

2475/3896

MONASH UNIVERSITY
THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ON..... 2 August 2002

Dr Sec. Research Graduate School Committee

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ERRATA

P 56 section 2.2.2, 10th line: delete "These range from"

p 61 section 2.4.3: "Legally Defining the Peripheral Worker" for "Defining the Peripheral Worker"

p 73 2nd line: "Figure 2.5" for "Figure 2.6"

p 73 last line: "also been documented" for "also documented"

p 74 line 14: "decides" for "decide"

p 75 2nd line: insert semi colon after "compensation" and after "engineer"

p 105 2nd to last line: "priority" for "prior"

p 113 para 3, 2nd sentence "points to" for "posits"

p 151 para 2, last sentence "let alone" for "let alone"

p 185 para 1, 3rd sentence: "these two form the" for "these two the"

p 289 title: "PART 2" for PART II

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**THE PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR:
WORKER OF THE FUTURE OR OPPORTUNIST OF TODAY?**

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BA (Hons), MA (Victoria University of Wellington, NZ)

A thesis submitted to Monash University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy


Monash University

December 2001

Dedicated to the memory of a dear friend, Bob Milk, who taught me that, with good coffee and good friends, anything is possible.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

SIGNED: 

J. Tui McKeown

ABSTRACT

The mass movements of workers into the various forms of peripheral or non-standard work arrangements present a formidable challenge to the structure of modern, western economies. Since the early 1980s, this movement within Australia has seen the peripheral workforce increase to represent over 30% of the workforce today. The purpose of this thesis is to explore one specific arrangement within the peripheral workforce - the arrangement of professional contracting which is commonly seen to represent the 'high road' (Milkman, 1998) amongst such arrangements.

In this thesis, the impact of working as a contractor for professionals in such arrangements is explored. Based on the perceptions of some of the key players in such employment relationships, the results indicate a wide variation, both in terms of the conditions of employment and in terms of the voluntary nature of moves to this arrangement. While these findings are consistent with previous empirical research on peripheral work arrangements, it does not accord with the common view of the 'high end' this arrangement supposedly holds. However, the findings also provided evidence of a very clear 'elite' amongst professional contractors, both in terms of labour market power as well as income. This group clearly equate with the 'high end' of both empirical and theoretical literature. The results also indicate that traditional 'push/pull' explanations of

the move to non-traditional employment are relevant in explaining the professionals moves into contracting.

Overall, the research findings suggest that there are key individual characteristics of the professional which play a critical role in determining how successful they are in sustaining the lifestyle of a contractor. These characteristics also have important implications for the management of the professional contractor workforce by those who employ their services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The easiest part to write of this whole process of doing a PhD is the last part – the thankyou. The first is a very heartfelt thanks to Dr Di Waddell and Associate Professor Julian Teicher for their support, encouragement and unfailing good humour as supervisors of an “inherited” PhD student. The second is to the team of Lillian, Heidi and Ing who, with their near-magical expertise with computers that have a life of their own to printers that eat chapters, provided a lifeline with sanity. Thirdly, a very special thank you to Glennie, Cherrie, Nina and Marg for always being there with quiet words of encouragement and advice when needed. Lastly, to my family, my mother Ada for the hours of childcare and quiet strength, my husband and children for not trading me in (just yet anyway!) and to my father in-law Trevor, who really got me started in the very early stages with the finance for a computer.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This thesis focuses on one significant aspect of the changing world of work, the arrangement commonly known as professional contracting. The title of the thesis, 'The Professional Contractor - Worker of the Future or Opportunist of Today?' encapsulates two of the major debates surrounding the changes occurring. The first focuses on the 'worker of the future' and questions whether the changes in work are a radical departure from the past or simply a continuation of established patterns. At the most extreme, the argument is one of evolution versus revolution. Central to the evolution debate is the fact that many of the 'new' arrangements are not new at all and, as the next chapter will show, this is certainly the case with contracting. What is new are the increasingly diverse range of occupations and numbers of people that contracting arrangements now encompass. The second part of the thesis question relates to one of the key explanations for the increasing number of workers in these 'new' working arrangements. The arguments on this issue centre on macroeconomic and labour market factors of supply and demand and there is considerable debate over whether the increase is employer led or the result of worker preference.

The literature review process produced an original model called the Push/Pull Matrix. It provides an analytical tool that captures the dynamic aspects of this working arrangement and through this lens of the matrix it is revealed that professional

contracting arrangements vary widely on a number of key dimensions. While this diversity is consistent with previous empirical research on peripheral work arrangement, it does not accord with the common view of the 'high road' that professional contracting arrangements supposedly typify within this workforce (Milkman, 1998).

This discrepancy underlies much of the body of literature reviewed in the following three chapters which establish the basis for this investigation. Chapter 2 outlines the generic forces that have created the pressures for change within work and addresses the changing world of work at the societal and then the organisational level. This increasingly focussed review of the literature provides the foundation for chapter 3, where the main peripheral arrangements of work are examined and chapter 4, where the theories and research findings regarding both sides of the thesis questions are specifically dealt with. The third chapter also details Atkinson's (1986) flexible firm model as the concepts it articulates underpin much of this investigation of the contractor workforce. However at this stage, the main contribution the model makes is to provide the terminology of the 'peripheral' and the 'core' workforces. These terms provide an effective distinction between the 'new' working arrangements and the 'traditional' model of full-time, permanent employees and imply an increasing distance in the employment relationship as individuals move away from the 'core'.

The level of interest in the world of the peripheral worker is evident in the array of research studies dedicated to the various arrangements it comprises. Within such studies, the professional contractor workforce is widely acknowledged at the theoretical

and anecdotal level but, as chapter 2 will reveal, it is one nearly totally lacking in empirical study both internationally and within Australia. It is a gap that is further exacerbated by a complete lack of official data within every OECD nation except the United States. There are, however, numerous theoretical and empirical studies of other peripheral working arrangements, such as part time and temporary work, which have close links to the arrangement of professional contracting and benefit from being grounded in official data.

