employment which Jahoda proposes.

It is also debatable whether everyone requires institutions to impose structure onto their lives as Jahoda assumes. Fryer and Payne (1984) investigated whether a group of proactive unemployed people were deprived of the latent functions employment was said to provide. Most of the unemployed men reported that their previous employment had imposed rigid time structures which did not comply with their needs and provoked resentment. This group viewed unemployment as allowing them to structure their own time in line with their needs, values, and personal requirements. The existence of such proactive groups, described by Fryer and Payne (1984), as being self-directed, independent, interpreting agents, raises further doubts about Jahoda's model.

Fryer (1986) argues that Jahoda's model has been found to have pragmatic, methodological, empirical, and theoretical limitations. There are two main underlying assumptions of Jahoda's model which led to important limitations. The first is that the actual nature of the experience of latent functions of employment may be beneficial to psychological well-being, whether or not individuals like their jobs. For example, even if evidence suggested that employed people disliked the five latent functions of employment, including having a structure imposed on their lives, it would not in Jahoda's view,

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<sup>6</sup> A number of researchers have provided evidence that an increasing number of people are being employed in jobs which do not utilise their knowledge, skills, and abilities (O'Brien, 1986).

### *Theory and Research*

discredit the claim that these latent consequences are necessary for psychological well-being (Fryer & Payne, 1984). The second assumption is that employment is the dominant institution in society which enhances psychological well-being. In this generalised form Jahoda's model is difficult to refute, as counter-examples can always be provided (Fryer & Payne, 1986). For instance, an unemployed group who seem to have high levels of psychological health can be interpreted as having obtained these consequences from another social institution, rather than coping without the five latent consequences. Jahoda's model has been described as a 'controlling', 'situation-centred' approach, which supports 'totalitarian systems of government' (Fryer, 1986, 1992a).

In short, by focusing on latent functions and neglecting manifest functions, poverty became peripheral in Jahoda's explanation of the effects of unemployment (Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1995). Jahoda's account of latent functions is limited by the proposition that the benefits of employment are universal. She failed to consider individual differences in the experience of work, and the influence of a range of material circumstances and environments. Warr's Vitamin Model attempts to extend Jahoda's explanation of the impact of unemployment by identifying features which can be used to assess the effects of a number of environments on mental health.

#### *Vitamin Model*

Warr (1987, 1994) proposed a Vitamin Model to explain the effects of nine environmental features on people's mental health. These environmental features can be considered in any setting, but Warr primarily focuses on paid employment and unemployment. Warr presented his model in three parts. First, the environment is categorised into nine environmental features. Warr viewed these features as being analogous to two different mechanisms by which vitamins affect physical health. He identifies six environmental features which resemble vitamins A and D (abbreviated as AD and standing for 'additional decrement'): opportunity for control, opportunity for skill use,

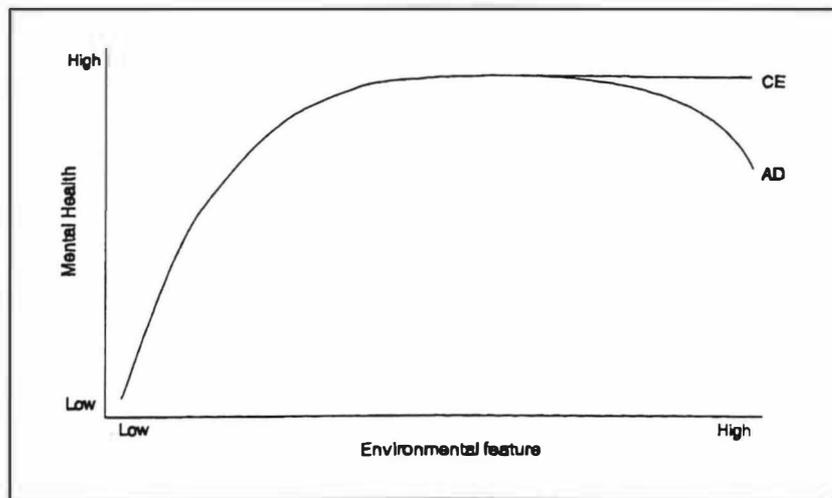
externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, and opportunity for interpersonal contact. Vitamins A and D are known to be toxic in large quantities, but beneficial in the right dosages. Conversely, three environmental features are identified as resembling vitamins C and E (CE, standing for 'constant effect'): availability of money, physical security, and valued social position. When these vitamins reach high levels they cease to be beneficial, but are not harmful to the individual.

Second, at a general level Warr proposed that the above environmental features affect mental health. According to Warr (1994) mental health in Western societies consists of five components: (1) affective well-being, (2) competence, (3) aspiration, (4) autonomy, and (5) integrative functioning. Within Warr's model, an individual's appraisal of their competence, aspirations, and autonomy contributes to self-esteem. Warr (1987, 1994) proposed that two possible decrements in mental health can occur (see Figure Two, p. 42). First, low levels of mental health are associated with low levels of vitamins. When the vitamin levels are in the middle of the range they have a constant beneficial effect (CE) on mental health. A second decrement occurs with those vitamins labelled AD. When the levels of these vitamins are too high, mental health decreases. Therefore a curvilinear relationship exists between each of the six environmental features and mental health. Warr characterises unemployment as causing low values on all nine environmental features, which then have harmful effects upon mental health. On regaining employment, the Vitamin Model predicts a general shift towards higher environmental values and higher levels of mental health.

The final part of Warr's model involves the recognition that people have some influence over their environment and its impact upon them. These influences can be cognitive in terms of appraisal and the imposition of meaning, and behavioural in terms of modifying environmental conditions. Just as environments are expected to differ, Warr (1987, 1994) acknowledges variations among people. He identifies matching personal characteristics,

### *Theory and Research*

which can be grouped into four moderating categories: (1) baseline mental health, (2) values, (3) abilities relevant to demand, and (4) demographic characteristics (indicators of other features or processes), with specific environments. According to Warr (1987) these categories can be relatively stable over time and across situations, but they may change in response to situational pressures.



**Figure 2.** Schematic Representation of Two Assumed Relationships Between Environmental Features and Mental Health (CE is 'constant effect'; AD is 'additional decrement').

**Source:** Warr, P. (1994). A conceptual framework for the study of work and mental health. *Work and Stress*, 8, p. 88.

Warr's Vitamin Model provides researchers with standardised criteria for describing environments for the employed and the unemployed. The model can describe the magnitude of change between employed and unemployed

environments. Therefore, the negative impact of unemployment on mental health can be explained in terms of an impoverished environment (Ezzy, 1993).

Research evidence supports the relationship between an individual's level of mental health and their employment status (Warr, 1987). A number of cross-sectional studies have found that the unemployed have significantly lower levels of well-being than the employed (Hepworth, 1980; Miles, 1983, cited in Henwood & Miles, 1987; Warr, 1978). Longitudinal evidence suggests that these differences may be caused, in part, by changes in the unemployed's environment (Warr, 1987). Support for such a view has come from studies which demonstrate that people re-entering the workforce improve their levels of well-being (Jackson, Stafford, Banks & Warr, 1983; Warr & Jackson, 1985). Warr proposes that the main area of concern is the effects of unemployment on aspiration, autonomy, and competence. These effects have been found to be more pronounced and stable for middle-aged groups (Warr, 1987). However, a study undertaken by Banks and Jackson (1982) found that adolescents who became unemployed also experienced a significant drop in their levels of aspiration, autonomy, and competence.

Winefield and Tiggemann (1985) view this relationship between environments and adolescent mental health as being even more complicated. They argued that an adolescent's experiences upon leaving school can affect mental health, irrespective of whether the school-leaver becomes employed or unemployed. Tiggemann and Winefield's (1980) research found no empirical evidence to suggest that an adolescent's desire for work (aspiration) is reduced by their unemployment. However, Winefield and colleagues (1993) agree with Warr's assertion that autonomy and competence are reduced in the unemployed. Several studies have reported reduced autonomy levels (as measured by locus of control) in the unemployed (Feather & O'Brien, 1986; O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1978; Patton & Noller, 1984; Winefield et al., 1993).

### *Theory and Research*

Research has also shown that the unemployed decline in perceived levels of competence. For example, Fryer and Warr (1984) found 37% of unemployed men were taking longer to do tasks, and 30% of the men agreed that their skills were getting rusty. Subsequently, a longitudinal study of Australian school leavers, by Feather and O'Brien (1986), found a significant reduction in perceived competence in those who became unemployed.

The above research into the psychological effects of unemployment has demonstrated that unemployment can impair mental health. The literature suggests the unemployed are less content, more anxious, depressed, and value themselves less than employed people value themselves. However, such consequences are not universal (Warr, 1987). As Shouksmith and Hesketh argued:

There is clear evidence that unemployment adversely affects the mental and physical health of a large majority of people who experience it. There are however, some whose physical and mental health improves on leaving a job. We must be careful of overgeneralising (1984, p. 20).

This proposition is supported by a longitudinal study conducted in New Zealand by Pernice (1992). Pernice investigated the relationship between Warr's environmental features and mental health among the long-term unemployed. She identified the absence of five environmental features (externally generated goals, opportunity for interpersonal contact, opportunity for skill use, availability of money, and environmental clarity) with lower levels of mental health. Additionally, unemployed participants who became re-employed were found to exhibit improved levels of mental health. Pernice also identified a small number of unemployed people who had high levels of mental health. This group was identified as being more active, self-directed, and making more self-determined choices. These findings further support research, previously discussed in relation to Jahoda's model, that shows an improvement in mental health can occur when people leave adverse work environments.

As acknowledged by Warr (1994) himself, research utilising the Vitamin Model has tended to focus on particular issues or environmental features, and no study has addressed the model in its entirety. This makes the model difficult to refute. However, several limitations have been identified. First, the model explores only mental health, neglecting physical health. It does not explain how a deprived physical environment, such as damp, over-crowded dwellings, can contribute to the onset of physical illness. Second, measuring all of the nine environmental features is difficult because of conceptual and empirical overlap (Warr, 1987, 1994). The nine environmental features for the unemployed may not be homogeneous compared with a specific work environment (Pernice, 1992). Third, according to Warr (1987, 1994) empirical research investigating the plateau has typically examined the relationship between different environmental features and mental health in a linear fashion. Warr argues that his framework cannot be linearly associated with mental health. However, his argument that a plateau exists has not been supported by empirical research (Ezzy, 1993; Pernice, 1992; Warr, 1994). Finally, although Warr (1987) considered individual differences, his model is situation-centred rather than person-centred. The focus is on environmental influences outside the person rather than the experiences of the individual. Ezzy (1993) argues that this situation-centred approach is limited when moderating variables associated with the meaning of work are considered. One important, empirically identified moderator is employment commitment. An individual's "commitment to work is shaped by and also shapes their environment: it is not the environment but the subjective meaning of employment that is the empirically significant variable" (Ezzy, 1993, p. 46).

In sum, the social-environmental approach to unemployment has provided two main models, Jahoda's Latent Function Model of Employment and Warr's Vitamin Model. Many of Warr's environmental features are already found in Jahoda's model. In contrast to Jahoda, Warr identified features which can be used to assess the effects of a wide range of environments on mental health, to account for the observed positive effects of leaving oppressive work

### *Theory and Research*

conditions, and the negative effects of being employed in dissatisfying work. Both theories take a situation-centred approach, where individuals are influenced by their environment. People's ability to make sense of their situation and initiate action from within themselves is not given adequate attention. An alternative person-centred approach, agency restriction, has recently been developed to explore the role of human agency (see Section 3.2.2) and the impact of unemployment on people's ability to act in a proactive manner.

#### *3.2.2 Agency Approach*

Debates around structure and agency have taken centre stage within sociology for decades, particularly in relation to issues of social and health inequalities (Bury, 1997; Bartley, Blane & Davey Smith, 1998; Marshall, 1984; Wilkinson, 1996). In light of such research and debate from other social science disciplines, and limitations in the social-environmental approach to unemployment, there is now increased emphasis placed on the role of structural restraint and human agency when theorising and researching the impact of unemployment.

The Agency Restriction Model emerged from Fryer's (1986) criticism of Jahoda's model on the grounds of the neglect of personal agency and material deprivation. Fryer (1986, 1992a, 1995) maintains that people are active agents who strive to make sense of, and assert themselves over, their environment. The Agency Restriction Model conceptualises the unemployed as self-determining, socially embedded agents, who, within the context of social norms and past experiences, attempt to not only cope with but influence situations. Fryer states:

whilst personal agency is sometimes empowered in interaction[s] with labour market social settings and systems, agency is frequently undermined, restricted and frustrated by formal and informal social forces including: powerful constituting and regulating social institutions and organizations; required social relationships entailing psychological strain inducing obligations combined with minimal collective and individual rights;

inadequate personal, family, social, community and material resources; and powerful, socially constructed norms, role expectations and disempowerments (1995, p. 270).

Fryer asserts that people are fundamentally proactive and independent, whereas Jahoda's work was criticised for its apparent tendency to view people as fundamentally reactive and dependent (Winefield et al., 1993). Here a shift has occurred from a rather deterministic situation-centred approach to a person-centred approach which tries to account for situational restraints (Fryer, 1986, 1995; Warr, 1987). Fryer (personal communication, August 30, 1997) acknowledges the roles played by both individual and social circumstances, and views people as being socially located agents who possess a kind of relative autonomy. People actively engage with the world, but may be restricted by social circumstances and power relations often manifested in state institutions and the perceptions of others.

The term agency<sup>7</sup> is juxtaposed, in the sociological literature, with the term structure (for a detailed explanation of structure see Marshall, 1994). Agency is viewed as "emphasizing implicitly the undetermined nature of human action" (Marshall, 1994, p. 7). It includes an individual's ability to make sense of their social world where they alternate between social belief systems, self-perceptions, life experiences, and social structures. Proactivity is a manifestation of agency where individuals actively assert themselves to gain some form of control of their lives.

Fryer contends that unemployment is psychologically destructive as it "impoverishes, restricts, baffles, and discourages the unemployed agent" (1995, p. 270). He proposes that distress during unemployment is due to factors (mainly relative poverty) that restrict personal agency. Fryer identifies two factors central to the psychological costs of unemployment. The first is the

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<sup>7</sup> The term agency is utilised in this thesis at the conceptual level. However, in everyday language agency refers to government organisations providing social services.

### *Theory and Research*

restriction of opportunities to plan for the future. The second is the experience of relative poverty resulting from unemployment. Economic insecurity can lead to reduced perceived control over one's life, lessened expectations, increased pressures, and limited options. All these factors are associated with increased risk of physical illness (Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996).

Fryer (1986, 1992a, 1995) has conducted research which supports his Agency Restriction Model. These studies focus on three particular areas: proactivity (Fryer & Payne, 1984), future orientation (Fryer & McKenna, 1987), and the role of poverty in restricting agency (McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Whelan, 1992). First, in terms of proactivity Fryer and Payne's (1984) aforementioned, qualitative investigation of a small sample of unemployed men found that their proactive stance towards unemployment helped them to cope with their situation, despite the material hardships they were experiencing.

Second, Fryer and McKenna (1987) interviewed two groups of unemployed men from engineering companies in an industrial town, situated in the North of England. The first group's union had negotiated a situation where, instead of compulsory redundancy, the men accepted temporary stand-downs. The second group had been laid off indefinitely (unemployed group). The first temporarily laid-off group reported higher levels of mental health than the second unemployed group. It was concluded that the difference was due to the groups' orientation to their future. The temporarily laid-off group planned carefully for their period off work, exhibited more self-initiated and goal-directed activity, and had less difficulty in filling their day, compared to the indefinitely laid-off group who showed little sign of planning. A lack of future expectations brought on by unemployment was found to result in lower levels of agency, exhibited here in terms of planning for the future.

Finally, a lack of ability to plan for the future is also said to result from the material deprivation caused by unemployment. Relative deprivation (a definition is provided in Chapter Four, Section 4.1, p. 63) is said to restrict

agency (Fryer, 1992a, 1995). McGhee and Fryer (1989) conducted a qualitative and quantitative (action research) investigation of unemployed men and their families. The unemployed expressed how difficult it became to prioritise different family members' needs, and how budgeting strategies caused division in the families and affected their coping behaviour. This financial hardship was compounded with the social stigma associated with receiving a benefit. Being a beneficiary was said to be construed as an illegitimate way of earning an income, which further restricted people's access to positive social interactions.

Whelan (1992) provides further evidence of the role of relative poverty in restricting agency. Whelan and colleagues surveyed 3,294 households in the Republic of Ireland. The study contained structured interviews and a number of questionnaires, which surveyed household characteristics, personal background (income), and levels of psychological distress (measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), 12-item version, Goldberg, 1972). Whelan found that psychological distress was directly effected by 'objective lifestyle deprivation' (lack of heating, food, clothing, and the persistence of financial debt due to daily expenses), and indirectly effected by 'secondary lifestyle deprivation' (exclusion from holidays, leisure activities, and consumer durables). 'Subjective financial strain' had an independent effect on psychological distress. Whelan argues that "the findings ... clearly demonstrate the role of poverty in mediating the impact of unemployment not only for the individuals involved but also for the members of their families" (1992, pp. 341-342).

Although providing a useful framework for exploring both situational and individual factors and placing renewed emphasis on the role of material deprivation, Fryer's Agency Restriction Model has two main limitations. First, Feather (1990) argues that it is a metatheory which takes a particular view of the person as being a proactive and goal-directed agent. Feather identifies a number of theories which present this position in a more formalised way, for

### *Theory and Research*

example "theories concerned with the analysis of action, coping behavior [*sic*] and the self" (1990, p. 38). Second, even though Winefield and colleagues support agency theory they "do not subscribe to Fryer's global view of human nature".

Indeed [*they said*] we believe that any global view of human nature must be mistaken. Some people, either for genetic or environmental reasons, are inclined to be reactive and dependent, others are inclined to be proactive and independent. Moreover, people who display reactance and dependence in one situation may display proactance and independence in another, and vice versa. We believe that the only realistic assumption to be made about human nature is its diversity (1993, p. 96).

A debate between Fryer and Jahoda highlights further critical observations. Jahoda (1986) argues that Fryer over-emphasises cognitive processes and ignores institutional constraints on life (a form of psychological reductionism). She also notes that Fryer fails to differentiate the social from the psychological dimensions in her Latent Function Model of Employment. In reply, Fryer (1986) argues that Jahoda places too much emphasis on institutional dimensions (a form of sociological reductionism). In reconciling this debate, Fryer proposes that eventually both the social-environmental and the agency approach are likely to be incorporated with other theories to produce a more extensive account of unemployment (Fryer, 1992a, 1992b). However, neither author has attempted to formally integrate these theories (Ezzy, 1993). This debate highlights that there is a need to further scrutinise the environmental or contextual factors which restrict the unemployed's lives and amplify the negative consequences of unemployment.

#### *3.2.3 Social-cognitive Approach*

One other approach evident in unemployment research throughout the last two decades is the social-cognitive approach. This approach does not encompass a distinct theory. It involves an eclectic application of widely accepted social-cognitive theories - such as attribution theory, learned helplessness, and expectancy-value theory - to unemployment research (Feather, 1990, 1992;

O'Brien, 1986). A key figure associated with this approach is Feather. Feather does not present a coherent theory as such, but draws on existing psychological theory, particularly from the area of social cognition, in an attempt to provide a more complex understanding of the impact of unemployment. Following a line of thought presented by Jahoda (1982), Feather proposes that the primary effort within research into the impact of unemployment should not be focused on theory building:

Instead, theories are used as background tools for planning research and interpreting results. It will be noted that there is no general theory that can be applied to all aspects of the unemployment experience. Instead there are theories that are more relevant to our understanding of affective reactions and psychological well-being, theories that can be applied to the analysis of behavior [*sic*] following job loss such as job-seeking behavior [*sic*], and theories that take account of age-related variables (Feather, 1990, p. 82).

According to Feather (1990, 1992, 1997) the type of theory used is dependent upon the research question or what aspects of unemployment are being explored. He takes an eclectic approach, drawing on what he terms middle-range theories, which he believes may provide a wider range of perspectives applicable to new areas of investigation.

For instance, Feather (1990, 1992) has been a leading proponent of the use of Expectancy-value Theory to investigate the job-seeking behaviour of the unemployed. According to this model an individual's behaviour is related to their expectations of success or failure, and their perceptions of the attractiveness or aversiveness of possible outcomes. Therefore:

Whether or not a person has a tendency to act in a particular direction will depend on that person's expectation about whether he or she can perform the action to the required standard, thereby achieving a successful outcome, and on a further set of expectations about the possible consequences of the outcome, and on the valence (or subjective value) associated with the action outcome (Feather, 1990, p. 63).

Feather (1990, 1992) argues that the Expectancy-value Theory can be used to explain key aspects of the unemployed's job-seeking behaviour and the

### *Theory and Research*

consequences of not finding work. In a study which applied Expectancy-value Theory, Feather and Davenport (1981) found that unemployed adolescents who were highly motivated to find a job were more depressed and were likely to blame external difficulties if they could not find a job. As a result their motivation decreased as they felt less able to find a job.

However, a later investigation undertaken by Feather and Barber (1983) failed to confirm these findings. They found depressive reactions to unemployment were not related to initial confidence in finding a job.

There are limitations in the application of social-cognitive models such as the Expectancy-value Theory. The main limitations of using Expectancy-value Theory is that it is a general process theory of motivation which is not designed specifically for unemployment research and can lead to the neglect of material deprivation by placing emphasis on an individual's motives, needs, and values. Furthermore, how the context in which people live influences their behaviour and restricts their options is not adequately explained (Ezzy, 1993; Fryer, 1992a).

When reflecting on the use of such social-cognitive theories, Feather himself acknowledges that "to some extent this strategy has been successful, but not entirely. One problem is that psychological theories may not be sufficiently well articulated to meet the complex conditions of real-life situations and events" (1990, p. 244). In more recent writing Feather (1990, 1992, 1997) has tried to emphasise both individual and environmental factors influencing the impact of unemployment. He presents evidence which suggests that variables related to quality of life and categories of experience are important factors in explaining the impact of unemployment. Departing from a social-cognitive approach, Feather has become increasingly interested in concerns central to Fryer's Agency Restriction Model, including the impact of relative deprivation on restricting people's agency. For instance Feather argues that "financial hardship and economic deprivation may be seen as limiting the satisfaction of

basic needs and values and the achievement of important goals" (1997, p. 42). Reflecting recent trends in unemployment theory and research Feather advocates the usefulness of investigating both environmental and individual determinants.

This thesis draws upon insights from theory and research outlined without being restricted to any one theoretical framework (*cf.* Feather, 1990; Jahoda, 1982). No one approach is adopted although particular attention is given to Fryer's Agency Restriction Model. This thesis uses Fryer (1986, 1992a, 1995) as the base for formulating hypotheses and at the same time acknowledging the influence of social circumstances in limiting the impact of unemployment. In particular, the view adopted is that the unemployed can act as agents who actively interact within the context of their everyday lives, and develop a range of understandings of unemployment and its impact. It is also acknowledged that relative deprivation can restrict people's options in life. The perceptions and actions of not only the unemployed but also the employed members of society and social institutions are also seen as important restraints. This thesis acknowledges that agency occurs within a material and social context (see Chapter Two), and that some unemployed people may react in a dependent manner. The approach taken is outlined more fully in the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter provides a review of research findings on the impact of unemployment.

### **3.3 Overview of the Impact of Unemployment**

Throughout this century, researchers have been interested in the social costs of unemployment (Binns & Mars, 1984; Carle, 1987; Dew et al., 1991; Hammarström, 1994; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability, 1998; Smith, 1987; Wilson & Walker, 1993). Research informed by the various psychological approaches outlined in this chapter has provided evidence that unemployment has adverse consequences on social life, and psychological and physiological health. The

### *Theory and Research*

following section reviews research evidence on the societal, family, and individual consequences of unemployment. Because only limited research has focused on the societal and family consequences (Carle, 1987), these consequences will be explored only briefly before attention turns to the more established findings on the individual consequences.

#### *3.3.1 Societal and Family Consequences*

To investigate societal consequences, unemployment research has mainly used aggregate and longitudinal designs (Hammarström, 1994; Warr, 1987; an overview of these research designs is given in Chapter Four). One prominent question in this research is whether decreased economic activity correlates with morbidity and mortality (Iversen, 1989). The work of Brenner popularised the use of aggregate studies in relation to unemployment. In a number of studies, Brenner investigated whether fluctuations in the economy related to levels of mortality. Despite the limitations of his research, Brenner demonstrated that an increase in unemployment was followed by an increase in mortality (Brenner, 1979; Brenner & Mooney, 1983; Iversen, 1989). Following Brenner, researchers have proposed links between unemployment and increases in mortality, crime, suicide, and the abuse of drugs and alcohol (Carle, 1987; Dooley, Catalano & Hough, 1992; Dooley, Catalano, Rook & Serxner, 1989; Hammarström, 1994), all of which are related to levels of social conflict.

Findings from such research are tentative because aggregate designs are unable to establish causal connections (Iversen, 1989). It may be that poverty (or income distribution), rather than unemployment, is responsible for reported increases in mortality (Winefield et al., 1993). However, few would doubt that unemployment places people in a situation of relative poverty which has been associated in epidemiological research on social and health inequalities with a range of negative health outcomes and increased social conflict (Bartley et al., 1998; Elstad, 1998; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson et al.,

1998; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998; this is further discussed in Section 3.3.2). Epidemiological literature on the link between social stratification and health inequalities is discussed in the following chapter. One aspect of increased social stratification associated with persistent high rates of unemployment is social conflict.

Recent epidemiological research provides substantial evidence that disparities between different social groups ('rich people and poor people') are likely to contribute to social instability and conflict (Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson et al., 1998; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). A recent study, undertaken by Kawachi and colleagues (1997), investigated income inequality in the United States and its relationship to social capital. Social capital (or the strength of social cohesion) was defined as the "features of social organisation, such as civic participation, norms or reciprocity, and trust in others, that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit" (Kawachi et al., 1997, p. 1491). Their study found that income inequality was strongly associated with group membership, a lack of social trust, and overall mortality rates. Social inequalities appear to contribute to increased levels of social conflict, such as violence (Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew et al., 1991). Wilson and Daly (1997) also found a strong association between income distribution in Chicago neighbourhoods and the homicide rate. Social cohesion appears to be sustained when gaps in income differences are minimised and social conflict increases when these gaps widen (Wilkinson, 1996). There have been increasing income differences between the rich and poor in the last two decades in New Zealand corresponding with the entrenchment of unemployment and benefit cuts (Cheyne et al., 1997). Within the New Zealand context Woodward and Kawachi propose that "... the most significant danger of inequality is that it may promote exclusion, lower thresholds for risk and violence, and weaken the social connections that make for healthy communities" (1998, p. 13).

Unemployment has the potential to affect not only the unemployed person but also family members. As is the case for societal consequences, research

### *Theory and Research*

investigating the effects of unemployment on the family is limited (Allatt & Yeandle, 1992; Dew et al., 1991; Hammarström, 1994; for an extensive review, see Dew et al., 1991 and Smith, 1987). In an important longitudinal study, Liem and Liem (1988) investigated the psychological effects of unemployment on a number of workers who had recently lost their jobs, and also the effects on the wives of the unemployed. Liem and Liem compared these wives to those of employed men and found that four months after their husbands had lost their jobs the wives showed significant increases in their levels of depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, interpersonal sensitivity, and hostility. Liem and Liem suggest that these delayed effects were determined by the husbands' psychological reactions to losing their jobs, as well as changes in their family responsibilities.

It has been proposed that the economic uncertainty caused by unemployment is the main reason for findings which indicate a deterioration in family relationships (Allatt & Yeandle, 1992; Smith, 1987). In his review, Smith notes that "unemployment can destroy relationships just as it destroys individuals ... And in this time of misery the family are likely to be thrown together more, usually in financially reduced circumstances and sooner or later something may snap" (1987, p. 131). Researchers investigating the effects of unemployment on the family provide accounts of increased levels of stress leading to marital disharmony, separation, and divorce (Allatt & Yeandle, 1992; Warr, 1987). Rates of domestic violence and child abuse have also been reported to be higher among the unemployed (Dew et al., 1991; Hammarström, 1994; Warr, 1987; Wilson & Walker, 1993). However, these findings come from aggregate studies which describe general trends in large population samples. Such studies are unable to answer questions concerning individual families. There is a need for more research in this area in light of research which shows that negative consequences are not universal and depend to a large extent on social support, existing family roles, and the financial resources available to the family (Allatt & Yeandle, 1992; Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew et al., 1991; Liem & Liem, 1988). Furthermore, unemployed individuals predominantly reside within

family structures which can insulate them from the negative impact of unemployment, but which also suffer the consequences (Allatt & Yeandle, 1992; Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew et al., 1991).

### *3.3.2 Individual Consequences*

Overall, psychological research indicates that unemployment has a negative impact on people's mental health. Research reviewed previously in this chapter indicates that the unemployed report lowered levels of psychological well-being. Questions concerning the impact of unemployment on physical health have attracted less attention from psychologists. Few investigators have set out primarily to examine the effects of unemployment on physical health (Bethwaite, Baker, Pearce & Kawachi, 1990; Hammarström, 1994; Wilson & Walker, 1993). Initial attention in this section is briefly given to the impact of unemployment on psychological health. However, the primary focus is on the less developed area of the consequences of unemployment on physical health.

Research investigating the health consequences of unemployment has primarily focused on psychological outcomes (Hammarström, 1994; Macky & Haines, 1982; Wilson & Walker, 1993). Studies have consistently found that unemployed people report diminished levels of psychological health and well-being, compared to employed people. Differences have been reported on a wide range of measures such as anxiety, values, boredom, depression, minor psychiatric disorders, life satisfaction, happiness, hopelessness, self-esteem, and locus of control (Feather, 1990, 1997; Fryer, 1997; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Kieselbach, 1988; Macky & Haines, 1982; O'Brien, 1986; Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). Research investigating the impact of unemployment has also focused on factors moderating, or mediating, the impact of unemployment on psychological health. Such factors include employment commitment, social support, length of unemployment, age, and financial deprivation. These and many other factors may help explain individual variations in response to

### *Theory and Research*

unemployment (Feather, 1990; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Macky & Haines, 1982; Warr, Jackson & Banks, 1988; Winefield et al., 1993).

The first factor which has been shown to moderate the effects of unemployment is employment commitment or work involvement. Employment commitment is generally conceptualised as the value people attach to being employed (Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1997; Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). The first study utilising this variable was conducted by Warr (1978), who investigated the work orientation of unemployed steel workers. Warr found those workers who were actively seeking work reported poorer psychological well-being than those who were not looking for work. Subsequently, a cross-sectional study undertaken by Stafford, Jackson, and Banks (1980) investigated employment commitment among unqualified employed and unemployed school leavers. The findings suggest that the unemployed who reported high levels of employment commitment were more likely to have higher levels of psychiatric symptoms. Following on from these studies, a number of researchers have replicated the findings of Stafford and colleagues, and also demonstrated longitudinally that employment commitment among the unemployed is associated with poorer psychological health (Jackson, Stafford, Banks & Warr, 1983; Shamir, 1986; Warr, Banks & Ullah, 1985; Warr & Jackson, 1985).

Another moderating factor is social support (Macky & Haines, 1982). A New Zealand study undertaken by Siegert, Chung, and Taylor (1990) investigated whether social support moderated psychological well-being among 300 unemployed people. It was found that the level of perceived social support amongst the unemployed predicted an individual's well-being. These results corroborate research in other countries, which identifies social support as a factor ameliorating the negative effects of unemployment on both psychological and physical health (Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Kasl, Gore & Cobb, 1975; McPherson & Hall, 1983; Schwarzer, Jerusalem & Hahn, 1994).

Length of unemployment is another factor that seems to mediate the effects of unemployment (Winefield et al., 1993). In a cross-sectional study utilising the GHQ, Hepworth (1980) was one of the first researchers to document differences in mental health after job loss. She found significant differences in subjective well-being (life satisfaction) for groups of men unemployed for more than six months, as opposed to less than six months. Although, further research evidence suggests the duration of unemployment is associated more with middle-aged people (Winefield et al., 1993), these findings do indicate that age is another mediating factor, at least among men. Research has found a curvilinear relationship between age and the negative effects of unemployment. Middle-aged men have been found to experience greater distress than those who are younger or older (Broomhall & Winefield, 1990; Hepworth, 1980; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1984).

An important mediating variable is financial deprivation. Various researchers have linked the mental health consequences of unemployment directly to financial problems (Bartley, 1994; Fryer, 1992a, 1997; Jackson & Warr, 1984; Ullah, 1990; Whelan, 1992). An Australian study undertaken by Finlay-Jones and Eckhardt (1984) found that young unemployed people who had little disposable income, large debts, no savings, and no access to financial loans were more likely to show signs of psychiatric disorders. In 1988 an American investigation undertaken by Kessler, Turner, and House found that financial strain was the strongest mediating factor between unemployment and reported psychological and physical health. These findings have subsequently led researchers to argue for renewed investigation of the consequences of financial deprivation and relative poverty (Bartley, 1994; Fryer, 1992a). Financial deprivation will be discussed further in relation to the health inequalities literature in Chapter Four. Attention now turns to the physical health consequences of unemployment, which are also related to financial deprivation.

Although fewer studies have investigated the impact of unemployment on physical health, available evidence suggests that a range of factors including

### *Theory and Research*

an unhealthy lifestyle (drinking and smoking), poor nutrition, relative poverty, inadequate housing, and life stressors exacerbate the negative health consequences of unemployment (Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability, 1998).

A comprehensive longitudinal study undertaken by Kasl and colleagues (1975) compared the health symptoms of a group of unemployed men and their wives with a group of employed men and their wives. The unemployed men were interviewed while experiencing job loss (anticipation phase), plant closure (job loss), unemployment (for most participants), probationary re-employment, and stable re-employment (Kasl et al., 1975). Kasl and colleagues found that the unemployed men and their wives who were in the anticipation phase reported increases in hypertension, peptic ulcer symptoms, and colds. The symptoms of those men who became re-employed reverted to normal base rates. Those men who remained unemployed reported increased subjective feelings of illness and reduced activity levels.

The proposition that unemployment can have negative consequences for people's physical health is also supported by a range of other studies. In an Australian study, O'Brien and Kabanoff (1979) surveyed employed and unemployed participants on a variety of physiological and psychological (e.g., work values) variables. Health was categorised into physical and non-physical symptoms. The unemployed were found to report significantly higher incidences of physical symptoms such as heart, eyesight, and throat problems. Also Brenner and Mooney (1983) investigated the association between unemployment rates and health status. These authors reported substantial differences between employed and unemployed groups in the prevalence of chronic physical illness, including bronchitis, obstructive lung disease, and ischaemic heart disease.

As a consequence of the increased prevalence of various illnesses amongst the unemployed, health care utilisation has been found to increase

(Hammarström, 1994). A study undertaken in Austria investigated the psychological and physical health consequences associated with health care utilisation by long-term unemployed people (Studnicka, Studnicka-Benke, Wögerbauer, Rastetter, Wenda, Gathmann & Ringel, 1991). One year after the closure of a furniture factory 172 former employees (unemployed and re-employed participants) were surveyed. The researchers found that those respondents who remained unemployed reported poorer psychological and physical health than the re-employed group. Health services were also found to be accessed more by the unemployed than the re-employed group.

Generally, the unemployed also exhibit higher mortality rates than employed groups (Bartley, 1994; Wilson & Walker, 1993). The primary causes of death for unemployed men are lung cancer and suicide. When behavioural factors such as alcohol and smoking have been taken into account, unemployed men still have a higher likelihood of dying within five years of becoming unemployed (Bartley, 1994; Wilson & Walker, 1993).

In spite of the research cited above, the causal pathways that lead from unemployment to ill health remain speculative (Bartley, 1994; Bethwaite et al., 1990; Wilson & Walker, 1993). Still contentious in the literature is whether ill-health leads to unemployment or unemployment leads to ill-health. This mirrors earlier debates in the inequalities literature about whether the higher rates of illness among lower socio-economic groups were a product of social selection, where sick members of a more affluent group spiral down the socio-economic ladder, or whether relative deprivation leads to health inequalities. This debate has not been resolved between medical sociologists and health psychologists. However, there is little evidence of social selection. Research indicates that relative deprivation can lead to health problems but is mediated through subjective perceptions of one's situation (Bartley et al., 1998; Bethwaite et al., 1990; Bury, 1997; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner & Prothrow-Stith, 1997; Wilkinson, 1996; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). Further research evidence,

### *Theory and Research*

from large-scale job-loss studies, also indicates that generally unemployment can lead to ill health, but the issue is by no means resolved in the psychological unemployment literature (Ferrie, 1997; Kasl et al., 1975; Studnicka et al., 1991).

In sum, this chapter has reviewed the diverse and contradictory field of unemployment research within psychology. What has been covered are the major approaches to unemployment research relevant to the present thesis. This review has presented both supportive and non-supportive evidence for the major psychological approaches used to investigate the impact of unemployment. It has also outlined the limitations of each of the approaches presented. Despite academic debates, a general point of consensus is that unemployment has some very real and negative consequences for individuals, their families, and communities. Factors such as work involvement, social support, length of unemployment, age, and financial deprivation can be used to explain variance in the psychological and physical impact of unemployment. Chapter Four builds upon the review presented in this chapter and outlines the research objective and design for this thesis.

## Chapter Four

# The Present Thesis: Research Objective and Design

After nearly 60 years of unemployment research, many researchers agree that unemployment is associated with a deterioration in psychological and physical health (Bartley, 1994; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1992a, 1995, 1997; Hammarström, 1994; Jahoda, 1982; Warr, 1987). Negative consequences of unemployment extend from the individual to the family and society (Carle, 1987). This chapter establishes the research focus and design of an investigation of such consequences in New Zealand. It acts as a transition from contextual concerns and a review of previous research to the empirical component of this thesis. Section one presents the primary research objective in investigating the meaning and impact of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. The second section outlines a range of quantitative research methods used to study the impact of unemployment (Bakke, 1933; Feather, 1990, 1997; Jahoda et al., 1933/1972; Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). This section explains that unemployment research has been dominated in recent decades by quantitative research methods and that researchers are rediscovering the usefulness of qualitative techniques. Section three presents the multimethod research design utilised in this thesis. Finally, section four identifies a number of concerns, such as response rates and literacy levels, in dealing with an unemployed group. To demonstrate how these concerns were dealt with a brief overview of the research procedure is provided.

