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OLDER WORKERS & NEW CAREERS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

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2005



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ABSTRACT

The existing literature of older workers and careers focuses on the challenges for older workers in maintaining employment in the new environment, revealing increased demands to adapt to an environment of uncertainty and decreased job or career security, compounded by age and discriminatory factors. The current career management literature proposes so far under-researched models of sustaining careers in this uncertain environment, including ideas of career resilience, protean career behaviours and career competencies.

The findings of this study contributes to the literature a predominantly positive picture of employed older workers: despite exposure to restructuring, redundancies, organisational change and regional economic downturns in the 1990's, most exhibit career behaviours and on going learning in ways that foster their progress and sustain their employment and their careers. Undertaken in a regional setting, themes emerge of detachment from traditional career concepts and practices, flexible patterns of employment, multiple job holding and self-employment. The effective practices of career management suggested by existing models are affirmed and extended.

The study uses a qualitative research methodology based on in-depth interviews, using a life history approach. The data is gathered through the career stories of 32 participants in a range of occupations, all of whom are employed older workers.

The study reports differing views of career, and distinctive ways of working in a rural regional environment. Using the behaviours derived from the data, the study proposes a model of effective behaviours for the new careers environment. This (PAIL) model proposes proactivity, adaptability, identity awareness and learning as behaviours which most assist the goals and progress of individual career actors; a typology is offered to illustrate and support this model. This study contributes to our understanding of careers in diverse contexts, and contributes valuable empirical data regarding ways in which career actors have achieved work and personal success in the current environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution and support:

My supervisors, Professor Kerr Inkson, and Professor Mary Mallon for their guidance, patience, intellectual insight and stimulation during this four-year process. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the benefit of their expertise, their enthusiasm, and their consideration in overcoming the long distance requirements of this work.

I thank also the Department of Management and International Business, Albany, Massey University for their support.

I am grateful to the participants who agreed to take part in this study, for the contribution of their stories, their time, and their interest.

Inspiration to do this work came from my family, past and present, many of whom value learning and education: my sisters, Lorna Brosnan and Chris Curren, who have worked all their lives in education, my brother-in-law C.J. Duley, who shared my lifelong interest in careers, my late mother, Iris Brosnan, who instilled these values, and my great aunt Mona Brosnan, an early graduate who I think would have appreciated this effort.

Inspiration also came from colleagues in the academic world who I looked to for advice and assistance, and most of all as role models of accomplishment.

Thank you also to the friends who encouraged me over the long haul, and to my children who seemed to understand. Especially to my husband Brett who lived with the development, the ideas, and the work, and who recognised that undertaking this work at a time of changing locations, and planting a vineyard was a necessary part of my own 'path with a heart.' Thank you for your love, encouragement and support.

This thesis is dedicated to my 24 year old son, Kiet, who died in an accident on September 25, 2004, just as I was finishing this work. When he recently asked me about the thesis, I told him it was about career management, and he then asked me how much I had written. I said "about 250 pages." There was a pause, and he said, "That would be about all there is to say about the subject, wouldn't it?" Not quite, but it is certainly all I can say right now.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

PART A. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The context of this study is the employment and careers environment at the turn of the century. Widespread economic, social and technological changes have had a massive impact on employment, with work and career patterns emerging from the complex, interrelated and dynamic changes in labour markets and organizations (Collin, 1997). The growth of a new knowledge based economy brought an increased demand for new technology and knowledge skills, and participation in this economy demands different skills to meet the challenges of the new economic era. The changes were revolutionary (Castells, 1998), providing a turning point in all aspects of employment: its form, quality, distribution, and risks.

The subjects of this study are career actors who in themselves provide a key interest within this landscape; they are aged 45 and over, in the second half of their careers and employment life, and through the demographic trend of the 'baby boom'; a group who are a growing percentage of western populations. Members of this group typically began their working lives in industrial states under a more stable and predictable set of employment rules and career norms (Collin & Watts, 1996), and they are having to transform their careers and working lives to work and survive in a work environment which has undergone and continues to undergo major changes.

At the heart of this study is career, a concept which has provoked and continues to encourage new and challenging interpretation and theory. This study aims to examine the career experiences and behaviours of older career actors in a continuously changing employment environment.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

A fascination with career

Ideas of career have been at the centre of my professional working life - my work over twenty years has been in areas involving teaching, employment skills, management, career development and counselling. I have an ongoing fascination with the concept, and the ways in which it is viewed and actioned by individuals, organizations and society. In developmental work, the way in which people view career has significant meaning for the way they view themselves and others, their valuing of themselves and what they do, and their valuing of others' endeavours. Comments such as "it's only a job" invariably mean a stop gap, something that won't lead to anything; 'I don't have a career' invariably leads to an explanation of the bits and pieces of work that a person has been involved in, which is seen to have little value because it doesn't add up to the person's (or others') notion of career. A career takes precedence: "my husband has the career...I just do this". The subtext suggests a diminishing of efforts that do not fit the preferred "professional" model.

Academic researchers may be suggesting more inclusive definitions of career (outlined in greater detail in Chapter 2), but in the public mind an attachment to exclusivity, progress and status endures. While researchers may see the meaning and purpose of career as changing (Adamson, Doherty & Viney, 1996), for a practitioner the challenge remains to articulate a concept of career which is inclusive, orients individuals to both the internal and external opportunities for career development and progression (Adamson, Doherty & Viney, 1996) and can broaden the concept in the public mind. Metaphors assist us to capture this understanding, and they may assist us to broaden it. Career is rich in metaphor: the ladder, the journey, the plateau, the tapestry, the pathway, the portfolio. What is the impact of these metaphors? Inkson (2004) raises valuable questions in his discussion of metaphor - do these metaphors represent deeply embedded stereotypes? How much do they condition and constrain career thinking through the images they convey? The ladder has certainly been a tenacious image in public thinking, and the image that the mature workers of today most likely grew up with. What might replace this? These questions underpin my interest in the

concept, and my choice of mature workers as the research subjects of this study. How do they now see career, and how do they act on the vision? What relevance does it have to their actions?

As a careers counsellor I had become very interested in the idea of a new (albeit disputed) careers paradigm, and the implications for career actors. Working with clients of all ages I was observing vastly differing approaches to surviving and thriving in the contemporary environment, with some strongly attached to traditional concepts of progress and others appearing to be thriving and successfully managing the changes they were experiencing. I found myself continually intrigued by the different ideas and strategies people had about career, employment and ways of working. Much of my early interest was generated in Auckland, a centre of commerce, where there were many examples of both those excited and stimulated by the changing environment, and those who considered themselves casualties of change, and betrayed by the organisations to which they had made significant commitment.

Why older workers?

On moving to Hawke's Bay, a region with a rural based economy, I found a very diverse working community, less industrial and organisational in focus. The area had undergone significant economic change through the closing and restructuring of key industries in the last decade (described further in Chapter 2). My ongoing work in careers involved work with the over 40's age group, many of whom were unemployed; or employed and struggling with the changes in work structures and environment. However there were clearly older workers working and managing careers well in the new environment, and I decided to focus my research on the group who were working in order to understand their experiences and strategies.

Guest and MacKenzie Davey (1996) have described three potential stages of organisational change which has occurred over the last three decades: the 'traditional' stage of structures, embracing concepts of bureaucracy, hierarchy, and job security; a 'transitional' phase of restructuring, downsizing and job

uncertainty; and a potential new stage of 'transformed' organisations which are flat, flexible and incorporating a greater degree of project based work. Workers over 45 are of special interest as the group who have been required to successfully navigate these environments during their career and working lives. How have they done this? The length and diversity of experience held by older workers provides the potential for rich data about how they have experienced these changes and what skills they may have utilised to do so successfully.

There is considerable variation in the concept of the older worker as defined by age (Stein & Rocco, 2000); the question of what constitutes an older worker is arbitrary (McGregor & Grey, 2001). Some see 40 years as the milestone (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece & Patterson, 1997), because this is the criterion for protection under the U.S. Age Discrimination Act (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece & Patterson, 1997), the OECD's (2000) definition is 55+ years. New Zealand studies range between 40 years (McGregor & Grey, 2001), and 50 years (de Bruin & Firkin, 2001).

Selecting the age group of older workers starting at 45 years seemed a useful compromise; it was the starting point in Thomson's work (1999) and tied in with the beginning of the 'maintenance stage' in developmental literature (Super, 1957). Warr (1994) notes that the empirical literature commonly sees 45 years and over as a defining age for the older worker. The age range of 45-60 was chosen for this sample to target a broad age range of those still in employment situations, and who have experienced the changing environment. I considered that in choosing 60 years of age as a cut off point, my sample would include some who may be looking towards retirement, but the majority would have a primary focus on work rather than retirement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

- To describe the characteristic career situations and behaviours of career actors over 45 years of age, their perceptions of their current situation and career progress, and their attitudes, strategies and behaviours regarding current and future development and progress.
- To identify and empirically investigate the skills and behaviours proposed as effective for the new careers environment; including the behaviours of proactivity, and adaptability, and theorise about how these and other attributes, practices or behaviours of the participants contribute to their current situation, progress and satisfaction.

The specific research questions are:

- What picture of the employment world do the study group hold? What concepts, ideas and beliefs are they acting on regarding their careers?
- How have they shaped their career - their forms, patterns, and models of career, their responses to the changing environment?
- What are their career experiences as older workers, relating to getting work, opportunities at work, types of work, perceptions of their future and their progress towards retirement?
- What age related patterns emerge?
- How are they managing their careers? What are their strategies, practices or behaviours that assist their career progress or survival? How do these relate to those suggested in the literature?
- Which ones are finding fulfilment and personal success? What are the characteristics of their career self management?

In this study I am seeking to understand what older workers did, or reported they did that assisted their career progress, and when using the word “behaviours” I am using it in a sense synonymous with “practices” or “actions”.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

Chapter one is in two parts. Part A provides the introduction to the research, and outlines the research objectives and questions pertaining to the study. Part B sets the scene for the study by examining the employment context in which it is located.

Chapter two reviews the literature of career, as the key subject of this study. Part A examines new areas of focus in careers research and the changing concepts of career, outlining the complexities within this concept. The debates surrounding old and new careers, and new career theory are examined and related to the theory which predicts the likely implications for older workers. Part B reviews career development theory concentrating mainly on the age/stage progress of 45-60 year olds. The ideas of maintenance and predictability in adult development processes are examined in the light of current changes and new concepts and expectations related to older workers are discussed.

Chapter three examines the literature which relates to the experiences of older workers in the current employment environment and highlights the key areas of concern and debate. Issues of participation, discrimination, and responses to restructuring experiences are discussed. Changes in work patterns and the effects, and predicted effects on the older worker are examined. The current challenges for the older worker are highlighted.

Chapter four reviews the literature regarding models for behaviour in the new careers environment. Key models, attributes and behaviours for sustaining employability and skills are described in the literature as necessary and effective for career actors engaged in new careers. These are reviewed and summarised to identify the significant actions relating to these behaviours.

Chapter five describes the methodology and the process of the research, and the factors that impacted on methodological choice. The sample is presented and discussed, including its limitations, and the process of data collection and analysis is outlined in detail. Tools that were developed for the data analysis process are

described. The chapter ends with a discussion of issues of validity and reliability related to this research.

Chapters six, seven and eight present the research findings. Chapter six addresses the research question regarding the career ideas of the participants and presents these findings. Chapter seven addresses the research question regarding the experiences of older workers in the new environment, and presents the related findings. Chapter eight addresses the research question relating to the behaviours and attributes utilised by the older workers of the study, and the findings in this area are presented. At the end of each chapter, there is a discussion of the findings, and the relationship of the findings to the literature is commented on where relevant.

Chapter nine draws together the themes of this study and concludes the thesis. Themes of experiences and behaviours are presented within a model, illustrating the ways in which they impact on each other and contribute to the positive experiences of the career actor. The contributions to the literature and implications for theory are described and the implications of the study for practice and career development, along with further research is discussed.

PART B – A CHANGING WORLD AND CHANGING WORK

This section provides a short overview of the significant changes in the context of employment brought about over the last two decades, pointing to the challenges that these have provided to older workers; it concludes with an overview of the experience of the local environment at this time. It examines changes in the employment world in the last two decades of the 20th century, and the challenges that older workers faced during this time. These are the key contextual factors frequently attributed to the transformation of careers (Storey, 2000) and include restructuring and downsizing practices, new forms and patterns of work, new employment contracts, and massive technological change.

CHANGES IN THE EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

The changing employment landscape has produced new and unpredicted economic and employment realities for the current workforce. Globalisation, characterised by the increasing flow of capital, labour, goods and services and ideas across national boundaries has significant effects on labour markets and international economies, including New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2001). Exposure to greater levels of competition, an increase in market opportunities and an increasing trade in information and ideas are all features of the global economy which have brought significant changes to the industry, occupational and work patterns of many economies, including that of New Zealand. The climate of ongoing change brought demands for flexibility and efficiencies. The new environment became characterised by the delayering of old hierarchical organisations (Collin & Watts, 1996; Bird, 1994); organisations with rigid structures whose processes were formal, transparent, bureaucratic and predictable were transformed, leaving flatter firms focussed on providing the fluid and flexible responses demanded by the new global economy. To achieve these changes, downsizing, restructuring and redundancies were the favoured strategies of management.

Job losses, downsizing & redundancies

By the late 1980's downsizing had become a feature of many organizations in the developed world, and appeared to have become the strategy of choice for organisational improvement amongst American corporations (Cameron, Freeman & Mishra, 1993). Job loss and redundancies were considerable as companies delayered, restructured, re-engineered and rightsized in a relentless drive for efficiency. Eleven million workers in the U.S. lost their jobs between 1981 and 1986 due to mergers, acquisitions and plant closings, with a further 5.6 million losing permanent jobs between 1987 and 1991 (Whetton, Keiser & Urban, 1995; cited in Ryan & Macky, 1998).

Littler, Dunford, Bramble & Hede (1997) surveyed the largest Australian and NZ organizations and found that extensive downsizing and delayering had occurred: 57% of Australian organizations and 48% of NZ organizations that responded to their survey had downsized between 1993 and 1995; 34% of these organizations had done so three or more times within this period and 63% of these organizations had downsized at least twice. In Australia 50-60% of organisations undertook some degree of downsizing during the 1980's and 1990's with the practice reaching its peak in the mid 1990's (Patrickson, 1998). The result in the majority of firms was a reduced number of fulltime positions, with work being allocated amongst fewer employees or full time staff replaced with casual or part-time positions. From 1984 onwards, New Zealand workers saw an increasing number of redundancies from company and factory closures, restructurings and public sector rationalisation (Cawsey & Inkson, 1992).

Changes in organisational and employment patterns

Organisations have experienced dramatic changes in their structures, a trend that is expected to escalate into the 21st century (Greenhaus, Callihan & Godshalk, 2000). The new organisations are flatter and more decentralised; they have shed layers of management to build work teams, which may be cross-functional and autonomous. Within many organisations there has been a reduction of core workers and a growth in work provided through outsourcing to contractual suppliers and to temporary, part-time and casual contracts. While bureaucratic organisations continue to exist, more and more organisations of the 21st century are considered likely to take on these characteristics: a small permanent work force with major reliance on contingent, casual and part-time workers; a flat hierarchy with self managed groups taking responsibility for most activities; an extensive set of alliances with internal and external partners, and a rapid introduction and utilisation of advanced technology into work processes (Greenhaus et al, 2000).

Flexible employment has become more prevalent (Spoonley & Davidson, 2004; Baines, Newell & Taylor 2004), in particular part-time employment by firms.

Casual workers, leased executives, multiple jobholders, teleworkers and the self-employed are among those who are working in different ways from the traditional 40 hour week of fulltime employment. Hours of work have also changed with growing numbers working more than 50 hours a week.

A new psychological contract

Changes in the organisational structure have been accompanied by a profound change in the 'psychological contract' between employers and employees, the implicit, unwritten understanding of the contribution of the employee and the expected rewards received from the employer in exchange for the contribution. The contemporary psychological contract is seen as shifting from a relational to transactional contract (Rousseau, 1995). The traditional contract was a long-term relational contract, based on reciprocal loyalty and security, and this has largely broken down (Watts, 1997). It has been replaced by a transactional contract, which tends to be short-term and specific, based on a more purely economic exchange. Under the relational contract, the locus of responsibility is on the employer: job security is a company policy. Under the transactional contract, the locus of responsibility rests with the employee, who remains employed based on their current value to the organisation (Rousseau, 1995).

New technology and learning

The acquisition of new skills has assumed critical importance - more and more jobs require multi-skilling, a broader and more flexible range of skills, which demands a wider base of understanding. Learning no longer simply precedes work, it is interwoven with work on a lifelong basis, and as the pace of technological change increases, the shelf life of work skills and knowledge is becoming shorter (Watts, 1997). Computer technology has upgraded the skills requirements of many jobs, at the same time as it has eliminated the existence of others (Greenhaus et al, 2000).

The new economy calls for skill sets that encompass ideas such as self-understanding, learning to learn, flexibility, and lifelong learning. In an information economy, good jobs require analytical research skills; and while the ability to read, write, comprehend instructions and follow directions faithfully were useful skills in the industrial economy, they are considered insufficient for the modern workplace (SCANS Report, 1992). The information economy requires a new set of general adult literacy skills, including computer and network literacy, skills which utilise globally networked information resources and apply these to everyday business practice and living. The new workplace has been described as a high performance workplace where virtually everyone acts as a decision-maker, gathers and sifts information, sets up and troubleshoots systems, organises workflow and team arrangements, manipulates data to solve problems, and on occasion provides direction to colleagues (SCANS Report, 1992). While this seems an unrealistic ideal, there is no doubt that the demand for multi-skilled employees has increased (Department of Labour, 2001).

New Zealand's Workforce 2010 (Department of Labour, 2001) report concurs with this analysis, spelling out the essential underlying skills: a high degree of literacy in the broadest sense - not just the ability to read and write, but the ability to find and interpret and use information, with adaptability and ways of learning being more critical skills than many specific skills which will be discarded in the future.

Increasingly the capacity to adapt to new technology will be valued as workers must deal with changing products and production processes. Jobs that once involved manual labour will now require the use of highly technical skills, with blue collar work, long the home of practical manual workers, moving increasingly towards the involvement of more sophisticated processes of supervision, the active overseeing of the process; optimisation, improving the performance of the technical system, maintenance and flow management, involving the close matching of production with orders (Department of Labour, 2001).

These changes in practices and skills define the workforce required, and change the options available most notably for the unskilled manual workforce. The OECD (1998) highlights a clear risk that Information and Communication

technology (ICT) can intensify societal divisions rather than close them. Those who are unable or unwilling to access ICT skills and knowledge will become less and less able to participate in an economy which is becoming increasingly technology dependent (Department of Labour, 2001). This has led to the use of the phrase ‘digital divide’ (Department of Labour, 2001, p. 14) to describe the gap between the information haves and the have-nots.

From manufacturing to service

Globalisation of the economy has led world wide to a movement towards information driven, increasingly service-based businesses, and a corresponding decline in manufacturing and heavier industries. In New Zealand employment opportunities are predicted to continue to shift from primary production towards processing goods and services. There is a continuing shift towards employment in the tertiary sector service industries – in particular in travel, leisure and entertainment, financial services, technology and health care industries (Department of Labour, 2001; Conway & McLoughlin, 2002). Continuing growth in the service sector has led to an increase in the occupational groupings of managers, professionals and technicians (Conway & McLoughlin, 2002).

Opportunities in the government sector in New Zealand have been shrinking. In 1989, government, both central and local comprised 28% of total employment. By 2000 the government share had shrunk to 19%. Between 1989 and 2000 government employment shrank by over 70,000 people. The private sector increased in size, and is predicted to grow more strongly over the next decade (Department of Labour, 2001).

THE HAWKE’S BAY EXPERIENCE

Hawke’s Bay is a province with clearly defined geographical boundaries. Located on the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand, it is bounded by the high ranges of the Ruahines and the Kawekas to the west, and the Pacific Ocean

to the east. The region has three main population settlements of Napier, Hastings, and Havelock North. The population of the region is 142,947 (Statistics N.Z., 2001), and the age distribution at the 2001 census indicates that 62.3% of the population were aged between 15 and 64 years, 24.3% were under the age of 15 years, and 13.4% were aged 65 years and over - an age distribution similar to that of the New Zealand population.

Although geographically isolated, Hawke's Bay had not escaped the changes that affected New Zealand throughout the 1980's and 1990's. The industries of Hawke's Bay are a mixture of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and service industries, with an economy heavily reliant on the rural sector. These decades saw considerable changes in the employment landscape with restructuring and closures in key industries. In October 1986, 2000 workers discovered overnight that Whakatu, the country's biggest freezing works (or meatworks), which had provided employment for families for generations, was closed; and Tomoana, another large meatworks, followed with a further loss of 2000 jobs in 1994. These companies were employers which had provided the community with long-term expectations of future employment.

An icon of Hawke's Bay, J. Wattie Canneries Ltd began its business of fruit processing and canning in 1934 in Hastings. This company became a major employer in the Bay with a workforce of over 7000 by the 1980's. Watties was bought by HJ Heinz Co. in 1992, and the company became Heinz-Wattie, and part of a multinational corporation. The workers of this company now became subject to global rather than regional forces and the company was restructured regularly throughout the 1990s. Health services were also rationalised within the region, and Napier Hospital was closed. Restructuring, rationalisation and the deregulation of industries which once provided certainty of employment provided an unstable and volatile environment for the people in this area (Firkin, Cremer, de Bruin, Dupuis & Spoonley, 2001).

Striking differences in terms of paid work in this region were also noted in the Labour Market Dynamics survey conducted in Hawke's Bay in 1996 (Firkin, Cremer, de Bruin, Dupuis & Spoonley, 2001), and these concerned the significance and impact of seasonal work. Seasonal employment in Hawke's Bay

was provided by farming, horticultural and viticultural sectors and the industries linked to the processing and packaging of this meat, fruit and vegetable produce. Cyclical seasonal work was a 'permanent' repeated option for many, with other work having to be found to fill the rest of the year (Firkin, Cremer, de Bruin, Dupuis & Spoonley, 2001).

At the turn of the century Hawke's Bay was emerging from the previous decade with much brighter prospects. The regional labour market report provided by the Department of Labour in 2003 noted that the east coast labour market had improved considerably during the last two years, with sustained job growth, rising labour force participation and steadily falling unemployment (Department of Labour, 2003a). Job growth was noted in primary sector industries, mainly viticulture and forestry, and population growth drove employment increases in construction, education, health and other services. Accommodation and hospitality had benefited from an increase in tourism, and the new branding and promotion of the Hawke's Bay Wine Country was promoting growth in wine tourism, food, and art cultures.

The area therefore provides an interesting context in which to examine the careers of older workers who have endured in employment throughout and beyond this period of turbulence. Their attitudes, experiences and behaviours form the subject of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

CAREERS IN THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part A examines the literature of career: the concepts of career, the changing focus of careers research over time, and the literature that captures the new definitions and debates. The concept of “boundaryless career” is reviewed, and critiqued regarding its impact on older workers. In Part B, I move to developmental career theory and examine and critique the age / stage theories related to older workers.

PART A. CHANGING IDEAS OF CAREER

Peiperl and Arthur (2000) provide a succinct summary of the attention paid to careers in the industrial state of the post-1945 era. Four principal fields of research, psychology, sociology, education and management examined careers, and they highlight a commonly shared perspective both within and between the fields:

“Stable personalities were seen to give rise to enduring vocational choice; vocational choice was seen to occur in a relatively stable employment structure; organizations were seen as the mechanisms through which the employment structure attained largely predictable economic productivity. There was a shared understanding about the way careers came about ” (Peiperl & Arthur, 2000, p.3).

The key word was stability, and career research during much of this period reflected a time of stability and predictability. An early focus in a context of post war growth was on the occupation that a person might enter. The emphasis was on finding the ideal person-occupation fit, vocational choice and decision-making (Holland, 1985). Super (1957) focussed on the developmental processes of the career actor’s life and the roles inherent in them. Throughout the 1970’s, an era of continuing stability, factors relating to specific jobs, job choices and success

(Schein, 1978) were explored. At the same time, within the business schools and alongside the developing disciplines of organisational and human resource management was the growth of the view of the organisational career, a resource of the company.

The 1980s saw a time of major organisational change with restructuring and downsizing, generating research on the individual and the organization: career plateauing, organisational commitment, organisational practices and their relationship to career (Dalton & Thompson, 1986), and the management of work transitions (Nicholson & West, 1989). With women moving more extensively into the paid work force, much more attention was paid to diverse issues such as the careers of women (Bardwick, 1980, Gallos 1989, Gilligan, 1980,1982), and work family issues (Bailyn, 1989)

Hall (2002) provides a useful illustration (below) of the changes in the focus of career research over the last 60 years.

Table 1. Eras of careers research (Hall, 2002, p.52).

ERA	DESIRED MATCH	EXAMPLES
Stage 1 (1950s→)	Person-Occupation	“I am a banker”
Stage II (1970s→)	Person-Job	“I am a division manager”
Stage III (1980s→)	Person-Organisation	“I work for IBM”
Stage IV (1990s→)	Person-Self	“I do web design”

At the beginning of the 21st century Hall (2002) suggests the focus is the *self*. The assumption is that individuals have full responsibility for their own careers, people are required to manage, create, enact, and foster their own careers, and are

advised to be their own business (Hall, 2002). A key assumption is that the career fundamentally belongs to the individual, and may be seen as a project of the self (Adamson, Doherty & Viney, 1996). It is with this perspective - how career actors manage their own careers - that this research is undertaken.

CHANGING CONCEPTS OF CAREERS

The notion of careers has been firmly embedded in our culture as a construct on which to base our occupational progress, encompassing all the implications of security, prosperity, status and self-identity. The traditional idea of career is underpinned by concepts which include commitment to a single theme, an orderly flow of work, the logic of advancement and achieving hierarchical progression (Inkson, 1997). These ideas have been tenacious and widespread in the public mind.

The idea of career found its most recognisable form as the product of an industrial society (Watts, 1996) and the archetypal industrialised career was found in the hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structure typical of the industrial era. These structures provided workers with the opportunities to pursue a single theme, and to achieve an orderly progression through opportunities for promotion and hierarchical advancement. Organisations provided the badges of a bureaucratic career, rewarding the individual with ranks, grades and titles (Kanter, 1989), and vacancies were filled by strong internal markets. The bureaucratic career was a dominant construct of careers for most of the 20th century both in common language, in the minds of employers and managers, and in employees' aspirations, reflecting the influence that large bureaucratic organizations have had in the 20th century imagination (Watts, 1996). The organisational perspective saw careers as essentially by products of efficient economic institutions (Inkson, 2002) and people's careers as a human resource to be managed efficiently by the organization. They provided a key source of personal motivation and loyalty, with performance having meaning or significance as an integral part of the hierarchical structures of authority that offered potential for progression and personal growth (Scase & Goffee, 1989).

In contrast, the perspective I adopt in my research is found in the human development literature. It is about the dynamics of individuals' careers, where the view of the career is not as a resource but as a journey taken by the individual. The definition I adopt is that of "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Hall & Laurence, 1989, p. 8). This definition involves a broad understanding of work - "all that work can mean for the ways in which we see and experience other people, organizations and society" (Arthur, Hall & Laurence, 1989, p. 8).

Psychologists and counsellors have tended to explore the career in one of three ways. The career can be seen as a vocation, an outcome of personality and occupational matching, in ways that are beneficial to the individual and the organisation (Holland, 1985). The career has been seen as a vehicle for self-realisation (Adamson, 1996), and a process through which individual growth (Shepard, 1984) can be attained. The career has also been proposed as a component of the individual life structure (Levinson, 1984), the provider of a purposeful activity which enhances both health and self esteem at various stages. In the developmental literature the career 'journey' is under the control of the career actor. All of these explorations are part of the developmental view, and centre on the individual as the career-maker.

To individuals the career may have many meanings. Careers involve the concept of self-identity, and reflect an individual's sense of who they are, and who they wish to be, encompassing their hopes, dreams, fears, and frustrations (Young & Collin, 2000). Careers enable us to feel worthwhile participants in social institutions and relationships (Nicholson, 1996). Careers offer structure, direction, meaning and purpose to our daily activities (Adamson, Doherty, Viney, 1996), a vehicle through which basic economic needs, as well as those of status and self-identity might be met. The career may also symbolically represent an individual's Life Dream (Levinson et al, 1978). The idea of 'career' promises more than 'a job', 'work' or 'employment' in common language and thinking, imbued as it is with implications of status and movement, and thus, in this 'old' identity may signal privilege and elitism (Collin, 2000; Young & Collin, 2000).

For the individual, nested within the identification of career lay occupation - a critical choice made with the assumptions of future stability. Career decision-making and vocational guidance emphasised finding the right fit by matching people’s characteristics to specifiable work roles (Inkson, 1997). Vocational choice theory built careers around occupations, not organisations; these occupations provided opportunities to develop in a range of settings, binding together members of the group with a common interest which used professional bodies as institutional structures to portray their public identity. For the individual the occupation gave a self-identity based on specialist skills and interests (Inkson, 1997). Choosing the right occupation smoothed the path of career.

Images of career

Career is a powerful image, attracting powerful metaphors. Inkson (2004) identifies nine key metaphors, described as the “dominating archetypal metaphors underlying the study of careers” (p.99). These are summarised briefly below:

Table 2. Metaphors of career.

Metaphor	Description
Careers as <i>inheritance</i>	The legacy of family circumstances and influence. That which is prescribed by social class, ethnicity gender, familial modelling and economic status provides a legacy which, for better or worse, may be hard to escape.
Careers as <i>constructions</i>	The product (career) that we create ourselves to show who we are, express our self, and meet our ongoing needs
Careers as <i>cycles</i>	The time sequenced behaviours suggested in age-stage theory, with related imagery such as ‘seasons’ and ‘passages’
Careers as <i>‘fit’</i>	The matching of people to occupations – the cornerstone tenet of career theory as in ‘you can’t put a square peg in a round hole.’

Careers as <i>journeys</i>	The ongoing travel to one's occupational destinations - these indicate the movement between places and time.
Careers as <i>encounters and relationships</i>	The social connectedness of career, the developing of social capital, networks and relational activities.
Careers as <i>roles</i>	Role behaviour enacted according to the expectations of employers, professional associations, co-workers. Over time these become 'career scripts' reinforcing the imagery of performance and theatre.
Careers as <i>resources</i>	A metaphor made explicit in terms such as 'human resources' and 'assets' and involving the notion of organisation's ownership of careers; and the accumulation of work activity available to the individual.
Careers as <i>stories</i>	The discourse of careers, the stories told by oneself, counsellors, educators, biographers, and allowing the opportunity of 'retrospective sensemaking.' Includes the myths and legends of career.

Inkson (2004) describes the metaphor as not just a powerful tool with which we express ourselves, but one that at the same time betrays deeper constructs in our thinking. This research concerns itself with *stories*, the means by which participants invest events with meaning and engage in 'retrospective sense-making' (Weick, 1996). It is also concerned with *constructions* - the way in which the participants have crafted their careers for their own purposes; and with *cycles* - how relevant are the past accepted cycles of career development in this new environment? The stories are used to describe the processes of construction and cycle.

Collin and Watts (1996) see the conceptual power of 'career' as deriving from its capacity to link the private world of the individual to the social and economic structure. With the erosion of the bureaucratic model, there is a greater ability to conceptualise coherence and continuity in the increasing fragmentation of work lives, and to accommodate experiences that are outside the occupational structure (Collin & Watts, 1996). Experiences in the home and the community have more validity, the more discontinuous models of women's career development (Gallos, 1989) can be recognised.

The limitations of the concept

However not all occupations or jobs have always been considered worthy of the term 'career' and many have pointed out the limitations of the concept. It can be an elitist term that refers to the work of some groups but not others (Young & Collins, 2000). As a driving force in an individual's life, it can subordinate other interests, including home and family (Evans & Bartholome, 1980). In the past it rarely applied to women and minorities, being essentially based on male, white, middle class conceptions (Gallos, 1989; Marshall, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). It is suggested that if the concept of career is to remain relevant to both individuals and organisations, broader more inclusive definitions that encompass the multifaceted nature of the contemporary career must be used (Adamson, Doherty, & Viney, 1996; Collin & Young, 2000; Littleton, Arthur & Rousseau, 2000; Ornstein & Isabella, 1993, Storey, 2000).

NEW CAREERS OR OLD

Many older workers of today developed their careers within the boundaries of stable organisational and occupational institutions. Specialised jobs, clear job descriptions and procedures and a defined hierarchy of responsibility and status characterised the 'classical' bureaucracy, and there were clear rules for advancement: competent work, a steady acquisition of responsibility, and loyalty and commitment to the company (Inkson, Pringle & Arthur, 1998).

Changes in the employment environment brought changes in career structures, and widespread predictions that 'traditional' careers based on hierarchy, progression and a single organisational setting are in a decline (Hall, 1996; Handy, 1994; Kanter, 1989). Throughout the last decade there has been a tendency for the old organisational career with a logic of advancement and hierarchical progression to decrease in importance. In their place emerges the new career, illustrated by two key models, the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and the protean career (Hall, 1996). The new career idea is summarised as follows (Littleton, Arthur & Rousseau, 2000, p. 101):

“The new environment suggests a shift from pre-ordained and linear development to perpetually changing career paths and possibilities...and as a result a shift from bounded careers – prescribed by relatively stable organisational boundaries and occupational structures – to boundaryless careers where uncertainty and flexibility are the order of the day - is increasingly common.”

The boundaryless career, as defined below, focuses primarily on the career itself: its interfirm mobility (De Fillippi & Arthur, 1994), its occurrence outside the organization (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997), and the new diverse patterns and shapes of career likely to be created by the changing environment. Briscoe and Hall (2002, p.5) comment that it is a picture of the career “as perceived from a third party perspective.”

The protean career model, on the other hand, presents a picture focussed more on the individual’s perspective (Briscoe & Hall, 2002), and outlines the attributes and behaviours required by career makers to pursue their personal aspirations and sustain employment in a climate of changing career realities. This model is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The boundaryless career: the opportunities view of new careers

The boundaryless career is examined as the predominant concept of new careers. The boundaryless career emerged in the literature of the 1990’s as a subject of considerable interest and excitement amongst career writers and as the career representative of a paradigm shift in careers, it demands attention. Arthur & Rousseau (1996, p. 6) outline the specific meanings or emphases of the boundaryless career:

1. The most prominent is when a career moves across the boundaries of several employers;
2. A second meaning is when a career draws validation and marketability from outside the present employer;
3. A third meaning is involved when a career, like that of a real estate agent, is sustained by extra organisational networks or information.

4. A fourth meaning occurs when traditional career boundaries, e.g. hierarchical reporting and advancement principles are broken.
5. A fifth meaning occurs when a person rejects existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons
6. A sixth meaning depends on the interpretation of the career actor, who perceives a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints.

“A common theme to all these meanings is one of independence from, rather than dependence on traditional organisational career principles” (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p.6).

As a concept the boundaryless career represents its time, and the discussion below focusses on the ‘opportunities view’ of boundaryless careers, a view which celebrates the discarding of restrictive structures and the embracing of individual freedoms, initiative and self-management, along with a new organisational relationship of mutual benefit (Arthur, 1994.) The concept enlarges the idea of career defined as the unfolding sequence of a person’s work over time (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989). Not only does the new paradigm suggest a new way of organising our careers, it also suggests an unambiguous ownership of the career, and new responsibilities for the ‘owner’. Within the framework of the new career, the career fundamentally, and clearly, belongs to the individual, rejecting the organisational view of ownership. It no longer fits so easily the structure of the occupation - the boundaries of occupations like those of organisations have been challenged to redefine themselves to meet market demands and technical developments. Organisational workers move outside their occupational boundaries to respond to the need to be multi-skilled and flexible workers. Occupation may have been the cornerstone of the traditional definition of career, and the way we chiefly identified ourselves to the world. However the present environment requires a much more dynamic concept that can keep pace with ever emerging work roles.

The career becomes a process, not a structure, and needs to be defined not objectively, but subjectively, with more reference to the individual’s goals (Collin & Watts, 1996). It forms a fundamental function in the construction and maintenance of a healthy self-concept, congruent with individuals' strengths and

weaknesses, deeply held beliefs and attitudes, and future aspirations. “The career is a ... project of the self, a vehicle for the continuous realisation of the self ” (Adamson, Doherty & Viney, 1996, p.16). A personal definition of career is the driver for the career journey, and success may be defined by personal accomplishments rather than by the visible symbols of organisational achievement.

Career progress may come increasingly from inter-company self-development, not from intra-company hierarchical advancement (Parker & Inkson, 1999) and job mobility has become a standard employment pattern, at least in the U.S. workforce (Brown, 1998). Mobility is viewed as a tool for capitalizing on the dynamics of the changing workforce demand, and in an idealised scenario, workers move seamlessly across levels and functions, through different kinds of jobs, and from company to company within a boundaryless career (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). In the process these workers gather skills, knowledge, and experiences which reinforce and enhance their employability. This mobility and gathering of skills incorporates the idea of the career as a ‘repository of knowledge’ (Bird, 1994), human capital that is potentially invested in job opportunities by the career actor (Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

A career without boundaries reflects and complements the context of the new environment. As large bureaucracies and organizations were dismantled, restructured and reinvented to meet the rapidly changing demands of a global economy, new more flexible structures emerged. Large firms continue to exist alongside multiple divisions, joint ventures, regional alliances, public and private partnerships, franchises and small businesses; with companies routinely reshaping, resizing and repartnering themselves (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). The present career actor might be found in the boundaryless organizations predicted by Handy (1994) as a core worker, as a contractor, or a temporary worker. Such a workforce is predicted to provide the flexibility critical to the success of the boundaryless organization; and its ability to self-design for ongoing demands (Weick, 1996). Self-designing in turn becomes a new characteristic of career (Weick & Berlinger, 1989).

Changing career forms

Kanter (1989) outlined the principal forms which described traditional careers: the bureaucratic form with a logic of advancement, which defined the careers of the stable industrial era; the professional career, defined by craft or skill, in which reputation in a specialist field is the growing value. Kanter (1989) describes a third career form as 'entrepreneurial' in which growth occurs by the creation of a new value. The entrepreneurial career is seen as the best type to flourish in the new boundaryless world (Inkson, 1997) requiring career makers with the enterprise and independence to create their own livelihoods.

The growth in contract culture and the amount of temporary work available saw a rise in self-employment as career actors exchanged full-time employment for independence and self-employment (Handy, 1994). Handy (1994) describes portfolio careerists as the new contract employees, who are qualified skills-oriented individuals with a portfolio of skills and clients, offering a collection of different work for different clients.

Weick (1996) provides us with a number of key distinctions for career in the new environment: "the boundaryless career comes to mean organising rather than organisation, in small projects rather than large divisions; enaction rather than reaction; transience rather than permanence; self-design rather than bureaucratic control; and struggles for continuity rather than struggles for discontinuity" (Weick, 1996, p 45).

Weick's message proposes that interrupted career paths can be opportunities. When people make sense of these opportunities and use them for improvisation and learning "triumphs of adaptation" (p.40) occur. The vehicle for conversion is the boundaryless career, a raft of "improvised work experiences that rise prospectively into fragments and fall retrospectively into patterns, a mixture of continuity and discontinuity" (p.40). In his view resumes that are full of change - so often discriminated against in the traditional career paradigm - show resiliency and creativity, and the strength to welcome new learning.

The subjective career and opportunities for self development and self fulfillment

The boundaryless career is characterised also by an emphasis on the personal subjective career rather than the objective individual career. Watts (1981) describes the 'objective individual career' as a sequence of publicly observable and definable positions through which a particular individual passes in the course of his or her working life; and the 'subjective individual career', as that which can only be understood in the individual's own frame of reference.

The difference between these lie in the perspective of the observer and of the individual actor. However in articulating career, the individual may act as an observer of his or her own subjective experience, attributing objective characteristics to it (Collin, 1990). Individuals may not label the narrative of their lives, the subjective individual career as 'career' at all, nevertheless it is recognised in the theoretical literature in that way. Collin and Watts (1996) describe career as a "very elastic construct, amenable to both positivist and constructionist interpretations," and note "its rich ambiguity is its source of power" (p.302). Individuals can describe it as they wish to the world, and may hold different meanings for themselves, or hold none at all. There is no doubt that the world has understood career best through the publicly observable position outlined above.

So while the subjective career is acknowledged as the personal definition of career of career actors, we are reminded that they themselves may not frame it that way. However Weick and Berlinger (1989) predict that "as the objective career dissolves" (p.321), i.e. traditional external guides such as hierarchical or institutional status disappear; the subjective career becomes externalised and treated as a framework for career growth, relying on internal self-generated guides, such as growth, competence, learning and integration (Weick & Berlinger, 1989).

New concepts of career support give greater emphasis to the subjective career, and the pursuit of personal relevant opportunities, with the associated ideas of human potential or uniqueness, and finding "a path with a heart" (Shepard, 1984).

Fletcher and Bailyn (1996) suggest that from the individual's point of view new forms of organisation imply the necessity, or perhaps the opportunity to forge one's career, over time, to meet one's personal needs. They note there is much to be gained for both the individual and the organisation in the synergistic integration of work and family needs. Schein (1996) suggests that in the future the internal career will act to hold together the fragmented set of jobs which will make up a career. He maintains that most people form a strong self-concept, a career anchor, that holds their internal career together even as they experience dramatic changes in their external career.

Exploring success and progress –what does it mean in the new careers environment?

In the research literature, definitions of success have usually been related to a person's hierarchical progression in an organisation (Bass, 1981) describing the sequence of steps needed to reach a managerial position. Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) view is that the external perspective of career includes the objective categories used by society or one's peers to describe the typical steps towards success in a given profession. The external career displays the visible symbols of success: hierarchical level, status and salary. Elliott (1982) defined career success as a combination of hierarchical level and salary. Success then in organisational terms has been heavily imbued with objective visible symbols.

The view changes when we attempt to articulate success in the subjective career – the core of the subjective career is the individual's self concept (Derr & Laurent, 1989) and success has private meaning founded in the achievement of personal aims, goals or ways of being. Private meaning is not easily articulated, or understood; and perhaps it is easier to talk in the public language of the objective individual career, using symbols of success recognised by all, than to attempt to make known personal concepts. This adds to the maintenance of objective symbols of success as a norm and perhaps compounds the difficulty of 'legitimising' the personal broader definitions of career and career success.

Mirvis and Hall (1994) assist this process with their idea that in the new environment, achieving psychological success in one's life work, which encompasses not only a job and an organisation, but many roles including those of spouse, parent, community member and self developer, will become more important. Hall (1996) points out that while there is only one way to achieve vertical success, i.e. making it to the top, there are a number of ways to achieve psychological success, including achieving personal goals. Mirvis and Hall (1996) contend that success in new careers may be as much linked with individual as organisational goals, offering a means of broadening the concept without limiting its application.

Feminist writers have consistently challenged male models of success defined by the external career, with their inherent assumption of the centrality of work to identity (Gallos, 1989; Marshall, 1989). They deny ideas of upward mobility and success at all cost as central to women's perspective on career, and point to other indicators of success which may be more appropriate, such as forging a career which meets personal, professional and interpersonal goals (Gallos, 1989), charting a successful course to manage life's critical challenge, finding the balance between love and work (Gallos, 1989), and achieving congruence between one's values and activities (Pringle & Dixon, 2001). Their models emphasise the achievement of personal subjective definitions of success and individual goals, reinforcing the focus articulated by new career theorists (Mirvis & Hall 1996; Arthur 1994; Hall, 1996).

RESPONSES AND DEBATES SURROUNDING NEW CAREERS

The idea of 'new careers' does not go unchallenged. Both whether they really exist and whether they are desirable are subjects of strong debate in the career literature, and critiques relating to their desirability are addressed below, in particular as they are related to older workers. As to their existence at all, while career instability is clearly present, Gunz, Evans & Jalland (2000) argue that pure boundarylessness is best seen as a special case, happening under very unusual circumstances; and they question to what extent inter-firm mobility is really

present. In their view certain boundaries *do* shape our careers whether these be subjective, in the perspective of the career actor, or objective, in the policies and practices of organizations. Certainly large firms still dominate many industries.

Debates over new or old careers raise the question of the appropriateness of thinking in an 'either ... or' fashion about careers. I acknowledge the duality of career by recognising that careers are likely to contain both traditional and new themes. Certainly traditional forms of career endure; and it is acknowledged that the "new" career is not new for many - "for a large proportion of people who participate in the workplace the boundaryless career is simply business as usual" (Littleton, Arthur & Rousseau, 2000, p.102). However the changes of the economic and employment environment into the 21st century are acknowledged as profound and the enlargement of the notion of career that has accompanied these changes suggests the validity of the term "new careers."

Individualism and self-responsibility

Much of this literature of boundaryless careers "invites a sharper focus on the individual and the personal 'odyssey' involved in career journeys" (Dany, Mallon & Arthur, 2002, p.1) and explores "independence from, rather than dependence on traditional organisational career arrangements" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p.6). These quotes succinctly summarise the aspects of the literature that draw concern and criticism from many. This aspect invites anxiety as to whether recent work on careers has shifted the focus too far to the individual - Dany et al. (2002) point to the ontological duality of careers as their conceptual strength, and worry that reduced focus on social structures may weaken this. A related problem is the effect of the shift of career risk as well as responsibility to the individual (Dany et al., 2002), encouraging the new career rhetoric to serve as a basis for the reconstruction of employment relationships (Fournier & Grey, 1999, cited in Dany et al. 2002). Richardson (2000) is sharply critical of what she calls the new 'ideology' suggesting that its belief in personal self-sufficiency and resiliency is 'American individualism at its most extreme' (p.203). I would take issue here, arguing that self-management in my view need not equate to self-sufficiency, and

that increasing the ability of people to navigate and manage the difficulties of their time in no way disregards or denies the benefits of stable employment, or the constraints of organisational structures. Pringle and Mallon (2003) argue that the boundaryless career literature continues the marginalisation of groups like the economically disadvantaged, women and ethnic groups and the boundaryless career may be available only to the highly skilled and the elite. In their view, the populations studied so far are not nearly wide or diverse enough to draw conclusions about new careers, and focusing on the issues of power and resources would show that careers have multiple boundaries, and are not boundaryless.

None would deny that there remain barriers - and boundaries - to the progress of marginalised groups and that these groups are not yet well researched. However in my view the attraction of boundaryless career theory is its reach beyond organisational theory and managerial populations to the career experiences of a wider range of workers - in the same way that is found in vocational and developmental theory. An example is the 'transitory' worker (Driver, 1982), who may have been the 'deviant' in the perspective of traditional 'directional' career theory, but who may now be viewed as a real participant in the world of work and worthy of attention. A more recent subject of study is the work related to the New Zealand 'OE' (Inkson & Myers, 2003) focussing on the career development acquired during this travel. Research into these experiences may bring fresh insights into career development opportunities.

Research on itinerant, non-organisational workers may well prove that the skills of the 'common worker' ignored in organisational theory, fits very well a boundaryless environment. So far, we do not know. In any case, *either...or* perspectives seem to encourage polarity. It serves no purpose to say that *all* careers are or will be boundaryless, any more than we could say that all careers fitted traditional models, or to hold that if boundaryless careers are perceived as good then other models are discredited. What we have is new theory, so far under-researched, meeting existing career theory, which is generally agreed to have been narrowly researched. One impact of the emergence of new theory has been to highlight the deficiencies of traditional career theory which seemed almost

unchallenged for many years, and the result may well be the extension and diversity of research that many seek.

Structure and agency

Further debate continues in the discussion of agency and structure. Individual agency is the familiar ground for career counsellors, who are influenced by psychologically grounded theory and less interested in organizations, and structures. Counselling practice assumes that individual's self-awareness and actions are the predominant determinants of career success (Rosenbaum, 1989). The focus is on assisting individuals to thrive in, negotiate, or even transform the structures in which they find themselves.

Peiperl & Arthur (2000) outline the key questions of the debate – ‘To what extent are careers the product of established structures versus that of individual actions....do careers unfold primarily within structures such as the institutional frameworks of governments, occupations or employer companies? Or do careers largely enact their own paths, creating new structures as they go?’ (Peiperl & Arthur, 2000, p.4). Structure is represented by organised systems and progressive career development, whereas action based views of careers are influenced by the notion of self-actualisation and an inner drive towards developmental growth. In the past, the studies of career by authors of the Chicago School of Sociology explored both individual identity and the formation of social institutions and perhaps their research is a reminder of the need to balance individual agency with attention to organizations and social context.