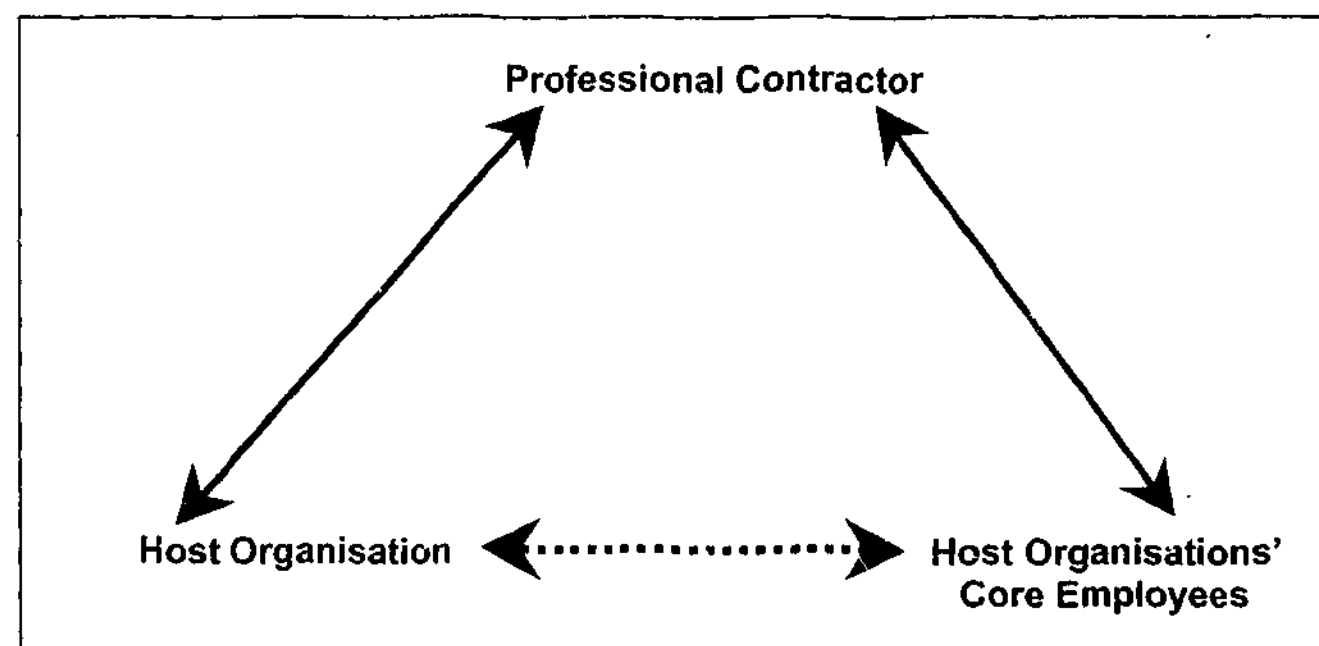
Chapter 3 reviews and summarises the most prevalent of the peripheral working arrangements in terms of their contribution to the understanding of the professional contractor workforce and the issues they raise for this research. Of these, the most troublesome is that many peripheral work arrangements suffer from problems of definition. Contracting in particular will be shown to have a long and legally complex history. The issue of definition also reveals the significance of contracting, as it is through this examination that contracting is revealed as being able to subsume many of the other forms of peripheral work. These include the recent moves to the outsourcing of work or contracting out, the employment of core staff on a contract basis as well as encompassing many of those whom consider themselves to be primarily self-employed. This wide range provides some indication of the possible magnitude of the workforce in contract employment.

The macro level view of the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3 identified the second key theme of a clear polarisation when the focus on peripheral work arrangements moves to the contractor workforce. The almost unanimous picture

presented of the professional in contract employment is that of highly independent, successful and self-actualised individuals who are in charge of their careers and their lives. Unlike many other peripheral work arrangements, the themes of marginalisation and exploitation appear to be absent in investigations of the professional contractor. Instead, any negative repercussions associated with contracting appear to be attached to the 'core' workers of the employer. It is a polarisation which highlights a specific area of interest for this thesis – that of the working relationships between the professional contractor workforce, the host organisations that use them, and the core employees of these organisations.

The main focus of this research is the professional contractor/host organisation relationship. However, Figure 1.1 integrates the language of Atkinson's (1988) flexible firm model to reveal the potentially significant influence that the core workforce may have on the working life of the professional contractor.

Figure 1.1: The Work Relationships of the Professional Contractor



It is this notion of differences within the relationships of work which begins to clarify the area for an investigation of the professional contractor workforce. The apparently straightforward nature of the triadic relationship portrayed in Figure 1.1 is deceptive as the model depicted effectively integrates the diverse issues, which arose from examining the themes of definition and polarisation that characterise chapters 2 and 3. These issues ranged from organisational restructuring and changing patterns of work, to debates on flexible work alternatives and increasing unemployment. Despite the apparent diversity of these issues, the common threads which unite them are the questions of choice and control – namely who has them and how are they exercised. Thus, the notion of employer lead demand for organisational restructuring and more flexible patterns of work are countered with arguments of workers being able to exert greater choice and control. The questions of choice and control are transposed in Figure 1.1 to examine the three-way nature of the working relationship of professional contracting. The model provides the grounds for a more detailed review of the literature focussing on the professional contractor in chapter 3.