### 4.1 Research Objective

The purpose of this section is to outline the primary objective of this research, which is

### *Research Objective and Design*

*to gain an understanding of the impact of unemployment and its meaning to unemployed and employed groups.*

This objective is derived from trends in previous research which were outlined in Chapter Three. The discussion of this objective will first deal with the impact and then the meaning of unemployment.

The first component of the thesis objective is to investigate the negative impact of unemployment on the unemployed. A variety of studies have compared employed and unemployed groups using a number of psychological and physical health measures. Significant differences have been reported on levels of anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and physical health (Bartley, 1994; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Hammarström, 1994; Kasl et al., 1975; Shamir, 1986; Warr, 1978, 1987; see Chapter Three). As stated in the previous chapter, psychological research into the impact of unemployment has primarily investigated psychological health. Emerging psychological research into physical health outcomes and more established research from other disciplines provide valuable insights for a study of the impact of unemployment on health. Overwhelmingly, social science research has demonstrated that people from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to have higher rates of illness and death. Health professionals including health psychologists propose that the distribution of a society's income affects the health patterns of its population (Bartley et al., 1998; Carroll & Davey Smith, 1997; Elstad, 1998; Howden-Chapman & Crampton, 1997; Lynch & Kaplan, 1997; Wilkinson, 1996). "With few exceptions, the financially worst-off experience the highest rates of illness and premature death" (National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability, 1998, p. 26).

An important determinant of ill-health is relative poverty. It is important to distinguish between relative poverty and absolute poverty. Relative poverty is used to refer to a financial situation where people do not possess adequate resources to gain access to the necessities in life many members of society are perceived to have. McGhee and Fryer propose that relative poverty is both

a "social-psychological" and an "economic phenomenon" (1989, p. 250). They argue that the unemployed experience not only absolute poverty,

but restrictive norms, perceived lack of entitlements and socially constructed needs to consume symbolic as well as tangible products ... the experience of families attempting to manage on a subsistence income, tainted by stigma, in a culture so dominated by materialistic consumerism that the very means of expressing personal identity and conducting family and social relations have been reified, packaged and made available only to those with expendable income and socially granted entitlements to buy them back as commodities (1989, pp. 250-251).

The term relative poverty rather than absolute poverty, will be used to articulate the research goals for this thesis. Relative poverty places people in a situation of relative deprivation or disadvantage in material and social resources. Drawing on the work of Townsend in the United Kingdom, Crampton, Salmond, and Sutton (1997) discuss material and social deprivation in New Zealand. "Material deprivation refers to material apparatus, goods, services, resources, amenities, and physical environment and location of life. Social deprivation refers to the roles, relationships, functions, customs, rights and responsibilities of membership of society and its sub-groups" (1997, p. 150).

Few would dispute that the majority of unemployed people exist in conditions of relative deprivation. Both internationally and in New Zealand, researchers agree that unemployed people live on or below the poverty line<sup>8</sup> (Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987; Warr, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1984). Researchers investigating the effects of unemployment have confirmed that relative deprivation has an overwhelming

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<sup>8</sup> The National Government prefers a poverty line of 50% of the median equivalent of a household's disposable income. This measure is close to the unemployment benefit (For example, a single person aged 24 years will receive \$15.37 per week, New Zealand Income Support Service, 1993, p. 13). Stephens and Waldegrave (1997) propose 60% is a more adequate measure of poverty. By utilising this definition Stephens and Waldegrave (1997) have shown increasing gaps between the rich and poor in New Zealand.

### *Research Objective and Design*

negative impact on the unemployed (Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Fryer & Payne, 1986; Seabrook, 1987; Smith, 1987). A shortage of money has been associated with social isolation, powerlessness, and inactivity (Binns & Mars, 1984; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Henwood & Miles, 1987; Jackson & Walsh, 1987; Jahoda, 1979, 1982; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985; Warr, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1985). Financial strain has also been associated with poor psychological and physical health (Bartley, 1994; Blaxter, 1990, 1993, 1997; Bury, 1997; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1997; Kessler et al., 1988; McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Warr & Jackson, 1984; Whelan, 1992).

Related to the recent increases in relative deprivation, health reports in New Zealand have indicated increased incidences of "diseases such as tuberculosis, infant mortality, rheumatic fever, meningococcal disease, asthma, glue ear and iron-deficient anaemia" (Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997, p. 105). The rise in prevalence of such diseases is likely to be the outcome of a combination of factors, such as inadequate living conditions, increased living costs, and social isolation. Howden-Chapman and Cram (1998) and Waldegrave and Coventry (1987) have discussed the financial deprivation and hardship experienced by unemployed people in this country and the negative health consequences. They conclude that the unemployed find themselves in a situation where they are unable to pay for basic essentials such as food, power, health, and rent, which increases the strain of unemployment. Such deprivation has been shown to influence the incidence of psychological problems (Whelan, 1992), increase mortality rates (Wilkinson, 1996; Wilson & Walker, 1993), and widen inequalities in physical health (Ferrie, 1997).

One of the leading researchers in the area of inequalities in health is Wilkinson (1996). He proposes that the relationship between income distribution and health is mediated by psychosocial factors: "Fortunately there is now a great deal of epidemiological and experimental evidence which removes any doubt that psychosocial factors can exert very powerful influences on physical health

- both morbidity and mortality" (1996, p. 175). Wilkinson highlights how the impact of material circumstances is mediated through an individual's subjective perceptions. These perceptions can be used to explain part of the variance of the impact of unemployment among people in similar material circumstances. Wilkinson explores the relationship between relative deprivation and health inequalities as an inherently socially mediated process:

Because we are trying to explain the health effects of low relative rather than absolute income, we will concentrate on psychological and social pathways. The importance of income distribution implies that we must explain the effect of low income on health through its social meanings and implications for social position rather than through the direct physical effects which material circumstances might have independently of their social connotations in a particular society. This is not to say that bad (or even non-existent) housing and an inadequate diet do not affect the health of a minority (though still a large number) of people in developed societies: they clearly do. What it means is that the direct material effects of factors such as these are not the main explanations of why national standards of health are related to income distribution. The poor suffer the psychosocial effects of deprivation as well as its direct material effects. Indeed, it is important to recognise that as well as the greatest material deprivation, those at the bottom of the social hierarchy also suffer the greatest social, psychological and emotional deprivation, and this may well have a greater impact on their health than the more direct effects of material deprivation (1996, pp. 175-176).

Prominent in Wilkinson's work is the idea that health inequalities reflect social stratification. He presents a social causation explanation which emphasises that it is not just material but also psychological deprivation which leads to increased health problems among lower socio-economic groups, such as the unemployed: a psychosocial explanation of health inequality (*cf.* Elstad, 1998).

Recent research has placed increased emphasis on people's perceptions of their health and the impact of material deprivation. Owing to persistent health inequalities, research is needed to map the unemployed's perceptions of unemployment, the situation they find themselves in, and how unemployment impacts on their health. This need is further enunciated by research neglecting

### *Research Objective and Design*

low socio-economic groups' understandings and their interpretations of health (Blaxter, 1997; Popay & Williams, 1996; Wilkinson, 1996). This leads to the second component of the thesis objective: to investigate the meaning of unemployment as a necessary element in developing academic knowledge of the impact of unemployment.

This thesis sets out to investigate the impact of unemployment, while acknowledging the role of material and subjective deprivation and the importance of the unemployed's experiences. The focus is on relative deprivation which is a 'central corrosive feature' of everyday life for the unemployed (Fryer, 1995). This research adopts the stance that a person is an active agent who interacts with their material and social world and constructs their own ways of perceiving themselves and others. They respond to unemployment within the context of social expectations, values, and belief systems.

Clearly, the meaning individuals ascribe to unemployment needs to be analysed. This thesis can undertake only a limited examination of subjective meaning. The meaning of meaning is viewed differently both across and within various disciplines: philosophy, linguistics, and psychology (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957; Saeed, 1997; Steinberg & Jakobovits, 1971). A classical conceptualisation of meaning is Ogden and Richards's view that "meaning is a kind of relation ... among mind, object, and word" (1923/1956, cited in Szalay & Deese, 1978, p. 1). In linguistics there has been some attention paid to the ways in which, "lexical meaning describes the dyadic relations between words and referents" (Szalay & Deese, 1978, p. 2; for an extensive review see Saeed, 1997). Within psychology two traditions emerged initially in the investigation of personal meaning: the psychoanalytic / psychodynamic approach (Freud, 1924, cited in Rickman, 1953), and the neo-behavioural approach (Deese, 1965; Szalay & Deese, 1978). This research literature attempted to describe meaning as an individual's "subjective perception and affective reactions to segments of language" (Szalay & Deese, 1978, p. 2). In

recent times, the construction of psychological meaning has been taken up by social constructionists (Billig, 1991; Parker, 1992). Here subjective meaning is both individual and communal (Billig, 1991). A person is born into a subjective culture with norms, beliefs, values, and ideologies, according to which she or he becomes socialized. The meaning system of a given society becomes the foundation of a person's thought (Parker, 1992).

Within the psychological literature personal experiences (or meaning making) have been inextricably linked to subjective culture. Triandis defined subjective culture "as a group's characteristic way of perceiving its social environment" (1964, cited in Triandis, Vassiliou, Vassiliou, Tanaka & Shanmugam, 1972, p. 339). Osgood and colleagues (1957) and Triandis and associates (Triandis et al., 1972) use the metaphor of a map, which represents the way in which an individual conceives of their environment. This map can differ from culture to culture. Szalay and Deese argue that "human beings have some way of representing nature, themselves, and indeed the world in subjective terms ... we prefer to describe this subjective world as the subjective representational system" (1978, p. 19). Not only is this system linguistic, it can also be "reflected in images, or indeed in any activity that reflects knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, or affectivity" (1978, p. 19).

It is important to note (self-) perceptions and attitudes are no longer considered to be influenced by personal experience and attribution alone (Billig, 1991). Societal communication systems, including the mass media, constitute primary means by which evaluative perceptions are circulated and attitudes or ideologies about employment status are promoted or negated (Giddens, 1991; Leitch, 1990). However, this is not to say that people are cultural dupes simply reproducing social beliefs (Billig, 1991). Individuals have the capacity to criticise and adapt contemporary belief systems for their own purposes, in addition to accepting, modifying, and utilising them in novel ways. The meanings held by the unemployed need to be explored in relation to the social context (see Chapter Two) that influences their development and functions.

### *Research Objective and Design*

In conjunction with analysing the personal meaning of unemployment this thesis investigates societal perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs the unemployed express. Historically a large amount of sociological literature has been concerned with the meaning of work and its significance to an individual (Ezzy, 1993). Even though references to subjective meaning have been made in the psychological literature by Jahoda (1982) and Feather (1990), what the term meaning designates in this technical context has not been fully explained. For instance, Sinfield (1981) explored the subjective meaning of unemployment without attempting to clarify how he conceptualises meaning. He merely described people's subjective perceptions of the impact of unemployment.

When researching psychological meaning, more than atomistic perceptions and elements of attitudes tend to be described (Szalay, Windle & Lysne, 1970). The term meaning of unemployment can be linked to the research tradition which began with the first modern analyses of lexical semantics in psycholinguistics applied to social and clinical problems (Osgood et al., 1957) and more specifically, the paradigms of subjective meaning (Sinfield, 1981; Szalay & Deese, 1978). Using the term meaning of unemployment reflects a research intention to

- probe into subjective interpretations which are more profound, more pervasive, and less fluctuating in time than common perceptions;
- examine patterns of the interpretation of employment status which are organised and show a regular internal pattern, rather than being dependent on changing momentary experience;
- locate the subjective interpretation of unemployment in a wider semantic network including other significant elements of the person's subjective experiences, as well as experiences of society at large.

In problematising the meaning of unemployment this thesis comes close to general questions of how processes in society and social groups influence the meanings held by an individual.

This section has outlined the primary objective: to investigate the meaning of unemployment to various social groups and its impact on the unemployed. The following section briefly outlines the main research methods used in unemployment research. This leads to Fryer's proposition that unemployment research should use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A multimethod research design is utilised in this thesis to investigate the primary research objective, which is

*to gain an understanding of the impact of unemployment and its meaning to unemployed and employed groups.*

## **4.2 Overview of Methods Used in Unemployment Research**

As early as the 1930s unemployment research used a multimethod approach. Two pivotal researchers, Bakke (1933) and Jahoda and colleagues (1933/1972), utilised a number of what are commonly known as quantitative and qualitative methods to provide detailed accounts of the effects of unemployment on the individual, their families, and the wider community. The type of techniques used included questionnaires, interviews (individual and family), document analyses, and direct observation (see Chapter Three). However, more recent unemployment research has been dominated by quantitative research methods. These methods have allowed researchers to use various statistical analyses. Warr (1987) identifies three types of quantitative research methods which have been prominent during this time: cross-sectional, aggregate, and longitudinal studies.

Research into unemployment has often utilised cross-sectional research methods, where matched employed and unemployed groups are compared with each other on various psychological dimensions. These studies have regularly shown that the unemployed, on average, report higher levels of anxiety, depression and minor psychiatric disorders, and poorer health (Banks & Jackson, 1982; Feather, 1990; Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Warr, 1987;

### *Research Objective and Design*

Warr et al., 1985). As with most correlational studies the pattern of causality is unclear and requires further supporting evidence.

"Aggregate studies examine aggregated or overall data that are collected from a large number of people in a community or nation over a long period of time, and then carry out complicated time-series analysis" (Winefield et al., 1993, p. 27). This type of research investigates unemployment at the macro level. Issues of whether unemployment rates are linked to indices of mortality, crime, suicide, alcoholism, or mental illness are explored. Generally, research has found lagged correlations between these indices and the unemployment rate (Brenner, 1979; Brenner & Mooney, 1983; Dooley et al., 1992; Dooley et al., 1989; Feather, 1990; Morrell, Taylor, Quine & Kerr, 1993; O'Brien, 1986; Warr, 1987).

Finally, longitudinal studies have been used to follow participants' movements between employment and unemployment. These studies involve a variety of measures which are administered to the same participants over two or more observations. A number of these studies have found differences between groups are at least in part caused by changes in employment status (Payne & Jones, 1987; Wanberg, Griffiths & Gavin, 1997; Warr & Jackson, 1985; Winefield et al., 1993). This evidence is able to identify the causal impact of unemployment. It has been demonstrated that decrements in factors such as psychological and physical health, family functioning, and social cohesion are the result of unemployment (Fryer, 1995).

These types of research designs have shown the strength of quantitative methods in producing replicable results which are generalisable to other settings and circumstances (Pernice, 1996). However, Feather argues "the averages that come out of the statistical analysis of large data banks are impersonal and far removed from the life experiences of the unemployed themselves" (1990, p. 24). As a response to such limitations researchers are calling for the re-introduction of qualitative techniques (Fryer, 1992b).

Although quantitative techniques have dominated the research scene in the last two decades, a few authors have used qualitative techniques to investigate the unemployed's experiences. Examples include: Sinfield's (1981) research on the meaning of unemployment; Seabrook's (1982) detailed description of the hardship unemployed people experienced in Great Britain; Bethune and Ballard's (1986) New Zealand study, which investigated the experiences of young unemployed job seekers in Dunedin; Fryer and Payne's (1983, 1984) research on book-borrowing and proactive behaviour; Starrin and Larsson's (1987) investigation of women's reactions to their unemployment; McGhee and Fryer's (1989) investigation of unemployed men's responses to unemployment in the context of family processes and interpersonal expectations; and McFadyen and Gray's (1995) research which examined the discourses of employed individuals and whether they expressed negative, sympathetic, or neutral attitudes towards the unemployed.

One advantage of research drawing on qualitative techniques is that it provides a more detailed and personal account of the experience and impact of unemployment (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). This type of idiographic research intensively investigates an individual's experiences. It is contrasted with nomothetic research, which is concerned with utilising group data in an attempt to discover laws and norms (Marx & Hillix, 1973; Valentine, 1992). Fryer (1992b) calls for researchers to reinstate the use of qualitative methods, particularly in combination with quantitative methods as a means of adding depth and complexity to the field.

This thesis responds to this challenge by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Social scientists working in the area of lay beliefs about health, illness, poverty, and inequalities advocate the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Blaxter, 1997; Bury, 1997; Popay & Williams, 1996). It is proposed that the methods used should reflect the questions asked and that quantitative and qualitative methods are most gainfully used in a mutually supportive manner (Wolff, Knodel & Sittitrai, 1993).

### *Research Objective and Design*

For instance, quantitative research can establish that the unemployed have higher levels of psychological distress than the employed, while qualitative research can provide an understanding of what impact this distress has on people's lives and how it is coped with and addressed. When used in a complementary manner, quantitative research can establish the prevalence of a problem and qualitative research can establish participants' experiences and understandings of that problem. Qualitative research can bring quantitative findings to life and provide a context for interpretation. As Popay and Williams write; "qualitative research can also be used to add depth to a bare statistical bones of numerical information ... Different methods are needed to enrich each other - the substantive significance of statistical findings can be illuminated by qualitative findings" (1996, p. 763).

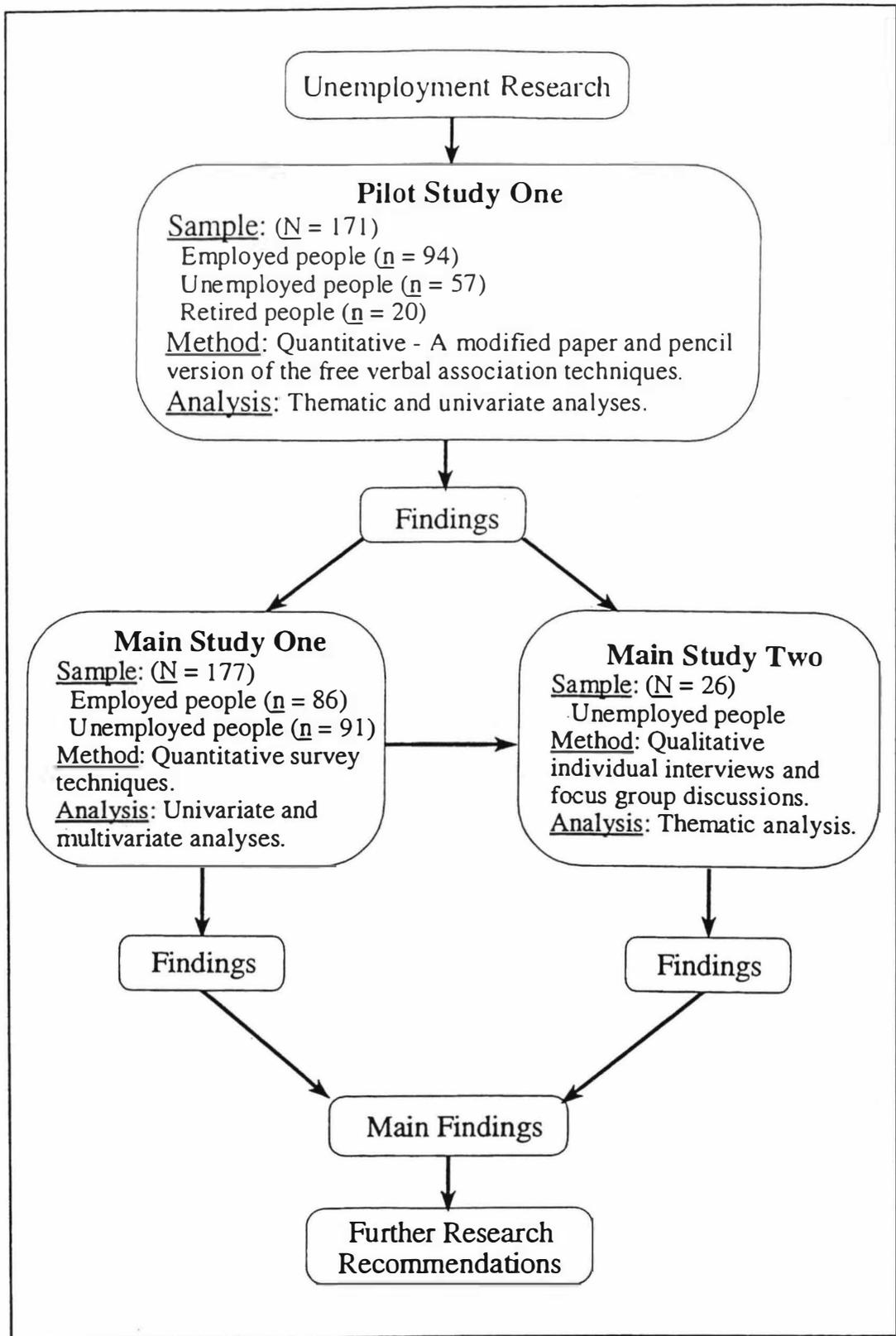
### **4.3 The Multimethod Research Design**

As can be seen in the previous section most contemporary unemployment research has used either quantitative or qualitative methods. However, some researchers are advocating that quantitative and qualitative methods, if selected appropriately, can help answer various aspects of the same research question (Fryer, 1992b; Pernice, 1996; Popay & Williams, 1996; Wolff et al., 1993). Clearly, research needs to be careful in using all-embracing labels such as quantitative or qualitative. Each category encompasses a diverse range of methods and philosophical stances (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Crotty, 1998). The labels are used here only for the sake of simplicity and to identify techniques selected from these categories which can be used in a complementary manner to explore the objective of this thesis.

This thesis takes a multimethod research design by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pilot Study One and the first main study utilised a comparative design where employed and unemployed groups were contrasted to detect quantitative differences between them. Study Two used individual interviews and focus group discussions to further explore the unemployed's experiences and understandings of their situation. The quantitative studies

provided statistical information on the relationship between key variables. Yet the understanding of these relationships, among the unemployed themselves, remains unknown. As a result the qualitative study explored the meanings the unemployed participants assigned to their circumstances. In short, the quantitative study provides data in broad patterns and the qualitative provided in-depth accounts of the meaning of unemployment (Popay & Williams, 1996).

Figure Three (see p. 76) presents a schematic representation of the multimethod research design which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods. The first phase of this thesis consisted of an extensive literature review of unemployment research. The meaning of employment status and the impact of unemployment on health were reflected in the literature as being the chief targets to be examined in this thesis. Next, two quantitative studies were used, followed by a qualitative study. The pilot study used a free association technique in probing employed and unemployed groups' subjective meaning of employment status (see Cullen et al., 1997; Appendix A). Findings from the pilot study guided the two main studies. The first main study investigated the significance of key variables such as affective connotation, anxiety, relative deprivation, perceived social conflict, and general and work values for employed and unemployed groups. The main empirical findings from this study were then investigated qualitatively in the second study. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gain access to the unemployed's perceptions, and experiences. Both the quantitative and qualitative methods enriched each other, the qualitative findings providing personal accounts for the quantitative findings.



**Figure 3.** A Schematic Representation of the Multimethod Research Design Utilised for this Thesis.

#### **4.4 Considerations for Research with Unemployed Groups**

The main objective of this thesis was to investigate the meaning of unemployment to different social groups (employed and unemployed people) and its impact on the unemployed in the Hawke's Bay region. However, a number of issues concerning the participation of respondents and data collection need to be addressed.

Researchers have identified practical difficulties in getting the unemployed to take part in studies which investigate their personal situation. The main concern has been low response rates (Daniel, 1974, 1990; Dew et al., 1991; Hesketh & Shouksmith, 1982; Warr, 1987). For example, in a New Zealand study Hesketh and Shouksmith (1982) reported a 45% response rate of the original number of unemployed people approached. This low rate is similar to the rates in a number of studies reviewed by Dew and colleagues (1991). Predominately, researchers have accessed registered unemployed participants through various government departments (Hesketh & Shouksmith, 1982; Pernice, 1992). This may hold the key to the low response rates. The main limitation of research utilising government departments is not necessarily attributable to inadequacies in the research. A plausible explanation is that the unemployed may be concerned that the research is associated with government departments and the administration of welfare benefits (see Chapter Five and Appendix A - Pilot Study One). Such an association may lead to lower response rates due to anxieties about possible implications.

The approach adopted for this research was to gain cooperation from various community groups within the Hawke's Bay region. These groups are commonly perceived to be on the unemployed's side. Approval from the community and support groups reassured participants that their responses were confidential. Also the researcher's personal background helped in reassuring the participants that the research was independent. The unemployed seemed at ease with the research process and were happy to

### *Research Objective and Design*

participate (For an extensive outline of the procedure for each of the main studies see Chapters Five and Six). The response rate to first main study by the unemployed was 76% and by the employed 72%. The unemployed's response rate supports the view that community groups are a more appropriate source for contact.

Apart from the low response rate researchers have identified low literacy levels amongst the unemployed as being a concern (Pernice, 1992). Research investigating the psychological impact of unemployment has almost entirely used self-report instruments. The research difficulties with unemployed people who have low literacy levels are self-evident. As a means of addressing concerns over literacy levels the quantitative questionnaires were targeted to a reading age of 10 years and were made simple and easy to answer (For the development of the questionnaires see Chapter Five and Appendix B which provides a summary of issues identified during the pilot process).

In sum, this chapter presented the primary research objective and justification for investigating the meaning and impact of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. The main quantitative methods used in unemployment research were outlined. Authors such as David Fryer propose that unemployment research should combine both quantitative and qualitative methods. Drawing on such proposals, this thesis takes a multimethod approach.

## Chapter Five

# Study One - The Meaning and Impact of Unemployment: A Comparison of Employed and Unemployed Groups

This chapter presents the first of two main studies. The initial section introduces the research problem and purpose of Study One, then provides an outline of the psychological dimensions, research aims, and hypotheses investigated. The second section outlines the method, which includes questionnaire development, a description of the research sample, the procedure, and data transformation. Section Three presents the results of Study One in two parts. Part One presents multi-item results and compares the employed and unemployed groups on each measure. Part Two investigates the interrelationships between each psychological dimension. Concluding this chapter is a discussion which relates the present findings to relevant research. Findings from Study One contributed to the design of a second qualitative study (see Chapter Six).

### 5.1 Research Problem and Purpose

Chapter four presented the primary research objective for this thesis:

*to gain an understanding of the impact of unemployment and its meaning to unemployed and employed groups.*

Study One investigated two subsidiary objectives: first, to understand the psychological meaning of employment status in different social groups (employed and unemployed); second, to investigate whether interrelationships exist between employment status and affective connotation, relative deprivation, anxiety, perceived social conflict, and values (general and work). These dimensions were explored owing to their association with the impact of

### ***Study One***

unemployment. The literature on unemployment has established differences between employed and unemployed groups on background variables, anxiety levels, relative deprivation, and values (general and work) (Feather, 1990; Feather & O'Brien, 1986, 1987; Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Isralowitz & Singer, 1987; Kessler et al., 1988; Ng & Beer, 1990; Shamir, 1986; Ullah, 1990; Whelan, 1992). Furthermore, recent public health research has asserted that income inequalities contribute to a less cohesive and stable society. Social conflict is viewed as an outcome of social inequality and has also been linked to the health status of a population (Bethwaite et al., 1990; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Kawachi et al., 1997; Wilkinson, 1996; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). This study sought to empirically check whether differences existed in a New Zealand sample and the extent and character of these differences. The present study is unique as no published work, to the researcher's knowledge, has investigated the meaning of unemployment to various social groups in New Zealand. This lack of research also reflects the sporadic attention given to the meaning of unemployment internationally.

### **5.2 Psychological Dimensions**

The psychological dimensions investigated in Study One are outlined in this section. The psychological instruments used to collect data on these dimensions are outlined in Section 5.4.2.

**Affective Connotation.** Affective connotation is an aspect of the subjective (and/or personal) meaning of concepts, both concrete and abstract. As shown in Chapter Four (see Section 4.1), philosophy, linguistics, and psychology have been unable to offer a universally accepted notion of meaning (Osgood et al., 1957; Saeed, 1997; Steinberg & Jakobovits, 1971). One way of operationalising meaning is to make a distinction between denotation and connotation. It is evident that lexical meaning (such as the meaning of a noun) consists of elements which are shared in a linguistic community and other elements more or less unique to the language system of the individual. Meaning constituents shared by a linguistic community are often encompassed under the term denotation. For example, the term house refers to a building

which is used for human habitation. The word does not usually refer to a building used for the manufacture of motor vehicles, or an airport hangar.

Denotation and connotation can be distinguished in relation to terms more pertinent to the present study. The term unemployment may denote being without a job (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2, for a more accurate definition of unemployment). However, there are also important elements of lexical meaning which differentiate individual language users and are based on the personal experience of the user and/or the history of the person's use of the term. These meanings may be based on, or derived from, social ideologies, values, and belief systems, but tend to be somewhat idiosyncratic and differ across individuals and groups. Connotative meanings are emotive or metaphorical associations people apply to concepts and terms. Through such associations unemployment can be evaluated favourably or negatively depending on a person's subjective experiences and the social belief systems drawn on. For instance, unemployment can be seen as powerful or powerless, or involving activity or passivity. Many people would agree that unemployment denoted being without a job, but there are both similarities and differences at the connotative level between what people attribute to unemployment and its social significance. (For further examples and a psychological view of the denotation/connotation distinction, see Osgood et al., 1957, 1975; other interpretations exist, for instance, Saeed, 1997.)

Even though connotation is by definition more malleable and changeable, there may also be some degree of variance in the denotation of unemployment, as reflected in formal conceptual definitions of the construct (see Chapter Two). This thesis explores similarities and differences in the subjective associations or connotative meanings employed and unemployed people make of the term unemployment. Following Osgood and colleagues (1957, 1975) the term

### *Study One*

affective connotation is used to refer to aspects of personal meanings associated with various employment status terms<sup>9</sup>.

**Anxiety.** Psychological research interest in anxiety emerged in the early 1900s. Freud argued that anxiety played a critical role in everyday life and was a "central problem of neurosis" (1968, cited in Spielberger, 1983, p. 1). Since this initial work a number of theories of anxiety have emerged which can be "categorised into psychoanalytic, learning/behavioural, physiological, phenomenological/existential, cognitive, and those concerned with uncertainty" (Strongman, 1995, p. 4). (For an extensive review of these theories see Strongman, 1995). Recent conceptualisations of anxiety refer to this dimension as a "response characterised by apprehension regarding a potentially negative outcome, physiological arousal (i.e., activation of the sympathetic nervous system), and a subjective feeling of tension or nervousness. As such, anxiety involves three interrelated components: cognitive, physiological, and affective reactions" (Leary, 1988, p. 366).

Modern personality theory and psychometrics view anxiety as consisting of two different types: state and trait. The distinction between state and trait anxiety was first introduced by Cattell (1966, cited in Spielberger, 1983) and was further elaborated and operationalised by Spielberger (1983). State anxiety is characterised as the immediate experience of anxiety in a particular setting. Conversely, trait anxiety refers to the tendency or disposition to experience

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<sup>9</sup> Osgood and colleagues (1957) operationalised meaning - in a model formerly labelled as neo-behavioural. While the model of mediated responses is no longer considered useful, the emotion- or feeling-related elements of connotation continue to be widely investigated (e.g., Feather, 1983, 1990; Luszcz & Fitzgerald, 1986; Ng, Chan, Weatherall & Moody, 1993; Osgood et al., 1975; Snider & Osgood, 1969; Szalay & Deese, 1978). It should also be noted that recent theories of emergent meaning and meaning construction (such as those in discursive psychology, *cf.* Harré & Stearns, 1995) offer alternative approaches in challenging classical semantic views of literal lexical meaning.

anxiety across situations and time (Leary, 1988; Spielberger, 1983). This thesis investigates trait anxiety (see Section 5.3)<sup>10</sup>.

**Relative Deprivation.** As outlined in Chapter Four, relative poverty generally results from the financial strains of unemployment, which places people in a situation of relative deprivation (see Section 4.1 for a detailed discussion of this dimension). The main consequences of relative deprivation are thought to be associated with social isolation, powerlessness, inactivity, poor psychological and physical health, and, in the extreme, social conflict (Bartley, 1994; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1995; Henwood & Miles, 1987; Jahoda, 1979, 1982; Kessler et al., 1988; McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Warr & Jackson, 1984; Whelan, 1992). Fryer (1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1997) has argued for the use of the concept relative deprivation, based on various 1930s explanations of the negative effects of unemployment (see Chapter Three). This concept is useful in investigating the ways in which many negative consequences of unemployment derive from a relative lack of income.

**Perceived Social Conflict.** Conflict has occurred throughout history across all levels of society, from the individual to the social (Levinson, 1994). Research investigating various forms of conflict spans a number of disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science, and philosophy. Simpson and Worchel (1993) distinguish three levels of conflict which can play a central role in an individual's life: Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup. Intrapersonal conflict is experienced every day when an individual has to make a decision. Interpersonal conflict occurs in dyadic relationships, from a married couple to a general working relationship. Intergroup conflict can occur among small and large social groups (Deutsch, 1973). People's perceptions of such conflicts, particularly those between social

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<sup>10</sup> Study One investigated the differences between various employment status groups on levels of trait anxiety. The theoretical approaches briefly mentioned, although informing this thesis, were not used.

### *Study One*

groups, is an important dimension for this thesis as an indicator of social cohesion, which is related to a population's health status (Bethwaite et al., 1990; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Kawachi et al., 1997; Wilkinson, 1996; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). The term perceived social conflict refers to a person's views of the extent and nature of conflict among different social groups in New Zealand.

**Values.** Philosophical arguments about values date back to Plato (Scheibe, 1970). Human values encapsulate aspirations of individuals and societies and "pertain to what is desirable, to deeply engrained standards that determine future directions and justify past actions. Values have been postulated as key constructs in the socialisation process" (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991, p. 661), and have been researched in a broad range of disciplines, from political science, cultural and religious studies, and education, to social and occupational psychology (Dawis, 1991; Scheibe, 1970; Super, 1957, 1970).

There have been debates on the development of values as a field of study, owing to two distinctive approaches which emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. One object-centred line of thought proposed that values were an absolute attribute of an object being valued (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991). This conceptualisation was rejected in favour of the second person-centred line of thought, which proposed that values were an attribute of the person doing the valuing (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991). There has been widespread acceptance in the psychological sciences of Kluckhohn's person-centred definition of a value as a "conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action" (1951, cited in Braithwaite & Scott, 1991, p. 661). However, although most researchers agree with Kluckhohn's definition, research efforts remained fragmented and are still hampered by problems in operationalising and measuring values (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991; Dawis, 1991). Rokeach's (1968, 1973, 1979) influential work

operationalised a value, in the individual, as

an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. *A value system* is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance (1973, p. 5, italics in original).

In formulating the above definition Rokeach accepted values as being similar to "prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs, wherein some means or end of action is judged to be desirable or undesirable" (1973, p. 7). According to Rokeach values, like beliefs, contained "cognitive, affective, and behavioral [*sic*] components" (1973, p. 7). Rokeach further built on his operationalisation of the value construct by categorising values into 'instrumental' ("desirable modes of conduct") and 'terminal values' ("end-states of existence") (1973, p. 7). 'Instrumental values' include both moral and competence values. "The concept of moral values is considerably narrower than the general concept of values. For one thing, moral values refer mainly to modes of behavior [*sic*] and do not necessarily include values that concern end-states of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 8). 'Terminal values' include both personal and social values which can be "self-centred or society centred, intrapersonal or interpersonal in focus. Such end-states as salvation and peace of mind are intrapersonal while world peace and brotherhood are interpersonal" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 8).

Rokeach's (1968, 1973) conceptualisation of values and value systems is used for this thesis. Explored are both the instrumental and terminal values of employed and unemployed groups, and their work values. Research into work values, as a subfield, contains conceptual distinctions which require specific mention here.

**Work Values.** "Since the 1950s motivational concepts such as work values, needs, and preferences have assumed an important role in both the theory and the practice of vocational and organizational psychology" (Macnab

### *Study One*

& Fitzsimmons, 1987, p. 1). Various researchers have been interested in values, needs, and preferences, as central components of general human properties (Macnab & Fitzsimmons, 1987). Super (1970), a key figure in the study of work values, proposes that work values originate from one's concept of the self (Macnab & Fitzsimmons, 1987; Pryor, 1979, 1982; Super, 1970). Super suggests that traits, values, and interests are derived from needs. "Traits are ways of acting to meet needs; values are objectives sought to satisfy needs; and interests are specific activities and objects through which to attain values and meet needs" (1973, cited in Dawis, 1991, p. 838). However, Pryor argues that Super has failed to acknowledge that "values (similar to perceptions or ideas) are relations between the valuer and the valued" (1979, p. 251). Pryor (1979, 1982) believes that research on work values remains fragmented owing to, in part, the disparity of approaches and the use of confusing terms. Pryor suggests that the term work values be replaced with the term work aspect preference. Work aspect preference is defined as

a statement of the relation between a person (the subject of the relation) and a particular quality of work (the object of the relation). The nature of the relation between these two is that of greater or lesser liking when the person has the opportunity to make a choice (Pryor, 1979, p. 254).

Therefore, work preferences are "concerned with what individuals like or prefer in a job or vocation" (Pryor, 1979, p. 253). For the purpose of this thesis the researcher accepts Dawis's (1991) contention that the conceptual distinction between work values and preferences has no far-reaching impact on interpreting empirical findings. A preference could be viewed as an application of a value at a more specific level. Work values are social products which govern and anchor social beliefs about work.

### **5.3 Aims and Hypotheses**

This section describes the main aims for this study. After each research aim, higher-order hypotheses are expressed. These general hypotheses are formulated for larger sets of variables. Next, more specific (lower-order) hypotheses are presented.

### **Aim One**

To investigate the interrelationships between employment status and demographic, socio-economic, and educational variables such as gender, ethnicity, marital status, income, and skill level.