I am attracted by the view of Weick (1996) whose enactment perspective suggests a linkage between these views. His view proposes that when people act, they create the materials that become the constraints and opportunities that they face and as individuals enact their careers, they enact the environment itself, in both limiting and enlarging ways. In such a model a world with flexible careers develops and is developed by flexible careers - such as portfolio careers.

Weick (1996) uses the terms “strong” and “weak” (p.44) to explain how this happens. Strong situations involve clear structures, and these maintain strong and salient guides to behaviours, such as those found in tightly knit bureaucracies, and these in turn encourage compliance to those guides. Conversely weak situations have less prescription and there is more opportunity to choose between alternative actions. These are typified more in loosely knit project driven environments, such as the widely used example of Silicon Valley (Saxenian,1996,).

Part of the attraction of this view is the location of my research. A rural region with few corporate structures might offer a more loosely knit, less prescribed context for exploring careers. While this research draws on an action view it is also concerned with context, and the region offers a distinctive environment.

Regional area and context as a factor in careers

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) put forward a new meaning of ‘region’, defining it as an interactive array of geographical, societal and company features. They point out that region is “a factor that is everywhere in our discussion of boundaryless careers” (p. 377) providing the “opportunity for both information exchange among producers and shared identities amongst boundaryless workers” (p.376). They assert that new models of career development will fail us if they fail to incorporate analyses of regions and regional factors such as industry concentration and social networks (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), a comment that highlights the lack of research in this area so far.

In a similar vein, the idea of a local labour market culture was proposed (Ashton, McGuire & Spilsbury, 1990) as transcending individual structural factors, but manifesting itself in local attitudes.

“The industry mix which characterises the locality seems to provide a set of social and economic conditions which not only structures the range of opportunities in the local labour market, but also influences the workers experience of mobility training and work situation. These in turn provide a set of shared experiences which generate and sustain attitudes and values which are

distinctive of the locality. This we refer to as the local labour market culture.” (Ashton, McGuire & Spilsbury, 1990, p.193).

Research relating to and expanding this concept and its impact on careers is lacking. Social networks are clearly a key factor, influenced by shared experiences, information exchange and local values. Parker and Arthur (2000) state the need to examine a broader and more diverse group of careers and career settings, stating that career situations involve multiple career community attachments and exploration of career beyond company career communities is required. Parker and Arthur (2000) explore communities and ways of knowing; and describe regional communities, centred around a particular geographic region. In these communities informal exchange of information may occur through these regional networks, experimentation may be encouraged in order to advance local learning (Parker & Arthur 2000). Entrepreneurial activities are likely to be regionally focussed. Social networks and support are sustained by a regional network of relationships which produces loyalty to a larger group and a shared interest in regional reputation and success (Parker & Arthur 2000), and “individual identities are largely local but attach value to the collective prosperity of the host geographic region” (Parker & Arthur, 2000, p 106).

This study of older workers does not attempt to provide an in depth examination of the impact of locational influences on career development, but here I point to the scarcity of literature which is available to examine the interweaving of regional context, social capital and career.

A CRITIQUE OF BOUNDARYLESS CAREERS IN RELATION TO OLDER WORKERS

Hirsch and Shanley (1996) point out that the celebration of new freedoms may be premature, in that the implications of the boundaryless career for society and social structures is not yet clear. Changes in social structure, in the forms of flexible patterns of employment, have created a challenge for people who are trying to build what they view as successful lives and work histories (Baker & Aldrich, 1996). Of concern are the costs of transition for some groups, and in

particular older workers who “lose out in the stepped-up tournaments of the new organisational era ” (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p.219). These authors assert that career investments can be irreversible: while it may not be hard to change an employer early on, it can be difficult to go back and restart a career after ten or twenty years in one firm. Older workers with firm specific investments will find these “sunk” by the threat of restructuring, and their knowledge and skills no longer valued by their “home” firm, and not strongly valued by other firms (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p.224). These workers struggle in their efforts to re-orient themselves to the marketplace, and to find an alternative use of their firm specific knowledge and skills.

Changes in patterns of employment have greater effects on people who are in their mid or late career years (Baker & Aldrich, 1996). These authors argue that for many the boundaryless career has not come about by choice, and that despite the philosophical case that can be made for the freedoms of the boundaryless career, there is little evidence that Americans made a sudden ideological and cultural shift to placing a higher value on moving from job to job and from employer to employer. They see boundaryless career patterns as reflecting the results of people’s attempts to come to terms with changes in the opportunity structures that they face. Individuals have not become less stable – employers have become more flexible, and this poses major challenges to individual workers as it represents a change in the rules. These authors maintain that it is one thing for the rules to change at the beginning of a career, but quite another for them to change after people have followed the same unchanging rules for twenty or more years.

Watts (1997) argues that flexibility of itself is not necessarily unwelcome: if there were full employment a flexible environment allows people to move jobs easily and freely. However as the period of full employment appears to have disappeared, to the vulnerable flexibility is seen as a threat rather than an opportunity. Incomes become unpredictable, planning for the future very difficult for a generation caught between the support of elderly parents and children with high education costs. However the low skilled as a group are the chief concern: for those with low skills, flexibility is a “euphemism for naked exercise of labour

market power” (Watts, 1997 p.3); a group at risk of being exploited for low wages and discarded when no longer needed. This encourages a growing divide between work-rich families who may have multiple incomes, and no-work families surviving on “a mixture of welfare benefits, cash in hand payments for odd jobs and petty crime” (Watts, 1997, p.3).

Hirsch and Shanley (1996) share this view, arguing that the positive boundaryless careers literature focuses on the “winners’ circle” or “boundaryless elite” (p.229) - the sub group of professionals who will either gain, or stand to lose the least from boundaryless careers. They see below the elite group of highly skilled and well connected professionals the ‘harsher realities’ of employed but less highly skilled and more easily replaced workers for whom boundarylessness means job insecurity, and a growing population of unemployed, under-educated and/or between jobs population who are experiencing a declining market for their skills. Older workers will be found in each of these groups, but if they are in the lower levels they have less time and opportunities ahead to change or reskill. Older workers are therefore more exposed by lack of education, changed career orientation, and discrimination.

Mid-career workers could be characterised as those who still are expected to be upwardly mobile, to be able to master a job, and enjoy the satisfaction of gaining seniority (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). These people still believe that if they work hard and do a good job, then they will be able to build a career with a single, or limited number of employers. Nevertheless they have lost the benefits that accrued with seniority under the old career patterns, which are less available in the boundaryless era (Baker & Aldrich, 1996). Their research serves to warn us that “focusing on boundaryless careers in terms of opportunity, freedom, and the dynamism of entrepreneurs glosses over the serious and difficult career problems the new organisational era poses for long term career employees” (p. 224).

Career instability and older workers

The new climate of competitive uncertainty, and organisational instability, has produced increased individual career insecurity, especially for older workers. The change of contract between employer and employee produced new roles for organizations and individuals: organisations in the process of constant change can no longer provide job security and protection; they can only offer opportunities to learn new skills. Individuals are required to assume greater responsibility for their careers and must develop new skills and attitudes to maintain their employability and manage their careers - a challenging requirement for many in established roles.

Beyond the organization, the occupational careerist faced the same trends of the demise of job security, the challenge of technological change (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994), the disintegration of protective occupational structures, leading to the corresponding disappearance of predictable pathways. This new culture provided opportunities to those who have the skills and abilities to build lives characterised by high inter-employer mobility, a strong accumulation of competencies and identity (Baker & Aldrich, 1996) but these and other authors warn that not all career actors will manage a boundaryless career, and of special concern is the older worker.

The questions raised

The literature is clearly divided about the effects of changes on older career actors in the new careers environment.

- While the new workplace flexibility and autonomy may be seen as 'tailor made' for the older worker, offering new ways to think about time, work and freedom from a traditional career path, it may be that those who enjoy these freedoms are few in number and represent the highly skilled (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996).
- How these new ways are integrated into existing career paths, or whether these new concepts may conflict with older workers' sense of identity and changing aspirations as they age is uncertain.
- Whether a significant number of older workers have the new skills proposed as necessary for this environment is unknown.

What does not emerge in the current literature is an understanding of ways in which older workers are responding to the challenge of integrating the new and conflicting demands into their developmental paths.

Conclusion

The most important feature of the new economy relating to career management is that individuals have full responsibility for their own careers. Although this perspective is challenged, many writings of the 1990's describe these changes as a paradigm shift in careers, and in a positive light. Achievement based on individual choice and self-fulfillment is clearly stated as an ideal and desirable scenario for the career actors of today, and it demands a redefinition and broadening of ideas of career participation and success not previously found in organisational theory. For many career actors in the second half of their working life, the changes have been revolutionary and far-reaching, signalling greater opportunity or failure. They have required adjustment at all levels: in the larger environment, within working organizations, and in personal development and behaviours.

The literature relating to the career experiences of older workers will be examined further in Chapter 3. Next I consider the age /stage literature which provides the developmental setting for career theory, and consider its relevance in the new careers environment.

PART B – AGE-RELATED CHANGES IN WORK & CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Developmental theorists explain adult behaviour in terms of age and sequential stages of development. Career progress and success forms part of the theoretical framework. Both adult development theory and career development perspectives assert and explain predictable individual tasks at successive stages and throughout the life course (Erikson, 1957, 1968; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee, 1978; Gould, 1978; Super, 1957; Vaillant, 1977).

AGE/STAGE THEORIES

Much career development theory focuses on issues of adolescence and early career, with far less attention paid to late career actors. For many theorists, successful aging is represented by resolving crucial issues. Jung saw adulthood, and especially the forties, as a major period of potential psychological individuation, change and growth (Jung, 1966). Theorists also consistently apply a notion of stability and maintenance to mid life experience.

Erikson (1950) proposed a developmentally sequenced psychological theory, not based on chronological age, but on an eight-stage progression in ego development from birth to old age. All stages were characterised by issues that needed to be successfully resolved before the individual could move on to the next stage. People may move quickly through these stages, or become arrested at a particular stage and move no further forwards. The adult stages proposed by Erikson

identified issues of identity (who am I?); intimacy v isolation (can I be committed and close to others?); mid life issues of generativity v stagnation (can I nurture others?); and at later life stages, ego integrity v despair (am I satisfied with my life?). The stage of the mid and late life worker is concerned about generativity, and the establishment and nurturing of the next generation. If these needs are unmet, then the outcome is a sense of stagnation or interpersonal loss.

Vaillant (1977) saw the 35-55 year old period as one of rebirth, which was marked by reflection on all aspects of life. He described a further stage of career consolidation occurring between Erickson's intimacy and generativity stages, with a relationship between successful completion of basic stages and career success. Each stage represents a developmental crisis with potentially healthy or pathological outcomes. However Vaillant (1977) studied only the male life course.

Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) divided adult behaviour into six age-related sequential periods. These began with late adolescence until about age 22, described as the time of leaving the family; moving into the adult world in the early to late 20's; settling down, a period from the early thirties to early forties; becoming one's own person, age 35-39; making a midlife transition in the early 40's; and restabilizing and beginning middle adulthood, taking place in the middle and late forties.

Levinson's conception of male adult development is influential, and work and career occupy a major role in his theory. His first study documented 40 male subjects aged 35 – 45, in four occupational groups: executives, novelists, biologists and labourers. His subsequent study of female adult development (Levinson, 1996) involved a sample of 45 women, also made up of a range of occupations and classes. Levinson has been often criticised for the size of his sample of only 40 male subjects and the narrow representativeness of that sample.

Levinson describes the middle adulthood era as lasting from about 40-65, beginning with the midlife transition (40-45) and ending with the late adult transition. He sees the midlife transition as the time when people begin to re-evaluate their lives in terms of their early dreams. At this time, Levinson believes

people are motivated by a shift in time perspective, and begin looking at their lives in terms of years yet to live. The critical issue becomes the disparity between what one has really accomplished in life and what one really wants. The tasks of this period are to re-evaluate the previous life structure, redefine one's sense of self, become more individuated, initiate a new era and form a new and stable life structure. He sees midlife transition as a period of major reappraisal and disillusionment with respect to the sense of self in the world. A successful mid-life transition builds the structure for middle adulthood, which occurs between the years of 45 and 60.

Career concerns are seen as particularly salient during this period; men may have achieved their highest level of advancement and may be ready to reduce their investment in their careers. Levinson identifies the age 50 transition as another key opportunity to appraise and attempt to change the existing life structure.

FEMALE ADULT DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The examination and comparison of gender differences provides a continuing challenge to existing theory. In Levinson's model of male development, growth and identity are based on autonomy, task achievement and career success, resulting in 'becoming one's own man.' Theorists such as Bardwick (1980) and Gilligan (1982) offer a distinctly separate theory of female adult development. For women, interdependence and relationships form the basis of growth and identity, and the focus is attachment as opposed to detaching (Gilligan, 1980).

Gilligan (1982) described the development of women, identifying issues of love, attachment and interdependence as central issues overlooked by other theorists in previous predominantly male studies. Gilligan's view of the life course development of women emphasises the importance of relationships and attachments. She challenges Levinson's application of his theory to the development of women. Levinson's (1996) studies of women saw women

progressing through the same age related sequence of stable structure building and transitional periods as men where the timing and nature of the tasks are similar, but the nature of working through these tasks differed for women.

Gilligan (1982) proposes a three-stage model of female development. The first stage is self-oriented, involving care for the self, as a means of survival. The second stage involves a shift to caring for others, in the more traditional conception of a woman's role. Her third stage involves a reconciliation of these; a new recognition of one's powers, and a realization of the responsibility of others for their own destiny.

Bardwick (1980) describes the male's sense of self as egocentric, with an orientation of autonomy and concern for task achievement, and an internal focus on one's own work. The female sense of self she sees as interdependent, oriented towards relationships and defining oneself in terms of the other people in one's life. Bardwick identifies four stages of development, with distinct differences from male development emerging in later years. The phase which begins in the forties, of middle adulthood and the mid-life transition, Bardwick describes as very different for men and women; women, with security and settled relationships are seen as moving toward more autonomy while men are moving in the opposite direction - having achieved career goals they are becoming more sensitive to relationships and internal psychological needs. Gallos (1989) notes that Bardwick is attempting to describe a woman's life cycle based on her assessment of women's lives today, and in the absence of longitudinal data about life phases for women.

Pringle and Dixon (2001) offer a new model of women's careers that is more inclusive of multiple experiences. They describe four facets – Explore, Focus, Rebalance and Revive - and these are not linked with age but with dominant life activities (Pringle & Dixon, 2001). While this model is not fully developed, what is most interesting is the introduction of reassessment stages after each phase, suggesting a realistic process of what now, rethinking and new decision-making – a process whereby the career actor makes choices and decisions depending on life events and changing circumstances. This highlights the reality and influence of change and reduces the elements of predictability that are now less convincing in

age/stage theory. The facet most linked to older workers is that of Revive, and this is the stage in which freedom from family or children's demands may give rise to increased energy and desire for new experiences.

Career development theory is based largely on research on males, and theories of men's careers do not fit women's lives or illustrate their developmental concerns (Gallos, 1989). Gallos (1989) highlights the years of the 40's and 50's as a time of accomplishment and freedom for women, who are less confined than in previous life stages. Middle adulthood is seen as a time of increasing assertiveness and accomplishment for women in their careers (Gallos, 1989), and a study of tertiary educated women aged 45 – 55 (Park, Pringle & Tangri, 1995) report women developing an increasing sense of self, influence, productivity and effectiveness with age. Families have been integral and absorbing aspect around which careers are arranged and designed, and the years of the 40's and 50's may bring increased freedom from family constraints for many women. Baruch, Barnett and Rivers (1983) studied 300 women at mid life and found that they considered the combination of mastery and pleasure essential for leading a satisfying life. While mastery related to accomplishment, implicit in the concept of pleasure was the quality of relationships they had with others.

Lack of generalizability of male to female models

The models proposed by Levinson and Super have received much attention as models that can predict individual career attitudes at different phases of development. Ornstein and Isabella (1990) note that while these models are postulated to hold for women as well as men, almost none of the empirical investigations identified women as a focus of study. Their study of 422 managers sought to redress the lack of empirical validation for women of Levinson's life stage model and Super's career development model. The results of the study found moderate support for Levinson's stages, but did not demonstrate the distinctive patterns of differences across age groups as predicted by Levinson. Women's experiences were however more closely aligned to how old they were

than with where they were in their career. The study found no support for Super's stages.

In discussion of the reasons for this, the authors propose that it is conceivable the career stages identified by Super (1957) simply do not apply to women, and that the specific issues and concerns within the stages of exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline might not be representative of the psychological experiences of women in their career development. Super's (1957) model of career development was constructed for men whose careers were fundamentally continuous, and there were traditionally few interruptions to this pattern for men over their career lifetime. This has not been the case for women (Ornstein & Isabella, 1990).

Another explanation may be that male/female differences may arise from organisational factors which have a stronger influence on employees than career stage, and the writers note contextual factors, such as organisational culture or climate may account for more variance than simply career stage (Ornstein & Isabella, 1990).

Other authors (Gilligan, 1982; Bardwick, 1986) been highly critical of Levinson's claim of universality for the age based periods and transitions, and the generalizability of his male based concept of development to female adult development. However we have no longitudinal data about women's lives, comparable to the work of Valliant, whose work took 20 years. Gallos (1989) warns against theorising about women's development to determine with certainty the causality for observed gender differences or to present findings as conclusive descriptions of women's process. In considering the question of whether the major theories are inclusive enough to provide useful concepts for studying men's and women's careers, she argues that there is a need for a separate theory of women's career development which acknowledges the different set of opportunities and problems which women face.

THE NOTION OF MAINTENANCE

Career development theory reflects the time in which it was created. Early vocational theory represented a world where career was synonymous with single occupations and sought to explain vocational fit and the relationship between job characteristics and individual traits. Parsons' (1909) model of vocational guidance was prescriptive, matching individuals with jobs. Super (1957), a life long practitioner of trait and factor theory, utilised traditional age stage explanations to construct and expand career development theory. To the traditional individual differences view of occupations, he added a developmental perspective on careers; attending to how individuals construct and negotiate their work lives and deal with the specific tasks and challenges with which they are faced at difficult periods of their lives.

Super's (1957) life stage conceptualisation of careers described 5 stages of careers: an early stage of growth, from birth to age 15; an exploration stage lasting from age 15 to 25, the establishment stage lasting from age 25-45. The stage from 45 – 60 is seen as one of maintenance, followed by a decline or disengagement stage lasting from around age 60 to 65, or retirement. These discrete stages were characterised by different themes, and in the maintenance stage, with which this study is largely concerned, Super saw the career actor's primary concern was to maintain the place already created in the world of work, and to have opportunities to demonstrate experience and seniority through contribution and mentoring. This concept presumes a stable world, in which one's contribution built on long years of experience was still viable and still valued; and opportunities were available in some kind of hierarchical structures to demonstrate this experience. Although in his later theory Super (1984) added a new concept of recycling through the stages developed amidst the changes in the post-industrial era, his notion of maintenance remains the primary concept of the working years of ages 45 – 60.

Career renewal – a new stage?

A case has been made that a sixth stage of career development - career renewal- occurs between the end of the establishment stage and the beginning of the maintenance stage (Murphy & Burck, 1976; Riverin-Simard 1988; Williams & Savickas, 1990; Beijan & Salomone, 1995). Midlife renewal is seen as a transitional stage requiring career actors to make new decisions, and plot action to implement these decisions, and the stage occurs when a person experiences a trigger to change in mid-career (Hall, 1990). The tasks performed during this stage are to reappraise career commitment and choice, to integrate the polarities in one's personality, and to modify the life structure (Levinson, 1980; Williams & Savickas, 1990).

Beijan and Salomone (1995) suggest that this stage was overlooked by Super, as in the time of his research changing one's career after the age of 30 was a relatively infrequent occurrence, and Super's lengthy maintenance stage may be a description of career constancy within the standard corporate and occupational structure of the time, rather than a singular stage of adult development.

However, exploration in early career years, advancement in middle years and maintenance in later years represents the characteristic idea in career theory developed in the time of stable, hierarchical employment structures (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999).

Transition theory

Transition theory challenges the concept of maintenance at mid life, and reminds us that the nature and extent of midlife career changes are complex. Traditional theory commonly assumed that by age 35 individuals were settled in their careers and no longer trying out various possibilities. Yet for some time career actors have been involved in a variety of career changes well into upper middle age. Career change at mid-life takes a variety of forms, voluntary and involuntary terminations, inter-organisational or life changing shifts (Nicholson & West,

1989), and renewal (Riverin-Simard 1988; Williams & Savickas 1990; Beijan & Salomone, 1995). In whatever form, they offer a challenging life event to the career actor.

In the study of career theory, Nicholson and West (1989) emphasize that it is essential to understand the punctuation of careers, the pauses and turning points that shape their course. In understanding the widespread differences in the continuities and discontinuities of careers, the management of careers in organisations and occupational processes are major explanatory factors. A transitions perspective to careers provides a means of tracking how the stratification of society and the design of organisations impose constraints on individual choice (Nicholson & West, 1989). However in this theory the focus is clearly on organizational paths, which raises questions about the transferability of these ideas beyond the organizational context.

Nicholson and West (1989) have concluded from their research that there are important gender differences in orientations to transitions that result in different work history norms for men and women. Women in managerial occupations appear to be better adapted to the increasing uncertainty of labour markets and opportunity structures because of their more value driven orientation towards career development, in contrast to the more characteristically rationalist goal directed orientation of male managers (Nicholson & West, 1989). A consequence of this is that men make their most radical transitions early in their careers, in contrast to women who maintain a high rate of transitions throughout their careers (Nicholson & West, 1989).

Lowenthal and Pierce (1975) also highlighted the different ways in which men and women handle transitions. They found that women generally have less positive self-images than men, feel less in control of their lives, and are less likely to plan for transitions; but at the same time their affective lives are richer and more complex, and they have a greater tolerance for ambiguity. Men's life styles may become less complex as they get older and they shed roles and activities, but the complexity of women's roles increases with age as they may play many roles and engage in many activities in the later transitional stages (Lowenthal & Pierce, 1975).

Challenges to the idea of predictability of adult development processes

Kammen (1979) says age and stage theories are popular because we want “predictability” and we desperately want definitions of “normality” (p.16). Much of the developmental theory suggests a stable world or at least a predictable set of events or responses at given periods of the life course. However, just as the work environment of the last decade has challenged notions of career stability and predictability, and demanded new definitions of career development, concepts of normality and predictability in adult development have also been challenged.

Neugarten, Moore and Lowe (1965) noted that prescriptions for and predictability of age appropriate behaviour were lessening; that young people were delaying their economic independence and that patterns for women had changed radically. During the 1970’s the continuity of personal development (Gould, 1978) and the event of the mid-life crisis, often signalling dramatic personal and vocational changes, gained recognition (Sheehy, 1974; Levinson et al, 1978).

Sheehy (1974) first described passages, predictable ‘crises’ or turning points, which usher in new stages of the life course. She now describes a revolution in the life cycle, a fundamental alteration of the whole shape of the life cycle which has taken place in the space of one generation (Sheehy, 1996). This change is generated by increased health, science and medical progress, and projected longevity, at least in the developed world, and Sheehy describes a ten year shift in life stages, and a five to ten year shift in projected longevity. A study of both U.S. and U.K. population surveys and data has convinced Sheehy that age norms for major life events have now become elastic – adolescence may reach until 30 years of age, marriage and family extend into the fifties, and middle age extends from the mid 40’s into the 70’s (Sheehy, 1996).

Sheehy now believes that new timetables are required for the adult life cycle, and proposes three adult stages to be anticipated and planned for. She sees Provisional Adulthood, from 18-30 years, First Adulthood extending from 30 to 45 years, and Second Adulthood beginning at 45 years and lasting until 85 and over. Sheehy believes that although the phenomenon is studied and researched, people’s perceptions have not yet caught up with the notion that the middle years

do not indicate a descent of some kind. In her view the major revolution is happening in the second half of life, which now demands new careers and life decisions; however all ages and stages are affected. Developmental tasks are postponed, ignored or pile up (Sheehy, 1996) with many tasks often accumulating in the same stage, changing the shape and sequence of the standard life cycle. People are increasingly able and willing to customise their life cycles, discarding predictable norms and patterns. Sheehy (1996) surveyed over 1800 research subjects, however she notes that none of her research or the major longitudinal studies cited in her book include people still struggling for survival, and she includes in this category those at poverty level. Her work therefore needs to be seen as representing a limited population.

Hall (1996, 2002) supports the concept of less predictable norms, and proposes that the careers of the 21st century are not now measured by chronological age and life stages but by continuous learning and identity changes. Because the lifecycle of technologies and products is now so shortened (Handy, 1979) so too are personal mastery cycles. As a result people's careers will become a succession of short cycle learning stages of exploration-trial-mastery-exit, as they move in and out of various organizations, product areas, technologies, functions, and work environments (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Hall (1996, 2002) suggests careers will be made up of short learning stages, not a lifelong series of developmental stages, and what will count will be career age - where the career actor is in a given specialty – and not their chronological age.

ORGANISATIONAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Developmental theory suggests internal biological and psychological needs are the major influences of developmental process, however many midlife and older adults encounter powerful situational constraints and various researchers have examined how individual internal development processes are affected by family, work, race and organisational structural constraints.

Kanter (1977) believes that opportunity structures such as organisational structures and work systems affect people's behaviours at work, and it is this cultural environment, rather than intrapsychic issues that affect, predict and determine human behaviour at work. Rosenbaum (1979) studied midlife crises, and believes they can be predicted from examining the impact of organisational structure rather than examining the aging process. His research showed that chances of promotion in organisations increased until the age of 40, and then declined abruptly. He suggests that midlife crises are predictable from the decline in organisational chances, and that this is a factor often overlooked in the popular view of the psychological affects of aging. This view however focuses on the minority of people who work in large hierarchical organisations, and ignores societal issues, other structures and cultures.

These views raise interesting issues in the current employment environment, where organisationally and occupationally driven careers have given way to individually driven careers in a world of flatter and increasingly cellular organisations. The developmental impact of these changes has yet to be fully measured.

The minority experience

Minority adult development and career development processes are lacking from the body of the literature. None of the theories of life and career development take into account the influence of race and culture on the developmental process (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). The research available for review in the English language is largely American, conducted with African Americans, and can serve only to provide a basis on which to consider and speculate on the adult and career development processes of our local minority populations. In New Zealand Durie (1998) makes the point that age and work contributions may have entirely different meanings within the Maori community, and increasing age means increasing responsibility to become leaders and mediators of tribal groups, and teachers of the culture. Increased age brings greater expectations of community responsibility, which outweigh ideas of individual career development.

It seems that in some cases a small and quite unrepresentative body of research has provided the normative concepts and ideas about adult and career development theory. It has already been noted that the evidential bases of much of this research is small samples, a lack of broad based samples and an absence of longitudinal data in the case of women, and that much of the small amount of research on careers and race has been conducted with managerial populations (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

THE CONTRAST OF MAINTENANCE WITH THE NEW EXPECTATIONS

Traditional theories of stages in career and adult development have generally seen the years in midlife and beyond as a period of mastery, followed by a gradual disengagement (Levinson et al, 1978, Super, 1984). Mastery suggests having achieved enough to have occupational success and control over future choices, reaching a stage where one is 'on top of things'. The tasks of the maintenance era as described by these theorists suggest a sense of orderliness and control. In Levinson's model tasks of re-evaluation, redefining one's sense of self, becoming more individuated, initiating a new era and forming a new and stable life structure suggest working with the self; tasks of holding on, securing what one has and avoiding stagnation, innovating, and updating, (Super, 1988, cited in Williams & Savickas, 1990) suggest more of a responsive consolidation within the security of full employment and stable opportunity structures. Although these tasks are clearly defined as challenges they have a sense of occurring in a reasonable orderly and stable environment and of being achievable without a major increase in skills.

The new expectations are for behaviours which not only address changes in personal life structures and aspirations, but which can also adapt (again and again) to continuous or dramatic external change. Proactive self-management, adaptability, flexibility, mobility and ongoing learning are suggested as required as essential skills for this new environment.

Much of the developmental research in both adult development and career development theory has been very influential, and has clearly proved highly useful as a basis on which to measure and predict behaviours of a particular era. However, the major longitudinal studies of age and career stage during the last fifty years focussed on the traditional work force (London & Greller, 1991), some of these researchers did not study workers over 50 years of age (Riverin-Simaud, 2000) and the theory emerging from these studies demands revision. Age bound stereotypes are now increasingly irrelevant (Inkson, Pringle & Arthur, 1998), and these early models of adult and career development did not take into account the larger context in which careers are now played out, within a changing environment which has had tremendous influence on the nature of career patterns.

Riverin-Simaud (2000) believes we can state that adults in the second half of working life may experience numerous new beginnings and career transitions and their career development is in constant change. Existing models cannot define the careers of older workers today (Solomone, 1996), they are only partially adaptable to the realities of the 21st century. The socio-economic context demands that workers continue to face renewal in the second half of working life (Riverin-Simaud, 2000) and the process calls for development that is “intense, turbulent, full of new beginnings, and redefinitions of projects” (p.116).

Conclusion - today's experience

The experience of the career actor of today appears more likely to be a unique and highly personalised experience than a representation of predictable generalised patterns. If people are now able to customise their life cycles, they may also be recycling major stages many times in their career experiences to accommodate changing personal circumstances (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999). Job transitions, redundancies, project or product cycles impact on the career development of the career actor with no respect for age and stage and force a reiteration of experience. The increasing participation of women involves career cycles more intricately bound up with home and family, and work family issues impact on the careers of both men and women. As the rapid change of the

employment environment continues, and familiar patterns are disrupted and fragmented, it becomes increasingly more difficult to predict shape or sequence in careers. Expectations of career actors however are unlikely to change overnight, and many of today's older workers may have expected and predicted a different course to that they are experiencing.

This chapter has explored the issues of career theory and considered the developmental theory relating to older workers. I move on to explore the literature regarding the experiences of older workers in the current environment.

CHAPTER THREE

OLDER WORKERS EXPERIENCING CAREERS

In this chapter, I review the literature related to the experiences of older workers in the current environment. The literature reveals issues of participation, discrimination, and responses to restructuring experiences; it describes and predicts the effects of changes in work patterns on the older worker. Key areas of concern and debate are examined and the current challenges to the older worker are highlighted.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS & ISSUES

New Zealand shares the demographic trends experienced by the western world in the wake of the baby boom of the mid 1940's to 1960's. While the total population is growing, the proportion of older people in the population is growing, and the proportion of younger people is declining. The pattern is reflected in the workforces of many nations, with progressively fewer people under 24, and more over 45. People over 45 years will make up a significant proportion of the working age population: in U.S. 30% by 2005 and 40% by 2020; and similar proportions in the United Kingdom, in Australia and in New Zealand (Stern & Miklos, 1995; Patrickson, 1998). All western economies have an aging population and older workers in many economies face similar challenges to employment, economic and demographic change. A number of issues are emerging internationally: questions concerning the productivity, trainability and employability of older workers, issues of early exits and abrupt retirement from the workforce, the decrease in male labour force participation and the effects of new forms of employment on this group (OECD, 1998; Taylor, 2002). A significant labour shortage is predicted in some countries (McEvoy & Blahna, 1999), however there is debate over whether there will be work to do: an

alternative view is that large scale later life joblessness is here to stay and economic growth will not deliver work for all (Thomson, 1999).

Workforce participation

Workforce participation rates of older men have fallen in the U.K., Sweden, Netherlands, Italy, France, Australia (Taylor, 2002) and in the U.S. a trend towards early retirement has been significant throughout last two decades (OECD, 1995; Stern & Miklos, 1995). Trends for women are less consistent with some economies showing increasing participation of older female workers. There has been a diversification of forms of employment since the 1980's with an increase in part-time work and self-employment. (OECD, 1995). The workplace is increasingly diverse in gender, race, and ethnicity, with new work force entrants including growing numbers of women, non-white populations and immigrants (Department of Labour, 2001). Growing female participation is attributed to rising female educational attainment, falling fertility, and ongoing social trends promoting women in the workplace (Department of Labour, 2001).

The decline in workforce participation among those over 45 has resulted from a range of economic, political and social factors. Older men have been over-represented in industries which are declining, and have been affected by the reduced demand for unskilled workers (Taylor, 2002). They are under represented in growth industries, targeted for early retirement in recession times and encouraged to retire where prosperity and pensions allow (Taylor, 2002). While some economies show a marked increase in unemployment rates for both men and women (Finland, Germany) in the mid 1990's; there is evidence in other regions that the decline in labour force participation among older workers has reversed, Taylor (2002) notes that older men and women in Australia, Finland and the Netherlands experienced sharp increases in employment rates between 1995 and 2000, and there were increases, although less dramatic, in the U.K. and the USA (Taylor, 2002).

In the New Zealand labour force the number of people over the age of 45 years increased by 30% between 1986 and 1996 (Statistics NZ, 1999). At the same time people in this age group who are wanting to work found it more difficult to get paid employment: Statistics New Zealand surveys indicate that the number unemployed 45 years and over increased from 7600 in 1988 to 21,000 in 1997, representing an 80% increase (Sparrow, 1999). In the two years from September 1999 to 2001, the participation rates of 45-60 year olds showed a slight increase, but less than that of the groups around them, e.g. 40-45 year olds and 60 years and over (Conway & McLoughlin, 2002).

In the same period unemployment rates for this group fell, but again less than other age-groups around them. The authors point out that rural regions, such as Hawke's Bay, tend to have fared better recently because the strong external sectors has led to strong employment growth in those regions.

Thomson's (1999) demographic research suggested that if the trends of the last 20 years continue, within the next ten years, a third of men and even more women will be without substantial paid work from their later 40's onwards, and more than half by their mid fifties. Thomson's (1999) view asks us to focus on a dramatic structural change. He suggests we are already deeply in the change transition to the disappearance of work after about age 45, for large fractions of both men and women: "the overall pattern, combining male and female, is a long term declining level of employment past about age 45" (p. 155).

Very rapid demographic growth has taken place in the group aged 50-64, which Thomson defines as older workers. In 1996, there were 350,000 in the paid workforce; by 2011 there will be 560,000 of this age group in the workforce. Thomson (1999) warns of an international trend shared by New Zealand of long-term decline in male employment, and paid work after about the age of 45 vanishing fast. Male employment took a much greater downturn in the recession than female employment, and had not recovered to pre-1989 levels. Labour market statistics which represent those registered unemployed and looking for work show a decrease in male labour force participation from 78.5% in 1987 to 73.5% in 1999. Thomson (1999) states that within ten years a third of all NZ men by their later 40's will be retired, and half of them by their mid 50's. However

predictions of retirement are difficult as they are directly affected by a lack of data: there is an increasing involvement in NZ in non-standard work, statistics from casual work, temporary work and multiple job holders are not recorded (Spoonley & Davidson, 2004), and we now know that older workers are increasingly participating in these areas of work (Baines, Newell & Taylor, 2004; Spoonley & Davidson, 2004). This same trend has produced increased “blurred exits” (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece & Patterson, 1997 p.220) and it seems that we now need new measurements of participation, new definitions of retirement, and more information about what it now means to the individual worker to make useful statements about these trends.

The New Zealand government policy discussion document, *Workforce 2010* (Department of Labour, 2001), adopted a more conservative view of this trend, noting that while male participation is declining, the rate of decline may be slowing. Their view was that participation rates may increase as the population ages and there is a growing labour scarcity. One contributing factor will be the impact of the decision to remove the compulsory age of retirement. This view appears to be borne out by the improvement of participation of the 60 and above age group seen in recent figures (Conway & McLoughlin, 2002). *Workforce 2010* (Department of Labour, 2001) also pointed out that as people live longer they may choose to exit the work force more slowly over a longer period of time, rather than stopping at a set age. The responses of governments have been varied, and generally governments are keen to increase the supply of older workers, and reduce the dependence of older workers on the state. There is therefore a trend to policy of removing the incentives for early retirement, increasing the age of access to state pensions, and introducing incentives to stay in the workforce.

From the vantage point of 2004 it seems the views of Thomson (1999) may have been overly alarmist, for though negative trends appear in the statistical data, improvements in participation are evident. In 2004 the picture of the workforce has changed and skilled workers, including older workers, are in high demand (Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004). A characteristic of the new job market (Department of Labour, 2004) is that new jobs have been increasingly taken up by older people; and employment of people aged 50-59 grew 76% from 1991 until 2003

(Department of Labour, 2004). Furthermore, as changing social and economic factors impact on ageing and work, automatic transitioning out of the workforce at a particular age is being questioned, and the whole concept of retirement is becoming more problematic (de Bruin & Firkin, 2003).

Restructuring and downsizing

Older workers clearly suffered in the past decades of delayering and restructuring; they are singled out in downsizing and are most at risk (Hall & Mirvis, 1994). In the U.S. older workers were laid off at 5 times the rate of their younger colleagues (Carnevale & Stone, 1994) and the years from 1988-1993 saw sharply increasing numbers of older people unemployed and seeking work; or classifying themselves as wholly or partly retired from the full time work force (Carnevale & Stone, 1994). More older workers lost their jobs through corporate retrenchment for two reasons: they were in industries that lost labour e.g. heavier industries, and the favoured downsizing methods of the time targeted the kinds of jobs and positions held by more mature workers (Hall, 1996). Older workers also tended to be more senior in company hierarchies, more highly paid and more attractive to companies to redeploy (Baker & Aldrich, 1996). Australian research (Patrickson, 1998) parallels the New Zealand experience, in that older people were especially vulnerable to the downsizing efforts when significant numbers of middle management positions were lost, many of those filled with mid or late career workers.

Job loss and unemployment

For many older people unplanned retirement through job loss becomes an extended period of unemployment (London, 1996). Job loss may produce powerful negative effects on psychological and physical health; these transitions are often times of stress, discouragement and self-doubt, and people experience

fear, anxiety, anger and hostility emotions that can be very powerful (London, 1996).

Job loss is a serious concern for older workers - older workers who lose their jobs take longer to find new jobs after they become unemployed (Harty, Harty & Hayes, 1996), and they seem to suffer more emotional distress than do younger people in the same situation (Krystal, Moran-Sackett, Thompson & Cantoni, 1983). Many also feel that their loyalty has been devalued (Harty et al, 1996). Personal distress after job loss increases the obstacles to successful re-employment (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Discouraged attitudes can lead to older workers leaving the labour force and to lowered career expectations (Leavitt, 1996), making them particularly susceptible to anxiety and depression (Wooten, Sulzer & Cornwall, 1994).

Occupations are a source of identity for people of all ages; loss of employment may trigger loss of identity and of sense of belonging, and contribute to personal stress. When a person's work identity is developed after a long-term attachment to an organisation, suddenly being required to be self-managing and totally responsible for oneself may be terrifying (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). When identity and success has been based on a certain set of job skills, and find that these skills are no longer valued, and new skills must be developed is a major blow to self-esteem and confidence, and threatening to the core identity of the career actor (Hall, 1986). Loss of full-time work and the collegiality of an organization, followed by job seeking or forced moves to casual or contract status with no security looks like a betrayal of commitment and loyalty. "For an older worker, who already feels undervalued and vulnerable, and especially one who is unemployed and thus lacking an organisational support system, this can lead to a cycle of despair which is difficult to escape" (Hall & Mirvis, 1995, p. 275).

McGregor and Grey (2001) outline the responses of New Zealand mature job seekers to being unemployed. McGregor and Grey (2001) describe a trajectory of emotion – a sliding scale of despair about unemployment - which reveals the powerful and perceptual loss of psychological well being experienced by older people seeking work. Respondents expressed a mixture of hope and sadness with degrees of adjustment and commitment and levels of disengagement from work

search and social interaction. The responses display a clear picture that this is a highly emotional stressful time in people's lives and there are differing levels of psychological adjustment and psychological ill health revealed. Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, lowered self esteem and depression were particularly associated with long term unemployed men (McGregor & Grey, 2001).

Psychological adjustment to unemployment appears to be strongly related to financial distress as retirement income is affected as well as present income. Varying definitions of older workers makes research findings less clear, but it is clear that job loss among middle aged and older workers can cause severe stress (London, 1996).

A British study (Beatty & Fothergill, 1999) examined the older male unemployed and paints a bleak picture. These researchers found out that the most accurate characterisation of 50-64 year old males without jobs is that of the manual worker, made compulsorily redundant with physical limitations on the work he can now do and who now finds himself now heavily reliant on the benefits system. Most of these men would still like a full time job but had given up on the chance of getting one (Beatty & Fothergill, 1999).

In contrast, two men out of five fitted the middle class pattern. These men had retired voluntarily, with occupational pensions. A high proportion still worked part-time as freelancers, and they had for the most part paid their mortgages. Most no longer wanted a full time job, and of this group few depended at all on the benefits system (Beatty & Fothergill, 1999). This research highlights the disparate prospects of aging manual workers with redundant skills, compounded by residual workplace injuries; and those who have the educational and skill attainments to continue to participate in the knowledge economy. This is supported by research of Treasury NZ (2001) acknowledging that older unskilled men in particular represent a very disadvantaged employment group in NZ.

Skill obsolescence

The occupational composition of employment is changing, demanding higher levels of skills and education. New Zealand has seen a drop of 9% in “blue collar” occupations, involving trades and manufacturing work, over the last 15 years, and a rise of 6% in “upper white collar” occupations – work involving highly skilled professionals (Department of Labour, 2001).

Skill demands are higher, however educational qualifications are found less in the groups over 45 years: the proportion of people with degrees and postgraduate qualifications decreases with age, and the proportion of people with no qualification increases with age. If ongoing requirement for a higher level of skills continues, there is increasing risk of job loss for people in the workforce with fewer skills, and there appears to be a major risk that the ‘lower end’ of the existing workforce cannot be upskilled (Department of Labour, 2001).

There is significant overseas literature that suggests that certain groups are more likely than others to be left behind by the information revolution. Older people are included in the groups most likely to be disadvantaged in terms of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) access and skills in NZ (Department of Labour, 2001). Levels of internet access and skills tend to be lower for those aged 50 and over than for younger age groups, and there is a perception that older people are less au fait with the technology, if not actively hostile towards it. A recent MSD standard of living survey found that a third (36.5%) of the 50-64 age group neither had internet access nor wanted it. This situation lessens the likelihood of this group developing the information and communication skills now associated with technology: a high level of literacy, including the ability to find, interpret and use information.

GROWTH IN NON-STANDARD WORK PATTERNS

Older workers now have more involvement in self-employment, temporary, casual and part-time work. Recent European research (Lissenburgh & Smeaton,

2003) examined the characteristics of those leaving permanent jobs, and the factors associated with moving to temporary, part-time or self-employment. Leaving permanent full time employment appeared to be a positive choice for some, with strong economic factors involved in this decision – the factors important for this group were accumulated benefits, and mortgage free houses. Others left for less positive reasons, e.g. health problems - especially if they were low paid men (Lissenburgh & Smeaton, 2003). Women were also more likely to leave their jobs if they had health problems, or they owned their home outright. A New Zealand study (O'Donohue, 2000) investigated the extent to which flexible work options had been implemented or were being considered for older workers in Christchurch. However employers saw barriers to the use of flexible work options, among them difficulties with supervising flexible work schedules, and recruiting other part-time staff to make up shortfalls in hours.

Self-employment

Self-employment is a significant form of work for older people (de Bruin & Firkin, 2001). There has been a growth in self-employment over all in the NZ workforce, from 10% in 1987 to around 13% by 2000 (Statistics, NZ, 2001). Self-employment is more common amongst older workers, and the ageing of the population is likely to see this trend increase. Male self-employment over the same period increased from 12% to 15%, and female self-employment from 7% in 1987 to 8.5% in 1999. By 2001 male self-employment represented 25% of the fulltime workforce, and female self-employment 14% of the full time work force.

Participation in self-employment is rising by age (Blanchflower 1998, Leung & Robinson 1998, cited in de Bruin & Firkin, 2001) and a recent analysis of data from OECD countries by Blanchflower et al. (2001, cited in de Bruin & Firkin, 2001) confirms the probability of self-employment increasing with age. While the rising population of the older group is likely to increase the number of people from that group in any activity, it is clear that a growing proportion of people are choosing to work this way. Haines (1991) and Bururu (1998) confirm that the trend increases in the early forties, but also at over 65 years.

That self-employment increases with age must relate to the expanding opportunities of the worker over time and the accrual of resources during that time (de Bruin & Firkin, 2001). Human and social capital factors such as skills, knowledge, expertise, experience and contacts make up these resources. There is also a range of ways in which self-employment is practiced, including independent contractors, franchise holders, and dependent contractors, and small business owners as well as operators of large scale businesses which employ many workers (Haines, 1991). Self-employment can cover a wide range of possibilities, however some evidence suggests that the majority of new businesses are sole traders or employ very few people (Stanworth & Stanworth, 2001).

Push and pull factors

The predominant issue explored in this literature is whether people are pushed to self-employment because of changes in organisational structures and economic activity, or pulled because they have an inclination towards this way of working, and are attracted to the benefits of it. Causal factors however might include a mix of 'push' and 'pull' factors.

The notion of push and pull factors was introduced in Hakim's (1988) study – a quantitative study with fewer than five self-employed participants. Push factors were identified as unemployment, redundancy and job insecurity; pull factors were those with an intrinsic attraction to the person such as autonomy, independence and control. Her data maintained the "pull factors clearly outweigh the push factors" (Hakim, 1988, p.290) and this is supported by New Zealand research (Bururu, 1998) which suggests that it is 'pull' factors which have the greatest influence. It is because workers are attracted to the opportunities of self-employment, rather than 'push' factors such as a lack of security in employment, and restructuring effects, which has contributed to this growth of self-employment. In my view, an "*either....or*" perspective on this is questionable, it may well be push *and* pull that operate in a climate of uncertainty such as the 90's decade, for there is no doubt that self employment increased during that period. The fundamental restructuring of the NZ economy over recent years has had

significant implications for the structure of the labour force (Davidson, 1995), and the impact of those changes -restructurings, labour market deregulation, responses to economic recessions, and the influence of technological changes have been cited as drivers behind the growth in self employment (Haines, 1991; Bururu, 1998).

Drivers to self-employment

Broad contextual factors which act as drivers are described above, however individually specific factors also drive, encourage or attract people into self-employment. Such a shift may be prompted by people gathering the necessary career capital or resources and being exposed to more opportunities (Evans & Leighton, 1989) or it may be that it becomes easier with age to break into entrepreneurship (Blanchflower et al, 2001; cited in de Bruin & Firkin, 2001). Not all, of course, are entrepreneurs. Some are clearly so, and some may well be in what Schein (1994, cited in Mallon, 1998) calls defensive self-employment, establishing their own means of income as a response to declining employment opportunities.

Fuchs (1982) identifies a group as 'switching' to self-employment later in life, as opposed to the group of self-employed who age with their businesses. He found in a study of older white urban males that the type of work people did was an influencing factor. Those switching late in life were in wage and salary jobs that are similar in many respects to self-employment, for example managers, salespersons and professionals. This is the group whose members have the opportunity to start out as dependent or independent contractors, identified in one NZ study (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) as starting out by leveraging occupational career capital as a newly independent industry player.

Improvements in health status allow older people to be engaged longer in a wide range of activities. Kean, Van Zandt & Maupin (1993) explored the relationship between aging and entrepreneurship. They studied the cases of five older women who started businesses late in life: influencing factors for this group included a

desire to be in control of their personal decision making; the capacity to influence their environment and to personally affect their economic and physical well being. Kean et al's (1993) study concluded that the choice of self-employment later in life "allowed people to use highly developed skills refined over a lifetime" (p.39).

de Bruin and Firkin's (2001) Labour Market study of Hawke's Bay identified a range of motivating factors: the desire to build on accumulated resources, the desire for challenge, and getting out of the comfort zone, the need to reduce physical work and the opportunity to gain freedom over working hours. Some just wanted to try a completely different kind of work, or to capture the higher levels of life and job satisfaction that self-employment can bring (Blanchflower, 1998; cited in de Bruin & Firkin, 2001). These authors also noted that drivers for some might serve as inhibitors for others.

Other advantages are outlined by Lissenburgh and Smeaton (2003) who found in their European study that self-employment offered older workers the job quality most comparable to that enjoyed by permanent full time employees: self employed people reported high levels of job satisfaction, relatively stable work, and enjoyment of control over how they spent their time. Self-employment in later life may offer ways to facilitate a gradual exit from paid work and may provide older workers with more flexible working hours (Fuchs 1982; Quin & Kozy, 1996).

Part-time and temporary employment

New Zealand Labour Market statistics show a marked drop in full-time employment by males and females after the age of 50, with the drop beginning for both at 45 years, with an increase in part-time employment. A much smaller number of men than women are in part-time employment. In New Zealand, part-time employment growth over all age groups has been more rapid than full time growth, a continuation of the trend evident throughout the 1990's. From 1999-2002 part-time employment increased by 6 % and full time employment by 3.8% (Conway & McLoughlin, 2002).