These questions of choice and control cover a substantive body of literature from the economic, sociological and legal disciplines, as well as input from the field of psychology. The contribution of each is acknowledged explicitly in chapter 4 and consolidated through reference to the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature. It is an eclectic approach that provides the basis for an interdisciplinary understanding of a workforce that has virtually been ignored both theoretically and empirically. Chapter 5 culminates in a set of five research hypotheses dealing with the broad concepts of *antecedence*, *new forms of working* and *independence* as well as the focussed

psychological constructs of *social support* and *commitment*. The hypotheses combine to form a challenging research project detailed in chapter 6. Overall, a key product of the research is the development and testing of an explanatory model, the Push/Pull Matrix, as a tool in the understanding and management of the professional contractor workforce.

The multi-disciplinary approach adopted in chapters 2 to 5 aims to provide the basis for a shared insight and a general focus of relevance to many disciplines. The difficulties presented by attempting to integrate information from areas such as econometrics through to sociology require some anchor, and this has been provided through the application of a modified version of the framework developed by Tyson (1995). Detailed in the methodology section of chapter 6, it is a model that derives from the Strategic Human Resource Management literature. The framework is based on an analysis of work at three levels, the societal, the organisational and the sentient. The strategic emphasis also accords with the flexible firm model (Atkinson, 1988) and provides the basis for developing the notions of employer versus individual choice and control in both the initial move to contracting and subsequently, in sustaining the contracting lifestyle.

This dual perspective provides the foundation for chapter 6 to integrate the five research hypotheses of chapter 5 as it draws together and refines a number of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks established from the literature reviewed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Principal amongst these are the two classic economic theories of Knight (1933) and Schumpeter (1934) whose Pull and Default explanations of self-employment have been adapted to the professional contractor. Together with more recent studies of peripheral

work, the Push/Pull Matrix produces a new framework for examining and explaining changing workplace arrangements. The matrix makes explicit the two key assumptions of choice and control¹ that pervade many studies of peripheral work and work of the future, and translates these into a two dimensional structure to capture important aspects of the dynamic nature of contracting. The matrix and its underlying constructs are developed clarified and tested in chapter 6 in a series of pilot interviews with professional contractors and representatives from contracting agencies. The results of this process provide the basis for a large scale survey of the professional contractor workforce in chapter 7.

The potential value of the matrix as an integrative research tool becomes clearer later in chapter 6 as the rationale behind the survey is explained in detail and is clearly related to the five research hypotheses, each the subject of a separate section. The first three sections deal with the themes of *antecedence*, *new forms of working* and *independence* and clearly reflect the exploratory nature of this research. While many of the items from these three sections are grounded in prior studies and models of peripheral work, as well as legal precedent, they also attempt to improve upon the typical 'yes/no' response traditionally requested in survey instruments.

Many of the items consequently require that a selection be made and that some rating of importance or priority be ascribed to a particular choice. Innovation is balanced with tradition in the fourth and fifth sections of the survey as they utilise to standardised and well-proven formats for dealing with the psychological constructs of social support and commitment. Utilisation of Sarason and Sarason's (1987) Social Support Questionnaire

¹ Where control is interpreted in terms of the timing of the move into contracting.

and Mowday, Porter and Steers (1988) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire means that the results generated from these two sections can be compared to large numbers of existing studies. This should provide some basis of comparison of the professional contractor with other populations, revealing any conformity or aberration which may exist.

Overall, the survey detailed in chapter 6 is potentially quite demanding of respondents but equally, appears justified in terms of the quality even low response rates may reveal about a virtually unknown workforce. The Push/Pull Matrix provides the common element that will be used to link the analysis of the five survey sections and the research hypotheses, which underlies each.

This choice of methodology is largely vindicated in chapters 7 to 9, which details the results. With a response rate of 48 per cent, the 240 useable surveys returned provided sufficient numbers for analysis of the results in terms of statistical significance. Chapter 7 deals with the first research hypothesis and the issue of Antecedence. It establishes the structure of the Push/Pull Matrix by isolating the overall nature of the initial move into contracting and then, breaking this down into the individual factors underlying the decision.

The results from this first section reveal a wide variation, both in the choice and the timing of the move into professional contracting. While this finding is consistent with previous empirical research on movement away from traditional forms of employment, it does not accord with the common view of the 'high road' that this particular arrangement

supposedly holds within the larger peripheral workforce. However, the findings support the existence of a potential 'elite', who are working as contractors by active choice and appeared to exercise considerable control in the original decision to become a contractor. They clearly equate with the high road of both the empirical literature on peripheral work and the theoretical literature on the future of work. Equally, there are professional contractors whose status is not one of free choice and who expressed a preference for employment in the core workforce. Redundancy and changing labour market patterns affecting the professions were key factors in these individuals' decisions to move into contracting. These results suggest that explanations of being either pushed or pulled into peripheral employment are just as relevant in the professional's move into contracting.

Overall, the Push/Pull Matrix appears to be of considerable value in examining these moves. Chapter 7 provides a sound basis to use the matrix as a tool to analyse the results from the other sections of the Survey.

Chapter 8 moves from the historical focus of the initial move into contracting to a contemporary one. It brings together the second research hypothesis on *new forms of working* and the third on *independence* to provide a snapshot view of the working life of a contractor. Assessed against the background of the Push/Pull Matrix, the indications from chapter 7 of a polarisation within professional contracting continues. Those individuals who initially fell into the pull quadrant of the matrix continue to dominate, emerging as a very distinct elite operating as truly independent professional contractors, exercising considerable labour market power and high income earnings. Similarly, those

initially pushed continue to conform to the pictures of marginalisation and disadvantage particularly common to studies of part time and casual employment.

The factors of occupation, age, gender, and dependents that emerge when current variables of contracting are analysed in terms of the framework of the matrix also provide indications of a downside to the privileges associated with the pull into contracting. Key amongst these is the very long hours of work, the inability to have annual holidays and the lack of long-term career planning or personal investment in ongoing training. Overall, the results from chapter 8 suggest that there are some primary characteristics of the initial move into contracting that play a critical role in determining whether the professional can sustain the contracting lifestyle in the long term.