H1 Background variables (as defined in the aim) show systematic differences between the employed and unemployed groups.

### **Aim Two**

To investigate the relationships between employment status and attitudes towards employment-related targets as reflected in affective connotation.

H2 Affective connotation of employment related concepts varies with employment status.

- H2a Affective connotation of '*Unemployed people*' differ between the employed and unemployed groups.
- H2b Affective connotation of '*Employed people*' differ between the employed and unemployed groups.

### **Aim Three**

To investigate the interrelationships between employment status and the following psychological dimensions: relative deprivation, perceived social conflict, general values, and work values.

H3 Relative deprivation is related to employment status.

H4 Perceived social conflict is related to employment status.

### **Study One**

H5 General values are related to employment status.

- H5a Primary mode, goal and social value dimensions differ between the employed and unemployed groups.

H6 Work values are related to employment status.

- H6a Primary work value dimensions such as Self-Development, Prestige, Management, Security, and Surroundings (Pryor, 1983) differ between the employed and unemployed groups.

### **Aim Four**

To investigate whether trait anxiety, as a dimension of psychological health, is related to employment status.

H7 Trait anxiety differs between the employed and unemployed groups.

## **5.4 Method**

### *5.4.1 Developing Measuring Instruments and Data Collection Procedures*

The method used in Study One was a quantitative survey involving some standardised psychological tests (see Chapter Four, Section 4.3 and Figure 3). Four pilot studies were conducted before the finalisation of the measuring instruments (see Section 5.4.2). The first pilot study was conducted in April 1994. This study was an exploratory investigation of the meaning of employment status. Subsequently, three additional pilot studies were undertaken as part of the development of the survey used in Study One. These pilot studies were conducted between March 1995 and September 1995. The main battery for Study One was distributed during January 1996. Standard New Zealand psychological ethical procedures (New Zealand Psychological Society, 1986) were followed in all four pilot studies and in the main study.

*Pilot Study One*

In this pilot study associative word meaning in randomly selected Hawke's Bay residents investigated the meaning of employment-related concepts (employment-unemployment) in employed as well as unemployed groups (see Appendix A for a report on Pilot Study One). Although this study was exploratory, it was guided by the broad assumption that in generating associations with the same words and phrases (e. g., '*unemployment*'), the employed group would systematically differ in associative meaning from the unemployed group.

Potential participants were given a general introduction to the research. When they agreed to participate in the study they were asked to complete a consent form and a survey which contained general background demographic questions and a modified paper-and-pencil version of the free verbal association technique (Deese, 1965; Szalay & Bryson, 1974; Szalay et al., 1970). The word association technique asked participants to think of words and phrases that they could associate with the following stimulus prompts: '*An Unemployed Person*', '*Unemployment*', '*Part-time Work*' and '*Full-time Employment*'. The order of the prompts were randomised across respondents. Participants were instructed to avoid chain associations.

The survey was conducted in both Hastings and Napier. Of the 250 questionnaires distributed, 171 were completed and returned (a response rate of 68.4%). The final sample ( $N = 171$ ) included 94 employed people, 57 unemployed people, and 20 retired people. The results reported here and in Appendix A are only for the employed and unemployed groups ( $n = 151$ ). In terms of self-categorisation, in the employed group there were 78 (83.0%) males, 16 (17.0%) females; 78 New Zealand European (83.0%), 2 New Zealand Māori (2.2%), and 13 from other nationalities (14.0%). The employed group ranged in age from 23 to 68 years ( $M = 47.70$ ,  $SD = 10.21$ ). In the unemployed group, there were 36 (63.2%) males and 21 (36.8%) females; 24 New Zealand European (42.0%), 25 New Zealand Māori (14.0%), and 8 from

### *Study One*

other nationalities (5.3%). The unemployed group ranged in age from 19 to 59 years ( $M = 38.21$ ,  $SD = 11.10$ ); (Cullen et al., 1997).

Verbal associates were analysed to reveal the meaning of employment-related concepts as reflected in salient single-word responses and so-called thematic categories. The results confirmed that there are systematic differences in the meaning of unemployment according to participants' employment status. Free word associations provided by the two groups to four phrases denoting employment status varied both within and between groups. Overlaps as well as marked differences are described in detail in Appendix A. The patterns of associations guided a further exploration of differences in the meanings these groups associate with unemployment. Subsequently, Study One investigated the meaning of different employment status concepts, relative deprivation, anxiety, perceived social conflict, and values (general and work). This led to the selection of measures which were refined in pilot studies two, three, and four.

### *Pilot Study Two*

Internal undergraduate students at Massey University were asked to participate in a pilot study to refine the questionnaire to be utilised in Study One. Ten questionnaires (five employed and five unemployed questionnaires) were distributed to students. After each participant had completed the survey they were invited to make comments about what they liked or disliked about the questionnaire, in a structured interview. These structured interviews took half an hour to complete. There were 4 females and 6 male participants, ranging in age from 19 to 30 years, with a mean age of 22.10 years ( $SD = 3.28$ ). The questionnaires consisted of a number of background demographic questions<sup>11</sup> and contained the following full-item measures: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983), Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire (D. Fryer, personal

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<sup>11</sup> The questionnaires for the pilot studies differed slightly. The employed and unemployed questionnaires contained some different background questions for the two groups.

communication, June 27, 1995), Work Aspect Preference Scale (Pryor, 1983), Goal and Mode Values Inventories (Braithwaite & Law, 1985), and the Semantic Differential (Osgood et al., 1957).

Three main concerns were identified by the participants. First, some of the demographic questions were phrased ambiguously. Second, the questionnaire was reported to be too long. Finally, the instructions for the Semantic Differential based on the standard procedure used by Osgood and colleagues (1957) were said to be ambiguous, confusing, and lengthy (see Appendix B for a summary of the problems identified in Pilot Study Two and Three). As a result of Pilot Study Two the questionnaire was further refined and tested.

### *Pilot Study Three*

Thirty participants ( $n = 15$  employed and  $n = 15$  unemployed) were approached by the researcher and asked whether they would like to participate in a pilot study and structured interview. Twenty-one revised questionnaires<sup>12</sup> and interviews ( $n = 10$  Employed and  $n = 11$  Unemployed) were completed. In the employed group there were 6 males and 4 females, ranging in age from 26 to 54 years ( $M = 36.80$ ,  $SD = 8.22$ ). The unemployed group contained 4 males and 7 females, ranging in age from 18 to 43 years ( $M = 30.81$ ,  $SD = 8.53$ ). In the structured interview session, participants were invited to comment on what they liked or disliked about the different sections of the questionnaire. Two concerns were highlighted by the participants. First, the visual layout of the questionnaire was cluttered. Second, the instructions for the semantic differential were still lengthy and difficult to follow. A further concern to emerge was the low literacy levels of the unemployed. Subsequently, the instructions were further simplified and the option of the researcher reading the

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<sup>12</sup> In the revised questionnaire the researcher added four social conflict items (Department of Marketing, 1992; Gendall, Wright & Hosie, 1993; P. J. Gendall, personal communication, June, 1994).

### *Study One*

questionnaire to the participants was introduced into the procedure. As a result of Pilot Study Three the questions were revised and tested in Pilot Study Four.

#### *Pilot Study Four*

The final phase of the development of the questionnaire included professional criticism from colleagues and supervisors. Seven colleagues commented on the revised version of the questionnaire. Generally, the questionnaire provoked little criticism. A few stylistic changes were made by the rewording of some statements before the questionnaire was distributed to participants. The following section describes the demographic background variables and psychological instruments used in the present study.

#### *5.4.2 Background Variables and Psychological Measuring Instruments*

##### *Demographic, Socio-economic, and Educational Variables*

Beyond the aim of describing the sample itself, questions were developed to assess various demographic characteristics of participants in both the employed and unemployed groups, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and income levels. Occupations for the employed and previous jobs for the unemployed were classified by utilising the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1992). Additional demographic questions were developed specifically for the employed group. A description of these questions is provided in Section 5.4.3. Full-item wording for the employed background variables is provided in Appendix D.

The background questions for the unemployed participants are reproduced in Appendix E. Three questions developed by Ng and Beer (1990) were used. The first question asked participants "whether they had done any of the following while being unemployed; part-time paid work, retrained for another

job, further education, ACCESS / TOPS course<sup>13</sup>, unpaid / voluntary work, joined a sports club or interest club, and any other things" (Ng & Beer, 1990, p. 110). The second question asked the length of time the unemployed participants had been unemployed. Finally, participants were asked whether they had previously had a full-time job.

### *Psychological Measuring Instruments*

The complete survey contained six instruments as listed below. A copy of the unemployed questionnaire is provided in Appendix E<sup>14</sup>.

**Affective Connotation.** Affective connotation was measured using the Semantic Differential Technique (Osgood et al., 1957). This technique has been shown to be consistent and reliable, and has been used by various researchers both overseas (Feather, 1983, 1990; Feather & O'Brien, 1986, 1987; Luszcz & Fitzgerald, 1986; Osgood et al., 1975; Singh, Singh & Rani, 1996; Snider & Osgood, 1969) and in New Zealand (Brennan & Kirkland, 1987; Green, McCormick, Walkey & Taylor, 1987; Ng et al., 1993; Singer & Singer, 1985; Walkey & Chung, 1996; Walkey, Taylor & Green, 1990) to investigate the connotative meaning of various terms.

The Semantic Differential comprise bipolar scales anchored by pairs of antonymous adjectives. An exploratory cluster analysis of bipolar scales allowed the modelling of a three-dimensional semantic space. The three dimensions psychometrically permit summation across items to obtain Evaluation (E), Potency (P), and Activity (A) scores. For the present study a

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<sup>13</sup> ACCESS and TOPS courses are government funded initiatives which provide training and job placement services for the unemployed.

<sup>14</sup> The unemployed questionnaire provided in Appendix E contains all of the psychological measures utilised. The employed questionnaire differed from the unemployed questionnaire on some of the specific background questions asked (see Appendix D).

### *Study One*

version of the standard form of the Semantic Differential was selected with 13 bipolar scales, on the basis of the largest worldwide investigation of affective meaning (Osgood et al., 1975). The scales utilised were: Good-Bad (E), Honest-Dishonest (E), Nice-Awful (E), Delicate-Rugged (E); Powerful-Powerless (P), Strong-Weak (P), Deep-Shallow (P), Large-Small (P); Active-Passive (A), Fast-Slow (A), Quiet-Noisy (A), and Warm-Cold (A). A final scale included in the instrument was Familiar-Unfamiliar (F). It was used to investigate whether participants considered the term denoting the target concept personally unproblematic to understand (Osgood et al., 1975).

The task of the participants was to rate two target concepts, '*Unemployed people*' and '*Employed people*', on the thirteen bipolar scales. The Semantic Differential profile was printed on one sheet of paper for each target concept. All of the judgements occurred successively, following the target concept. The direction (positive adjective left or right) of scales and the serial order of bipolar scales on the profile were randomised to minimise response sets.

The present study amended the original instruction format for the Semantic Differential. Participants in the pilot studies reported that the instructions were ambiguous and lengthy (see Section 5.4.1 and Appendix B). The new directions included an example of a target concept, '*Bus Drivers*', and instructed participants to rate the concept on the gentle-aggressive bipolar pair. Participants were asked to rate each bipolar pair on a seven-point scale with 1 indicating '*Closely Related*' (e.g., to '*Bus Drivers*' being gentle) and 7 indicating '*Closely Related*' (e.g., to '*Bus Drivers*' being aggressive) to the target concept (see Figure 4, p. 95).

Participants' responses to each target concept were coded in the following manner. A polar response to a positive adjective was coded +3 and a polar response to a negative adjective was coded -3. Positive and negative polarity was derived from Osgood and colleagues' (1957) original studies.

For the present study the internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the target 'Unemployed people' was .70, and for the target 'Employed people' was .73. These  $\alpha$ 's are reasonably high and indicate that the participants were consistent in their judgements on particular scales for the two target concepts.

**DIRECTIONS:** In this section, we would like to find out how you view certain statements about different people, by having you rate them using a series of words.

**FOR EXAMPLE:** Each of the statements can be rated in the following way:

***BUS DRIVERS are..***

GENTLE    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    AGGRESSIVE

If you feel that the above statement *Bus Drivers are* is quite closely related to 'gentle' then you would circle **2**. If you think that the statement *Bus Drivers are* is quite closely related to 'aggressive' then you would circle **6**. If you consider the statement to be *neutral*, or if either word is *completely irrelevant*, then you should circle **4**. Where you place your circle depends on the extent to which the words apply to the statement you are rating.

	<b>Closely Related</b>						<b>Closely Related</b>	
GENTLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	AGGRESSIVE

In answering these statements, please make your judgements on the basis of what each word *means to you*. Please circle *only one number* which best represents how you would rate each statement. *Please answer every statement*. It is your *first impression*, the immediate "*feelings*" about the items, that we want.

**Figure 4.** The Directions and Rating Scale Developed for the Semantic Differential.

### **Study One**

**Trait Anxiety.** The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI: Spielberger, 1983) was used to assess trait anxiety (T-Anxiety). As stated previously, trait anxiety refers to the tendency or disposition to experience anxiety across situations and time (Leary, 1988; Spielberger, 1983). The trait scale (STAI Form Y-2) consists of 20 items measuring how '*respondents generally feel*'. Item scores in the STAI are summed to reflect one total trait anxiety score. Scores range from 20 to 80, with higher scores reflecting greater trait anxiety. Spielberger (1983) reports that T-Anxiety (Form Y) has a relatively high test-retest reliability coefficient and an overall median  $\alpha$  coefficient of .90. In the present study Form Y-2 was used, which asked participants to rate a series of statements on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 '*Almost Never*' to 4 '*Almost Always*'. The STAI provided highly reliable internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , of .93.

**Subjective Deprivation.** Relative deprivation (see Chapter Four, Section 4.1) was assessed by Fryer's, as yet unpublished, Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire (SDQ)(personal communication, June 27, 1995; personal communication, August 30, 1997). The SDQ items were originally obtained from a qualitative investigation (action research) which examined the effects of income loss on ten unemployed families (McGhee & Fryer, 1989).

The SDQ consisted of 28 items measuring the individual's perceived level of financial deprivation. Participants were asked to rate their responses on a four-point Likert scale with 1 indicating '*Strongly Disagree*' to 4 '*Strongly Agree*'. Owing to negative phrasing, scoring weights for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 19, 23 were reversed (responses 1, 2, 3, 4 were changed to 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively). To obtain an overall score the SDQ items were simply totalled. Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , was high in this study, .96. Because the measure is in the developmental stages there is presently no literature on reliability and validity.

**Perceived Social Conflict.** Four of the original six social conflict items from the International Social Survey Programme were used (Department of Marketing, 1992; P. J. Gendall, personal communication, June, 1994; Gendall et al., 1993). These items investigated whether there were any perceived conflicts between different social groups in New Zealand. Participants were asked to read each item and then indicate on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 '*Very Strong Conflict*' to 4 '*There Are No Conflicts*', whether each statement represented their opinion. This measure does not provide an overall (total) score; therefore no  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient is reported.

**Values.** General values were assessed with the Goal and Mode Values Inventories developed by Braithwaite and Law (1985). The Goal and Mode Values Inventories measure 14 value constructs. Each construct is assessed by multiple items. The measure provides an expanded set of goals and modes of conduct and separates social goals from personal goals (Braithwaite & Law, 1985). Mode values correspond to Rokeach's (1973) instrumental values (e.g., Positive Orientation to Others, Helpful, and Competence and Effectiveness). The goal and social values correspond to Rokeach's (1973) terminal values (e.g., International Harmony and Equity, National Strength and Order) (Heaven, 1990). This instrument was developed in Australia, providing good comparative data with Australian research.

The present study presented the measure in three parts: personal goals, modes of conduct, and social goals. For personal goals and modes of conduct, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they accept or reject each item '*as a principle for you to live by*'. Social goals were "differentiated from personal goals through being directed toward the nature of society rather than the behaviour of the individual" (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991, p. 679). The social instructions were modified to '*principles that guide your judgements and actions*' (see Appendix B). Participants were asked to rate the importance of the individual items presented.

### *Study One*

The original seven-point Likert scale proposed by Braithwaite and Law (1985) was modified to a five-point Likert scale. The seven-point scale was found by Braithwaite and Scott (1991) to result in positively skewed distributions of scores. The researcher widened the gap between the categories on the Likert scale. The five-point Likert scale ranged from 1 '*I reject this*' to 5 '*I accept this as very important*'.

Not all value constructs were used in the present study, nor were all the original items used. The following constructs, thought to cover a wide range of values, were included in the questionnaire: 'International Harmony and Equality', 'National Strength and Order', 'Personal Growth and Inner Harmony', 'Physical Well-being', 'Secure and Satisfying Interpersonal Relationships', 'Social Standing', 'Individual Rights' (Goal and Social Values); 'A Positive Orientation to Others', 'Competence and Effectiveness', and 'Assertiveness' (Mode Values).

Nine value constructs were not used in this study. The internal consistency reliabilities for 'Getting Ahead' and 'Social Stimulation' were barely adequate, .53 and .66 respectively (Braithwaite & Law, 1985). 'Traditional Religiosity', 'Propriety in Dress and Manners', 'Religious Commitment', 'Withdrawal from Others', 'Carefreeness', and 'Honesty' were not included, as these values were not the central focus of this study and would have added unnecessary length to the questionnaire. Finally, 'Thriftiness' was removed because the questionnaire already measured subjective deprivation and actual income levels.

Braithwaite and Law (1985) presented the construct item factor loadings for three studies undertaken in the development of this instrument. The present study selected the individual items for each value construct in the following manner. First, an average factor loading was calculated across the three studies for each of the individual items. Second, items on each value construct were rank-ordered from the highest average factor loading to the lowest. Third,

each item was examined over the three factor loadings to check that the item did not have a factor loading of less than .10. Finally, if two items were equal in rank order the actual item was checked to see which question was applicable to the present study. The  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient for the present study shows a high internal consistency of .92 for the value measure.

**Work Values.** Work values were assessed with the Work Aspect Preference Scale (WAPS; Pryor, 1983). This standardised scale is a self-report instrument consisting of 52 items measuring participants' preferences for 13 work values (such as 'Security', 'Management', and 'Surroundings'). A total score is obtained for each of the 13 work value sub-scales by summing four single-item statements for each work value. The sub-scale scores can range from 4 to 20.

Previous research indicates that the WAPS possesses acceptable psychometric properties (Macnab & Fitzsimmons, 1987; Pryor, 1981, 1983, 1987; Schulenberg, Vondracek & Jeong-Ran, 1993). In a series of studies undertaken with Australian high school students, Pryor (1981, 1983) found that the split-half reliability estimates for the sub-scales for WAPS Version 3 ( $N = 1,166$ ) ranged from .73 to .89 with a median coefficient of .78, and for WAPS Version 4 ( $N = 451$ ) .63 to .82 with a median coefficient of .69. Two-week test-retest correlations were found, for WAPS Version 3, to range from .69 to .88, with a median coefficient of .78, and, for WAPS Version 4, from .61 to .84 with a median coefficient of .69. In analysing construct validity, the WAPS sub-scales were found to be significantly correlated with conceptually similar scales from Super's (1970) Work Values Inventory (convergent validity), and generally unrelated to measures of cognitive abilities, personality factors, and career interests (discriminant validity) (Pryor, 1981, 1983).

Participants were asked to consider their preferences for different work aspects, by rating a series of statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 '*Totally Unimportant*' to 5 '*Extremely Important*' (Pryor, 1983). The

### *Study One*

present study omitted three sub-scales from the WAPS: 'Altruism', 'Creativity', and 'Money'<sup>15</sup>. Ten sub-scales were used in this study. They were: 'Independence', 'Co-Workers', 'Self-Development', 'Lifestyle', 'Prestige', 'Security', 'Management', 'Detachment', 'Physical Activity', and 'Surroundings' (see Pryor, 1983). The  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient for the present study shows a high internal consistency of .89 for the sub-scales.

#### *5.4.3 Sample Description*

##### *Global Background Variables for the Total Sample*

The following section describes the sample of participants in the main study. The characteristics of the sample are presented in two sections. The first section collates global background variables for both the employed and unemployed groups and presents  $\chi^2$  statistics to detect intergroup divergences for these variables. Section Two presents the background variables which were specific to the employed and unemployed groups.

Two hundred and forty questionnaires ( $N = 120$  Employed and  $N = 120$  Unemployed Questionnaires) were distributed by the researcher in Hastings and Napier. One hundred and seventy seven participants completed the survey (73.75% response rate). Eighty-six participants were identified as being employed (Full-time  $n = 75$ , Part-time  $n = 5$ , or Self-employed  $n = 6$ ), and ninety-one were identified as being unemployed. In the employed group there were 49 (57%) males and 37 (43%) females, ranging in age from 19 to 59 years ( $M = 38.50$ ,  $SD = 10.64$ ). In the unemployed group there were 61 (67%) males and 30 (33%) females, ranging in age from 16 to 59 years ( $M = 30.99$ ,  $SD = 14.85$ ). The employed group reported the following number of dependants living with them, no children ( $n = 45$ , 52.3%), one child ( $n = 13$ , 15.1%), two children ( $n = 15$ , 17.4%), three children ( $n = 8$ , 9.3%), four children ( $n = 4$ , 4.7%), and five children ( $n = 1$ , 1.2%). The mean number of

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<sup>15</sup> Money was measured elsewhere in the questionnaire.

dependants was slightly more than one dependant per household ( $M = 1.02$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). The unemployed group reported the following number of dependents living with them, no children ( $n = 58$ , 63.7%), one child ( $n = 19$ , 20.9%), two children ( $n = 7$ , 7.7%), three children ( $n = 4$ , 4.4%), and four children ( $n = 3$ , 3.3%). The mean number of dependants was less than one per household ( $M = 0.63$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ).

Table 1 (see p. 102) presents detailed global biographical information for the sample of Study One. The employed were predominately European, married New Zealanders. A large proportion of the employed had obtained some type of educational qualification (for example a trade qualification or university degree). Nearly all of the employed reported middle to high income levels. In comparison the unemployed group included Māori and European New Zealanders. Over half of this group were single and a large proportion had no educational qualifications and low income levels.

In investigating H1 (see p. 87), a  $\chi^2$  statistic was calculated for various global background variables to examine the relationship between each background variable and employment status (see Table 2, p. 103). There were five statistically significant relationships. First, the most prevalent ethnicity for the employed was European New Zealanders, but for the unemployed it was Māori New Zealanders. Second, the employed were predominantly married, whereas most of the unemployed were single. Third, over three-quarters of the employed had gained some form of educational qualification, whereas most of the unemployed had no educational qualifications. Fourth, most of the employed were in middle to high income levels whereas the unemployed were predominantly in the low income bracket. Finally, over half of the employed group (57%) were skilled (see Appendix C, Table C6, which presents the total percentage for each group). This is in contrast with just under a quarter of the

**Table 1**

Frequencies and Percentages for the Employed and Unemployed Groups on Global Background Variables (N = 177)

Variables	Employed Group (n = 86)		Unemployed Group (n = 91)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
New Zealander European	69	80.2	36	39.6
New Zealander Māori	10	11.6	42	46.2
Other Ethnic Groups	7	8.1	13	14.3
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Single	22	25.6	61	67.8
Partnered	64	74.4	29	32.2
<b>Education</b>				
No School Qualification	13	15.1	64	72.7
School Qualification	18	20.9	18	20.5
Trade Qualification	31	36.0	3	3.4
University Qualification	24	27.9	3	3.4
<b>Income<sup>a</sup></b>				
Low	8	9.3	80	89.9
Middle	45	52.3	9	10.1
High	33	38.4	--	--

**Note.**

<sup>a</sup> The low-income category ranges from Nil income to \$288 per week, middle-income from \$289 to \$769, and high-income from \$770 to \$1 347 and over per week.

**Table 2**

Frequencies for the Employed and Unemployed Groups on Global Background Variables and Reported  $\chi^{2a}$  (N = 171)

Variable	Employed ( <u>n</u> = 86)	Unemployed ( <u>n</u> = 91)	df	$\chi^2$
	Frequency	Frequency		
Gender			(1,1)	1.90
Male	49	61		
Female	37	30		
Ethnicity			(2,1)	31.75****
NZ European	69	36		
NZ Māori	10	42		
Other	7	13		
Marital Status			(1,1)	31.42****
Single	22	61		
Partnered	64	29		
Education			(3,1)	73.16****
No School	13	64		
School Qualification	18	18		
Trade Qualification	31	3		
University	24	3		
Income			(2,1)	115.89****
Low	8	80		
Middle	45	9		
High	33	--		
Skill <sup>b</sup>			(2,1)	37.85****
Skilled	48	7		
Semi-skilled	24	12		
Unskilled	12	32		

Note.

<sup>a</sup> All cross-tabulation results are provided in Appendix C (Table C1 to Table C6) for each variable providing the row percentages and number of cases.

<sup>b</sup> Skill was created by examining each participant's educational level and occupational classification (Department of Statistics, 1992). The unemployed who reported a previous occupation were included in the group (see Table 4).

\*\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

**Table 3**

Frequencies and Percentages for the Employed Group on Specific Background

Variables (n = 86)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Full-time Employed	75	87.2
Employed Part-Time	5	5.8
Self-Employed	6	7.0
<b>Occupation<sup>a</sup></b>		
Armed Forces	1	1.2
Legislators, Administrators, Managers	6	7.1
Professionals	29	34.1
Technicians /Associate Professionals	14	16.5
Clerks	7	8.2
Service and Sales Workers	12	14.1
Agriculture and Fishery Workers	2	2.4
Trades Workers	4	4.7
Plant & Machine Operators/Assemblers	10	11.8
<b>Length of Time Employed in Present Job</b>		
Less than 1 year	20	23.3
1 year to 2 years	10	11.6
2 years to 5 years	13	15.1
5 years to 10 years	17	19.8
10 years and over	26	30.2

Note.

<sup>a</sup> All occupations were categorised by the New Zealand Classification of Occupations 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1992).

unemployed group (13.7%) being skilled. Whereas over half of the unemployed group (62.7%) were unskilled. This is in contrast with just under a quarter of the employed group (14.3%) being unskilled. These results confirmed H1 that various global background variables such as ethnicity, marital status, educational qualifications, income, and skill levels differed between the employed and unemployed groups.

### *Specific Background Variables for the Employed and Unemployed Groups*

#### Employed Group

Table 3 (see p. 104) presents frequency distributions for background variables that were assessed in the employed group only. Of the 75 participants who reported their employment status as being employed full-time, six reported that they were self-employed. One-third of the employed (20.9% of the total sample) were classified as professionals.

Five further background questions were asked of the employed. First, the employed were asked to indicate the number of hours (on average) they worked. This ranged from 6 to 72 hours per week ( $M = 45.71$ ,  $SD = 11.32$ ). Second, participants were asked to indicate the number of people employed in their immediate work environment (i.e., the number of people with whom they came into daily contact). The number ranged from 0 to 180 ( $M = 38.66$ ,  $SD = 37.71$ ). Third, participants were asked about the number of people they were friendly with in their immediate work environment (e.g., people you like talking to on a regular basis). Participants indicated a range from 0 to 70 ( $M = 16.90$ ,  $SD = 15.31$ ). Fourth, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt they were socially involved with people in their work environment. The participants rated their responses on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('Not At All') to 7 ('All The Time'). The level of social involvement in the immediate work environment reported by participants was low ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ). The final question asked participants how they perceived the level of risk of losing their job in the next 12 months. The

### *Study One*

participants rated their responses on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('*Very Low*') to 7 ('*Very High*'). Few participants felt that they would risk losing their job in the next 12 months ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ).

#### Unemployed Group

Table 4 (see p. 107) presents frequency distributions for background variables that were assessed only in the unemployed group. Most of the unemployed received some type of government benefit. Of the type of benefits Income Support provided most of the participants received the unemployment benefit (dole). In terms of the length of time they had been unemployed, a large proportion reported more than one year (the range was from 1 to 14 years). Many of the unemployed reported that they had not undertaken part-time work, retrained, undertaken further education, unpaid or voluntary work, or joined a sports/interest club. More than half had undertaken ACCESS or Tops courses, and had previously had a full-time job. The most prevalent previous occupations were classified as plant and machine operators or assemblers, and agricultural and fishery work (Department of Statistics, 1992).

#### *5.4.4 Procedure*

To recruit an employed group, the researcher approached a range of large businesses situated in the Hawke's Bay Region. Data collection was coordinated through the managerial staff in each business. Meetings were held with management to gain permission for the researcher to access workers in the organisation. When permission was given, the researcher approached employees in their morning tea, lunch, or afternoon tea breaks, so as not to encroach on working hours.

For the unemployed group the researcher approached a number of community support groups in the Hawke's Bay Region. Data collection was conducted through the coordinators of each community group. The researcher did not access Income Support or the Employment Service because potential participants in the initial pilot study (see Appendix A, Pilot Study One) explicitly

**Table 4**Frequencies and Percentages for the Unemployed Group on Specific BackgroundVariables (n = 91)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment Status		
Unemployed	80	87.9
Sickness Beneficiary	6	6.6
Primary Caregiver	5	5.5
Receiving a Government Benefit		
Yes	85	93.4
No	6	6.6
Type of Government Benefit		
Unemployment Benefit	71	78.0
Sickness Benefit	5	5.5
ACC Benefit	1	1.1
Domestic Purposes Benefit	4	4.4
55 Plus	4	4.4
Length of time without paid employment		
Less than six months	18	20.9
Six months to a year	31	36.0
More than a year	37	43.0
The last four weeks have actively sought part-time employment		
Yes	45	51.7
No	42	48.3
The last four weeks have actively sought full-time employment		
Yes	43	48.9
No	45	51.1
While you have been unemployed, have you done any of the following		
Part-time paid work		
Yes	39	43.3
No	51	56.7
Retrained for another job		
Yes	29	32.2
No	61	67.8

*(table continues)*

Study One

Table 4 (continues)

Frequencies and Percentages for the Unemployed Group on Specific Background Variables ( $n = 91$ )

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Further Education (e.g. High School)		
Yes	13	14.4
No	77	85.6
ACCESS / TOPS course		
Yes	58	64.4
No	32	35.6
Unpaid / voluntary work		
Yes	34	37.8
No	56	62.2
Joined a sports club or interest club		
Yes	28	31.1
No	62	68.9
Other Things		
Yes	11	12.2
No	79	87.8
Have you had a full-time job?		
Yes	53	58.9
No	37	41.1
Occupation <sup>a</sup>		
Legislators, Administrators, Managers	5	9.8
Technicians /Associate Professionals	2	3.9
Clerks	5	9.8
Service and Sales workers	5	9.8
Agriculture and Fishery workers	10	19.6
Trade workers	2	3.9
Plant & Machine Operators/Assemblers	19	37.3
Elementary occupations	3	5.9

Note.

<sup>a</sup> ( $n = 53$ ) Unemployed respondents identified that they had previously held a full-time job. ( $n = 51$ ) Occupations were classified by the New Zealand Classification of Occupations 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1992).

stated their distrust of these government departments. Participants were more willing to take part in research that was not linked to any government department.

All potential participants<sup>16</sup> were given a brief introduction to the research, were told the purpose of the study, and were told that the survey was interested in their general views on a number of topics. Participants were advised that there were no right or wrong answers and were asked to give the answer that best described what they thought and felt about the topics. Participants were advised that they could take the information sheet (see Appendix F) home and ring the researcher on a toll-free number after they had fully considered whether they would like to participate. They were told that if they did agree to participate the questionnaire would be sent out to them. They were informed that the information they provided was confidential and participation was voluntary. This procedure complies with the New Zealand Psychological Society's (1986) ethical guidelines.

All of those who agreed to participate were informed that answering the questionnaire implied consent. This reassured both the employed and unemployed participants that no one could ever connect their questionnaire with them. Participants were given the opportunity to '*request feedback*' and to ring the researcher on a toll-free number to discuss the survey if they so wished. A printed list of various psychological services was made available to participants if they required further assistance.

Participants who '*requested feedback*' were asked to write their name and address on a blank envelope. The researcher guaranteed that the envelopes would be immediately separated from the questionnaire and securely locked

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<sup>16</sup> All potential employed participants were asked if they considered themselves to be employed. All potential unemployed participants were asked whether they considered themselves to be unemployed (see Chapter One).

### *Study One*

away, so that the individual's name could not be identified with the returned questionnaire. At the completion of the study the envelopes were sent back to participants with a summary of the findings (see Appendix G for the feedback letter for Study One). This further reassured participants that no names would be held by the researcher after the study was completed. At the completion of the study, information posters and a summary report were sent to each organisation and support group.

The measuring instruments appeared in the following order for the employed and unemployed groups: the Perceived Social Conflict items (Gendall et al., 1993), the Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983), the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire (D. Fryer, personal communication, June 27, 1995), the Work Aspect Preference Scale (Pryor, 1983), the Goal and Mode Values Inventories (Braithwaite & Law, 1985), and the Semantic Differential (Osgood et al., 1957). Both questionnaires took approximately thirty minutes to complete.

#### *5.4.5 Data Transformation*

Prior to the main analyses, data were screened for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and the fit of variable distributions to the assumptions of multivariate analyses. Skewness for the variables was accepted in a range of +2.00 or -2.00. Using this criterion, univariate distributions showed only one distribution (Semantic Differential item for the stimulus '*Employed people*') to be skewed. One unemployed male was removed from the unemployed group as he reported extremely high levels of income (gained through illegal practices).

## **5.5 Results**

### *5.5.1 Analyses*

The analyses were undertaken in two distinct stages. First, the multi-item measures (except for perceived social conflict) were checked to corroborate

that the instruments actually measured the psychological dimensions, as outlined in Section 5.2. Following this, the substantive findings which explored the research aims and hypotheses were produced (see Section 5.3). The final Section, 5.5.3, presents interrelationships between each psychological dimension.

The statistical package SPSS Version 6 for Windows 95 (1995; Norušis, 1995) was used to manage data sets and conduct statistical analyses. In order to test the structure of multi-item measures, exploratory factor analyses were conducted. Several checks were undertaken to ensure that all of the psychological measuring instruments were satisfactory for a factor analysis. Correlations between each pair of the items were examined. Factorability was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test of Sampling Adequacy (Kaiser, 1974, cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Normal default eigenvalues of 1.00 were used to decide when factors should cease being extracted, the adequacy of this principle being checked by using the scree plot as a guide. In the final rotated factor loadings, variables loading less than .5 were disregarded.

A *t*-statistic was used to examine whether there were differences between the employed and unemployed groups' responses on each of the psychological dimensions investigated. All *t*-tests were two-tailed with an  $\alpha$  level set at 0.05. Equal and unequal (pooled versus separate) variance *t*-tests were used depending on the *F* test of relative equality of variance (Snedecor & Cochran, 1980). Bivariate correlations were also used to examine the relationships between each of the psychological measuring instruments; subscale significance for *r* was .40 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

## *Study One*

### *5.5.2 Results for Multi-item Instruments and Comparisons Between Employed and Unemployed Groups*

#### *Affective Connotation*

In the semantic differential Osgood and colleagues (1975) included a familiarity (F) scale. This scale allows the researcher to examine whether the employed and unemployed groups felt they understood the denotation of the two target concepts studied: '*Unemployed people*' and '*Employed people*'. For the first target concept, '*Unemployed people*', the data indicated a higher F in the unemployed group ( $M = .49$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ) than in the employed group ( $M = -.02$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). As indicated by this finding, the unemployed participants were more familiar with the concept of the unemployed than the employed participants. For the second target concept, '*Employed people*', F was higher in the employed group ( $M = .74$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than in the unemployed group ( $M = .35$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ). As indicated by this finding, the employed participants were more familiar with concept of the employed than the unemployed group<sup>17</sup>.

Osgood and colleagues (1957, 1975) propose that affective connotation, as measured by the Semantic Differential, involves a three-dimensional space of Evaluation, Potency, and Activity. This factorial structure of affective meaning has been documented across a large number of cultures and languages. Rather than believing that Evaluation, Potency, and Activity automatically apply to a New Zealand sample, the researcher examined the underlying structure of the Semantic Differential profile. It was reasonable to explore the factor structure by performing a separate exploratory analysis of the item space for each of the two target concepts studied: '*Unemployed people*' and '*Employed people*'. It was hypothesised that data on each of the target concepts would show a differentiation of E, P, and A scales.

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<sup>17</sup> The F-scale is a single bipolar item, and caution is required in interpreting these results as no reliability coefficient can be produced.

The factor analysis revealed four factors for each target. For the first target, 'Employed people' (KMO = .74), the factors accounted for some 66.3% of the variance (with eigenvalues ranging from 3.81 to 1.18). For the second target, 'Unemployed people' (KMO = .78), the factors accounted for some 61.1% of the variance (eigenvalues ranging from 3.75 to 1.00). The composition of the four factors was quite different for the two target concepts. After careful examination of these factors the researcher located some structural commonalities between the factor structures.

Table 5 (see p. 114) presents the final (Varimax rotated) factor loadings. Overlaps between the factor structures for the two targets are shown. Evaluation, Potency, and Activity dimensions could not be as clearly identified as originally anticipated. Shouksmith (personal communication, December 18, 1997) and Walkey (personal communication, November 17, 1997) have also found that the factorial structure of affective meaning(s) calculated on certain New Zealand samples failed to reproduce the E, P, and A dimensions as documented by Osgood and colleagues (1957, 1975). Three tentative explanations for this result could be proposed. First, the nature of the sample could have affected the replication of E, P, and A. Second, only two target concepts were used in this study, whereas Osgood and colleagues (1957, 1975) utilised a number of targets from the Atlas of Affective Meaning (cited in Osgood et al., 1975). These ranged from everyday concepts (e.g., tree) to abstract terms (e.g., freedom). Finally, Osgood and colleagues used a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis to identify holistic structures in the data space of affective connotation ratings. The likelihood of replicating E, P, and A may have been reduced owing to the multivariate technique chosen in this analysis.