Part-time employment is usually associated with low pay, less training and less tenure (Thomson, 1999); these are work situations which may be less secure, less certain, and lower paying. Where workers are able to exit with an occupational pension, then they are doing so. Men are exiting the workforce earlier and earlier, and in two clear groups: the highly skilled and highly paid, and the low skilled and low paid (Thomson, 1999).

Bridge employment

There is increasing interest in the idea of partial or staged retirement (Quin & Cozy, 1996; Moody, 2000). Bridging is described as a form of partial retirement in which the older worker alternates periods of disengagement with periods of temporary, part-time or self employed work. Bridging is proposed as allowing older workers to 'practice' retirement, to fill labour shortages, or try a variety of occupational positions after an initial period of retirement. It involves a tendency for increasing 'blurred' rather than 'crisp' exits from the workforce (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece & Patterson, 1997 p.220). It is usually portrayed as a chosen, predominantly positive approach to casual or temporary work situations, with the ability to obtain bridge employment in the same occupation or industry as the previous job having an effect on retirement decisions. A U.S. working life survey of 36,000 workers aged 50 plus who had returned to the workforce after retirement cited reasons for returning as financial need, liking to work, feeling successful, enjoying the excitement of the workforce, making a contribution and fulfilling a social need (Bird, 1994). Some older workers want to remain in the workforce because they are healthier, cognitively able and want to remain engaged (Stein, 2000). McEvoy & Blahna's (1999) study of worker satisfaction supports the notion that many near-retirement workers would find part-time or flexibly scheduled work a possible attraction. Phased retirement programs are currently practised in Norway and Sweden (Barth & McNaught, 1991).

London (1990) has called for bridge jobs to ease the way into retirement. Lissenburgh and Smeaton (2003) point out that bridge jobs and flexible employment are an effective means of maintaining in the workforce those older

workers who had moved out of permanent full time jobs, and that the group most likely to do this are those who had relatively high levels of skills and had enjoyed a good permanent full time job. They propose policies designed to improve the skills of older workers and to help them maintain their position in the occupational hierarchy because doing so would encourage and enhance their ability to enter flexible employment as a bridge to retirement. Their study offers some interesting factors regarding the quality of flexible employment – as noted above self employment provides the quality most comparable to full time employees, temporary employment was rated next in terms of job quality, and was likely to offer training; and part-time employment offered poorest job quality among these three options, providing little stability and few training opportunities (Lissenburgh & Smeaton, 2003).

Multiple jobholders & portfolio careerists

Multiple jobholders are another name used for portfolio workers (Spoonley & Davidson, 2004) and these authors define them as those holding two or more paid jobs. This group is increasing in numbers in New Zealand, with almost one in ten New Zealanders in the work force holding more than one job (Taylor, Baines, & Newell, 2004) but is almost certainly under represented in national statistics because of the way data is collected in New Zealand (Taylor, Baines, & Newell, 2004). These authors suggest that the real figure might be almost double the official national figure. Motivations are seen as varied: primarily multiple job holding meets the need to maintain a sufficient level of income by the low skilled, however high income professional workers use multiple job holding to build income, and enjoy the personal and family benefits of more flexible employment (Chapman, 2000, cited in Taylor, Baines & Newell, 2004). Rural areas have relatively high rates of multiple job holding compared to urban areas (Taylor, Baines & Newell, 2004) the data citing farm households and rural people in general, and particularly rural women. Statistical data does not yet assist us to fully assess the extent to which older workers are working in this way, however in this study at least we can explore their attitudes and participation in this work.

Cohen and Mallon's (1999) qualitative study provides rich examples of both portfolio careerists and the self-employed, and although not this is not a study which focuses on older workers, it has examples of these. They describe an ambiguous picture which they consider is an important corrective to the 'overly optimistic and upbeat' (p.30) literature about emerging career forms. Nevertheless, their data included upbeat and valuable feedback. Participants in portfolio careers felt freer and more in control of their lives and work, had had fun and variety in the process, and most managed to achieve a far greater degree of balance in their lives than was the case in organisational employment. The writers describe two subjects in their fifties who represented the dilemmas and drawbacks of the portfolio life: A man of 50 conveys his happiness at doing his own thing, and not having a regular job; a female consultant conveys anxiety that some of the expected benefits of this role were not available.

Cohen and Mallon's (1999) research illustrates the merits and drawbacks of the portfolio worker: variety versus deeper attachment, a chance to grow and develop versus lack of organisational opportunities; freedom to do the work they want versus financial security. Their participants point to tangible losses such as salary, pension, access to training opportunities, but also to more abstract gains such as balance, autonomy, integrity and the ability to consolidate skills and interests within a portfolio career. These workers could be portrayed as trialling new careers in a transformed economy with some with traditional 'baggage' intact, and represent the dilemmas and confusions of such a situation. Are they liberated from the demands of a career world, or disengaged from the benefits and the sense of belonging available in the organisational world? What matters most to the older worker? The subjects in this study may assist in providing some answers to these questions.

EXPERIENCES AT WORK

Attitudes towards older workers

This section examines perceptions and stereotypes about the abilities and characteristics of older workers, particularly with regard to learning new skills, and the stereotypes that exist. Attitudes and beliefs about older workers have been characterised as 'ambivalent'; older workers are viewed as having both positive and negative attributes. Older workers are viewed positively on a number of traits including low absenteeism and low turnover, work attitudes, motivation, job skills, and loyalty (Barth, McNaught & Rizzi, 1993). However this same study found managers were concerned about their flexibility in accepting new assignments, their suitability for retraining, and the cost of their health benefits. An American Association for Retired Persons study found similar areas of positive traits, but managers interviewed for this study were more likely to rate older workers as weak on flexibility, acceptance of new technology, and ability to learn new skills (AARP, 1995). McNaught (1994) found that managers almost always underestimate the productivity of older workers, stereotyping them as "loyal and possessing good work habits, but inflexible and difficult to train" (p. 229).

International studies are consistent in their findings - older workers score highly on motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (London, 1998), but are commonly seen as less flexible and adaptable, unable to master the new skills required to learn today's jobs, too costly to employ, both in salaries and benefits, less energetic and enthusiastic, and less interested in training and learning new skills. (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1994; Warr, 1994; Stern & Miklos, 1995). Australian studies show the same trend, revealing a widespread belief that older people are slow to learn, that their output levels are below those of younger people, and they are less innovative and creative (Patrickson, 1998).

Sparrow (1999) conducted a NZ survey to find out what business managers in NZ think about older workers and found similar results to the overseas studies. The managers believed attributes such as loyalty to employers, work ethic and a high level of people skills belonged with workers 45 years and over. However

adaptability, the ability to learn new skills, and innovation were seen as attributes of workers under 45 years. Fifty-four per cent of managers believed older workers are set in their ways and resist change. These findings were supported in an Otago study (Greene, 2001) of 37 labour market participants, including employers. A study of 143 Canterbury employers (O'Donahue, 2000) found 72% reported having older workers with skills they would find difficult to replace, citing useful experience, a strong work ethic and customer knowledge; however negative comments included the beliefs that older workers are slower and cannot carry the same workload as a younger person, and that older workers block younger workers from gaining employment and promotion.

Discrimination and ageism

While older workers commonly are rated better than the 'average employee' in terms of attitudes, turnover and absenteeism, negative stereotypes are common in regard to attributes which are seen as significant, even crucial in today's work environment: creativity, flexibility, adaptability, willingness and ability to learn. These stereotypes are longstanding and resistant to change (Bird & Fisher, 1986, cited in McEvoy & Blahna, 1999).

In the American environment many companies have preferred to retire older workers rather than to retrain and redeploy them (Barth, McNaught & Rizzi, 1993). Economically, older workers are perceived as less beneficial to organizations (Finkelstein & Burke, 1998) who consider that a better return on investment is gained from early and mid-career employees. In the U.S. labour force employers have demonstrated a consistent bias in favour of younger workers when it comes to training investments – training diminishes substantially after the age of 44 (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, cited in Carnevale & Carnevale, 1994).

Barth, McNaught & Rizzi (1993) describes a "vicious cycle of consequences", which begins with employer bias in favour of younger employees. The cost effectiveness argument proposes a better return on investment from early and

mid-career employees, and payroll savings with the redeployment and retiring of older staff. This results in a lack of training and retraining of older employees, which leads to a gradual erosion of the value of the older workers to the company. This reinforces the belief that older workers are more expendable. The consequent failure of these workers to enhance their job skills prevents older workers from changing jobs or functions within the company, and makes it more difficult to re-enter the workforce after they have been laid off or retired.

Stereotypes about older workers' abilities to learn contribute to the cycle that limits their training in organizations-employers are not offering older workers as much training nor using age appropriate training methodologies. Older workers are not treated comparably to younger workers in gaining access to training (AARP, 1995; Barth, McNaught & Rizzi, 1993; Hall & Mirvis, 1993; Carnevale & Stone, 1994; Warr, 1994). Little support of this trend, however appears in a New Zealand study of older workers, aged 55 and over (McGregor, 1999) where only 11.6% of workers recounted discrimination on the grounds of age with the most prevalent form reported as access to training opportunities. These respondents reported they were considered too expensive to train, too old to learn new skills, and younger colleagues were clearly preferred for training. Perceptions of these workers, while not proven, are widespread and pervasive. Imel (1991) notes that unfortunately older workers themselves have been influenced by these perceptions, accepting the negative stereotypes regarding their ability to learn new things.

Older workers' work performance and attitudes

A significant number of studies using objective measures of age and job performance have found no significant difference between older and younger workers (Warr, 1994). The evidence states that there is no basis for the beliefs surrounding the ability of older adults to learn new skills (Rothman & Ratte, 1990). There is far more variability in skill acquisition and retention within age groups than there is between age groups (Cascio, 1994, cited in Hall, 1996). Older workers can learn, they may require more time and support than younger

colleagues, but will perform equally well providing learning is tailored to their age knowledge and experience (Carnvale & Stone, 1994). Analyses of studies in this area suggests that while they take longer to master complex skills and they are slower at applying these to high-tech jobs, they tend to be more accurate (Hall, 1996). Warr (1994) suggests that where older workers are less effective than younger ones in a particular job, that difference is not fixed; it may be that the older workers need more opportunities to learn.

Satisfaction at work

Older workers who have plateaued in organisations with no opportunities to mentor, contribute in any special way or be involved in organisational directions or decisions are more likely to be dissatisfied (Dalton & Thompson, 1986). Research on career plateauing shows that the longer one stays on in a given job without prospects of promotion, the more entrenched and cynical (Hall & Mirvis, 1994; Stearns & Miklos, 1995) and the more alienated and dissatisfied (Goffee & Scase, 1992) a worker is likely to become.

McEvoy and Blahna's (1999) research on employed older workers in the transport industry explored issues of 48 transportation workers over 45 years in age across four states. He found that a substantial minority, 25% to 35%, revealed considerable dissatisfaction and disengagement. The authors proposed that this disengagement is caused primarily by a perceived lack of respect - primarily from management - for their expertise, knowledge and opinions.

McEvoy and Blahna's (1999) research considers what it takes to retain and motivate older workers. An early review of the literature by Doering, Rhodes, & Schuster (1983) suggested that older workers needs were higher for security and affiliation, and lower for pay and self actualisation, when they were compared with younger colleagues. These suggestions may well represent a time of more secure employment and retirement practices; a more recent review suggests that older workers respond to financial rewards, recognition of accomplishments, and being consulted by management (Paul & Townsend, 1993). Further suggestions

include respect and support, fair compensation, involvement and utilisation of expertise, and flexible scheduling of work (Solomon, 1995). A study by Fyoch (1990) indicated that older workers are retained through a variety of factors, including rewards for good performance, equal opportunities for growth and development and respect from others.

Respect from others is signalled as a primary need (Paul & Townsend, 1993; Solomon, 1995; Fyoch, 1990) and the lack of respect is indicated as a primary source of dissatisfaction and disengagement in McEvoy and Blahna's (1999) study. This is clearly a key area of difficulty, when this need is considered alongside the considerable evidence of negative stereotyping of older workers' abilities (Hall 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1994; Warr, 1994; Stern & Miklos, 1995). McEvoy and Blahna (1999) conclude that older workers want jobs that are high on autonomy, self-direction and challenge, and that they do want to remain current in new technologies, but are frustrated in the lack of support in these areas. Greller and Simpson (1999) highlight the problem: "Stereotypes, role expectations, and company policies and practices, which reflect potentially erroneous attributions and beliefs, drive decisions affecting older workers, resulting in older workers being placed in secondary roles during late career "(p. 335).

Challenges for the older worker

Forces of change are providing considerable challenge for the employment prospects of the older worker. Surveying the changes in their environment, they are most disadvantaged by dramatic changes in work patterns. In an era of transactional contracts, early established behaviours of conformity, playing by the rules, and loyalty to their employer are no longer effective (Hall, 1996). Their experience of past ways of working, and the cumulative nature of their past career experience increases the conflict and difficulty in adapting to new employment rules.

Freedom from the organization has its downside and this may be especially evident for the older worker. In a world where personal identities are tied to formal organisational roles, problems of self-definition are likely for the independent worker (Mirvis, 1995, cited in Hall & Mirvis, 1995). While portfolio work is portrayed as a liberation from organisational employment, providing professional freedom and opportunities to learn and develop, contrasting and ambivalent experiences are described by the survey sample of portfolio workers (Cohen & Mallon, 1999). The older workers within this study revealed issues of identity and of freedom, describing a sense of empowerment and control, but also high insecurity, and many struggled to redefine themselves and their careers.

An important point is made by Greller and Simpson (1999) – while late career on the one hand is a point of increased individuation on the part of workers: “an inherently richer repertoire of personal history and subjective experience shapes each older worker, manifesting a wide array of preferences, identities and skill sets for work” (p. 336), on the other hand “these more highly individuated people increasingly face deindividuating social structures as they age.” The problem, as they see it, is that the older worker is “an undifferentiated category within both academic research and organisational settings” (Greller & Simpson, 1999, p. 336) which inhibits us from fully understanding this late career period, and fully utilizing this population (Greller & Simpson, 1999).

A NEW ZEALAND STUDY

New Zealand research (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) provides one of the few studies available providing data regarding the transition from the traditional careers environment to the new. This research, which included older workers, found the lives of these workers affected less by restructuring than might have been expected. The research does describe a group of ‘company servants’ whose loyalty to the company had not been reciprocated, and who now had dislocated careers. Generally however the note is cautious: older workers are described as typically hard working and innovative, and the ability to grow and develop or

create opportunities seems to depend on personal attributes - energy, flexibility, and the ability to keep learning (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999).

This study sampled 76 careers of Auckland respondents, including 32 over 45 years of age. These participants are described typically as continuing to be not only economically active, but hard working and innovative (Inkson, Pringle & Arthur, 1998). The research presents a positive picture, the cases are described as “replete with people continuing to grow and develop” (p. 85). The experiences of the older workers were more stable than the younger participants with fewer radical career changes (Inkson et al, 1998), and the decade of restructuring in New Zealand had affected their lives less than expected. The participants of this study were categorised into five representative forms of career adaptation and growth.

- The true vocationalists, committed to careers such as church or teaching. These people are constantly drawn back into the vocation, despite dissatisfaction, and intended spending the rest of their careers in these vocations. The participants in the study reflected these lasting intentions.
- The company servants who have invested strongly in organizations. The older subsample in this study were not severely dislocated by organisational change, they were loyal long-term workers who had settled into a niche in their company and had no plans to move from where they were. They were increasingly dependent on the company to retain them in their work, and often fearful of redundancy before their retirements.
- Work-home balancers spent their lives adjusting the delicate balance between family needs, income, and their personal needs for career development and personal growth. Many older members of this group were looking for ways to wind down.
- Experience capitalists described the career actor whose primary career investment is experience; a group who have moved around a lot in their careers, and in the process developed a body of skills and interests on which to continue to develop their careers.
- The self employed - the study showed a cross over trends amongst participants. Some with years of self-employment were opting for steady

employment in jobs in later life; or if losing steady employment, others were branching out into areas where interests were expanded into viable businesses.

The respondents lived in the Auckland area, their experiences occurred in a location with a large local employment market. The categorisations above may also reflect that same location; a regional rural study may reveal different experiences and a different typology.

CONCLUSION – A PICTURE OF DISADVANTAGE?

Research of the 1990's points to the difficulties of adaptation (Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece & Patterson, 1997, p. 207):

“a decade of downsizing and restructuring ...resulted in increased demands to adapt to an environment of increased uncertainty and decreased job or career security. Adaptation is difficult however in an environment in which many older workers continue to feel the impact of age – stereotypes, associated patterns of discrimination and pressures to retire; and in which they sense that their skills are becoming obsolete, that training is unavailable and that much of their worth to their current employer is not transferable to a different employer (Bailey & Hansson, 1995; Warr, 1994a).”

To a large extent the picture of older workers is that of a group disadvantaged in many ways – through poor access to training and upskilling to meet workplace changes; and through common perception - they are considered inflexible, low on adaptability, and a poor return on the training dollar. They suffer discrimination when they seek employment. As a population group, they have experienced revolutionary changes over a short space of time in a very abrupt manner. It may be that the changes occurred for many at a time when the prevailing expectation of career was very different and more related to the notion of maintenance, and that change occurred too fast and too often for many to handle well. This is a group whose members were asked to learn and demonstrate the behaviours of the new environment with little opportunity to unlearn old rules and behaviours. Consequently they may have gained a reputation of resistance (Sparrow, 1999).

However to what extent is this an accurate picture of older workers in the New Zealand workforce? The literature appears to focus mostly on those who have been most disadvantaged and least able to retain employment. What would have made a difference for them? I move on next to examine the theory regarding effective career management, which attempts to answer that question.

CHAPTER FOUR

MANAGING CAREERS IN THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

In this chapter I review the literature which proposes attributes and behaviours regarded as necessary and effective for the career actor in the new careers environment. I examine proposed models of career management and the behaviours they suggest and prescribe, and I identify key behaviours of importance that emerge in the literature.

MODELS OF INDIVIDUAL CAREER-MAKING

The model of the boundaryless career asks for new and individual strategies and abilities, critically the ability to self- design and to manage one's own personal and career development. Career writers have proposed varying but complementary ways in which individuals do this by reframing careers in more personalised and subjective ways.

Career competencies, and building career capital

Career competencies were initially proposed as components of the intelligent career, a response to the idea of intelligent enterprise, and the core competencies of a firm (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995). The core competencies of a firm can be described as company culture, which embodies the values and beliefs of a firm; know-how which represents the company's accumulated skills; and networks - the array of marketplace relationships on which the firm depends (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995). Applying these ideas to the career actor, the intelligent career framework suggests it is advantageous for people to develop and understand their own motivations, values and aspirations, and to develop and maintain their learning to be able to adapt successfully to a changing

environment; and to build career relevant relationships as their career progresses. The 'intelligent career' concept focuses on internal or subjective measures that relate to personal adaptation, growth and learning, and de-emphasises external or objective measures of success.

DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) introduced three categories of career competencies as the foundation of the intelligent career: *Knowing why* refers to the values, meanings and interests that shape what activities are pursued in a career (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), and is closely identified with the Schein's (1987) career anchors and Derr's (1986) career orientations. They are the basis of the self-image that drives career decision-making; they relate to identity, and are the source of motivation for actions. An examination of identity and self-knowledge is provided later in this chapter.

Knowing how refers to the skills and knowledge of a career actor, his or her technical understandings, distinctive expertise, or informal knowledge that the career actor has gathered over his or her lifetime. Because of the demise of job security, DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) contend that people need to actively maintain and, where necessary, add to their knowing-how competencies.

Knowing whom relates to personal and professional relationships involving networks connections social acquaintances and resources. These competencies relate to communication with others in personal and social ways but also to career networks and relationships (Arthur Inkson & Pringle, 1999, DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Jones' (1996) study of the film industry in America highlights the importance of developing a network of personal contacts and maintaining these relationships. These three career competencies go to the heart of the development and maintenance of career in the boundaryless career environment.

These ideas are further developed into a model of career capital that is simple and compelling, in terms of individual progress. The career competencies that are gained through work, education and life experiences accumulate over time into career capital (Inkson & Arthur, 2001) and the capital is increased by further investment in valuable experience or activities, or diminished by a lack of investment. In a knowledge economy, the key individual capital is knowledge

(Inkson & Arthur, 2001). The jobs and experiences of the career actor provide further ideas and inspiration for their progress (knowing why) skills and expertise (knowing how) and in the process they develop and build workplace and community relationships and contacts (knowing whom). The authors make the point that accumulated career capital can be applied to new and unanticipated opportunities (Inkson & Arthur, 2001), and suggest that being able to improvise in career making is likely to be more useful than formal career planning in such a changing environment. This is a prescriptive model in the sense that it advocates the conscious use of experiences for the outcome of building career capital; it is also descriptive in that one is immediately aware on reflection, that consciously or not, this is what some career actors appear to do.

The protean career

Hall (1976) defined the new career as protean - having the ability to change shape at will as it is reinvented by the person, not the organization, as the person and the environment change. Hall (1996) provides us with a highly attractive and compelling analysis of the positive possibilities of this new career, with individuals free to be guided no longer by organisational demands but by the "path with a heart" (Shepard, 1984), the route to psychological success. The protean career concept provides a different way of thinking about the relationship between the organization and the employee, in that the organization now provides a context or medium in which individuals pursue their personal aspirations (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). A protean career involves attributes and skills of exploration, self-directedness, continuous learning and is driven by personal values. The goal of the protean career is psychological success, the achievement of one's most important goals in life (Mirvis & Hall, 1994), whatever they may be. The protean career demands a high level of self-awareness and personal responsibility from the career actor: continuous learning, high levels of adaptability and identity changes are required (Hall, 1996). Hall is careful to note that a protean career can only apply to those who choose autonomy (Hall, 1996).

Hall and Mirvis (1995) describe this new potential for flexibility and autonomy as tailor made for the older worker. Given that late career is a time of life when external constraints such as children's needs may have receded, the older person may be more free to pursue flexible career options than their younger peers (Hall & Mirvis, 1995), and be ready to pursue individual needs rather than some ideal career path.

NEW CAREER ATTITUDES AND SKILLS PROPOSED FOR THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

Much has been written about new career attitudes and skills proposed as necessary for the challenges of the new environment, and to realise the potential of the new career. Career resilience, career adaptability and career proactivity are three terms which encompass a wide range of behaviours and abilities, and are proposed as necessary attributes and behaviours for the new environment and defined in various ways. The career development literature supplements organisational and management literature to provide a more detailed examination of these attributes.

Career resilience

London and Stumpf (1986) provided an early definition of career resilience in their examination of career motivation. "The extent to which we keep our spirits up when things do not work out as we would have liked...people who are high on career resilience see themselves as competent individuals who are able to control their response to what happens to them...they respond to obstacles and undesired events by reframing their ideas and repositioning their energies to allow them to move ahead anyway" (p. 26). The concept included tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, flexibility and autonomy, definitions which continue to persist throughout the later literature.

This early work also provided a rationale for developing career resiliency which proved accurate: "it stems from several trends: the increased amount of retraining needed for people to keep up with technological changes, changes in the way people relate to each other given the computer and the communications explosion, and pressures to maintain and increase job satisfaction by changing job content " (London & Stumpf, p. 28).

Further studies (London & Greller, 1991) were concerned with examining managers' responses to career change, and noted that the changes in the work force and in the work place can be viewed in terms of the periodic career crises that they create, including layoffs, displacements, retraining, premature retirements. In focussing on managerial responses to career crises, they identified three aspects of career motivation: career resilience, career insight, and career identity.

The study described above provides a useful base definition for the concept of resilience, and represents it in a chronological timeframe, but it is limited by its narrow focus on managers and their interaction with the organization. The literature of the 1990's reflected a decade of organisational uncertainty and instability. Concepts of resilience focussed more on self-management, and are linked to retaining organisational careers, and the ability to withstand career crises. Bridges (1994) defined career resilience as the ability to let go of the outdated, learn the new, and bounce back from disappointment. Collard, Eppenhimer and Saign, (1996) suggest that it is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive. Thus the concept of career resilience has connotations of reactivity rather than proactivity.

Collard et al (1996) summarise the concept of career resilience in idealised terms, representing the shift in organisational relationships. They see individuals who are career resilient as those who contribute skills aligned with business needs and have an attitude that is focussed but flexible, while delivering a solid performance in support of organisational goals for as long as they are part of the organization (Collard et al., 1996). They must be looking ahead to the future and have a plan for enhancing their performance and long-term employability (Waterman,

Waterman & Collard, 1994). Brown (1996) suggests that attitude has a great influence on the ability to become career resilient; and London (1998) supports this view in his research on career barriers, asserting that people high in resilience have a high belief in themselves and are likely to respond positively to change, risk-taking, challenges and new circumstances. Behaviours associated with career resilience include demonstrating belief in oneself, striving for autonomy, demonstrating adaptability in the face of changing demands or learning requirements, and taking control or seeking development. London sees resilience as linked strongly with career theory, to Holland's (1985) notion that career decisions are influenced by the ability to face barriers, among other factors.

Proactivity

The theme of proactive career management has been developed by a number of writers (Jackson, 1996; Siebert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999; Crant, 2000) and introduces a more dynamic aspect into the discussion, in that the proactive career actor is perceived as not just a recipient of change, but a change agent. Some clear definitions emerge in the literature - people who are highly proactive identify the opportunities around them and action them; they show initiative and persevere until they bring about meaningful change (Siebert, Crant & Kraimer, 1999); they pursue opportunities for self improvement and act to change their circumstances, including their social environments (Siebert et al, 1999). Those engaging in boundaryless careers must be more proactive in their career management and their approach to lifelong learning (Jackson, 1996).

An empirical study (Claes & Ruiz-Quantanilla, 1998) identifies four proactive career behaviours: career planning, referring to initiatives to explicitly make career changes; skill development, referring to initiatives leading to mastering tasks involved in one's own occupation; consultation behaviour, referring to initiatives involving seeking information, advice and help from others; and networking behaviour intended to build interpersonal networks in which to seek information, advice and help.

These authors highlight the proactive skills both within the organisational context, and boundaryless careers. While this is a useful representation, the ideas expressed do not capture the dynamism of the current careers environment. Ideas such as 'I have a well developed plan' and 'I have begun to think more about' appear to indicate a career actor undertaking careful structured planning, rather than a spontaneous or mobile enactment of career. The language used lacks the opportunism suggested by the concept of proactivity in the literature. Skills development is matched with the boundaryless career competency of knowing how, networking and consultation with knowing whom; however the authors neglect the knowing why competency and its relationship to shaping the future and career planning. However their analysis shows important concepts of proactivity in career behaviours and locates them in both the organisational and boundaryless settings.

Researchers in this area unanimously support a person-centred perspective on career processes. A great deal of career research treats people as passive and malleable; in contrast they can actively shape their environments and create favourable outcomes for themselves (Bell & Staw, 1989). A review of the literature on proactivity (Crant, 2000) considered the role of proactive behaviour in an array of domains such as leadership, job performance, socialization and careers, noting a common concern that research in the various domains had overemphasised passive/reactive individual responses and paid insufficient attention to proactive ones. Common themes identified by these authors include arguments for an action orientation in studying people's organisational behaviours as compared to a passive reactive orientation. Both situational and dispositional approaches to the study of proactive behaviour share the perspective described by Bell and Staw (1989) that people can alter the situation in which they find themselves, i.e. people can take control of organisational situations rather than simply adapting to unfavourable and ambiguous conditions. An extension of this view is surely that people can take control of life and career situations beyond the organisation and also alter them to better suit their needs. A further theme referred to (Crant, 2000) is the cost benefit analysis: expectancies about the efficacy and benefits of proactive behaviour play a guiding role in the decisions to act in a proactive fashion.

A recent empirical New Zealand study (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) illustrates the skills and attributes needed in the wider environment beyond the organization. This study of 75 career actors produced a data-base of career stories, illustrative of the uncertainties, challenges and hardships of the 1990's career environment in New Zealand. It provides a valuable qualitative study of the individual's experience of contemporary careers. A number of career attitudes and skills are described as appropriate to the challenges of the new environment, including versatility rather than specialisation, flexibility rather than special purpose, the ability to career improvise rather than career plan, and the acceptance of personal responsibility for one's own career (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999). The authors endorse the encouragement given to develop career resilience or career adaptability, but they are doubtful that the earlier ideas of resilience go far enough. From the vantage point of their study in the late 1990's, the pace of change in the world of work is clearly observed, and indicates that in the era of the boundaryless career, a more proactive approach is needed, and is taken by many actors (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999).

These authors utilise a model of capital to illustrate the proactive career, which involves the accumulation of career competencies and the building of "career capital". It includes spreading occupational investment widely, with less dependence on a single employer. It pays attention to personal growth, suggesting career actors must actively develop strategies to maintain energy, and foster interests which enhance lives and extend capabilities, (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) thus building social capital and useful networks. Flexibility, versatility and persistent learning are qualities that must underpin these behaviours in a time of rapid change; and improvisation adds a further dimension of opportunistic action.

The concept of proactivity emerging from this research encompasses a range of responses to the employment and social environment beyond the organization that people need both to sustain themselves in changing times (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999), and to maximise their experiences through their interaction with the wider communities of occupations, industries, companies and the social arena. This concept includes persistent learning. These authors suggest that the

difference between those who develop productive and fulfilling work careers in the new economy and those who are marginalised by change and driven into less secure positions will be qualities such as the ability to improvise and seize opportunities quickly (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999).

Adaptability

Adaptability is a concept also used widely to describe desirable attributes for workers in the new economy and examined in some detail in the career development literature. People writing about adult transitions generally refer to the need for adaptability (Goodman, 1994), and writers examining new careers (and the popular press) call for adaptability in the new environment: it is a concept involving the ability to respond effectively to change, and including ideas of flexibility, resilience and versatility (Goodman 1994; Hall, 1996; Featherman, Smith & Peterson, 1990). In the case of older workers, as described previously in Chapter 3, this is an area in which they are often perceived as lacking.

Super and Knasel (1979) utilised the term “career adaptability” to focus on the balance that each individual seeks between the world of work and his/her personal environment, and generally defined it as the readiness to cope with changing work and changing conditions. Savickas (1997) proposes career adaptability as a concept to integrate aspects of lifespan theory, and to replace Super’s concept of career maturity. He describes learning and decision making as components of adaptability. In his view adaptability means the “quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances” (Savickas, 1997, p.6), and involves readiness to cope with both predictable tasks and unpredictable change, “planful attitudes, self and environmental exploration, and informed decision-making” (p.6).

Pratzner and Ashley (1984) defined adaptability as the ability to adapt to job requirements, and the ability to change jobs so they are more suited to individual needs. Isaacson and Brown (1993) suggested that career adaptability “may be an appropriate term to identify the individual’s ability to face, pursue or accept

changing career roles” (p.40). In outlining the skills required in the new “protean” career, Hall (1996) describes adaptability as an essential competency. The new competencies required to realize the potential of the new career are those of self-knowledge and adaptability, and Hall calls these meta skills, as they are the skills of learning how to learn. In his view the more a person can learn how to adapt to changed tasks and conditions and to form new images of self as the world changes, the more a person is learning how to learn. This will be an essential skill in the new environment as it will be too costly and too time consuming for people to wait to be told what to learn or wait for the right training programme to create learning for them. Hall describes these skills as the currency of the protean career. Studies (Hall, 2002; Hall & Mirvis, 1995) which emphasise the careers of midlife and later workers, reiterate the need for increased adaptability. In the new environment the adaptable employee will have to possess the complexity of skills required to do the work of their firm. This suggests a need for varied work experience and flexibility on the part of the career actor, and the need to acquire the core career competencies of learning how to learn and continuous learning (Hall, 2002; Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Later work by Hall (2002) delved more deeply into the components of adaptability. He summarises this as the capacity to adapt and change, but provides a much more complex definition, the underlying thread of which is the ability to develop or update behaviours so that a career actor can effectively respond to changing environments in ways that are congruent with personal identity (Hall, 2002). In his model of adaptability, Hall (2002) addresses the requirement that the career actor must have not only the ability to change but also the motivation to change, pointing out the ineffectiveness of one without the other. Hall (2002) also provides a useful analysis of the ways in which adaptability has been perceived and defined: as appropriate behavioural responses to external demands; as an internal phenomenon, focusing on the characteristics of the individual to deal with personal changes; and a third perspective, which integrates both internal and external abilities, where adaptability involves “a generalized capacity to respond with resilience to challenges arising from one’s body, mind and environment” (Featherman, Smith & Peterson, 1990, p. 53). Hall’s (2002) focus is on an integrated perspective, and he presents a two-part model, whereby

adaptability is the “potential and preparedness” (p. 220) for dealing with demands, and adaptation is the construct for putting it into action.

There are elements of proactivity in this construct: Hall (2002) notes a “lifelong capacity for motivated self expansion” (p. 220) which is part of the development of “the competent self ” (Hall, 2002, p.220), and planfulness is seen as an important dimension (Super & Knasel, 1979; Savickas, 1997). However these are less apparent and less well understood aspects of the concept; and the usual context in which adaptability is discussed or proposed is in response to external changing workplace demands.

Identity

What is self-identity? Giddens (1991) asks this question, and answers it: self-identity is not a distinctive trait possessed by the individual; “*it is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography*” (p. 53.). Giddens sees the best analysis of self-identity by contrasting those with a strong sense of self and those without. The best way to analyse self-identity is by contrast with individuals whose sense of self is fractured. These individuals display the lack of a consistent feeling of biographical continuity; they are apprehensive of risks and fail to develop trust in self integrity (Laing, 1965). A person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity “has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively, and to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people.” (Giddens, 1991, p.54). The person accepts their own integrity, and has “a sense of the self as “alive”- within the scope of reflexive control, rather than having the inert quality of things in the object-world.” (Giddens, 1991, p.54).

In being influenced by Giddens, I am not positioning myself with writings in the post-structural mode, amongst those who see the self as something that “simply disappears” (Pahl, 1995, p.114) except in discourse where it is constructed and deconstructed. I am influenced by authors who have narrative at the core of their expression of identity, as the primary vehicle for capturing the self, and making it

explicit (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Weick, 1995). Giddens (1991) describes the self as a reflexive project, portraying not what we are but what we make of ourselves, and this view is in keeping with the perspective of the career development literature (Cochran, 1990). Autobiography is at the heart of self-identity, as self-identity presumes a narrative where the self is made explicit, and there is a capacity for the person to “keep a particular narrative going” (p.54). Giddens (1991) describes feelings of self-identity as both fragile and robust:

“Fragile, because the biography the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one story among many potential stories that could be told about a persons development as a self; robust, because a sense of self-identity is often securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments within which the person moves”(p.55).

In the new environment with an interplay between the local and the global worlds, there is a greater need for reflexivity, which Giddens defines as the characteristic of the self “that allows one to know ...both what one is doing and why one is doing it” (p. 7). He notes “ the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change” (p. 33). In this context of change, reflexive self-identity plays an important role in connecting the past and present of career actors and providing unity and coherence in their lives (Weick, 1995).

Career and identity are strongly interwoven (Cochran, 1990), with career being described as a movement through “a series of situations which bestow identity on us” (Watson, 1980, p.47). We know that career refers to more than objective pathways or movements (Young & Collins, 2000). It involves self-identity, and “reflects individuals’ sense of who they are, who they wish to be, and their hopes, dreams, fears and frustrations.” (Young & Collins, 2000, p.5). Occupations are a source of identity for people of all ages; however loss of employment may trigger loss of identity and loss of a sense of belonging (Hall 1986). In a changing careers environment, people’s sense of self may be challenged by the diverse experiences that they must integrate into their self concept (Kegan, 1994) and while this is difficult, it is this process that constitutes the growth of the identity (Kegan 1994). The evolution of identity in response to changing qualities of work experience has been demonstrated (Kahn & Schuler, 1983; Brousseau, 1983, cited

in Kegan, 1994), all revealing that self-determination (or equivalent concepts) are heightened by prolonged exposure to challenging job demands. Hall (1986) however notes that when identity and success has been based on a certain set of job skills, and the career actor finds that these skills are no longer valued and new skills must be developed, there may be a major blow to self-esteem and confidence, which threatens the core identity of the career actor.

Identity then is perceived as a feature of the self that grows (or becomes threatened) in response to changing situations, but may also act as an internal stabiliser in the midst of this change. Hall's (2002) analogy of an internal compass is one I find useful and apt:

“one important implication for the individual in a continuously changing organisation is that he or she must have a clear sense of personal identity, to provide an internal compass' keeping him or her on the path with a heart in the midst of all the turbulence” (p. 33).

Hall (2002) describes also the two elements of identity development or identity growth:

“One is the ability to seek and take in feedback information about one's self, to learn about one's strengths and deficiencies. The other element of self-identity is self-awareness, the extent to which one has a clear understanding of one's own values, goals, needs, interests, abilities and purpose. Thus identity growth is not just knowing yourself but knowing how to learn more about yourself. Of course we need feedback and help from others to do this. Thus much of identity development is a relational process.”

“If a person is not able to obtain this identity growth, this strong internal compass, the result is likely to be a chameleon like succession of quick changes that respond only to the shifting prevailing winds. This is the risk of having adaptability without identity, adaptability must be guided by a strong and clear sense of self”(p.33).

Hall's focus on identity provides a critical missing link in the discussion in the literature concerning useful attributes, qualities and behaviours. Without appropriate direction from the 'internal compass', much energy and many useful

skills may be applied where they bring little satisfaction or success to the career actor. Identity growth, with its accompanying feature of self-knowledge presumes identity awareness, i.e. the ability to know what you need to learn, and how to learn it; to know your strengths and abilities and where they fit in terms of your values and sense of identity. This is a key foundation for effective career behaviours in the changing environment.

LEARNING

Career growth is explicitly linked with learning in the new career paradigm (Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995). Ongoing learning is essential; education has an impact but does not offer guarantees. Learning is the key to progress in work (Watts, 2000). If workers are to be able to move between organizations with a sense of development rather than survival then they need to find ways of continually enhancing their skills and knowledge (Watts, 2000). If workers are going to move beyond organizations into new patterns of working, continual learning is a behaviour which must underpin that path.

Continuous learning

London and Mone (1999) provides a deeper examination of the concept of continuous learning suggesting the term *continuous* implies a 'strong and ongoing awareness of the need for and the value of learning' (p.119). This learning may encompass a range of areas, upskilling and training to do the existing job, developing skills in anticipation of the requirements of a future job or retraining for a different job or career opportunities (London & Mone, 1999).

These authors provide two useful definitions of continuous learners (London & Mone, 1999, p. 120):

“People that are committed to continuous learning search for new information about themselves and about emerging performance requirements that suggest a learning gap. Moreover they are

willing to devote the time energy and financial resources to gain the education needed to close the gap and improve their performance...”

“People with a continuous learning mentality think about what they have learned from daily activities or unusual events and try to apply that knowledge later.”

Continuous learning is needed to keep pace with never ending advances in technology and associated changes in job requirements (Hesketh & Neal, 1999). It assumes ideas of preparing ahead, keeping up with advances in the industry or profession, and anticipating skills requirements of the future (Hesketh & Neal, 1999).

Learning as a way of being

Vaill (1996) expands on the idea of continuous learning with his concept of ‘learning as a way of being.’ His view is that the working world is a macro system of “complex, interdependent and unstable systems which require continual imaginative and creative initiatives and responses from those people living and working in them (especially the leaders and managers)” (p. 5). He uses the analogy “permanent white water” to describe the “complex, turbulent and changing environment in which we are all trying to operate” (Vaill, 1996. p. 5). It is he says, full of surprises, produces novel problems, and features “messy and ill structured events” (p. 5). Vaill believes that ‘permanent white water’ puts organizations and people in the position of continually facing new challenges, of doing things they have never done before, implying that beyond all the other new skills and attitudes that permanent white water requires, people have to be (or become) extremely effective learners (Vaill, 1996).

The phrase “lifelong learning” was used as early as the 1960’s to describe growing awareness that there could be no let up in learning processes. However Vaill says the problem with our ideas about learning is that they are based on the

existing model of learning – one that takes place as an institutional activity. Vaill (1996) describes the features of this model as limiting and restricting.

Features of learning as an institutional activity (Vaill, 1996):

- It is goal directed - it is assumed to depend on the learner's desire to achieve some specific goal;
- It assumes the learner will value the goal towards which the learning is directed;
- The learning goal is assumed to be outside the learning process, e.g. a qualification;
- Efficiency of the process is a matter of prime concern - speed of learning is valued, volume of material covered is important as it is taken to equate with the amount learned;
- It is likely to be answer oriented - it has ingrained generations of learners with the obsession of getting the right answer;
- It begins in confusion and involves considerable pain and inconvenience before it moves to a state of competence and comfort;
- It is a relatively private process, and often a lonely one and usually involves competition.

Vaill contrasts this with learning as a way of being, which refers to the whole person, to something that goes on the whole time and extends into all aspects of a person's life.

Features of learning as a way of being (Vaill, 1996, p.32):

- it is self directed learning, the learner may be the only person who knows of the need;
- it is creative learning, exploratory and inventive, and learner may not know where they are going;
- it is expressive learning – it happens as we go, in the process of expressing it;
- it is feeling learning – can make the learner feel stupid, confused, incompetent;

- it is on line learning – by this Vaill means de-institutionalised;
- it is reflexive learning – it has to include learning about oneself, becoming a more conscious or reflective learner, and aware of one’s own learning processes.

Vaill (1996) sees learning as a way of being as more than a skill, it is a way of framing all experiences that we have as learning opportunities or learning processes. This is a concept which while under researched in my view seems to describe more satisfactorily the requirements packaged within the idea of continuous learning. This concept of continuous learning suggests continual activity - it is closely aligned to proactivity and reinforces the idea that a proactive rather than reactive approach to learning is required in the new environment (Briscoe & Hall, 2002).

Similar views regarding learning in the new environment are proposed by Beckett & Hager (2002) in their ideas of practice based informal workplace learning. They describe this as holistic and contextual, and “triggered by work activity and experience” (p.118). It may be implicit or tacit learning, and it is “instigated, activated or controlled by individual learners themselves in interaction with the situation that they find themselves in” (p. 121). These ideas, like Vaill’s, seem to suggest a relationship to the concept of continuous learning as informal and integrated into daily experience.

SUMMARY OF KEY IDEAS AND BEHAVIOURS

Summary tables of the key ideas and behaviours appear below. These have been set out in table form to highlight the key theoretical concepts and ideas and to clarify areas of agreement and difference.

Table 3. Career resilience.

Resilience: responsiveness, to demonstrate positive adaptability in the face of change, individual self-belief, the ability to move forward or bounce back.

Timeframe	Authors	Key ideas, behaviours and attributes
1980's concept influenced by the increased retraining needed to keep up with technological changes, changes in the way people relate to each other given the computer and the communications explosion, and pressures to maintain and increase job satisfaction	London & Stumpf (1986)	Competent individuals have certain qualities, they are able to control responses and respond appropriately Able to reframe ideas and reposition energies. <i>Involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence • Flexibility of responses • Autonomy • Tolerance of uncertainty, ambiguity
1990's literature reflects a decade of organisational uncertainty and instability. Concepts of resilience focus more on self-management, and adaptability and are linked to retaining organisational careers, and the ability to withstand career crises.	Bridges (1994) Waterman Waterman & Collard (1994)	Letting go of the outdated and learning the new, to be able to bounce back from disappointment. <i>Involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Flexibility • Learning Contribute skills aligned with business needs, be responsive to organizational needs and able to change. <i>Involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus and flexibility • Present directed response
Late 1990's-2000's. Concepts of resilience have a stronger focus on self-management, and the individual qualities required to overcome barriers and maintain own paths.	London (1998)	Positive responses to change & new challenges, people high in resilience have a high belief in themselves. <i>Involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self belief • Risktaking • Striving for autonomy

Table 4. Proactivity

A future directed approach, involving anticipation, opportunism and improvisation. Suggests action for change, or building towards inevitable change by utilising all the capital or resources of the wider environment.

Authors	Key ideas, behaviours, attributes
Siebert, Crant & Kramer (1999)	<p>Ability to identify the opportunities around them and action them. Initiative and perseverance utilised to change the environment around them. Pursuit of opportunities for self improvement, act to change their circumstances <i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the wider environment • Future directed • Action oriented • Initiative • Perseverance • Self improvement
Arthur, Inkson & Pringle (1999)	<p>Spread of occupational investment for future use. Ability to improvise, and seize opportunities quickly The decision to build career capital or capacity <i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility / versatility • Persistent learning • Improvisation • Expectation of change • Self management of career
Claes & Ruiz-Quantanilla (1998)	<p>Skill development, career networking, consultation, planning <i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous learning • Lifelong learning • Seeking of information, enacting networks

Table 5. Adaptability

A response to circumstances; generally present directed with a reactive flavour, suggests coping responses, having effective personal strategies and skills to deal with changing demands.

Authors	Key ideas, behaviours, attributes
Super & Knasel (1979)	<p>Readiness to cope with changing work and conditions, finding balance between work and personal environment.</p> <p><i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness to change • Coping strategies
Savickas (1997)	<p>The ability to change to fit new and changed circumstances, readiness to cope with new roles or tasks</p> <p><i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Planfulness • Self exploration • Environmental exploration • Decisional skills
Hall (1996, 2002)	<p>The ability to develop or update behaviours so that a career actor can effectively respond to changing environments, and influence them, the ability to incorporate new roles and responsibilities into one's personal identities</p> <p>A metacompetency which includes ability and willingness to change, learning how to learn, and continuous learning</p> <p><i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to change • Learning how to learn • Continuous learning • Self knowledge
Isaacson & Brown (1993)	<p>The ability of an individual to face, pursue or accept changing career roles and circumstances.</p> <p><i>Involves:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to change • Acceptance of change

Table 6. Identity – encompassing identity growth and identity awareness

The sense of self that guides the career actor.

Author	Ideas in the literature
Hall (2002)	Self awareness - clear understanding of values, needs, interests, goals, abilities and purpose. Knowing how to learn more about yourself- Seeking and taking in feedback information from others about ones self, strengths, weaknesses Provides the ‘compass’ to keep the individual on their personal path. <i>Involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self awareness• Ability to self assess• Self knowledge• Ability to gain and use feedback
Giddens (1991)	“the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography” (p.54), accepting of their own integrity.

Discussion of tables

Theories of the attributes and behaviours required to develop and maintain productive and fulfilling careers in the new environment show strong areas of agreement. Skills of independent self-management such as flexibility, versatility, adaptability, and autonomy are highly useful for the career actor of the present environment, knowledge of self provides the component to know what is needed by the individual.

There are differences in examining the contextual implications of these attributes. Career resilience is seen in the literature as an attribute – or a combination of attributes -of individual survival in organisational settings. The concept shares many characteristics with ‘adaptability’ as described in the careers literature.

Adaptability has a dictionary definition of “to make fit or suitable, or a process by which something is adapted to conditions” and in the literature it is discussed fairly consistently in this way. Although more complex definitions exist, it is

generally described in terms of responsiveness to demands, and in relation to the career actor having the means and abilities to cope with external pressures and constant change. Adaptability is generally present rather than future directed, it suggests waiting for change and having effective strategies, abilities and willingness to deal with it.

Proactivity suggests future directed behaviours, as well as effective improvisation and opportunism. The idea involves reading the environment, expecting change, gathering the information required to position oneself for those changes, and also being able to influence that change in some way. It suggests anticipation of inevitable change by utilising all the capital or resources of the wider environment, identifying opportunities and actioning them through initiative and perseverance (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999).

Ideas about proactivity in careers have appeared through the last decade, and it appears that the literature is showing an evolution of ideas and responses which reflect the timeframes in which they occur, and that these ideas may describe a trend from adaptability, and its more reactive component to proactivity, a more active anticipation of change. These behaviours appear to reflect and be encouraged by the environment in which they occur. As wider contexts of work arrangements emerge through the decade of the 1990's and discussion of career attributes and strategies reflects a gradual moving away from the organisational focus into the "enlargement of career space" (Hall, 1996), we see the emergence of the proactive approach to career demanded by growing participation in portfolio careers (Handy, 1989), and the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

These contexts offer workers the opportunity to create new arrangements that acknowledge the individual's unique place and state in life, including mid-life and beyond (Hall & Mirvis, 1995), and careers are examined less in relation to the organisation and more in relation to qualities of self-management in a wider environment.

Alongside, and part of that self-management is understanding of one's own identity, the self and its needs, aspirations and abilities.