Chapter 9 investigates the issue of sustainability in terms of the fourth research hypothesis and the construct of *social support*. Past and present perspectives are combined to establish the role that both support networks and the perceived quality of the support that they provide played in the initial move and, subsequently in sustaining the contractor in this arrangement. The results of these two viewpoints conform to both clinical and work-based studies of social support where females were found to have both more extensive and higher quality social networks. However, applying the matrix framework to the results on social support produced results that, at first, appear contrary to those of chapters 7 and 8 and to that predicted by the fourth hypothesis. Instead of the pull quadrant dominating, it was individuals initially pushed into contracting who had the greatest number of supporting individuals and who rated the support they receive most highly. Consequently it seems that the negative aspects of contracting for this

group are balanced by access to strong networks of supportive individuals. At the other end of the contracting spectrum, it seems that the very long hours of work associated with those pulled into contracting provides financial rewards but also leaves little opportunity to maintain and sustain supportive social networks.

A different focus on contracting is provided in the second part of chapter 9, which addresses the fifth research hypothesis, and the issue of commitment. This construct is examined from the perspective of the contractors and their ability to hold dual commitment – to the host organisations that use their services and the contracting agencies who profit from placing contractors. The results largely confirm that commitment is differentiated between the parties – but in an unexpected direction. It appears that increasing commitment to the host organisation is concomitant with the pull into contracting while Contracting Agencies benefit from increased commitment where contractors were pushed. The issues of choice and control are thus shown to have important consequences for the management of this workforce by both Agency and host organisation.

Chapter 10 draws the results from chapters 7 to 9 together to explore the move into professional contracting from the perspective of the key player in this employment arrangement – the professional contractor. The thesis questions are then synthesised in chapter 11 to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings for professional contractors, those who use their services, those who work with them and, for society in general.

Overall the results reveal professional contracting arrangements cover a much wider spectrum than that of an elite peripheral worker. The diversity found is consistent with previous empirical research on peripheral work arrangement. While there is evidence of a very clear elite, in terms of labour market power, income and independence, this group is a minority and overwhelmingly pulled into contracting and characterised by IT and engineering professionals. However, the much greater number of individuals are within the default and push options of the matrix where initial move into contracting is typified by the issues of a lack of choice and control. Overall, the matrix has been used effectively throughout the analysis of results to demonstrate that traditional push/pull explanations of the move to peripheral work are just as relevant in explaining moves by the professional into contracting.

The results support the view that there are individual characteristics of the professional that play a critical role in determining whether they survive in such arrangements in the long term. The role of social support is especially important in sustaining those who are pushed into contracting and remain there as the results of factors beyond their control. These findings are important for the individuals directly involved as contractors, those who use their services and for the future of work in general. Chapter 11 thus concludes with suggestions for further research that could develop these findings and as a review of the limitations of this research investigation.

CHAPTER 2

The Changing World of Work

As with the vast majority of writings on the changing world of work and peripheral work arrangements, this chapter commences with an overview of the social, legal and political forces that have brought about these changes. Because the rise of peripheral employment is a well documented area, the main aim of this chapter is to provide background on the key macro level elements that have lead to the growth of the professional contractor workforce. This provides a focussed review of a very extensive body of literature.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter integrates contributions from the fields of law, economics, econometrics, psychology, sociology and management through a modified version of the analytical tool developed by Tyson (1995). Originating from the Strategic Human Resource Management literature, it provides a framework based on three levels of analysis, the societal, the organisational and the sentient. The original model was based on the analysis of an organisation and has been modified in this chapter to provide firstly a global, then a societal and lastly, an organisational and sentient overview of the changes

in the world of work. As Figure 2.1 illustrates, this has been done by adjusting the units of analysis from the micro-level of the organisation to the macro-level of society.

Figure 2.1: Tyson's Modified Levels of Analysis

SOCIETAL LEVEL VARIABLES				
Market size and product type	State of technology	Level of unemployment in specific labour markets	Climate of State activity on employment	Bargaining history and methods between employers & trade unions
ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL: INTERVENING VARIABLES				
Market share	Investment policies	Personnel role-expressed in habits/rules policies & actions	Management ideologies	Decision-making
SENTIENT LEVEL: PERCEPTIONS OF WORK PEOPLE				
Deriving from group norms, concepts of justice, fairness and reciprocity				

Source: adapted from Tyson, 1995:48

The rest of this chapter will follow the structure established by this modified model. It is a particularly appropriate framework for this research for three reasons. Firstly, it provides a generic model that uses terms and concepts that are easily understood and transferable across situations. This advantage combines with the second reason, which is that the model is not discipline specific and therefore provides a platform for integrating the diverse bodies of literature. Thirdly, the emphasis is on relationships and this supports the underlying focus of the thesis established in the previous chapter (see Figure 1.1). The strategic emphasis of Tyson's (1995) framework also accords with Atkinson's (1984 and 1988) flexible firm model, also referred to in chapter 1, which is discussed in detail later in this chapter. This structured approach will be used to

establish the gap in the existing literature where the professional contractor workforce is concerned and to identify the key theories and models that may aid in redressing this. The key themes within the changing world of work are drawn together to isolate those of relevance to the growth of the professional contractor workforce. This establishes the basis for a specifically focussed review of the literature in the following chapter, as well as providing the beginnings of a well-informed empirical investigation of the professional contractor workforce.

Turbulence, expendability, innovation and above all, change have characterised the world of the 1990s (Doeringer, Flynn, Hall, Katz, Keefe, Ruhn, Sum & Useem. 1991; Winner 1995). The basis of the rest of this chapter is that the changes occurring within the world of work equate with the quest for flexibility. Flexibility is seen as the key to coping and adapting to these unpredictable factors and thus ultimately providing the key to survival. This view permeates the structural changes that have occurred and are still occurring at all levels within the world of work. Following the framework provided by Tyson (1995), the next three sections will develop the themes of change within macroeconomic variables, labour markets and individual work practices.