Following the exploratory factor analyses a discriminant function was computed to investigate H2, H2a, and H2b (see p. 87). The discriminant analysis examined which bipolar scales explained differences between the employed

**Table 5**

Factor Structure for the Semantic Differential's Bipolar Adjectives for Both the Employed and Unemployed Target Concepts

Bipolar Adjectives	Global Concept 1 <sup>a</sup>		Global Concept 2		Global Concept 3		Global Concept 4		Individual 1 <sup>b</sup>	Individual 2	Individual 3
	Em1 <sup>c</sup>	Un2 <sup>d</sup>	Em2	Un1	Em3	Un1	Em4	Un3	Un4	Un2	Un3
A <sup>e</sup> Slow-Fast	.79	.69									
A Active-Passive	.75	.77									
P Strong-Weak	.74	.73									
P Powerful-Powerless	.59								.73		
A Warm-Cold			.87	.77							
E Nice-Awful			.82							.60	
E Honest-Dishonest			.80	.49							
A Noisy-Quiet					-.81	-.78					
E Delicate-Rugged					.63	.64					
E Good-Bad					.56						.49
P Large-Small							.81	.78			
P Deep-Shallow							.63	.48			

Note.

<sup>a</sup> Each Global Concept represents bipolar adjectives whose factors overlapped for each target concept. <sup>b</sup> Each individual item shows which bipolar adjectives did not load onto a global concept. <sup>c</sup> Em1, Em2, Em3, and Em4 are the factor loadings for the target 'Employed people'. <sup>d</sup> Un1, Un2, Un3, and Un4 are the factor loadings for the target 'Unemployed people'. <sup>e</sup> Osgood and colleagues (1957, 1975) dimensions E = Evaluation, P = Potency, and A = Activity.

and unemployed groups in terms of rating the two target concepts. Discriminant power was assessed by computation of Wilks'  $\Lambda$  and associated chi-square tests of statistical significance (Wilks'  $\Lambda = .82$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The discriminant function was dominated by two variables, the scales 'active-passive' and 'nice-awful', (Wilks'  $\Lambda = .90$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The discriminant analysis confirmed H2a and H2b. In terms of the particular targets, there were two scales ('active-passive' and 'nice-awful') which clearly contributed to distinguishing the employed and unemployed groups. Subsequently, a  $t$ -statistic was used to examine the differences between the two separate scales and employment status. Two  $t$ -tests indicated that there were significant differences between the employed and unemployed groups regarding affective connotation of the concept '*Unemployed people*'. First, the employed group ( $M = -.96$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) rated the target more negatively (towards being 'passive') on the 'active-passive' scale compared to the unemployed group ( $M = -.02$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ),  $t(170) = -4.87$ ,  $p = .0001$ . Second, the employed group ( $M = -.08$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) rated the target more negatively (towards being 'awful'), while the unemployed group rated the target more positively (towards being 'nice'), on the 'nice-awful' scale ( $M = .56$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ),  $t(137.95) = -3.96$ ,  $p = .0001$ . However, the above results do not fully support H2 and confirm findings from Pilot Study One (see Section 5.4.1 and Appendix A), in that the respondent groups could not be differentiated in terms of their overall ratings of the affective meaning of employment-relevant target terms.

### *Trait Anxiety*

Previous research has supported the use of the STAI as a reliable and sensitive measure of anxiety, applicable across various social groups (Marteau & Bekker, 1992; Ray, 1984; Spielberger, 1983). To confirm whether or not the STAI did indeed measure a single dimension of trait anxiety on this particular sample an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken. The KMO for the measure was .92, and the scree test indicated one factor accounting for some 42.7% of the variance being extracted with an eigenvalue of 8.55. The final

### *Study One*

Varimax rotated factor loading is shown in Table 6 (see p. 117). The factor analysis confirmed clear construct validation of trait anxiety.

The total trait anxiety score for the employed ranged from 20 to 64 and for the unemployed from 20 to 69. In investigating H7 (see p. 88), a *t*-statistic was used to examine the relationship between trait anxiety and employment status. The *t*-test established that the employed group ( $M = 35.98$ ,  $SD = 9.67$ ) scored significantly lower than the unemployed group ( $M = 44.20$ ,  $SD = 11.09$ ) on trait anxiety,  $t(165) = -5.11$ ,  $p = .0001$ , confirming H7. However, a one-way ANOVA controlling for income found no significant difference between the employed and unemployed groups on trait anxiety  $F(1,162) = .10$ ,  $p = .75$ . This indicates that income is a major factor of anxiety. A multiple regression analysis showed that income accounts for 19% of the variance on this anxiety measure.

#### *Subjective Deprivation*

The subjective deprivation questionnaire is still being developed by Fryer (personal communication, June 27, 1995; personal communication, August 30, 1997). An exploratory factor analysis was undertaken to investigate the underlying factors of this set of variables in the New Zealand sample assessed. The KMO for this measure was .92 and the scree test indicated two factors accounting for some 53.9% of the variance, with eigenvalues of 13.3 and 1.7 respectively. Varimax rotation to orthogonal structure produced the final rotated factors, shown in Table 7 (see p. 118).

Inspection of the major loadings on the factors suggests the following interpretation: *Factor One*: The major components on this factor are item variables 17, 16, 18, 20, 21, 26, and 22, referring to an individual's perceived social isolation caused by having no money. Social isolation is conceptualised as an individual's inability to invite people around, to afford local travel, and to join local clubs, and being restricted financially from interacting socially with others.

Table 6

## Factor Structure of Trait Anxiety

Items	Factor
	1
19 I am a steady person	.75
3 I feel satisfied with myself	.73
10 I am happy	.71
7 I am "cool, calm, and collected"	.69
1 I feel pleasant	.66
16 I am content	.65
14 I make decisions easily	.54
6 I feel rested	.52
13 I feel secure	.51
5 I feel like a failure	.38
11 I have disturbing thoughts	.31
2 I feel nervous and restless	.30
9 I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter	.27
12 I lack self-confidence	.26
4 I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be	.23
20 I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests	.20
8 I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them	.19
17 Some unimportant thoughts run through my mind and bothers me	.13
18 I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind	.12
15 I feel inadequate	.10
Eigenvalues	8.55
Variance (%)	42.7

**Table 7**

Factor Structure of the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire

Items	Factors	
	1	2
<b>17</b> I cannot afford to invite people to visit me	.81	
<b>16</b> I feel socially isolated because of my financial situation	.70	
<b>18</b> The cost of local travel keeps me at home	.70	
<b>20</b> I cannot enjoy my social life because I am not able to pay entrance or membership fees	.60	
<b>21</b> I do not like to go out because I do not have enough decent clothes	.60	
<b>26</b> I am worried about how I will manage until my next money comes in	.60	
<b>22</b> I cannot enjoy myself because of lack of money	.58	
<b>11</b> I am satisfied with the quantity of food I can afford		.81
<b>12</b> I am satisfied with the quality of food I can afford		.74
<b>5</b> I can afford everyday necessities		.70
<b>14</b> I am able to pay for the power I need at home		.64
<b>1</b> I am able to meet my household needs		.54
<b>3</b> I can cope with financial emergencies		
<b>2</b> I have enough money to meet my personal needs		.52
<b>6</b> I can replace things which are worn out		.52
Eigenvalues	13.3	1.7
Variance (%)	47.7	53.9

*Factor Two:* It contained item variables 11, 12, 5, 14, 1, 3, 2, and 6, referring to material deprivation. Material deprivation is conceptualised as an individual's inability to meet the cost of everyday living, for example, buying food and clothing, paying power and rental costs, and buying basic necessities (e.g., toiletries).

The results provide construct validation for social isolation and material deprivation, as being two separate factors. The link between social isolation and material deprivation is related to restrictions imposed by economic deprivation (Fryer, 1995). It is virtually impossible for an individual to plan for their future when they do not know where next week's money is coming from.

Three scores were derived from the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire: two average scores for social isolation and material deprivation, and a total subjective deprivation score. In investigating H3 (see p. 87) a *t*-statistic was used to examine the relationship between subjective deprivation and employment status. Three *t*-tests were performed for each score. First, the employed group ( $M = 9.42$ ,  $SD = 3.04$ ) scored significantly lower than the unemployed group ( $M = 15.48$ ,  $SD = 4.50$ ) on social isolation,  $t(143.35) = -10.21$ ,  $p = .0001$ . Second, the employed ( $M = 12.66$ ,  $SD = 3.30$ ) scored significantly lower than the unemployed group ( $M = 18.83$ ,  $SD = 5.25$ ) on material deprivation,  $t(145.51) = -9.24$ ,  $p = .0001$ . Finally, the total SDQ score for the employed ranged from 28 to 86 and for the unemployed from 31 to 103. The employed group ( $M = 50.65$ ,  $SD = 13.18$ ) scored significantly lower than the unemployed group ( $M = 73.71$ ,  $SD = 16.20$ ) on subjective deprivation,  $t(172) = -10.29$ ,  $p = .0001$ . These findings confirmed H3.

#### *Perceived Social Conflict*

Interitem correlations for the four individual social conflict items were calculated to see if the set of items defines a single dimension of perceived social conflict. The correlation matrix presented in Table 8 shows relatively low but significant correlations among the items.

*Study One*

**Table 8**

Interitem Correlations Between Individual Items for the Social Conflict Measure

Items	1	2	3	4
1 Poor people and rich people	--	.47****	.27****	.21**
2 The unemployed and people with jobs		--	.13	.26***
3 Management and workers			--	.31****
4 Farmers and city people				--

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

\*\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

In investigating H4 (see p. 87) *t*-tests were performed to examine whether there were any differences between the employed and unemployed groups on each of the individual social conflict items. Two items indicated a difference between the two groups. First, the employed group ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) scored significantly higher than the unemployed group ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ),  $t(170) = 2.17$ ,  $p = .03$ , perceiving minimal conflict between poor and rich people. Second, the employed group ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) scored significantly higher than the unemployed group ( $M = 2.18$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ),  $t(171) = 2.48$ ,  $p = .01$ , perceiving minimal conflict between the unemployed and people with jobs. The results for these two items confirmed H4<sup>18</sup>.

*General Values*

Items of the Goal and Mode Values inventories (Braithwaite & Law, 1985) were submitted to a factor analysis. Nine factors were found. The KMO for this measure was .83; the scree test indicated that four factors accounted for some 46.5% of the variance (with eigenvalues ranging from 9.93 to 2.00). Varimax rotation to orthogonal structure was used to extract the final rotated factors. The final factor loadings are shown in Table 9 (see p. 121).

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<sup>18</sup> Caution is required when interpreting single item results as reliability cannot be assessed via conventional psychometric means available for multi-item instruments.

**Table 9****Factor Structure of the Goal and Mode Values Inventories**

Items	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
<b>8</b> Resourceful	.77			
<b>11</b> Knowledgeable	.72			
<b>9</b> Efficient	.71			
<b>12</b> Showing Foresight	.66			
<b>7</b> Competent	.64			
<b>10</b> Realistic	.61			
<b>3</b> Forgiving		.81		
<b>4</b> Considerate		.78		
<b>5</b> Understanding		.73		
<b>6</b> Generous		.55		
<b>28</b> International cooperation			.74	
<b>29</b> Social progress and social reform			.74	
<b>30</b> A world at peace			.73	
<b>31</b> Equal opportunity for all			.58	
<b>32</b> Greater economic equality			.48	
<b>18</b> Personal support				.82
<b>20</b> Acceptance by others				.66
<b>19</b> Security for loved ones				.65
<b>16</b> Mature love				.57
Eigenvalues	9.93	2.60	2.20	2.00
Variance (%)	27.6	7.2	6.1	5.5

**Table 10**

A Comparison of Employed and Unemployed Groups Regarding Goal and Mode Value Subscale Scores (Means and Standard Deviations) and Independent t-test Scores

Value Sub-Scales	Employed Group <sup>a</sup>		Unemployed Group <sup>b</sup>		<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
<u>Mode Values</u>						
A Positive Orientation to Others	25.63	2.64	24.45	3.85	2.34*	172
Competence & Effectiveness	26.58	2.88	25.09	3.84	2.88**	171
<u>Goal and Social Values</u>						
International Harmony & Equality	25.64	3.96	25.43	3.79	0.36	171
Secure & Satisfying Interpersonal Relationships	22.44	2.84	21.84	3.11	1.33	173

Note.

<sup>a</sup> The n's for the employed group ranged from 85 to 86. <sup>b</sup> The n's for the unemployed group ranged from 87 to 90.

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$

Factor loadings suggest that all of the factors match the sub-scales proposed by Braithwaite and Law (1985). *Factor One* refers to an individual's perceived abilities in achieving their goals. This factor was labelled Competence and Effectiveness. *Factor Two* identified certain characteristics which were labelled a Positive Orientation to Others. *Factor Three* identified items which were related to equality and a more egalitarian society. This factor was labelled International Harmony and Equality. *Factor Four* identified items such as 'personal support', 'acceptance by others', and 'security for loved ones'. This factor was labelled Secure and Satisfying Interpersonal Relationships. The results are in accordance with the construct validation of the four sub-scales published by Braithwaite and Law (1985).

Intergroup comparisons were performed to examine, H5 and H5a (see p. 88), to see whether there were any significant differences between the employed and unemployed groups on each of the four subscales of the Goal and Mode Value Inventories (Braithwaite & Law, 1985). Table 10 (see p. 122) displays the Goal and Mode Inventory subscale scores, means, standard deviations, and *t*-test scores for the employed and unemployed groups. Two significant results are shown. First, the employed group described themselves as having a more positive orientation towards others than the unemployed group. Second, the employed group rated themselves as more competent and effective than the unemployed group. These results confirmed H5 and H5a.

### *Work Values*

The Work Aspect Preference Scale (Pryor, 1983) was also submitted to an exploratory factor analysis. The KMO for this measure was .79. The scree test indicated there were five factors accounting for some 46.3% of the variance (with eigenvalues ranging from 8.47 to 1.97). Varimax rotation to orthogonal structure produced the final rotated factors. The final Varimax rotated factor loadings are shown in Table 11 (see p. 124).

**Table 11**  
Factor Structure of the Work Aspect Preference Scale

Items	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
21 are always increasing your knowledge	.82				
3 improve the skills you have	.79				
33 can acquire specialised skills	.73				
12 add to the abilities you already have	.69				
16 can be sure you will always have a job		.84			
26 are certain your job will last		.83			
36 have a secure future		.77			
6 are certain of keeping your job		.77			
23 are really liked by your fellow workers			.81		
24 are looked up to by other people in society			.73		
35 can obtain a high status in the eyes of others			.63		
4 know that other people think your work is important			.61		
8 plan and arrange the work of others				.83	
28 have authority over others				.73	
17 set goals for workers to reach				.65	
37 set out the best way for others to do a job				.65	
20 do your job in a physically attractive environment					.69
29 can work in a pleasant area of the town of countryside					.65
40 have a workplace that is clean and tidy					.58
Eigenvalues	8.47	3.31	2.69	2.09	1.97
Variance (%)	21.2	8.3	6.7	5.2	4.9

Inspection of the factor loadings suggests that factors 1, 2, 4, and 5 matched the subscales proposed by Pryor (1983). *Factor One* relates to individuals continually improving their skills and abilities. This factor was labelled Self-Development. *Factor Two* refers to an individual's ability to maintain and have a secure job. This factor was labelled Security. *Factor Four* covers controlling and managing the work of others. This factor was labelled Management. *Factor Five* concerns an individual's physical working environment. This factor was labelled Surroundings. Finally, *Factor Three* includes three items from the original Prestige sub-scale and one item from the Co-workers subscale ('are really liked by your fellow workers'). This factor was labelled as Prestige as the items identify the concern an individual holds in terms of recognition and status. The results confirm the construct validation for the four subscales proposed by Pryor (1983).

In investigating H6 and H6a (see p. 88), *t*-tests were used to examine whether there were any significant differences between the employed and unemployed groups on each of the five Work Values subscales. Table 12 (see p. 126) summarises pertinent results, contrasting the WAPS subscale score means and standard deviations for the employed and unemployed groups. Two significant differences emerged. First, the unemployed respondents judged the security of a job as being more important than employed respondents. Second, the unemployed respondents judged the surroundings of the workplace as being more important than employed respondents. These results confirmed H6 and H6a.

Further intergroup comparisons were undertaken using individual items whose factor loadings were more than .70, to locate potential differences between the employed and unemployed groups. The employed group ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) rated 'working hard physically' as being less important than the unemployed group ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ),  $t(174) = -4.17$ ,  $p = .0001$ .

**Table 12**

A Comparison of Employed and Unemployed Groups Regarding Work Aspect Preference Scale Subscale Scores (Means and Standard Deviations) and Independent t-test Scores

Sub-Scales	Employed Group <sup>a</sup>		Unemployed Group <sup>b</sup>		t	df
	M	SD	M	SD		
Self-Development	17.20	2.35	17.22	2.60	-0.05	170
Prestige	14.49	3.04	15.20	3.00	-1.53	166
Security	16.68	3.25	17.85	2.66	-2.56**	160
Management	12.30	3.51	12.54	3.23	-0.45	158
Surroundings	15.20	2.62	16.31	2.56	-2.80**	169

Note.

<sup>a</sup> The n's ranged for the employed group from 80 to 85. <sup>b</sup> The n's ranged for the unemployed group from 81 to 88.

\*\* p < .01

### 5.5.3 Correlations Between Psychological Dimensions

Findings presented in Section 5.5.2 highlight differences between the two groups (employed versus unemployed) along several psychological dimensions. This analysis, however, is challenged by the possibility that psychological constructs such as the ones investigated in this thesis fail to be mutually independent. After checking intergroup differences, it was necessary to investigate whether the main psychological dimensions were related. On the whole the psychological constructs showed minimal co-occurrence. Two main patterns were identified in the Pearson correlation matrix. The first pattern was found between trait anxiety (STAI: Spielberger, 1983) and subjective deprivation (Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire: D. Fryer, personal communication, June 27, 1995). A moderate positive correlation was identified between the total trait anxiety score and the social isolation score of the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire ( $r = .52, p < .0001$ ). A second, moderate positive correlation was identified between the total trait anxiety score and the material deprivation score ( $r = .45, p < .0001$ ). A third, moderate positive correlation identified was between the total trait anxiety score and the total subjective deprivation score ( $r = .51, p < .0001$ ).

Table 13 (see p. 128) presents the second pattern of correlations between general values measured by the Goal and Mode Values Inventories (Braithwaite & Law, 1985) and work values measured by the Work Aspect Preference Scale (Pryor, 1983). This pattern indicated that people's general values were linked to their work values. Mode Values and Goal and Social Values correlated with three work value scores, 'Self-Development', 'Security', and 'Surroundings'. A moderate positive correlation was found between 'A Positive Orientation to Others' and 'Self-Development'. Another moderate positive correlation was found between 'Competence and Effectiveness' with 'Self-Development' and 'Security'. A further correlation indicated a moderate positive relationship between 'International Harmony and Equality' with 'Self-Development' and 'Surroundings'. These findings support

**Table 13**

Bivariate Correlations Between General Values (Mode, Goal, and Social Value Inventories) and Work Values (WAPS) (range N = 159-171)

General Values	Work Values		
	Self-Development	Security	Surroundings
<u>Mode Values</u>			
A Positive Orientation to Others	.42****	.24***	.22**
Competence & Effectiveness	.52****	.41****	.22**
<u>Goal and Social Values</u>			
Secure & Satisfying Interpersonal Relationships	.31****	.31****	.28***
International Harmony & Equality	.46****	.32****	.41****

Note.

Significance for bivariate correlations was set at .40 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

\*\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

Dawis (1991) and Macnab and Fitzsimmons's (1987) assertion that general values and work values are systematically related.

## **5.6 Discussion**

The present study aimed to investigate two research objectives. First, to understand the psychological meaning of employment status in employed and unemployed groups. Second, to investigate whether interrelationships exist between employment status and meaning, relative deprivation, anxiety, perceived social conflict, and values (general and work). The findings will be discussed in the same order as the four research aims were presented in Section 5.3.

### **Aim One**

Aim One was to investigate whether there were interrelationships between employment status and background variables. Some demographic characteristics differed between employed and unemployed groups. The employed were predominately European, married New Zealanders. A large proportion of the employed obtained some type of educational qualification (e.g., a trade qualification or university degree), and were trained or experienced in some type of work. Nearly all of the employed reported middle to high income levels. In comparison, the unemployed group included Māori and European New Zealanders. Over half of this group were single, a large proportion had no educational qualifications, were unskilled, and had been unemployed for more than one year. The majority of the unemployed did not undertake part-time work, further education, unpaid or voluntary work, and did not join a sports/interest club. However, more than half of the unemployed had undertaken ACCESS or TOPS courses and had previously had a full-time (unskilled) job. The majority of the unemployed initially undertook some form of training (ACCESS or TOPS course) in the first six months of their unemployment. However, once they had completed these courses they were

### **Study One**

not given the necessary financial support to seek further educational qualifications or retraining. This finding is consistent with Buckland and MacGregor's (1987) assertion that only a minority of the unemployed actively seek further training and that the training available to the unemployed is inadequate. The lack of retraining is reflected in low educational attainment and the unskilled status of the unemployed. Ng and Beer's (1990) New Zealand study of unemployment in Dunedin also provided results similar to the present study. Ng and Beer found that a significant proportion of those unemployed for over six months remained unskilled. Low skill levels were also documented in research by Hicks and Brosnan (1982) and Payne and Payne (1993). Clearly, low skill levels are a barrier to gaining employment in an increasingly skills-oriented job market.

### **Aim Two**

Aim Two guided an empirical investigation into potential differences in the ways employed and unemployed participants judged employment-related targets, in terms of affective meaning. Overall the present study found no differences between the two respondent groups in rating '*Unemployed people*' and '*Employed people*'. However, there were differences between the employed and unemployed groups on two connotation scales: 'active-passive' and 'nice-awful'.

Of the 12 scales utilised in the present study the 'active-passive' and 'nice-awful' scales clearly distinguished employed and unemployed participants on the target concept '*Unemployed people*'. The employed rated '*Unemployed people*' as being more 'passive' and 'awful' compared to the unemployed group. The unemployed rated the target concept, '*Unemployed people*', in terms of being more 'nice' and were neutral on rating the 'active-passive' scale. While these findings are supported, in part, by McFadyen and Gray (1995) and in Pilot Study One (see Appendix A; Cullen et al., 1997; Caution is required interpreting single items as no reliability coefficient can be produced). Generally, McFadyen and Gray found that norms appear to govern the

expression of attitudes towards the unemployed by the employed. Such norms may also function for the unemployed (Cullen et al., 1997). Employment status appears to be a source for categorising individuals in society (Kelvin, 1980, 1984). Employment is a socially approved role associated with working hard and being identified as a contributing member of a community, whereas unemployment is associated with being lazy and not contributing to society. It could be conjectured that dominant negative perceptions in society about the unemployed may influence the employed's responses. Also a fundamental attribution error may be occurring (Myers, 1988). This is supported by the employed rating themselves positively. An interesting contradiction is that the unemployed did not exhibit such an error. Unemployed participants rated the employed as positively as the employed group. This would further support the assertion that social norms are guiding participants' responses (McFadyen & Gray, 1995).

Second, the overall results from the present study do not support the general assertion that affective connotation of employment-related concepts varies with employment status. This study confirms findings from Pilot Study One (see Section 5.4.1 and Appendix A) that the two groups could not be differentiated in terms of their overall ratings on the affective meaning of employment-relevant concepts. Although responses on the 'active-passive' and 'nice-awful' scales support the notion of a fundamental attribution error, the overall results do not. This may reflect changing perceptions in society with the increased persistence of unemployment. It could be tentatively argued that the employed may realise the potential threat of unemployment and the increased likelihood "of encountering, or at least knowing of, someone like oneself who is or is about to become redundant" (Kelvin, 1984, p. 309). New Zealand's present economic situation means that jobs are less secure. Therefore, the employed may have associated '*Unemployed people*' less negatively so as to leave open the possibility of self-inclusion (see Appendix A, Pilot Study One; Cullen et al., 1997). This finding, somewhat supports Kelvin's (1980, 1984) anticipation that a reduction of negative attitudes towards the unemployed will occur as

### ***Study One***

unemployment becomes more of a structural issue. However, the researcher does not agree with Kelvin's extrapolation that these positive perceptions of the unemployed will in turn lead to a decline in the Protestant work ethic and that western society will become more tolerant of the unemployed, with the unemployed "ceasing to be automatically 'deviant' and stigmatized, and ... increasingly becoming compatible with being a 'normal', respectable member of society" (1980, p. 308). Kelvin argues that western society will either increase taxation to maintain full-time unemployment or redefine work (e.g., fewer days in the working week and job-sharing). This type of societal change would challenge the current economic system, and would require a shift in conceptualisations of work and leisure and a radical restructuring of the employment market. Given the direction of social reforms in the western world over the last two decades this may be a somewhat optimistic view.

Overall, results regarding affective connotation may also reflect a shift in people's explanations for unemployment. The connotations of employment status terms, emerging on the 'active-passive' and 'nice-awful' scales, reflect the anticipated negative perceptions of the unemployed by the employed. However, the overall results reflect similarities between the employed and unemployed groups in terms of the connotative meanings associated with employment status. This may reflect an ideological shift from victim-blaming to attributing the cause of unemployment to structural factors (see Chapter Two). In other words, the results may be viewed as a consequence of shifts in social belief systems. However, there does appear to be persistence in some negative perceptions of the unemployed by the employed on key target concepts. These negative perceptions of the unemployed and the resulting belief systems are investigated further in Study Two.

### **Aim Three**

The third aim was to investigate the interrelationships between employment status and the following psychological dimensions: relative deprivation, perceived social conflict, general values, and work values.

Relative deprivation as a psychological dimension was investigated by using the Subjective Deprivation Questionnaire (D. Fryer, personal communication, June 27, 1995; D. Fryer, personal communication, August 30, 1997). The findings of this study supported the notion that employed and unemployed groups differ in perceptions of relative deprivation. Differences were also found between the two groups on overall subjective deprivation, and on subscales of social isolation and material deprivation. This study confirms previous research findings (both quantitative and qualitative) that significantly lower levels of financial resources confine the unemployed both socially and materially (Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987; Warr, 1987; Wilkinson, 1996). Such deprivation is associated with a range of negative societal and health outcomes (Blaxter, 1990, 1993, 1997; Bury, 1997; Elstad, 1998; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996).

Previously researchers have associated a shortage of money with social isolation (Binns & Mars, 1984; Henwood & Miles, 1987; Jackson & Walsh, 1987; Jahoda, 1979, 1982; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). The basis of social isolation is a financial inability to socialise and a lack of daily contact with others, which is generally provided by employment. Results of the present study are limited by the finding that a large proportion of the unemployed were single and may have had a limited circle of friends, therefore reporting higher levels of social isolation. As shown in Chapter Three, social support is a key factor in ameliorating the negative effects of unemployment (Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Kasl, Gore & Cobb, 1975; Macky & Haines, 1982; McPherson & Hall, 1983; Schwarzer et al., 1994; Siegert et al., 1990). International research has generally found that increased social contact with family, friends, and neighbours can contribute to lower levels of psychological distress (Binns & Mars, 1984; Fryer & Payne, 1986). The unemployed's perceptions of social isolation will be explored in Chapter Six.

Employment status groups were found to differ significantly in ratings of material deprivation. In the present study, the unemployed participants

### *Study One*

reported difficulty in being able to pay for food, clothing, power, rent, and basic necessities. This finding is supported by Whelan (1992) who documented 'objective lifestyle deprivation' in the form of a lack of heating, food and clothing, and the persistence of financial debt due to daily expenses. Chapter Four proposed that few would dispute that the majority of the unemployed exist in conditions of relative deprivation (Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987; Warr, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1984). Such deprivation has been shown to contribute to the increased incidence of psychological problems (Bartley, 1994; Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1981; Fryer, 1992a, 1997; Ullah, 1990; Whelan, 1992), increases in mortality rates (Wilkinson, 1996; Wilson & Walker, 1993), as well as widening inequalities in health (Carroll & Davey Smith, 1997; Ferrie, 1997; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). Material deprivation is a direct result of welfare benefits being set below the poverty line (see Chapter Two). An increase in recent years of such material deprivation has been associated with an increase in poverty-related diseases such as rheumatic fever, tuberculosis, and meningococcal disease (Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997). Hardship is also reflected in an increase in food banks and stress on social support agencies. This theme of relative deprivation and the ways the unemployed cope with limited financial resources is investigated further in Chapter Six.

The findings for this study supported the proposition that employed and unemployed groups perceive different levels of social conflict. The results confirmed previous findings that the unemployed respondents perceived more social conflict between the poor and the rich and the unemployed and people with jobs (Gendall et al., 1993). The unemployed's perceptions of conflict between various social groups may reflect their experiences of conflict at home, with government departments, and with society. Because the unemployed have limited financial resources for basic everyday necessities conflict can arise between family members (McGhee & Fryer, 1989). Being unable to pay for food, clothing, power, rent, or school fees, can increase

levels of stress in the home, which may result in domestic violence (Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew et al., 1991). Also, the unemployed have to constantly cope with state bureaucracies (e.g., New Zealand Income Support Service and New Zealand Employment Service) to remain eligible for their benefit and to ensure access to their entitlements. They are also more likely to live in areas of high crime and be subjected to societal stereotypes. Kelvin and Jarrett (1985) identify personal factors, such as the stigma associated with being unemployed, having to approach a bureaucracy for more financial help, and the loss of social contact with others as contributing to the negative impact of unemployment. In sum, the unemployed may perceive more social conflict than the employed because the unemployed experience more conflict in their lives. In New Zealand this is no doubt due, in part, to recent government policies which enforce strict eligibility criteria for receiving the unemployment benefit and which have worsened the position of the unemployed. These issues are further explored in Chapter Six.

The findings support the proposition that there are differences between employed and unemployed groups regarding their general values. The unemployed tended to perceive themselves as being less competent and effective and having a poorer orientation to others. The difference between the two groups in competence and effectiveness may indicate that the unemployed perceive that they do not have the knowledge, skills, or abilities to deal with everyday situations and to secure employment. These personal inadequacies were already shown in the analysis of background demographic variables. (Over half of the unemployed had no educational qualifications, were unskilled, and had limited work experience.) Another general value, 'A Positive Orientation to Others', indicates the unemployed have a more negative outlook towards others and society in general. This finding is congruent with the higher rates of perceived social conflict reported by the unemployed. Lower levels of 'A Positive Orientation to Others' could be interpreted as a cognitive and affective consequence of the negative experience of unemployment (Feather, 1983, 1984, 1990; Feather & O'Brien, 1986, 1987). Overall, the results on the

### *Study One*

value dimensions are concordant with previous research undertaken in Australia (Feather, 1983, 1984, 1990; Feather & O'Brien, 1986, 1987; Heaven, 1990; O'Brien & Feather, 1990).

A longitudinal study undertaken by Feather and O'Brien (1986, 1987) investigated the effects of employment status on a large sample of school leavers. The results indicated that the unemployed were less physically active than the employed. However, in the present study the employed and unemployed equally valued the importance of taking part in leisure activities and being physically active. A desire to be active is now widely accepted as a core value in Western societies which have been associated with public health initiatives over the last three decades (Blaxter, 1990, 1993, 1997; Crawford, 1980, 1984, 1994). In our sample, employed respondents rated the unemployed as being less active, which reflects dominant stereotypes, such as the unemployed being 'lazy dole bludgers'.

The findings from this study support the proposition that the employed and unemployed groups differ in terms of some work values. In the present study two work value dimensions indicated a difference between the employed and unemployed groups. First, the unemployed rated the importance of 'Job Security' higher than the employed group. The unemployed may have identified 'Job Security' as being more important to them because of their current employment status. 'Job Security' may be perceived to be more important because it provides certainty in future income, reduces anxieties about job loss, and changes the unemployed's (deprived) situation. Second, the unemployed rated the 'Surroundings' of a job as being more important than the employed group. This result is confirmed by Isralowitz and Singer (1987), who found that young men living in an unemployed environment reported work surroundings as being an important work value. The work surrounding dimension taps into an individual's desire "to work in safe, attractive, [and] comfortable working conditions" (Pryor, 1983, p. 9). It is argued that because the unemployed are mainly an unskilled population (see the discussion for Aim

One) they are likely to experience adverse work conditions. For example, in the Hawke's Bay the unemployed are frequently expected to undertake part-time seasonal work. This type of employment is generally outside, where the unemployed experience environmental conditions of extreme heat (30-40°C), dust, and exposure to chemical sprays. Employment experiences of this nature may help to explain why the unemployed identified job security and work surroundings as more important work values.

However, there were similarities between the employed and unemployed groups on certain work value subscales. The present study found that the employed and unemployed assigned similar importance to three work values: Self-Development, Prestige, and Management. A number of studies have reported that the unemployed generally hold the same work values as the employed (Isralowitz & Singer, 1987; McPherson & Hall, 1983; Searls, Braucht & Miskimins, 1974). For instance, one Australian study (McPherson & Hall, 1983), compared young unemployed men with employed apprentices and found that the two groups did not differ in the values they attached to work. In sum, the unemployed may hold similar work values as the employed in terms of a desire to be a productive member of society. In terms of this finding, stereotypical assumptions about the unemployed as not holding the same desire to work appear to be erroneous (see Chapter Two).

#### **Aim Four**

The fourth aim was to investigate whether levels of trait anxiety, as a single dimension of psychological health, are generally higher among the unemployed than the employed. Previous research which has found higher levels of anxiety among the unemployed than the employed is corroborated (Feather, 1990; Feather & Bond, 1983; Kaufman, 1982; Shamir, 1986; Warr, 1978). A comparison of the means of the two groups in this study with Spielberger's (1983) American normative sample shows some potentially alarming results. For the present study the unemployed's central tendency score ( $M = 44.20$ ) seemed comparable to Spielberger's (1983) sample of general medical and

### *Study One*

surgical patients with psychiatric complications ( $M = 44.62$ ). Although this comparison provides some indication that anxiety levels of the unemployed are comparable to psychiatric populations (Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Kammerling & O'Connor, 1993; Morrell, Taylor, Quine, Kerr & Western, 1994; Stokes & Cochrane, 1984)<sup>19</sup>, it should be noted that Spielberger's (1983) mean scores are based on a small sample of patients. Therefore, it may be more helpful to compare the two groups from the present study with a representative sample of New Zealanders. A normative study undertaken by Knight, Waal-Manning, and Spears (1983) presents findings for the STAI on a large sample of residents of Milton (54 km south of Dunedin) ( $N = 1\ 173$ ). Total trait anxiety scores were provided for both men ( $n = 555$ ,  $M = 33.11$ ,  $SD = 7.80$ ) and women ( $n = 586$ ,  $M = 36.85$ ,  $SD = 8.89$ ). The present study found that the trait anxiety means for both employed men ( $M = 34.63$ ,  $SD = 8.63$ ) and women ( $M = 37.73$ ,  $SD = 10.75$ ) were relatively similar to the normative data. In contrast to this finding, both the unemployed men ( $M = 44.08$ ,  $SD = 11.27$ ) and women ( $M = 44.41$ ,  $SD = 10.95$ ) reported markedly higher levels of trait anxiety than Knight and colleagues' (1983) normative sample. The similarity of the employed's levels of trait anxiety to the normative sample implies that trait anxiety levels have not changed over time. However, the difference between the unemployed's levels of trait anxiety compared to the normative sample is large. Whether an individual's employment status is a crucial predictor of their levels of trait anxiety needs further investigation, but the intergroup difference between the employed and unemployed signals an elevation of anxiety in the unemployed.

Research undertaken by Shamir (1986) investigated the relationship between employment status and psychological health. The sample consisted of a group

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<sup>19</sup> Goldney has cautioned researchers about reporting an association between unemployment and psychiatric admission rates. He highlights that there is "no direct causal relationship ... between unemployment and subsequent illness" (1996, p. 309).

of educated people, aged between 27 and 47 years, who had lost their jobs in Israel. Shamir argued that "depressive affect, morale, and anxiety are affected by employment status" (1986, p. 61). The present study supports Shamir's proposition that employment status is a component of anxiety. The researcher found that the main predictor of trait anxiety levels is income (predicted 19% of anxiety). The present study confirmed this result in the bivariate correlations, which showed that subjective deprivation was moderately correlated with trait anxiety. Such findings confirm assertions made in the research literature that income plays a primary role in the psychological health of the unemployed (Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Fryer, 1995; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Ullah, 1990; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987; Whelan, 1992; Wilkinson, 1996). For instance, an Australian study undertaken by Ullah (1990) investigated the psychological impact of reduced income during unemployment. The sample consisted of unemployed teenagers who experienced a reduction in their welfare benefits (due to changes in government policy). Ullah found that high levels of subjective financial strain were associated with poor psychological health. These results increase the need for further investigation of the impact of income on the unemployed's health. This theme is further investigated in Chapter Six.

In sum, the quantitative study outlined above investigated the meaning and impact of unemployment for different social groups. Key findings, such as the meaning of unemployment, its impact in terms of relative deprivation, interpersonal conflict, and the role of social support in ameliorating the negative consequences of unemployment, are investigated further in the following qualitative study.

## Chapter Six

# Study Two - The Unemployed's Accounts of the Meaning and Impact of Unemployment

Chapter Six presents a qualitative study of the experiences of the unemployed and includes an investigation of relative deprivation, interpersonal conflict, and the impact of unemployment. In exploring the unemployed's experiences this study adds to our knowledge of the meaning and impact of unemployment. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the study and the research aims, followed by a description of the two qualitative techniques (individual and focus group discussions) used to collect the research corpus. A brief description is then provided of the unemployed participants. This is followed by an outline of the research procedure and a discussion of the technique used to analyse the corpus thematically. The findings of the study are subsequently presented under two main headings, Meaning and Impact. The concluding discussion relates the analysis to previous research and the findings of the quantitative study outlined in Chapter Five.