Conclusion

While there is considerable theory on attributes, qualities and behaviours that are perceived as helpful there is little substantive research to support this - certainly data gathered recently with those who are experiencing the changes and transitions of our times is lacking. There are gaps in the literature regarding the experiences of older workers in a new careers environment and how they have managed their careers; there is little research in varying settings, and theory on effective behaviours in the new environment is so far under-researched.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

I set out in this research to undertake an exploratory study to focus on questions regarding the career experiences and behaviours of older workers in the workforce, and these were questions which could only be answered by the process of qualitative research. While we have numerical data for example on the numbers of workers affected by restructuring and change, we don't know *how* they recovered or *how* they sustained employability in these times. We have prescriptive literature on career management and strategies, but little data on what career actors are actually doing. In this chapter I describe the framework of the study, and provide a rationale for the use of methodology and process. I also describe the methods and tools used in the analysis of data.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Collin and Young (1986) challenged career theorists to look beyond the orthodox philosophies of the social sciences and develop new methodology for research and theory, a methodology with biographical and hermeneutical dimensions which would more aptly describe individual's careers in the dynamic context of their environments.

Positivism in careers research has led to a tendency to investigate the person and the environment as independent variables, although "people and environments are not logically independent of one another in the real world" (Walsh & Chartrand, 1994 p. 192). Traditional theory focussed on the objective career, with little regard for subjective dimensions, and on individual and job characteristics, and the process of matching them (Collin, 1997). Linear frameworks are currently challenged as providing traditional theory which does not allow understanding of

the more “circuitous rhythms and patterns” of today’s career (Cohen & Mallon, 2001, p. 58).

Collin (1997) in an argument for contextualism in developing theory, points out that the theories stressing the individualism of careers were conceived in the period before the ‘turbulent fields’ (Emery & Trist, 1965, cited in Collin, 1997) of the environment were recognised, and are not broad enough to encompass the elements of the present environment, such as globalisation, and the information revolution that are massively impacting upon careers (Collin, 1997). These career theories do not acknowledge an increasingly diverse workforce and different ethnic and social groups which may not fit traditional models or methodologies. Current career theory (Cohen & Mallon, 2001) asks us to return the career actor to the heart of the matter, as the central key to understanding the complex interactions that make up career or career progress: how they exercise their skills, develop their ideas and shape their careers in harmony, or disharmony, with external factors of family, organization, culture and society. This research aims to ask these questions in relation to older workers.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

This study uses qualitative methods of research to provide a descriptive picture of the characteristic career experiences, ideas and strategies of the sample group. This is an interpretive enquiry which aims to discover and reveal understandings, and to explain these from the career actor’s perspective. In an interpretive approach, emphasis is placed by the researcher upon the views and perceptions of the respondents taking part in the research, and the detailed accounts that people give provide the data which may serve to create new understandings and theory.

Cassells and Symons (1994,) outline five defining characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Interpretation rather than quantification
2. An emphasis on subjectivity

3. Flexibility in the process
4. A concern with context, a holistic view
5. An explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation.

These characteristics provide a useful structure under which I outline the theoretical framework of the research.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH

Interpretation rather than quantification

The research aims to increase awareness of the dialectic between individuals and their context, in this case between older workers and the enactment of their changing careers in their environment. An interpretive approach allows the researcher access to the details of progress and change, and the opportunity to describe, and interpret the meanings to people of phenomena which are occurring in their normal social contexts (Fryer, 1991). Quantification of phenomena will be appropriate to assist in some aspects of the enquiry, and will be used where counting in reducible terms adds to the understanding of the phenomena.

An emphasis on subjectivity

Adopting a qualitative approach implies a perspective on human behaviour which highlights the subjective understandings of the participants in the research. This research attempts an analysis of changing careers, with the individual conceptualised as an active shaper of situations and events. The research utilises life history methodology, at the cornerstone of which is people's subjective view of past situations and the situation in which they find themselves (Musson, 1998). The reflexivity of human beings is central to this perspective - the raw material which life history methodology seeks to capture is how human beings reflect and explain their past, present and future lives (Musson, 1998).

I am attracted to this methodology as it encourages the recognition of the individual's place in changing networks of relationships, cultures and traditions. The methodology is based on a holistic approach concerned with all aspects of the individual's life; it allows insight into family, location and other considerations which inform and influence career. It also has an historic aspect which adds depth, context and understanding. The methodology provides a tool to access the personal reality of the career actor, "the sense of reality that people have about their own world, and attempts to give 'voice' to that reality" (Musson, 1998, p.11). The understandings of participants may also provide a conduit beyond the individual and into understanding the wider contexts of society, as personal lives mirror a more macro social change (Cohen & Mallon, 2001).

Asking people to talk about their life histories in order to unearth their understandings entails listening to their stories (Musson, 1998). Cohen & Mallon (2001) describe stories as a particularly effective tool for exploring changing careers: they provide chronology and sequence, a vehicle for narrative sense-making and retrospection, and a means of articulating the present and historical link between individuals and social structures. Narrative is the primary vehicle through which people make sense of their history; narrative allows us to access career for meaning, and a narrative approach allows us to hear the different stories of experiences.

Flexibility in the process

The use of qualitative research methods allows flexibility in the research process, giving the possibility of formulating and revising ideas and areas of inquiry as the research proceeds. This research is being undertaken in a time of continuing change in the employment and social environments. The approach used needs to allow the possibility of examining changing issues and following new directions, and utilising other forms of data such as workforce and economic data to deepen contextual understanding.

A concern with context

The context in which we live and work is a complex whole of interwoven parts, involving a multitude of connections and interrelationships between these parts (Collin, 1997). A number of scholars (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989, Collin & Young, 1986) have proposed the need for research and theory which explores more holistically the impact of contextual factors on career behaviours and the interaction of the career actor with an increasingly complex environment. The flexibility and open-endedness of the new careers environment demands an approach which can entertain and explain complexity and these interrelationships, and a qualitative approach using a life history method can be framed to meet this demand.

The new careers are fragmented and flexible. Order, patterning and ultimately predictability, hallmarks of the traditional career, are not easily applied to increasingly diverse, and discontinuous careers (Collin, 1997). Making sense of these careers occurs retrospectively through the actors' perspectives – “in order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going” (Taylor, 1989, p. 47). Sense-making refers to the process of making sense of the objective movements of career, in such a way that it provides internal and subjective congruence to the career actor; retrospection is a process that blurs the boundaries between past and present (Weick, 1995). Cohen and Mallon (2001, p. 60) point out “this idea of careers as continuous stories, merging past and present, is central to new definitions of careers” citing the definition “the unfolding sequence of a person's work experience over time ” (Arthur, Hall & Laurence, 1989).

Career development theorists have been criticised (Carter & Cook, 1992) for the assumption that the focus of career development is the individual devoid of context. In the case of racial minorities, Carter and Cook (1992) describe the careers of these groups as shaped by socio-cultural circumstances and their paths restricted to those permitted by the dominant culture. In recounting stories, aspects of the social world such as gender, ethnicity, social class, family background, educational opportunities, social networks, occupational structures, and organisational hierarchies are factors that participants can identify as

constraining or enabling them in their careers (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). This perspective provides material for illuminating issues central to understanding how people enact new careers. Another factor which might act as a constraint or enabling factor is location – the participants in these studies are not inhabitants of a city, or large centre of commerce but a small rural and regional economy.

An explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation

Life history methodology provides an opportunity for sense making – for the participant in the study and for the researcher. Collin (1997) highlights the importance for career actors of developing a coherent account of their past, by authoring their own story, in order to move forward in their career. As stories are told, a sequence and chronicle of events is created. In creating this narrative participants “reveal the inconsistencies and contradictions of their career experiences which propositional perspectives tend to iron out” (Cohen & Mallon, 2001, p. 56). Participants are able to construct and reconstruct careers to make sense of outcomes, and analyse their career stories to understand them more personally (Weick, 1995). The research process is fundamentally participative, relying on people to construct and present an account of themselves, unconstrained by tightly prescribed formats.

Qualitative approaches also demand recognition of the role that the researcher plays in the research, as a social being who impacts on those around her or him (Cassell & Symon, 1994). These authors explain research as a social process which is heavily influenced by the choices made by the researcher as the research proceeds. It is interactive, intensive, and the researcher is part of, and contributes to this social process, requiring skills of interaction as well as research (Cassells & Symon, 1994).

That researchers bring their own implicit and explicit values to a study is increasingly recognised (e.g. Denzin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Musson, 1998), along with the recognition that experiential data can enhance a study,

rather than detract from it. Qualitative researchers often study concepts or topics that are personally significant - and in this research my own experience needs to be recognised: I am a worker of the same age group who has made a move to portfolio living.

Researchers also bring their own skills to the research process. As a counsellor, I have had considerable experience in interviewing, and was aware that personal stories require a careful approach from the interviewer. I was especially aware of the ways in which life history and narrative mode interviewing may encourage confidences and the revelation of highly personal data, and took steps to build in safeguards for the participants, such as the opportunity to vet their transcripts and change them if they were uncomfortable with their data. I also adopted a model of “process consent” (Grafanaki, 1996), checking during the process of the interviews that participants wished to continue to talk about a certain area, if it seemed to be very personal. In these cases, most data of this nature was crossed out in the returned transcript.

I needed to be attentive also to role boundaries - I am a careers counsellor and my role was that of an interviewer. I usually tried to acknowledge any difficulty or issues that the participants had with their careers, while making clear my boundaries as a researcher. According to Patton (1990) the researcher needs to adopt a stance of ‘empathic neutrality’ - empathic engagement with the story being told, and neutrality regarding the content of the data generated.

Research Objectives

The research objectives and questions are repeated here.

- To describe the characteristic career experiences and behaviours of career actors over 45 years of age, their perceptions of their current situation and career progress, and their attitudes, strategies and behaviours regarding current and future development and progress.

- To identify and empirically investigate the skills and behaviours proposed as effective for the new careers environment; including the behaviours of proactivity, and adaptability, and theorise about how these and other attributes, practices or behaviours of the participants contribute to their current situation, progress and satisfaction.

The specific research questions are

- What picture of the employment world do the study group hold; what concepts, ideas and beliefs are they acting on regarding their careers?
- What are their career experiences as older workers, relating to getting work, opportunities at work, types of work, perceptions of their future and their progress towards retirement?
- What age and stage patterns emerge?
- How are they managing their careers? What are their strategies, practices or behaviours that assist their career progress or survival? How do these relate to those suggested in the literature?
- Which ones are finding fulfilment and personal success? What are the characteristics of their career self management?

THE SAMPLE

The decision to sample locally

I have considered in Chapter Two the characteristics of Hawke's Bay, a rural regional and growing economy. The decision to sample locally was based on two factors. One was the ease of access to research participants. I was undertaking this research as a part-time activity alongside running a career consultancy business and developing a vineyard. An equally influential factor was the lack of any similar research in a rural regional economy in New Zealand. While useful research has been undertaken with this population for specific labour market dynamics such as examining self-employment and unemployment (de Bruin &

Firkin, 2001; McGregor & Grey, 2001) there has been no specific examination of the experiences and behaviours of employed mature workers. The changes that Hawke's Bay had undergone over the last 15 years, and was continuing to undergo (outlined in Chapter Two) provided the context of change that I was seeking as the background for my research; the people of Hawke's Bay appeared a fresh area of study to someone more familiar with the commercial employment environment.

Characteristics of the sample

The research targeted a mix of participants, aged 45 years and over, to capture a variety of work experiences. The upper age limit was 60 so that I was researching those still in employment, who were looking towards retirement, but not generally in it. The geographical limits of the sample were the three areas of Napier, Havelock North, and Hastings and the surrounding rural districts.

I set out to make the sample as broadly representative of the regional workforce as possible, and have representation from all nine occupational groupings (NZ Standard Industrial Classification of Occupations, 1999) if possible. The groupings that resulted are set out below, and the participants are referred to here by the pseudonyms used for each in the study. The column '% of sample' is discussed in the following section, limitations of the sample.

Table 7. Representation from occupational groupings

Group	Classification	Research Participants	% of sample
Group 1	Legislators, administrators, and managers	Bev, Derek, Gail, June, Pat, Todd	18.75% <i>(12.5%)</i>
Group 2.	Professionals	Marie, Ruth, Meg, Jenny, Andrew, Simon, Kevin, Matt, Mike	28.1% <i>(13.9%)</i>
Group 3.	Technicians and associated professionals	Sheila, Wynn, Annabel, Max, Jake,	15.6% <i>(11.0%)</i>
Group 4.	Clerks	Fiona, Viv, Tom, Nick	12.5% <i>(12.5%)</i>
Group 5.	Sales and service workers	Paula, Beth, Richard, Steve	12.5% <i>(14.0%)</i>
Group 6.	Agricultural and fishery workers	Sue, Liz, John	9.3% <i>(8.0%)</i>
Group 7.	Trades workers	Carl	3.12% <i>(8.4%)</i>
Group 8.	Plant & machine operators & assemblers		<i>(8.3%)</i>
Group 9.	Elementary occupations		<i>(11.3%)</i>

Note: % of sample in italics refers to NZ proportions.

Selecting the participants

At first I used personal contacts and networks to find willing participants for the research. When it seemed that I was finding too many in similar occupational groupings, I selected participants more purposefully (Patton, 1990) as I aimed to find a cross section of participants meeting the various occupational groupings described above, and thereby to gather a broader range of experience related to the research focus (Patton, 1990). I asked various participants who had been recommended to me, if they could recommend others, for example in categories such as sales or trades.

Limitations of the sample

The sample is not as representative as I had hoped. The sample proportions as shown on Table 8 are relatively similar to NZ proportions (Statistics New Zealand, 2001) in Groups 4, 5, and 6 (Clerks, Service and Sales workers, and Agricultural and Fishery Workers); however it is disproportionately high on Groups 1, 2 and 3, Legislators, Administrators and Managers, Professionals, and Technicians and Associated Professionals) and low on Groups 7, 8, and 9 (Trades Workers, Plant & Machine operators and Assemblers, and Elementary Occupations). There are a number of reasons for this lack of representativeness.

One difficulty I found was in getting agreement from some participants who were recommended to me to undertake an interview. There were a number of reasons that interviews did not happen, including pressure of work, family and community commitments. There was often a remark along the lines of “but I haven’t done anything to talk about.” The tone suggested that they felt that their experience was not worthwhile. Research was a term not easily understood or familiar to many of the participants, and my explanations of what I was doing was not enough in some instances to reassure prospective participants that their experiences were valuable to me. This was particularly evident with people in work that would have fitted groups 7, 8 and 9 above, and those who were in cultural minorities, specifically Maori or Pacific Island participants. Pressure of work was a factor in attempting to interview trades workers - with Hawke’s Bay in a midst of a building boom it proved the wrong time to ask these workers for time to talk about their careers, when as one man said, he was “working all the hours in the day and then some. ”

As I gained a better awareness of the meanings of the word ‘career’ to the participants that I interviewed, I became more and more careful about using it to explain what I was doing. However I felt I did need to use it to be fully frank and open about my research. When reluctance to participate was expressed, I felt it inappropriate to persuade people to be part of the research. Consequently I was not able to find a range of culturally diverse participants, and while I did get agreement from some, for various reasons the interviews did not take place. Eventually I decided I needed to work with those I had. In retrospect, my

newness in Hawke's Bay was also a factor; as I found towards the end of my research I had more possibilities of interviewees, but by that time I had commenced my analysis. The research then lacks the cultural and occupational diversity I would have liked to include in this examination. It also lacks a representation from people in manufacturing and elementary occupations, who have been identified previously as those most at risk.

Another more positive and interesting factor was the multiple occupational involvement which seemed to be prevalent in this region. This affected my sample in that I sometimes discovered I was interviewing a person who was in a different category than I had expected. I approached a teacher and discovered during the interview that he was also the owner of a small hospitality business. I approached a person I knew was a hospitality worker, because I knew her in that context; I found during the interview that she worked primarily as a nurse. I approached a mechanic and found he also worked half of his time as a nurse. An editor of pharmaceutical data revealed in the interview that her greater interest lay in her two small businesses. Consequently while I might have selected 'purposefully' to ensure a broader range of experience, I found on interviewing the participants that I was offered a different range of experience than expected.

This process reinforced the criticisms emerging in labour market research (Spoonley and Davidson, 2004; Baines, Newell & Taylor, 2004) of the current difficulty (at least in New Zealand) in classifying people and their work. The standard classification of occupations in itself symbolises an era of stability, and by its very nature suggests that occupations can be classified in some uniform and predictable manner, with no regard for trends of multi-tasking, multiple job holding, and the blurring of occupational boundaries.

So while I started with the intention of a wide occupational spread these categories became less meaningful as the research progressed. This experience suggests that attempting to locate people in a single occupational category may be less useful in the current environment. We are finding a breakdown of the linear job-to-job careers and growing participation in flexible employment styles.

THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Drawing on life history methodology recognises a fundamental aspect of the telling of careers - it is essentially a story. "To describe a person's career is to tell a story" (Cochran, 1990, p.71). Stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. Career stories cannot start anywhere but at the beginning. This has been my experience in research interviews, but I have also found it to be invariably true in any career interview context, for example in career counselling. The participant will ask, even if not invited, to "let me start at the beginning." The story needs to be told in a way that makes sense for the teller, and with my experience of careers as stories, I considered this methodology the most appropriate for this subject.

Although in my research I am primarily interested in the participant's experiences and behaviours as an older worker, it is still relevant and necessary to allow the participant to tell the story from the beginning. The beginning informs the middle which leads to the end (Cochran, 1990); the ways in which people have dealt with experiences and changes over the 25 years of employment will impact on and inform their choices and behaviours now. Listening to the stories that people tell allows the researcher to learn about their lives in their own terms, listening to people's stories and their accounts in their own words also made it easier for me to be connected to them. In Marshall's (1981) words "it's important to me to have *been there*; I can't imagine doing an adequate analysis of data if I haven't participated in collecting it" (p. 394).

Interviews allow the researcher the opportunity to interact with the research participants at a personal level as they tell their personal story. Interviewing is a flexible way of gaining data that is both detailed and personal (McLeod, 1994). Face to face interviews can promote the building of a 'research alliance' between the researcher and the participants (Grafanaki, 1996), and I found this to be true for me - participants took an interest in the project and felt part of something worthwhile, and in conveying this to me they increased my commitment to the research and my efforts to produce work that had some value.

The skills required for counselling apply equally in my thinking to the research interview – to be fully present, actively listening, displaying accurate

understanding, warmth, acceptance and genuineness. These qualities are of major importance in encouraging and promoting a good rapport between researcher and participants (Mearns & McLeod 1984, McLeod, 1994). The degree of sensitivity and respect towards the research participants affects the quality and depth of the interview and the material shared by the participants (Grafanaki, 1996). For my part, the personal intensity of the research interviews encouraged reflexivity, and increased my awareness of my own biases and assumptions.

Using an interview guide

An interview guide (Appendix 4) was used to ensure that I gathered information about experiences related to the themes that emerged from the literature. There were certain things I wished to know about their experiences as older workers and this became the basis for the questions on the interview guide. While the participants told their story, I asked questions at intervals in order to have them elaborate on an experience. When the story ended I asked specific questions from the guide to fill in the gaps in my understanding. Participants often asked at the beginning if there were questions for them, indicating they felt they would need these as prompts – however they then in many cases set off to tell their stories with gusto. The questions then became a helpful device to keep participants on track. My interview guide was added to when themes appeared prevalent, and certain questions were dropped off, as they appeared less relevant to the research.

An iterative process

Qualitative research designs are fluid and require researcher choices throughout the process (Polkinghorne, 1991). The interview guide was the first part of an iterative process. It was read before each interview as a reminder of the key themes for exploration, then the interview was carried out, and the information transcribed. I then read the interview data against the template I had prepared for analysis, making notes about each participant in charts related to each theme. The

template was revised (described in detail below) as the new and different data became more relevant, and different categories of data added to it. This was a constantly revised, iterative process, which for clarity I am describing in its separate elements. As time went on I found myself more relaxed with the process and less attached to the interview guide: as a researcher I found it became more productive and more enjoyable to let the process unfold, instead of trying to guide it in directions. On many occasions a specific question from my interview guide would be ignored by the participant as they preferred to elaborate on other issues. I learned to allow the story to unfold as the participant wanted, and not be driven by the desire to find answers to my specific themes.

The interview process

The interviews commonly took between one and two hours. They took place in a variety of settings: the homes of the participants, the offices of participants and my home office. Participants chose the setting and times most convenient to them. I aimed for a relaxed informal approach, and although the method is described rightly as an interaction between the interviewer and the participant, I took the role mostly as a prompter and listener, occasionally summarising an experience to check out the accuracy of my perceptions. The research participants in most cases appeared to enjoy the experience - a letter from Tom thanked me for the experience. Others expressed pleasure at the end of the interview for the opportunity to recount their experience, noting they had clarified some things in their own mind in the process. One or two found their stories a little disappointing, and made comments to the effect they wished they had done more with their lives, or taken other opportunities. With all participants there appeared to be an honest, and if anything a modest approach to their achievements. There were no instances in which I felt they were giving me the best impression of their experiences; most transcripts provided a rich mix of both positive and more challenging times. For me the process of asking, listening, attempting to carefully understand and then retell what happened was an exciting interesting and exhausting experience.

A concern for confidentiality

Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality is a critical issue in a small community. The more detailed the biographical and background data, the more difficult it is to keep people's identity secret. Some participants were concerned with privacy, and more guarded with their comments. A common concern emerged as I proceeded with the interviews as to the confidentiality of the information. A number of participants noted their recognisability, not because of any particular achievement or event but because there were few people locally who had progressed in their particular way: only one health manager who has come from that background, only one lawyer who had the particular history described, and was well known locally; few people managed large corporations in the Bay - a case study or detailed pen portrait of the subject might be identifiable.

The longer I lived in the area the more clear it was to me that people's histories were, at least in their own personal and professional circles, relatively well known. Where they had come from, what they were doing before their current role, what they were doing now, how they had got there was 'common knowledge' to many, and this compelled considerable thinking on my part about the presentation of the data. I eventually decided that using detailed case studies was inappropriate and would compromise the confidentiality of the participants. I decided I would use short quotes and pen portraits where possible, and use only a minimal number of longer examples.

After a number of participants had expressed concerns during the interviews, I made it part of my process to assure participants that I would not be utilising very large portions of transcripts, but short quotations and extracts to illustrate various themes. I had also decided early in the research to send transcripts (Appendix 3) to participants if they wished to review them, and most participants did take the option to read and vet their transcripts and delete parts they wished. They were also given the opportunity to request that no direct quotes be used, however only one participant did this. I had an agreement with this participant that I would check first with him about any quotes or examples I wished to use from his transcript. I also amended job titles to those of similar industries where it seemed that the participant was potentially identifiable.

Transcription

Transcription of the interview tapes was undertaken by myself and a word processing professional who was utilised after I was advised to limit my own computer usage for health reasons. After transcription I went through all the transcripts to eliminate references to personal family and workplace names. Most transcripts were then sent back to the participant to check that they felt the data reflected their views and they were happy with it. The few who did not receive the transcript indicated that it was not necessary or convenient for me to do this.

THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

A short questionnaire was added to the interview process to give an indication of the participant's approach and responsiveness to change and to indicate their approach to career issues. This was done for the following reason. The literature of the new careers makes the clear assertion that those who take charge of their lives and can become self-directed in their approach have the best chance of surviving well in the new environment. I therefore designed a short questionnaire to act as an initial signal to the behaviours identified in the literature.

The questionnaire (Appendix 5) is designed to indicate responses to career events or changes in career circumstances. The questionnaire is based on theoretically derived assertions (Appendix 5b) about self-initiated and responsive career behaviours and participants are asked to match their behaviours or attitudes with the questionnaire items. Participants are also asked to express beliefs as to their perceptions about effective career maintenance by ranking a number of behaviours or attitudes.

Participants filled this questionnaire out at the time of the interview. The questionnaire was reviewed after the analysis of transcripts and the checklist of behaviours. It served as a triangulation device in the analysis phase, as there were a number of overlaps between the self-assessment of the participants and the analysis of their data via the checklist.

The questionnaire statements

The questionnaire showed:

- (i) statements signalling self initiated actions which are future directed, involve forward thinking, creating, and risk-taking, actions associated with expectation of change (Hagevik, 2000). These statements reflect the ability to act in the face of uncertainty and change, and are related in the literature to proactive behaviours,
- (ii) statements signalling positive responsiveness containing actions which are present directed, responding in the present, and displaying adaptation to external events; actions associated with acceptance of change and responsiveness to it (Super & Knasel 1979; Savickas, 1997). These statements imply an approach of reacting positively when necessary and are related in the literature to behaviours of adaptability,
- (iii) statements signalling inactivity, demonstrating a lack of action, or negative perceptions of opportunities. The statements reflect paradigm paralysis (Gelatt, 1993) - the inability to make appropriate shifts in thinking as situations and contexts change.

The statements in the questionnaire provided to the participants are reproduced below with the indicators alongside (not supplied to the participants). The instructions to the participants were "Choose the one that fits you best." Participants' responses were counted to identify the predominant attitudes and behaviours chosen.

DATA ANALYSIS

I examined the data with a template which reflected some strong assumptions that I had made from the literature, setting out the themes I wished to study. I elected to use a template with categories I had identified early in my research, with the intention of adding salient categories as they emerged. My approach was as

follows: to start with the thematic framework developed from the issues that I wished to explore, and add or subtract themes or categories as the analysis progressed. It was first trialled with 6 transcripts.

The initial template consisted of broad topic areas, with categories I had identified from the literature early in my research. I began by reviewing each transcript looking for data which matched the broad topic areas and the identified items on the initial template. I thought of this as the first layer of my research, noting identifiable topic areas and the direct responses to my interview prompts and questions - I was identifying the responses to the researcher driven categories.

I then reread the transcripts and coded the items in the transcript which related to the items on the template, at the same time examining further categories which emerged from the data. These I added to the template items. I also noted any further items which might become a subcategory. Sometimes these were direct quotes that resonated with the literature, descriptions in depth or elaborations on the topic theme.

Developing a template

Here is an illustration of how the template was developed:

Table 8. Template development

1 ST LAYER	2 ND LAYER	3 RD LAYER
Themes chosen from research questions and literature (and used as part of the interview guide)	Categories generated from the data	Subcategories-emerging from data
Learning		
Approach to learning, importance, interest to participants:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - responsiveness to provided opportunities - initiation and seeking of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning as an imposition, unnecessary - learning as a personal

What does it mean to them?	opportunities - disinterest in learning - enthusiasm for learning	strategy, love of learning explicitly stated
Learning behaviours and strategies: What have they done? How have they undertaken their learning ? Formal Learning Informal Learning	- learning through formal study - learning from training, structured opportunities - learning from daily tasks and experiences -picking up specific skills on the job	- doing required qualifications - initiating qualifications - taking what is offered “Making sure I know” “continually learning, observing, watching others” ‘using situations’ e.g. interviews, assignments, projects, travel as learning opportunities - taking a job for a specific purpose - being aware of what was learnt on a job

The final template showed three ‘layers’, and I examined the data for examples of each category (Appendix 6).

Structuring the data

My intention was to let the data speak for itself where possible, and to use significant quotations to show the participants’ meaning. I was influenced by Marshall’s (1981) concept of “chunks of meaning” (p.397), and I charted the information I gathered from the transcripts in this way. As Marshall (1981) says, “the units are really fairly obvious - you get chunks of meaning which come out of the data itself. If you read a side of transcript there is something which comes out to you” (p. 397). A chart for example, with the heading “attitudes to learning” held quotes I have picked out from each of the participants underneath this

heading. I also made notes on the participants about their attitudes, eg strategies for learning that emerged, those who showed little interest.

At moments when I felt overwhelmed by data and I was not sure where I was going, I did drawings and diagrams. Ideas and images about careers started as a series of balloons over the heads of the participants ...who was thinking what? Where was the synergy? What were the differences? Usually this approach showed a path to follow, sometimes the ideas and diagrams were dead end roads, but that in itself was sometimes a useful finding. I kept notebooks of ideas and possibilities, and returned to these constantly. Sometimes there is the surprise of an idea written many months ago and forgotten; another trail to pursue.

Developing a checklist for analysis

The general career management strategies and behaviours of the participants that emerged in the data, such as approaches to learning and training, getting work, were identified during template analysis. However I have made some a priori assumptions from the literature that I applied to the data, and those assumptions form the basis of a checklist developed as part of the template of analysis.

I had identified specific behaviours as significant in the literature, i.e. initially those of proactivity and adaptability. I therefore developed an initial checklist of “proactive” and “adaptable” career behaviours, as defined by the literature (Chapter 4) to use as a tool for the specific analysis of the interview data. However in the process of interviewing and reading and listening to the transcripts the power of identity seemed to emerge. I was struck by the “sense of self” that some participants demonstrated, both in words, and through the assurance and coherence with which they presented their story.

Using definitions sourced from Hall (2002) described more fully in Chapter 4, I added ‘identity awareness’ to the behaviours of proactivity and adaptability listed on the checklist with the intention of attempting to identify these from the data.

Assembling the checklist of indicators

The items on the checklist were developed in the following way. From the literature, I identified three variables which I define in the following way:

Proactivity

People display proactivity in their career behaviour when they:

- Identify opportunities around them and take action to benefit from them;

As in examples: *reading the environment, anticipating change, gathering the information to position oneself for these changes, try to influence the changes in some way* (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999);

- Make decisions to build career capital in anticipation of inevitable change (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle 1999)
- Seek out and pursue opportunities for self improvement (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999)
- Demonstrate continuous learning;

this is defined as: *Thinks about learning from daily events, applies knowledge later, searches for information to meet performance needs.* (London & Mone, 1999);

- Display initiative and perseverance (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999).

Proactivity does not include passive responsiveness, inactivity, or a resigned acceptance of situations.

Adaptability

While recognising that adaptability has more complex definitions in the career development and psychological literature, in this study I use definitions from the literature that I consider apply to career management ideas and practice.

People display adaptability in their career behaviour when they:

- Display a willingness to respond positively to new work requirements (Savickas, 1997)
- Act to accommodate change and new roles that are presented to them (Super & Knasel, 1979, Pratzner & Ashley, 1984, Hall, 2002)
- Show acceptance of the environment around them and its changes (Isaacson & Brown, 1993)
- Respond positively to learning opportunities, create learning and engage in ongoing learning (Hall, 1996, 2002).

Adaptability does not generally suggest acting to influence change in some way, and ongoing initiating behaviours.

Identity Awareness

Identity may be broadly defined as “how a person sees himself/herself” (Hall, 1986), and in relation to career, as the “internal compass” (Hall, 2002) which keeps the career actor headed on the path most suited to their values and goals. Identity awareness suggests knowledge of self and identity: one’s own attributes and preferences, goals, and values, one’s strength and abilities and where they fit in terms of values and sense of identity.

People display identity awareness, and a ‘sense of self’ when they

- Display awareness of their own skills, abilities, characteristics;
- Demonstrate self assessment, and reflection in examining assets that they have, require, or lack;
- Describe and exhibit an understanding of the goals and values which have meaning and purpose for them;
- Have the ability to gain and utilise feedback, so that their own perceptions of self or performance are realistic and reviewed. (Hall, 2002, p.33).

These definitions were used as indicators on a checklist to analyse participants’ data. (Appendix 7).

Developing a model for analysis

I designed a model of examples of the behaviours that I was attempting to identify by using one transcript which seemed to incorporate them all. Within the model, the left column states the indicator, and the right column gives examples from the transcript of that behaviour. The model is shown in part below; the complete model is found in Appendix 8.

Table 9. Model of examples to assist analysis (part)

Indicators -	Examples from transcript (June)
<i>Proactivity</i> 1. Identify opportunities around them and take action to benefit from them	<i>"The main reason I went is the health changes were starting. I knew that job, if I did it well, would grow to others."</i>
2. Seeks out and pursues opportunities for self improvement	<i>Started also at the same time in doing post-graduate course in manipulative therapy, which was a 3-year part-time course where you had to go away and do weekends and pass sections, etc. "I was one of the oldest people in the class doing post-grad"</i> <i>Started doing post-grad in Health Management and has completed two of the four papers for that</i>
3. Demonstrates continuous learning (defined as)- <i>Thinks about learning from daily events, applies knowledge later, searches for information to meet performance needs.</i>	<i>There were good learning opportunities in the hospital and there were good learning opportunities in the process of change. It's a very challenging and dynamic environment and while some people can get scared of that environment and retrench back I actually always look for the opportunities."</i> <i>"we were lucky that we were allowed to be involved in negotiations with the ministry and I developed a very good understanding of contracts and their application. I'm constantly looking - I'm constantly assessing the environment we work in and I think the people who get confused and are very negative, they only look at the internal environment. They don't look at the external environment that is the drivers of change where we're going.</i> <i>I looked at what was happening and I could actually understand the environment. You do a lot of reading and listening and whatever.</i>

4. Makes decisions to build future career capital.	<p><i>" The main reason I went is the health changes were starting. I knew that job, if I did it well, would grow to others."</i></p> <p><i>I would like to have the ability in 5 years time to do consultancy in health and I think the project work I do now is very good preparation for that.</i></p>
5. Displays initiative and perseverance	<p><i>I find out what I don't know and I'm very good at networking to get the information and surround myself with people that have the skills that I haven't got.</i></p> <p><i>Within the organisation even as a therapist I made sure I was finding out what was happening in the other divisions</i></p>

With each transcript I looked for behaviours that matched the indicators on the checklist, and marked the checklist accordingly. The participants were then categorised as very characteristic, generally characteristic, not very characteristic or uncharacteristic in demonstrating that behaviour.

VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

Hammersley (1990) defines validity as "truth: interpreted as the extent to which a study accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (p.57). In this study the question becomes whether I communicated accurately the experiences that were communicated to me, and interpreted accurately the behaviours they chose in those processes. I was attracted to Marshall's (1995) idea of "faithfulness" which she defines as "staying close to what the person had said, and using their words and quotations where possible " (Marshall, 1995, p.31). However this does not allay the common concern that findings are genuinely based on a critical investigation of all the data, and do not depend on a few well chosen examples (Silverman, 2000). As Bryman (1988) points out one of the weaknesses in qualitative research is the use of brief conversations, snippets used to provide evidence of a particular contention – "there are grounds for disquiet in the representativeness or generality of these "(p.77).

Yet these ‘snippets’ are part of the very essence of our research, the words that give us the richness and depth of data. Recognising this, I tried to use meaningful chunks of data to tell the story of their speaker, and not to demonstrate generality. I included many verbatim extracts in the analysis data, to reveal as best I could to the reader the data on which the interpretations were based. This provides some means for the reader to evaluate the validity of the study for themselves (Silverman, 2000). I also attempted to represent participants’ positions accurately by ensuring that participants were located within categories that were representative of their position by creating as many categories as the data required, and indicating where there was uncertainty about a participants view. The use of extracts in a range of categories assist in revealing the breadth of responses. However in some cases I used one example only, not to signal that it was representative of many others but more to exemplify the clarity and range of the data offered and to reveal my interpretation of it.

Triangulation suggests getting a ‘true’ fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it. Taping interviews reduces problems with reliability in that the data is accurately presented as it is spoken, ensuring a high quality of data providing transcription is accurate and nothing is lost (Silverman, 2000, p.185). I first offered the transcript back to the candidates to ensure that any misjudgements of transcription were addressed, and that the overall data I was analysing was ‘true’ for the participant. This process ensures the accuracy of the transcribed data. In my presented data I tried to show the spread of ideas around various positions, and to look for the case that did not fit, and search for why this was so.

For reliability to be calculated it is incumbent on researchers to document their procedures. The procedures I used to show my methods were reliable include illustrating these methods as far as possible, setting out clearly the means and tools of analysis, and giving examples of how analysis proceeded. In analysing the behaviours of the participants in this study, I created a model of behaviours, and made this available; this allows readers to assess the interpretive decisions I made.

The researcher’s role is to “illuminate the phenomenon under investigation” (Cohen & Mallon, 2001 p.55) capturing richness and ambiguity as well as a sense

of order and sequence (Cohen & Mallon, 2001); and to achieve this requires judgement and perspective. In working with qualitative data we face the “inevitability of the author’s perspective and judgement” (Casey, 1995, p.199) and I have indicated where possible my approaches to this study. As Watson (2000, p.12) says “to reveal the hand of the puppeteer in ones’ writing can help achieve a degree of objectivity, in that the reader can make up their own mind about the “biases “ or “spins” of the writer. ”

Table 10. The Participants in the study

Name	Age	Gender	Title	Ed Quals	Rel	Ch
Andrew	54	M	Solicitor	LL.B	M	3
Annabel	46	F	Business Consultant, and partner in a home orchard	BA/Dipl/PGDipl		
Beth	50	F	Retail business owner	Dipl	W	2
Bev	54	F	Director, Health Service	B.N/ NZRN	D	Nni
Carl	51	M	Caregiver / Nurse Motor Mechanic	Trades Cert/B.N	M	Nni
Derek	49	M	Managing Director, own Company	NZCE	M	2
Fiona	50	F	Administrator	Sec	M	1
Gail	48	F	Secondary Teacher	B.A/Dipl/Cert	M	0
Jake	60	M	Retired insurance broker/ small business	Prof Assoc	M	Nni
Jenny	53	F	Practice Nurse + Small Business	NZRN /Dipl	M	2
John	60	M	Horticulturist	TradesCert	M	Nni
June	55	F	Health Manager (large hospital)	Dipl/PGDipl+ papers		
Kevin	53	M	Education advisor	BA/BSci/Dipl		
Liz	47	F	Horticulturalist + businesses	B.A/Dipl.+ papers	M	3
Marie	45	F	Secondary Teacher	B.Sc/Dipl	M	3
Matt	49	M	Secondary Teacher/ Small business owner	B.Sc/Dipl	M	Nni
Max	57	M	Sports Officer	Sec /Police	M	Nni
Meg	51	F	Occupational Health Nurse (self Employed)	RGON + papers	M	2
Mike	50	M	Lecturer	NZCE, Fire Service	M	Nni
Nick	48	M	Just left long term (25yrs) job as clerk in large organisation	Sec	D	0
Pat	47	M	Company Director	Dipl.	D	Nni
Paula	55	F	Retail (part-time) + Small business	Dipl	M	2
Richard	56	M	Real Estate Agent	Sec	M	Nni
Ruth	49	F	Teacher (part-time)	B.A/ Dipl	W	1
Sheila	52	F	Medical Editor (pt) + small businesses	B Sc	M	2
Simon	53	M	Education Administrator	LL.M+Papers	M	Ni
Steve	58	M	Franchise Owner /Sales	Sec	M	Nni
Sue	52	F	Grapegrower	Sec	M	0
Todd	54	M	Manager (Food Industry)	MBA	M	Nni
Tom	59	M	Packaging Clerk	Sec	M	3
Viv	60	F	Clerical worker, p/t temp.	Papers	W	Nni
Wynn	52	F	Employment Consultant	Cert.	M	1

Name - Pseudonym used to protect the identity of the participants

Age - The age of the participants at the time of the interview

Gender - Male or Female

Title - the occupational titles that the participant used on interview data, or similar where a change is required to protect confidentiality.

Ed. The highest level of education achieved. Sec/Cert/Trades/Dipl/B-Bachelors. M- Masters PG

Post graduate, papers- work in progress towards qualification

Child. – No of children, Nni- Has children but number was not indicated.

Rel – Married or partnered, s- single , d- divorced, w -widowed.

CHAPTER SIX

CAREER IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

Chapters six, seven and eight present the data and discuss the findings of this study. Chapter six addresses the following research questions:

- What picture of careers and the employment world do the study group hold? What concepts, ideas and beliefs are they acting on regarding their careers?

This chapter explores the influences that participants experienced early on in their career history, the concepts of career that they have acted on during their working life, and examines their perceptions of work in their lives. This is followed by a discussion in Part B on the findings.

PART A. IDEAS AND CONCEPTS OF CAREER

INFLUENCES ON EARLY CHOICES

Choices were influenced significantly by others for this group, family and societal norms were strong influences and impacted clearly on the their early choices. While early career decisions and experiences are not the focus of this research, in the stories of the research participants the themes of the middle take on significance as extensions of the beginning and movements towards the end (Cochran, 1990). A career story has a beginning, a middle and an end, and the career stories of these participants invariably started with the choices they had made early in their careers...where they started their career life.

Family influences

The influence of parents and family members was a common feature of the career choices made by these workers, who of course had started their careers in the 1950's and 1960's.

Meg's grandmother and mother were nurses and that became her choice. *"I think in my age I don't think we had a lot of choice, or I was just the type that went with the flow. It's not a great dissatisfaction, it's just the way it was."* Nursing was a relatively short course, it was paid, and she wanted to travel. Marie *"followed her mother into teaching"*, Fiona's mother had been an office worker, and so *"I followed her lead."* Sue's sister went into office work, *"so I took a commercial course too."* Tom's father had bought land in Hawke's Bay, so he went to work on it, because *'it was expected'* although he really wanted to go to university, and study to become an accountant. Steve's father was a tradesman so he started in that work. Nick's father got him work in the manufacturing plant where he worked- and Nick was to spend 25 years there. Derek went into the family construction business, established by his father straight from school. Andrew fits the category of *"the person who in reality followed their father's footsteps. My father was a lawyer and I think looking back for as long as I can remember I probably wanted to do law at University."*

Pat followed parental advice to join the Public service for the security and stability it held, *"that was where you went"*, and Paula was encouraged by her father to look for security of employment, and also the funding to study, so chose a course – Dietetics –that provided a studentship. Later casual work overseas convinced her she was a librarian at heart, but she didn't pursue this. She notes also the lack of assistance in her time to find what suited: *"that's what I should have done and I think if I'd been starting off again these days I would have realised it or someone else would have realised it and steered you into what you're really good at."* Of the 32 participants, 11 indicated a parental influence of this type in relation to their career choices.

Constraints v. enactment

The majority of this sample reported severe constraints on their initial choices of vocational training. Prescribed paths, gender norms, financial and family constraints and ‘availability’ drove their choices.

Annabel and Carl found their choices prescribed by their school paths: Carl entered the public service when he really wanted a more practical course, but having finished the professional stream at school, he found *“it wasn’t the done thing.”* Annabel completed an academic strand, and found her choices were *“teaching or nursing”* so chose teaching so she could leave home. Kevin just *“drifted”* into university, because *“it seemed to be the thing to do.”* Gender norms influenced others: Jenny wanted to become a doctor but that was *“sort of frowned on so I did nursing instead.”* Gail chose teaching because *“it seemed like a good choice for a girl.”* Liz was really interested in horticulture but *“it was not really what women do”* - and her parents wanted her to have a broad education so she entered an Arts degree.

Finances influenced Todd’s choice: he agreed to stay in the Bay to play rugby for a senior team, and in return he required them to find him work, and thus began his traineeship in the meat industry. Family finances also motivated Jake to accept a local banking job, instead of going to university to become an Art teacher, which he had aspired to since he was a small boy.

Others fell into what was available - or began training without a clear outcome: Matt decided on teaching after his university degree and an OE filled with a range of experiences; Ruth tried a variety of things but eventually trained as a teacher, her choice driven mainly because it was convenient for her family situation.

Only one participant, June, describes a very self-directed choice, which was physiotherapy. After reading the biography of June Opie at a very young age she made up her mind to do this and never considered other alternatives. She is the exception in this group, for the others there was overwhelming parental and traditional influences in their early choices. Many of the group explained this as simply a feature of their time.

CONCEPTS OF CAREER

“Each of us has our personal lens through which to look at careers, our own *image* of what a career is (Inkson, 2004, p.97).”

The influence of family and societal norms on early career behaviour may well explain a reticence in this group with the idea of career- careers were for certain people and jobs, but it was not necessarily what these people did. Career as advancement and career as profession are two concepts which are readily identified in public thinking about career (Hall, 2002), and they emerge clearly in this data as career concepts of this group. They are concepts however which they feel have little connection with their own experiences.

Denial of career

Many of the participants were unable to apply the term “career” to their own lives. Sheila saw goals as the stepping-stones of her working life, and was adamant the concept of career did not apply to her. *“I don’t have a career, I set goals.”* She explained that career is not something she thought about, interests were more important, and she had never wanted advancement to management. *“I would have had to have gone on and become the manager and a manager means that you look after people.”* Sheila is clear that she is not having a career, as having a career to her implies organisational activity and advancement. She also reveals some ‘new’ career thinking, but does not call it career:

“You’ve got to have multiple streams of income these days and that’s what we tell our children, its no use having a job and a career, you’ve got to have more than one income. You start with a job, an earning facility and then you use that and build on that to produce income, and that’s what we tell our children, and that’s where I think all young people should be looking, not to be in a job for X number of years and then retire. You never retire if you have other things. I don’t have a career, I have goals.”

For Liz, a career did not mean what *she* was doing. *"I was a bit before that age when women were keen on a career as such...when the kids went back to school it didn't occur to me to go back to the workforce because I had enough around me to keep me occupied."* Liz sees her paid work as sideline activities, stimulating short projects, chosen to fit around the family needs. The many small businesses she has operated do not qualify, the career concept is saved for something much more special. Liz, like others in the group sees career more as profession.

Paula never *"stuck"* to a career, describing it as an established path. *"I'm not a competitive person,"* she explained. Tom (aged 58) does not see himself as having a career - *"a career is something that you start when you're young and you keep going right through to the end."* Viv (also aged 58) agrees, she says career is something she should have started when she was young. *"I can't have a career as such at my age."*

Carl had thought a lot about the term career, and liked the idea of the word as a verb - he offered the meaning for him, being to travel very fast without any direction. The other kind of career he found much too serious. *"I come into conflict with the career term - career is something that is totally focussed and deadly serious, and that doesn't fit me. That in X number of years I'm going to be managing director. No. I like the random factor, the variety. I think I viewed career as a tunnel with no destination."*

This is a powerful metaphor offered by Carl, and one relating to direction and journey, however this journey was to be avoided. Richard sees a career as a commitment to a particular field, and not necessarily working towards the goal of being CEO, but recognising that is probably the ultimate goal. He feels that it does not apply to his work as a real estate agent.

Many participants were simply not comfortable with the concept at all, and it did not fit their idea of what they were doing. Despite heading a large property and construction company, and working in this company all his life, Derek does not think of himself as having a career. *"No, I didn't think of it as a career at all...it's just what you do. You get up and you do it. Because you enjoy what you are*

doing.” Kevin is in agreement with this, for him career is having been “not so much about a path, but more about finding day-to-day satisfaction.”

Ruth is regretful at not, in her view, achieving a career. Although there were opportunities for her, and while she is quick to point out that a career *is* important, she found herself more committed to her very part-time working lifestyle. Looking back she is not happy with her own commitment as she didn’t “*do something.*” Fiona sees herself as just marking time at present, and “*probably not having a career now, I’m not going anywhere.*”

Career as goals and advancement

Career as growth and advancement was implied by others: June sought these opportunities, “*I knew if I followed that path it would lead to others.*” Todd also saw his organisational career as advancement, getting better and better jobs. However he says while he never planned his career, instead he consistently set goals for every challenge or step that appeared before him, and systematically achieved them. Gail also saw her career as a step at a time – a series of single goals to be met.

Careers as valid in occupational structures

More ownership and recognition of career was felt by those who spent their working lives in the more observable structures of the public service, education, health, the police, and the fire service – the bureaucratic organizations which are the home of the traditional idea of career. Annabel did not think much at all about career until a management job in her public service industry appeared – when she won this responsible role, she felt she was having a career. Marie and Gail also began to think about it consciously when they achieved their management roles.

After a long career in the formal structures of the police, Max was very clear that he had had a career, and he was very satisfied with it “*I felt I had achieved a very*

satisfactory career, I felt good about myself." His career when he retired at 55 was recognised and celebrated with the formal leaving rituals which often take place in a service organisation. Mike refers to entry in to the fire service as *"immediately starting a career path"* with some clear steps ahead of him.

Simon, on the other hand left an educational administration role to study for a higher level degree. While he acknowledges his career, he is disappointed with his career outcomes. Having spent many years in tertiary education and taken a large number of academic and management roles, he now finds the doors to new positions are not open to him. He wishes that clear career paths had been signalled to him in earlier years and much more support had been given - more 'formal' directive assistance to negotiate his future career:

"Nobody ever suggested that perhaps I should do an MBA and get a knowledge of strategic management. There is nobody tapping you on the shoulder and saying we think you have got potential. In 20 years you could be a XX, and this is what you have got to do."