2.2: The Societal Level

Figure 2.1 illustrates that the five distinct domains of economy, technology, demography, politics and employment relations readily isolate common themes across a number of disciplines. Each of these domains will be examined in turn.

2.2.1: Economics - Changing Markets

At the macroeconomic level Keynesian theory dominated Western economies since World War II. A key implication of Keynesian economics is government manipulation of monetary and fiscal policy to achieve and maintain full employment (Standing 1991). Underlying these clear welfare concerns were political policies that were reflected in attitudes to what was considered acceptable levels of unemployment and the degree and type of intervention in employer/employee relations. Underlying this was the second feature of Keynesian economics, an industrial system built upon Fordist principles of mass production (Matthews, 1994).

The economic upheavals which began in the 1970s increasingly questioned and then rejected the prevailing logic of the goal of full employment. The political and demographic changes in employment (or, more specifically, unemployment) are dealt with in more detail later but this destruction has taken the form of macroeconomic reforms aimed at moving many Western nations to market economies with decreasing state intervention (Standing, 1991). This essentially means the overthrow of what Schmid (1995:12) calls "the consensus for a policy of full employment." One major consequence of the move to a market economy is identified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as the change to the increasingly temporary nature of working life (ILO 1995). Again, this issue will be dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter. Here it serves to highlight one of the major assumptions of the market economy, that full employment is no longer a primary government objective.

This change at the macroeconomic level flows on to the micro-economic level. The dynamic nature of economies was described by Schumpeter (1934) as 'creative destruction' and is presented as part of an adaptive process. This is echoed in one of the seminal post-Fordist theories of the changing world of production, Piore and Sabel's 1984 work, *The Second Industrial Divide*. They propose that the events which began in America in the 1970s are evidence of the product market crisis of the West and that the world has entered a new era, the 'post-industrial divide' marking the transition from Fordism to post or neo-Fordism. This ends the era of mass production of standardised goods and the reliance on the increasing division of labour and it also sees the end of the need for a system of management where "absolute control was necessary if plans were to be implemented exactly" (Reich, 1992:51). Piore and Sabel (1984) call this new system of production 'flexible specialisation' and characterise it as requiring workers with significantly increased skills and autonomy over the work. In Australia, these themes were reflected in the process of award restructuring initiated by the government in conjunction with the union movement in the late 1980s and 1990s (Campbell, 1996; Matthews, 1994). A key aim was to reduce outmoded award provisions and to make those that remained more relevant and appropriate to the needs of industry and employees (Alexander & Lewer, 1996:295). The translation of this theory to the organisational level is seen in the 'Just-In-Time' methods of production.

Linked to the move away from Fordist production methods is the claim that it is small firms which have become the new engines of economic growth and development (Hyman, 1988). In one characteristic example, *Business Week* announced that "Small Is Beautiful Now in Manufacturing" (Bryne, 1992:45). The new conventional wisdom holds that the

large corporation is a dinosaur, unable to compete in a world characterised by continually fluctuating consumer demand, heightened international competition, and the need for more flexible forms of work and inter-firm interaction (Piore and Sabel, 1984). While the big firms collapsed under their own weight, we were told, a panoply of small, flexible enterprises rushed in to fill the void by creating most of the new jobs in the world's highly industrialised countries (Birch, 1987). It was the acceptance of this theory which lead governments of Western nations to sponsor a number of schemes aimed at encouraging self-employment (Bogenhold and Staber, 1991, Bryson and White, 1997: Meulders, Plasman and Plasman, 1994). While the outcome of these schemes is still debatable and the subject of a later section in this chapter, it clearly raises the question of how these changes have come about.

2.2.2: Technology - Changing Methods of Production

The forces that are changing the world today are basically technological, not military or economic ...military and political forces can be reduced to fundamentally economic forces, and economic forces are based on technology.

(Davis and Davidson, 1991:147)

Technology itself is obviously not limited to the creation of a new sector - that of high technology. The impact of technology ranges from the automation of the most menial work through to CAD-CAM (computer-aided design and computer aided manufacture) and aerospace design. The most significant impact of new technology for this thesis is the pressure it creates for new skills and new work arrangements. A central feature of new technology is information. Jones (1995:44) likens the impact of the "Information Revolution" to "the first Industrial Revolution which began in the 1780s, a new

paradigm in economic and social history." The consequences of new technology are reflected in the numbers and type of workers required, the job tasks and how they are performed, through to the actual physical characteristics of the workplace.

An ILO examination of the effects of technology within manufacturing found that a fundamental change was necessary within manufacturing philosophy to make the move from a traditional to a flexible systems approach (Thurman, Ciboria, Gregory, Gustavo, Lindholm, Naschold and Oscarsson, 1993:98). The fairly optimistic view of this study is that technology opens up a new dimension to work through the opportunity provided by increased knowledge levels (Thurman et. al., 1993:101). This view concurs with the 'flexible specialisation' view expressed in the previous section and can offer actual examples as support. A study of British and Finnish 'high tech' paper mills supported the view of an environment where "employers rely on highly skilled, experienced, full-time workers to operate advanced machinery continuously" (Penn, Lilja and Scattergood, 1992:214). There is also a contrasting view complete with grim warning that "Hi-tech. will destroy more jobs than it creates" (Aronowitz & DeFazio, 1994:3). Thus the productivity gains made possible by new technology may also signal the end of mass employment (Rifkin, 1995).

The balancing view of technology is presented by Jones (1995:38) who argues that technological innovation tends to reduce aggregate employment in traditional areas such as manufacturing but correspondingly, increases employment in new sectors. While the ability of low to middle level workers to transfer into the high technology/high skill areas raises questions about this last view, it also touches on the third area of analysis,

that of changing demographic structures and the consequences these have for employment.