### 6.1 Introduction

Increasingly research attention is returning to the impact of material and subjective (psychological) deprivation on the unemployed (Feather, 1997; Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1997; McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Whelan, 1992). As noted in Chapter Three, these issues were initially explored in the 1930s (Bakke, 1933; Jahoda et al., 1933/1972), when researchers suggested that financial deprivation limited the unemployed's ability to fulfil various life goals and had negative health consequences. A contemporary authority on

### ***Study Two***

deprivation research, Fryer (1992a, 1995), has explored the restrictive aspects of material deprivation on the agency of the unemployed. Restrictions on agency or proactivity (definitions of both terms are provided in Chapter Three, Section 3.2.2, p. 46) are said to occur because of economic insecurity, which prevents people from meeting everyday needs and planning for their future. This in turn is said to have negative psychological, physical, and social consequences. As discussed in Chapter Three (see Section 3.2.2), a number of researchers have investigated three areas of Fryer's Agency Restriction Model: proactivity (Fryer & Payne, 1984), the role of poverty in restricting agency (McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Whelan, 1992), and an individual's inability to plan for the future (Fryer & McKenna, 1987). Such studies have provided valuable insights into the impact of material and social deprivation on the unemployed, which include increased social isolation, family problems, and health problems.

In investigating the impact of unemployment it is important to establish how the unemployed make sense of their situation. Although general consequences of unemployment have been identified, there appears to be individual variations in the prevalence of these consequences (Fryer & Payne, 1986). Such variations can be explained, in part, by differences in people's interpretations of their situation (*cf.* Fryer, 1992a, 1995; Fryer & Payne, 1984, 1986; Wilkinson, 1996).

If, as proposed by authors such as Fryer (1992a), Wilkinson (1996), and Elstad (1998), the impact of material deprivation is dependent, in part, on people's subjective interpretations of their situation, then research should explore such interpretations. In this study, the focus is on the unemployed's reflections on their situation rather than the numerical prevalence of various negative consequences. It is designed to contribute to psychological knowledge of the unemployed's perceptions and beliefs about unemployment and its impact. Emphasis is placed on the experiences and perceptions of the unemployed as

central components in developing psychological knowledge of the meaning and impact of unemployment (Fryer, 1992a, 1995). This study explores the unemployed's accounts of unemployment, the ways they make sense of their situation, the impact of restrictions placed on their agency, and societal perceptions about the unemployed. The concept of agency is useful in approaching unemployment from the perspective of the unemployed themselves, as people who actively strive to make sense of events in their lives within social conditions not of their own making (*cf.* Giddens, 1991).

A number of studies have investigated lay accounts of a range of social phenomena relevant to the present study, such as unemployment (Furnham, 1982a, 1982b; Furnham & Hesketh, 1989; Lewis & Furnham, 1986), poverty (Feather, 1974; Furnham, 1982c; Harper, 1996), and health and illness (Blaxter, 1990, 1993, 1997; Bury, 1997; Herzlich & Pierret, 1987; Radley, 1993). A key advocate for such research is Furnham (1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1988; Furnham & Lewis, 1986). Furnham (1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1988) investigated the range and type of accounts people gave of poverty and unemployment. He proposed that the structure of lay accounts consisted of three factors: individualistic (where people are held responsible for their own situation), societal (where structural, economic, and political factors are said to cause poverty and unemployment), and fatalistic (where poverty and unemployment are caused by uncontrollable factors such as chance or fate). The existence of these three factors is supported by empirical research which suggests that people can use one factor in isolation or draw on two of the three factors in a single account (Furnham, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c; Furnham & Hesketh, 1989).

The conceptual basis for Furnham's research into such accounts was attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986). He used this theory to explain how the three factors could be seen as attributional patterns and how

## ***Study Two***

participants made sense of and addressed unemployment (Feather, 1990; Furnham, 1988). An attribution refers to the development of a perception, and/or an inference about the cause of a phenomenon (in this case poverty and unemployment) and/or the making of an evaluative response in a cause-and-effect context (Weiner, 1986). Several varieties of attribution theory share common assumptions: "that we seek to make sense of our world, that we often attribute people's actions to internal or external causes, that we do so in fairly logical ways" (Myers, 1988, p. 76). Attribution theory provides valuable insights into lay accounts of the ways people assign responsibility for issues such as poverty and unemployment. However, results are limited by the individual focus of attribution theory (*cf.* Harper, 1996). In an investigation of lay accounts of poverty, Harper (1996) argues that findings from research conducted within an attribution framework can be extended through more socially focused research, which draws on qualitative methods to explore the complex and socially derived character of these accounts.

Over the last two decades, qualitative research into people's accounts on a range of topics from poverty to illness has attempted to link an individual's expressed beliefs and attributions to wider social meaning systems, representations, or discourses (Blaxter, 1990, 1993, 1997; Bury, 1997; Lewis & Furnham, 1986; Harper, 1996; Harré & Stearns, 1995; Herzlich & Pierret, 1987; Moscovici, 1981; Radley, 1993). Although the number of studies is limited, previous investigations of lay accounts provide rich insights into the lives of the unemployed and the socially dominant meaning systems from which their perceptions are framed.

The accounts people provide of unemployment are influenced by societal meaning systems, which encompass a range of ideas and assumptions. People's accounts are created in a social context and are derived, in part, from dominant social meaning systems, which can lead to the stigmatising of the unemployed. In a recent study, McFadyen and Gray (1995) examined the

discourses used by 67 employed individuals and whether they expressed negative, sympathetic, or neutral attitudes towards the unemployed. They found negative attitudes were expressed. These authors suggest that "there may be norms that govern the specific manner in which individuals express different types of attitude statements" (1995, p. 316). It is well established that people draw on meanings, norms, and values from a range of sources to create their accounts of illness, inequality, and unemployment (Blaxter, 1993, 1997; Bury, 1997; Furnham, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1988; Harper, 1996; Iyengar, 1991).

The present study investigates the ways social meaning systems are drawn on and used when the unemployed make sense of their situation. An analysis of the unemployed's accounts is useful in highlighting the influence of these meaning systems on how unemployment is conceptualised and dealt with. According to Fryer's (1986, 1992a, 1995) Agency Restriction Model, the unemployed are viewed as social agents who are actively involved in making sense of their situation by drawing on various meanings available to them when creating their accounts.

## **6.2 Method**

A qualitative approach using individual and focus group interviews (see Chapter Four, Section 4.3 and Figure 3) was used in this study to complement Study One and further develop key findings. This section briefly describes the procedure, including the research methods, the participants, the training of a research assistant, and the general analysis process.

### *6.2.1 Individual Interviews and Focus Group Discussions*

Both individual interviews and focus group discussions were used in this study to access people's accounts of unemployment and related issues. Individual interviews have been widely used by researchers "to gain a detailed picture of

### *Study Two*

a respondent's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts, of a particular topic" (Smith, 1995, p. 9). Individual interviews allow the participants to express their beliefs on various topics and the researcher to access the participant's rich, often diverse, and frequently contradictory accounts (Pierret, 1993; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Focus groups are an increasingly common technique within the social sciences (Agar & MacDonald, 1995; Krueger, 1988; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1988, 1997; Wilkinson, 1998). The focus group technique involves an informal discussion of a specific topic by a group of participants (Morgan, 1988, 1997). This technique allows access to participants' accounts in a way that is flexible enough to explore different points of view. Morgan suggests that focus groups can be used as a self-contained research strategy to "explore new research areas or to examine well-known research questions from the participants' own perspective" (1988, p. 24). He also proposes that focus groups can be used with other research methods, "either as preliminary research to prepare for specific issues in a larger project, or as follow-up research to clarify findings" (1988, p. 24). Focus groups were used to clarify and add context to the findings of the quantitative study reported in the previous chapter. This qualitative technique was used to explore the unemployed's accounts of unemployment when talking with one another.

Both the individual interviews and focus group discussions were selected as part of a multimethod design. The individual interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to establish rapport and access participants' accounts in some detail. The focus group technique was selected to "reveal not only shared ways of talking, but shared experiences, and shared ways of making sense of these experiences" (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 335). (For a discussion of combining individual and focus group interviews, see Agar & MacDonald, 1995; Crabtree, Yanoshik, Miller & O'Connor, 1993; Morgan, 1988; Wolff et al., 1993).

Three main stages occurred in the development of the semi-structured individual interview protocol (for a detailed discussion of developing and conducting semi-structured interviews, see Berg, 1995; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Smith, 1995). First, after a review of the unemployment literature and the findings from study one, a number of open-ended questions were developed. Second, the protocol was structured into three main parts (see Appendix H for the Individual Interview Protocol). The beginning of the interview focused on general background questions, such as marital status and previous employment information, and was intended to encourage the participants to feel at ease when talking to the researcher and answering questions. The next set of questions were developed to investigate participants' general views about unemployment and its impact. The final section asked the participants whether they would like to discuss any further issues. The protocol was memorised and used as a guide which was adjusted in light of each participant's responses. Not all of the questions contained in the protocol were used in every interview and additional questions were asked in relation to the participant's accounts. The interviews were flexible enough to cover core themes, but also addressed any individual concerns (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Smith, 1995).

The focus group protocol (see Appendix I) was developed in light of previous research findings and the results from Study One, and to complement the individual interview protocol. Only a few questions were used so that the participants would have the opportunity to discuss issues at length. The questions were structured to generate discussion amongst participants, and were asked in a 'funnelling sequence' (*cf.* Morgan, 1988, 1995; O'Brien, 1993). This sequence initially asked general questions about unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. The next set of questions were more specific, investigating themes such as social conflict, and the relationship between unemployment and illness. At the conclusion of the focus group discussion the researcher

## *Study Two*

asked whether the participants wished to discuss any further issues. In the focus group the researcher acted as a facilitator, moderating and listening to the discussion, providing the focus, but allowing the conversation to flow.

The initial individual and focus group protocols were piloted with five unemployed participants to establish whether any of the questions developed in the protocols were problematic (for a description on writing interview questions see Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Smith, 1995)<sup>20</sup>. Three men and two women aged between 26 and 50 years participated in the piloting of the protocols. At the completion of each individual interview and the focus group discussion participants were asked to comment on the protocols. The researcher then identified questions which were misunderstood by the participants. Subsequently, these questions were either re-phrased or deleted, or new questions, based on the participants' responses, were incorporated.

### *6.2.2 Participants*

The individual interviews and the focus group discussions took place in the Hawke's Bay (Napier and Hastings) during August and September 1996. Twenty-six unemployed participants took part in the individual interviews. Of this group, twenty-one took part in three focus group discussions. There were eleven women ranging in age from 17 to 49 years and 15 men ranging in age from 17 to 55 years. In terms of self-categorisation there were fourteen New Zealand Māori, eleven New Zealand European, and one Polynesian. Thirteen participants were single, eight were married or presently partnered, four were separated or divorced, and one was widowed. In terms of previous employment experience four of the participants reported that they had not had

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<sup>20</sup> The participants took part in an individual interview and a focus group discussion. The pilot was undertaken in conjunction with the training of the assistant researcher (see Section 6.2.3). The corpus from the pilot was not included in the final research corpus.

a job, ten had experienced seasonal work in the agricultural sector, seven had worked as plant or machine operators/assemblers, and five had worked in the service industry (e.g., working in a bakery). The participants are identified in the findings by pseudonyms.

### *6.2.3 Procedure*

The participants were recruited from a number of community support groups, who were given a donation of fifty dollars for their help in referring participants to the researcher. Potential participants were accessed by a worker at each community group. The research required at least five participants for the focus group discussions, so eight potential participants were recruited from each group. This technique of over-recruiting is a means of compensating for participants who may be unable, for various reasons, to attend the focus group discussion (Morgan, 1995).

The community worker supplied the researcher with a list of names and telephone numbers of people who were interested in taking part in the study. The researcher then telephoned these people and introduced herself. People were told the purpose of the study and that the interviewer was interested in their experiences of and ideas about unemployment and its impact. After considering whether to take part in the study, the participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix J). They were informed that they could ring the researcher on a toll-free number, both during and after the research, to discuss any concerns.

Before each individual interview commenced the researcher stated that the information participants provided was confidential and that participation was voluntary. This procedure complies with the New Zealand Psychological Society's (1986) ethical guidelines. Participants then signed a consent form allowing the interviews to be audio-taped and permitting the researcher to use

### *Study Two*

quotes in the thesis and subsequent publications (see Appendix K for the consent form). All consent forms were locked away, separately from the audiotapes, and destroyed after the research was completed. The audiotapes were coded with a number which only the researcher could link to each participant. Participants were also given the opportunity to '*request feedback*' and the return of their individual interview audiotapes. For this purpose, they were asked to write their name and address on a blank envelope. The researcher guaranteed that these envelopes would be kept separate from the consent forms and audiotapes. At the completion of the study the envelopes were sent back to participants with their audiotapes and a one-page summary of the findings (see Appendix L for the feedback letter). This procedure further reassured participants that no names would be held by the researcher after the study was completed and that no one could ever associate them with their interviews.

The focus group discussions were conducted after the individual interviews. Three focus groups were conducted: Group A consisted of both men and women, Group B consisted only of men, and Group C consisted only of women. When the participants arrived at the venue the researcher welcomed them into the focus group setting and informal introductions were made. The researcher introduced the study and then outlined nine guidelines which were designed to allow the discussion to run smoothly (D. J. Hodgetts, personal communication, February 20, 1996; see Appendix I). All of the focus group discussions were audio-taped. These tapes were secured away from the tapes of the individual interviews. At the conclusion of the focus group a debriefing occurred where the researcher answered queries. Then the researcher provided morning or afternoon tea, which gave the participants the opportunity to interact with the researcher and discuss any further concerns.

Individual interviews varied in length from thirty minutes to an hour and a quarter. Focus group discussions were, on average, two hours in length.

*Assistant Researcher Training*

A twenty-four year old working class male, who was enrolled in a Masters degree in Education, was hired as an assistant, to undertake the interviews with male participants. The assistant researcher was selected owing to his having been unemployed for one year, having completed a number of training courses, and having worked in various semi-skilled occupations. It was thought that such experiences would assist with the establishment of rapport with the unemployed men and overcome any gender or class barriers, thus improving the quality of the research corpus.

The training of the research assistant was conducted over a three-day period and comprised of three stages. First, the ethical procedures and issues associated with interviewing were discussed. The assistant was provided with a copy of the New Zealand Psychological Society's ethical guidelines (1986); one chapter from Krueger (1988) outlining focus group interviewing skills; and one chapter from Morgan (1997) discussing factors which may affect focus group discussions. After the assistant had read these chapters, he viewed a video on interviewing skills (Massey University, Department of Psychology, Television Unit, Interviews, No. 44). The researcher then provided the assistant with further reading from Berg (1995) on writing research field notes. Next, administrative issues were covered, including the signing of an employment contract, the procedure for reading the information sheet and the consent form, and the labelling of audiotapes. Finally, the assistant conducted three individual interviews with male participants and a focus group discussion, which also served as the pilot for the protocols (see Section 6.2.1). The researcher observed both types of interview and gave extensive feedback to the assistant on the following areas: questioning technique, attending behaviour, and the use of secondary prompts, and an overall assessment of the interviews.

## *Study Two*

### *6.2.4 Thematic Analysis*

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes or patterns of response in the interviews (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). After the individual and focus group interviews had been conducted, the analysis began with the writing of field notes. These field notes included the researchers' first impressions of the content of the individual interviews and focus group discussions<sup>21</sup>. Next, the individual interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed, and initially coded into the themes identified from the field notes and by the main areas the study set out to investigate. As the initial coding was being undertaken further themes were identified. Following this a system of conceptual themes emerged; these were developed, defined, and used to describe the research corpus. These themes were further subdivided according to the issues and patterns identified in the transcripts. All of the themes were used to locate common conceptual threads and functioned as an analytical framework (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The qualitative package, Q.S.R. NUD\*IST (Qualitative Solutions & Research, 1994) was used to manage, sort, and search the transcripts. After coding all transcripts, the researcher asked a person familiar with qualitative analysis techniques to assist with an inter-coder reliability check<sup>22</sup>. A number of themes were randomly selected and then the person coded the transcripts to

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<sup>21</sup> The assistant researcher and the researcher discussed with each other their field notes and the main themes emerging from the interviews.

<sup>22</sup> The inter-coder reliability check was not quantified. The process involved the person undertaking the check to look at whether the coding framework reflected the content of the transcripts and to identify any parts of the analysis which they disagreed with. Subsequently, the coding structure was clarified and improved.

the themes identified in the coding structure. As a result the few points of divergence that emerged were clarified and the themes adjusted accordingly.

The following section presents the findings of the thematic analysis. This section utilises direct quotes to reveal details of the vivid accounts the participants provided (Boyatzis, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). An account is "not just a description of an event but is an explanation of *how* or *why* it happened. Such explanatory work may take many forms, from explicit delineation of causal linkages, to taken-for-granted inferences about motives for action" (Lloyd, 1996, p. 440, italics in original). These quotes represent trends in the research corpus. Some participants are drawn on at more length than others as they exemplified common accounts in a more articulate and expressive manner.

### **6.3 Findings**

The findings are presented under two main categories, meaning and impact, both of which encompass a number of themes. It is important to note that for the unemployed these higher-order categories were often intertwined. For instance, financial concerns were inherent in both categories. Themes from both categories were talked about in an interrelated manner but are separated in the findings section for the purposes of conceptual clarity. Supporting extracts from the individual interviews and focus group discussions are used to explore each theme.

#### *6.3.1 Meaning*

Instead of relying on a single, unitary meaning for unemployment (such as being out of work), the unemployed often drew on social meaning systems which include work values and notions of responsibility (both individual and societal) in making sense of unemployment. Unemployment took on meaning, for the participants, within the context of their own experiences and everyday

## **Study Two**

lives, and encapsulated a number of interrelated themes, such as social conflict, cause and responsibility, and the ways unemployment should be addressed. The present section provides a general introduction to the meaning of unemployment prior to investigating prominent themes.

Participants discussed the meaning of unemployment in functional terms such as hardship and being prevented from doing things. As Moana (44 years) stated:

*It means hardship, it means, it's just struggle, you know, life of struggling and it means, um, I guess unemployment makes you down and out man, ... you can't do stuff you want to do.*

To the participants, unemployment meant being placed in an adverse situation, facing financial hardship, and often being stigmatised. For instance, Sonya (17 years) stated:

*To me it means that I can't afford half the stuff that I need to have because I'm unemployed. I suppose I'm young so that's different but I mean half the jobs now you have to be qualified to get a job and then half the time you don't know where you're going to get the qualifications from because nobody helps you ... I think they make it hard for you on purpose so it makes you wonder why you left school, makes you want to go back. I just think it really sucks, the whole unemployment system sucks, yeah.*

This account links unemployment with a lack of money and educational qualifications, and how these factors limit an individual's ability to gain employment. The unemployed often state that they need to up-skill in order to compete in the labour market.

Similarities emerged between the ways participants made sense of, and dealt with, unemployment and what research has highlighted as important elements of the meaning of illness. Illness is often associated with inactivity and a lack of control. Like illness, unemployment was perceived as restricting one's ability to do things. The participants viewed unemployment as a state of inactivity and limited control where people were unable to do what they wanted. In a

sense unemployment was viewed in terms of its impact, as an unhealthy state (the unemployed's experiences of the impact of unemployment is outlined in Section 6.3.2, p. 175). These findings are complementary to the statistical findings reported in the previous chapter, for the Semantic Differential, where unemployment was associated with inactivity.

In sum, unemployment was seen as an unhealthy deviation from the healthy state of employment. This conceptualisation was implicit in many of the participants' accounts. However, some participants overtly explained unemployment as an illness or something that comes from outside and disrupts people's lives. For example, John (55 years) identified unemployment as an illness and emphasised the social stigma and moral evaluations which the unemployed are subjected to by other members of society: (Such moral stigmas are a common finding in research on lay accounts of illness.)

*I think everybody who is unemployed is sick. Especially when you are unemployed for two years. They are sick but they don't want to tell you. They are trying to hide it. Because they are too, it's a private thing in a lot of people, they don't want to express themselves. Because people have pride ... When you get sick now, you know, the depression. I don't care sometimes. Sometimes I didn't give a damn if the lights went out [suicide]. You know, I don't worry. It's wrong and this is the illness this government is creating, unemployment. An idle mind is a devil's advocate, that's what it is ... I think unemployment is one of the biggest sicknesses to a lot of families ... and that, it has got to that stage that it's become a disease ... Despair. That says it all ... I worked all my life, I've worked to a routine. Had my three meals a day, kept everything to a routine. And that's been taken away from me by not working. I have become lazy.*

This account also supports aspects of Jahoda's (1982; see Chapter Three) proposition that the imposition of a work structure is an important benefit of work, a theme often raised in terms of the health consequences of unemployment. People associated having time on their hands with depression and interpersonal conflict.

## **Study Two**

Further exemplifying the conceptual link between illness and unemployment, Malcolm (27 years) stated that a person's health was associated with their employment status:

*I'm like healthier when I'm working, where it's just peace of mind or actually thinking of getting ahead, not going backwards, mind health sort of thing. When I'm working, yeah, I'm always, like I'm everything is working to timing, it's like meal times, dinner times, you know, everything is like in time, 40 hour week is the thing, and like I find that if I'm not working, I would probably skip lunch, might skip breakfast, might skip both of them, tea's the main thing ... When I'm working, I'm getting a good sleep. If I'm not I might smoke a lot more or yeah, like, probably I'm healthiest when I'm working.*

This extract associates unemployment with a change in behavioural patterns which is linked to a deterioration in health. Emphasis is placed on the structure which employment provides people's lives. The conceptualisation of unemployment as an unhealthy state or illness is undoubtedly an outcome of social stereotypes, such as the lazy dole bludger, which can lead to restrictions in the ways unemployment is addressed by government policies. Often unemployment was seen as an illness. Interventions are primarily aimed at encouraging the individual to get motivated by changing their attitudes and behaviours, and to get back to work. One such intervention is setting benefit levels well below the poverty line as a means of forcing the unemployed back to work. What is evident is that unemployment, like other illnesses, has moral values associated with it. It is often seen as a transgression which is to be avoided and dealt with in a way that encourages the persistent offender to take action, seek work, or gain skills in order to become employable. This can lead to the assigning of cause to an individual's failing - a form of victim-blaming.

### *Societal Perceptions*

The participants felt that they were not valued in society and had to deal with the consequences of negative societal perceptions. These societal perceptions are influenced by political ideologies such as neo-liberalism (see Chapter Two). This section explores some of these negative perceptions and the ways they

influence the unemployed and their interactions with others. The participants' accounts provide examples of the ways negative perceptions can lead to the unemployed being placed in adverse situations. It is worth noting that the unemployed do not simply accept these negative perceptions. They provide critical accounts within which they question such perceptions.

Claire (25 years) provides an account of how employed people often conceptualise the unemployed in a stereotypical manner:

*They put us down, for example, most people would say to you that anyone that is unemployed has got a criminal record, or they're most likely to be on drugs or they're most likely to be in trouble with the law ... They lump everybody into this category if they are on a benefit that they are: (1.) no good; (2.) they don't stand a show of getting a job; and (3.) they're just bludging off the government and everybody else. That is more or less what everybody that's employed will tell you because they class people that are on the unemployment benefit as just totally useless, which in actual fact is not true. Not everybody is like that.*

Here Claire is well aware of the negative perceptions of the unemployed and the implications, but she also questions the validity of such perceptions. However, the participants did not limit themselves to identifying and questioning the use of such perceptions. They also attempted to make sense of why these perceptions are used. One reason for these perceptions was provided by Wayne (17 years):

*Oh, cause we are not working for our money and they just think we are just sitting on our bums, lazy people. Most of us want a job but can't get it, but there is a few that do sit on their bums, they think it's pretty cruisey [easy] ... , you know, sitting on their bums drinking heaps of piss [alcohol], lazy people, spoil it for the rest of us.*

Wayne relativises the rhetoric of victim-blaming, which leads to the conceptualisation of the unemployed as being unmotivated and lazy. In this account it is not Wayne who is 'lazy', but a few individuals who 'spoil it' for everyone else and encourage the employed to construct negative stereotypes.

## **Study Two**

The unemployed reflected on the circular reasoning behind such perceptions. For instance, if you are unemployed you are lazy and lazy people are unemployed. The circularity of such reasoning provides a basis for resistance. Participants asserted that they valued work and were actively looking for a job. In Focus Group A the participants provide an account of the impact of these negative perceptions on restricting their agency and how they resist such stereotypes by highlighting that they are not lazy and are determined to keep on searching for work:

**Louise (19 years):** *Well you can't do anything once you are labelled, it sticks. Once it sticks you can't do anything to prove yourself.*

**Ed (45 years):** *It's other people's, other people's perception of you but I, you know, if everyone's got their own opinions ... I know that I'm worth something. Yeah, if they think or try to determine that they know me better than myself, well, they can have their own ideas.*

**Paul (17 years):** *At least we are trying to do something. Whereas a lot of people out there aren't doing enough. At least we are having a go at it.*

**Ana (22 years):** *At least we are trying to find work, that's what I say.*

Participants developed this line of reasoning further to avoid blame. They pointed out that they were repeatedly refused work, which is a stressful experience that can lead to learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975). In a sense inactivity was perceived as an outcome of being refused work and being stigmatised, rather than a cause of unemployment. While exemplifying these trends, accounts also reflected the idea that negative perceptions guide how other employed members of society react to the unemployed. As Sonya (17 years) stated:

*I mean just in general like conversation where the people go 'oh, where do you work', 'oh, nowhere'. People look at you differently because you haven't got a job ... They just don't realise how hard it is. It just really sucks and they look at you as if to say 'wow, don't you go looking for a job, do you just sit on your ass all day and do nothing?'. But I mean you go and look for a job and so many of these people slap you in the face, you get tired of it after a while. You get sick of being bummed*

*out all the time, you just want to give up ... I think it's because people think we don't get off our ass and go out there and look, because they think that we're lazy and really we're not. Oh I don't know, all I know is that I'm not, I don't know about other people. I mean some people are, some people are like lazy, but other people they're just ashamed because they haven't got a job. They just give up after awhile.*

Here Sonya has also negotiated a stronger position for herself, by stating that other people might be lazy but she isn't. She is presenting herself as one of the deserving poor.

Accounts by the unemployed reflect that they are often not treated as valuable members of society. Malcolm (27 years) describes how, in social situations, he justifies his situation and presents himself as an active and valuable member of society by stating that he is a part-time soldier:

*I'm unemployed and in a conversation dole bludger, that's a downer. A lot of people like saying that. Oh I would say, oh I'm unemployed at the moment but I'm in Territorials [Army]. Um, I'm not just doing that to make myself look good, I'm making myself feel better because unemployment to me is a real stuff around. Just because you are unemployed doesn't mean anything, doesn't mean you're lazy. No one's got any right to judge you because you are unemployed.*

This account also reflects how the unemployed are stigmatised in everyday social interactions and have developed ways of justifying themselves and protecting their self-image as valuable members of society.

Although reporting the existence of negative societal perceptions, participants felt that these perceptions were changing because of the number of people experiencing unemployment in New Zealand. Justine (24 years) highlighted an important point when she talked about different generational perceptions of unemployment. This woman stated that older people did not understand unemployment because they were able to leave school unskilled and easily find full-time employment. Justine proposed that those people who are

## Study Two

currently unemployed will understand the difficulties of future generations in finding employment:

*A lot of people look negatively at people who are unemployed because they actually put a label on us like we're failures, we can't do anything, we're failures, we're losers, we're not motivated, we don't want to work. A lot of people are like that and then again you get people that aren't. Most of the older people in the business world, that back in their days they sort of just went straight out of school and went into any job they wanted and so they've just got this attitude that because they didn't have the problems that we do now. I mean when it comes to our children going for jobs, we're going to understand a lot better if they can't get a job because we know what they've gone through, but people in the older generations - way older than me - they just don't understand because they never had the problems.*

This account highlights the externalisation of unemployment as a social problem, which is explored further in subsequent sections. It also reflects the changing status of work. At some time or another, regardless of their skill level, most people can expect to be unemployed. Unemployment is now a structural problem. However, such accounts also reflect the idea that people who have not experienced unemployment are more likely to blame the individual, instead of associating unemployment with structural issues. As Bill (42 years) stated:

*Well, unemployment means that you feel like you are worthless even though it is not your own fault ... Some people feel sorry for us, but often other people say, oh he's unemployed, move on and won't accept us for what we are and this is what I hoped that people would, see a person unemployed as he's not working at the moment, just see it that way. Negative stuff is mainly by people who haven't been unemployed. If they were in these shoes their whole attitude would change. I think they look at the ones, say the long-term unemployed but there is a reason why that person is unemployed and people have got to look at mainly the system, they have got to look at the system ... Yeah, a lot of them look at, oh, you are unemployed, it's your fault, why were you unemployed, why haven't you been working, what have you done and they don't look at the whole situation.*

This study found no evidence that negative perceptions towards the unemployed are rapidly abating. The participants overwhelmingly felt stigmatised and themselves drew on negative perceptions to talk about other unemployed people or the 'lazy' minority spoiling it for everyone else. This further corroborates the fundamental attribution error found in Study One.

Negative societal perceptions include the view that the unemployed do not want to work. In exploring the participants' accounts it was evident that this was not the case. The unemployed repeatedly emphasised their desire to find employment and some participants often worked as volunteers for various community agencies. People not only adjust to unemployment but do so in a way that is compatible with dominant societal perceptions. This includes actively seeking a job and in some cases placing responsibility with the individual.

### *Conflict*

The participants associated the stigma of unemployment with interpersonal and social conflict, family violence, and criminal activities. Conflict was a prominent theme in most of the accounts. This corroborates the findings from the quantitative study, where the unemployed perceived higher levels of social conflict than the employed respondents. Many participants experienced conflict between themselves and various government departments ('the bureaucratic system'). Their accounts highlighted the externalisation of the stigma and strain of unemployment onto government staff. For instance, Sonya (17 years) recounted the rage she felt when staff did not inform her of her benefit entitlements:

*I mean the idiots up at Income Support, they piss me off. I mean they think because I'm young that they can just muck me around. Same as the Unemployment Service, ... I'm like a really strong-minded person and I'll just stand there and I'll just scream and yell at them and I'll say what I feel and I'm not a very nice person when I'm angry and they know it.*

## *Study Two*

Sonya's account reflects an attempt to actively assert herself and take control of her situation. This attempt is restricted when she has to deal with government staff who may not be as helpful as they could be.

Many participants talked about negative interactions with government departments and how they can lead to family conflict. In such instances people take their frustrations home rather than confronting government staff. For example, Kylie (42 years) talked about the stressors associated with dealing with Income Support:

*You get fobbed off from one to the other if you're not determined ... Most people are just going to give up in the process and what have you got, you've got stress, whether it be male or female. But they are going to be so het up and no doubt they'll go back to their families and this is where the animosity will come out too. It has got to release somewhere but why don't these people in the right place cop it. No, it's always some innocent person within your family and this is where ongoing abuse happens because you've started a little fire at home.*

Kylie's account continues to emphasise the consequences of the frustration arising from interactions with the staff of government departments. She provides an example of the wider ramifications of institutional policies, such as the principle of less eligibility, on limiting the financial resources available to the unemployed and how this can result in family conflict. In a similar account, Ron (44 years) outlined how financial strain can divide families. He stated:

*Especially in married couples, breaks them up, they get behind in their finances and I see, well, me and my partner split up because I wasn't working and being around the house all the time, got up her goat and she got up mine, and then started arguing, lot of reasons there. But it all boils down to the money part ... Yeah a lot, a lot of people from the [freezing] works have gone through that ... I know half a dozen guys who have split from their partners and their wives when money is not coming in.*

Ron's account reflects an understanding of how a lack of resources can lead to marital discord, conflict, and sometimes separation.

Conflict was also identified at a societal level. The desperation caused by unemployment and lack of resources can lead some people to engage in criminal activities. This is reflected in the following extract from Focus Group B:

**Warrick (19 years):** *Some go and steal stuff so people can't call them bludgers.*

**Kevin (18 years):** *They get very angry, I think, when they get called dole bludgers and useless pricks ... Beat their wives. Beat their partners, sell shit [drugs].*

The main point here is that in New Zealand people are encouraged to have various material goods. Some of the unemployed respond to these material pressures by turning to crime. They do not simply accept their impoverished situation but exert their agency in an anti-social manner, in order to gain material goods. (Further accounts of the link between unemployment and crime are provided in Section 6.3.2.)

In sum, participants attributed conflict with government departments and family members, and increased anti-social behaviour to a lack of material resources and the strain of being unemployed.

#### *Cause of and Responsibility for Unemployment*

A key element of the meaning of unemployment and the participants' accounts of their experiences was the attribution of cause and responsibility. Three factors identified by Furnham (1988) are evident in the participants' extracts. First, unemployment was presented as an outcome of an individual failing. For instance, unemployment was the result of individuals being unmotivated or not possessing adequate skills. The second, more common, account placed responsibility at a societal level, where government policies, such as increased foreign ownership and economic policies, were linked to a reduction in employment. Third, fatalistic accounts placed responsibility in fate and luck. For instance, uncontrollable factors such as the introduction of technology into the workplace were said to cause unemployment. Often these three factors

## **Study Two**

were intertwined, where participants stated that they did not have the skills to obtain employment in an increasingly technological and deregulated job market.

Drawing on an individual account to attribute cause for unemployment, Kevin (18 years) stated:

*People are just too lazy to go and work, just sit around on their butts all day.*

This somewhat isolated account indicates an extreme view that highlights the perception that the unemployed are 'lazy dole bludgers'. It also shows that it is not only the employed who express such perceptions. A more common account at an individual level was a lack of education and skill. Participants stated that they had virtually no educational qualifications and that this was a barrier to them gaining employment. Claire (25 years) provided an example of the difficulties involved in finding a job:

*... if you haven't got the qualification - if you haven't got School Cert, or haven't been to Polytech, or haven't got certificates, or trained in that sort of line ... you haven't got a show of getting a job, realistically.*

With notable exceptions younger participants generally tended to attribute unemployment to such individual factors while older participants explained structural causes more fully.

Many of the participants identified government policies or structural determinants as causing unemployment. For instance, in Focus Group A participants discussed structural causes of unemployment:

**Ron (44 years):** ... Most of the jobs out here are seasonal, and um, it's getting harder and harder for people to get jobs ... All the big businesses, yeah, they have a lot of cut-backs, to save money.

**Paul (17 years):** They contracted a lot of the jobs out now. Jobs don't seem to last very long, eh? Sort of, seem to be going from one job to another, eh? You know, like to get the next job you have to upgrade your skills.

**Ed (45 years):** *Because even these larger companies and some of them are folding, eh. Levies and all that. And just that the big companies just all eat the small companies and there's workers in those small companies, they can't make a living. Well, everyone has to go on the Dole.*

**Paul (17 years):** *How could a person, like a small business, how can he survive with some of those big companies that they have to go up against. If they fold, well they go straight on the dole then, you know, that little business could of helped, you know, create a couple of jobs, two or three jobs for the unemployed, ... The government aren't really creating any jobs. They are more or less taking jobs away from people, eh. Through these big companies getting liquidated and that. They actually, like these meat works [Tomoana and Whakatu], those places that are closed down, you know, their policies on firing them, is only costing the country. If you get 2 000, 3 000 people getting laid off on one job, I can't see the sense in having all those people off. I suppose you just have to go with the changes.*

This was a complex interaction within which the unemployed identified a number of societal causes for unemployment. For instance, cause was attributed to a lack of jobs in the Hawke's Bay and the seasonal nature of work. Participants then identified changing work patterns, in terms of contract work, which led to a discussion of broader issues relating to economic policy and globalisation. These problems were linked to a lack of government intervention in regulating the job market and creating employment.

In the focus group discussions the participants often mixed individual, societal, and fatalistic accounts for the cause of unemployment. What the following extract from Focus Group B shows is that participants can draw on various belief systems to negotiate their accounts of unemployment in social interactions:

**Ross (18 years):** *The person that's unemployed is responsible.*

**Matt (19 years):** *No, not necessarily.*

**Warrick (19 years):** *That's why they are on the dole, they're lazy.*

## Study Two

**Aron (41 years):** Well, actually the government cos they sell things. They sell things to overseas companies, like the freezing works.

**Ross (18 years):** The whole thing comes back on them, doesn't it?

**Brent (17 years):** And there are those people that just don't want to work. So they sit on their asses and get the money.

**Aron (41 years):** And there's money-hungry corporates, like Brierlies, buying up all these orchards that they think they can run for under budget.

**Matt (19 years):** Start having 'made in New Zealand' instead of 'made in Taiwan'. There's no jobs for all those people that want them. Because there is too many people or everything is computerised these days.

**Peter (36 years):** I think we don't even need to import any stuff from overseas. Cos we can like there is plenty of land out there that they can build factory warehouses on. That we could, like make the stuff and create jobs for people, we wouldn't need to import ... and we wouldn't like be sending money overseas or anything. All the money would be staying in New Zealand.

**Aron (41 years):** But then everything that we built, everything we build over here just gets bought off us.

**Terry (49 years):** The government will sell us.

**Matt (19 years):** Like when they closed down that Telecom, they just fired so many people. Was just stupid.

**Aron (41 years):** They think it's our fault that there is no jobs, but it's because of the government.

Evident here is Billig's (1991) proposition that people negotiate their views on a topic in conversations with others. In this discussion the individual is initially identified as having primary responsibility for their unemployment. However, others in the group provide both societal and fatalistic accounts where economic and government policies, such as selling state assets, and technological developments, are identified as the catalyst for a reduction in the number of jobs available in New Zealand. The group negotiate a position moving from the individual to societal causes. This focus group discussion may demonstrate, in part, the tendency of older participants to place more emphasis on societal causes. Older participants are providing a wider frame of reference for younger participants, linking their individual experiences to wider social shifts.

Similar interactions within the focus group discussions also identified the seasonal nature of work, foreign investment, and immigration as causing unemployment. The participants in Focus Group C further relate unemployment to the wider job market, employment legislation, and the way some unscrupulous employers exploit their workers.