Matt as a teacher describes himself as committed to classroom teaching. He prefers to describe himself as having a long-term *"vocation"* rather than a career, as he has *"never wanted or worked towards management roles."* Matt's distinction seems to be that he is professional, not managerial, and again the suggestion is that one must be managerial to have a career.

Only 10 participants saw themselves as having a career of sorts, and all of these are describing times when they were in structured occupations. Generally there was a reluctance to use the word, imbued as it seems to be with qualities of advancement, profession and direction. Even when Derek had advanced to Managing Director of a very large company, it still seemed that he felt it was a little presumptuous to use this term. Only Max, after a long and satisfying career in the police, and Mike in the fire service, were comfortable enough with the term to refer to it consistently, and apply it often to their experience. Others who acknowledged a career - Marie, Gail, Annabel, and Jake - all indicated it only became a conscious idea after they reached management status.

Few careers are planned

The concept of career for many appeared synonymous with planning – if you didn't plan it you didn't have one. Mike is the only participant in this group who specifically refers to formal career planning, *"I actually sat down and worked out what rank I would be and courses I would do within the fire service and what qualifications I would get, so that was a 10 year plan which took me through essentially Assistant Commander."*

Sue says for her, nothing was really planned, *"I guess I just followed my nose from school."* Wynn says nothing was really planned, *"I've fallen into jobs, I've never really planned a career."* Bev says she hasn't been good at planning her career, *"but then again I am where I want to be."* Pat, now a managing director says he never had a conscious career plan, *"I just went with the flow, there was never a clear plan that I wanted to aspire to."* Meg didn't plan, she arranged her work to fit family circumstances, and her own *"3-year boredom cycle."* For this group, just "going with the flow", or taking opportunities as they arose, appeared to be the antithesis of career.

Todd and Gail, now in very senior management roles, both set personal goals at all stages of their career. Marie says her career happened accidentally, as opportunities opened up for her, however now she has reached management level she is planning and has clear goals for her future. *"It is much more purposeful now. I'm planning now, I'm looking to see what I can achieve."* Annabel describes a similar situation: *"I took control of what work I was going to do in 1995. Up till then it was what there was, that I went and did. The only truly active 'make your own choice' decision was when I chose to apply for the manager's job and that is probably when I first started thinking about skills and skill sets and keeping horizons broader."*

IDEAS ABOUT THE PLACE OF WORK IN THEIR LIVES

If the group are reticent on the idea of career, they communicate clear ideas on the place of work in their lives. Over half of the 32 subjects mentioned balance or a similar idea which signalled the importance of time for other things in their lives.

June says her career could go further if she was prepared to move out of the Bay, but *'you've got to have balance.'* For Sue, it *"shouldn't be the be all and the end all. You need time for other things."* Wynn likes her work to fit around her freedoms – *"to come and go, do other things, make choices."* Matt plans his work around his life, not vice versa, *'it fills in the time between other things.'* Pat is clear he doesn't want his work to be his life, although he is prepared to put in the hours when he needs to *"but I don't want to be working 60-70 hours a week."* He wants time for children and his boat. John is *"looking for a balanced lifestyle. I think a good way of summing it up probably is do you live to work or work to live. I think I have got to that I work to live."*

Max describes himself as excited about going to work, but he notes he always had another full life in community sporting organisations. Paula gets irritated by the intrusion of work on her day-to-day activities, and has what she calls an *"old fashioned, almost socialist attitude. I know that some people are absolutely driven and can't stop working but I think, as a contribution to society, you should probably only work enough in paid employment to maintain your adequate lifestyle and give someone else a go. Really, that's it. If you want to work more than that you should do it voluntarily."*

At the same time there are strong indications of work commitment. Todd's philosophy is clear- work extremely hard, take what you are offered and do well with it. Viv revealed high commitment – her job was her life in her early factory management role. Her frustration lies now with being unable to find a workplace that will allow her to make a commitment *"if I'm working I like to give it 100% and I don't like to ask for time off. I like to give - if I've made that commitment I like to do it."*

Integration of community work into career

There was a strong theme of community involvement. Over half of the participants mentioned participation in community and voluntary work: Paula and Wynn have both worked with the disabled, Wynn's early involvement as a volunteer led to her work in that role. Andrew sees his career as integrally associated with service organisations, Max with sports organisations, Steve sponsors a wide range of events through his business, but he also holds strong beliefs about community- *"instead of being a taker, be a giver and if you adopt that attitude as a giver the good things will come. I guess that I practice what I preach because I am on 2 or 3 committees, you know the A & P Society for example or polo club where I do a bit of administration, hey, someone has got to do it but I quite enjoy it."* Marie was heavily involved in voluntary work with the Parents Centre and the National Council of Women, before her return to teaching, and for some time after that.

Andrew sees contribution to the community as an important part of being a lawyer, and has always been part of a service organisation. He gives an explanation of this involvement as part of a tradition of professional people in a local community:

"I think that there was an understanding that as a professional person you had skills and abilities which could be used in the community.... And I think in a sense people in the community from time to time looked to you, or look at you and made a decision that you could assist their organization because of the skills that you have, it is a two way system in the sense that its been in a traditional sense a requirement of people in professional life to give back to the community in other areas, particularly in the skills that you have in terms of organization and management and leadership skills that you have. People would ask you, and then there was a feeling that it was right and proper to do it."

Many of the women mention service to community organisations during time out for children, and there is ongoing commitment to schools from Liz, Annabel, and Marie. Sue is contemplating training for voluntary literacy work at present, and a number mention it in plans for the later retirement era.

Integration of family into career

Many of the women had children but returned to work while they were at a relatively young age, and in Wynn's case, never really stopped work. *"I worked full time always – worked around childcare. I've always managed that OK."* Hearing a number of comments along these lines, and the lack of description of any stress around the combination of family and work roles, I wondered if time had just dulled the experience. I found myself aware of my own bias, as a former working mother in Auckland, and I expected to hear something about the pressure of those years, the difficulties of time, travel, getting children to day-care, or after school activities. While this related only to their early career lives and was not a specifically related to my research questions, I was intrigued that the descriptions of this time in their lives seemed very unpressured and trouble free. After a number of interviews, I began to ask the participants specifically about their experiences of parenting alongside their working lives and discovered it did not seem to be an issue worth much discussion, many had already arranged their lives to accommodate the spaces that they wanted to have for family. Annabel worked in the same organization before and after her children's births, and her response was typical. *"It was easy. I mean there are so many support services here anyway. With my daughter I didn't have her go to day care straight off – first child and at 6 months old that seemed too young, but my son at 5 1/2 months was at day care and it was actually a better scenario than what I had done for my daughter. Day cares are open from before 8am to after 5pm. The school my children go to had before and after school care plus holiday programmes and also, we created family support locally."* While the services described were no different from those in any large city, there were other factors in play - proximity to services, shorter working days and lack of traffic to make accessibility easier. In some cases there were partners at home 'on the property' for after school care, and working days remain short - in many cases workers are home by 5pm or 5.30 - in sharp contrast to many city and corporate work cultures.

EXAMINING THE SUBJECTIVE CAREER

New career theory is characterised by an emphasis on subjective interpretations of career. Schein (1996) proposed that the internal (or subjective) career will act to hold together the fragmented set of jobs which will make up a career, with the glue being a strong self-concept. Sheila is a case in point. She has three areas or work - or income streams as she prefers to call them - and a very clear sense of who she is and what she wants:

"At the moment I'm renegotiating my company work, because of the systems we have in place in Hawke's Bay. I mean I have extra that few people at my company have – it's to do with perseverance really. I'm a bit of a Sherlock Holmes, I nut things out, so I'm renegotiating my situation and if it doesn't fit in with their criteria that's fine because I have lots of other interests. They are very important to me.

We have several properties, we get good return, we also help people to have good accommodation. We have good quality accommodation. That's important to us. And we have tenants that ring us and say, please ...if you have another house free....

We are also involved in network marketing in a big way, its to do with nutritional skin care, that's my field, it's exciting, it's fascinating, I could turn my hand to that tomorrow and go full time. At the moment I'm only doing it part time. I can see it coming to the fore, and I enjoy it, I enjoy the people, I enjoy helping people.

We want to travel, we have the children, we want the residual income, I don't want to be working.....you don't want to be sitting in an office 9-5.

I am ahead of my time now with the teleworking, that's all going to come, but I've had to make it work for me. So I've never been scared, well I have but it hasn't stopped me."

Sheila is driven by her own personal needs and goals; she exemplifies the subjective career. She also exemplifies enactment of career. When Sheila left Auckland for Hawke's bay she negotiated the first part-time telework role in her organization, creating flexible work for herself, and introducing changes in the firm that she had left. She adds also to the environment of local flexible workers.

Success and career

For this group, concepts of success are mixed, but consistently reflect the achievement of personal aims, goals or ways of being. The concept of psychological success (Mirvis & Hall 1994) which describes success in one's life work, encompassing not only a job and an organisation, but also work as a spouse, parent, community member and as a self developer fits this group better than ideas of success in terms of objective criteria such as salary and status. While there is a respect for the benefits of financial success, this is balanced with ways of being, happiness, and job satisfaction. This group offers clear evidence in support of the contention (Mirvis & Hall, 1994) that success in the new careers environment may be as much linked with individual goals that are diverse and wide ranging as organisational goals.

Feminist writers have challenged male models of success as being defined by the external career (Gallos, 1989, Marshall, 1989), citing different indicators of success as more apt for women such as a stronger focus on personal goals, balance and relationships. However with this group there is little difference in the statements of men and women. Both mentioned financial achievements, most focused on the duality of success.

Table 11. Factors mentioned by participants in their description of success

Males mentioned	Females mentioned
Max – Being competent, getting feedback I am doing a good job, making a worthwhile contribution, feeling good about myself	June – Getting recognised for what you are doing, having a high level of job satisfaction, financial success.
Todd – Achieving goals, achieving status in the organization, achieving goals for my family	Sheila - Feeling fulfilled, feeling good about myself, my personal achievement
Matt – Success is enjoying what you are doing, having the students succeed	Annabel - Having a happy balanced lifestyle-but income is a key factor. I define success by income.
Pat – living comfortably, having a good income	Bev - The quality of my professional skills

Carl – enjoyment of life, fulfillment of my goals	Marie – Achieving a goal, seeing students achieve
Richard – getting regular sales, the lifestyle you want.	Paula - Having retirement income, being relatively happy
Mike - Growing people, being well, complete, happy	Wynn - Running my business well, achieving success for clients – and its also the way I feel about myself.
Jake - Self realisation and self worth	
Kevin - Working within my values	

The dual nature of success

This theme runs through all the comments made about success. Richard describes the dual idea of success - the objective financial measure, and also the achievement of a ‘way of being’ that suits him. *“Success is the regular sale...and then at the end of the day being able to get on a bike and go for a ride, and keep one’s mind reasonably sharp, and one’s body reasonably fit and healthy.”*

June also describes this. *“Success for me - I guess part of it’s financial. It’s no use being successful if you’ve barely got enough money to live on. But the other success for me is one getting recognised for what you’re doing but actually having a high level of job satisfaction. And I don’t think that comes from being passive. I’m not passive about the environment we work in.”*

Because research participants were in their 40’s and 50’s, it was common for them to reflect on changes in their thinking. Steve (in his late 50’s) expressed this change of thinking as occurring over time:

“to be successful was to be the top salesman, but as you get older you ask is money the measurement? I suggest no, it is not. Because as you get older most of us successful people do accumulate, and as we are accumulating we are building up assets to make ourselves more comfortable in our lifestyles and then it goes...how you stand in the community? Are you respected? Do you tell the truth? It is more value based.”

Tom (also in his late 50’s) noted:

"I think my ideas have changed over time...there probably was a time when I wanted to make lots of money, but now I think success means to me doing a job properly and getting real satisfaction out of it.Success to me is providing for your family so you can all enjoy a certain standard of living, and doing your job, and getting a bit of respect from your peers."

Carl noted that fulfillment of personal goals, and enjoyment of what he does are the main indicators of success for him, and it is probably a different answer to that he would have given a few years ago *"the enjoyment factor has come to the fore."* Wynn, who is in a business review period revealed the relationship between her view of success and her self esteem – *"success for me was not just the money thing, it was also the way I felt about things, and myself, and I think it has slipped a bit."*

Three of the participants did not know what they considered success, and perhaps this reflected uncertainty about themselves, as Ruth commented *"I need to do something worthwhile."*

Conclusion

This section examined the concepts ideas and beliefs about career held by the study group, the place of work in their lives and their views regarding career success. I am struck by the denial of career by these participants. If they are not having a career then what are they having? What they tell me about is the working life that they have created. Savickas (2000) says careers must become more personal and self directed to flourish in the post-modern information age: career should be viewed not as a lifetime employment on an occupational ladder, "but as a carrier of personal meaning that defines and structures significant events in a life" (Carlsen, 1988, p.186, cited in Savickas, 2000). This is a definition that is more useful with this group, and fits well with many of the career ideas of the participants - they saw career as something formal, structured, organisational and intrinsically important, therefore not belonging to them.

Planning a career is undertaken by few - and while careers may involve chance and serendipity (Gelatt, 1992) perhaps these comments simply illustrate a failure to apply the behaviours they actually *do* use to the idea of career planning - as instanced by Sheila and Todd's insistence on the term "goal-setting" as their tool of making their way in the employment world.

Although traditional objective markers such as hierarchical or institutional status continue to define career for the participants of this study, they articulate clearly in their discussion of their own career the personal goals and concepts characteristic of subjective careers. Integration of work and lifestyle needs, more traditional in rural life appear to be long term and important underlying influences for many in this study, and the desire for a balanced life is a prevalent theme, as indicated above. For this group, concepts of success are mixed, but consistently reflect the achievement of personal aims, goals or ways of being. While there is a respect for the benefits of financial success, this is balanced with ways of being, happiness, and job satisfaction. There is little difference in gender: men and women alike noted values, advancement, and financial rewards as important in varying degrees.

PART B. DISCUSSION: IDEAS AND CONCEPTS OF CAREER

Concepts of career for this group imply something that is fixed, that takes place in an organisation, that is planned in those contexts and leads to advancement. For some career is constricting and part of another world. Their concepts confirm the notion of deeply embedded stereotypes (Inkson, 2004), and constructs in their thinking - in this case the tenacious image of the organisational and observable ladder. Non-compliance with this image certainly forces many to see themselves as operating outside the traditional careers arena. Metaphor themes used by this group are those of directionality - going somewhere, going on to responsibility and journeys, on paths and in tunnels, and the direction is upward in the overall hierarchy of the world of work. These are typically all pervasive themes in thinking about career (Hall, 2002), and clearly held by this group.

Interpretations of career

The interpretations of career by these participants reflect the dominant construct of careers for most of the 20th century - that of bureaucratic and professional careers - and the influence that large organizations and occupational structures have had in the 20th-century imagination (Collin & Watts, 1996), even when these are few and far between in the Hawke's Bay local region. The concept of career which this group holds, even while they are practising in many cases something completely different, is that of organisational careers and the objective career, with its sequence of publicly observable and definable positions. For those in clearly defined organisational or professional structures it fits; for those outside the service structures it is not what they do, and they do not see it as applicable to them. In this study, the majority of participants do not label the narrative of their lives, the subjective individual career, as 'career' at all. More generalised concepts of career such as a lifelong sequence of jobs, or role-related experiences are not indicated as known or an accepted concept by any of this group. For want of a broader definition they are 'careerless' in their naming of themselves.

The subjective career emphasises self-direction and a greater responsibility for the choices that are made (Weick & Berlinger, 1989). The narratives of career in this study highlighted career actors as the agents of their own progress. In the telling of their stories the career actors generally took ownership for their own careers, the choices and decisions they made and the outcomes of those. Disappointments as a result of structural or environmental change were articulated and then in most cases these were followed by progress that was satisfactory to them. Only a small number came to a halt when societal or change forces seemed too much for them. Focusing on the subjective career also raised awareness of diversity (Collin, 1986) in that the participants were able to present their perceptions of their career and life experiences, with reduced emphasis on the objective and organisational career, and describe more appropriately the diversity of careers represented here. Subjective interpretations in this study have produced rich data regarding the way in which similar events can be perceived in different ways, evidenced by the differing views and responses to workplace change throughout the nineties, described below.

Differing rhythms of life

In my view, there is a different rhythm of life in this location, Hawke's Bay; a rhythm which incorporates leisure, community and family involvement in the careers and work of this group. They have a concern for balance, as Jake, whose work experiences covered a number of New Zealand regions, pointed out, "*I think you'll find that people who live in regional areas do that.*" The majority in this group articulate balance as a key driver, and have integrated family and community commitment into their lives with relative ease. Arthur, Inkson & Pringle's (1999) study also noted a greater attention focus on lifestyle from the older workers in their research group, suggesting that more than previously, lifestyle would be consciously chosen in career decisions by this age group.

Savickas' (2000) comments on the agrarian economy and vocations are pertinent for this study: "the agrarian culture moulded work and family roles to fit its needs" (p.54) – it traditionally involved a large multigenerational labour unit and production team who worked together, and work and family were interwoven. This theme emerges in the lives of some participants. Liz especially weaves her family in and out of her career tapestry, her family are an integral part of the labour in their businesses, and factors in decisions that are made. Derek's narrative of his work as the steward of a large family owned company has similar nuances. Is a shared 'family career' rather than a personal career a more common perception in rural regions, and a category neglected by career theorists? In rural areas the integration of careers with family and community, or the tradition of it, appears to contribute to the difficulty many have in seeing themselves as participating in the individual objective career.

It is not the dichotomous work life balance concept that relates to the lives of the workers in the study group. Dupuis & de Bruin (2004) are helpful in casting light on just what it is. They use the term "integrated lifestyle" in discussing non-standard work, multiple jobholders and work life balance. They note the lack of relevance of the term work life balance, as it tends to mean organising work in a particular way within organizations of sufficient size to do this. In a labour market like New Zealand where 86% of small businesses employ five or fewer workers (Statistics NZ, 2002) this is unlikely. "The blurring of the boundaries

and the way work and life interpenetrate are not caught at all in the metaphor of work life balance” (Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004, p. 12). I also like the idea of the “work life mosaic”, proposed as a conceptualisation of these careers (Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004) and then discarded in favour of integrated lifestyle. Career actors build the patterns of work and life that they want and remove those that no longer apply – and the mosaic highlights the lack of predictable patterns (Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004).

For the knowledge workers in Dupuis & de Bruin’s (2004) sample, and the multiple jobholders and self-employed in this study, work and life are strongly integrated rather than separated out as the concept of work life balance suggests. As Mangan (2000) says “non standard work has a special place in the link between work and family because it is seen by many as the only practical way for some workers to combine both work and family responsibilities”(p.182). So here is yet another aspect of boundarylessness to be considered – the dissolution of work / home boundaries – with the careers of many Hawke’s Bay workers including multiple jobs, self employment and integration with family life. This integration of work and home life also offers an explanation for the broad views of success held by this group. If psychological success in one’s life work is that which goes beyond the job or the organization into personal or community roles and a balanced lifestyle, (Mirvis & Hall, 1994) then this is the success that is described predominantly by this group. While ‘vertical’ success is aspired to by some there is always the addition of personal markers - enjoyment, fulfillment - both self and family, personal satisfaction, and self-development are consistently quoted in this context.

These findings support the view that the broadening of the concept of career to include a greater diversity of career pathways and patterns is increasingly necessary (Storey, 2000) if not well overdue. As Storey (2000) points out the need for new definitions is not new, but it has been ignored in the past, and ignored by educationists and researchers alike. It has been widely noted that concentration on the careers of managerial and professional employees has meant neglect of other careers, including the self-employed, non-managerial, temporary,

women and ethnic minorities (Storey, 2000). To this list of neglect we might add the careers of those in rural and regional areas.

Bounded and boundaryless careers

A common theme of boundaryless careers is one of independence from traditional organisational career principles (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and it seems that many of this group are operating in a 'boundaryless' manner, with a disregard for the traditional job boundaries and linear career principles. The 'boundarylessness' displayed by this group is not mobility between jobs, as job stability is valued in this region where there is limited employment. Rather it is the boundarylessness of attitude, the desire not to be bounded by one role, identity, organization, or occupational structure. Perhaps the idea of boundarylessness should be extended to other types of boundaries – occupational, industry, work-home, and geographical. Structures or boundaries can be described as having both a subjective and an objective existence (Gunz, Evans & Walland, 2000). In the mind of the career actor experiencing the career, boundaries may be perceived that are assumed to limit career opportunities (Gunz et al, 2000). So too with boundarylessness, or the lack of perceived boundaries. What is evident is that the majority of career actors in this study do not perceive themselves as confined to one occupational identity or view of their work.

Conclusion

There are weak organisational structures in Hawke's Bay relating to a lack of association in this region with mass production and corporate structures - work has always had a non-traditional flavour. Weak situations mean less prescription and more opportunity to choose between alternative actions; and this provides opportunities for individual rather than organisational agendas (Weick, 1996). Many of the participants have individual agendas; they have constructed their working lives to fit their skills and lifestyle interests. This group lives within a

geographically bounded area, and to a large extent is less influenced by the corporate worlds beyond those boundaries. They have multiple work experiences, and while some careers are fragmented they have designed them this way. The region itself has a strong identity, life in the Bay has characteristics of leisure and balance interwoven with an acceptance of multiple and diverse work options.

However the structural features that do limit this group must not be ignored - they are bounded by geographical location, the range of options and opportunities within that location, and influences of lifestyle and location. They exhibit a common theme of attachment to life in the Bay, and the values and benefits of this. For these benefits they limit their work opportunities to this area, and then, in many cases put together available options to create a living. The next chapter analyses the data which describes their experiences in making a living.

CHAPTER 7

THE CAREER EXPERIENCES OF OLDER WORKERS

Chapter seven addresses the research questions:

- How have they shaped their career – what are their forms, patterns, and models of career, their responses to the changing environment?
- What are their career experiences as older workers, relating to getting work, opportunities at work, types of work, perceptions of their future and their progress towards retirement? What age related patterns emerge?

Part A of this chapter examines the forms of work that participants have chosen, their career experiences, and their satisfaction with their progress. It describes the data relating to their experience of workplace change, and getting work; their approach to upskilling, their perceptions of their future and their thoughts about their career as they progress towards retirement. The career experiences of this group are related to the stages proposed by age stage theorists and gender issues that have emerged in this study are discussed. The findings of this section are then discussed in Part B.

PART A. EXPERIENCES OF WORK AND CAREER

CAREER FORMS AND EXPERIENCES

I draw on recognised forms of career described by Kanter (1989) to provide an overview of the breadth of career experiences of this group. As previously referred to in Chapter 2, Kanter (1989) outlined the principal forms which described traditional careers: the bureaucratic form with a logic of advancement, which defined the careers of the stable industrial era; the professional career, defined by craft or skill, in which reputation in a specialist field is the growing value. A third form is described (Kanter, 1989) as ‘entrepreneurial’ - in which

growth occurs by the creation of a new value. The entrepreneurial career is seen as the best type to flourish in the new boundaryless world (Inkson, 1997) requiring career makers with the enterprise and independence to create their own livelihoods. These distinctions are limited in that they signal discrete types, and seldom does a career fit securely within a particular type; however the categories provide a means of illustrating the range of experiences of the participants. I have used a table (Appendix 9) to place participants in these categories according to the experiences their data suggests they have had, or are having.

Each participant's career was considered as a total entity and evaluated in terms of whether all or part of it met Kanter's (1989) classic type definitions. The categories chosen reflect the experiences of the participants. Sheila is an example to consider – she had been employed in a large Auckland based bureaucratic organisation for some time and when she left 4 years ago she negotiated to continue part-time employment as a teleworker from Hawke's Bay. However she continues to work within that context of employment, and her data shows her experiences and understandings of that organisational context (and her frustrations with it). My point is that she has exposure, knowledge and experience of a large organisational, bureaucratic form, even though now she is attempting to work differently within it, and attempting to create a work structure that fits *her*. Therefore she is shown on the table (Appendix 9) in that form of work. Where a career actor's experience has been in a large organisational structure, e.g. as a nurse in a hospital based setting, it is shown as organisational experience; where it is in a smaller occupational and professional setting, the table indicates that form.

Appendix 9 indicates the experiences of this group with these specific career forms. Those marked 'current' relate to where they are now, those marked 'previous' indicate where they have moved from within the last 10 years. I have set it out in this way to demonstrate more clearly patterns of interest which have emerged in the data.

Patterns of Interest

- 10 participants have remained in a single form of career; 4 of these have been in education.
- 22 (over two thirds) of the participants have experienced two forms of career; all making significant moves or changes within the last decade.
- All participants who changed their predominant form of work made these changes in the last decade, i.e. in their 40's or 50's
- There are only 7 participants currently involved in bureaucratic/organisational forms of career
- 7 out of 32 participants have involvement in a business as well as employment, involving themselves in 2 forms of career concurrently.
- 18 participants (over half) are currently involved in some sort of entrepreneurial business activity.

This analysis suggest that less than 1/3 of this group have experienced and remained in a single form of career for at least the past 10 years. The majority (22) have experienced, or are experiencing two forms of career. All of these have made a change to their current situation in the last decade; twelve of these were in their 40's, and ten were aged between 50 and 60.

What I found surprising was the large group of people in two forms of work simultaneously, working for an organisation or small business as well as running their own businesses. Seven were doing this (Todd, Tom, Matt, Jenny, Fiona, Paula and Sheila) and one was thinking about adding a business to his work as a lecturer (Mike). In Sheila's case she had two other small businesses as well as her part-time work for a large company. Sheila's was a planned strategy - *"You've got to have multiple streams of income these days."* Others seemed to be reflecting a common way of working locally. Some reflected the horticultural economy of the past and present, when many, in addition to their main occupation, also had an income producing horticulture business or an orchard, often an operation of a significant size (Tom, Fiona, Todd, Derek). Now additional businesses were reflecting the growth of tourism and the newly branded Hawke's Bay as "Wine Country" and likely to be small tourism related

businesses, providing accommodation, or activities for the tourist market (Liz, Matt, Jenny).

A significant direction of change for this group over the last decade has been a move into self-employment and operating their own businesses. An involvement of 56% of the sample in self-employment is high compared to national figures (21%) but may reflect more the norms of working in this regional economy. These movements tend to support Kanter's view of a trend to entrepreneurial forms of career in the last two decades, and self-employment as a specific trend for older workers (de Bruin & Firkin, 2001). (Self-employment will be examined more closely later in this chapter.)

The reasons for the changes in employment are discussed more extensively below. In brief, in about half the cases the drivers of change have been the restructuring or external change events of the nineties, although in some cases this has coincided with a growing individual desire for change. These events created opportunities for some and created dissatisfaction for others.

- Redundancies prompted the decisions of Annabel, Nick and Carl to make changes
- Dissatisfaction with the organisational environment, constant restructuring or change in health and education environments were mentioned by Beth, Jenny, and Kevin, and the stress of the horticultural industry led to change for Tom.
- A desire for change – location (Sheila), lifestyle (Sue), self-employment and independence (Sheila, Meg, Wynn and Steve,) perceived opportunities for growth and opportunity (June, Mike).
- Retirement opportunities affected the decisions of John, Jake, and Max.

The activity of this sample indicates a wider spread of investment than found in many traditional career structures, and a broad exposure to career skills and competencies, all of which may well build career capital and the capacity for work in the new environment (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999). This being the case, these career actors may have a broader range of skills and competencies to

call upon to deal with the changes and employment issues of the new careers environment.

RESTRUCTURING AND DOWNSIZING

The literature suggests that older workers suffered the most in downsizing (Hall & Mirvis, 1994) and the favoured downsizing methods of the time targeted the kinds of jobs and positions held by more mature workers (Hall, 1996). This group was especially vulnerable to the downsizing efforts when significant numbers of middle management positions were lost, many of those filled with mid or late career workers (Patrickson, 1998). The extensive period of restructuring, delayering and downsizing which occurred in the New Zealand organisations during the 1980's and 1990's (Littler, Dunford, Bramble & Heed, 1997) certainly impacted on this group, and on the way they shaped their future careers.

Table 12 gives a short summary of those thirteen participants, over a third of the sample, who describe the change events of redundancy or restructuring as significant in their careers, and an indication of their responses.

Feelings about redundancies

The feelings expressed by the research participants reflect those described in the literature related to job loss – fear, anxiety, and self-doubt (London, 1996) have been powerfully reported. Wynn describes feeling “*desperation, I felt a failure*” (despite a very strong support group of fellow workers); Fiona states her anxiety increased after the second redundancy (which occurred at age 47), and she retreated from seeking more responsible jobs. “*I felt the age I am, I should go back to what I know.*” After redundancy from a new Case Management role, she returned to ‘safe’ secretarial work. Carl underwent 2 redundancies and he describes the feeling – “*it’s just the shock...all of a sudden your job is gone. It is just bang. Total explosion.*” His response was to go straight into retraining.

Viv describes it as a “*devastating*” experience. After very long experience in one company, working with her husband, the company was bought and restructured. Viv oversaw staff redundancies, then she and her husband were themselves left suddenly without work. *“Two months later my husband had a heart attack and died. It was too much. It was really the whole strain of it and he’d worked there from 1980, had given a lot of his life and time. We’d treated it as our company.”* Steve was more constrained, describing himself as ‘*annoyed*’ at his redundancy after a year of great results for the company. However he resented the age factor that he perceived – *“if you had grey hair you got sacked, made redundant. If you were over 45, goodnight nurse!”*

Some were more philosophical. Todd was a CEO, when made redundant. He comments *“I understood the process. I was a senior executive, I knew what they were trying to do.”* Nick had just become redundant, and was two weeks out of the company - a large multinational company where he had worked for 25 years - when I conducted the interview. He was relaxed about it, knew it was a possibility for some time, and had watched numerous rounds of restructuring in the company over his 25 years there. He described himself as ready for change, and he already had some part-time work lined up for himself.

Restructuring experiences generated very negative feelings. Sue described it as *“basically turmoil”*. Bev felt that the only constant was change in hospitals, *“we felt restructured out of existence.”* Jenny, also in the hospital system described the pressure of workload and demands as *“just wicked.”* Her path was made more difficult by her involvement in the nurses’ union. In the special education service Ruth hated the insecurity, the constant change that made people feel unstable, *“you had loss of job hanging over your head continually.”*

Pat, working in the public service, expresses his frustration with the time. *“The whole period, 1984-1994, it was just total uncertainty, and not knowing what was going to happen was frustrating.....I looked at the guys that I worked with, there were some really confident guys, and I thought what a waste, what a total waste.”*

Paula describes finding the deregulation and changes in government policy that affected her family business as too uncertain, and the business was sold, with both

her and her husband moving to employment. *“The best option was to close the business....and for P to get employed at a decent wage somewhere else....but the changes, a lot of them were things we could do nothing about.”*

Table 12. Participants experiences of significant change events.

Name	Position at the start of the decade	Significant restructuring, change events mentioned	Responses to events
Bev	Nurse, Hospital based	Constant restructuring	Sought work outside the hospital environment
Carl	Working as a mechanic	Restructuring, 2 redundancies, the second after retraining as a nurse	Reviewed his work participation, now has 2 part-time jobs
Jenny	Nurse (Hospital based)	Restructuring Involvement in union activities	Felt disadvantaged by hospital environment, left for work outside the hospital in private practice
June	Physiotherapist, private practice	Saw health restructuring in progress (as opportunity)	Moved into health management for opportunities of change
Mike	Fire Service Officer	Restructuring, involved at management level	Although he left employment, Mike felt advantaged and motivated by change processes
Nick	Working long term in a multinational company	Redundancy after 25 years service	Still deciding his future, but relaxed about his options
Pat	Senior public servant	Experienced restructuring ‘for no good reason’, then involved in management buyout of public sector industry	Company director of business Felt advantaged by change
Ruth	Employed part-time as special needs teacher	Restructuring of special needs services, requirement to retrain (not taken)	Found only intermittent and very small part-time work opportunities Felt disadvantaged by changes
Steve	Employed as a commissioned salesperson	Restructuring, company bought by overseas firm, made redundant	Found work quickly at competitors firm, then rehired by firm, later became franchise holder.
Sue	Employed in large organization as a PA.	Restructuring of workplace, affected partner	Decision with partner to move to Hawke’s Bay and work together on vineyard venture.
Todd	Employed as a CEO	Restructuring of company, made redundant	Employed at same level quickly Felt advantaged by change
Viv	Held senior management position in manufacturing company	Involved in restructuring of the company, then made redundant- described as devastating, and as cause of husbands early death	Failed to find employment at same level, found part-time temporary clerical work Felt seriously disadvantaged by changes
Wynn	Employed in special needs services	Redundancy – described as shattering	Found similar employment quickly, (3 weeks later) left later for self employment

Longer term positive effects

While the initial impact was negative, positive outcomes of their redundancy or restructuring experiences were expressed by some. Wynn thought *"looking back, it was the best thing that happened to me...I had support, financial payout, and I got a job 3 weeks later."* Sheila says she sees change as opportunity - she felt that after the initial shock, it didn't affect her *"then I thought well this is a chance."* Steve was shoulder tapped for another job immediately, and spoke of no negative effects. Todd explained that he understood the process. He did not feel disadvantaged, he was immediately offered another good job at the same level. He didn't see it as a personal thing. *"It's about knowing how organizations work."*

Pat describes himself as negative to start with, *"I thought I would just take redundancy and drive a courier van."* Instead he wasn't made redundant, he was offered a management role that introduced him to management processes *"a whole lot of new things ...business planning, and budgeting...and I enjoyed that."* It was the beginning of a process which led him to be a key player in a management buy out.

Annabel saw lots of changes in her organization, and at times felt that she had enough, but she chose to hang in there and get through the difficult times - she pointed out that there were benefits in having her qualifications funded, and getting more responsibilities during this time.

Mike saw no disadvantages in the changes in the Fire Service. He was in management and it was an exciting period for him. *"It was exciting...I was able to realise my methods, my dreams. I took risks. I was responsible and accountable. I was given budgets I was able to grow people. I spent a lot of time with staff and growing people."*

June entered health management at the time of change because she could see opportunities. *"The main reason I went, was the health changes were starting.... I knew that job, if I did it well, would grow to others. I ended up in the position of managing around 46 staff and quite a big budget."*

Advantaged by change

It is not surprising that in retrospect, Todd, Steve, Wynn, and Sheila all signal positive outcomes from their redundancy experiences; because all of them found new employment, or were shoulder-tapped for another equally desirable job within a very short space of time. They experienced none of the long-term effects of job loss. Pat, Annabel, Mike and June all stated positive outcomes following from their restructuring experiences, and it may be significant that all of these moved into management roles during this time. Only Todd was a long-term manager. A common factor of this group is that all who were involved in organisational careers articulated well-developed personal strategies for change. The age of the participants at the time of experiencing restructuring was varied, four were over 50 and four were in their 40's.

Tolerance or understanding of change

Todd spoke at length on his respect for change. *"it is amazing what you could do ...you must accept change...then go about it."* He saw the necessity of change for the sake of the company, and in many cases was a key driver of it. He outlined a strategic approach *"I set goals and outcomes, and worked towards them."*

Pat explains his philosophy, and his initial negativity: *"I'm not scared of change...you have to change, if you don't you get left behind. The change that I have been through over the years was totally illogical...it was driven by politicians and people like that who had some sort of philosophy, and didn't realise the full implications of a lot of the change."* June puts a similar view *"I understand we live in an environment where there is rapid change, so you can't stand still. It's a very challenging and dynamic environment and while some people can get scared, I look for opportunities."* Annabel was very vocal about her strategies, she says she saw the opportunities for herself very early in the change process, in achieving a change of role, the opportunity to do part-time work (after the birth of her second child) and the opportunity for leadership roles.

“My experience is that change does provide opportunity and you often end up in a better space than before.”

The group who mentioned positive outcomes from the challenges of redundancy and restructuring; and perhaps dealing best with the changes had these factors in common.

- They saw change as opportunity, and found opportunity in it
- Seven out of eight had tertiary education qualifications
- They articulated an understanding of the context and what was happening and why
- They could define their ways of dealing with change

Intermediate and long term negative effects

Seven of the group indicated some difficulty in recovering from change events. Carl, Paula, Fiona, Jenny, Simon, Viv and Ruth describe careers constrained by change, and experiencing long-term negative effects. Viv experienced all the negative factors of job loss – after 20 years of a responsible job she found herself starting again with great difficulty, and finally accepting work at a much lower level than her capabilities. Ruth found the long sequence of changes in education discouraging. She did not respond to the opportunities offered, e.g. retraining, which seemed only to offer long hours and hard work. Instead she chose to retreat, and at the point of our interview was barely in the workforce, working only about 2 hours a week. Simon took time out for study, and now returning to the workforce at 55 he feels he may be considered too old for some roles, and out of step with the changing environment. While he has some part-time work, he is looking for a full time job and he does not seem to have the skills that employers want.

Carl found it difficult to find work after redundancy, and wondered if his qualifications in nursing worked against him. He dealt with change by looking for alternatives...after his first redundancy he retrained immediately as a nurse,

after a second redundancy in that field, he returned to his original trade. Jenny also looked for alternatives, leaving nursing for related fields. Jenny felt so discouraged and stressed by the system that she would not ever consider returning to her previous employer, describing her experiences as impacting on her personal well being. Fiona felt a great anxiety about redundancy, and described a feeling of an ongoing lack of security in the work environment which reduced her willingness to take chances.

Disadvantaged by change

The group who mentioned negative outcomes from the challenges of redundancy and restructuring and found difficulties with the changing environment had these factors in common:

- They described feeling personally vulnerable to changes around them
- They described real apprehension and a more cynical approach to change

Unlike those who felt positive effects from changes:

- They did not articulate any understanding of the context or reasons for the changes around them.
- They did not mention any personal strategies for change.

Six out of seven had tertiary education qualifications, three had undertaken recent qualifications, and their approach did not seem be connected to feeling ill equipped or out of date. This group demonstrated less ability to understand or deal with the change events that they were confronted by, these events involved negative experiences and threats to their personal security and identity.

INDUSTRY CHANGES

Organisational changes were not the only stressful events of this time, industry changes, technological change, and weather events had a significant impact on the

Hawke's Bay economy, and employment environment. Table 13 (below) gives a short summary of those who describe significant industry and environmental change events in their careers, and their responses to it. In providing such short, summarised responses to events, I am taking licence with complex stories in order to clarify events for the reader.

Table 13. Participants' experiences of industry change events.

Name	Position at the start of the decade	Significant change events mentioned	<i>Responses to events</i>
Andrew	Lawyer	Introduction of technology, disappearance of traditional ideals	Adapted but regretful of what he sees as significant changes in profession
Beth	Teacher	Administrative and curriculum changes, decline in student behaviour	Disliked administrative changes and overload, Left teaching for self employment, set up own retail business
Matt	Teacher	Constant curriculum and administrative change, introduction of technology	Maintained motivation by classroom teaching, and taking periods out of teaching
Liz	Horticultural grower	Crop failures (frosts) Change in regulations of horticultural industry	Decided on diversification, set up small flower businesses, then added a tourism based business
Richard	Real Estate Agent	Industry deregulation, decline in standards	Continued in Real Estate, in markedly different environment, finds it a less enjoyable job now
Simon	Education Administrator	Curriculum and structural changes, demands for higher level qualifications	Took time out to upskill at a high level, finding re-entry difficult. Feels disadvantaged by changes
Tom	Horticultural grower, and Real Estate agent	Crop failures (frosts) Horticulture industry changes	Reviewed economic choices, trained, began looking for employment, found this, feels advantaged by changes

For the teachers, workplace change and new technology meant higher workloads, more administration, and for those in private schools an introduction to contract negotiations, but compared to many workers Matt commented "*teachers have been sheltered from a lot of the changes that took place.*" He still had not made the shift to computer competency however he recognised that eventually he will have to get more skilled. Andrew regretted the loss of some of the more collegial

aspects of his profession, he cites *"the disappearance of the professional mentoring of young lawyers...you are more and more into a 'dog eat dog' situation, so you sort of lose that sense of pleasantness, collegiality."*

Richard described a similar loss of collegiality in the real estate industry. When this industry deregulated, he described going from being part of a small group who knew each other to the doors being opened to as many people as possible brought into the industry. He saw in his view the diminishing of professionalism and integrity in this new scene.

Not all the stressful events of the 90's in Hawke's Bay were man-made. Growers cite the 1994 hailstorm which wiped out all crops, and how stressful it is at times with the harvest. Liz comments *"It is always the worry there is going to be a frost, or there is going to be something."* She states the hailstorm of 1994 *"affected us hugely for a couple of years."* Tom gives the stress of the weather as part of his reasons for looking for paid employment, *"you know if it doesn't rain you are worrying about whether the fruit is going to be big enough, and if it is too hot it is sunburn or too much rain and it all goes rotten."* Deregulation of these industries in Hawke's Bay was described by Liz as a stressful time; it was not accomplished without a great deal of industry debate and division amongst groups and neighbours, often causing long-term bitterness. The impact of these changes led to ideas of diversifying (Liz) and seeking paid employment (Tom).

Four of the group seemed to be observers of change - they reported that it was going on around them but did not directly affect their roles or progress. These respondents were in stable employment - Meg as a nurse working in the community, which she says was an environment less affected than hospitals. Meg described herself as able to *"go with the flow"* and take on new challenges as they arrive. Max was in a responsible position in the police force, and concerned mostly for the front-line staff in his organization, *"I was able to see the problems (the changes) were creating."* Jake was a manager in the insurance industry, and described the need to help his staff adapt to the implementation of significant technology changes in his industry, but his company did not experience restructuring at that time. John was in a secure role as a probation officer and coming to the end of his time in employment by his own choice.

KEEPING SKILLS UP TO DATE

A discussion on change invited consideration of the skills of this group. The literature points to the importance of ongoing skill development, with the acquisition of new skills assuming critical importance (Watts, 1997) for career actors in the 21st century. The suggestions are that this group is most at risk because they are perceived as unwilling to train or upskill, that they may be given fewer opportunities to train, and that they may be unwilling to adapt to new technology (Department of Labour, 2001). The data below enables us to examine these ideas in relation to the study participants from questions related to their qualifications, their approach and access to upskilling and training, and their perceptions of whether their skills are up to date for the current environment.

Qualifications and updating of qualifications

The participants' data indicates that twenty four of this group had tertiary qualifications of Certificate level and beyond, fourteen had degree level qualifications: ten at Bachelors level, two with Post Graduate diplomas and a further two with Masters level degrees. Ten had trade and certificate or Diploma level qualifications in various disciplines. This is a reasonably well-qualified sample. However the literature suggests that both the need for ongoing learning and a willingness to train and upskill are areas of concern in relation to older workers, so while the qualifications were listed by the participants, my questions elicited information on what had occurred in the last decade, how up-to-date their training was, and their interest and participation.

Table 14. Recent involvement in gaining formal qualifications.

No	%	
7	21.9	Completed tertiary qualification(s) in last decade
5	15.6	Undertaking a tertiary qualification at time of interview
5	15.6	Involved in tertiary study of some kind in last decade
15	46.9	Not involved in obtaining qualifications in last decade

Completed qualification(s) in last decade	Undertaking a tertiary qual. at time of interview	Involved in tertiary study of some kind in last decade	Not involved in last decade
Annabel , Bev, Carl Jenny, June, Todd Wynn	Gail, Marie, Meg, Mike, Simon	Liz, Matt, Sue, Tom, Viv	Andrew, Beth, Derek, Fiona, Jake John, Kevin, Max, Nick, Pat, Paula Richard, Ruth, Sheila, Steve
M = 2 F = 5	M = 2 F = 3	M = 2 F = 3	M = 10 F = 5

Twelve (37.5%) of the participants had completed a qualification within the last decade, or were in the process of doing so, and seventeen in total (53%) had some involvement in tertiary study. The qualifications all related to beginning a new phase in their career; some were job requirements (Jenny, Wynn, Annabel) others' efforts were more independently driven. More women reported involvement in gaining qualifications than men.

The group includes a mixture of those driven enthusiastically by the desire for self-development and others somewhat reluctantly responding to employment requirements.

Enthusiastic about development

Todd undertook an MBA, beginning at a time when he had become the HR Manager for the large company he was employed with. Bev took her nursing qualifications to degree level and is continuing to study management papers, as that is her job now. June is undertaking a postgraduate diploma in Health Management, her current field, Meg is working her way through a Occupational Health qualification and small business papers – both signal their enjoyment of continuing learning to meet new challenges. Mike at the time of the interview was handing in a thesis for a Masters degree in Management. He travelled to Britain to undertake this project in a field he feels passionate about, after a life changing decision to give up his protective services career two years ago. Simon

is involved in a lengthy academic study, a personal decision and a project that was causing him anxiety about its value for future work.

Liz, Viv, Tom, and Matt have all attended the local Polytechnic for papers and courses. Tom and Viv have developed their computing skills through local courses, both in their mid-fifties at the time. Matt has completed part of a program in viticulture and wine-making, a major personal interest, and complementary to his science teaching. Liz has completed a management paper, and Sue attended Polytechnic classes to develop horticultural skills prior to the career change to grape-growing; and she attends ongoing seminars.

Doing what's required, or expected

Wynn and Jenny both gained a Certificate for new roles in health service provision, and Annabel a specialist post graduate degree, all of these required for the new jobs they took on, and assisted by time and resources provided by the employers to do so. Marie was enrolling for a school management qualification at the time of our interview, but doing so reluctantly. Gail is halfway through a School Management qualification, and ambivalent about completing it. Like Marie, she doesn't feel she needs to, but she is "*doing what's expected.*"

Training and upskilling opportunities

Participants were also asked about the opportunities for training that were available to them, and what courses or on the job training opportunities they had experienced in recent years.

Table 15. Training and upskilling opportunities.

No	%	
13	40.6	Experienced many opportunities (courses, seminars etc) in recent work
10	31.25	Experienced opportunities through on the job learning, or own initiatives
4	12.5	Experienced few or no opportunities (courses) in recent work on the job
5	15.6	No recent training or upskilling mentioned

Experienced many training opportunities in recent work		Experienced opportunities on the job or own initiatives		Few or no opportunities given in recent work	No recent training or upskilling mentioned
Andrew	Annabel	Derek	Liz	Beth	John
Bev	Gail	Matt	Meg	Carl	Max
Jake	June	Pat	Richard	Fiona	Paula
Kevin	Marie	Simon	Sue	Jenny	Ruth
Mike	Nick	Tom	Viv		Wynn
Sheila	Steve				
Todd					
M = 7		M = 6		M = 1	M = 2
F = 6		F = 4		F = 3	F = 3

Of the participants, 23(72%) out of 32 describe training opportunities accessed through their workplace or their own initiatives, or both. Most commented that there was training available, from courses to computer packages to on the job processes of some kind. Only one participant, Viv, noted that in her temporary role she was not considered for training, however she participated through her own efforts.

This group does not signal a lack of training available to or engaged in by older workers. They have been active participants in keeping themselves upskilled. Ten of those not involved in gaining any formal qualifications in the last decade have gained training through workplace opportunities, or their own efforts. Whereas more women were involved in gaining qualifications, (Table 14), more men received on the job training opportunities (Table 15). Only a small group have not received recent training, or initiated it for themselves, or completed qualifications.

Informal skill development

Lack of involvement in formal or on the job learning does not necessarily indicate lack of interest. John (at 60) says *"I am striving harder than I ever did in my life really to educate myself, in a strange sort of way...visiting libraries, reading."* Paula commented *"I looked into teaching but ...it all just seemed beyond me"* nevertheless she recounts with enthusiasm her sewing, her entries into the Wearable Arts show and her success and interest in that area. Max's new role as a Sports Co-ordinator is the outcome of many years of community sports administration and coaching, and his job was a progression of his weekend activities and required no new expertise.

Liz's garden brings visitors nationally and internationally, and her knowledge and expertise in this area is widely sought. Even though she hasn't transformed this expertise into a 'job' she is continually seeking new ideas and travelling to explore them when possible.

Reluctance to upskill

Some reluctance to formally upskill was expressed by three participants in the study, Jenny, Marie, and Ruth, but two out of the three did it anyway. Jenny resented the push in nursing for ongoing qualifications, but accepted the opportunity in a new job to undertake a relevant Certificate *"I thought oh God, I am going to have to do it some time so I might as well do it now and they paid for it."* Marie was planning a further teaching management qualification at the time of the interview, not with any enthusiasm, *"I don't think its going to improve my classroom teaching...its not all that valuable, its just expected."* Ruth refused the opportunity to upskill offered by her industry when restructuring, she saw this as an imposition which would impact on her lifestyle. She sees herself now as a bit *"past"* training and upskilling, and in fact her job is now so small there are no opportunities offered to her. Ruth stands out in the study as the participant who has made the least commitment to ongoing development, and who feels the most helpless about her situation.