2.2.3: Demographic Trends – The Changing Population

The factors driving the economic and technological changes already discussed also interact with population movement and changes occurring in the characteristics of the population. The massive impact of demographic trends on employment from events such as migration and immigration are demonstrated by Barinhorst's (1995) study of Western Europe. This charts three major periods of migration. The first was from Southern to Northern Europe as well as to countries such as Australia following WW II. The second was European-specific and followed the end of official foreign recruitment from North Africa in the 1970s. The last migration stream was that of the opening of the borders in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and Australia again, benefited from a flow of these migrants.

While Australia now has significantly decreased levels of immigration, there are important demographic changes occurring that match those occurring in Europe. These include an ageing workforce (from an average of 39.3 in 1990 to 41.2 years in the Year 2000) and a decrease in young entrants to work (BCA, 1992). These combine with higher female participation rates in employment, a greater casualisation of the workforce and higher standards of education to produce a very different workforce to that of the 1970s (EPAC, 1996; Marshall, 1998; Norris and Wooden, 1996).

A major criticism of this type of demographic data extrapolation as a research method to identify and research employment trends is that there are often serious deficiencies in both quality and quantity of data. The source and accuracy of data as well as the lack of individual views, are issues which will be addressed in detail later in this chapter. They are particularly relevant in highlighting the need to employ qualitative as well as quantitative methods in the study of the professional contractor workforce.

The Business Council of Australia's (BCA, 1992) report is one example of the shortcomings of a reliance on quantitative data alone. Based on only 146 responses from senior Human Resource Managers throughout Australia, it was claimed the study reflected the impact of changes in the workforce and business environment. Despite the limited nature of the data, the report supported the view that employers have been forced to reduce workforce numbers as the pressures for change impacted on organisations. Schumpeter's (1934) notion of 'creative' destruction' was cited as creating secular movements of employment, with the decline of manufacturing industries and the rise of the services sector. These findings are at odds with more rigorous studies which suggest that structural changes have been relatively insignificant influences (see for example Campbell, 1996; de Ruyter & Burgess, 2000).

The reliance on quantitative data is also seen in projections of occupational growth in Australia which reflect this move away from the manual based work of the declining manufacturing sector, into the wide ranging alternatives of the fast growing services sector. The Workforce 2000 study predicted that the more skilled occupations, such as the professions, will grow fastest while the unskilled, such as production work will grow

the slowest (BCA, 1992). The former Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Simon Crean (1995:6) explained this as reflective of "the fact that in each industry the more skilled occupations are increasing in importance" and predicted that, "by the year 2005, those occupations that currently represent the top one third of jobs will account for 43% of employment."

However, combining the traditional economic perspective with the more qualitative view of social research suggests a link between business contraction, peripheral employment and increased unemployment (Capelli, 1995). This combined perspective provides three key explanations for the correlation between rising unemployment and peripheral work:

- periods of unemployment are often experienced between peripheral work assignments (Appelbaum, 1992; Bryson and White, 1996 and 1997; Payne and Payne, 1993).
- the flexibility of peripheral arrangements offers a solution to unemployment (ACOSS, 1996; Burgess and Campbell, 1998; O'Reilly, Cabrián and Lallement, 2000).
- The common perception is that unemployment is increasing as low income jobs are disappearing (Long, 1996).

Unfortunately, closer examination of peripheral work has tended to dismiss this optimistic and much vaunted view that the flexibility of peripheral arrangements offers a solution to unemployment. This is exemplified in one of the most heralded of such arrangements, worksharing. In a review of work-sharing initiatives across five European Commission nations, Buchanan and Bearfield (1997:3-5) concluded that such initiatives show much more modest employment generation effects than expected. In terms of the

potential for the employment generation effects of such initiatives within Australia, they state "changes to working time alone can make only a moderate contribution to reducing unemployment" (Buchanan and Bearfield 1997:43). They suggest that, apart from job creation, the real issue of this type of flexibility is the qualitative dimension for those in employment.

The perception that unemployment is increasing as low income jobs are disappearing has been re-interpreted in an Australian study by Gregory (1996). This interpretation supports the view developed in this section, that the correlation between business contraction, peripheral employment and increased unemployment reflects the changing demographic nature of employment and unemployment. Thus, as the age, industry, occupational and gender characteristics of the Australian workforce change, so too does the profile of the unemployed (ABS, 2000). Gregory (1996) argues that it is the movement of displaced, former middle class workers into lower wage jobs which is forcing growing numbers of these workers who would traditionally have held these jobs into unemployment (Gregory and Long cited in Davis, 1996:12). If this assertion is correct, then it can be expected that there will be indications of such downward movement within the professional and more specifically, the professional contractor workforce. It also implies that policy initiatives will vary with the view adopted by the government of the day. This leads to the next level of analysis in Tyson's (1995) model.

2.2.4: Politics - Changing Philosophies

Increased international competition, the impact of new technologies and changing demographics have provided substantial forces of change which have been resistant to

the traditional macro and micro-economic manipulations of governments. Until recently, the underlying role of government in Western nations has been largely predetermined by adherence to Keynesian welfare state philosophies. These cast government itself as a major service provider, especially in terms of being an employer and overtly ensuring progressive income redistribution through direct intervention in terms of fiscal policy and social expenditure (Standing and Tokman, 1991; Trifiletti, 1996).