**Sonya (17 years):** *You look at all the seasonal jobs that go in, and all the people that are doing them are mostly overseas people.*

**Kylie (42 years):** *It's the government that opens up the immigration numbers, they can come in by their thousands and take our jobs*

**Claire (25 years):** *You find most of them are getting paid less than New Zealanders. That is why a lot of orchardists will hire them, because they are cheap.*

**Justine (24 years):** *It's just greed.*

**Sandy (40 years):** *They always get caught out, eh, like there is one guy by Karamu Road, he hired heaps of immigrants cheap, and at the end of the season there was a big clamp down on him and he was screaming for workers.*

**Kylie (42 years):** *But you know since that [Employment] Contract Bill came in, it has left the employers to abuse their workers, you know, they are in a position to keep a worker in a stranglehold. If a person was lucky to get nine dollars an hour, you are supposed to be so thankful, you know, seasonal work it's bloody back-breaking ... You have to work out in that heat, that sun just doesn't go away but they still want that fruit off the trees. You know, the government has given the employer that much power, where they can treat workers like a piece of dirt and, well, look at the youth rates. Three dollars fifty an hour. Now you tell me what is a youth. A youth goes up to the age of 18. No one is going to go out there and work ten or eight hours a day for three dollars fifty an hour and they are even offering adults that too ... Everyone is just going to stay on the benefit because it's just not bloody worth the time and effort of getting three dollars fifty an hour.*

This discussion reflects a contradiction between government policies, the principle of less eligibility, and wage rates. The participants talked about the practice of employers paying below standard rates, as a form of exploitation. These accounts reflect the idea that people would be better off living on the unemployment benefit than being exploited by an employer. Government

### *Study Two*

policy in this region is not to increase wages and improve work conditions, which reflects the attribution of cause to societal and structural factors, but to further cut benefit levels, which reflects the attribution of cause to the individual. In this focus group extract participants drew on the idea of balancing the power in an organisation equitably for both employers and employees. In a sense unemployment could be conceptualised as a product of imbalance which is in favour of the employer.

All of the focus group discussions reflected a societal attribution of cause, proposing that government needs to intervene and have some form of control over the job market and employment conditions. This section has demonstrated that the participants tend to attribute unemployment to societal (structural) causes and to a lesser degree draw on individual and fatalistic accounts.

### *Addressing Unemployment*

Participants' recommendations for addressing unemployment were linked to individual and societal attributions of cause and responsibility. The unemployed proposed a range of interventions such as re-training or up-skilling, as well as changes in government policy and job creation initiatives. The main issues to emerge from these accounts concerned the education system, career guidance, up-skilling, and the need for government departments and policies to recognise the problems faced by the unemployed. Although attributing unemployment primarily to societal factors, participants tended to focus on individual interventions to address unemployment. Existing government interventions encourage the unemployed to reflect on their own inadequacies and how they can be changed. This can lead to a focus on what they, as individuals, can do. However, even interventions at the individual level carry implicit assumptions about the need for structural and policy change, for instance, to improve access to education.

In terms of the perceived lack of education and skills, a number of the unemployed thought the curriculum in schools was not relevant and did not prepare them for entering the workforce. Some thought the education system should be more job-oriented as highlighted in the following extract from Focus Group B:

**Warrick (19 years):** *If education was to teach your students what they need to know, there wouldn't be so many dropouts.*

**Matt (19 years):** *... I reckon they should change the way education is, find out what that person likes, get them started towards what they are going to pursue, that idea. Instead of doing all this book work.*

In this extract there is a perceived need for schools to identify students' interests and tailor their education to provide them with knowledge, skills, and abilities that will assist them in finding employment. An emphasis on identifying interests and providing people with knowledge of their skills was also evident.

As Louise (19 years) explains:

*A lot of people, you know, cos a lot of people don't know what they, what their skills and capabilities and qualities and stuff are, they don't know until somebody actually tells them, and then they can see themselves doing it and know what courses they need.*

As a means of addressing unemployment Louise focuses on the individual and how people need assistance in identifying their interests and abilities, which can be linked to their training needs.

Many of the participants did not just blame the education system but accepted some responsibility for their unemployment. Participants acknowledged that they needed to re-train and up-skill to gain employment. As Aron (41 years) stated:

*But it's mainly just to get my tickets instead of just bumming around. On modern machinery. All my learning tickets, gas learning tickets and that ... Um, like um, I know there is a lot of jobs out there but they're wanting people with papers and all that, C.V's. And that's why I am in a [training] scheme, to get more advanced, so I can get my CV and all that, my tickets, so*

## **Study Two**

*I can get out into the work force ... Up-skilling will get a lot of the unemployed into jobs. Well these days you have got to be skilled, to be able to get out into the work force ...*

Aron has enrolled in a training scheme in order to gain various skills related to his desired vocation as a fitter-turner. Up-skilling was viewed, by a number of the unemployed, as the primary means of addressing unemployment. As Moana (44 years) stated:

*My daughter, she's um, she was unemployed, you know, it must be a year or two and um, she came around, she's determined and she went to the Polytech. She was there for one and half years and her whole life changed around and she's actually a different person today. She works at the [City] Council today in Hastings here and she is a different person, that's nice, got so much confidence now. Yeah, she picked herself up and you can do that, anyone can do that. It's what you want, it's, so I might be going to the Polytech next year.*

This extract provides an example of someone who gained employment through a process of up-skilling. Such examples attribute some individual responsibility to the unemployed, but acknowledge that people's lives are influenced by various contextual factors. For instance, there are not enough jobs in the Hawke's Bay and material restrictions can prevent people from up-skilling. In light of a lack of government job creation or intervention in the employment sector, education and training are seen as the primary means of gaining employment.

A re-occurring account was that government departments needed to improve their services and support the unemployed in their efforts to up-skill. The participants advocated policy changes in the area of support for training. They felt they were prevented, rather than supported, in their efforts to gain work-related training. This view emerges in the following extract from Focus Group C:

**Sonya (17 years):** ... *The government expect us to go on training courses, like to get a job. But they don't really pay you much to do it.*

**Sandy (40 years):** *Yeah, you get ten dollars a week extra to go on the training courses ... Sonya is a fine example. She goes to a course and it costs her 20 dollars a week and all they are giving her is ten, well I would tell them to shove it, I wouldn't come. That needs to change.*

**Sonya (17 years):** *It costs me twenty dollars a week and I only get twenty a fortnight ... I have money one week and no money the next week. And then I can't say to the people I live with, excuse me, I can't pay my board this week. Because I mean, you know, well, you're out on your arse then.*

**Sandy (40 years):** *So really if Sonya wasn't Sonya, she would say, 'shit it's cheaper for me to stay home rather than spend ten dollars out of my dole, say, stuff it, I will stay home'.*

This extract highlights a common idea among the unemployed that government departments are not providing adequate resources for the unemployed who want to up-skill. This may reveal a contradiction between policy and practice, where the dominant rhetoric of the government states that the individual is responsible for their unemployment and should up-skill. However, government training benefits do not provide the incentives or resources for re-training the unemployed.

Participants often stated that government staff were not supportive, stigmatised them, and were not responsive to their inquiries regarding benefit entitlements, training allowances, and general financial assistance. This lack of information and assistance was highlighted by Sandy (40 years):

*They don't tell you nothing. I lived without a fridge for about three months and it was Summer and my sister-in-law came around and she worked at Income Support and I said there was only a little bit of milk because we haven't got a fridge and she goes 'why', and I said 'because it broke' and she said 'well why don't you go and buy one' and I go 'where' and she goes 'go to Income Support'. And if you buy a fridge they just take it off your [benefit] payments. Yes, they take it off at about \$5.00 a week ...*

Sandy subsequently outlined how, when she applied for this financial assistance, Income Support was reluctant to allocate funds, even though she was entitled to them. This account highlights that government staff have

## **Study Two**

considerable control over the unemployed's material situation. Such control and a lack of assistance were perceived as part of an informal policy of restricting people's access to information. This may reflect efforts to reduce welfare expenditure and force the unemployed back to work. Kylie (42 years) identified some of the stand-over tactics used by government staff to force the unemployed into insecure, low-paid, seasonal work, even when this work was not longer available. She stated:

*The worst thing about it, in the summer time, like when the seasonal work comes out they tend to harass people to go out on these seasonal jobs ... I don't like their stand-over tactics on how they get people to do it. And in the winter time, what happens, they're still telling you to go and get a job and there's no bloody jobs out there because I've been to the Employment Service Department and I said to them 'well you show me a job and I'll go and get it' - 'oh yes but that's already taken' and I say 'well don't piss me around'. They need to help us rather than give us a hard time.*

This account reflects a general desire by the participants to have government departments provide support and guidance, rather than acting as punitive and reactive institutions that place sole responsibility on the unemployed and force them into jobs which they do not want to do (and which are available for only a relatively short period of time).

Focus Group C discussed how not all government staff caused such problems. However, the majority of staff were perceived to be unhelpful. Certain policies were also seen as being counter-productive. In particular, the policy that people have to be unemployed for six months in order to gain access to certain schemes and advertised positions reserved for the long term unemployed was thought to discourage and frustrate the recently unemployed. During a discussion of this and other issues, the women in Focus Group C questioned whether government departments are there to help or impede the unemployed:

**Justine (24 years):** *You really, if you want to get anything done through Income Support or the Employment Service, you have got to keep going back until you get someone that you can relate to, the good ones.*

**Claire (25 years):** Yeah, but soon as you find a good one, they move them to another department ... They think she's giving away too much money, we had better put her somewhere else.

**Sandy (40 years):** I think Income Support and the Employment Service needs a shake-up. Because some of them, as soon as you walk in the door, they got an attitude.

**Kylie (42 years):** Yeah, like they [Income Support] rang me up within the month of my unemployment and they said, oh you should be able to get a job, I said, Christ half of Hastings is without a bloody job and you're telling me to go out and get a job.

**Justine (24 years):** That's ridiculous, just like that 26 week stand-down is pretty dumb. You know, if you want to get on Task Force Green, you have to be unemployed for 26 weeks or more and it means that the government will actually pay anything up to 80% of your wages.

**Claire (25 years):** After six months, you actually get the job at the end and a lot of people will employ you.

**Justine (24 years):** You have to have only two or less School Certificate subjects ... It's good in some ways but I don't think you should have to be unemployed for 26 weeks, that's stupid.

**Sandy (40 years):** I think that anyone that wants a job, that walks into that office, should be able to do it, yeah. I'm here, I should be allowed, anyone that walks up to that counter, that's why they go in there for, I mean they should put up signs and if you haven't been unemployed for 26 weeks don't come in, you know, because you're wasting your time.

Such stand-down periods were repeatedly raised as key concerns. Many of the unemployed saw such policies as being unfair, and frustrating their attempts to keep themselves active. They felt that they were still in a work orientated routine in the first six months of their unemployment. Being refused access to schemes or further employment that would allow them to remain active was seen as counter productive, resulting in apathy and difficulties in readjusting to work routines in the future. This is further explained by Malcolm (27 years):

*It gets harder, especially when you turn up to the Employment Service and you have to be on the dole for 26 weeks. That's a joke. I have had arguments with them before about that. There's a good job there, you have just left the job, like you are used to that timing, you are used to getting up early. You roll up, you say, 'Look at this, it's for me'. 'Sorry, you have to be on*

## Study Two

*the dole for 26 weeks'. Whoever put that rule in needs their head read because 26 weeks, you imagine you being on the dole for 26 weeks after that. You have to try and pick yourself back up again.*

At the societal level the participants felt that changes in government departments alone would not suffice. What was needed was a change in employment policy and, in particular, job creation, as the following extract from Focus Group B demonstrates:

**Terry (49 years):** *They [government] should create jobs as much as possible ...*

**Brent (17 years):** *They are just taking the easy way out, sort of thing. Well they have just decided can't be bothered doing anything about it, we will just give them the dole each week. That's not enough.*

This extract highlights how unemployment is seen as a structural phenomenon which can be addressed through job creation. Accompanying such discussion of policy initiatives many participants also emphasised a desire to have some input. Sandy (40 years) proposed that the unemployed should be represented in policy decision-making. She stated:

*I think they should set up a group of people that live in this real world, you know, talk about it instead of these people that live, that work in offices, they know nothing. They have got to live in the real world too.*

This extract demonstrates that government departments need to approach unemployment in a cooperative manner, where the unemployed are given the opportunity to draw on their experiences and improve government policies, making them more workable and appropriate.

In sum, societal accounts were often intermeshed with notions of individual responsibility. Considerable emphasis was placed on the need to provide the unemployed with job-related skills. The unemployed proposed that this could be achieved by making government departments more receptive to the needs of the unemployed. The unemployed also called for job creation initiatives and

representation in policy decision-making. Recommendations for addressing unemployment reflected general patterns of its assigned meaning, including the attribution of cause and responsibility. Participants highlighted that they wanted to up-skill, but that their ability to up-skill was restricted. Participants viewed government departments as putting barriers in place rather than supporting their efforts.

### *6.3.2 Impact*

Participants expressed a complex array of accounts about the psychological, material, and social impact of unemployment. Within these accounts financial deprivation emerged as a key factor in causing negative health consequences. Overwhelmingly, the impact of unemployment was discussed in a way compatible with its meaning. The stress, anxiety, and social isolation of unemployment was linked to family conflict and negative health consequences. Although unemployment was viewed as having a negative impact on their health, the unemployed did not passively accept this situation. Considerable emphasis was placed on attempts to cope with the restraints unemployment placed on participants' lives and how their agency was restricted. Participants talked extensively about being hampered in their coping with everyday life and planning for their future owing to the material and social deprivation which unemployment caused.

Reflecting such trends the present section briefly describes a range of accounts of the impact of unemployment according to four main themes: relative deprivation, health consequences, coping, and agency restriction. Before each theme is outlined, accounts about the impact of unemployment on the individual, the family, and the community are discussed below.

## Study Two

Accounts of the individual consequences of unemployment are highlighted by Ed (45 years):

*... affects your health, the way you live. The way you relate to other people. I suppose it affects people differently, some worse than others. Some, you know, maybe just living from payday to payday, eh? There is a lot out there that do want to work but they just can't get a job, eh ... You feel down when you are unemployed and most of your goals and dreams are gone.*

Like a number of the participants, Ed's account emphasises the stress involved in being unemployed and its consequences. It also expresses an understanding of variations in impact, links with increased conflict in interpersonal relationships, and a reduction in future expectations. Kylie (42 years) also provides an account of the stress of living on the dole and not being able to find a job. This extract describes how such stress can eventuate in an individual's committing suicide:

*My nephew, that I lost before Christmas, he was another one ... He had a good job and when the [Employment] Contract Bill came his boss just fired him, didn't pay him any severance pay or anything. So he had to persevere for two years and I think, well, the unemployment was getting on his goat ... well he committed suicide. This is because of the unemployment, because he got sick and tired of being called a dole bludger and a bum and being stared at. Yet he was a prime example. He walked every shop up town and ended up working way the hell out the back of Femhill and he biked there every morning. He'd get up at 4.00 am. And then once the seasonal work was gone he was back on the dole. If they had a system that had a bit more compassion for the community this sort of thing would not happen.*

Kylie's account of her nephew's suicide highlights the extreme despair associated with unemployment for some and how this can end tragically. She also identifies how the government and society should be more accountable and compassionate towards the unemployed. Implicit in this extract is the idea that negative societal perceptions and a lack of sympathy and support from the community can exacerbate the impact of unemployment.

The impact of unemployment at an individual level was also prominent in the focus group discussions. Such consequences as those outlined by Ed and Kylie were often implicit in these discussions and taken for granted. Yet the impact of unemployment was linked not just to the individual but also to the family. In Focus Group A, participants discussed the ways unemployment can impact on people's psychological and physical health, which was thought to have negative consequences for the family.

**Paul (17 years):** *It's just how you feel, eh, when you are on the dole. Attitude and everything changes. When you are on the dole you feel down, find it hard sometimes.*

**Julie (22 years):** *Oh, I am asthmatic and I'm unemployed and things get on top of me, it's really bad, you know, my lungs start playing up. But when I'm employed I have got no worries, you know, there's no stress. I can do things. I don't have to worry about the bills or things like that.*

**Ron (44 years):** *By us not working it puts a lot of stress on the family as well. Yeah, you are moping around the house and you are moaning about this and that. I noticed that when I'm not working, I get really angry, can't handle anything.*

**Ed (45 years):** *Not got something to occupy the mind with, eh? It's a lot of mental stress being unemployed and on the dole, and you know the health issues.*

**Julie (22 years):** *You feel run down.*

**Paul (17 years):** *The family get down being unemployed then get all stressed out.*

**Julie (22 years):** *Especially the kids, eh. They feel it the most.*

**Ed (45 years):** *Yeah, it hits them hard as well, in a lot of ways, family and friends ... Health and working is good for a person or at least their mind is occupied and it's better for the family.*

This extract highlights associations between unemployment, relative deprivation, and negative health consequences. The participants linked unemployment with lowered levels of psychological and physical health, which in turn are thought to impact on the family. Such discussions reflect the shared experience of the negative consequences of unemployment.

The participants elaborated on the link between unemployment and negative consequences for the individual, their families, and the community.

## Study Two

Unemployment was said to impact on the community in terms of crime and general levels of conflict. When explaining the impact of unemployment at the community level many of the participants identified benefit levels and general policies as causing many of the problems experienced by the unemployed. The following extract, from Focus Group C's discussion, demonstrates the ways in which many of the issues relating to the consequences of unemployment on the individual, the family, and the community were viewed as being interrelated:

**Sandy (40 years):** *There is a big problem. There's no jobs so guys, people are just committing crimes. A lot of them go on the dole, money's tough so they steal to get what they need.*

**Kylie (42 years):** *... It's increased crime, it's a breakdown in society. Well, it doesn't give people a very high thought of themselves does it? It makes people look at themselves and ask them are they worthy of more, can they pull these times under pressure. I think we can all say we hit a rut now and again, but we have got to lift ourselves above it even though the benefit doesn't allow you to. They [government departments] keep us below the living level. It's just so much stress on not just one person, but if you have got a whole family it puts pressure on the whole family. Once the family breaks down, well, you know, it goes right across the community. You have got some people out there and if they have to steal to feed their family, what does the community think of them? They think the lowest of that person and yet little do they realise the situation they are in. Or if you have got to beg, borrow, or steal to feed the family; why not? You have got to be realistic cos I mean, like, Income Support says oh well, come to me if you need assistance. It's like talking to a wall. The Labour Department, the Employment Services, they are there, and don't really want to know about you. All they want to do is cover up the numbers and slot you in somewhere.*

**Sandy (40 years):** *People do steal. Like I have a friend and her kids had no food, she had no money and she rang up Income Support and they were not going to give it, um, and she was stressing to the max. And I said to her, 'If you are going to make a big deal about it, you just go in the supermarket, fill your trolley up and walk out with it'. And she goes 'no'. And I said 'well, you will have all the law here and then you can say 'well, I wanted to feed my kids.' Income Support won't give you assistance. So she stole it.*

This discussion reflects the links between the frustration of being unemployed, conflict with government departments, conflict with the family, and the incidence of crime. In the process responsibility is attributed to the government. The extract also reflects facets of the meaning of unemployment examined in Chapter Five. Unemployment means being placed in adverse situations with limited resources which, in part, is a result of negative societal perceptions.

### *Relative Deprivation*

As outlined in Chapters Four and Five (see Sections 4.1 and 5.2) relative deprivation is the financial situation where one does not have the resources to access the basic necessities of life that many members of society perceive as necessary. Relative deprivation can be subcategorised into material and social deprivation (see Chapter Four, Section 4.1). This distinction has been useful in investigating the participants' accounts.

Material deprivation is a financial inability to afford the basic necessities of everyday life. The participants talked extensively about the impact of the material deprivation resulting from unemployment. They often identified a lack of financial resources as being a source of considerable strain. For instance, Sarah (49 years), a proactive community volunteer, draws on her experiences to comment on the material ramifications of unemployment, and the situation members of her community find themselves in.

*I have had a lot of hungry people, people who are hungry and wanting me to help them to get some food from somewhere, because they can't get any help from Income Support. It's not because Income Support are being really mean. It's just that they have not been able to handle what money they get from the benefit ... It has affected some people in a way that they have lost their homes. I have seen families broke up with half of the family left with parents and the other part has gone to live with someone else, so that part of the family can cope. Someone else, like it's an aunty looking after two kids while mum and dad have only got one because they haven't got much money or no*

## Study Two

*money at all and, um, they had to borrow money. They don't say anything until it's too late and they come in here, and they're out of food. We had a lady who was kicked out of her flat, out of her home. She had nowhere to go so she was just walking around the streets, sleeping on park benches and ducking in here for a cup of coffee. Um, power had been cut off. We see proof of what we go through here, kids walking around with no shoes, socks, clothes, hardly any clothes, um, yeah those are some of the examples ... There is a lot of stress, um, that a lot of the stress caused by, that lead onto other things is caused through money. And it's because they haven't got money to cope with all the everyday living costs, like paying your power, paying your rent. You have got to have money to buy food, and for, um, power, so that you can cook the food that you buy. And you really don't need a telephone unless you are desperate to get in touch with someone.*

Sarah describes the destitution and despair some people in her community have experienced. She believes that this situation results from the unemployed not being able to manage the limited financial resources they receive. In some cases this leads to debt, family break up, and the loss of a family home. Sarah describes life on the unemployment benefit as a life in which one must be constantly vigilant and frugal, and in which one must prioritise one's spending. The life of the unemployed is a life of struggle.

The constant pressure to manage inadequate resources places the unemployed in a helpless or a no win situation. Julie (22 years) provides an account of the ways she tries to manage what little the benefit provides:

*Being on the benefit, you can't afford to waste money. You can't go out and do this and that. You know, bills get on top of you. Yeah, so you are always arguing about this is not getting paid, that's not getting paid but you can't help it, you know, you can't afford to pay everything all at once ... By the time we pay rent, do our shopping, and pay all our other bills, you know, you think oh hell, I have got to put that little bit on the power bill. It's not going to make it any less, you know, it doesn't make a difference, yeah. Its just hard to get by.*

Like a number of the participants, Julie highlights the difficulties of trying to live on the unemployment benefit. This is further elaborated by Kylie (42 years),

who links inadequate levels of government support to an inability to afford basic necessities or present oneself to an employer in a professional manner.

As a result a person is caught in a poverty trap. Kylie stated:

*By the time you've paid your phone, your power, and your food, your food is so expensive. What else well clothing, I haven't bought clothing since the [freezing] works shut. And this is the worst thing about it too is when you go up to the Employment Department and say to them 'well I'm going for a job' and they tend to tell you 'but don't forget your presentation'. How can you present yourself if you haven't got the clothes. You're living hand and foot, can't bloody feed yourself and pay your bills, and the worst part of it the housing, the rental goes up, you can't keep paying rentals.*

Kylie's account also demonstrates the expectation of government departments that the unemployed should spend money on their appearance for employment interviews. This expectation contradicts the experiences of most of the participants because they are living from day to day and cannot afford clothing.

Financial concerns were also linked to participants' inability to access health care. The cost of health care in New Zealand emerged as a concern. The unemployed stated that they had to keep themselves healthy because they could not afford to pay for health care and sought help only for major illnesses.

Peter (36 years) stated:

*I have got to be really crook before I go to the doctor, other than that I don't usually like seeing him. It costs too much. I don't like it because it's just too dear to go ... The price affects me. Even once you pay for him you have got to pay for the stuff he gives you. Well, to me the dole does not let you have spending power because you can't buy anything, you are just paying out on all the bills ... Oh if you haven't got the money, you sort of want to do something and you can't afford to get it.*

Peter's account relates to the consequences of user pay policies in health care. Those who do not have the ability to pay simply go without. Further emphasising this point, Sonya (17 years) outlined how the cost of going to a doctor prevented her from accessing contraceptive medicines. It is worth noting that this young woman had resorted to using free condoms, but they

## **Study Two**

had failed and she was three months pregnant at the time of the interview. This participant typifies how the unemployed cannot afford to go without health services which the system is not enabling them to access:

*It worries me, because I'm unemployed I can't afford to pay the doctor's bills. If you don't pay it, it goes up ... That's why I can't go on the pill, because I can't afford to pay ... It's just hard having no money and to be sick and stuff and you just can't afford it.*

The material deprivation faced by the unemployed is exacerbated by an increasingly market-oriented political structure which places less emphasis on welfare and more on individual responsibility. As a result increased pressure is placed on those at the lower level of the socio-economic ladder, who simply cannot afford basic necessities such as health care or adequate clothing.

Participants' accounts also reveal a connection between material deprivation and social deprivation. Social deprivation emerges from having no financial resources 'to do things', being unable to pay for membership fees for various clubs, and an inability to socialise. The unemployed talked repeatedly about being deprived of positive social interactions. As Warrick (19 years) stated:

*Yeah, well, if folks haven't got a job, they would be at home and just be boring as ... When I'm working I'm, you know, enjoying myself being with mates. When I'm at home I get all upset and grumpy because I'm not doing anything, not being with anyone, and there's nothing to do just staring at the walls.*

In a similar way, participants like Ron (44 years) talked about being actively involved in sport when they were employed, but not being able to afford it while they are unemployed.

*I'm a couch potato really. I used to play rugby league, golf, golf is my game, yeah. I could do a time payment, costs you more, but not while I'm on the dole I can't pay.*

These participants highlight how unemployment prevents an individual from doing things and taking part in leisure activities. They cannot afford to pay for leisure activities. If we accept the public health message that participation in sport and recreation is health-enhancing, then it follows that to be prevented

from participating in such activities may have not only negative social and interpersonal implications but also negative health consequences.

A lack of money was associated with an inability to socialise or participate in normal social rituals. This was thought to lead to increased stress on the individual and the family. As Ed (45 years) stated:

*Yeah, well, when you are working, eh, you have got money and you can go out and do those things, go to the rugby, about 5 to 10 bucks just to get through the gates these days. It's 5 to 6 bucks to go to the pictures, can't afford to do that all the time, eh? ... On the dole there's a lot of things you can't afford to do, can't go out as much and meet people. You sort of, when I first went on the dole, I was shy to go out, I admit, people look at me, oh yeah, what's he doing at home? ... Since I have been on the dole, you know, it gets me a bit down now and again, nothing to do, eh, you know, sort of get uptight, you got conflict with the missus. I think it's just not having the money to do anything or go out. When I was working, eh, I seemed to be out-going, a lot to do, you know, just had, it's just when you haven't got anything to do, you sort of stay at home. Sort of affects the kids too, all uptight, you know.*

This account confirms the impact not only of material deprivation, but also the social deprivation of being unemployed, on a person's ability to experience positive social interactions. Ed also reports how unemployment exacerbates marital and family conflict, which further intensifies negative health consequences. The unemployed appear to be restricted to the home and limited to social interactions within the family, which can lead to conflict.

Positive social interactions with one's peers and age group is particularly important for the psychological and social well-being of the unemployed. The young unemployed often talk about limited positive social contact and having to rely on their families for what social interaction they did get. These individuals report having limited social circles, perhaps because many had not worked and had no opportunity to develop social relationships, which are central to a person's social adjustment. As Ana (22 years) stated:

## **Study Two**

*I do meet some people and become friends with them, but I haven't really had a real good friend, I mean, outside the family. I, I have always had my mother, you know, she's been like a really good friend to me. And my sister, cos I'm like a, you know, loner, you know, I don't really have a lot of friends.*

The above accounts highlight how material and social deprivation impact on the lives of the unemployed. Such deprivation is linked to social isolation, psychological strain, and negative health consequences.

### *Health Consequences*

While the impact of unemployment on an individual's health has been documented in the research literature (see Chapter Three), this study was not concerned primarily with the prevalence of various ailments, but with the unemployed's experiences and understandings of the link between unemployment and health. Participants discussed a range of health concerns resulting from their unemployment, in terms of physical, behavioural, and psychological consequences. The unemployed's accounts reflected an understanding of unemployment as a deviation from a state of psychological and physical health, an unhealthy state.

The following extract provides an example of the ways participants express the impact of unemployment on an individual's psychological health. Justine (24 years) recounts how people's mental health fluctuates from one day to another when unemployed. She links these fluctuations with a person's self-worth or self-esteem.

*Sort of fluctuates, might just be from one day to the next. I might just feel up one day and down the next. Your self-worth goes right down, especially the longer you are unemployed. It's a matter of being able to pick yourself up. You've got to do it for yourself.*

Justine's account highlights how it is up to the individual to pick themselves up and cope with the pressures of unemployment and how unemployment challenges one's sense of self.

Extending some of the issues raised by Justine, John (55 years) explains the differences between the psychological and physical health consequences of unemployment. He focuses primarily on the impact of unemployment on his own mental health which he perceives to be deteriorating.

*I have always looked after my health ... there are two types of health. There is mental health and there is a sickness in your body health. But at the moment, mine might become a mental problem. It's being unemployed. Depression. You start thinking of doing things you never dreamt of doing [suicide]. It's different to having a heart attack or a toothache or stomach ache. This is what this government today is creating because I'm sitting down 24 hours a day thinking 'where am I going to go?' And I know I can't get there because there is no future for me.*

John's account illustrates the despair of being unemployed. Like Justine, he talks about the depression associated with unemployment. Feelings of depression and hopelessness were repeatedly raised by the participants and often associated with either suicidal thoughts or examples of people who had attempted suicide. Sonya (17 years) overtly linked psychological distress with not finding employment and provided an example of an unemployed person attempting suicide as a result:

*It affects people in different ways. Like it can affect people mentally and physically. Like I know this lady, over a week she went to 100 interviews and she was just so sick of being shot down and stuff that she tried to commit suicide because she thought nobody wanted her.*

Sarah (49 years) further explicated the impact of unemployment when she stated:

*Unemployment has a major impact on people's health. Um, I see it, you know, with people, like, when the freezing works went out, we saw a really good example because we worked at the resourcing centre with a few of the community groups and we saw what it did to a lot of those people who were made*

## Study Two

*unemployed. I mean we were talking suicides, we are talking about people who just gave up completely, we saw families break, we saw kids being beaten, we saw wives being beaten, husbands not able to cope, threatening suicide.*

The participants provide compelling accounts of the despair, heartache, and hopelessness of unemployment. The repeated linking of the pressures of unemployment with suicide, and the ability of the participants to provide concrete examples was striking.

Some participants linked unemployment with both psychological and physical health problems. For instance Matt (19 years) stated:

*Suppose when you have got absolutely nothing to do and not going out any more. Come down with the flu. Get down and get depressed, nothing to do, bored ... Depressing just can't go out ... Stops you doing what you want.*

Matt perceives unemployment as preventing one from being able 'to do things'.

He also overtly linked the psychological consequences of unemployment with physical illness. Making a similar connection between psychological strain and physical illness, Moana (44 years) linked fluctuations in her health to her employment status. Here psychological and physical health were linked to her weight. When she was normal and had a job she was at her normal weight. Conversely, if she lost her job she deviated and gained weight. Moana attributed her overeating and unhealthiness to losing her job:

*I'm overweight and I go up and down and I hate being unemployed because you get in a rut and that's when I put on weight. I'm telling you when I'm working I go down, you know, I go back to my normal weight cos, being unemployed is horrible. Get in a rut, eat too much and as soon as I get a job I lose weight and it makes you feel good. You know, it's not only because of the money - actually is the most important thing, you have gotta have money - but it makes you feel good because you are doing something worthwhile. And I gain weight as soon as I lose my job, I'm eating again, pigging out, ... getting sick.*

When Moana has a job she feels as if she has control over her life, but when she loses her job she loses that control. Moana's account of her fluctuations

in weight also mirrors the ways the stress of unemployment can manifest itself physically.

Participants placed considerable emphasis on the physical consequences of unemployment. Claire (25 years) linked her unemployment to the frequency of her asthma attacks:

*In the last two years I haven't really been healthy, I've been quite bad with bad asthma, like I've been on and off the [nebuliser] machine four times a day for the last three or four years. I can't go out at nights, I can't do the things that I like to do.*

This psychosomatic disease was prevalent amongst many of the participants and has been linked in the literature to poverty (Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996). The unemployed associated a number of such ailments with unemployment.

In sum, the participants proposed that being unemployed heightened their levels of anxiety and stress. Unemployment was associated with negative life events, such as conflict with government departments which resulted in psychological strain and the onset of both physical and mental illness. Many of the participants experienced psychological or physical health consequences of unemployment. Often they experienced both.

### *Coping*

While some accounts identified attempts to cope with unemployment, most participants reported not being able to cope. Coping strategies, both ineffective and effective, ranged from turning to alcohol, crime, and drugs, to drawing on the resources of a supportive family.

Many of the participants thought that they could not cope. As Terry (49 years) stated:

*There are those that have worked so hard. See, 'my age group' a lot of people are likely to have been workers all their lives, you*

## Study Two

*know. Suddenly like in the case of the freezing works and jobs they have been in for about 20 odd years have suddenly been cutoff, and they just don't know how to cope. A lot of personal friends, their health has deteriorated straight away and went downhill and they died. A lot, a lot of them were just chronically ill and they just can't handle that situation where they have got to, you know, one day they are working and the next they have got nothing to look forward to. And a lot of them were proud and didn't like this going on the dole business.*

Terry's account demonstrates that some individuals cannot cope with being unemployed and the stigma of receiving the unemployment benefit. Often the participants referred to other people not coping. For instance, Sandy (40 years) stated:

*Some don't cope, they commit suicide if they can't handle it. Depending on what sort of person they are. I mean, some people cope, they can handle it, others drink, drugs, anything, crime, violence, family violence, you know. If it's a husband, takes it out on his wife and kids. There's quite a lot of that.*

This account reflects a number of re-occurring issues, such as the negative consequences of unemployment on the individual and the family. Not coping is presented as a catalyst for family conflict and suicide.

The issue of turning to alcohol is reflected in other participants' accounts. For instance, John (55 years) outlines how people who cannot cope drink to hide their problems:

*When you have no money, you have got all the stresses in the world on you. How am I going to pay the bills? You argue with your wife, you argue with your kids, you cannot go out. What money you do have, some people who are weak will spend their last dollar on a beer so they can hide their problems.*

The idea that escapist behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse results from unemployment, rather than alcoholism leading to unemployment is proposed in John's account. Other participants identified the use of alcohol, drugs, and gambling as misguided attempts to cope. Claire (25 years) further explains this:

*Some people, I know two or three, for example, that are unemployed and the only way of coping with it is going to the TAB or to the pub which to me, I can't comprehend that. But other people really get quite stressed because they haven't got a job and they can't afford things, so they opt out.*

This form of coping reflects individuals who are not dealing with their situation and are turning to escapist behaviour patterns which, in the long run, are likely to exacerbate the negative consequences of unemployment.

Not all accounts were so negative. Sarah (49 years) highlighted that an individual's redundancy could, in some cases, be a positive experience. A positive attitude and proactivity can insulate some people from the negative consequences of unemployment and help them cope:

*... then we saw a lot of good things, come from it. I know, from some personal experiences with people, personal experiences of people who were grateful that, that they were made redundant then because now they have been able to pursue better things, things that they would not have done if they had stayed at the freezing works or Watties [food processing factory]. We had a lot of people, we met a lot of people here who are grateful that they were made redundant because now they were doing something which they thought they wouldn't be able, ever have been able, to do if they hadn't been made redundant. We have got people who had been working in those big factories and freezing works and that, when they got made redundant, they were forced to go out and look for something else. These were the ones who were still thinking confident, who weren't going to let the unemployment, the redundancy put them down. And they were really good, they kept strong and kept looking for work. They came in here and offered themselves to do voluntary work just to keep themselves working. Even though it wasn't being paid, it was still working, doing something. Um, we saw people who had never done gardening, doing gardening. We thought bingo.*

The contradiction between those individuals who experience negative psychological consequences and those who actively cope with being unemployed has been shown in a number of studies. However, only a few participants in this study claimed to cope with their unemployment in terms of

## **Study Two**

being proactive. Most of the unemployed actively resisted negative stereotypes and were looking for employment (levels of proactivity) but reported an inability to cope. One key factor in the difference in response may be the person's previous work experiences (see Chapter Three), where some may be happy to leave an unfulfilling job and have the confidence and psychological and social resources to move on in life (Cooper & Payne, 1982; Fryer, 1986; Hesketh & Shouksmith, 1982; Warr & Jackson, 1984; Winefield et al., 1993). A key difference may be voluntary redundancy which moderates the consequences of unemployment.

A key element in coping was an ability to reframe the situation. Malcolm (27 years) shows how he has renegotiated his unemployment to being a positive thing. His unemployment allows him to see more of his family:

*I used to worry a lot about what other people think but over the years, I have got to the stage where I don't give a damn about them. As long as my kids are fed and my wife's happy ... Actually sometimes I am better off being unemployed because I can do, help her out and do quite a lot of other things. The funny thing about it, every time I have been unemployed I have spent with my children, and it's been good for them and good for me. Cos I like spending time with the kids ... My two, they like it when I spend time with them. And so that takes away a bit of it, but there is still all the pressures of getting a house, getting a good job, and all that.*

Here Malcolm is coping with the consequences of unemployment by justifying his situation as an opportunity to spend quality time with his family. Malcolm highlights how social support plays an important role in a person's ability to cope and find an alternative social role, in this case that of fatherhood.

When the participants were asked about how they coped with unemployment the most salient factor identified was social support, whether present or absent. For instance, many of the participants talked extensively about social support in terms of how their families (whanau) 'give them a hand'. Ana (22 years)

explained how her family pooled their finances to support one another and run the household:

*I was paying about \$40.00 for rent. I was staying with my family, and I had about another \$40.00 to buy what I wanted but I wasn't keeping it for myself, we were mixing it up for family. Our family, we don't keep our money for ourselves, we share.*

Participants also talked about how emotional support from family members helped them to cope. John (55 years) turns to his children for support:

*All I do is go to my kids, to comfort me, but all I'm doing is complaining, which I never used to do. I don't like complaining. But unfortunately that's all I do. What have I done? I can contain it at the moment because they have got good ears, people have got good ears and listen to me.*

John feels he will need more support in the future and will be unable to keep on relying on his family. There appear to be limits to the amount of available social support, for example the psychological resources available from significant others may deteriorate over time.

In sum, this section has shown that many of the participants talked about being unable to cope. They also identified social support as playing a significant role in their coping and alternative roles, such as fatherhood. Participants' accounts support the proposition that the experience of unemployment can restrict people's control over their situation.