Perceptions of currency, being ‘up to date’ in the current environment

The participants were also asked how they perceived themselves in regard to their skills – did they consider they were up to date in relation to what was required in the current work environment.

Table 16. Perceptions of being ‘up to date’ in the current environment.

No	%	
16	50	Confident that skills are up to date for current needs
8	25	Generally up to date, could improve in some areas
4	12.5	Need to improve computer skills
2	6.25	Not up to date at all
(2)	6.25	(No comment made)

Confident skills are ‘up to date’	Generally, could improve in some areas	Mentioned need to improve IT/ computer skills	Not up to date at all
Bev, Fiona, Gail Jake, John, June Marie, Max, Meg Mike, Sheila, Simon Steve, Todd, Viv Wynn	Annabel, Beth Carl, Jenny Nick, Pat Sue, Tom	Derek , Kevin, Matt, Richard	Liz Ruth
M = 7 F = 9	M = 4 F = 4	M = 4 F = 0	M = 0 F = 2

Note: Two participants, Paula and Andrew did not comment.

Half (50%) of the group expressed confidence that their skills were up to date for the current environment. Within this group were many that have undertaken recent formal qualifications or are in the process of completing these (Bev, June, Todd, Wynn, Gail, Mike, Meg, Simon, Marie) and those who have experienced training opportunities- Sheila, Steve, Jake, and Viv.

John, at retirement age, and working casually, and Max, in his new role as sports co-ordinator, considered they had all the skills they need for the work that they wanted. Max described with pride upskilling himself in computers to the extent that he became a resource for others. Fiona has had few opportunities and the ill

health of her partner restricted any future plans for training, however she felt she is up to date through her own efforts.

Of those eight (25%) who express some uncertainty, i.e. think they could improve, five (15.6%) have taken on new roles or functions. Annabel was uncertain because she recently became self employed and was not able to access organisational training; she now relies on reading, and contacts. Pat thought he probably should do some HR training as he manages this function in the company "*I haven't had any formal training for that either, and I probably should do.*" Beth has moved into retail shop ownership from teaching and is uncertain about her skills in this area; Carl is returning to a specialised area of his trade after years of nursing. Nick is unsure "*It's probably the down side of working in one place which has its own systems*" - he has yet to test his skills outside the organization he has just left after 25 years. Sue is learning new skills in her current role as a grape grower, but worries that her previous skills are diminishing - she is not using her PA skills and feels out of date with computer packages. These are situations where uncertainty is a likely response.

Four participants specifically mentioned the need to improve their IT and computer skills. Richard noted he was lacking in this area, and could see its value in Real Estate; Kevin felt he could do more, Matt commented he is "*not up to speed yet*" and Derek, as a managing director, stated he's "*got to get my computer skills sorted out*" but at the same time admitted that he had plenty of office staff for those tasks.

Only two participants expressed a complete lack of confidence in being 'up to date'. Liz, who said, "*No I don't feel up to date all round.*" This is an interesting comment as there was no evidence that Liz was not up to date, she expressed a great deal of participation, taking opportunities for seminars and growth opportunities in the horticulture and tourism industries she is involved in. Taking seriously her responsibilities as a board member of a local company, she had recently completed a management paper. Her feeling seemed to derive from being always self-employed - she felt there are no benchmarks to measure herself against, and finds it difficult to value her activities - a similar situation to Nick. He commented that being in the same company all his life led to a difficulty of

assessing oneself against the skills of the outside world. Ruth also thought she was not up to date. She recognised her lack of computing skills, and also felt that *"it's a bit late"* to retrain for any new job.

Competent users of technology

Most participants in this group indicate that they are reasonably competent users of technology. Some specifically comment on their efforts with IT, they have set out to improve their skills in this area and are justifiably proud of it. *"I've made huge strides in IT,"* said Bev. A few mentioned the need to learn to touch-type or refine their skills. There are a small number of older workers in this group who have not yet mastered computer technology, the others have made significant effort to do this, understanding it as a key to employability. Tom, employed for the first time at 58, describes it as a critical factor in getting the job, and he initiated his own learning through Senior Net and other local classes.

Levels of internet access and computer skills tend to be lower for those aged 50 and above (Department of Labour, 2001). Members of this group are generally skilled users of technology. In many cases their employment situations have demanded the development of skills over time, and provided opportunities to do this. Others whose backgrounds are in more practical areas like horticulture have made specific efforts to learn and develop the information and communication skills associated with technology. This is an employed group who are participating in the economy. None are unable to access ICT skills, only a few are unwilling. Two of these are teachers; Matt expresses some resistance. *"I haven't taught myself thoroughly yet, it is a matter of time for learning to do it. Half our people do hand written reports and half do them on the computer.... I still think that a hand written report is much more personal than a computer report."* Ruth is barely participating, on minimal part-time work. Derek is managing his own company, and clearly sees his other skills as more important. For most there seems little risk of non-participation. They have accepted the importance of the task and as Andrew said *"taught themselves..or just got on and did it."* It needs

to be said however that none of this group fits the manual unskilled workforce which is seen as most at risk (Department of Labour, 2001).

EXPERIENCES OF GETTING WORK IN THE LAST DECADE

Over half of this group described their experiences of getting work as easy, or mostly successful. The long term self-employed of course had not tried to get employment for some time; however only six participants described any difficulty in obtaining work. This is only 18% of the sample, and a surprising finding given the negative attitudes towards them generally suggested in the literature and the popular press. Even though on the whole this is a reasonably well qualified group, not all have qualifications or recent training.

Table 17. Described experience of getting work in last decade.

No	%	
13	40.6	Easy, never any trouble getting jobs
7	21.9	Mostly successful at getting the jobs they were seeking
5	15.6	Experienced difficulty
7	21.9	No recent applications

Easy, never any trouble getting jobs	Mostly successful	Experienced difficulty	No recent applications
Bev, Gail John, June, Kevin, Marie Matt, Max Pat, Paula Sheila, Todd Wynn	Annabel, Fiona Jenny, June Mike, Nick Ruth	Carl,, Sue Simon, Tom Viv	Andrew, Beth Derek, Jake Liz, Richard Steve
M = 6 F = 7	M = 2 F = 5	M = 3 F = 2	M = 5 F = 2

Fifteen of this group express having no difficulty with getting work. They used words such as “easy”, and expressions like “never had a problem.” Most are not in their current roles through formal job interview processes.

Easy to obtain jobs

Wynn described her experiences of getting work. *"Easy... I've just fallen into jobs all the way along. When I was made redundant every time anyone rang me I just said give us a job... and there was one coming up and I just fell into that. Jobs have always been offered, I haven't applied for any."* She noted her contacts gave her significant help. Meg also described no problem getting jobs, and connects her success to personal contacts and relationships.

Others also described an informal approach to gaining work. Pat's work came easily – *"You know I had three different offers saying come and work with us"* and since then he has never had a job interview. After being in the police for 37 years, Max had no problem getting a job. He had another full life in community sports organizations, he knew this would suit him and got the job he applied for. Matt has had *"no problems"*, he states he has (at 46) never had a formal job interview, and never put together a CV. Paula said she hasn't gone looking for work for 30 years - jobs have come her way. *"I have either created them or people have asked me."*

Others attributed more personal characteristics to their success: Todd described getting jobs in his progression through a large company as a process that just *"fell into place ...my attitude was to work extremely hard...I had some jobs that I may not have liked but I worked hard and did them well, and then I got offered another job."* Sheila stated she never had any problems getting jobs, *"I had expertise, I came out with the job, I just knew I would."* She felt her confidence and self-belief assist her. Kevin, with a somewhat transitory work history also states *"up to now I have found it quite easy, and I think it is because I have had personal contacts, a reasonable work record...and the skills that have been sought after."* Bev, Marie and Gail also described jobs as having come easily for them, Gail noting *"I have only ever been rejected once."*

Mostly successful in obtaining work

June described success on most occasions, as she quite deliberately tested herself on the market, and her satisfaction in making the short list. *"It was good to go out and test the market."* She regarded job seeking as an opportunity to develop skills, and a learning experience. Jenny found getting jobs within nursing was initially easy, she never had a job interview until she changed her role. *"it was just that there was a position in the hospital and they sort of looked you up and down and said okay yes or okay no."* She found that this approach changed when they began to appoint management roles in the 1990's. Fiona had generally had success, but *"struggled after a redundancy"* at one stage when looking for work in a small town. She felt she had done it through *"getting proactive...you can't just sit back, you've got to go looking."* Having moved around in her working life, she did not describe any benefit from contacts or networks. Annabel's early experience was less successful but she found it easier later when seeking responsible roles, and Mike described his experience as pretty OK most of the time. Ruth had *"hardly ever applied"* but her last application for a very small part-time job was successful.

Experienced difficulties in finding work

After a lifetime in orcharding, Tom applied for his first employed job at 57 and at first applied for *"all the wrong things."* When he developed his computer skills and applied for a role related to the horticultural industry he had been a part of for 30 years, and had strong networks in, he was successful. Sue never had any trouble until she moved to Hawke's Bay, and then she was told *"in Hawke's Bay its who you know."* When she did eventually get a job it was in this way.

Simon and Viv are the two cases in the sample that have had the most difficulty finding the work they want. They do not fit a model of lack of relevant skills - Simon, a long-term tertiary lecturer and administrator has continually undertaken postgraduate work, Viv had regularly upskilled in computer areas and learning through the University of the Third Age.

Viv, aged 60 displayed the most difficult experiences of any female in the sample. She was the eldest and had had considerable experience but no formal qualifications. Viv is the example that bears out the worst experiences stated in the literature. Her work experience and position of responsibility were gained through a 20 year commitment to one company, which after restructurings and redundancy, eventually disappeared. Along with it, it seems went the knowledge and record of Viv's contribution and abilities. Her lack of confidence at this time did not assist her, she was a 55 year old job seeker, and after 20 years in a company she recognised her deficiencies as a job seeker. *"I look back on some of the applications I made – they were atrocious. I wouldn't have employed me on some of them. I said I'd just been widowed, ...did all the wrong things."* Contacts and friends suggested administrative office work, not work at the managerial level she had experienced. In looking for work after this time, and in the work she eventually found, she encountered significant examples of age discrimination (detailed further below). Her response was to lower her expectations, and she eventually accepted temporary and menial work. She has never stopped learning – she has continually upskilled herself in computing areas, and undertaken a number of Polytechnic courses at her own expense. Her work mates know she has these skills, but she is seldom asked to do tasks that use them. One could speculate that piecemeal papers, rather than qualifications; specialised industry knowledge in a manufacturing field no longer found in Hawke's Bay, and a general lack of confidence compounded by her husband's death all contributed to Viv's inability to maintain work at a satisfactory level, however her experiences indicate she was also significantly disadvantaged by her age.

Simon saw himself as up to date, he has never stopped 'qualifying' himself, and at the stage of his interview was in the process of a long academic study. At the same time he was applying for jobs that would allow him to re-enter the tertiary education system at the senior management level, but he was not having success at gaining interviews. He does not see age as a factor in his lack of success, he is well qualified for senior academic roles. He speculated on the reason for his difficulty *"the focus on studying provided the equivalent of a full time master's load each year for many years while teaching and holding administrative positions. The downside was that I did not develop professional contacts or*

relationships, and as I look back now obtaining better academic leadership roles meant I didn't develop professional community roles. I believe that impacts on me now when I look for subsequent employment." Simon reinforced the questions raised regarding the value of networks and contacts, and their role as assets or barriers in this location.

Those listed under "no recent applications" had their own businesses and have had for over a decade. Jake was the exception, however he was retired from his insurance career, developing a hobby, and in part-time employment in his partner's business.

Using networks

Networks and contacts within the local region stand out as having played a significant part in smoothing the employment paths of some of these participants. Wynn describes having *"a huge network, I was well known and had contacts with a range of people, I had a huge start."* Meg sees contacts and relationships as part of her success, Annabel and June also both describe undertaking active networking and building relationships. Max had extensive networks in both the police and community sports groups, and these assisted in his ease of gaining work. Pat describes contacts as *"It is how I got to where I am."* He continues the pattern now that he is in an employing capacity. *"Some people actively go out there and create these networks and actively maintain them. I don't go to that extent but I have some really close friendships through my work ... a number of those guys in the past have been my boss and they now work for us. ...they were great guys and if I think there is an opportunity I give them a call...networking has been really good."* Matt sees contacts and networks as an important way of getting work in teaching. Steve is a consummate networker, with wide ranging activities, and his networking forms part of his community contribution.

"Well you have got to network. To make it happen I think you put yourself in areas where you can meet the right people, like I sponsor, I do a fair bit of sponsorship here in Hawke's Bay but I target the areas I sponsor. I sponsor the (rugby club) because I know that a lot of the people there are business people I sponsor the (soccer

club) because I know there is another element of business people that are there and those guys always support their sponsors. I go to the Chamber of Commerce when they have something, you can't go to everything but I try to go to a Chamber thing about every 2 months and I pick the one I want to go to.

.....and then I got involved in the A & P Society and looked at them and how I got there, they invited me on the committee because I sold them a few goodies for their programmes to do for the show and it worked well....and then I said one night we should actually run a wine show, so we talked to a few people and that is how the wine show happened. ... Now we have the wine awards. It is all about doing it right I suppose. Trying to create things, thinking outside the triangle."

Those who do not highlight networks as important in their lives indicate that self-belief and their own work behaviours were important in their progress; Todd in working hard, Fiona in proactively searching; Sheila in her confidence and planning.

The data above prompted me to consider the length of time spent in the local area by those who had more difficulty in getting work. Even though Tom had difficulty getting work, at 58 he did get a job and it was in the area of his long-term experience, contacts and networks. Simon is a relative newcomer to the area, only 8 years in Hawke's Bay, and one educational position. He travels outside the Bay for the part-time work that he does now, and has little opportunity to develop social or career relationships. Sue had no difficulty getting jobs until she moved here, and then she found that the local wisdom ("its who you know in Hawke's Bay") applied. Location then appears to emerge as both an asset and a barrier to getting work, a positive and negative 'boundary'. In one sense Viv is a disconfirming case, with a longstanding history in Hawke's Bay. However both she and her husband made the manufacturing company in which they worked for over 20 years "*their life*", and one might suppose developed strong networks within and around it. However when this organization disappeared from Hawke's Bay (along with similar clothing industries) Viv's career capital, and industry based contacts and networks may well have disappeared with it.

Building career capital is signalled as one of the key skills for the current environment and the experiences of this group would appear to support this. In a region such as Hawke's Bay career capital is built within industries, social and professional networks, and simply longevity in the region, which allows knowing a lot of people and being known by them. They have gathered a currency of career capital, what is referred to as "knowing whom assets" (Inkson & Arthur, 2001, p. 3):

".....the attachments, relationships, reputation, sources of information and mutual obligations that we gather as we pursue our careers. Knowing-whom contacts include relevant bosses, peers, and subordinates inside the same company, but also extend to contacts with the company's customers, suppliers, consultants, and to links with outside professionals. Contacts made in one employment context are often retained when we move to another context. Job-to-job transitions are often facilitated by network connections. Knowing-whom assets also come from our nonwork life, for example family relations, friends, acquaintances, and fellow alumni."

Those who have success with finding and maintaining work in this sample have built networks. They have also fostered interests which enhance their lives, building social capital and extending useful networks (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) which have served many in this group well.

PERCEPTION OF AGE DISCRIMINATION

This group contrasts dramatically with the literature in their perceived experiences of age discrimination. McGregor's (1999) study of older workers, (aged 55 and over) found 11.6% of workers recounted discrimination on the grounds of age with the most prevalent form reported as access to training opportunities. Of this sample, only 2 (6%) described age related discriminatory experiences. Instead, there was marked unanimity that many did not suffer this; and their workplaces and industries did not practise it. There is a bias in the sample towards health and education workers, and they declared their industries looked favourably on older workers. Only 18 participants commented on this in any detail, those in self-employment did not see it to relevant to them.

Table 18. Described experiences of age discrimination.

No	%	
12	37.5	No experience of this, only positive comments
4	12.5	Expressed anxiety about this in the future
2	6.3	Perceived self as experiencing discriminating practices
(14)	43.7	(Did not comment, did not consider relevant.)

No experience of this, only positive comments	Expressed anxiety about this in the future	Perceived self as having experienced discriminating practices
Annabel, Beth , Bev, Derek, Gail, Jenny, Julie, Matt, Max, Pat, Sheila, Wynn	Fiona, Ruth, Simon, Sue	Steve, Viv
M = 4 F = 8	M = 1 F = 3	M = 1 F = 1

Positive experiences

Workers in the health and education sectors were unanimous that they were valued, rather than discriminated against. Bev noted that age is not an obstacle in nursing.

“In nursing itself older nurses are often valued....there seems to be an unspoken recognition of the value of the experience you’ve had over the years and if you show a continued ability to learn then I think I have no fears in terms of age.”

Jenny agreed that age and experience leads to more responsibility in nursing. June, as a Health Manager sees her world as positive towards age, because a lot of the health workforce is older. She noted *“you’re valued if you are competent, it’s a harsh world if you are not.”* Wynn, who has spent her pre – self-employment years in the public sector noted that her experience is that older workers are treated very well, adding though *“contingent on them being able to change.”*

Education workers were equally positive – Matt had experienced no problems, in his school, at 46, he noted *“in my school I am one of the younger ones...in teaching the majority of people are older workers, that is the way it is in*

teaching.” Gail thought schools treated older workers well, adjusting workloads when required; Beth had “seen no evidence” of this in her teaching years.

Pat had never experienced it himself but had observed it in his years in the public sector. He commented regarding older workers:

“I think at times they are really unvalued in terms of the experience they can bring to organisations and also sort of like a calming influence to a team. You know you get a lot of impetuosity with the younger ones ...older workers can say we tried to do that in the past but it failed, because of this, think about that.... So you don't make the same mistakes. I really value older people in organisations.”

Some anxiety

Some participants expressed anxiety about their employment options as they age. Sue believed she has fewer opportunities with age; Fiona described herself as more anxious about getting jobs as she got older. Ruth saw turning 50 as an obstacle. *“I guess it will be hard to pick up jobs at this age.”* Simon's concern was expressed in this way *“I think there is the suggestion that people looking for a return on their investment...as it was suggested to me that they are looking for people in their early to mid 40's.”*

Negative experiences

Viv (60) experienced this in both her job seeking and her work experiences. As a job seeker she recounts

“...the young girl who was doing my CV said, gosh, you've done a lot of things in your life, you must be quite old. Made me feel wonderful. ...and two or three people - if you were lucky to get to the interview stage - had said to me, “do you know there is a benefit for the over 55 year olds?” I was also told “we're a young crowd and we really want someone that will fit in with our young crowd”. A lot of people do not know how to employ people and they will never employ somebody that they feel knows more than

them...I can do accounting, I can do typing, I can be the receptionist, I could work in the accounts department but you learn not to say any of that because if you say, yes I'm very versatile I can do all those things... they don't want to know."

After some experiences that didn't work out, Viv was eventually offered a temping job, mostly answering the phones. *"So that's what I have been doing on and off for a company and nobody's ever ever asked me what skills I've got, what I did, what I've done, what I can do."* Inclusion in the work force hasn't happened for her because *"as a temp you're not really a person because you're not part of their general structure. You're not part of their social club....nobody's ever said would you like to join the social club."* Fitting in can be an issue. When Viv applied for a permanent job within the company she 'temps' in she didn't get it. *"I was told one of the reasons that they didn't give you the full time job was the men thought you were a bit aloof and stuck up and you didn't ever tell any dirty jokes...and I said well I don't usually go around telling dirty jokes, and I was quiet because I didn't know them well."* Viv has clearly found herself in a company with a culture that didn't value age and experience, and her comments are especially valuable in that she is the oldest of the female participants, and job seeking in her mid-fifties. Steve was the only other respondent who claimed that his redundancy happened because of his age, noting that everyone with grey hair went from his company at the time of restructuring.

TYPES OF WORK

The types of work the participants were involved in at the time of the interview were surprisingly wide. I found portfolio type work and flexibility of employment a relatively normal occurrence in the sample that I interviewed.

Table 19. Types of work involved in at time of interview.

No %

6	18.8	Fulltime Employment
3	9.4	Mixed - Full time employment and own business
8	25.0	Part-time Employment
5	15.6	Mixed – Part-time and own business
10	31.2	Fulltime self employment (one, or 2 or more businesses)

Full time Employment	Mixed – F/T employment and own business	Part-time employment	Mixed P/T employment and own business	Full time self employment
Bev, Gail June, Marie Mike, Pat	Fiona Todd Tom	Carl (2 jobs) John, Kevin Max, Nick Ruth, Simon Viv	Jake, Jenny Matt, Paula Sheila (2 businesses)	Andrew, Beth , Meg, Richard, Steve, Sue, Wynn +2 businesses- <i>Annabel, Derek Liz</i>
M= 2 F= 4	M =2 F = 1	M = 6 F = 2	M = 2 F= 3	M = 4 F = 6

Fourteen of this group were employed by others, six full-time and eight part-time. There were a number in mixed types of employment – three in full time employment as well as running their own business, four in part-time employment and running their own business. Seven were self-employed with one business, three with two businesses.

Employed full time

Five out of six involved in full time employment are health and education workers. None of these five signal a desire to move from full-time employment. The sixth, Pat, while enjoying his role, was restless and looking for opportunities to change in some way, perhaps act as a consultant to his company, perhaps *“wind down a bit.”*

Employed part-time

Eight workers were employed part-time. Of these, four - Kevin, Max, John and Carl - who had 2 part-time jobs were working as much as they wished. They chose part-time work because it suited their lives at this time. John considered himself semi retired after selling his large business; Max had chosen part-time work after his retirement from the police. For these participants this was bridge employment; they were involved in work other than their career job, and saw this work as a means of continuing beyond the usual retirement age. Kevin wanted part-time work to suit family needs and his lifestyle; he resisted pressure from his organization to work full time. Carl had 2 part-time jobs expressing the diverse roles in his life - nursing and mechanics, and he liked this way of working. Nick was newly made redundant and half-heartedly seeking full time work, as he was also considering self-employment. Simon was studying, but had been seeking full time work for some time. Simon, Ruth, Viv and Nick all expressed the wish for more work.

Mixed employment and self-employment

Eight participants mixed employment (whether part-time or full-time) with self-employment. In three cases, it was horticultural businesses in which they operated as well; the others included tourism activities, personal services, retail business, sales and property management. Multiple business ownership appears to be a common enough factor not to attract any explanation - none of the respondents referred to their work as 'portfolio' or 'flexible'. It was described in a matter of fact way, as a common occurrence in this region. In the case of Matt and Jenny, it was a means of transitioning to full time self employment, and freedom from the ties of daily working hours. In the case of Paula, who considered herself retired and Jake, who had formally retired, this work was bridging employment.

Fulltime self-employment

Ten participants were in full time self employment: four had longstanding businesses and three were running two businesses. Six participants had moved within the last decade into self-employment, some within recent months (Meg, Beth and Annabel.) Of this group five did not have employees, and three were working in consultancy roles.

Choosing self-employment

The reasons given for choosing self-employment were modifying their hours of work, freedom, the chance to do something new, and undertaking a new challenge. Choosing self-employment was based mainly on pull factors, with considerations being freedom, autonomy, self regulation of hours, and for the women, the chance to do something for 'me.'

Meg talked about *"little things, not having to be accountable, freedom to sit in the sun."* Sue noted *"the chance to do something new, we didn't like the idea of retiring at 65 with us still with the same outfit, still doing the same thing."* Wynn commented *"it was not that I wanted to be self-employed...I saw it as an opportunity to do something different. I had been working long hours and I wanted to change that."* Four women mentioned the attraction of something for themselves. Jenny and Wynn both stated they thought *"I really must do something for me."* Meg explained, *"You are doing it for you. It is something you enjoy doing and you are independent and nobody is telling you what to do."*

Beth was tired of endless after-school work, and attracted by a sudden business proposition. Those who moved to self-employment did not mention the desire to have their own business as a key focus, it was more what it offered them in lifestyle terms. Liz, involved in long-term self-employment stated she *"always wanted to work for me"* adding *"our lives were more interesting and less regimented on the land."* Her comments reflected a practice of whole family involvement in all their businesses.

Clear push factors were indicated only by Annabel, who started her own business after redundancy. *"I feel a bit of a fraud initially because the decision was made when my back was against the wall a little...but I was talking to someone recently and saying well, I have autonomy and I have flexibility and quite high earning power, and they said it sounds like the ideal job. And I thought bloody hell it is, and its mine and I created it."*

Considering self-employment

At the time of Nick's interview, he had just been made redundant and was considering this option. While he has been 'pushed' from his job, he indicated that he was attracted to the freedom of self-employment. June, happy in her organisational work, noted she was considering consultancy in the future, perhaps when she was around 55, as was Mike, both looking for the best use of their skills and knowledge and more freedom than they currently experienced in their organisational roles.

Bridge employment

Within the categories outlined above four participants appeared to be in bridge employment, defined as work which provides a means of partial retirement in which the older worker might alternate periods of disengagement from the workplace with periods of temporary, part-time, occasional or self employment work (Stein, 2000). They continued to work, but not in their career jobs. Wynn seemed to be contemplating this – her interest in her business was declining, and she had only a short time remaining until she could, if she wished, retire.

Multiple jobholders or portfolio workers

Within the groups above, nine participants (28%) may be categorised as multiple jobholders holding two or more paid jobs, or holding jobs and running one or more businesses. If running two or more separate businesses can be categorised in this way then three more participants are involved, and it might be said that over a third (37%) of the sample work in this way. The participants work in this way for a number of reasons including variety, balance, and diversification. None of this group are 'portfolio' in the sense of providing a range of knowledge work and consultancies; although some mix this with other activities.

PERCEPTION OF FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES, AND PROGRESS TOWARDS RETIREMENT

There was surprisingly little anticipation of retirement as a time to stop work, and perhaps this related to the degree of satisfaction that many of the sample felt with where they were and what they were doing (discussed in the next section). Typically the group indicated that they intended to continue work depending on how things were going, and of those who mentioned an age for retirement, few were definite about the prospect. Retirement has become a moveable feast, for some of little significance and for others as ambivalent vision of the future. Those already considering themselves retired epitomised this ambivalence, in that they were all still working in some way or another. Involvement in bridge employment has been discussed above in forms of work, but it is clear in analysing the intention of these participants that many of them are likely to be involved in this work.

Table 20. Perception of future progress towards retirement

No	%	
9	28	Mention a commitment to continuing work, not retiring
12	37.5	Mentioned a possible age, and reducing hours of work.
5	15.6	Considered selves already retired or semi-retired
5	15.6	Mentioned uncertainty, or not considered
(1)	3.1	Views not given

Committed to continuing work	Mentioned a possible age, reducing hours of work	Considered themselves already retired or semi retired	Uncertainty or Unplanned
Annabel, June, Liz Meg, Richard Sheila, Steve Todd, Tom M = 4 F = 5	Carl, Derek Fiona, Jenny Marie, Matt, Max Mike, Nick, Pat Sue, Wynn M = 7 F = 5	Jake, John Paula, Ruth Viv M = 2 F = 3	Beth, Bev Gail, Kevin Simon M = 2 F = 3

Views not stated by Andrew

No plans to stop, positive views about work availability

There is a group within this sample who have no plans to stop work and indicate a belief that the opportunities for them will not lessen. June (55) is one example - *"I love working, I'm not committed to retiring."* She enjoys her job, she is still contemplating a further career change to consultancy, and her aim at 60 is not to retire but to have options. Steve (58) is also very clear - *"I don't think retirement is in my vocabulary because I will always want to do something."* He sees himself as still working *"in some form or another until very old age."* Sheila is confident she will be able to negotiate what she wants in work, and while she is well planned financially, she *"never thinks of retiring."* Meg (51) also expresses confidence at carrying on, possibly expanding her business. Annabel (46), one of the youngest in the sample sees limitless opportunities ahead for her, and has no vision of retirement yet.

Defining an age limit, and reducing hours

Many expect to work in a reduced form until some particular age, and 60 is the age most mentioned when a retirement pattern will emerge. Most stated an age range rather than a specific age. Fiona thinks she will work part-time until retirement *"at 60 or 65."* Max, already in part-time work, also thinks he will probably finish at 60, but it will depend on how he feels, *"I'm happy where I am, I have a good quality life."* Matt sees even less part-time work and working until

60 at the latest. Mike wants to be engaged in some way or another, teaching, mentoring coaching, or consulting, but working part-time by 58. Sue likes the idea of 60, *“actually I’d like it a bit early.”* Wynn mentioned the earliest age, 55, and at that point she has planned to be able to choose whether she works or not. Carl commented that he thought it was more realistic to look at 70 than 65 as a retirement age, but he had no idea how he was going to approach it, except by heading towards self sufficiency in his lifestyle. Derek thought the ideal age is *“in your 50’s not 60’s, not to do nothing but we should be handing things over to other people.”* Any movement to working fewer hours was not generally considered to be within the current jobs that were held, but could be to something completely different.

Retired or semi retired now

All those that referred to themselves as retired or semi retired were still working in some way. Paula saw herself as already retired at 55, and the work she did she saw as an intrusion on her time. Ruth (not yet 50) thought *“I’ve been sort of retired for years...I enjoy golf and music.”* Viv (widowed and 60) also saw herself as already retired, just working part-time. She expressed anxiety about the future, *“how do you know how much you will need?”* The men had formally retired, that is they referred to themselves as retired, but were continuing in part-time work. In Jake’s case he was developing a new career as an artist.

Uncertainty

Some of the group expressed uncertainty, because a factor in their life that they had counted on was missing, or because they were at the younger end of the group and it was a long way off. Two women were without partners. Bev describes her situation as *“scary...when I was married I thought it was well thought out...it’s a big unknown.”* Beth (widowed) also noted *“it is different without a partner.”* In Simon’s (53) case the planned full time work had not eventuated, he was

struggling to get full time work, and he described himself as very uncertain about what he wants and what he can do. Gail (48) was uncertain how long she wanted to work, but saw herself involved in voluntary work in the community after she retired from education. Two participants (Wynn and Fiona) mentioned they were affected by the precarious health of family members, which made the future uncertain for them, and caused difficulty with planning.

SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PROGRESS

The group was asked in the interview to rate themselves high, medium or low regarding their satisfaction with their working life, and where they were now. Most of this group described their satisfaction with where they were now in their working life as high or fairly high. They were employed, and generally happy with the decisions and progress they had made.

Table 21. Description of satisfaction with their progress.

No	%	
16	50	Described satisfaction as high or fairly high
7	21.9	Described satisfaction as medium
4	12.5	Described their satisfaction as low, not satisfied
5	15.6	Unstated or unclear

Described satisfaction as high or fairly high	Described satisfaction as medium	Described their satisfaction as low, or not satisfied.	Unstated or unclear
Andrew, Annabel Bev, Carl, Gail John, June, Marie Max , Meg, Nick, Pat, Sheila, Steve, Todd, Tom M = 9 F = 7	Beth, Jenny, Kevin, Paula, Richard, Ruth, Sue, M = 2 F = 5	Fiona, Liz, Wynn, Viv, M = 0 F = 4	Derek, Jake Matt, Mike Simon M = 5 F= 0

High satisfaction

A considerable number (50%) indicated high or fairly high satisfaction with their work or career progress so far. Of these eleven had reached positions or situations that they aspired to or deliberately chose. Nick was on the eve of his redundancy party, and declared himself very satisfied with where he was at present. The others had reached positions they aspired to in organizations; or had made successful transitions to employment or self-employment. Max described himself as very satisfied, and provides a good example. His retirement from the police at the age of 55 was at a time he felt appropriate and timely, and his transition to a new part-time job in the area of his lifelong community interest and involvement was smooth and on schedule. He applied for the job that he wanted and got it. He was as involved in work as he wished to be and saw himself as having options: he will continue at 60 if he wants to at the time.

Medium satisfaction

The group that indicated medium satisfaction (22%) are generally not quite where they want to be at this stage of their lives and careers. Beth has just started a new venture but she is by no means securely established in it. Jenny and Matt are both looking forward to the day when they leave their part-time jobs. These participants are in transition at this stage of their careers to new paths but these are not yet established or they have not yet become confident about these.

Low satisfaction

Two of this group were affected by the need to attend to the needs of close family members. Fiona describes her satisfaction as *"probably low, because I don't think I've reached my potential really."* She is influenced by the uncertain picture of her future at present, and the health of her partner is the key focus of her life. Wynn comments in a similar way *"I've had sick parents for 2 years now...I'm just marking time...there's not a huge amount that's fulfilling at work at the*

moment.” However the ability to do something about this has to wait until she has personal time and space to address it.

A number of the men did not answer the question directly. Their comments indicated ambivalence at expressing this in a concrete rating; or a lack of clarity. I wondered if this indicated a lack of satisfaction, but I was unable to discern this.

CAREER EXPERIENCES RELATED TO AGE STAGE THEORIES

The data relating to these career actors could be grouped into 3 categories. The categories signify the stage that the overall career situation of the career actor most closely related to at this time. Three broad categories are represented, firstly the durable concept of maintenance as proposed by Super (1957) which includes holding on and keeping up in one’s occupation, and the notion of mastery. Secondly, career renewal (Williams & Savickas, 1990; Hall, 2002) which represents more complex changes at mid life. The third stage represented is that of disengagement, the life stage signalled by theorists where career actors in their 50’s to 60’s, may indicate a decrease of energy and interest towards work and career.

The table below provides a broad categorising of the participants of the study in these career development stages.

Table 22. Broad categorisation of developmental stages.

No	%	
11	34.3	Career situation most closely resembles maintenance
16	50	Career situation most closely resembles career renewal
5	15.7	Career situation most closely resembles disengagement or decline

Most closely resembling Maintenance	Most closely resembling career renewal	Most closely resembling disengagement or decline
Andrew, Bev Derek, Gail, Kevin , Marie, Matt, Pat Richard, Simon, Todd M = 8 F = 3	Annabel, Beth, Carl , Jake, Jenny, June Liz, Max, Meg, Mike, Nick, Sheila Steve, Sue, Todd Wynn M = 7 F = 9	Fiona, John, Paula, Ruth, Viv, M = 1 F = 4

Maintenance stage indicators

Maintenance stage indicators are displayed by those in more predictable career structures and roles. Participants in organisational or occupational structures were achieving mastery through advancement, horizontal development, or deepening of experience. Predictable advancement is demonstrated by Andrew, in his role as a senior lawyer in his firm; by Todd working at the top executive level in a corporation; by Marie and Gail in education management roles, by Bev in as health management setting. All these roles represent a continuation of early career. Mastery of teaching practice has been the aim of Matt, and he has sought innovation through sabbaticals in local industry. Richard works to maintain his position in an increasingly competitive real estate field. Derek maintains his role in his own construction company, but deepens his experience by adding new property development opportunities. Simon is tenuously maintaining his senior role in his industry- although he has strong interests in mentoring and using his experience to the benefit of his industry he is thwarted by his inability to obtain a full-time role. In fact as an observer it seems his career is more in decline; however that is not his intention.

The women within this group have all had long-term career experience in the one industry, and have reached senior levels, and they appear to fit the maintenance model. I found the following comment (Greller & Simpson, 1999) relevant and helpful, as I found myself feeling reluctance at putting some of these dynamic career actors in this category. "The term 'maintenance' sounds terribly downbeat, but the reality can be quite different. Late careers can be maintained at a very high level and the trajectory might be quite energetic. Continued learning and

growth is possible, however it will still be in the pre-existing directions” (Greller & Simpson, 1999, p. 332). This is certainly the case for some of the participants in this group.

Mid life career renewal indicators

This group more aptly resembles the new career models described by theorists (Williams & Savickas, 1990; Hall, 2002) who describe change at mid life. For many people this has been a time for beginning a new career rather than maintaining the old one (Hall, 2002). These participants have made new decisions at mid life, or taken an unpredictable or sudden turn in their careers. For some this has been a move to self-employment, for others a move from a well established role to something completely different. Mike’s move from a very senior position in his government service agency, to travelling to Britain to study at Master’s level in an entirely different field, then returning to lecture in tertiary education, provides an example for this. The trigger for him was the millennium, and a life changing decision on how he wanted to spend the next 25 years, a reappraisal of his career commitment and choice.

These actions also fits Hall’s new stage model for middle and later career years – a model of short cycles of learning (Hall, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Hall 2002) which he has proposed as replacing life stage models. A short cycle is seen where the career actor learns about and masters a new area of work. Each episode may have an exploratory stage, a trial or testing period, a period of getting established and mastering the work. All three stages are described by Tom, in his move into company employment at the age of 57. Beth in her establishment of a retail business after a career of primary teaching was in the testing stage at the time of her interview; Meg – just 1 week into self-employment - was at the exploratory stage of the cycle. Wynn, having mastered the change to self-employment, after 5 or more years appeared to ‘get itchy’ (Hall, 2002, p.120) and would like to explore different terrain.

Participants have described their experiences in retrospect and present varying accounts of their experiences with change. My overall impression in listening to their stories and reading their data is that views of “ruptures” and “intense suffering” (Riverin-Simard, 2000, p.126) typify this process overstate the case – at least with this group. Their processes of career renewal or change were happening in a reasonably calm way. My interviews with Meg and Nick took place practically in the moment of change, and with Beth and Mike, within months of major change. The impression is of resilience and capacity to accommodate these changes, certainly not without anxiety but also with energy and excitement.

Disengagement indicators

Indicators of disengagement and career decline are demonstrated by these participants. They are retired or semi retired, however all are working part-time. They show characteristics of deceleration, retirement living, retirement planning and a decrease in energy and interest in occupation (Super, Savickas & Super, 1996). They are making transitions to living in ways that are disengaged from work focus; some are designing new lives and customising these years to live the way they want (John, Paula, Viv); others are more uncertain about their lives as family issues affect them.

More participants' situations resemble career renewal than maintenance, and more women than men show career renewal indicators. More than twice as many men as women reflect maintenance career situations. Generally the career situations reflect the predictions of the literature (Sheehy, 1996; Williams & Savickas, 1990; Hall, 2002): personal choices have disrupted career patterns, family needs have put career progress on hold, and careers have become customised (Sheehy, 1996) as older workers design careers and work in ways that reflect their values and needs. However maintenance and disengagement stages remain. In examining these career situations, I am not suggesting they are necessarily predictable stages; only to demonstrate that for some career actors traditional age stage situations exist.

A merging of gender themes?

Today's work career with its new starts and likelihood of ups and downs may resemble the cyclical pattern of women's careers (Hall & Mirvis, 1994). Many of the women in this study generally display the characteristics of women at middle adulthood described in the literature: moving towards autonomy (Bardwick, 1980), displaying increasing confidence, assertiveness and accomplishment (Gallos, 1989) demonstrating significant job commitment and self efficacy (Cadin, Bender, de Saint Giniez, & Pringle, 2001). Meg, Bev, June, Marie, Sheila, Annabel, and Gail are examples of these, as are Wynn, Liz, and Beth in varying degrees.

As well they model the approach to learning found previously in studies of women at midlife and beyond, "an openness to education, adaptation and acceptance of changes" (Park, Pringle & Tangri, 1995, p.81) and "a commitment to continual personal development" (Park, Pringle & Tangri, p. 81). At the same time, those involved in organisational careers in health and education were displaying linear career development. Women's literature is clear that linear models on the whole do not fit women's lives (Marshall, 1989; Pringle, 1996) but in fact some of these women (Marie, Bev, Gail) have by this stage of their lives long-term experience and linear advancement in their fields. Conversely, male participants (Kevin, Carl) demonstrated stop/start values-driven careers punctuated by self-discovery episodes – a process typified by many women's careers. Others demonstrated a strong commitment to personal learning (Mike, Todd), and indicated new energy at mid or later life (Pat, Jake, John).

Generally this research did not show major differences in men's and women's experiences. To summarise the reported experiences: more women (25%) reported involvement in gaining qualifications than men (12%), and women generally had more involvement in study. More men experienced training opportunities at work (40%), on the job or through their own initiatives, than women (31%). Similar numbers expressed confidence that their skills were up to date (men 21%, women 28%), similar numbers described that for them it was easy to get work (men 19%, women 22%) – although more women (15%)

described the process as mostly successful, and more men (9%) described difficulty in gaining work.

The same number (6%) of men and women described experiences of discrimination. More women (25%) declared they had no experience of discrimination, however more women (9%) were anxious that they might experience discrimination in the future. Similar numbers (men 12%, women 15%) were committed to continuing work into retirement, similar numbers considered themselves already retired (men 6%, women 9 %).

More men (22%) than women (9%) indicated their career situation most closely represented maintenance, as might be expected; and more women (28%) than men (22%) fitted the career renewal situation, although the numbers are more similar in this case. Twice as many women (12%) showed indications of disengagement or career decline, than men (6%). However the unpredictability of these situations is indicated in the data – disengagement may be a personal choice or influenced by the ill health of a partner, renewal is a clear choice in some cases, and more blurred by the results of restructuring or redundancies in others. The more orderly careers are in health and education industries, and areas of long term occupational or entrepreneurial commitment, but these by no means have a predictable flavour as participants – both male and female - speculate on changing, and future possibilities towards retirement.

In the current employment era, “men’s career themes (as noted by Van Maanen, 1977) are beginning to resemble those of females: their career paths are not straightforward and predictable but idiosyncratic and confusing” (Kanter, 1989, cited in Fondas, 1996, p. 288).

Fondas (1996, p.288) summarises well the new realities for men:

“they need to be mobile in order to sustain employment and career development but they are tied to a geographical area by the income needed from a spouse’s job. Their hopes and expectations may be dashed when they face “glass ceilings” due to corporate restructuring, and other barriers to the traditional notion of advancement in a single company or career. Some may have to hold more than one job, ...and have multiple commitments. Such career themes were once almost exclusively the province of females. Today they have come to

characterise men's careers as well."

While this quote may be more applicable to corporate career experiences it can be adapted to fit the experiences of men in this study. As well as spouses' work, responsibilities for children, parents and long-term association with land provide strong ties to an area. They also describe multiple commitments and multiple jobs. Men in this region, like women, have the freedom, or the need, to build more subjective careers.

PART B. DISCUSSION: CAREER FORMS AND EXPERIENCES

FLEXIBLE WORK IS A KEY THEME

As well as moving across boundaries of organisational, occupational and entrepreneurial careers members of this group have participated in a broad range of career forms and experiences. Standard work involving permanent full time jobs may have been the dominant employment of the 20th century, but the workers of this study have also experienced work at a time when the rate of non-traditional work has grown faster than full time standard employment (Spoonley & Davidson, 2004). The findings regarding their work activities reflect this trend towards flexible, non-standard work practices: many more are involved in part-time, including casual and temporary employment, mixed or multiple jobs and self-employment (56%) than in traditional full time permanent work (19%). The remainder of the group (31%) are involved in fulltime work and self-employment. More women than men are in fulltime employment and self-employment, three times as many men are in part-time work. Trends highlighted in the literature are supported in this research; men reducing participation in full time work, and women increasing their participation in self-employment.

The findings regarding the work forms of this study group reflect the environment around them; flexibility is a long-standing tradition in Hawke's Bay. The

Hawke's Bay employment environment has been described previously in this study, with a key feature in Hawke's Bay being seasonal work. This is a phenomenon where many people work different jobs in different seasons, change employers and jobs often, and may be contributors as well as workers in the produce industries. Flexibility and multiple job holding is therefore familiar to Hawke's Bay employment patterns and this may well explain the 'comfort' with the portfolio and multiple job type arrangements described in this study.

Self-employment is a popular option with this group. It is more common amongst older workers (Blanchflower 1998, Leung & Robinson 1998, cited in de Bruin & Firkin, 2001), and has been noted as a significant and growing form of work for older people (de Bruin & Firkin, 2001; Conway & McLoughlin, 2002). The findings of this study support this trend. Over half (56%) of the participants in this study have either been involved in their own businesses for some time, or have developed the necessary human and capital resources to take on self-employment with confidence in recent years. They portray the diverse ways in which it is practised – the sample included portfolio workers, dependent or independent contractors, franchise holders, and small business owners as well as operators of large-scale businesses employing many staff. The majority of the businesses that were started over the last decade are not self-employed on their own account or consultancies, however they do employ very few people.

In moving to self-employment the findings are clear- the pull factors outweigh the push factors, supporting previous research (Hakim, 1988; Bururu, 1998). Pull factors to which the career-actor was intrinsically attracted, such as freedom, autonomy, self-regulation of hours, and self-fulfillment drove the move to this work, supporting the findings of research already carried out in Hawke's Bay (De Bruin & Firkin, 2001) and elsewhere (Lissenburgh & Smeaton, 2003). However push and pull factors are likely to work together and context must be seen as an influence. Hawke's Bay was recovering from some years of economic uncertainty. The difficult economic times, particularly in the mid 1990's produced a climate which may have encouraged 'defensive self-employment' (Schein, 1994, cited in Mallon, 1998), where career actors establish their own means of income as a response to declining employment opportunities. However

participants were entering, or considering entering self-employment as I was interviewing them in 2002, a time of economic recovery, so this influence should not be over stated. Furthermore none indicated their entry into self-employment was because they could not get work, many indicated that getting work was easy, and some left secure employment roles to begin businesses.

Flexible retirement follows

The participants are not strongly focussed on a set retirement age, rather they plan a flexible retirement. The idea of bridge employment rather than a permanent separation from the workplace appeals to many in this group. If bridging is a form of partial retirement in which the older worker alternated periods of disengagement from the workplace with periods of temporary part-time occasional or self employment work then some are doing this already, and many others plan to in the future. Part-time employment is favoured over full time retirement - even those who designate themselves as retired are still working in some way. The intention is to keep on working in some way or another, and in work other than a career job. None of this group declared an intention to 'bridge' work by reducing hours within their current roles, a finding supporting Doeringer's (1990) claim that contrary to the assumption that bridge employment occurs in the same industry or company as the last full time job, the majority of bridge jobs involve a change of occupation or industry, and sometimes both. Rather they talked of moving to other possibilities including consultancies, self employment, or taking advantage of local market changes, as in the case of Steve, who had designed his new home so that he could offer home stay accommodation to tourists in the future if he wished to.

Options which suit many older workers include part-time working, (including job share), short term contracts, flexible location work allowing some work at home, and seasonal working (Department of Labour, 2003b). The workers in this study are already utilising all of these options to create the working life that they want in their pre-retirement and retirement years. These are clearly options that might be used successfully to encourage gradual or phased retirement.

This study is set within the framework of careers, and examines the participant's ideas about retirement for the purpose of obtaining their view of their future prospects, their ideas about their ability to sustain work in the future. It does not attempt to examine in detail retirement plans, motives or initiatives. However the key findings signal personal intentions to pursue flexible work options for indefinite periods, rather than rely on, or adhere to a fixed retirement age and pensions.

WORKPLACE CHANGE AND NEW JOBS

The participants in this study certainly experienced change events. Jake gave an all encompassing view of the difficulties experienced in Hawke's Bay through a period of workplace change: *"I think the freezing works had just closed the year before I came. So that was 1990. And all the effects were going around. Things were downsizing and it was very hard and prices were poor and then of course we had strikes and we had hailstorms and they all got wiped out, not once but twice and the prices were poor and the stock prices were poor as well as the apples."*

This comment reveals the range of factors, beyond the usual scope of occupational change, contributing to workplace change in Hawke's Bay through the 1990's. While organisational changes, and new regulations had significant impact, so too did the weather - poor seasons and poor harvests affected the prospects of the entire region.

The participants acknowledged the stress and distress they suffered as a result of these events. They described typical factors associated with this, such as loss of confidence, and fears about regaining work. Then, in most cases their response was to make changes where required to a position or situation that was more comfortable for them, and to do what was required to make those changes possible, whether it was retraining, upskilling, taking a risk or trying something new. The career instability of the environment was counterbalanced by their personal willingness to change, learn and upskill. Participants stayed in

organizations or moved to others and some took advantage of the opportunities to learn new skills in new positions.

If organisations in the process of constant change could no longer provide job security and protection they could offer the opportunity to learn new skills albeit in a harsh and changing environment. This was embraced by those in the study who described the process of change as an opportunity event. Contrary to prevailing themes of fear and work decline in much of the literature, some older workers in this study (25%) found the changing environment a time of considerable opportunity. These workers were notable for their common approach to change in dealing with change as a challenge, rather than a threat.

Looking beyond the organization, environments in the process of constant change produced similar results - many of the non organizational workers in the study responded to regulatory changes and downturns with developing new approaches and diversifying businesses to improve their working lives. The majority of these workers did not go on to jobs of lesser value and reward, although a small number were certainly under-employed after changes in their industry.