The perceived rigidities of government-imposed employment protection and job security have fuelled the movement for deregulation and a market economy. The danger of maintaining such institutional rigidities within a European context has been colourfully described as "Eurosclerosis" (Buchteman, 1991; Green and MacDonald, 1991). Contrasting with the slow and painful economic decline this term conjures up is the optimistic view of the benefits of deregulation and adoption of principles such as flexible specialisation. This is well articulated in the vision of former US Labour Secretary Robert Reich (1992) who foresaw American business and industry creating a 'Workplace of the Future' where companies engendered loyalty, improved productivity and quality by giving workers more training, responsibility and respect. He argued that, as workers become more productive and skilled, they would see their pay and status rise accordingly. There actually is evidence of this occurring in some companies, see for example Bluestone and Bluestone (1992) or Semler (1994). But overwhelmingly, the reality of the changing workplace is much more uncertain (Winner, 1995; Peters, 2000). Reich (1992) argues that the pain should be short-lived, and points to organisational examples such as Caterpillar, AT&T and General Electric. While they have all dramatically slashed employment and

held the line on wages in the last decade, many of the remaining employees are now multi-skilled and Reich (1992) believes, are in the position to improve their quality of working life and incomes.

This positive vision extends only to those lucky enough to remain in employment and ignores the 'dark side' of the functional flexibility promise that is the basis of 'flexible specialisation' (Harrison 1994; Harrison 1994a; Peak 1995). It also ignores the rise of union avoidance strategies identified in America and more recently in Australia whereby legally striking workers are threatened with 'replacement' workers, "a sanitised term for scabs in an antiunion decade" (Aronowitz and DeFazio, 1994:2; Peetz, 1998).

These recent tactics by employers tend to be associated with a political shift from the left to the right. In Australia the shift has been away from traditional Labor left leaning philosophy, summed up as "work for those who want it is a necessary condition to a humane society in Australia" (Langmore, 1995:8) to more right-wing policies supporting a deregulated market philosophy. The dramatic restructuring of the public sector experienced in the 1980s in Britain under the Thatcher Government and in America under the Reagan presidency demonstrates the implementation of the change away from an interventionist, Keynesian economy. Such changes really only began in the last decade in Australia where decreasing involvement of Government in regulating financial and labour markets, as well as the privatising of the public sector, were a feature of the 1990s.

The reduction in government role as a service provider and the associated shift to enabler saw a decline both in service provision and employment. This shift was based on the economic model of the free market which assumes that there should be a competitive market for the services which government has traditionally provided. One view of this is that privatisation essentially transfers public assets to the private sector and the range of mechanisms for achieving this involves varying degrees of ownership transfer. These range from outsourcing (otherwise known as contracting out) where ownership is retained through to the most extreme case which is the sale of the asset (Pirie, 1994). An international study of these changes within national economies concludes that such moves have definitively altered the patterns of ownership within countries, specifically the relationship between private and public sector and that generally, this has been to the detriment of employees and the notion of full employment (Simai, 1995:2).

The concept of ownership is a particularly significant aspect of the move to outsourcing and contracting out and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3. At this stage the key focus is on the change the concept of ownership heralds within the employer/employee relationship which is the subject of Tyson's (1995) fifth domain for analysis at the societal level.

2.2.5: Changing Employment Relationships

Changes within international and domestic markets, the introduction of new technologies, increasing rates of both unemployment and underemployment and changing political policies have had a fundamental impact on legal aspects of the

employment relationship. As with the industrial revolution, the magnitude of the change is so great that workers and employers have to "re-evaluate their ideas, goals, social and economic arrangements and their interactions with each other" (Jackson, 1996:1). As already noted, a fundamental aspect of this change has been within government's role as an employer and regulator. In terms of intervening in the relationship between employer and worker, the traditional pluralist ideology that underpinned the British and Australian systems of industrial relations have been replaced by a more unitarist view (Bamber 1990; Green and MacDonald, 1991).

While there are important legal differences which distinguish the British, Australian and, prior to the *Employment Contracts Act* (1991), New Zealand systems regulating the employer/employee relationship from those of Europe and America, there are some common consequences of deregulating the employment relationship. Essentially the current state of economic unpredictability, high unemployment and reduced union power means that employers have greater control in determining the employment arrangements they require from their workers. The employer rationale for the move to deregulation is evident in the BCA submission that the restrictive work practices of the 1980s has contributed to an

inflexible and under-utilised labour force ... unable to meet the demands of today's more technologically advanced industries and of the more open and competitive economic circumstances
(Bailey and Kelman, 1988:2).

Australia's peak employer body the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, formerly known as the Confederation of Australian Industry, articulated the employer quest for flexibility in terms of removing "an impediment to the development of more effective ways of utilising working time" (CAI, 1990:1). The opposing view is

summarised by Horowitz (1990:11) who states that changes are a "management tool for seducing employers away from unionism" and expresses an ideology that legitimise management authority and control in a manipulative and exploitative way.

This polarisation of views will be dealt with in the next chapter in the context of a discussion on individual peripheral work arrangements but here, the issues in contention are not necessarily those of employers seeking flexibility and unions rejecting it. As Green and MacDonald (1991) point out, it is the type of flexibility which is used and who has access to it. They speak of the 'flexibility paradox in Australia, where the qualitative benefits of functional flexibility, the 'flexible specialisation's' promise of Piore and Sabel (1984), was actively encouraged by unions under the traditional system of employment regulation. It is the quantitative, numerical flexibility increasingly sought by employers under the new system that is opposed. This raises the push/pull, supply and demand debate that surrounds flexibility.

There is, however, mounting evidence to support the flexible firm view that it is employer demand that is driving the quest for flexibility. The findings of Atkinson and Meager's 1984 and 1986 studies that the labour use strategies of employers are 'opportunistic' have been supported by further British studies such as those of Hunter and McInnes (1991) Geary (1992), McGregor and Sproull (1992) and Mayne, Tregaskis and Brewer (1996). Employers as the driving force behind the quest for flexibility is also confirmed closer to Australian shores in findings that employers in Australia and New Zealand hold similar views (Anderson, Brosnan & Walsh, 1996).