### *Agency Restriction*

To varying degrees concerns about personal agency were inherent throughout the meaning and impact sections. Many of the participants talked about asserting themselves, challenging negative societal perceptions, actively seeking work, coping with unemployment, and exerting some form of control over their situation. However, participants also stated that the experience of unemployment generally impacted negatively on their health and prevent them from planning for their future; unemployment often made people feel as if they were not valued members of society.

## Study Two

This section explores the accounts of the ways participants tried to assert their agency, but were often restricted in their attempts. Issues of agency are linked to coping. An individual can overcome restrictions more easily if they have access to psychological resources such as social support. Conversely, when a person is overcome by the restrictions unemployment places on their lives they are likely to be unable to cope.

Agency appears in accounts of the impact of unemployment. Bill (42 years) recounted the initial impact unemployment had on his health, in terms of physical and psychological consequences, and how he adjusted and preserved his agency by getting involved in a local community support group. He speaks of the need to break the cycle of despair and learned helplessness associated with unemployment, and says that the unemployed need to place some structure on one's life:

*Well, yes, especially after being made redundant or restructuring, it does affect your health and I found especially with the first three weeks, over the whole period, my stomach was just churned up. I actually saw myself as a useless person, I felt, 'oh', I'm unemployed, I have got nothing to offer, nothing to give. But the incentive was there for me to get back into work. I think a lot of people find that it's the shock and a lot of people now just concentrate on the shock of it. And if you can go and fill a void and want to work and get out there and do the steps, but you actually get knocked back. Now I feel, even though I'm unemployed I'm doing voluntary work, I feel the voluntary work is keeping me in sound mind. Or otherwise you just sit round and mope. It's like an injury or something. But there is the mental side of it by getting depressed, down and a lot of that can take over you, when you are feeling down, you feel worthless ... It's just every so often comes over you like a wave of depression. You just feel down, and I just try to keep positive thoughts. I think I'm looking for something in the future, two days, I have got this to look forward to. So you are actually setting goals ... I think you do feel down lots and we have got to realise that, you know, that everyone has got their own worth and if they can do something, it doesn't matter what.*

Bill's account highlights how some people are forced to stay at home, which can result in a deterioration in their health. To avoid this cycle Bill asserted his

agency by becoming a volunteer worker, advocating for other unemployed people. His voluntary work has resulted in him structuring his day, preserving his dignity and self-concept, setting short-term goals (an immediate future), and coping with his unemployment. Although the health benefits of the structure of a working day, proposed by Jahoda, are reflected in this account, the structure is not imposed on Bill. He is asserting himself and providing his own structure, which supports some of Fryer's criticisms of Jahoda's work.

In explaining their agency participants talked about how they were determined not to give in to unemployment. Kylie (42 years) refuses to give up what few pleasures in life she still has. She has adapted to her situation, and created a routine, in order to preserve some agency and enjoyment of life:

*I'll do my housework, do my gardens, I visit the neighbours or I bake. That's how I save a lot of my money, I do my own cooking and shout myself out now and again. Instead of shouting us out for tea we'd just get a couple of flagons [beer] and have a few drinks. Why deprive yourself of any more. You know I'm quite happy, that's what I was saying to you. Well, mentally I feel quite stable, mentally and physically, because I won't let anyone defeat me and I won't let being unemployed defeat me also. I always try and beat it ... I've never ever been pushed to the edge of suicide, but I've thought if I get sick and tired of this there might be a chance. You know, I can't say I'd never commit suicide but then I can't say that I would either, but it depends how far I am able to take this stress ... I'm a chronic sinus sufferer and when I get sinus I suffer quite bad. I get those pulsating thumping in the head and quite a few times I've got to lay down and sometimes I get a migraine headache with it and that really bowls me over. I hate being that weak because I feel in this day and age you've got to be strong, mentally strong and physically strong, to cope with the stress and everyday participation.*

While trying to assert her agency, Kylie acknowledges that it may decrease the longer she experiences the material and social restrictions unemployment places on her. Inherent in participants' accounts was a battle metaphor. Unemployment was explained as a battle where the unemployed were placed in an adverse situation which wore down the most active and hardy individual.

## *Study Two*

Kylie has contemplated that she may lose her battle to cope with unemployment, but the fight continues. This metaphor raises notions of friendly allies such as family and neighbours who can be drawn on for support.

The struggle with unemployment is also reflected in accounts of the barriers which stifle people's efforts to find employment. Government departments were often seen as frustrating and restricting the unemployed's efforts to take action to educate themselves and return to work (see Addressing Unemployment, Section 6.3.1). As Sandy (40 years) stated:

*I think they [Income Support] discourage us [unemployed]. My daughter, wanted to go to Polytech for art at nights. She couldn't afford it. As soon as they said no, that was it, she was home. She was 'well I can't afford to go, and I can't afford to go there so I won't go anywhere' and she just stayed home. I think they put them down a bit. I mean it's OK to encourage these things but they've got to help us. What can we do with \$100 a week? We can't go to Polytech.*

Sandy describes the way her daughter wanted to up-skill (assert her agency) and the way Income Support would not provide her with the financial resources to attend a Polytechnic (Eastern Institute of Technology). This extract also demonstrates that people may eventually give up owing to restrictions placed on their ability to break the poverty cycle. They lose the fight and become prisoners of the system.

Agency is also restricted by the unemployed's inability to plan for their future because of a lack of material resources. Many of the participants believed that they did not have a future. This is shown in Louise's (19 years) account:

*I don't see my future. I just, you know, don't like looking too far ahead. I'm just bloody living from day to day, not thinking about anything, what I'm going to do, because I know if I don't do it, well then I will be pretty sad after that, if I set a goal like you know, don't get it ... I don't think about, I don't look at the future, I don't see myself in the future, yeah. Just bum out and oh, just little things and then I don't want to do it again because I, because I think I'm going to fail all the time.*

Louise, like a number of the unemployed, tries not to think about her future. She is protecting herself from the disappointment of not finding a job. This is shown when Louise's self-esteem is further reduced as a result of her setting goals and being unable to achieve them. Not planning for the future leads to the hopelessness of unemployment. Hopelessness has been found to be a strong predictor of suicide (Davison & Neale, 1998). Many of the participants openly stated that they had contemplated suicide. It may be that not planning for the future leads to depression. Therefore, 'taking one day at a time' reinforces the conceptual link between unemployment and illness. People need to find a job before they worry about other things; they need to recover.

Some participants provided fatalistic accounts about their future. These people identified forces outside their control which impacted on them having no future. This type of account is exemplified by Moana (44 years):

*It's frightening. I hope in the next five or ten years I'll still be here saying 'I am still positive within my thoughts'. I just hope I don't get demoralised and let my body run down to bad health. So I'm not a defeatist, I'll try and break the system. I want a permanent job or seasonal? I mean, I could have plenty of seasonal jobs but I don't know about a permanent. I'm starting to wonder what is permanent in life ... I'm a guinea pig and all of New Zealand, so it's not me pulling the strings, it is the system. I'm part of the system.*

This is an example of an unemployed person who is proactive and determined to find work. Yet, social situations still play a significant role in people's lives by restricting what options are available to them. For instance, Moana also talked about being affected by successive governments' experimentation with market reform (see Chapter Two, Section 2.1.4). The same is evident in the following extract from John (55 years):

*I worry how I'm going to live in the future. I just have no confidence in the governments of today. I'm going downhill because I want to help myself. I go out looking for work, and get knocked back. The only reason I am getting knocked back is because of my age. I'm not very pleased with what I see. Well, I can't go anywhere because I have no money. What I get*

## Study Two

*on the dole it just keeps me above water, it just. In fact I am too scared to buy food that I am accustomed to because I don't want to get into debt, I don't want to lose my house. My house is paid for. But I have still got insurances, I have still got rates, I have still got my power bills. I am just going backwards. I can't plan the future. My future is in their hands. I haven't got a future ... I thought I was tough. But after two years, I'm starting to get grief. It's getting to the stage where I don't know what to do. I'm not sleeping, I'm snarling. It's bringing the dark side out of me, which I didn't know I had.*

John proposes that his future is reliant on government intervention and does not think such intervention will be forthcoming. Apart from corroborating the struggle and anxieties associated with being unemployed, this extract reveals that economic conditions and government policies impact on the unemployed and restrict their agency.

A lack of confidence, financial and material deprivation, negative societal perceptions, and fewer opportunities for the unemployed were all identified as factors restricting agency. For instance, Justine (24 years) talked of the unemployed being unaware of the options that are available to them and of government departments being less helpful. The restriction of people's agency is attributed to a lack of resources, a lack of self-confidence, and limited social approval.

*We're not lacking goals and motivation, we lack confidence in ourselves. We have to go through a lot of stuff to find out where we want to go. Once you know what you want your motivation just comes with it. You've got to know where you want to go, you've got to have the confidence to find it out. I mean for me personally, as soon as I found out what I wanted to do I just jumped right into it. But I'm getting frustrated at the moment because nobody's working with me. I have one guy, he's actually supposed to be getting me work-based training somewhere and he's mucking around and I'm getting really frustrated with him, I'm pretty much getting ready to do it myself. It's just the confidence and help, you need help, you cannot do it on your own, you need support from other people. You shouldn't have to do it on your own. There must be at least one person in everybody's life that can help them in some way. Start with your family, and then for me personally I've got eight*

*brothers and sisters so I've got plenty of support in my family. We don't all get on like a house on fire but sitting down talking to them, you find out a lot about yourself doing that. If you talk enough to people you find out what you want to do. They might have to say one word and all of a sudden it just starts an idea in your head and you're on your way.*

Justine's emphasises that the unemployed need support and information to help them to assert their agency, set goals, and plan for the future.

This section has shown that the unemployed are well aware of the ways unemployment restricts their agency. They require material and social resources so they can be proactive independent members of society. Participants' understandings of the link between negative societal perceptions, economic policies, and the ways of addressing unemployment, and how these factors combine to further restrict their agency was evident throughout the accounts.

#### **6.4 Discussion**

This study contributes to academic knowledge of the meaning and impact of unemployment by investigating the accounts of the unemployed. It is important to investigate these accounts as they provide valuable insights into the ways unemployment is conceptualised, (its consequences and its importance), as a key component of many people's lives. Insights into the ways the unemployed linked the meaning and impact of unemployment and made sense of their circumstances have been highlighted. Accounts reveal the social perceptions shaping the meaning and impact of unemployment. The analysis of the interviews was conducted in light of the historical review of unemployment and state provisions in New Zealand, presented in Chapter Two. Participants were well aware of individual variations in the impact of unemployment and when explaining these variations cited both individual and societal factors. These accounts can be linked to an individual's understanding of, and support for, different economic strategies. As noted in Chapter Two, two dominant political

## *Study Two*

frameworks have been a part of New Zealand's history. These frameworks are: (a) liberal ideologies about the free market including the principle of less eligibility; and (b) socialist ideologies about the need for state intervention to assist those who are unable to look after themselves (Social Security Act of 1938). These two frameworks have influenced social belief systems, attitudes, and ideologies, and impinge on the way unemployment is conceptualised and addressed within various historical periods. At any given point in time one framework may be more prominent, yet ideas associated with the other are still evident. This is reflected in the participants' drawing on socialist ideologies during a period of neo-liberal dominated social reform.

### *6.4.1 Meaning*

Unemployment was explained as an unhealthy state to be coped with and cured. Participants' accounts of unemployment share many of the conceptual distinctions often associated with chronic illness. Illness is often described as something that comes from outside and disrupts people's lives and is a deviation from a normal state of health (*cf.* Bury, 1997; Pierret, 1993; Radley, 1993). As Radley writes: "the point is that 'health' defines the whole dimension, while 'illness' is restricted to the subordinate opposite of 'health' " (1993, pp. 5-6). The same distinctions were applicable in the unemployed's accounts of employment and unemployment. Employment was conceptualised as a healthy state while unemployment was presented as an unhealthy state, a deviation from the norm (Cornwell, 1984). The unemployed described how their lives were disrupted by unemployment and how they had to renegotiate their interpretation of their situation and themselves by drawing on available explanations from society. Many of the unemployed's explanations were similar to those used in making sense of illness.

Pierret (1993) found that one way people conceptualised health was as a product or outcome of factors over which one has control. This point is linked

to the concept of 'healthism' (the duty to be healthy) proposed by Crawford (1980), where people feel morally obligated to preserve their health and gain control. Such thinking has been linked to the influence of the protestant work ethic where the healthy person is someone who is in control of their life and produces economically (Turner, 1987). It stands to reason, according to such thinking, that a person who is unemployed is not in control. This proposition is supported when participants talked about unemployment as an illness and recounted how their health status fluctuated with their employment status.

Such thinking is not only evident in lay accounts but is also reflected in government policies (see Chapter Two). Even within well-intentioned research such conceptual distinctions are evident. For instance, Fryer's (1986, 1992a, 1995) Agency Restriction Model reflects conceptualisations of unemployment as an illness which prevents you from doing what you want (*cf.* Blaxter, 1990, 1997). The research literature has pathologised unemployment and talks of 'preventing' unemployment or helping people cope with this chronic condition (*cf.* Ezzy, 1994; Hammarström, 1994). Warr's Vitamin Model relies on a conceptual cross-fertilisation of unemployment and illness where an unemployed person is deprived of 'necessary vitamins'. Such conceptualisations can lead to focusing interventions on individual rather than on socio-structural factors (*cf.* Crawford, 1980; Zola, 1972).

The use of military metaphors is a salient finding in research on lay perceptions of health and illness (Bury, 1997; Sontag, 1977). To fight unemployment one needs to fortify one's position in the market place. People have to adopt a healthy attitude, take responsibility, up-skill, and search for a job, in order to ward off unemployment. As Radley writes, "in trying to cope with physical disease it is often believed that what is important is an attitude of mind that involves fighting the illness, not giving in to adversity" (1993, p. 3). Such reasoning is also applied to unemployment. What is often important is a

## *Study Two*

person not giving in. To enforce such patterns punitive measures have been put in place through government policies. In expressing negative consequences of placing responsibility for illness with the individual, Radley writes:

What becomes clear is that this strategy, although having various degrees of success, often does not square with the reality of the condition. In spite of this, the belief in self-help can provide a 'rhetoric of optimism', though at the same time being the basis of the charge that failure to cope is the result of either a 'defective or inadequate will' (1993, p. 3).

This is evident in the attitude that people could get a job if they really wanted one: a form of victim-blaming. Such thinking reflects the influence of dominant social perceptions, which are discussed below.

### *Societal Perceptions*

Previous international research has shown the persistent use of certain perceptions in explaining unemployment, relative poverty, and relative deprivation (Becker, 1997; Fumham, 1988; Harper, 1996; McFadyen & Gray, 1995). Of particular note is the assigning of cause and responsibility to the individual, as reflected in the principle of less eligibility (see Chapter Two). Notions of individual responsibility can focus attention away from the fact that unemployment is a socially produced phenomenon onto the 'lazy' unemployed, who lack ambition and skill.

Notions of the deserving and undeserving unemployed were evident in the assigning of responsibility to the individual. Becker points out that, "the distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor has been characterised as a demarcation between those who are seen as 'copping out' or 'chipping into' society" (1997, p. 8). The former are held in lower esteem than the latter. According to such reasoning, the undeserving unemployed do not want to work, are content to live on the dole, and bludge what they can from the system. Participants were well aware of such perceptions of the

unemployed as lazy dole bludgers who did not want to work. There were persistent references to the undeserving unemployed as a lazy minority, in the participants' accounts. In contrast, the participants presented themselves as the deserving poor actively seeking work. There is a contradiction here in that the unemployed know how hard it is to get by on the dole and find work, yet they still draw on such perceptions to stigmatise others. This may be a means of coping with such social perceptions and distancing themselves from the stereotype of the lazy dole bludger. Participants' use of such perceptions is testament to their salience in society.

Findings support and extend McFadyen and Gray's (1995) research which showed that employed people expressed negative attitudes towards the unemployed. The significant relationship between employment status and perceptions of the unemployed as inactive, found in Study One, are reflected in the lazy dole bludger stereotype referred to in Study Two. Winefield and colleagues (1993) argue that these types of stereotypical attitudes towards the unemployed are unjustified. Many of the participants did not simply accept these perceptions, but developed counter-arguments based on personal experience. They cite negative stereotypes and explained why they were not true in their case. Although assigning responsibility to an unmotivated minority they presented themselves in a more positive light, as victims of circumstances and factors outside their control. They actively sought work and wanted to up-skill, but were hampered by a lack of employment in the Hawke's Bay.

These findings support Fryer's (1995) proposition that the unemployed try to actively assert themselves and make sense of their situation. The ways societal perceptions were renegotiated also support contemporary writing on the social character of human thought, which proposes that people weave together various symbolic resources to construct their accounts (Billig, 1991;

## *Study Two*

Harper, 1996). In the process negative or stigmatising perceptions are resisted.

### *Conflict*

Findings from this study reflect the significantly higher levels of perceived social conflict reported by the unemployed in Study One. They also support research which has shown that increased social inequality is linked to increased social conflict (Wilkinson, 1996; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). Participants' accounts reveal the ways social stigma and personal frustration can lead to conflict with government departments, family members, and society. Such conflict has been associated with reduced social cohesion among deprived groups and society as a whole (Binns & Mars, 1984; Dew et al, 1991). Participants also associated conflict with strained interpersonal relationships, over time leading to reduced levels of social support. In this way conflict appears to exacerbate the negative consequences of unemployment. However, further research is required to explore such links.

### *Causes of and Responsibility for Unemployment*

For the participants, unemployment is not just an individual problem resulting from personal inadequacies, such as a lack of skill or motivation. It is also linked to wage levels, government policy, economic downturn, and the transient nature of employment. As discussed in the section on societal perceptions, considerable emphasis is placed on individual responsibility for unemployment. However, societal causes and responsibility were also identified. This supports previous research by Furnham (1988), and Hesketh (1982) who also found that the unemployed assigned responsibility to societal factors. Such accounts may provide the unemployed with a way of shifting responsibility from themselves to external factors over which they have little control. Participants shifted between individual and societal accounts and highlighted interrelationships between these two causes, such as the way skill levels may reflect problems with the education system. Accounts of cause, both individual and societal,

were drawn on when the participants recommended ways of addressing unemployment.

### *Addressing Unemployment*

The unemployed identified a number of strategies for addressing unemployment. These strategies included improving services provided by government departments, reforming benefit policies, changing the education system, career guidance, up-skilling, and job creation (*cf.* Lewis & Furnham, 1986). Strategies were reliant on individual and societal accounts. Participants raised the need for interventions at both the individual and societal levels and demonstrated a willingness to become involved in resolving issues around unemployment. This supports Becker's (1997) call for interventions and policy initiatives to become more informed by the experiences of the unemployed if they are to be effective. These issues are discussed further in Chapter Seven. Generally, participants' recommendations for addressing unemployment reflect the ways cause was assigned and were intended to reduce the impact of unemployment on the participants' lives.

#### *6.4.2 Impact*

Although some participants mentioned individuals who benefited from unemployment, the overwhelming focus was on negative consequences. Accounts of the impact of unemployment support the findings of previous quantitative studies (Bartley, 1994; Fryer, 1995; Hammarström, 1994; Warr, 1987). The impact of unemployment appears to be dependent on the unemployed's perceptions of their situation (*cf.* Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996) and exacerbated by feelings of hopelessness. Participants explained links between relative deprivation, deteriorations in health, restricted agency, the degree of social support, and efforts to cope. The impact of unemployment was explained in a way which reflected its meaning. Participants were aware of individual, family, and societal consequences and their accounts did not treat

## *Study Two*

them as being distinct. As a result the accounts provide valuable insights into the intertwined character of consequences at each of these three levels.

### *Relative Deprivation*

Overwhelmingly, all of the participants talked about the central role of financial concerns in their lives. Accounts provide details on the implications of the significantly lower levels of income and material goods reported among the unemployed in Study One. Participants associated their stress, health problems, and inability to cope with a lack of money, which resulted in difficulties in budgeting and caused family conflict (*cf.* McGhee & Fryer, 1989). As highlighted in Chapter Two, initially the unemployment benefit was conceived of as a temporary measure and benefit levels were set below the minimum wage. Yet, for many the unemployment benefit is now a long-term reality and is inadequate. The accounts provided by the participants support the view that beneficiaries live at a basic level of existence, which causes constant stress and strain for many (Waldergrave & Coventry, 1987). People live in relative deprivation for extended periods of time. Key concerns included a lack of ability to access basic health care services, purchase basic necessities, and participate fully in social life. Participants' accounts of this situation support Fryer's (1995) contention that the negative consequences of unemployment are associated with relative deprivation (*cf.* Winefield et al., 1993).

### *Health Consequences*

Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the link between unemployment and negative health consequences, which has been persistently found in previous quantitative research (Bartley, 1994; Warr, 1987; Whelan, 1992). Participants discussed the ways unemployment impacted negatively on both their psychological and physical well-being. Health consequences tended to be discussed in both personal and general terms. Participants exhibited a

complex understanding of the health consequences of unemployment. A central concern was material and social deprivation (*cf.* Fryer, 1995).

A re-occurring issue identified by the participants was their contemplation of suicide. This study supports the existence of an association between unemployment and suicidal ideation and behaviour (*cf.* Winefield et al., 1993). Platt and Kreitman (1985) demonstrated that the proportion of suicide attempts among the unemployed compared to that among the employed is as high as 15:1. Voicing reservations Winefield and colleagues (1993) argue that to identify an individual predisposition or to say that unemployment causes suicide is by no means a simple association. Furthermore, Dooley and colleagues argue that

aggregate-level analyses do not support the contention that economic contraction has a strong or widespread effect on suicide in the general population. The results suggest, rather, that any effect a regional economy has on suicide is complex and depends on individual-level factors (1989, p. 334).

Platt (1986) re-examined his results and controlled for poverty. He found that the correlation between unemployment and attempted suicide was no longer significant and concluded that "unemployment appears to be associated with parasuicide only in so far as it relates to poverty or to some other variable closely connected to poverty" (1986, p. 402). This is reflected in the participants' accounts, where giving up and contemplating suicide was talked about in the context of relative deprivation. In terms of explaining suicide the participants identified relative deprivation as a key determinant.

Participants' accounts also present the idea that relative deprivation is linked to a range of health consequences and is exacerbated by poor housing and other life pressures (Bartley, 1994; Ullah, 1990; Whelan, 1992). When explaining the impact of unemployment on people's physical health, participants often identify financial hardship as an important factor. Such hardship has been associated in previous research with a range of negative

### *Study Two*

health outcomes (Kasl, et al., 1975; O'Brien & Kabonoff, 1979; Brenner & Mooney, 1983).

#### *Coping*

Fryer's model is useful in explaining why the unemployed, although placed in adverse situations which restrict their agency, did not present themselves as passive victims who react in a uniform manner. Participants developed their own ways of coping with unemployment and understood their situation within the material and social constraints of everyday life. When coping with unemployment the participants focused on searching for a job, in addition to eliminating the symptoms of stress. The Agency Restriction Model appears to be supported in the participants' accounts, where they do behave as active agents who seek to improve their situation. However, coping was not just an individual phenomenon.

A number of the participants indicated that their families provided them with both financial and emotional support to cope with unemployment. This confirms previous research findings which suggest that social networks and support can ameliorate some of the negative consequences of unemployment (Binns & Mars, 1984; Finlay-Jones & Eckhardt, 1984; Kasl et al., 1975; Macky & Haines, 1982; McPherson & Hall, 1983; Schwarzer et al., 1994; Siegert et al., 1990). Yet, many of the participants admitted that often they could not cope. A primary reason for not coping was the material and social restrictions placed on their lives.

#### *Agency Restriction*

Accounts reflect the idea that poverty restricts agency (McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Whelan 1992; Winefield et al., 1993). Participants talked about how unemployment was a struggle and that they could not afford the basic necessities of life. Fryer proposes that people are agents who strive to assert

themselves, initiate influences, and are intrinsically motivated. The participants' accounts reflect attempts to be proactive and independent which were often hampered by institutional policies and a lack of material resources. This in turn reduced their ability to cope. Restrictions imposed by economic deprivation made it difficult for people to plan and organize personally satisfying lives (Winefield et al., 1993). Fryer & Payne (1984) found the unemployed were proactive even though they do not have material resources. However, such proactivity may diminish over time unless meaningful activity is found. Such activity does not need to be institutionally imposed, as proposed by Jahoda, but is often found by the individual, as proposed by Fryer. Those participants who were coping well were proactive and took part in activities such as volunteer work.

In sum, this qualitative study has investigated the unemployed's accounts of their situation and further explored the meaning and impact of unemployment. This study complemented the quantitative study by bringing to life the unemployed's experiences and the ways social meaning systems are drawn on and used when making sense of their situation. Even though the findings were presented under two main categories, meaning and impact, both were often intertwined. Key themes, such as the meaning of unemployment, its impact in terms of relative deprivation, interpersonal conflict, and the role of social support in ameliorating the negative consequences of unemployment, highlighted that unemployment is not just an individual problem but is linked to structural and societal factors.

# Chapter Seven

## Conclusion

In light of the persistently high rates of unemployment in New Zealand, research explaining its consequences is important. This thesis has extended psychological knowledge of the meaning and impact of unemployment. With care, its findings may be generalised to other geographic regions outside the Hawke's Bay. Significant relationships between key dimensions have been identified and the experiences and perceptions of the unemployed have been explored. This final chapter presents some general conclusions and outlines the contributions made by this thesis to the psychological study of unemployment. Limitations in the thesis and suggestions for future research are presented. The chapter is completed by a discussion of some key policy issues.

### 7.1 General Conclusions

Unemployment was found to have negative consequences on the lives of those without formal employment (*cf.* Fryer, 1986, 1992a; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). In the face of undeniable trends, the impact of unemployment does not appear to always be uniform and is moderated by variations in relative deprivation and subjective perceptions. This thesis supports the recent proposition, made within public health research on inequalities in health, that the impact of material deprivation is mediated through people's interpretations of their situation (*cf.* Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996). The meaning of unemployment is an important factor in determining its impact. Attention needs to be given to both psychosocial and material factors when investigating the consequences of unemployment. The accounts provided

### ***Conclusion***

by participants revealed a range of complexities in the relationship between the meaning and impact of unemployment. The participants provided rich insights into the experience of unemployment as an adverse life situation.

Findings from both studies support Kelvin's assertion that in most industrialised societies being employed rather than unemployed is a central source of normal identity (Kelvin, 1980, 1984). The unemployed person struggles to find socially approved roles and the positive self-evaluations that go along with them. The unemployed are often stigmatised and placed in a position of lower prestige that does not provide a feeling of full membership in society (Warr, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). In terms of status and identity needs, the unemployed are generally lacking socially positive perceptions and self-definitions, which employment may provide. The unemployed manifest increased stress levels and low self-esteem (Winefield et al., 1993). However, most try to resist negative stereotypes and justify themselves through strategies such as saying that they are not lazy and are seeking work. Participants in Study Two also questioned the legitimacy and appropriateness of stereotypes such as the dole bludger.

Researchers such as Kelvin point out that, "as unemployment becomes more widespread almost everyone will be affected by it, directly or indirectly. Then it will no longer be possible to attribute it to individual laziness or lack of commitment" (1984, p. 419). Kelvin proposes that this will lead to a more tolerant attitude towards the unemployed similar to that expressed by many of the employed participants in Study One. However, Study Two also found that negative perceptions still persist and the impact of unemployment is intensified through their social isolation and the stigma of being unemployed. These negative perceptions may continue as long as society is dominated by the neo-liberal notion of individual responsibility, which can lead to victim-blaming (*cf.* Jahoda, 1982; McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Winefield et al., 1993).

This thesis contributes to unemployment research in four unique ways. First, it demonstrates the usefulness of a multi-method research design. Findings obtained through the use of such a design support the usefulness of both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate complex areas of everyday life, such as employment status (*cf.* Feather, 1990, 1997; Fryer, 1992b; Jahoda, 1931/1972; Pernice, 1996; Popay & Williams, 1996).

Second, findings from this thesis provide a timely reminder of the persistence of social inequalities and the impact of conservative social policy and perceptions on groups such as the unemployed. There is an increasing economic and social gap between the rich and poor in New Zealand, which requires the attention of social scientists (Cheyne et al., 1997; Howden-Chapman & Cram, 1998; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987; Woodward & Kawachi, 1998).

Third, this thesis provides further evidence that financial deprivation or a shortage of money is associated with social isolation, poor health, inactivity, stress, and feelings of powerlessness. Further, a person's hardiness and access to social and material support is important in moderating the impact of unemployment (Bakke, 1933; Bartley, 1994; Binns & Mars, 1984; Feather, 1990; Fryer, 1995; Jackson & Walsh, 1987; Jahoda, 1982; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985; Warr & Jackson, 1985; Whelan, 1992). The importance of investigating people's experiences and perceptions when exploring the consequences of unemployment and relative deprivation has also been demonstrated (*cf.* Fryer, 1986, 1992a, 1995).

Finally, findings support the idea that no single theoretical approach can sufficiently explain the complexities of unemployment. Existing approaches, such as Fryer's Agency Restriction Model and Jahoda's Latent Function Model of Employment, need to be integrated because both individual and societal

### ***Conclusion***

factors play an important role in shaping the unemployment experience and its consequences. In merging these approaches insights can be derived from the work of sociologists such as Giddens (1991) and social psychologists such as Billig (1991), who have theorised the social origins of human thought and the impact of social structures on the ways phenomena (such as unemployment) are conceptualised and addressed. The work of such theorists is central to establishing the relationship between social structures and personal agency. Parallels can be drawn here with contemporary work in the area of health inequalities, where emphasis is being placed on the role of psychosocial factors in theorising the link between social structures and personal agency (*cf.* Popay, Williams, Thomas & Gatrell, 1998). Emphasis needs to be placed on the creative agency of people and the restraints imposed on their lives by material circumstances.

### **7.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

This thesis has drawn attention to the advantages of utilising a multimethod research design. However, there were a number of limitations which need to be outlined.

First, the sample may not have been fully representative of the employed and unemployed populations in the Hawke's Bay region. Drawing a strictly representative sample would have exceeded the logistical constraints of the thesis. In light of the low response rates among the unemployed (Daniel, 1974, 1990; Dew et al., 1991; Hesketh & Shouksmith, 1982; Warr, 1987), and ethical concerns, an opportunistic sample obtained through community consultation was more appropriate.

Second, the limitations of a self-report questionnaire are well-known. Self-selection may have taken place with both the employed and unemployed groups. Also a position response bias may have occurred on the semantic

differential. This type of response bias may have been evident in the employed group's ratings of the target '*Unemployed people*'. The employed group may have associated the target '*Unemployed people*' less negatively and remained close to a neutral response so as to maintain the possibility of self-inclusion (*cf.* Cullen et al., 1997). Although it is necessary to be wary of such limitations, they certainly do not render self-report questionnaires useless.

Third, sets of variables studied had to be reduced. The health of both the employed and unemployed groups was not measured. The logistics involved in medical examinations or accessing people's medical records was well beyond the scope of this thesis. The alternative of using a quantitative self-report questionnaire has been found to be of limited value when dealing with unemployed populations (Goldney, 1996; Popay & Williams, 1996; Wilson & Walker, 1993). Therefore, the researcher accessed health qualitatively and focused on the unemployed's explanations and perceptions of the effects of unemployment on their health. There is a growing body of research which supports the use of qualitative techniques to explore such topics (Bury, 1997; Ezzy, 1993; Fryer, 1992b; McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Murray & Chamberlain, 1999; Popay & Williams, 1996).

Although providing insights into the meaning and impact of unemployment, this thesis can serve only as a snap-shot of a given point in time. Many of the consequences of unemployment and the ways it is conceptualised take shape over time. The findings from this study could be extended through an exploration of changes in perceptions and the health status of participants as they move in and out of employment. This type of longitudinal design would need to utilise both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Key dimensions would include relative deprivation, social and interpersonal conflict, psychological and physical health consequences, and societal and individual perceptions of unemployment.

### **7.3 Policy Implications and Recommendations**

It is traditional for psychologists researching unemployment and designing interventions to focus on the individual and to call for assertiveness and confidence training or up-skilling as initiatives for addressing unemployment. These strategies are part of the answer but may be effective only if combined with initiatives aimed at the societal and policy level.

If social scientists are really concerned about social inequality and those less fortunate than ourselves, then they have to advocate wider focused interventions (*cf.* Woodward & Kawachi, 1998). This entails working with colleagues from other disciplines such as social policy and sociology. The focus in this thesis on the social origins of the meaning and impact of unemployment can contribute to such collaborative work, by bridging the gap between individual and contextual factors.

Currently, government policies focus on reducing the dependency of the 'undeserving' unemployed and forcing people into jobs which are often underpaid and undervalued. Such policies are likely to exacerbate the stress of unemployment and be of limited effectiveness, owing to a lack of available jobs. The unemployed's accounts in Study Two reflect the implications of policies that punish the individual and conceal an economic environment where the market is unable to provide sufficient employment. The unemployed participants advocated flexible policies which do not penalise people for finding temporary work. In particular, stand-down periods appear to serve no purpose other than highlighting a victim-blaming mentality and the inflexibility of state bureaucracies. As Becker writes:

Rather than punishing the poor in an effort to get them off benefits and reduce 'dependency' - a policy which has been destructive to individuals and families, socially divisive and ultimately self-defeating - the poor need to be respected as agents and experts in their own right, 'partners' rather than

'villains'. Welfare provision must be seen as a badge of citizenship rather than a mark of failure (1997, p. 165).

Many of the unemployed participants were motivated to take part in this research as a means to have a say and expressed various strategies which they thought would address unemployment. This motivation needs to be fostered at an institutional level (Becker, 1997; Cheyne et al., 1997).

The relative deprivation faced by the unemployed was also evident in the significant differences in income between the employed and unemployed groups in Study One. Participants in Study Two associated heightened anxiety and stress, health problems, and an inability to cope with a lack of money. In New Zealand Income Support benefits are set well below the poverty line, which results in everyday life becoming a struggle for the unemployed and their families (Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997; Waldegrave & Coventry, 1987). (For example at the time of the data collection for this thesis a single, unemployed person aged 24 years would receive \$115.37 per week; New Zealand Income Support Service, 1995, p. 13.) The unemployed are placed in a situation of relative poverty, where a combination of factors, including poor living conditions, increased living costs, social stigma, and social isolation can have a negative impact on their health. Research suggests that the incidence of poverty-related diseases is a key indicator of social inequality (Elstad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996). The incidence of such diseases has increased over the last two decades of economic reform (Cheyne et al., 1997; Stephens & Waldegrave, 1997). Therefore, as is proposed in a recent report to the Minister of Health, all social policies and reforms need to be evaluated in terms of their social and health consequences (Woodward & Kawachi, 1998).

In conclusion, this research offers further insights into the meaning and impact of unemployment. As a complex phenomenon, unemployment needs to be investigated within its historical, social, and political context. The current direction of economic policy, combined with technological advances and

### ***Conclusion***

continual barriers to education, is likely to reduce the number of available jobs in New Zealand. Without major readjustments in the direction of economic and social policy, the number of long-term unemployed in New Zealand is likely to remain around its present level or increase. Future government policy needs to consult the unemployed and provide them with the opportunity to become valued members of society. This means more than just treating the unemployed as stigmatised outsiders who are deprived of certain basic necessities in life.

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## Appendix B

# Summary of Problems Identified in Pilot Studies Two and Three

The following summary presents the main changes from pilot studies two and three for the first main quantitative study (see Chapter Five). Minor editorial and formatting changes have not been included in this summary. After completing the survey for both pilot studies, participants took part in a structured interview which invited them to make comments on what they liked or disliked about the questionnaire.

### **Pilot Study Two**

#### *Length*

All full-item measures were initially utilised. However, participants reported that the survey took too long to complete (see Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1, p. 88).

#### *Background Variables*

Some of the background variables in the questionnaires for both the employed and the unemployed, did not convey adequately what type of information the participants needed to provide.

In the employed survey, question thirteen asked participants, 'How many people are you friendly with in your immediate work environment?'. Participants were unsure as to what 'friendly' meant. This question was changed to include a behaviour, 'For example: people you like talking to on a regular basis' (Question 12 was also changed by providing an example behaviour).

In the unemployed questionnaire, item ten asked, 'How long have you been unemployed?'. Some of the respondents did not like using the term 'unemployed' but preferred 'without work'. This question was changed to, 'How

## ***Appendix B***

long have you been without paid employment?'. Item eleven was included to provide additional information about the unemployed's work history. This item asked participants, 'In the last four weeks have you actively sought part-time employment?'

### *Measuring Instruments*

#### Goal Mode Values Inventories

The instructions developed by Braithwaite and Law (1985) for the goal inventory stated, 'By goal we mean any state of affairs that a person might strive for as well as any state of affairs that a person may wish to preserve or keep as is'. The unemployed participants had difficulty with the instructions for this instrument. These instructions were rewritten: 'A goal is something which a person might strive for'. The original seven-point Likert scale proposed by Braithwaite and Law (1985) was changed to a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix E, for the Full-item Questionnaire) as the original scale is pative data.

#### Semantic Differential

Nearly all of the participants reported difficulty with rating the target concepts and the length of the instructions for the semantic differential. The original instructions from Osgood and colleagues (1957) are presented on the following page.

## **Pilot Study Three**

### *Measuring Instruments*

#### Semantic Differential

After Pilot Study Two the instructions for the semantic differential were changed and repiloted. In this pilot study participants further expressed concern with the length and presentation of the semantic differential (see p. 244).

#### Perceived Social Conflict

Four social conflict items were added to the questionnaire (Department of Marketing, 1992; Gendall et al., 1993; P. J. Gendall, personal communication, June, 1994); (see Appendix E for the Full-item Questionnaire).