A surprising aspect of this study was the lack of difficulty experienced around getting work or changing jobs. For most of the group (65%), work was obtained with relative ease. Age is far less of a barrier than expected, and few (6%) reported experience of age discrimination. On the contrary, many (predominantly health and education workers) asserted the valuing of older workers in their industries. Mitigating effects for these workers were extensive and longstanding networks, and new opportunities made available through social and career capital.

The literature points to older workers as a group at risk in the current employment environment. However this group did not typify those with long-term organisational experience, and long-term firm specific investments. This study did not find many "sunk investments" (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p.224). Rather the participants have created capital- assisted by their wide exposure to a range of employment experiences - that was transferable to other work situations, and social capital that also helped them to do this. A flexible environment creates a flexible workforce. There are few large organizations to work in, and career

investments were not shown to be irreversible where adaptability and ongoing learning was practiced – the example of Nick emerging after redundancy from 25 years in a single organisation is a clear example of what is possible. This may be more possible in regional economies where flexibility of employment is accepted and practiced.

A COMMITMENT TO UPSKILLING AND TRAINING

Alongside the networks described above, a further factor in maintaining the employment of these workers to the extent of their own satisfaction is surely the demonstrated commitment to upskilling.

Half of the group (50%) were involved in some form of tertiary study as older workers, with over a third (37%) undertaking or completing a qualification at this time, maintaining or gaining qualifications, upskilling and training, and developing competence in new technology. This commitment contributed to their ability to gain work and employment opportunities.

Action views of careers are influenced by the idea of self-actualisation and an inner drive towards developmental growth; individuals are required to assume greater responsibility for their careers and must develop new skills and attitudes to maintain their employability and manage their careers - a challenging requirement for many in established roles. The participants in this study participated in upskilling both for developmental and pragmatic reasons, nevertheless mostly they recognized the need to do so and acted on it. They engaged in the task of critical importance to maintaining employability in the current environment - the acquisition of new skills, including dealing with information and computer technology.

This group is not the “boundaryless elite” (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p.229). These authors describe a “winner’s circle” (p. 229), an elite group of highly skilled and well-connected professionals who will either gain, or stand to lose the least, from the new careers environment (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996). The

participants in this study certainly include skilled professionals in higher proportion to their prevalence in the general population, but the study represented seven out of nine occupational groupings.

CONCLUSION

Has there been a 'scare' regarding older workers? While I do not challenge the view that older workers are more exposed by lack of education, changed career orientation, and discrimination, it is useful to present a picture of older workers who do upskill, who have successfully changed their career orientation, and who have not faced age discrimination. This is not to deny the existence of discriminatory factors, but to assert that other factors are clearly helpful in avoiding them.

The findings of this study support those of the New Zealand study (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) who found many of the sample had adapted their careers successfully – “effective career actors had leveraged learning from hobbies and fringe interests to develop their careers, people who had been successful as employees in the eighties were doing well in the nineties in self employed and entrepreneurial activity” (Inkson, 2002, p. 4). While the findings of the study support research on women’s development at stages related to mid life and later career, generally this research does not show major differences in men and women’s experiences, and suggests more a merging (Kanter, 1989; Fondas, 1996) of men’s and women’s career themes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CAREER ATTRIBUTES, COMPETENCIES, AND BEHAVIOURS

Chapter seven explored participants' experiences of working. Chapter eight moves on to explore the career attributes, competencies and behaviours demonstrated by the participants in this study, addressing the research questions related to their management of careers:

- How are they managing their careers? What are the attributes, or behaviours that contribute towards their career progress?
- Which ones are finding fulfilment and personal success?

PART A. IDENTIFYING & EXAMINING ATTRIBUTES & BEHAVIOURS

INTRODUCTION

The literature reviewed in chapter 5 (Managing Careers in the new environment) describes behaviours considered important for the new careers environment - behaviours such as proactivity, adaptability, learning, identity awareness, and the career competencies of 'knowing how', 'knowing why', and 'knowing whom'. I examined the data for these specific behaviours and attributes identified in the literature.

My process is first to identify those people who through their descriptions of their activities appeared to demonstrate behaviours most characteristic of proactivity, or adaptability, or identity awareness and others for whom these attributes appeared low or uncharacteristic; and second, to illustrate the differences through the use of cases. I am able to describe where the characteristics appear as strong and weak examples only, those 'in between' can be assumed as having

characteristics of these in varying proportions but I am unable to describe specific proportions or amounts. My intention in this thesis is to show where and how these behaviours appear, and to illustrate the impact that they may have on the careers of the participants.

I looked also for characteristics of career competencies: knowing why, knowing how and knowing whom. Knowing why items suggested motivation, values and lifestyle considerations; knowing how items represented skills and expertise, formal and informal knowledge that the career actor had gathered over his or her lifetime. Learning attitudes related to the knowing how competencies; recognising that with the demise of job security, there is a need to actively maintain and add to knowing-how competencies (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). Knowing whom items were those related to contacts, networks and relationships. These competencies are noted in the cases outlined below. The scripts were also analysed for learning behaviours and approaches to learning, and these are described in the section below.

Finally I suggest a model of behaviours, and a related typology. This brings together the behaviours that have been examined in a useful way, and integrates the findings in order to show the differences in career behaviours related to the strength or weakness of the behaviours.

EXAMINING PROACTIVITY, ADAPTABILITY AND IDENTITY AWARENESS

The specific behaviours I was looking for derive from the literature and the development of the checklist used for the analysis is described in Chapter 6. The sections below repeat the key behaviours derived from the literature used to create the checklist.

Proactivity

The behaviours used to identify this were these abilities:

1. to identify opportunities around them and take action to benefit from them, e.g. reading the environment, anticipating change, gathering the information to position oneself for these changes, trying to influence the changes in some way (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999);
2. to make decisions to build career capital in anticipation of change (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle 1999);
3. to seek out and pursue opportunities for self improvement (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999);
4. to demonstrate continuous learning (defined as thinking about learning from daily events, applies knowledge later, searches for information to meet performance needs) (London & Mone, 1999);
5. to display initiative and perseverance (Siebert, Crant & Kramer, 1999).

Adaptability

These behaviours identified from the literature were these abilities:

1. to display a willingness to respond positively to new work requirements (Savickas, 1997);
2. to act to accommodate change and new roles that are presented to them (Super & Knasel, 1979, Pratzner & Ashley, 1984, Hall 2002);
3. show acceptance of the environment around them and its changes (Isaacson & Brown, 1993);
4. the ability to respond positively to learning opportunities, to create learning and engage in ongoing learning (Hall, 1996).

Identity Awareness

Identity has been broadly defined as “how a person sees himself or herself” (Hall, 1986), and in relation to career, as the “internal compass” (Hall, 2002. p.33) which keeps the career actor headed on the path most suited to their values and goals. Identity awareness implies knowledge of self, one’s own attributes and preferences, goals, values, abilities; as well as the important ability to grow and change in response to changing situations. This differentiates it from identity

strength, which can include a fixed state. The indicators that I used for this study were the following (Hall, 2002):

People display identity awareness, and a ‘sense of self’ when:

1. they display awareness of their own skills, abilities, and characteristics;
2. they demonstrate self assessment, and reflection in examining assets that they have, require, or lack;
3. they describe and exhibit an understanding of the goals and values which have meaning and purpose for them;
4. they have the ability to gain and utilise feedback, so that their own perceptions of self or performance are realistic and reviewed.

I also drew on Giddens’ (1991) characteristics of the robust self, and of a person with a stable sense of identity “has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively, and to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people.” (Giddens, 1991, p.54.).

Explanation of the table

1. The participants in column 1 displayed behaviours that were generally or very characteristic of proactivity, adaptability and identity awareness. The smaller group (in bold) are singled out as they displayed all the behaviours on the checklist of indicators as very characteristic.
2. The participants in column 2 displayed behaviours that were generally or very characteristic of proactivity, and adaptability, and behaviours that were not very or uncharacteristic of identity awareness.

3. The participants in column 3 displayed behaviours that were not very or uncharacteristic of proactivity, and generally or very characteristic of adaptability and identity awareness.
4. There were no participants who displayed the combination of proactivity and identity awareness without adaptability.
5. The participants in column 5 displayed behaviours that were not very or uncharacteristic of proactivity, adaptability and identity awareness.
6. The participants in column 6 displayed behaviours that were generally or very characteristic of adaptability, and not very or uncharacteristic of proactivity, and identity awareness.
7. & 8. There were no participants who displayed identity awareness without either of the other two characteristics (column 7) or proactivity without either of the other two characteristics (column 8).

behaviours and how they might impact on a career. The example chosen then is one that illustrates the behaviours very clearly. Interwoven in the text and highlighted are examples of career competencies. They are shown in this context not just to reveal the competencies of the participant but to suggest that these behaviours and competencies may affect and mutually enhance each other.

Example of strong proactive behaviours, and career competencies

Todd is a senior manager in a large corporation. He has progressed through manufacturing industry from trainee status, and as an older worker moved through a variety of management roles. He was in these roles during the restructuring of the industry throughout the 1990's. Todd's analysis provided some clear examples of proactive behaviours. Todd took positions throughout his company in many locations; he indicated his ability to identify opportunities and position himself for change.

"I learnt what went on in that side of the business...it's an international company, I organised the sale of beef to North America, I learned what the dynamics was all about.... Then I came back to T. and because I had head office experience I became a production manager. I then got an international assignment in Malaysia...and learned the dynamics of what was happening globally. Went to P. as Assistant Plant Manager, came back to T. became an assistant Works Manager there ...and then I experienced what social responsibilities of a plant manager was all about because people had a job one day and they didn't the next." (knowing how)

"I was fortunate enough to go to America and I visited a number of companies, plants, and an insurance company which had 7000 employees in the corporate office and there were all the employees working away on their computers. They had an IBM system which had a network, so they could communicate with each other...and so I decided (on the plane coming back) I'm going to learn computers, and use them, and so I got a 386 computer which cost about 4000 dollars. It was obsolete within 12 months, but I learnt how to use it, word processing and spreadsheets. I used to work the early hours of the morning, do my graphs or whatever it was so that I could go to meetings and table well illustrated reports with coloured graphs. You

become self taught, and you ask questions. Later it was one of the outcomes of the MBA that I honed all my computer skills" (knowing how)

Todd expresses a strong commitment to learning, and self-improvement, as illustrated below. The time context he is referring to here is during his years as an older worker.

"They made me the HR manager, and it was at that point that I thought if you are going to look after human resources and upskilling and all that sort of thing, then upskill yourself, and that's when I decided to do the MBA."

"It was continuous learning...but by working hard at what you are doing, being more informed, being knowledgeable, being persuasive, you know what your goals are, and then working with groups and individuals to effect change." (knowing why, knowing how)

"You need to be aware and informed of what's going on. You need to have work relationships with others in the industry, you get to know them over the years, and within your own organization you need to have an organisational structure that you are supportive of, and they respect you by being fully communicative with the individuals....and you are prepared to change. At the end of the day you don't lose sight of your goals and with experience you realise there are different paths to get there." (knowing why, knowing how, knowing whom)

His initiative and perseverance with his goals were made clear in the interview.

"My attitude to work was to work extremely hard and through that process they wanted to move me to another job, and then I had some jobs that I might not have liked but I worked hard and did them well and then I got offered another job and it just became a progression of advancement" (knowing why)

"I had this goal - I kept learning, I kept taking jobs and working hard at them, and never turning anything down, and learning. At one stage I said well I'd like to become a works manager, so I set my personal sights on that..and I achieved that." (knowing why)

He showed the capacity to build 'career capital'.

"I had building blocks of experience.... I knew about personal grievances, I was conversant with employment law, I documented everything and because of my knowledge I was able to handle

situations. I was not fazed by them...it's not a personal thing. It's about knowing how organizations work.” (knowing how)

These illustrations exemplify *proactive* behaviours as described in the literature. They also illustrate Todd's career competencies of knowing how, knowing why and knowing whom. He provided a further example of *identity awareness* -

- He described an understanding of the goals and values that have meaning for him- his knowing why was very strong
- He displayed an awareness of his own abilities, he demonstrated self assessment and reflection about career assets he had or needed
- He indicates a responsiveness to feedback in his management of change and his own developmental progress.

Todd indicates that he acts on the environment in which he finds himself to bring about progress and change, both personal and organisational. He told a “robust” (Giddens, 1991 p.55) story, indicating a strong sense of identity or self. The “internal compass” which Hall (2002, p.33) refers to as keeping the career actor headed on the path most suited to their values and goals was very evident in Todd's story, he displayed knowledge of self, referring to his own attributes and preferences, goals, values, and abilities. The strength of the characteristics as represented in Todd's story by no means fully representative of the group in column 1 – as previously stated he is shown as a strong example, and more representative of the group who were analysed as very characteristic of proactivity. Others provided examples that were more generally characteristic of proactivity.

Examples of weak proactive behaviours

Participants whose behaviours were not very characteristic of proactivity, provided a contrast in both behaviours and in their career progress. These are shown in columns 3, 5, 6, and 7 on Table 23. Simon provides an example of this contrast. Again, he is not very representative in that he is shown as a very weak example.

Simon showed very little evidence of proactive behaviours. The extracts below from his transcript illustrate that his decisions did not relate to purposeful actions to create the future he wanted, but were more often responses to the situation in which he found himself. There was a certain helplessness in his attempts to understand the world and what was required for progress in it, and a wish for others to have made this clearer to him. Simon found it difficult to identify opportunities, read the environment, or build career capital, instead he signalled a wish that others would find what he had to offer and assist him make the most of it.

"So I ended up working for a firm, it wasn't what I had wanted to do. By 1970 I had decided I would leave but had difficulty telling my boss that I was trapped into staying on out of a misguided sense of loyalty."

"I didn't finish the thesis because of a number of reasons... too much material, lack of direction, etc. etc."

"We took the role that we had to get academic qualifications to teach.... Nobody ever suggested that perhaps I should do an MBA and get a knowledge of strategic management. There is nobody tapping you on the shoulder and saying we think you have got potential. In 20 years you could be a... and this is what you have got to do. Now you will be competing against others, ... however we will assist you, we will give you access to this..... we are not encouraged to say is this what you want to do, so you can position yourself in such a such a post. You don't have the role of sponsors, of people who say ... here is somebody. You don't see people who will take you aside and say this is what you should be doing and we will introduce you to this group of contact people or key people so that they will know who you are when it comes to you to go the next step."

While Simon had spent an enormous amount of time increasing his knowledge, his 'knowing how' was limited to a narrow area and he was now having trouble persuading others of the transferability of this knowledge. He was very clear that he lacked 'knowing whom'. He regretted his lack of community networks and his lack of understanding about the usefulness of these. He viewed networks as 'referees', as a repository of reputation (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996), and overlooked their usefulness in communication and opportunity information.

"The down side was that I did not develop professional contacts or relationships, and as I look back now, to obtain better positions and

academic administrative leadership roles meant that I didn't develop professional community roles. I believe that that impacts now when I look for subsequent employment. I think that is what people need I think they need good contacts. I know this smacks of the old boy network, but is not what I mean. It is just that having people who know you and can articulate and advocate your cause perhaps..... And nobody has ever told me that is what I should do.... Perhaps as an example you know at my age now, one would expect that I could put on a CV that I have been a President of a Sports Club or the President of a Services club because reading a CV one would see that as important. It doesn't matter whether it was Lions or Rotary they see, ah here's a person who has given service to the community, whereas I do a lot of gratuitous work and get no credit for it."

Knowing why competencies relate to individual values and motivation, and Simon's story again did not reveal strength in this area. He has worked very hard to gain qualifications and taken on a range of difficult roles in his field to no apparent benefit, as he has not had the ability to tie this to meaningful goals and directions, and ongoing future work. For the senior roles that he has been seeking, age is unlikely to be a factor in his lack of success.

Most others (with the exception of Ruth) do not demonstrate as clearly the lack of proactive behaviours as the example above, so Simon cannot be seen to be fully representative of the less proactive group. His case however also indicates a lack of other behaviours, including career competencies and serves to illustrate the difficulties in such a situation.

ADAPTABILITY

A number of participants were identified as demonstrating behaviours generally or very characteristic of adaptability, demonstrating the behaviours identified from the literature. These participants are shown in column 1, 2, 3 and 6 in Table 23.

Again the findings are presented through an illustrative case, using one rich example to clearly illustrate these behaviours and how they impact on a career. Again examples of career competencies are interwoven in the text and highlighted

to reveal the competencies of the participant and the way in which the behaviours and competencies are mutually enhanced.

Example of adaptable behaviours and career competencies

Nick is chosen as he was the sole participant with a long career in one organization, and he provides an interesting example of adaptability in a large organization. Employed for 25 years in a large manufacturing plant he described a reasonably satisfying career which provided a lot of diverse opportunities and experiences, but little vertical advancement for him.

"The advantage of a place like M. is that because it's so large there are lots of different jobs you could do...even when I worked in the office, I worked in 2 major departments and I also filled in various other places, and it gives you a slightly wider look on how the place operates."
(knowing how)

Nick expressed a relaxed view of the numerous restructuring and redundancy rounds he had experienced.

"Since the early 1990s there was this sort of change thing on a far more regular basis..(I found) change relatively easy...I was able to fill in different places so sometimes you would come in and find you were working on such and such a line, but the supervisor would come up and say we need you to fill in there so there was always change just happening and you would go from one department to another."
(knowing how)

He did not achieve a great deal of advancement during this time, and he explains this in the context of management and the number of different strategies and reengineering he had observed during his time. Nick had hoped for a higher-level role in the last restructuring, but had been made redundant instead. He was philosophical about this...

"I was disappointed in that respect (losing out on the job) but then they (the company) had been doing this for a number of years ...I know a number of people who have been made redundant', and there was a saying at work that you could always tell someone who has been made redundant at M. by the smile on their face. All the glum ones were the ones that were still there."

"I have this saying. 'que sera sera'. You can look after your destiny to a certain extent but there are times when there are forces greater than individuals operating and some people try and understand those forces and try and analyse it and work it out and beat it.... but you cant." (knowing why)

I interviewed Nick soon after his redundancy and he was very cheerful and relaxed when talking about his future. He already had part-time work in hand and good enough contacts to have two or three ideas under consideration- a lifetime in the Bay had provided him with good '*knowing whom*' contacts. He was enjoying his newfound freedom, and considered his view of his future a lot better than previously. He showed no concerns about adapting to his new life, and even the worst case scenario was not a problem for him, "*I may wind up having to accept a job that I don't really want to accept but it might be what is going at the time.*"

Nick appeared highly adaptable but not very career goal directed. He was sure of himself in his *knowing how*, he had taken learning opportunities and had a wide and useful range of skills including technology. He did not perceive his redundancy to be related to his skills or him personally, "*it's a numbers game.*" He had observed his changing environment with interest but had not attempted to influence it in any way, accepting the opportunities that came his way and not very concerned about those that didn't. Nick was also comfortable in his *knowing why*:

"other people are quite driven...they have a success or goal attainment kind of thing - that is not really me and it is not necessarily a driver for me, not in a career thing. I would sooner accomplish things more in my private life away from work."

While not a strongly proactive person, Nick had the skills and attitudes to achieve the working life he wanted for himself- he was adaptable, he appeared to have a clear sense of self and an understanding of his values and motivation, and confidence in the skills he left the company with. I was reminded in listening to his story of the value of the idea of preserving discretion (Weick & Berlinger, 1989) in organizations. Nick told his story about his time in the organization as

an interested observer rather than in a very personal manner. He was attached for 25 years but not too attached: when he left, he left with his identity and his confidence intact from a situation where loss of employment might have triggered a loss of identity and sense of belonging (Hall, 1986).

Nick is relatively typical of the group that have behaviour very or generally characteristic of adaptability, and he represents the group in column 1 who are not very characteristic on all behaviours but have enough of these, and adequate career competencies to sustain employment and be confident about their employability.

Example of weak adaptable behaviours

Participants with weak adaptable behaviours are shown in column 1, 2, 3 and 5 in Table x.

Ruth is chosen as an example as she is a participant who clearly shows very little evidence of adaptive behaviours. She had trouble deciding on a career path, and finally made her choice on teaching, which *“suited at the time really. I mean I couldn’t have got any other jobs in D.”* Ruth didn’t need to work full time, and describes her choice to work part-time *“because I’ve worked part-time for a number of years, I’ve sort of got other things that I enjoy doing that I don’t want to give up now.”*

Ruth worked part-time in special education. She had enjoyed working part-time with a very supportive team, but when changes were made she found them very difficult.

“And then the way they did it was pretty harsh. They just kind of dropped it and all of us who had had experience of working with intellectual disabilities were kind of just told oh well you can apply for something else if you like within the education world. They started up (new positions) but they involved a lot of retraining and full-time work and so on. And I didn’t really want to go back to full-time academic study again so I didn’t apply.....well, I could have taken up that opportunity I suppose. having spoken to a couple of people that did

it, this was about 3 or 4 years ago now, they found it very long hours and hard work even though most of them had done degrees before.” (knowing why, knowing whom)

Ruth was reluctant to upskill, as she saw it as difficult and intrusive of her time. She was also reluctant to accept short-term contracts, and uncomfortable with the situation of uncertainty “*not knowing what will happen from year to year through the ministry.*”

Even though she preferred part time work, having her working hours reduced to almost nothing had been disappointing, and Ruth described her work opportunities as not very good. Her only child would be going away to university soon and she felt ready for a change, but she was not clear what that might be.

“I don’t envisage it being easy to find something else that I could do really. Office-wise I’m totally out of date because when I did secretarial training years ago there were no computers or anything like that. So I’m years out of date with that sort of stuff. So it’s a bit hard to think of things that I could do really.” (knowing how)

Although Ruth is not yet fifty she describes herself as semi-retired already, and this belief affected her approach to learning. “*I feel it’s a bit late to start completely retraining and I’d be silly really to get out of education completely if there’s jobs available still. And there may well be.*” However now there were changes in her life approaching, and she wanted more work opportunity.

“ But next year he’ll be off to university or wherever so I’ll be suddenly bereft and I’ll need something more stimulating in my life I think. So there’s a good possibility that I might want to go to full-time work next year. But I might not be able to because it mightn’t be there.”

For various lifestyle reasons, including her role as a mother, Ruth did not want to change the way she worked or ‘invest’ in her future by upskilling. Now at a point where she was ready to do more, it did not seem to be available to her. She has

been cautious about learning and wanted the certainty of a job at the end of it before she looked at developing herself. Ruth's "knowing why" was strongest in her role as a mother, and not in her career behaviours. Her life was geared around being available to her son after school and *"not being rushed or stressed,"* and her enjoyment of her hobbies. She saw work in a particular way – *"I think people have got to think about why they do jobs. I mean you don't live to work, you work so that you can enjoy life - that's the way I see it."* She acknowledges her approach is not very active – *"if I was a bit more ambitious I would be more active in seeking jobs and I think if you're only prepared to work part-time well you're not going to get great job security anyway."* Her 'knowing how' has diminished with her failure to take training opportunities offered and the applicability of her skills narrowed. Her choices have suited her up till now when she had begun to want more work, and she expected difficulty in achieving this. Her contacts and long-term networks did not seem to be of any assistance to her work future.

Ruth's career competencies are weak. As with Simon, weak behaviours illustrate weak 'knowings' or career competencies, suggesting that these attributes mutually enhance and sustain each other.

IDENTITY AWARENESS

Examples of strong identity awareness

These participants demonstrating strong or generally strong identity awareness are shown in columns 1, 3, 4 and 7 in Table 23.

Giddens (1991) defined a characteristic of the self "that allows one to know ...both what one is doing and why one is doing it" (p. 35). This "knowing why" was very strong in some participants. An example is Todd, and this is illustrated in the data set out under proactivity. Further strong examples are June, Mike, Sheila, Max, Meg and Steve. Their sense of identity was "robust.....securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments

within which the person moves” (Giddens, 1991 p.55). June is chosen as the example case, as she provides an effective illustration of these indicators, and is representative of the group above (strong examples).

June is a health manager in a large organization. Her comments illustrate strong identity awareness, and clear indications of the ability to grow and change. She displays a clear awareness of her own skills and abilities:

“I think it’s finding out what skills you need to have and I think IT skills are a huge one. I look at friends who can’t get jobs who are in their 50s, marriages have broken up, and basically the skills you require now, you need to have an IT component to that. You know, the information technology, know how to use your PC. My skills still aren’t great but they’re a hell of a lot better than they were.”(knowing how)

“I’ve probably learnt in the last 4 years to move out of my comfort zone several times and looked upon that even though you might feel a little period of discomfort for a period of time, if you actually plan and do the right work you’ll actually come back into feeling comfortable about what you’re doing and you accept that a little bit more often.” (knowing why)

June demonstrates self-assessment, and reflection in examining her assets and her needs:

“I think I’m an internaliser who always looks where my gaps are, where’s the weakness and where are the opportunities.”

“ I’ve got a 30-odd year knowledge of how health’s been going...I understand the context of where we’re at the moment. I probably learnt to communicate a lot better and I’ve learnt to analyse.... I went into an area with quite complex problems and I realised my ability to analyse and drill down to find out what the real problems were and did a lot of work on that.”(knowing how)

“I find out what I don’t know and I’m very good at networking to get the information and surround myself with people that have the skills that I haven’t got.” (knowing whom)

June is clear about her knowing why, the goals and values which have meaning and purpose for her.

"I'm not a person who is committed to retire. My focus is really the joy of it- I really enjoy my job, I make sure I enjoy my job and I create an environment." (knowing why)

"I would like to have the ability in 5 years time to do consultancy in health and I think the project work I do now is very good preparation for that." (knowing why, knowing how)

"the other success for me is not just getting recognised for what you're doing but actually having a high level of job satisfaction. And I don't think that comes from being passive. I'm not passive about the environment we work in." (knowing why)

She describes her openness to feedback, so that her perceptions of self or performance are realistic and reviewed.

"She is a manager that will develop the team, and provided you are there and willing to be developed she will certainly give you all the feedback."

"I've picked this up and she's given the time and the feedback for me to develop the skills. I mean one of the biggies is around report writing which a year ago was a nightmare to me and now I can report write for the Board with no stress at all." (knowing how)

June told a strong story with a powerful sense of "biographical continuity" (Giddens, 1991, p. 54). Regardless of the pressure in her work and the changes around her, she enjoyed her work enormously and made strong efforts to develop personally to meet the demands of that work. June presented as a person strong in her sense of self and in her identity in health and management; with confidence in her experience and her ability to learn, and with a clear notion of "going somewhere."

Examples of weak identity awareness

Participants with weak identity awareness behaviours are shown in columns 2, 5, 6 and 8 in Table 23.

A clear sense of self is less obvious in Simon, Ruth, Beth, Jenny, Fiona, Sue, Viv and Liz. It is the absence of behaviours that mark this, and no single case

illustrates this effectively. Liz showed some indicators of proactive behaviours and adapted well to the changing demands of her industry, but it was a sense of constantly responding to shifting prevailing winds. She expresses a lack of satisfaction and uncertainty about "*where she is going with this*" - there is not a sense of a strong internal self-direction. Similarly with Simon who has continually responded to his work environment by one strategy - ongoing formal training - but has not seen or adapted to other changing demands. This suggests an attachment to one view of the self that is not up to date - identity awareness assumes the knowledge of the need as well as the ability to grow and change with these demands. Fiona and Sue responded to opportunities as they arose, but now that they had speculated on doing something different they had less inclination or ability to initiate change or create new opportunities. Characteristics of self-awareness, gaining and using feedback, reflection on their progress, and having meaningful goals were not present in the dialogues of this group. All acknowledged some lack of goal direction, and while wanting some change they found it difficult to see what it might be. There was little of the sense of an inner direction in their stories, rather that there was no longer an impetus - or compass - to guide them, and there was a sense that they were somewhat lost.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Learning is an underlying theme of all proposed effective career behaviours and appears in the definitions of all the behaviours described above. My intention was to explore how the participants perceived learning, and their attitudes to it.

The participants in the study gave clear messages about how they perceived learning and the importance of learning in their lives. Some talked very specifically about learning, their commitment to learning, the enjoyment of it or the necessity of it for them. Most participants described a positive approach, and a readiness to learn. The differences lay in the extent to which learning emerged as a continuous activity, indicated by a continuous and diverse range of learning strategies; or a situation where positive responses were given to learning and training opportunities, but these were described as short term or discrete events.

Table 24. Learning attitudes and responses.

No	%	
15	46.8	Mentioned a continuous and diverse range of learning strategies
14	43.7	Mentioned positive responses to learning and training opportunities
3	9.3	Mentioned little interest or ambivalence towards learning

Mentioned a continuous and diverse range of learning strategies	Mentioned positive responses to learning and training opportunities	Mention little interest or ambivalence towards learning
Annabel, Bev, Carl, Gail, Jake, June, Liz, Meg, Mike, Pat, Sheila, Steve, Todd, Viv, Max M = 7 F = 8	Andrew, Beth, Derek, Fiona, John, Kevin, Marie, Matt, Nick, Richard, Simon, Sue, Tom Wynn, M = 9 F = 5	Jenny, Paula, Ruth M = 0 F = 3

Learners with a continuous and diverse range of strategies

This group talked about learning as a continuous activity, with informal learning taking place as well as formal learning, and described a number of diverse learning strategies. The participants described using work situations as learning opportunities, e.g. jobs and rotations within the company and interviews. This group gained feedback on their performance: they used phrases like “*reading the environment*”, “*constantly looking*” and “*making sure I know, finding out, reading and listening*”, and “*looking at what is going on*”, “*maintaining connections*”, “*checking out ideas*”, “*always learning.*” Their comments signalled an awareness of their environment and their processes of learning through this awareness.

June provides one of the clear examples of this approach:

“I find out what skills I need and get them...I’m constantly looking, constantly assessing the environment we work in....you have to keep learning. There were good learning opportunities in the hospital and there were good learning opportunities in the process of change. It’s a very challenging and dynamic environment and while some people can get scared of that environment and retrench back I actually always look for the opportunities. I think I was fairly naive at that service level management then and probably didn’t have the systems

or the capacity that I have now but I learnt from it. I went in there and it was the most rapid learning time I had to do."

Bev also describes her commitment to ongoing learning *"I feel tremendous responsibility to my professional activities and the standard of care I deliver and the continual learning process really"* and she described *"a continual search for wanting to look at what's new and what's improving, what can be done better."*

Mike's story conveyed a similar commitment.

Many expressed a love or enjoyment of learning, taking personal pleasure in self-development. Meg is an enthusiastic learner –*"I love learning, I'm always learning."* Max described the constant learning which was available to him within the police force: *"every thing you learn is useful."* Liz is very active in her learning approach to her horticultural and tourism businesses, *"you have to get out and find out what is happening...we're better off by going out and looking and doing."* Sheila related her learning to her goals, *"I've initiated most of it, it is self-directed, I read a lot of self-development books... I practice strategies, believe in upskilling, I set goals."* Pat and Jake described learning from *"skilled others"*, and relationships with other people are a key source of continuous learning (Hall, 1993, cited in Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Steve referred to the need for practice, and learning his product. *"It is like anything. It is like Andrew Merhtens kicking goals in a footie game. You know that guy doesn't just go out and kick goals, he probably practices 3 hours every day."* The common factor was the apparently continuous nature of their learning – Vaill's (1996) view of "learning as a way of being" is captured in the way these people talked about learning.

At the same time most of this group were or had recently been involved in some kind of formal tertiary study, upskilling and gaining degrees or papers (Carl, Meg, Viv, Liz, Todd, Bev, Gail, Mike) as discussed in Chapter 7. Continuing with formal learning was interesting and enjoyable for them. Others were less interested in formal learning, (Gail, Pat,) but had many informal strategies. Gail commented *"I'm really nosy...I like to know how things really work...to have all the information, observe, talk to people, see what people do. I like to see how it all works, how it all fits together."*

Learners who respond positively to learning opportunities

These participants give positive responses concerning learning opportunities and training, including learning through experience. Learning was described as an event that happened at various times, and usually for a purpose: for example it was required for a job, or as a means to a promotion, or as intermittent training. With this group it was less likely to be self-initiated, there was a reason to do it. They also expressed the value of learning from experience.

Marie is a responsive and purposeful learner. A maths teacher, she took opportunities to increase her skills by adding ICT to her teaching skills, *"career wise it was a step up, and I think the ICT involvement has been great for me as far as my career goes.. after that I gained promotion."* She was now beginning an educational administration degree, as she had reached a position of school management level. *"It would be useful...I know that too much theory isn't all that valuable when working with kids, ... but I think it's just expected."*

Kevin trained and extended his formal learning as his circumstances changed. After his government service position was restructured in the 1980's, he took the option of retraining as a teacher. He talks about learning in the context of his daily work. *"There were several areas of learning...classroom stuff, (on re-entering teaching,) and quite a lot of learning to do with technology and keeping up with computers"* (on changing his work back into a government service organization). His approach to this was positive and responsive, *"I am still learning."* Tom had strategically decided at 57 when he wished to move into full time employment that he needed computer skills and set out to gain them. *"My son showed me some basic things on the computer, then I went to senior net and did a couple of programs there and then I have been learning computer skills on the job since then."* Sue prepared for her transition to grape growing by attending a horticulture course at the local Polytechnic.

Simon fits the above category to some extent. However he also provides an example of someone working in what Vaill (1996) calls the 'existing model of learning' - learning as an institutional activity. Vaill (1996) describes the features of this model as limiting and restricting as it is specific goal directed, usually a

qualification. Simon had been engaged in almost continuous formal study throughout his career, however now he found it difficult to find the full time job that he sought within higher education institutions; these in his view now “*seemed to want something different.*” In contrast the continuous learners described above demonstrate ‘learning as a way of being’ (Vaill, 1996), something that refers to the whole person, that goes on the whole time and extends into all aspects of a person’s life; and learning through ongoing workplace experience (Beckett & Hager, 2002).

Ambivalent or reluctant learners

These participants mentioned learning in the context of formal learning and as a requirement they were reluctant to undertake, or had not “got around to.” Paula was practically skilled, and tertiary educated. She mentioned learning in the context of formal learning, and while she considered this from time to time, she hadn’t yet pursued it. “*I’ve always felt I would like to do more extramural study ...just subjects that interest me and maybe I will.*”

Jenny ‘s views on learning appeared soured by the way in which she saw people “*forced to do papers to get a degree*” during her time in hospital nursing. She indicates that she did all the practically relevant courses that came her way, but was very ambivalent about the formal upskilling. Finally undertaking a tertiary certificate for a new job, she did not enjoy the process much. “*It had been so long since I had done any formal study that I found the assignments initially very difficult because I didn’t have a computer, I hand wrote it and sent it.*”

Overall the majority of this sample were active learners, and responsive to opportunities. They acknowledged and responded to the need for ongoing learning to maintain themselves in their work. Some - Meg, June, Bev and Sheila - expressed the sheer enjoyment of learning and its relationship to their own ongoing development.

THE COMBINATION OF BEHAVIOURS

The findings above indicate the requirement for all of these characteristics to be present to some degree to provide a “recipe” that works at the most effective level.

If all these factors – proactivity, adaptability and identity awareness - are strongly present then the career actor appears to be able to function very well in the new careers environment, and is more likely to be able to make the changes that not only sustain employment, but meet personal goals. If all these factors are present but less strongly, then that effective functioning is relative.

Adaptability is the essential factor, and added to identity, ensures that responsiveness is in directions that suit that person. These two factors lack the strong future orientation of proactivity that can assist with options when these are required. Without proactivity, when opportunities stop appearing, participants like Wynn found it difficult to find a future plan or direction, and they had not put in place career capital to assist them. Having adapted well to the winds of change, Wynn had come to a halt. She had the ability to maintain her work, knew what she liked and didn't like, but looking into the future was difficult. Participants who indicate only adaptability are still maintaining work, but are not particularly satisfied in it, and all indicate goals that they have not pursued or achieved. Without adaptability, in Ruth's case, opportunities were running out completely, and she was holding on to only the smallest amount of work.

Without identity, and knowledge of self, the foundations are at risk, there is no clear sense of the direction in which to place one's effort, no “internal stabiliser in the midst of change” (Hall, 2002, p. 33). This is demonstrated in the case of Liz. A great deal of activity was expressed in her dialogue, she was well tuned to regional changes and proactive in addressing them, however there was a lack of clear direction, and uncertainty as to whether what she was doing was what she really wanted to do. Consequently she expressed dissatisfaction with herself.

The compass analogy provided by Hall (2002) proved very apt. A compass gives clear direction and lets you know where you are when you are lost. As I listened

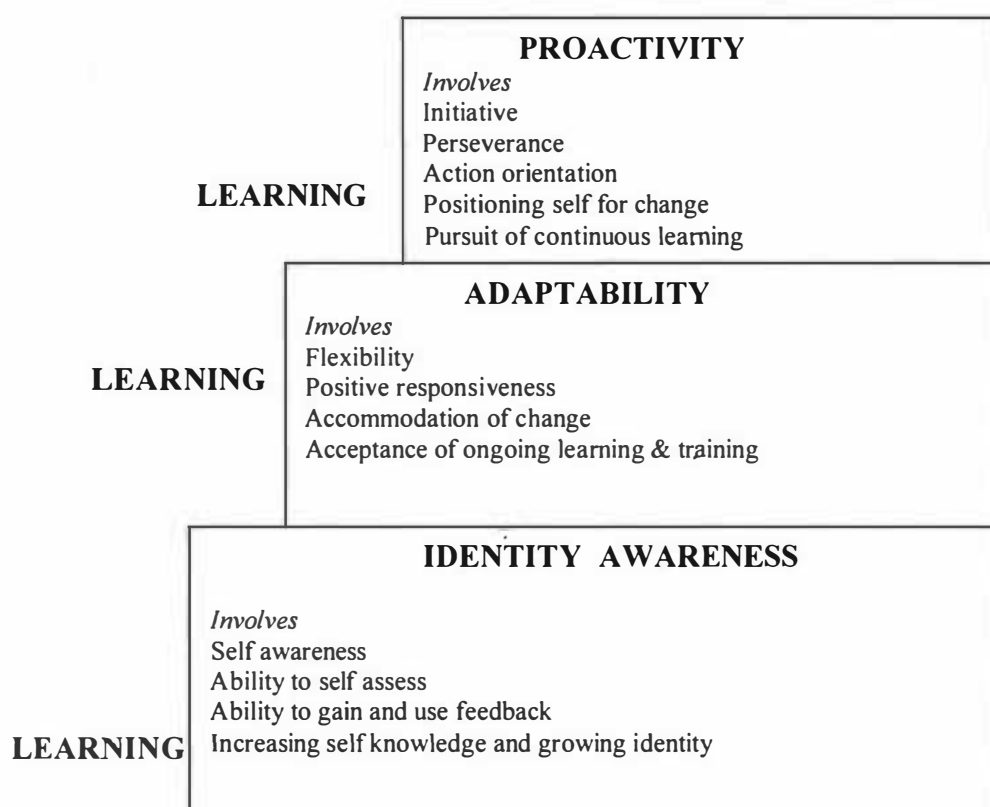
to interviews and participants, those who spoke with a sureness of self did speak with the confidence of those with a compass, differing significantly from those who were uncertain if they were in the right place, or were looking for ways to discover the right place.

While the 'amounts' required cannot be defined specifically, many of the participants have sufficient of these behaviours to maintain employability with varying degrees of satisfaction. It is clear from the numbers in the table that most participants were generally or very proactive, generally or very adaptable, and had generally or very well demonstrated behaviours of identity awareness. This is an employed group who have had sufficient skills and behaviours to maintain that employment through difficult times. Within this group there is a smaller number that have demonstrated *all* of these behaviours clearly, and also demonstrated *all* the career competencies. They were performing effectively in the current environment, and were among the most satisfied in this study. This group, and the others will be described further below in the proposed typology.

INTEGRATING THE BEHAVIOURS INTO A MODEL OF EFFECTIVE CAREER BEHAVIOURS

The behaviours of proactivity, adaptability, and identity awareness may be assembled together to create an ascending model of effective behaviours in the new careers environment. Learning is seen as a key component of each part of this model and is present in every part.

Figure 1. Model of effective career behaviours: PAIL



This model proposes the following:

- Identity awareness is shown at the base, indicating that strength in this is the foundation for career effectiveness in the current environment - the “compass” for the individual path (Hall, 2002, p. 32).
- Identity and adaptability together provide the ability to respond to change and work challenges in ways that are effective for the career actor.
- The addition of proactivity to adaptability and identity adds the ability to act on self and the environment to bring about meaningful change and develop a positive future.
- Learning is present alongside all these behaviours to signify the importance of continuous learning – including learning about self, ongoing training, and the holistic concept of “learning as a way of being” (Vaill, 1996, p.32).

Table 25. PAIL Behaviours of the Participants.

No	%	
10	31.2	All behaviours demonstrated
17	53.12	Some behaviours demonstrated
5	15.6	Few behaviours demonstrated

Demonstrate all PAIL behaviours –the career connected	Demonstrate some PAIL behaviours - the career resilient	Demonstrate few PAIL behaviours – the career slowed
Bev, Jake, June, Max, Meg, Mike, Pat, Sheila, Steve, Todd M = 6 F = 4	Andrew, Annabel, Beth, Carl, Derek, Gail, John, Kevin, Liz, Marie, Matt, Nick, Paula, Richard, Tom, Viv, Wynn M = 9 F = 8	Fiona, Jenny, Ruth, Simon, Sue M = 1 F = 4

This differs from the group shown in Table 23 in the following way. This table identifies those (10) who demonstrated all the behaviours identified as important. A larger group (17) are those who demonstrated some of the range of behaviours; and a third group (5) demonstrated few of the behaviours that were identified from the literature.

All PAIL behaviours demonstrated

The first group provides a valuable insight into a group of career actors with a rich repertoire of helpful and effective behaviours. This group had clearly taken ownership of their careers and could act on their environments to achieve the goals they wanted. They have the ability to navigate or work around structural constraints to maintain the progress they want. They appear in the group who felt advantaged by change and had well developed strategies to develop their careers effectively in times of change. These participants also appear in the group who mentioned it had been easy to find work.; they appear in the group who had undertaken recent qualifications or training (with the exception of Sheila, who described instead a commitment to continual self improvement, and Steve, both of

whom were working in sales). All of these participants viewed themselves as being up to date, all of these participants had a positive view of their work future, and confidence in themselves to bring about that future.

Some PAIL Behaviours demonstrated

The participants in this group demonstrated mixed degrees of the PAIL behaviours, some strong, some weak; or they may have had one behaviour which appeared to be very weak, or missing from their repertoire. They had sufficient of these behaviours to maintain employability with varying degrees of satisfaction. They may be very successful adaptors, who have achieved their goals and are happy with the positions they have reached. Within an organisational setting, the next step is clear, and provides an ongoing momentum. Marie fitted this criteria, and she was moving up the school hierarchy. Gail was at the top of her school hierarchy already, and the next move is less obvious for her. *“Things are feeling really good, but there is this niggling part of my brain. I feel worried because for the first time in my life I haven’t got a plan. I always need a plan, but since I got here I haven’t had a plan.”*

Wynn is similar, she is capable of maintaining her current work, but now that she has less energy for it, she appears less able to create a different future. There is a sense of the ability to be adaptable working less well when opportunities have stopped presenting themselves, or when the “internal compass” (Hall, 2002, p.33) of identity awareness provides little guidance. These participants do not demonstrate a strong inclination or ability to act upon their environment to create new prospects or aims. They appear across all categories in data concerning satisfaction with their progress. However within this group, many participants were satisfied with where they were, and others were in a transition to where they wanted to be. So while there is no real need to acquire the other more proactive behaviours, they appear to enhance and facilitate progress.

Few PAIL Behaviours demonstrated

Participants in this group did not demonstrate many of the relevant behaviours; they are weak or missing. They have received what the working world has offered, but at this stage they have not been able to make it work very well for them. Sue, Simon, Ruth, and Fiona, although still working, do not have a strong sense of place in the vocational world, and reveal feelings of alienation or disengagement. In Fiona's case, it may be that she is distracted by family illness, and she describes her life as being "on hold" for this reason. The others have some uncertainty about where they are and find difficulty in actioning any changes.

Jenny is a different case, and her data gave me some difficulty. She appears in this group because her transcript indicated few of the behaviours I was looking for. However her situation is more certain, and assumes more behaviours than her career story revealed. Her story had a underlying theme of distress and cynicism resulting from past treatment and changes she had experienced, and these feelings may have dominated her story in ways that overshadowed other actions. Jenny is placed in this group with some uncertainty, and a caveat that her own reporting may have understated her actions.

TYPOLOGY

The table has been used to develop a typology. This examines the groupings further and the discussion relates the PAIL model to that of other models of behaviours identified in the literature.

The career connected

This group is those who demonstrate all PAIL behaviours. They are proactive in orientation, adaptable and responsive to change, and exhibit a strong sense of self, they indicate an awareness of their identity and their ability to grow and change.

As the explanation below outlines, they fit existing models of behaviours, exhibiting career competencies (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and protean behaviours (Hall 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2002).

This group has been named as 'career connected' as they appear to see and understand 'big picture' connections, such as

- Contacts and work possibilities
- Information and opportunity
- Present and future
- Learning and fulfillment
- Self and context (local and/or global environment)
- What is and what might be

Developing, fostering and maintaining networks and contacts and relationship building are an integral part of how these participants work. As older workers they have gathered considerable career and social capital, what is referred to as "knowing whom assets" (Inkson & Arthur, 2001, p.3) including relationships, reputation, and sources of information. Gathering information, being aware, and anticipating change are aspects of proactivity that provide the data for the ability to understand how what is happening in the present creates pathways or opportunities for the future. This data also is the basis for the understanding of a changing world and its ambiguities, and the ability to be comfortable with those ambiguities, and deal effectively with change. Learning is a key tool for this group, whether for growth, skills or fulfillment, and it is undertaken proactively and in broad forms, informally or formally. All of these factors contribute to 'knowing how' and 'knowing why' competencies (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999).

Those who have had success with finding and maintaining work in this sample not only build networks, they exhibit the other qualities of 'career capitalists' – they have spread their occupational investment widely, paid attention to professional growth, and with their focus on their lifestyles, maintained lives that are interesting and balanced. The 'career connected' also incorporate the concept of experience capitalists. This term (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) describes

the career actor whose primary career investment is experience; a group who have moved around a lot in their careers, and in the process developed a body of skills and interests on which to continue to develop their careers. The difference in this study is that breadth of experience is gained by expansion into various employment settings, not necessarily mobility across employment settings. This expansion has taken place over their entire career and while they are 'older workers.'

The attributes of the 'career connected' participants resonates with a protean career orientation (Briscoe & Hall, 2002). The attributes of the protean orientation are these (Briscoe & Hall, 2002, p.7):

- Reliance on personal subjective definition of career success (rather than reliance upon external reference persons or groups)
- Emphasis on fulfilling personal values through work (may or may not reflect "performance" as defined by organisational ends)
- Self reliance in making career plans and decisions
- Proactive orientation, willingness to seek out change and to take action
- Career defined independently of organisational boundaries
- Career is expanded beyond vocational self-perception to encompass the person's total life space (family, lifestyle, etc).

The goal of the protean career is psychological success, the achievement of one's most important goals in life (Mirvis & Hall, 1994), whatever they may be. The protean career demands a high level of self-awareness and personal responsibility from the career actor: continuous learning, high levels of adaptability and identity changes are required (Hall, 1996). The participants in this group exhibit these characteristics; they set goals that are personally meaningful, and these encompass their life space. They show commitment to self-awareness and self-improvement, and they are self-directed in their approach to achieving these.

The criteria above add a dimension that Hall (1996) has not previously emphasized. A recent paper (Briscoe & Hall, 2002) supports the idea of a proactive orientation, as described above. That is the actions of readiness for and anticipation of change that are found in proactive behaviours. Inkson (2003)

alluded to the need for this when he raised a question about the relationship of proactivity to adaptability, and notes that Proteus responded only when cornered, indicating a reactive response. The addition of this criteria removes the flavour of reactivity that appeared to be present in the protean career concept. While this group may be bounded by age and geography, proactive behaviours ensure there are still many opportunities, retaining the connections to the work environment.

The career resilient

This group is those who demonstrate some PAIL behaviours. They are positive responders, generally willing to upskill and maintain their employment capital. They have been named ‘career resilient’ because they have attributes of adaptability, they demonstrate the ability to let go of the outdated, learn the new, and bounce back from adversity (Bridges, 1994). Some are more skilled than others, but they share in common the ability to respond positively to changing circumstances and challenges.

This ability to respond and adapt to changing circumstances differs from the ‘career connected’ in that it has connotations of reactivity rather than proactivity. There are fewer indications of the perspective described by Bell and Staw (1989) the ability to alter the situation in which they find themselves, fewer examples of opportunism or vision regarding the future. How this impacts on their career progress can be surmised by the satisfaction described by this group – some categorise their satisfaction as high, others are medium, only three indicate low satisfaction with their situation. In varying degrees therefore they make the progress they wish to make.

Career competencies are present in this group but do not always present themselves as consistently or strongly as in the ‘career connected’ group. While many indicate ‘knowing whom’ competencies, and may benefit from networks, some indicate that this had not happened knowingly. Tom had gained his first job at the age of 58, becoming successfully employed after he applied within the industry that he had spent many years growing for. He considered at the time of

the interview that his contacts - or 'knowing whom assets'- from within the industry and from his time in real estate may also have assisted in getting this work, but he had not really thought of this before. Wynn on the other hand is clear that her long term in the region and many contacts assisted her to establish a successful business.

This group generally exhibits the ability to sustain employment in a changing world. It includes many working in organisational settings such as education where their ability to respond positively has maintained or advanced their progress, and the direction ahead of them seems clear. They have maintained their knowing how, and are not slowed down by lack of skills. Some are uncertain in 'knowing why', showing a lack of clarity about where they want to be at this point. All have proved their capability in sustaining work in this current environment, and when they have reached obstacles of some sort at some time, their data indicates they have the ability to move forward.

The career slowed

These examples suggest there is no one common theme to a lack of progress-these are not the less skilled workers seen as the most at risk in the literature but they do represent the older workers who have made industry (rather than firm specific) career investments which are no longer valued, or who have disengaged from seeking career momentum for various reasons. In two cases the industry is education, but the cases differ and these examples highlight the complexity of the difficulties. A lack of upskilling has diminished Ruth's chances, but this is not the case with Simon. It is more a lack of understanding of how the employment world works, and how to be proactive in the new environment. He acknowledges his difficulty in marketing himself effectively and perhaps this reflects the difficulties of the "the stepped up tournaments of the new organisational era" (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p. 219). There is a struggle to re-orient himself to the marketplace. Jenny has work, but her disenchantment with her industry has lingered and she is mostly looking towards a freer future with her own business. Sue is looking towards retirement, and Fiona is distracted by family illness.

These exemplify issues that older workers commonly face and are those likely to reduce career interest and momentum. None of this group describes himself or herself as very satisfied.

Knowing how competencies are present in most cases, although this group includes the two categorised as ambivalent and reluctant learners (Table 15). This group is generally weak on ‘knowing why’ and ‘knowing whom’ competencies. Jenny who has the work that she needs, does illustrate the issue of ‘sunk investment’: having left a workplace where she had spent many years, and left in an unhappy manner, she was unable to add the total value of this time and network to her career capital.

What they share in common is a lack of awareness regarding behaviours required to navigate the new environment, and a lack of understanding of the consequences of their choices. They do not appear to see the connections between choices and future progress, contacts and opportunities, information and future progress – the types of connectedness described above.

PART B. DISCUSSION: IDENTIFYING & EXAMINING CAREER BEHAVIOURS

EXISTING MODELS OF CAREER BEHAVIOURS

Identifying effective behaviours

This study empirically supports the theoretical models of career competencies and career capital, and the protean career as models of behaviours that will assist and promote career progress and employability in the new careers environment. The behaviours examined in this research – proactivity, adaptability and identity awareness – are inherent within those models and support and complement the processes of achieving personal and workplace goals and maintaining employment as an older worker.

Various authors (Hall, 1996; London 1998; London & Mone, 1987) assert the keys to career success at all stages are adaptability and identity. Hall (2002) comments “if the older worker has the ability to self reflect, to continue learning and assessing about himself or herself and to change behaviours and attitudes, the chances are much better for a successful mid career transition and a good fit with the new work environment” (p.117). This study supports these views, adaptability and identity awareness are key components for maintaining employment – however the intention of this study has been to look beyond “a good fit” (Hall, 2002, p.117). These behaviours alone do not necessarily allow for the achievement of personal goals, effective future planning, or the ability of individuals to create an environment or work situation more suited to their needs. That is facilitated by the addition of proactive behaviours to the repertoire. This study shows that more attention should be paid to the development of proactive behaviours which appear to make a difference in facilitating future progress and the achievement of personal goals and satisfaction - proactivity adds the initiating, anticipatory and positioning for change behaviours required in a changing environment.

Crant (2000) asserts that research in various domains had overemphasised passive/reactive individual responses and paid insufficient attention to proactive ones, and arguments for an action orientation in studying people’s organisational behaviours as compared to a passive reactive orientation should be listened to. The results in this study indicate that people who have the full range of skills, including proactivity, are those who have been most successful in achieving their goals, and are most satisfied with where they are. These results support the idea of “sculptors” (Bell & Staw, 1989) - people *can* alter the situation in which they find themselves, i.e. take control of organisational or career situations rather than simply adapting to unfavourable and ambiguous conditions, and by inference that people can take control of life and career situations beyond the organisation and also alter them to suit their needs better.

Developing effective behaviours

In this study I have been seeking to answer the question “what behaviors assist individuals? My aim has been to identify and describe the behaviours that have proved effective for these career actors but I have not attempted to investigate the origin of these behaviours. For this reason I have not used standard personality based measurements; or explored how participants may have developed these behaviours, except to speculate on the relationship between the impact of broad employment experiences and adaptability. I cannot differentiate with any real evidence between those that gained them through experiences or through a lifelong orientation, although extracts within the data may clearly show, for example, a strong or weak locus of control.

In discussing protean careers Briscoe and Hall (2002) state being protean is both a trait (inborn) and a state (that can be acquired and developed) and they describe experiences that assist that development, and psychological attributes that contribute towards that state. As research progresses in this area, Hall (2004) proposes that people are capable of becoming more protean as a result of learning from events that take place in their lives and work. Personality factors, locus of control and self efficacy are theorised as generally desirable for proteanism, but as Inkson (2003) points out “the theory is stronger on the internal acquisition of proteanism than on shape changing practice in a workaday world” (p. 25). It is this “shape changing practice” that intrigues me, and its importance for the individual career actor who may lack the innate abilities or traits which promote useful behaviours. If people are slow to accept and internalise a protean orientation (Hall & Moss, 1998), how do we help them? Certainly by exploring ways to explain and encourage the behaviours implicit in these models.

The behaviours made explicit in the PAIL model developed in this research resonate with proteanism and the model of career capitalism; extending and enlarging these existing models to suggest a model of useful behaviours to assist career actors in a competitive and changing environment. We need to explore further ways to assist career actors to develop these useful behaviours and we need to be able to communicate these as part of everyday practice. The model is presented in simple terms that provide this basis for everyday communication.

ENACTING CAREERS

Individual action, and enactment is a framework for this research, focusing on careers as processes rather than structures (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999). Weick's (1996) model of enacting career asks boundaryless career actors to engage in self-design rather than rely on organizations for the provision of structure and opportunity. Self-design is a characteristic of this group – the participants of this study were active agents in designing careers which integrated in many cases multiple work roles with family and community activities. As Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, state “most old theories do not highlight *how* people can enact their careers in their own frameworks, and in the process contribute to rather than simply respond to the unfolding new economy” (p.163). Many in this group did not have much experience of organizational careers to provide the traditional structures and opportunities; they had to initiate their own learning activities, utilize appropriate skills and create their own opportunities. In doing this they contribute to the unfolding and developing of careers within their regional context.

The career actors in this study were mostly positive, and not afraid of the future. They demonstrated confidence that they had the skills to find a place in it. In contrast those not finding career satisfaction and success are described in the typology as the career ‘slowed’. This group have become the external face of older workers, the group closest to the unemployed or underemployed often presented in both the research and popular press, and the group quite rightly a source of concern in discussion of the new careers environment (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996). The discourse has focussed on those in difficulty and these have looked like recognised norms, supporting the strong image of the older worker as a problem. In this study however those in difficulty represent only 15.6 % of the sample group. What is interesting, however, is that this group is not composed of the least skilled or qualified individuals in the sample.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION: DRAWING TOGETHER THE THREADS

This chapter draws together the threads and themes of this study, and presents a model which integrates the findings. I also consider the implications for theory and practice and acknowledge the limitations of this study. Finally, I conclude with further comments on the subject of career.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN KEY ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH

This research has been presented in separate sections. Chapter 6 presented the data regarding ideas and concepts of careers, answering the research questions relating to their pictures of careers and outlining the views of career and work that these participants were acting on in relation to their careers. The findings of this chapter include a summary of the broad understandings in which these participants hold career and work. Chapter 7 presented the data of the experiences of the older workers, revealing their experiences of workplace change, getting work, their approaches to training and gaining qualifications, and their perceptions of their future. The findings of this chapter indicate more positive experiences than those suggested in the literature of older workers, and chapter 8 provides an explanation of this through the analysis and description of the career behaviours and the career competencies of this group.

The model below brings together these factors, indicating the interrelationship between key aspects of my research.

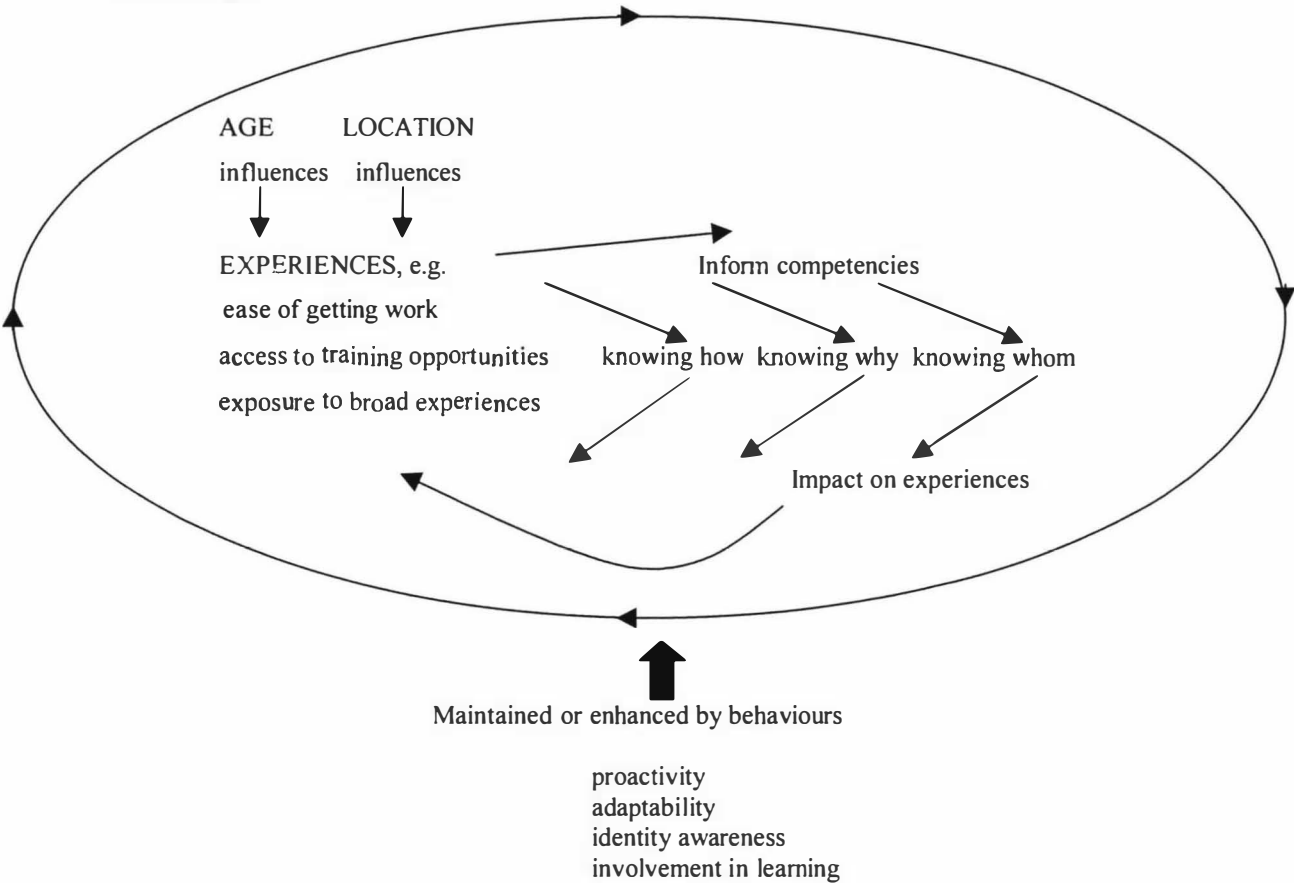
Explanation of the model

The model is referred to as a success cycle, as it suggests that these factors acting in concert with one another contribute to individual success and progress.

- The cycle I convey here is that positive experiences inform and increase career competencies, and these increasingly stronger competencies then impact on the quality of experiences, i.e. they are increasingly positive.
- The whole cycle is influenced by the behaviours of the career actor.
- The whole cycle is moderated by factors such as age and location

Fig. 2 A success cycle

Depicting the relationships between experiences, competencies, attributes and behaviours



Within this model are the following components:

Age is a structural, and socially constructed factor which influences all the various factors below it. It is mediated by local labour market culture, regional opportunities, education, qualifications and training, social capital and networks. This research indicates that negative factors associated with age in regard to older workers are less evident where other factors facilitate positive experiences. These other factors include a culture of acceptance of older workers (cited in health and education) longstanding networks, and up to date currency of educational and skills. In this study the experiences of most of these older workers show positive experiences facilitated in this way.

Location is a structural factor seldom accounted for which may either provide or limit opportunities and create norms of career behaviours. This research suggests that those positioned longer in Hawke's Bay do better than the newcomers in maintaining employability. Contacts in a region increase knowing whom capital, positively through both family networks and the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). In this research locational norms also increase career options by providing acceptable models of behaviours e.g. multiple job holding.

Career Experiences. Factors such as age and location influence career experiences, and sometimes negatively. However in this study this has not been the case for most: experiences such as ease of getting work, access to training opportunities, and exposure to broad employment experiences have been positive career experiences. As these experiences occur, they inform and increase career competencies by increasing the social and career capital of the career actor. They have a synergistic relationship with career competencies – broad experiences create a wider range of career competencies which in turn create a broader range of possibilities in positive career experiences.

Career competencies. These are knowing why, knowing how, and knowing whom, the career competencies which build their career capital (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). These competencies are increased and enlarged by positive experiences and in turn become increased career capital.

They then act back, in that this increased career capital impacts on career experiences by increasing the likelihood of positive experiences and outcomes.

Career behaviours

- Proactivity enhances career competencies – the more proactive a person the more they proactively increase their career competencies and build capital. A proactive approach to building career competencies is a valuable asset in the new environment, particularly for the older worker.
- Adaptability - the more adaptable a person is the more they will respond positively to experiences that enhance career competencies. Broad experiences (not necessarily mobility) enhance adaptability.
- Identity awareness - the more aware a person is as to their ‘knowing why’ at any stage of their lives, the more directed the competencies are to career prospects that suit the person. Identity awareness and identity growth is important to allow the changes required in a changing era.
- Involvement in learning underpins all these behaviours.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

This research contributes to the literature of careers in a number of ways. First of all, it answers the call for careers research beyond cities and formal organizations by locating the research in a rural regional economy and investigating a sample beyond organisational or corporate populations. Hawke’s Bay people did not identify with, and therefore may not have been fully – actually, or emotionally – linked with, hierarchical career progress and the ‘real career’; and they are not really mourning its passing. Their engagement with paid work as older workers appears to differ in ways from that offered in the literature, and they offer new and interesting illustrations of career. The picture developed contributes to the ongoing calls for broader and more diverse career research (Adamson, Doherty, & Viney, 1996; Collin & Young, 2000; Littleton, Arthur & Rousseau, 2000; Ornstein & Isabella, 1993; Storey, 2000), reaching beyond the “narrow empirical

base” of both boundaryless and traditional career theory (Pringle & Mallon, 2003, p.15) into regional careers.

Boundaryless careers—a suggested view

This research contributes further to the theory on boundaryless careers. New theories have been embedded in mobility, however in this research many career actors display boundarylessness through attitude and an expansion of occupational boundaries. They depict boundarylessness of attitude, the desire not to be bounded by one role, identity, organization, or occupational structure, suggesting, as mentioned previously that concepts of boundarylessness might be extended to other types of boundaries – occupational, industry, work-home, and geographical. There is certainly a theme of ongoing blurring and shifting of boundaries on the part of the career actor, between occupations, work forms, between family and work, perhaps between male and female career experiences and themes.

Critics of the concept of boundarylessness (Gunz, Evans,& Jalland, 2000; Pringle & Mallon, 2003) point out the impossibility of a environment free of boundaries, and structural and societal constraints must be recognised. However the concept is too useful to abandon, offering as it does possibilities of freedom from the organisational straitjacket and perceived traditional norms of careers so unsuited to many. For those concerned with career development, it provides an exciting perspective - if more people see the world in this way, then more opportunities would be available to them.

This research shows that people may be differently bounded – voluntarily bounded by their geography and its economic possibilities and within those structures able to adopt a boundaryless perspective of career making that fits their circumstances. If we apply the concept to the actions of the career-maker we may find a more viable concept that encompasses broad experience, wider thinking, and creative approaches to career. Perhaps it may be more acceptable to talk about boundarylessness in terms of the career-maker rather than the career.

The study contributes to research regarding career enactment; it is gathered from the individual perspective and illuminates individual behaviours and understandings. The role of the individual agent is central to this research and central to boundaryless career theory (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). A broader picture of the career actor as the individual in the new careers environment has been revealed. Certainly not all the career actors in this study fit the prototype of the “assured, skilled and probably well qualified agent” (Pringle & Mallon, 2003) or the “boundaryless elite” (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996) suggested by critics of boundaryless theory. This study suggests that even the somewhat tentative, less assured, reasonably skilled but persevering might manage boundarylessness, or at least the successful navigation of disadvantageous structural or environmental factors in the new careers environment. This research provides a useful illustration of *how* people can enact their careers in their own frameworks, it presents a group who have by and large *successfully* dealt with changes in the employment environment. This is not to disregard the problems of those most at risk, but to suggest that the capacity for individual self-design and career resilience may be greater than we believe. To investigate this capacity in varying populations would be very useful research.

Older worker theory

This research contributes a new, more diverse and more positive perspective on older workers - the discourse has tended to focus on those in difficulty and these have looked like recognised norms. There has been a strong image of the older worker as a problem that is only just beginning to change (Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004; Department of Labour, 2004). There is little literature describing the older worker who is able to take opportunities through restructuring or change events, who has the skills and desire to advance their careers; the older worker who has successfully moved from one contract to another. As with the previous New Zealand study (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999) the decade of restructuring in New Zealand had affected their lives less than expected. Organisational theory has tended to focus on the group that have appeared to be devalued in these settings. However individual actions count: whether or not organizations were

devaluing them, they were not devaluing themselves. Within organizations many were persevering and adapting to change and finding the fit required to continue to be employed, and beyond the organization they have been successfully creating their own livelihoods.

The study contributes further to the literature an illustration of the work and employment choices of older workers which are emerging in more recent literature (Spoonley, Dupuis & de Bruin, 2004) showing a reduction of involvement in traditional organisational work and more involvement in flexible work options. While traditional jobs have not disappeared, the career actors in this study engage in a broad range of employment and work options, and more are involved in these options than traditional organisational employment. The study reinforces the pictures of the growing interest of older workers in self-employment, adding illustrations of multiple businesses and mixed employment to that frame. Taylor, Baines and Newell (2004) suggest that multiple job holding constitutes a significant labour market dynamic, with “accompanying changes in work styles, and effects on personal, household and community life” (p. 126). This research provides some illustration of this as yet under researched aspect of employment.

The study adds useful information to concepts of retirement and late career, supporting views that new definitions of retirement may be required (Greller & Simpson, 1999; Stein, 2000) and retirement intentions may be becoming increasingly unpredictable. The full circle of career appears to have turned when the question can be asked of those in late career “what are you doing for retirement?” and the answer may well be a new career, a new venture, multiple jobs, part-time work, bridging employment, or the option to stop work altogether. Flexible retirements offer a continuum of possibilities for work involvement. “For the broad population a successful late career is the most likely prelude to a successful retirement” (Greller & Simpson 1999, p. 328). What makes a successful late career? This research provides data on late careers that are satisfying and regarded as successful by their owners; and these career actors generally have positive views and ideas about their retirement options. As well, it

suggests that the adoption of certain behaviours coupled with ongoing learning contribute to the ability to maintain choices and options in late career.

Finally, this research provides rich individual examples of older workers, their ideas and experiences, recognising their varied subjective experiences. Much of the theory and research of late career attempts to understand this broad population in simple terms (Greller & Simpson, 1999); and while they are a highly individuated group (Greller & Simpson, 1999) they are not often studied in this way.

Useful behaviours in the new careers era

The PAIL model proposed in this research outlines useful behaviours that might be encouraged in the current environment, and presents these in a simple and integrated manner. This research asserts that certain behaviours assist people to manage their careers successfully through changing and difficult employment environments. Structures impact on career – but certain behaviours make career actors more functional despite structural change. The critical question for those concerned with career development is “What will make the difference between those who develop the careers they want to, productive and satisfying, and those who are marginalised by change?” (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999, p.171). The PAIL model suggests a response to this important question.

The older workers in Hawke’s Bay who failed to grow and change, to develop their skills and maintain their learning throughout this period are likely to be underemployed and possibly unemployed. This research contributes to a closer understanding of the behaviours and attributes that assist their employability.

The study supports ideas of unpredictability (Williams & Savickas, 1990; Hall 1996, 2002; Riverin-Simard, 2000; Salomone, 1996) in career development processes, and the emergence of new stages and cycles; however previous age stage patterns remain. I found indicators of the traditional maintenance stage from 45-60 apparent with some career actors who have retained a long-term

career in a particular field, and it seems that career theories and organisational employment remain inextricably linked. These career actors however were in the minority, and career renewal and change has been for this group at least a more common scenario.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research has focussed on individual action. It has described people's reported actions and identified those that have assisted people's progress, employability and achievement of goals. This relates directly to the purpose of the career guidance process, as a key question in this process is "what actions will help me?" Theoretical models assist us to make sense of the processes, described actions assist individuals adjust their activities to achieve their aims. I have attempted in this study to translate concepts into actions that are recognisable, identifiable and potentially teachable; for the ultimate goal of the practitioner is to be able to translate useful knowledge into useful practice by career actors.

The cyclical success model (Figure 2) provides a theoretical concept to suggest the interplay between behaviours, results and positive career experiences. It might also be developed into an analytical model for the identification of progress points and strengths, or sticking points and barriers in career progress and development. Facilitated analysis or self-assessment against such a model might provide for useful discussion.

The PAIL model

This is a key contribution of this research. This is a simple exploratory model which describes key career behaviours that assist employability and career satisfaction in the current era – proactivity, adaptability, identity awareness and ongoing learning. The PAIL model brings these behaviours together in an integrated manner and provides an explanation of the components which make up these behaviours.

When concepts and behaviours can be broken down into identifiable parts, then they may be better able to be discussed, explored, encouraged or taught in career education or development processes. The model assists us in understanding of actions that are helpful to career progress and learning, and may assist in sustaining the employability of older workers.

The value of narrative

In agreement that identity-based theories are very useful for individual interventions, Greller and Simpson (1999) refer to Hall and Mirvis's (1995) cycles of stability and change. "One of their attractions is that they help people make sense and impose order on their career experiences, which is difficult in an increasingly turbulent work environment. The need to make sense of one's life is at the base of a recent approach to retirement counselling in which the individual is helped to develop a narrative explanation of his or her career, to both better understand past experience and to facilitate adjustment to the new roles in retirement (Simon & Osipow, 1996; Jonsson, Kielhofner and Borrell, 1997)" (Greller & Simpson, 1999, p.333). The reactions of some of the participants to the pleasure of the process of making sense of their career reinforces the value of narrative both in interventions and in research. This process provides us with a wider span of possibility within which to encompass and validate people's careers and career actions. The richness of narrative data is invaluable in this respect.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It seems that new definitions are required for many aspects of the employment world - retirement is not what it used to be (Greller & Simpson 1999; Stein 2000), the concept of job may vary considerably in the population at large (Taylor, Baines & Newell, 2004) and many older workers do not work in predictable ways, or for that matter, consider themselves older workers. More

investigation into the meaning of work and retirement in the lives of older workers would be very fertile ground for research.

Instead of a time of predictability, it seems that for many it is a time for renewed energy and change. The older worker may be viewed as an “active agent negotiating various roles within the workplace” (Stein, 2000, p. 3). In this study this seemed to apply to both men and women. Is there a blurring of gender themes alongside the blurring of traditional employment and retirement boundaries at this time? One might expect this to be so, and research that addresses these questions would be valuable.

Further exploration of effective behaviours

To investigate the behaviours of employed older workers in the new careers environment has provided very useful data regarding their attitudes and behaviours, and produced an exploratory model that could be further investigated both with older workers and with other populations. This study has not explored the progress of manual, less formally skilled workers who have sustained employment, to learn what attributes and behaviours have maintained their employability through these times of change. This would be valuable information. Exploration of the progress of other cultural groups who have sustained employment, in order to learn the attributes and behaviours that have maintained their employability would offer interesting data. The resilience of the individual in the face of external career change events deserves further focus.

All models of behaviours proposed as essential for the current employment era refer to the importance of learning in its widest sense, as does the PAIL model offered in this study. The learning identified includes formal learning: qualifications, upskilling, and training; and informal learning: learning from others, from experience and from the environment around them. Given general agreement that lifelong learning is a must for the 21st century, exploration of dynamic models (Vaill, 1996; Beckett & Hager, 2002) would be helpful to extend our knowledge about learning in a climate of workplace change.

An underlying and unexpected theme in this study is the local norms of career-related behaviours. Actions are judged differently in different localities - I did not explore this in this study but the data revealed interesting local norms, ideas and experiences. There appears to be an interconnection between normalised local practice in regional areas and careers which is under researched.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

I have commented on the value of narrative, and I recognise the limitations of the same approach. This research concerns itself with stories, the means by which participants invest events with meaning through retrospective sense-making (Weick, 1996), and retrospection is a process that blurs the boundaries between past and present (Weick, 1995). While I am specifically examining their progress and situations as older workers, in many cases it seems that there are ways of conducting a career that endures through life. In making sense of their lives, and describing what they do, the participants move at times between present and past, and the examples offered at times include mid and early careers. However these comments form part of the picture of where they are now and, I believe, contribute to an understanding of the whole career.

I have attempted only to describe reported behaviours, not to investigate personality or other constructs that might contribute to these behaviours. These are research tasks for those more qualified in appropriate disciplines. My reasoning is that while behaviours such as proactivity and adaptability may be seen as traits, they also involve a range of components which can be developed and learned through situations (Briscoe & Hall, 2002; Crant, 2000) and it is with this view that I use them in this study.

The study group is a small, limited sample, and not fully representative of the area. There is a bias towards professional workers, and a weakness of this study is the lack of inclusion (despite efforts) of the two categories of workers (NZ Standard Classification of Occupations) that are considered most at risk of unemployment (Department of Labour, 2001). I particularly regret the lack of

inclusion of culturally diverse participants, and I have offered reasons in Chapter 5 for this omission. Despite these omissions, however, I believe there is useful range of representation.

Single researcher bias also produces limitations for a study. I carried out all the interviews and analysis alone. Operating as I was, a single researcher in isolation, some distance from useful networks, there were no accessible opportunities for peer review. I did investigate the possibility of having some transcripts analysed as a data comparison however this was too difficult to achieve and never eventuated.

THE ONGOING 'PROBLEM' OF CAREER

Finally I am adding to the unresolvable debate about the naming of career. Whilst agreeing that the word career may be a concept with elitist and exclusionary aspects it is also enlarging and a word in which all possibilities can be contained. I retained the use of career in the typology described – in my view it is still the most appropriate and the challenge is to broaden its legitimacy.

At the same time I support the forward notion of careers in a development sense – that is the point of researching behaviours that develop and advance careers and employability in the new environment. This is not necessarily a linear forwardness, it is more the development and expansion of the potential of career actors so that they achieve the work that they want. At the very least adaptability is required to maintain this, and willingness to continue learning in whatever form is necessary. Older workers need to ensure that their personal compass is maintained by identity awareness which facilitates growth; proactive behaviours provide the most likelihood of achieving personal goals.

One of the most interesting aspects of this research was the opportunity to examine perceptions of career both in the literature and with the participants of the study. How to explain the many perceptions of career? Careers are multidimensional and can be likened to a hologram - when we look at them what

we see is not necessarily what others see, and yet every aspect is present, each part in some way contains the whole. A holographic model to me represents a path away from the linear models of career towards more holistic thinking in this debate.

We are still struggling to develop conceptualisations of career to fit the scope of workers in the 21st century. I began this thesis by noting (p. 2) the problem of inclusive definitions of career. I found during the study many who would deem themselves 'careerless' considering themselves outside the recognised framework of career. A new conceptualisation is required and 'work' will not do. It does not embody the aspirations, dreams, visions and potential excitement of career, nor the on-going time dimension, or non-work aspects. The challenge is for many visions of career to be acceptable, not just those that have traditionally defined career, and new descriptions require a multidimensional perspective. Career is a term that should remain in our thinking; and in using the term "new careers", we are signalling that within a new environment, new attitudes, new thinking and new practices are required.

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Appendix 1. Participants Information Sheet

The career attitudes, strategies and behaviours of older workers

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Heather Carpenter. I am a student at Massey University conducting Careers research in the Department of Management and International Business. I am conducting this research as part of the work of my PH.D thesis. The study is examining the career attitudes, behaviours and strategies of older workers in the current employment environment.

You have responded to an invitation for volunteers for this study, or have been invited through my personal approach. I would like to interview you about your career and work experiences. This interview would take about 1 to 1 ½ hours. I would like to audio-tape the interview with you, but this will only be done with your consent, and could be turned off at any time.

As a participant you have the right:

- to decline to participate;
- to refuse to answer any particular questions;
- to withdraw from the study at any time;
- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- to provide information on the understanding that your name, or other identifying features will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

All interview data and tapes will be handled only by the researcher, and are accessible only to the researcher. This data will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure office, and destroyed after a suitable time. If you wish, the audiotape of your data will be returned to you at the end of the study. Any information given will be confidential to the research and any publications resulting from it.

If you agree to be interviewed please fill in the consent form, and telephone me on (06) 879 6132. The form can be supplied to me at the time of the interview. Please note that all information that you provide in an interview is confidential and your name or any other identifying features will not be used.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance in making this study possible. If you have any further questions about it, please telephone me at my office, at the number given above. I can also be contacted at:

P.O.Box 2509
Stortford Lodge
Hastings, Hawke's Bay

My Supervisor is: Professor Kerr Inkson
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Appendix 2. Participants Consent Form

The career attitudes, strategies and behaviours of older workers

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name or any other identifying features will not be used without my permission, and the understanding that the information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.
I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 3. Letter to Participants

Dear

Here is the transcript of our interview together.

I would be grateful if you would review this document, and note if there are any changes or further comments you would like to make. I would like to be sure that it accurately reflects your comments and feelings stated in our interview. I also welcome comments you might like to make about the interview.

If you feel any of the quotes are too revealing of your identity, and would not like them reproduced in my thesis, please indicate these.

Please note that a different name will be used for you in the final thesis, and any specific companies/ groups /organizations you have named will not be used.

I am grateful for your continued support of my research. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of this transcript.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Heather Carpenter

Appendix 4. Researcher's interview guide and questions

Questions – use as required.

Describe your work history up to now.

What does the word career mean to you?

What has brought about changes for you in jobs and work?

How did you get your present job?

How long have you had that job?

How do you go about looking for work?

What success have you had in getting jobs?

What obstacles have you found?

Why did you choose self-employment?

How do you feel about continuing learning and upskilling?

What opportunities have there been for you to do this?

What changes have you noticed in your work environment?

What is your view of the way older workers are treated in the workplace now?

Is it any different for men/women in your view?

What is your philosophy around work?

What is your experience of getting jobs/work?

How would you assess the opportunities available to you?

Do you have any useful connections which have helped you, or could help you?

What is your experience of getting on the job training?

Describe your views and experience of training /upskilling/development?

Do you believe your skills are up to date for the current environment?

Is there any further training you would like to do? Do you see any obstacles to ongoing development? What skill would you most like to have now?

What are your ideas about success? How do you view it?

What is your view of your future? How do you see your career path developing?

Do you like or look forward to the idea of retirement?

What would be the ideal retirement age for you?

How satisfied are you with your current work? Is your satisfaction high, medium, or low?

Appendix 5. Participant Data / Questionnaire

1. Name _____

2. Date of Birth / /

3. Gender (circle) M / F

4. Occupation / Industry (in last or current job) _____

5. Current Employment situation: F/t work / P/t Work

Other _____

6. Educational / Trades / Professional Qualifications _____

7. Ethnicity _____

B. Questionnaire

Here are some statements which represent approaches and attitudes to work situations.

Tick the statement which most applies to you.

a.

- ☐ I am flexible in my approach to work, and able to make the best of whatever opportunities come my way
- ☐ I like to create opportunities for myself
- ☐ I have found there are few opportunities coming my way

b.

- ☐ I am willing to try whatever new turns up
- ☐ I found it difficult to make plans, or make progress with them
- ☐ I like to think ahead about career ideas and plans

c.

- ☐ I have undertaken educational courses or training with an eye to the future
- ☐ I would be willing to retrain if my job needed it.
- ☐ I haven't had many opportunities to train, or gain new skills

d.

- ☐ I enjoy change and new challenges
- ☐ The changes that have occurred in employment have not helped me.
- ☐ I value stability, but am able to respond to change

e.

- ☐ I am willing to take risks
- ☐ I avoid risky ventures at this stage, but I can take risks when I have to
- ☐ I avoid risk at all times, when it comes to work.

f.

- ☐ I have chosen to make some major changes in my career
- ☐ I have preferred to follow the same work for most of my life, making changes when necessary
- ☐ I have wanted to move in my career but have not been able to

g.

- ☐ I have sought out training and education
- ☐ I have undergone training courses that have come my way
- ☐ I have not had many training opportunities

h.

- ☐ I can adapt when I am required to
- ☐ I enjoy the challenge of adapting to change
- ☐ I find it hard to adapt to change

i.

- ☐ I use contacts to help my work, or find opportunities
- ☐ In some cases friends and networks have been able to help me
- ☐ I do not have the sort of contacts that help me with work opportunities

Appendix 5b. Explanation of Questionnaire

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
(a) 1. I am flexible in my approach to work, and able to make the best of whatever opportunities come my way 2. I like to create opportunities for myself 3. I have found there are few opportunities coming my way	Positive responsiveness to opportunities Self-directed approach Inactivity
(b) 1. I am willing to try whatever new turns up 2. I found it difficult to make plans, or make progress with them 3. I like to think and plan ahead in career plans and decisions	Positive responsiveness Inactivity Self-directed, future oriented approach
(c) 1. I have undertaken educational courses or training with an eye to the future 2. I prefer to consolidate the skills that I have, and do a good job 3. I haven't had many opportunities to train, or gain new skills	Self-directed, future oriented Present oriented Inactivity
(d) 1. I enjoy change and new challenges 2. The changes that have occurred in employment have not helped me. 3. I value stability but am able to respond to change	Enjoyment of change Inactivity Acceptance of change
(e). 1. I am willing to take risks 2. I avoid risky ventures at this stage, But I can take risks when I have to 3. I avoid risk at all times, when it comes to work.	Risktaking Adaptation when required Inactivity
(f). 1. I have chosen to make some major changes in my career 2. I have preferred to follow the same work for most of my life, making changes when necessary 3. I have wanted to move in my career but have not been able to	Proactive approach to change Positive response to change Inactivity
(g). 1. I have sought out training and education 2. I have undergone training courses that have come my way 3. I have not had many training opportunities	Proactive approach to training & education Positive response to opportunities Inactivity
(h). 1. I can adapt when I am required to 2. I enjoy the challenge of adapting to change 3. I find it hard to adapt to change	Able to adapt to change Enjoyment of adapting to change Inactivity
(i). 1. I use contacts to help my work, or find opportunities 2. In some cases friends and networks have been able to help me 3. I do not have the sort of contacts that help me with work opportunities	Creating opportunities Using helpful opportunities Inactivity

Appendix 6. Final Template for Analysis of Data

IST LAYER	2 nd LAYER	3 rd LAYER
Themes	Categories generated from the data	Sub categories generated from the data
1. Career History Early Influences on choice Ideas about planning Concept of career Philosophy around work	Inner directed/Other directed/ family Planning occurred Metaphors expressed Stated /Not held	 Never planned/planned As advancement As part of lifestyle As a single vocation As balance+ others
2. Personal Data Age Gender Ethnicity Married/Partner Children or not / significance / still managing teenagers Qualifications undertaken	Issues of health Family responsibilities/ parents Completed /not completed	 Taking care of sick parents Required /Desired No need
3. Career Experiences Getting work Maintaining work Redundancy, restructuring experiences Reasons for job changes Reasons for self/ employment Forms of work, portfolio, mixed employment etc. Intentions regarding work up to retirement	Easy? Difficult why? Experiences Multiple reasons List these Continuation/Change/Reduction	No problem...fell into place Negative experiences Negative experiences Positive outcomes Family, location Autonomy/ other Confident, anxious, uncertain
4. Environment Perceptions, strategies of dealing with change Perception of opportunities Perceptions of obstacles Perceptions of age & gender discrimination Relationship to Lifestyle Satisfaction / fulfilment	Personal responses Aware/unaware Stated/none Aware/unaware Present situation	<i>Changing my situation - looking for alternatives</i> Making it work for me Liking challenge Keeping learning Confident Not confident Wanting the same Not in my experience Observed

5. Learning Approach to learning Attitude to importance, interest, What does it mean to them?	Responsive –responding to provided opportunities Proactive-initiating and seeking opportunities Disinterest in learning Enthusiasm for learning	learning as a personal strategy, love of learning explicitly stated
Learning behaviours and strategies-what have they done, How have they ‘done’ their learning? Formal Learning Informal Learning	Learning thru formal study Learning from training, structured opportunities Learning from daily tasks and experiences Picking up specific skills on the job	Doing required qualifications Initiating qualifications Taking what is offered “Making sure I know” “continually learning, observing” ‘using situations e.g. interviews, assignments as learning opportunities’ learning from others
Training& upskilling Training and upskilling opportunities/ Perception of skills currency IT & Computer skills	Opportunities taken, not taken, not offered Up to date, not up to date Up to date, not up to date	Efforts made through work, own initiative
6. Success & progress Ideas about success and progress in careers	Subjective ideas Objective ideas	mixed ideas

7. View of the future Ideas about retirement / ideal age	Planned Unplanned Visions/dreams	stronger focus/age identified weak focus/can't visualise retiring, other plans
8. Satisfaction Level of Satisfaction with current situation	High Medium Low	non committal
9. Talking about selves	Strong narrative, Answering the questions	-telling the story as a coherent flow - elaborating on reasons why -telling the story in simple statements -not elaborating, not stating/known reasons why

Appendix 7 Checklist used for indicators

Indicators	Andrew	Annabel	Beth	Carl	Derek	Fiona	Gail
<i>Proactivity</i> 1. Identifies opportunities around them and take action to benefit from them							
2. Seeks out and pursue opportunities for self-improvement							
3. Demonstrates continuous learning							
4. Makes decisions to build future career capital.							
5. Displays initiative and perseverance							
<i>Adaptability</i> 1. Display a willingness to respond positively to new work requirements							
2. Acts to accommodate change and new roles that are presented to them							
3. Show acceptance of the environment around them and its changes							
4. Respond positively to learning opportunities, creates learning, engages in ongoing learning							
<i>Identity Awareness, sense of self</i> 1. Displays awareness of their own skills, abilities, characteristics							
2. Demonstrates self assessment, and reflection in examining assets that they have, require, or lack							
3. Describe and exhibits an understanding of the goals and values which have meaning and purpose for them							
4. Have the ability to gain and utilise feedback, so that their own perceptions of self or performance are realistic and reviewed							

Appendix 8. Model of examples used to assist analysis

Indicators	Examples from a transcript (June)
<p><i>Proactivity</i></p> <p>1. Identify opportunities around them and take action to benefit from them</p>	<p><i>“ The main reason I went is the health changes were starting. I knew that job, if I did it well, would grow to others.”</i></p>
<p>2. Seeks out and pursue opportunities for self improvement</p>	<p><i>Started also at the same time in doing post-graduate course in manipulative therapy which was a 3-year part-time course where you had to go away and do weekends and pass sections, etc. I was one of the oldest people in the class doing post-grad</i></p> <p><i>Started doing post-grad in Health Management and have completed two of the four papers for that</i></p>
<p>3. Demonstrates continuous learning</p> <p>(defined as <i>Thinks about learning from daily events, applies knowledge later, searches for information to meet performance needs.</i>)</p>	<p><i>There was good learning opportunities in the hospital and there was good learning opportunities in the process of change. It's a very challenging and dynamic environment and while some people can get scared of that environment and retrench back I actually always look for the opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>I'm constantly looking - I'm constantly assessing the environment we work in and I think the people who get confused and are very negative, they only look at the internal environment. They don't look at the external environment that is the drivers of change where we're going.</i></p> <p><i>I looked at what was happening and I could actually understand the environment. You do a lot of reading and listening and whatever.</i></p>
<p>4. Makes decisions to build future career capital.</p>	<p><i>The main reason I went is the health changes were starting. I knew that job, if I did it well, would grow to others.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to have the ability in 5 years time to do consultancy in health and I think the project work I do now is very good preparation for that.</i></p>
<p>5. Displays initiative and perseverance</p>	<p><i>I find out what I don't know and I'm very good at networking to get the information and surround myself with people that have the skills that I haven't got.</i></p> <p><i>Within the organisation even as a therapist I made sure I was finding out what was happening in the other divisions</i></p>
<p><i>Adaptability</i></p> <p>1. Display a willingness to</p>	<p><i>And as a result of that the CEO asked me to set up and manage all the XXX business in the environment that was changing in 1999. So I</i></p>

respond positively to new work requirements	<p><i>think that was my contract knowledge and my knowledge of how XXX worked. So I took that on in 1999 because we had the new environment of XXX and private providers... developing a relationship with employers in Hawke's Bay and try to make it sort of an occupational health centre."</i></p> <p><i>I've probably learnt in the last 4 years to move out of my comfort zone several times and looked upon that even though you might feel a little period of discomfort for a period of time, if you actually plan and do the right work you'll actually come back into feeling comfortable about what you're doing and you accept that a little bit more often.</i></p>
2. Acts to accommodate change and new roles that are presented to them	<p><i>when the new General Manager for C. arrived from N .she asked me to do some work for her when she initially came, liked my ability, knew what my gaps were but was prepared to sort of mentor me to improve, and I became her Project Manager and it's a job where I've had probably the most growth in management skills that I could have had.</i></p> <p><i>then when I went to take over mental health for four months or something I realised I had huge gaps and I won't let that happen again. That was probably the steepest learning curve that I had.</i></p>
3. Show acceptance of the environment around them and its changes	<p><i>And I understand that we live in an environment where there's rapid change so you actually can't stand still.</i></p>
4. Responds positively to learning opportunities, creates learning, engages in ongoing learning (Hall, 1996, 2002).	<p><i>I think I was fairly naive at that service level management then and probably didn't have the systems or the capacity that I have now but I learnt from it. I went in there and it was the most rapid learning time I had to do.</i></p> <p><i>we were lucky that we were allowed to be involved in negotiations with the ministry and I developed a very good understanding of contracts and their application.</i></p>
<p><i>Identity Awareness, sense of self</i></p> <p>1. Displays awareness of their own skills, abilities, characteristics</p>	<p><i>I think it's finding out what skills you need to have and I think IT skills are a huge one. I look at friends who can't get jobs who are in their 50s, marriages have broken up, and basically the skills you require now, you need to have an IT component to that. You know, the information technology, know how to use you PC. My skills still aren't great but they're a hell of a lot better.</i></p> <p><i>I've probably learnt in the last 4 years to move out of my comfort zone several times and looked upon that even though you might feel a little period of discomfort for a period of time, if you actually plan and do the right work you'll actually come back into feeling comfortable about what you're doing and you accept that a little bit more often.</i></p>

	<i>I think I'm an internaliser who always looks where my gaps are, where's the weakness and where are the opportunities.</i>
2. Demonstrates self assessment, and reflection in examining assets that they have, require, or lack	<p><i>. I've got a 30-odd year knowledge of how health's been going. I understand the context of where we're at, at the moment. I probably learnt to communicate a lot better and I've learnt to analyse.</i></p> <p><i>I find out what I don't know and I'm very good at networking to get the information and surround myself with people that have the skills that I haven't got.</i></p> <p><i>I went into an area with quite complex problems and I realised my ability to analyse and drill down to find out what the real problems were and did a lot of work on that.</i></p>
3 Describe and exhibits an understanding of the goals and values which have meaning and purpose for them	<i>the other success for me is one getting recognised for what you're doing but actually having a high level of job satisfaction. And I don't think that comes from being passive. I'm not passive about the environment we work in.</i>
4 Have the ability to gain and utilise feedback, so that their own perceptions of self or performance are realistic and reviewed	<p><i>She is a manager that will develop the team and provided you are there and willing to be developed she will certainly give you all the feedback.</i></p> <p><i>I've picked this up and she's given the time and the feedback for me to develop the skills. I mean one of the biggies is around report writing which a year ago was a nightmare to me and now I can report write for the Board with no stress at all.</i></p>

Appendix 9. The experiences of participants with specific career forms.

Previous - indicates where the participant has worked, or moved from within the last 10 years

Current - indicates the situation the participant works in now.

Name	Careers defined by Bureaucratic or Organisational structures	Careers defined by Profession or Occupation	Careers defined by Entrepreneurial ventures
Andrew		Current and long term previous experience in the legal profession	
Annabel	Previous experience adviser/manager with a government agency		Current experience - providing business consultancy and training
Beth		Previous experience- working as a teacher	Current experience - running her own retail business
Bev	Previous experience – working as a nurse in a large hospital	Current experience - working as a manager of a small health organization	
Carl		Current experience - working part-time in 2 areas, as a nurse /caregiver in small home and as a specialist mechanic in a niche business.	
Derek			Current and lifelong experience- large construction and, property business
Fiona	Current and previous experience –working as an admin secretary		Current experience - partner in a horticultural business
Gail		Previous and current experience – working as a senior manager in education	
Jake	Previous long-term experience in insurance		Current experience- semi - retired, artist, and retail work in small business
Jenny	Previous experience – nurse in large hospital environment	Current experience - work as a practice nurse in a community practice	Current experience – operates a boutique tourism accommodation business
John	Previous and long term career in government service		Current experience – own horticultural business
June	Current experience – management role in large health organization	Previous experience - in private practice as a physiotherapist	
Kevin	Current experience - advisor in a government organization	Previous experience - as a secondary teacher	

Liz			Long term, previous and current experience of orchards & horticulture businesses, recent addition of tourism business
Marie		Previous long term and current experience as a secondary teacher	
Matt		Previous long term and, current experience as a secondary teacher	Current experience – operating a tourism accommodation business
Max	Previous, long term role in the police force	Current experience – work as a sports coordinator in a secondary school	
Meg		Previous experience – as an Occupational Health nurse in Health organization	Current experience - Own business in Occupational health provision
Mike	Previous experience - senior manager in Fire Service	Current experience - lecturer/trainer in education	
Nick	Previous experience - long term (25 years) in large manufacturing organization.		Current experience -as yet undecided, but presently contracting self for rural work.
Pat	Previous experience – long term work in a government department		Owner/ manager within a national company
Paula	Current experience - part time work in retail organisation	Previous experience – working in special education	Current experience – owner of small business providing personal services
Richard			Current and long term previous experience – as a Real Estate Agent
Ruth		Previous, long term and current experience - part-time work in special needs education	
Sheila	Previous, long term (part-time) and current, experience – Working, then teleworking for large pharmaceutical publishing company		Current – ownership of businesses, including direct marketing and property management.
Simon		Previous, long term and current experience - work in education, teaching and administration	
Steve	Previous experience – sales work for large companies		Current experience - own sales franchise
Sue	Previous experience - P.A in a large city organization		Current experience – grapegrower, own business
Todd	Previous, long-term and current experience		Previous and current – maintains own orchard

	– senior management role in large company		business
Tom	Current experience - admin officer in export organisation		Previous, and long term current experience – owner of orchard and packhouse business
Viv	Previous experience - management in production company. Current experience - administration and clerical work (temp)		
Wynn	Previous experience – Case Manager in large government organization		Current experience – consultant, own pre- employment business