**DIRECTIONS:** For this study, we would like to find out the *meanings* certain questions have, to you, by having you judge them against a series of words. In answering these questions, please make your judgements on the basis of what each word *means to you*. On the following two pages you will find a different question to be judged and beneath it a set of words. Place your marks *in the middle of the spaces provided*, and do not place more than one mark on a single line. It is your *first impression*, the immediate "*feelings*" about the items, that we want.

Each of the questions presented can be rated in the following way:

FOR EXAMPLE:      **A CLOSE FRIEND IS...**

1. If you consider the question to be *neutral*, or if the item is *completely irrelevant*, then you should place your mark in the middle space:

GENTLE    :        :        : X        :        :        :        AGGRESSIVE

2. If you feel that the question at the top of the page is *very closely related* to one end of the line, you should place your mark as follows:

HAPPY    X:        :        :        :        :        :        SAD

OR

HAPPY    :        :        :        :        :        : X        SAD

3. If the question seems *only slightly related* to one side as opposed to the other side (but not really neutral), then you should mark as follows:

TENSE    :        : X        :        :        :        :        RELAXED

OR

TENSE    :        :        :        : X        :        :        RELAXED

Where you place your mark depends on which of the two ends of the line seem most typical of the question you are judging.

**DIRECTIONS:** For this study, we would like to find out how you view certain statements about different people, by having you judge them against a series of words. In answering these questions, please make your judgements on the basis of what each word *means to you*. On the following two pages you will find a different question to be judged and beneath it a set of words.

Each of the questions presented can be rated in the following way:

**FOR EXAMPLE:      A CLOSE FRIEND IS...**

1. If you consider the above statement to be *neutral*, or if the item is *completely irrelevant*, then you should circle **4**.

GENTLE 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 AGGRESSIVE

2. If you feel that the above statement is *very closely related* to one end of the line, you should circle **1**.

HAPPY **1** 2 3 4 5 6 7 SAD

OR

HAPPY 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** SAD

3. If the above statement seems *only slightly related* to one side as opposed to the other side (but not really neutral), then you should circle **3**.

TENSE 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 RELAXED

In answering these statements, please make your judgements on the basis of what each word *means to you*. Please circle only one number which best represents how you would rate each statement. **Please answer every statement.** It is your *first impression*, the immediate "*feelings*" about the items that we want.

# Appendix C

## Crosstabulation Tables for Table 2

**Table C1**

Crosstabulation for Gender Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group	Gender		Row % Count
	Male	Female	
Employed	57.0% n=49	43.0% n=37	48.6% n=86
Unemployed	67.0% n=61	33.0% n=30	51.4% n=91

**Table C2**

Crosstabulation for Ethnicity Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group	Ethnicity			Row % Count
	NZ European	NZ Māori	Other	
Employed	80.2% n=69	11.6% n=10	8.1% n=7	48.6% n=86
Unemployed	39.6% n=36	46.2% n=42	14.3% n=13	51.4% n=91

**Table C3**

Crosstabulation for Marital Status Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group	Marital Status		Row % Count
	Single	Partnered	
Employed	25.6% n=22	74.4% n=64	48.9% n=86
Unemployed	67.8% n=61	32.2% n=29	51.1% n=90

**Appendix C**

**Table C4**

Crosstabulation for Education Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group	Education				Row %
	No School	School Qual <sup>a</sup>	Trade Qual <sup>b</sup>	University <sup>c</sup>	Count
Employed	15.1% n=13	20.9% n=18	36.0% n=31	27.9% n=24	49.4% n=86
Unemployed	72.7% n=64	20.5% n=18	3.4% n=3	3.4% n=3	50.6% n=88

Notes.

<sup>a</sup> School Qual represents New Zealand school qualifications including School Certificate Passes to Seventh Form Bursary. <sup>b</sup> Trade Qual represents trade qualifications. <sup>c</sup> This category includes all university qualifications.

**Table C5**

Crosstabulation for Level of Income Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group	Income			Row %
	Low <sup>a</sup>	Middle <sup>b</sup>	High <sup>c</sup>	Count
Employed	9.3% n=8	52.3% n=45	38.4% n=33	49.1% n=86
Unemployed	89.9% n=80	10.1% n=9		50.9% n=89

Notes.

<sup>a</sup> Low income included Nil income or loss to \$15,000 per year. <sup>b</sup> Middle income included \$15,001 to 40,000 per year. <sup>c</sup> High income included \$40,001 and over per year.

**Table C6**

Crosstabulation for Skill Level Showing the Row Percentage and Number of Cases for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Group <sup>a</sup>	Skill Level			Row %
	Skilled <sup>b</sup>	Semi-skilled <sup>c</sup>	Unskilled <sup>d</sup>	Count
Employed	57.1% n=48	28.6% n=24	14.3% n=12	62.2% n=84
Unemployed	13.7% n=7	23.5% n=12	62.7% n=32	37.8% n=51

Notes.

<sup>a</sup> The employed's present occupation and the unemployed's previous occupations were identified for the two groups. <sup>b</sup> The skilled group contained the following categories: Legislators/Administrators/ Managers, Professionals and Technicians, and Associate Professionals. <sup>c</sup> The semi-skilled group contained the Armed Forces, Clerks, Service and Sales Workers, and Trade Workers. <sup>d</sup> The unskilled group contained Agricultural and Fishery Workers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, and Elementary Occupations. All occupations were classified by the New Zealand Classification of Occupations 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1992). All of the three skill level groups (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled) were checked with educational levels.

# Appendix D

## Employed Background Questions - Study One

**DIRECTIONS:** In the following questionnaire we ask you to place your answer in the right hand box for each question.

1.) Year born [19 . . . . ]

2.) Gender (Please enter one number only)

1 = Male

2 = Female

[ . . . . ]

3.) Which of the numbered statements describes your ethnic origin? (Please enter one number only)

1 = New Zealander (European Descent)

2 = New Zealander (Maori Descent)

3 = Pacific Islander

4 = Asian

5 = European

6 = Other please specify \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

4.) Present marital status? (Please enter one number only)

1 = Single

2 = Married

3 = De facto relationship

4 = Currently partnered

5 = Divorced / Separated

6 = Widowed

[ . . . . ]

5.) How many dependents (children and/or stepchildren) do you live with?..... [ . . . . ]

6.) Highest educational qualification attained (If not a New Zealand qualification enter the nearest equivalent) (Please enter one number only)

1 = No School Qualification

2 = School Certificate Passes

3 = Sixth Form Certificate

4 = Bursary / 7th Form Certificate

5 = Trade Qualification, Certificate or Diploma

6 = University Degree

7 = Doctoral Degree

8 = Other please specify \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]<sup>17</sup>

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

**Appendix D**

7.) What will be your total income for the year, including income support, before tax?  
 (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Nil income or loss
- 2 = Less than \$48 per week (\$2 500 or less per year)
- 3 = \$49 - \$96 per week (\$2 501 - \$5 000 per year)
- 4 = \$97 - \$144 per week (\$5 001 - \$7 500 per year)
- 5 = \$145 - \$192 per week (\$7 501 - \$10 000 per year)
- 6 = \$193 - \$288 per week (\$10 001 - \$15 000 per year)
- 7 = \$289 - \$385 per week (\$15 001 - \$20 000 per year)
- 8 = \$386 - \$481 per week (\$20 001 - \$25 000 per year)
- 9 = \$482 - \$577 per week (\$25 001 - \$30 000 per year)
- 10 = \$578 - \$769 per week (\$30 001 - \$40 000 per year)
- 11 = \$770 - \$962 per week (\$40 001 - \$50 000 per year)
- 12 = \$963 - \$1 346 per week (\$50 001 - \$70 000 per year)
- 13 = \$1 347 and over per week (\$70 001 - and over per year) [ . . . . ]<sup>18</sup>

8.) What is your current employment status? (Please enter one number only).

- 1 = Employed full-time
- 2 = Employed part-time
- 3 = Self-employed [ . . . . ]

If you are **SELF-EMPLOYED** and you have employees working for you, how many do you currently have? (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Less than 10
- 2 = 11 to 20
- 3 = 21 to 50
- 4 = 51 and above [ . . . . ]

**The next set of questions are about your current work situation.**

9.) What is your main occupation, job or position? **Please describe fully, using two words or more: for example Builder’s Labourer *not* Labourer, or Retail Shop Manager *not* Manager.**

Main occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

10.) How many hours do you work per week (on average)?

Number of hours: . . . . . [ . . . . ]

11.) How long have you been employed in your present job? (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Less than 1 year
- 2 = 1 year to 2 years
- 3 = 2 years to 5 years
- 4 = 5 years to 10 years
- 5 = 10 years and over [ . . . . ]<sup>26</sup>

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

12.) How many people are employed in your immediate work environment?

**For example:** people who you come into daily contact with.

Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]<sup>27</sup>

13.) How many people are you friendly with in your immediate work environment?

**For example:** people you like talking to on a regular basis.

Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

14.) To what extent do you feel that you are socially involved with people in your work environment.

**For example:** people who you would go out with regularly. (Please indicate by entering one appropriate number from the below scale in the box on the right)

**Not At All**

**Often**

**All The Time**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**6**

**7**

[ . . . . ]

15.) How great is the risk that you will lose your job in the next 12 months? (Please enter one appropriate number in the box on the right)

**Very Low**

**Medium**

**Very High**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**6**

**7**

[ . . . . ]<sup>33</sup>

# Appendix E

## Unemployed Background Questions and Full-item Questionnaire - Study One

**DIRECTIONS:** In the following questionnaire we ask you to place your answer in the right hand box for each question.

1.) Year born [19 . . . . ]

2.) Gender (Please enter one number only)

1 = Male  
2 = Female [ . . . . ]

3.) Which of the numbered statements describes your ethnic origin? (Please enter one number only)

1 = New Zealander (European Descent)  
2 = New Zealander (Maori Descent)  
3 = Pacific Islander  
4 = Asian  
5 = European  
6 = Other please specify \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

4.) Present marital status? (Please enter one number only)

1 = Single  
2 = Married  
3 = De facto relationship  
4 = Currently partnered  
5 = Divorced / Separated  
6 = Widowed [ . . . . ]

5.) How many dependents (children and/or stepchildren) do you live with?..... [ . . . . ]

6.) Highest educational qualification attained (If not a New Zealand qualification enter the nearest equivalent) (Please enter one number only)

1 = No School Qualification  
2 = School Certificate Passes  
3 = Sixth Form Certificate  
4 = Bursary / 7th Form Certificate  
5 = Trade Qualification, Certificate or Diploma  
6 = University Degree  
7 = Doctoral Degree  
8 = Other please specify \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]<sup>17</sup>

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

267

**Appendix E**

7.) What will be your total income, including income support, before tax for the year?  
(Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Nil income or loss
- 2 = Less than \$48 per week (\$2 500 or less per year)
- 3 = \$49 - \$96 per week (\$2 501 - \$5 000 per year)
- 4 = \$97 - \$144 per week (\$5 001 - \$7 500 per year)
- 5 = \$145 - \$192 per week (\$7 501 - \$10 000 per year)
- 6 = \$193 - \$288 per week (\$10 001 - \$15 000 per year)
- 7 = \$289 - \$385 per week (\$15 001 - \$20 000 per year)
- 8 = \$386 - \$481 per week (\$20 001 - \$25 000 per year)
- 9 = \$482 - \$577 per week (\$25 001 - \$30 000 per year)
- 10 = \$578 - \$769 per week (\$30 001 - \$40 000 per year)
- 11 = \$770 - \$962 per week (\$40 001 - \$50 000 per year)
- 12 = \$963 - \$1 346 per week (\$50 001 - \$70 000 per year)
- 13 = \$1 347 and over per week (\$70 001 - and over per year) [ . . . . ]<sup>18</sup>

8.) Please indicate whether you are (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Unemployed
- 2 = Sickness beneficiary
- 3 = Primary caregiver
- 4 = Retired
- 5 = Student
- 6 = Other please specify \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

9.) Do you receive a type of government benefit? (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = YES
- 2 = NO [ . . . . ]

If you answered YES, can you please state what type of Government Benefit you receive.

I receive: \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]

10.) How long have you been without paid employment? (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = Less than six months
- 2 = Six months to a year
- 3 = More than a year please specify number \_\_\_\_\_ years [ . . . . ]
- [ . . . . ]

11.) In the last four weeks have you actively sought part-time employment (Please enter one number only)

- 1 = YES
- 2 = NO [ . . . . ]<sup>28</sup>

12.) In the last four weeks have you actively sought full-time employment (Please enter one number only)  
 1 = YES  
 2 = NO [ . . . . ]<sup>29</sup>

13.) While you have been unemployed, have you done any of the following?  
 (Please enter one number only for each item)

1 = YES  
 2 = NO

- Part-time paid work . . . . . [ ]
- Retrained for another job . . . . . [ ]
- Further education (eg: High School, Polytech, University) . . . . . [ ]
- ACCESS / TOPS course . . . . . [ ]
- Unpaid / Voluntary work . . . . . [ ]
- Joined a sports club or interest club . . . . . [ ]
- Other things (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

14) Have you had a fulltime job? (Please enter one number only)

1 = YES  
 2 = NO [ . . . . ]

If YES, what was your main occupation, job or position? Please describe fully, using two words or more: for example **Builder's Labourer** *not* Labourer, or **Meat Works Chain Worker** *not* Chain Worker.

Main occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ [ . . . . ]<sup>39</sup>

**SECTION A**

**DIRECTIONS:** Please read each of the statements below and then select the number from the scale which best represents your *opinion*. When you have made your choice, write that number in the box on the right. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your *opinion*.



**In New Zealand how much conflict is there between....**

- Poor people and rich people . . . . . [ ]<sup>1</sup>
- The unemployed and people with jobs . . . . . [ ]
- Management and workers . . . . . [ ]
- Farmers and city people . . . . . [ ]<sup>4</sup>

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

**Appendix E**

**DIRECTIONS:** A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then choose the number to indicate how you *generally* feel, write that number in the box on the right. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe how you generally feel.

ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

- I feel pleasant ..... [ ]<sup>1</sup>
- I feel nervous and restless ..... [ ]
- I feel satisfied with myself ..... [ ]
- I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be ..... [ ]
- I feel like a failure ..... [ ]
  
- I feel rested ..... [ ]
- I am "calm, cool, and collected" ..... [ ]
- I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them ..... [ ]
- I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter ..... [ ]
- I am happy ..... [ ]
  
- I have disturbing thoughts ..... [ ]
- I lack self-confidence ..... [ ]
- I feel secure ..... [ ]
- I make decisions easily ..... [ ]
- I feel inadequate ..... [ ]
  
- I am content ..... [ ]
- Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me ..... [ ]
- I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind ..... [ ]
- I am a steady person ..... [ ]
- I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests ..... [ ]<sup>20</sup>

**Continued...please turn over**



SECTION B

**DIRECTIONS:** Different people are attracted to different aspects of work. This scale lists some of the aspects of work that people consider important. You have to consider which of these aspects of work you prefer. When doing this scale, it does not matter whether you are working or not; you just have to indicate your personal preference.

Each of the aspects of work presented can be rated in the following way.

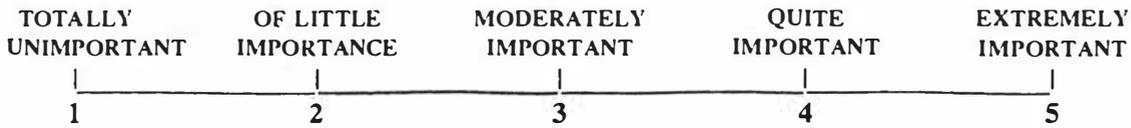
TOTALLY UNIMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5

Rate each work aspect by selecting a number from the above scale to indicate your attitude to that aspect. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the items, write the number you choose for each aspect in the box on the right. **Judge each work aspect by itself. Do not compare one answer with others you have already made.** Work as quickly and carefully as you can. Do not spend too much time thinking about any one item. **Do not leave out any items.**

**Work in which you.....**

- can work as fast or slowly as you like ..... [ ]<sup>1</sup>
- have pleasant people to work with ..... [ ]
- improve the skills you have ..... [ ]
- know that other people think your work is important ..... [ ]
- are free to live wherever you like ..... [ ]
  
- are certain of keeping your job ..... [ ]
- are not required to do work in your spare time ..... [ ]
- plan and arrange the work of others ..... [ ]
- do your job in safe workplace ..... [ ]
- work hard physically ..... [ ]
  
- get to know your fellow workers quite well ..... [ ]
- add to the abilities you already have ..... [ ]
- can do your own work in your own way ..... [ ]
- do not have to change the way you live ..... [ ]
- get a good reputation for your good work ..... [ ]<sup>15</sup>

Continued...please turn over



Work in which you.....

- can be sure you will always have a job ..... [ ]<sup>16</sup>
- set goals for workers to reach ..... [ ]
- can forget the work while you are not there doing it ..... [ ]
- do not have to spend all of your time behind a desk ..... [ ]
- do your job in a physically attractive environment ..... [ ]
  
- are always increasing your knowledge ..... [ ]
- can start and finish your work when you like ..... [ ]
- are really liked by your fellow workers ..... [ ]
- are looked up to by other people in society ..... [ ]
- are not expected to move wherever the organisation wants to put you .. [ ]
  
- are certain your job will last ..... [ ]
- do not have to think about work once you leave the workplace ..... [ ]
- have authority over others ..... [ ]
- can work in a pleasant area of the town or countryside ..... [ ]
- are not just sitting down all day ..... [ ]
  
- determine the way your own work is done ..... [ ]
- enjoy the company of the people you work with ..... [ ]
- can acquire specialised skills ..... [ ]
- do not have to change where you live to gain promotion ..... [ ]
- can obtain a high status in the eyes of others ..... [ ]
  
- have a secure future ..... [ ]
- set out the best way for others to do a job ..... [ ]
- are not expected to take work home ..... [ ]
- are physically active ..... [ ]
- have a work place that is clean and tidy ..... [ ]<sup>40</sup>

Continued...please turn over

**Appendix E**

**DIRECTIONS:** Listed below are 15 ways of behaving. Please indicate the extent to which you accept or reject each way of behaving *as a guiding principle in your life*. Choose the number that is closest to your own feelings as a guiding principle in your life. When you have made your choice, write that number in the box on the right. Before you start, quickly read through the entire list to get a feel for how to score your answers. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

I Reject This	I Am Inclined To Reject This	I Neither Reject Nor Accept This	I Accept This	I Accept This As Very Important
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Tolerant:</i> accepting others even though they may be different from you . . . . . [    ] <sup>1</sup>				
<i>Helpful:</i> always ready to assist others . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Forgiving:</i> willing to pardon others . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Considerate:</i> being thoughtful of other people's feelings . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Understanding:</i> able to share another's feelings . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Generous:</i> sharing what you have with others . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Competent:</i> being capable . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Resourceful:</i> being clever at finding ways to achieve a goal . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Efficient:</i> always using the best method to get the best results . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Realistic:</i> seeing each situation as it really is . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Knowledgeable:</i> being well informed . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Showing foresight:</i> thinking and seeing ahead . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Standing up for your beliefs:</i> defending your beliefs no matter who opposes them . . . [    ]				
<i>Having your say:</i> confidently stating your opinions . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Determined:</i> standing by your decisions firmly . . . . . [    ] <sup>15</sup>				

**DIRECTIONS:** Listed below are 11 goals that various people have used as guiding principles in their lives. A goal is something which a person might strive for. Please indicate the extent to which you accept or reject each of these goals *as a principle for you to live by*. Choose the number that is closest to your own feelings as a guiding principle in your life. When you have made your choice, write that number in the box on the right. Again, quickly read through the entire list before you start. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

I Reject This	I Am Inclined To Reject This	I Neither Reject Nor Accept This	I Accept This	I Accept This As Very Important
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mature love:</i> having a relationship of deep and lasting affection . . . . . [    ] <sup>16</sup>				
<i>True friendship:</i> having genuine and close friends . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Personal support:</i> knowing that there is someone to take care of you . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Security for loved ones:</i> taking care of loved ones . . . . . [    ]				
<i>Acceptance by others:</i> feeling that you belong . . . . . [    ] <sup>20</sup>				

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

I Reject This	I Am Inclined To Reject This	I Neither Reject Nor Accept This	I Accept This	I Accept This As Very Important
1	2	3	4	5

- Physical development:* being physically fit . . . . . [     ]<sup>21</sup>
- Good health:* physical well-being . . . . . [     ]
- Physical exercise:* taking part in energetic activity . . . . . [     ]
- Privacy for yourself:* being able to keep your business to yourself . . . . . [     ]
- A sense of ownership:*
  - knowing that the things you need and use belong to you . . . . . [     ]
- Comfort but not luxury:* being satisfied with the simple pleasures of life . . . . . [     ]<sup>26</sup>

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are 14 goals that are about people in New Zealand. Although most of us do not directly affect the course of national affairs, we all have principles or standards we prize highly in New Zealand. We use these standards to make judgements about national policies and about world community events. We may even use them to guide our actions (eg. when we join certain organisations or when we vote in elections). Please indicate the extent to which you reject or accept each of the following *as principles that guide your judgements and actions* in the same way as you did previously. Again, quickly read through the entire list before you start. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

I Reject This	I Am Inclined To Reject This	I Neither Reject Nor Accept This	I Accept This	I Accept This As Very Important
1	2	3	4	5

- A good life for others:* improving the welfare of all people in need . . . . . [     ]
- International cooperation:* having all nations working together to help each other . . . . . [     ]
- Social progress and social reform:* readiness to change our way of life for the better . . . [     ]
- A world at peace:* being free from war and conflict . . . . . [     ]
- Equal opportunity for all:* giving everyone an equal chance in life . . . . . [     ]
- Greater economic equality:* lessening the gap between the rich and the poor . . . . . [     ]
- National greatness:* being a united, strong, independent, and powerful nation . . . . . [     ]
- National economic development:*
  - having greater economic progress and prosperity for the nation . . . . . [     ]
- The rule of law:* punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent . . . . . [     ]
- National security:* protecting from enemies . . . . . [     ]

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

SECTION D

**DIRECTIONS:** In this section, we would like to find out how you view certain statements about different people, by having you rate them using a series of words.

**FOR EXAMPLE:** Each of the statements can be rated in the following way:

***BUS DRIVERS are..***

GENTLE      1    2    3    4    5    6    7      AGGRESSIVE

If you feel that the above statement *Bus Driver's are* is quite closely related to 'gentle' then you would circle 2. If you think that the statement *Bus Driver's are* is quite closely related to 'aggressive' then you would circle 6. If you consider the statement to be *neutral*, or if either word is *completely irrelevant*, then you should circle 4. Where you place your circle depends on the extent to which the words apply to the statement you are rating.

Closely Related
Closely Related

GENTLE      1    2    3    4    5    6    7      AGGRESSIVE

In answering these statements, please make your judgements on the basis of what each word *means to you*. Please circle *only one number* which best represents how you would rate each statement. *Please answer every statement*. It is your *first impression*, the immediate "*feelings*" about the items, that we want.

***UNEMPLOYED People Are...***

ACTIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	PASSIVE
SLOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	FAST
GOOD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	BAD
LARGE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SMALL
DISHONEST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	HONEST
RUGGED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DELICATE
POWERLESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POWERFUL
STRONG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	WEAK
NICE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	AWFUL
SHALLOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DEEP
FAMILIAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	UNFAMILIAR
NOISY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	QUIET
COLD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	WARM

Office Use Only  
(1)

(13)

These ratings apply to **Unemployed People**. For the following page, answer in the same way for **Employed People**.

- In Confidence -

Continued...please turn over

Closely  
Related  
1

2

3

4

5

6

Closely  
Related  
7

**EMPLOYED People Are...**

Office Use Only

POWERLESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POWERFUL
NOISY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	QUIET
DEEP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SHALLOW
WEAK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	STRONG
LARGE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SMALL
UNFAMILIAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	FAMILIAR
WARM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	COLD
AWFUL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NICE
SLOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	FAST
BAD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	GOOD
DELICATE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	RUGGED
PASSIVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ACTIVE
HONEST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DISHONEST

(14)

(26)

Thank you very much for taking part in this research. Could you please now **check that you have answered all the questions** and post this questionnaire back to me in the pre-paid envelope provided. If you have any further questions, **please call me on 0800 733 009**. If you would like a summary of the results of this study, once it is completed, please tick the following box and write on the envelope provided stating where you would like it to be sent to. **Please enclose this envelope with your questionnaire.**

YES, I would like a summary of the results.

**The researcher guarantees that your envelope will be kept separate from your questionnaire so that complete confidentiality will be maintained.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

**- In Confidence -**



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# Appendix F

## Information Sheet - Study One

### UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE HAWKE'S BAY

#### **What is this study about?**

The aim of this study is to find out how different people view unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. The research is being run by Andrea Cullen, a Doctoral student in the Psychology Department at Massey University under the supervision of Professor George Shouksmith.

#### **Am I eligible to take part?**

You are eligible to take part in this study if you have been living in the Hawke's Bay for at least a year and you are aged 16 years and over.

#### **What would I have to do?**

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about unemployment. This survey contains questions about background (biographical) information and what unemployment means to you. This questionnaire takes around 30 minutes to complete.

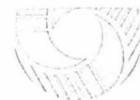
**What can I expect from the researcher?**

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, or not to complete the questionnaire.
- Contact the researcher at any time to discuss aspects of the study.
- Provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. All records are identified by code number, and are seen only by the researcher. It will not be possible to identify you in any reports that result from the study.
- Be given a summary of the findings either through the local media or if requested through the mail.

If you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call me on 0800 733 009, or Professor George Shouksmith (06) 350 5257.

Andrea Cullen



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# Appendix G

## Feedback Letter - Study One

### Unemployment in Hawke's Bay: Meaning and Impact

Dear Participant

You may remember filling out a survey about the meaning and impact of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey and your interest in learning what came out of the study.

You were one of 177 participants aged between 16 and 59 years. There were 86 employed people and 91 unemployed people. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the impact of unemployment and its meaning to employed and unemployed groups. The employed responses were compared with the unemployed to see if there were any differences between the two groups. Your participation helped to provide the following results.

First, this study found differences between the employed and unemployed's ratings on two scales for the target '*Unemployed people*'. The employed rated '*Unemployed people*' more negatively (as being passive) on the active-passive scale. The employed also rated '*Unemployed people*' more negatively (as being awful) on the nice-awful scale. There were no other differences between the two groups in rating the two targets: '*Unemployed people*' and '*Employed people*'.

## *Appendix G*

Second, the employed group reported lower levels of anxiety. This finding was influenced by an individual's income. For example, people who reported low income levels were likely to report higher levels of anxiety.

Third, the employed reported a higher standard of living and lifestyle. Whereas the unemployed reported that a lack of financial resources led to social isolation. The unemployed also reported an inability to meet the cost of everyday living; for example buying food and clothing, paying power and rental costs, and being unable to buy basic necessities.

Fourth, both the employed and unemployed groups perceived no social conflict between management and workers, and farmers and city people. However, the unemployed perceived more social conflict between poor and rich people, and the unemployed and people with jobs.

Fifth, both the employed and unemployed groups held similar work values. These values included the opportunity for self-development, the prestige involved with having a job, and being able to manage the work of others. However, the unemployed group valued job security and work surroundings as being more important than the employed group.

Finally, both the employed and unemployed held similar general values. Both groups valued secure and satisfying relationships in addition to international harmony and equality. However, the employed tended to perceive themselves as being more competent, effective, and positive towards others.

At the completion of this survey I conducted a set of individual interviews and focus group discussions to further investigate these findings. Combined both studies add to our understanding of unemployment in New Zealand and how it influences the lives of people in our communities.

I hope you enjoyed taking part in this research. Your contribution was very much appreciated. If you have any further inquires, please feel free to contact me at the School of Psychology, Massey University (Phone 06 350 5799 extension 2049 or 2041).

Andrea Cullen  
Doctoral Candidate

# Appendix H

## Individual Interview Protocol - Study Two

### Introduction

What I'd like to do is start by gaining some background information. As a way of setting a context for our later discussion on. You should approach this as an informal discussion, so be relaxed, ask questions if you are unsure and when talking try to think of examples.

#### **A. Demographics (Personal History)**

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married?
3. Do you have any children and/or stepchildren who live with you?
  - **If so** how many?
4. How long have you lived in the Hawke's Bay?
5. Can you outline your employment history?
  - How long have you been unemployed?

#### **B. Health Understandings**

1. What does being healthy mean to you?
2. People have said that sometimes they are healthier than at other times.
  - Can you talk about this?
3. Do you consider yourself to be healthy?
4. How do you account for your healthiness?
5. How important is health to you?
6. What part does health play in your life?
7. What do you perceive to be the biggest threat to your health?

## **Appendix H**

### **C. Illness**

1. Do you have any persistent annoyances (eg: headaches, back aches or sore throats)?
  - **If so:** how do you cope with them?
2. For what type of illness would you go to someone for help?
3. Think of someone you know who is sick?
  - Who are you thinking of?
  - Talk about them?
  - How old are they?
  - What makes you call this person sick?
4. Can you tell me what it is like when you are ill?
5. What does getting sick mean to you?

### **D. General Views about Unemployment in Hawke's Bay**

1. What does unemployment mean to you?
2. Can you tell me how people relate to the unemployed?
3. How do you think unemployment affects people?
4. Is there a relationship between money and stress?
  - **If so:** Can you talk about it?
5. How do people cope with unemployment?
6. Why are the unemployed sometimes perceived negatively?

### **E. Associated Terms with Employed and Unemployed**

What follows is a series of words people have associated with the unemployed and employed. I'll read you the words and then ask you to explain why people related them with either employed or unemployed people?

#### **People have associated the unemployed with these words**

1. Young or over the hill?
2. Lacking goals and motivation?
3. Dole Bludgers and Supported by the workers?
4. Unfortunate and Bad Luck?

5. Unskilled and Uneducated?
6. How do you feel about this?

**People have associated the employed with these words.**

1. A good wage and spending power?
2. Lifestyle, sport and recreation?
3. How do you feel about this?

**F. Time**

1. Can you talk about what you do in a typical day?
  - Do you have enough time to get everything done?

**G. Future Orientation**

1. How do you see your future?

**H. Closing the Discussion**

1. In relation to what we have been talking about is there anything that you would like to bring up or thought should have been discussed?

# Appendix I

## Focus Group Discussion Protocol - Study Two

### Introduction

I am interested in discussing the meaning of unemployment in Hawke's Bay and how it impacts on people's health. The purpose of this group is to create the opportunity for us to discuss unemployment as a means of exploring different people's perspectives. I would like to audiotape this discussion so I can get an accurate record of the conversation and concentrate on what is said and not on taking notes. Before beginning I would like to discuss the following guidelines which are designed to allow our discussion to run smoothly:

1. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Each person has the right to speak to each question.
3. Feel free to respond to others but try not to interrupt.
4. Feel free to disagree but respect the views of others.
5. Bring up what ever you please.
6. When making a point think about including examples.
7. Be honest, I am interested in what **you** think.
8. If you have any questions feel free to ask them at any time.
9. It would be appreciated if no-one discusses what others say outside the context of the group session.

### Questions

#### A. Context:

1. Is unemployment a problem in the Hawke's Bay?
  - To what extent and how is it affecting people?
  - What are the causes of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay?
  - Who is responsible for unemployment?
  - How do you think unemployment should be addressed?

## **Appendix I**

2. Do you feel there is conflict between the haves and the have nots in the Hawke's Bay?

- The employed and the unemployed?

### **B. Unemployment**

1. How do you view the governments actions in handling unemployment?
  - What unemployment issues are being addressed?
  - What issues are not being addressed?
2. Do you think unemployment can be a positive thing?
3. Give an account of a typical unemployed person?
4. Why are the unemployed sometimes perceived negatively?
5. What do you perceive to be strategies used by the unemployed to deal with negative labels and restricted money?

### **C. Work Values and Health**

1. Discuss the possible relationship between employment - unemployment and health?
  - What role does employment have in the Hawke's Bay?
  - How is employment related to health?
2. Do you think employment is valued in our society?
  - **If so:** Why?
3. Do you think unemployed people are valued in our society?
  - **If so:** Why?

### **Debriefing:**

What I've been thinking is that we have shared understandings of unemployment and its impact but do differ in certain ways depending on whether we have jobs or not. As can be seen in our discussion people have different views on unemployment and how it effects people's health yet we had some similar views on certain things. I think this is because we make our understandings by drawing on our experiences which shape how we come to interpret unemployment, what do you think?

### **D. Closing Statement**

1. Its there anything else you would like to discuss?
  - How did you find the session?
  - Do you have any questions concerning what has happened today?

# Appendix J

## Information Sheet - Study Two

### UNEMPLOYMENT IN HAWKE'S BAY AND ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH

#### What is this study about?

The aim of this study is to find out people's views about unemployment and how it impacts on people's health. The research is being run by Andrea Cullen, a Doctoral student in the Psychology Department at Massey University under the supervision of Professor George Shouksmith.

#### Am I eligible to take part?

You are eligible to take part in this study if you have been living in Hawke's Bay for at least a year, have been unemployed for at least six months, and aged 16 years and over.

#### What would I have to do?

The study is in two parts. **Firstly**, if you agree to take part, you would be asked to participate in an individual interview with the researcher lasting approximately thirty minutes. The interview would take place at a time and place that is convenient for you. You would be asked to talk about your general ideas of health and illness, and how unemployment effects people's health. An audiotape will be used so that all of the information you provide is recorded accurately. **Secondly**, you will be involved in a group discussion about generally held views about unemployment in Hawke's Bay, and how it effects people's health. The group discussion will also be sound recorded. It is estimated that the discussion will take about one and a half hours to complete. In the discussion you will be asked to speak about your opinions on

unemployment in Hawke's Bay. This is a very informal encounter and refreshments will be provided. In total your participation will involve no more than two hours.

**What can I expect from the researcher?**

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, or to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Have the right to ask for the tape to be turned off at any point during the interview.
- Have the right to contact Andrea Cullen at any time to discuss aspects of the study.
- Provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. All records are identified by a code number, and are seen only by the researcher. It will not be possible to identify you in any reports that result from the study.
- Be given a summary of the findings from the study when it has concluded.

If you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call me on 0800 733 009 or Gus Habermann (06) 350 4138.

Andrea Cullen

# Appendix K

## Consent Form - Study Two

### UNEMPLOYMENT IN HAWKE'S BAY AND ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers on the understanding that it is completely confidential. I also agree to the interview being taped and I understand that I have the right to ask for the tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

**I also agree that (please circle):**

1. The researcher may use brief direct quotations from the verbal material I produce during the study in her reports of the research, provided these do not identify me in any way. **Yes No**
2. I would like to be named in published materials. **Yes No**
3. Receive my tape after the researcher has finished with my interview. **Yes No**
4. For the tape and/or transcript to be archived anonymously **Yes No**
5. For the tape to be destroyed. **Yes No**

I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out on the Information Sheet.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix L

## Feedback Letter - Study Two

### Unemployment in Hawke's Bay: Meaning and Impact

Dear Participant

You may remember taking part in a study investigating the meaning and impact of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. Thank you for participation and your interest in learning what came out of the study.

You were one of 26 participants who took part in an individual interview and focus group discussion. The aim of this study was to investigate the meaning and impact of unemployment for unemployed people. Your participation provided some insightful explanations of unemployment in the Hawke's Bay.

In terms of the meaning of unemployment there was a range of patterns and diversity in responses. Often unemployment was talked about as an illness that had to be coped with and defeated. Under the meaning of unemployment four inter-related themes were identified. First, a number of participants felt that the unemployed were not valued in society. People often talked about negative societal perceptions such as the unemployed being seen as '*lazy dole bludgers who did not want to work*'. These negative perceptions often led to the unemployed being placed in adverse situations. Such perceptions were also associated with increased family violence, criminal activities, and social conflict. A key element of the meaning of unemployment was the assigning of cause to unemployment and where responsibility lay. Three key ideas

### *Appendix L*

emerged: (1) that society and government policies both caused and were responsible for unemployment in New Zealand, (2) that the unemployed were responsible for their own unemployment, and (3) uncontrollable factors also influenced unemployment (for example the introduction of technology in the workplace). Finally, participants identified a number of strategies for addressing unemployment in the Hawke's Bay. These strategies included improvements in the services provided by government departments, reform of benefit policies, changes to the education system, increased availability of career guidance, the introduction of appropriate training programmes, and job creation initiatives.

Participants also identified a number of issues relating to the mental, physical, material, and social impact of unemployment. Overall a lack of money was identified as a key factor in causing the health problems often associated with unemployment. A lack of money was associated with increased stress and anxiety levels, social isolation, and increased interpersonal conflict. Participants also talked about attempts to cope with unemployment. One important coping strategy identified was the availability of emotional and financial support from one's family.

In sum, this study adds to our understanding of unemployment in New Zealand and how it influences the lives of people in our communities. I hope you enjoyed taking part in this research. Your contribution was very much appreciated. If you have any further inquiries, please feel free to contact me at the School of Psychology, Massey University (Phone 06 350 5799 extension 2049 or 2041).

Andrea Cullen  
Doctoral Candidate

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST TO EMBARGO A THESIS  
(Pursuant to AC98/168 (Revised 2), Approved by Academic Board 16.02.99)

Name of Candidate: Andrea Margorie Cullen I.D. Number: 89018129

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy Dept/Institute / School: Psychology

Thesis Title: Unemployment: Its Meaning and Impact in Contemporary Society

Name of Chief Supervisor: Professor G. Shouksmith Telephone Ext: 7155

As author of the above named thesis, I request that my thesis be embargoed from public access until (date) 1 ~~Sept~~ January 2001 for the following reasons:

- Thesis contains commercially sensitive information.
- Thesis contains information which is personal or private and / or which was given on the basis that it not be disclosed.
- Immediate disclosure of thesis contents would not allow the author a reasonable opportunity to publish all or part of the thesis.
- Other (specify) : \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain here why you think this request is justified:

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Signed (Candidate): AMCullen Date: 27/8/99

Endorsed (Chief Supervisor): G Shouksmith Date: 27/8/99

Approved / Not Approved (Representative of VC): [Signature] Date: 27.8.99

Note: Copies of this form, once approved by the representative of the Vice Chancellor, must be bound into every copy of the thesis.