The consequences of the quest for flexibility being employer driven are important for the alternatives that an organisation will pursue and the impact that these have on employment relations. There are a number of categorisations of flexibility but numerical, functional and temporal flexibility are the forms most commonly referred to in the literature. Numerical flexibility refers to the ability to change employee numbers while functional flexibility provides the ability to adjust the work that is done and temporal flexibility relates to the hours worked. The common practice is to make adjustments according to demand. Of these three types, the first two apply particularly to the professional contractor workforce. As already noted, temporal flexibility tends to be associated with attempts to reduce unemployment.

The most widely known large scale evaluation of temporal flexibility is the Hansenne experiments (named after the Minister of Labour who devised the scheme) in Belgium. They began in 1982 and ran for two years. While lauded as an example of temporal flexibility's ability to produce more work, it should be noted that the majority of this was weekend work (CAI, 1990).

Overall, while temporal flexibility appears to have little relevance to the professional contractor workforce, the notion of employer-led flexibility leads to the next level of analysis of the changing world of work, that of the Organisation. This section deals with the pursuit of flexibility by organisations.

2.3: The Organisational Level

The organisational perspective of the changing world of work is the key theme addressed by the literature reviewed in this section. Organisations' utilisation of varied forms of labour flexibility strategies to survive and adapt to external pressures for change have already been outlined above. The concept of flexibility provides the major dimension that will be used within this thesis to separate the past and current/future world of work. There are a number of models that have been advanced to explain what has occurred and also what may occur in the future. The traditional industrial relations and full employment models of labour management relations are briefly outlined and the range of empirical evidence for new models is evaluated. These will then be synthesised into an aggregated version of Atkinson's (1988) flexible firm model as the basis for evaluating aspects of the strategic use of the varied employment options employers now have available.

2.3.1: Economics – Changing Labour Markets

Kuddo's (1995:43) international investigation into the future of work provides a succinct summary of what has really changed from the micro-economic perspective of the organisation, namely the replacement of a supply-side environment with a demand side one. The supply demand argument is a specific focus of this thesis and central to the debate on many aspects of the changing world of work. It is reflected in organisational responses to changing product markets where one of the key theories, that of flexible specialisation (Piore and Sabel, 1984), has already been mentioned in section 2.2.4. Briefly, this charts the move from the mass production systems, typified

as Fordism, to the generation of smaller and more specialised 'niche' markets. The typically 'lean' production systems that result are reflected in organisational restructuring which has a similar focus on being 'lean' and changing management practices characterised by Just-In-Time or Total Quality philosophies.

However, the 'myth' of the flexible specialisation of the small firm as the power house of economic revival is systematically examined and debunked by a number of researchers (see for example Harrison, 1994 and 1994a; Hyman, 1988; McLagan, 1991; Peak, 1995). In an examination of the actual organisations often cited as evidence of these changes, Harrison (1994) found quite a different picture than that of the 'polyvalent' worker of Piore and Sabel (1984).

Studies of corporations such as Nike or Bennetton, cited as typifying the central tenet of flexible production, reveal that the division of work into permanent (core) and contingent (peripheral) jobs means that core is often reduced to the bare minimum. This is why such 'flexible' firms are often described as practising 'lean' production. Part time or temporary workers with low wages and few benefits frequently handle the peripheral activities that are designed to reduce companies' labour costs. Furthermore, they tend to be located wherever a core firm can find a supplier to perform the work expediently and cheaply - often in different parts of the company or network, and in outlying geographic locations. Work shifts away from the bigger, more established and sometimes unionised companies where workers are paid relatively high average wages and benefits, and where the gap between the highest and the lowest earners is relatively narrow. The jobs that are available tend to stem from peripheral activities among network suppliers where workers are paid

lower average wages and benefits that vary greatly from one network partner to another (Harrison and Kelley, 1993).

The result is that organisations have changed not only the way they produce, and therefore work, but also the way in which they are structured.

2.3.2: Capital and Investment – Organisational Restructuring

The organisational restructuring which has been a feature of working life since the 1980's has redefined the world of work (Naschold, 1995). The key words associated with restructuring have been versatility and flexibility (Libes, 1995). What they actually translate into is reduced staff numbers in pursuit of the lean, mean organisation (Jacobs, 1994).

Peters and Waterman's (1982) seminal work *'In Search of Excellence'* gave new life to an old adage, exhorting organisations to "stick to one's knitting" (Jacobs, 1994:5). In practice, this meant that organisations shed non-core and sometimes-profitable businesses to focus their efforts and resources on what apparently made them successful. The next logical step was for organisations to examine what Hamel and Prahalad (1989) call the core competencies or the 'why' and the 'how' that made the business the 'provider of choice.' It is a focus that dictates an organisation should do what it does best and discard all else (Coates, 1990; Smith et. al., 1994). Drucker (1992) supports the view that most companies will farm out these activities over the next ten to fifteen years. The rather euphemistic terms of 'downsizing', 'delaying', 'rightsizing' and such do not hide the fact that what is essentially being undertaken is large scale cost cutting exercises that focus on retrenchments and redundancies to achieve goals of profit maximisation.

The fact that that huge job losses have been a regular feature of the business landscape in recent years is confirmed in a number of studies (see for example Cappelli, 1995; McGee, 1995, 1998; Peak 1995; Wagar and Gilson, 1995). Most also confirm that 'downsizing' exercises are a continual process. That this is also a fact of corporate life in Australia is supported by similar findings here (BCA, 1992; Long, 1996). The key concept behind this process is that simplifying the business and getting closer to the customer will bring about success. Guest (1992) questions this wisdom, noting that seventeen of Peters and Waterman's 'excellent' companies were in some kind of difficulty within two years of the book's publication.

Of the subsequent studies of downsizing, two are particularly relevant to this thesis. Drew (1994) concentrates on the actual strategies used by organisations in undertaking this process while Cooper (1999) looks at the effects on the workers who remain. Drew (1994) undertook a review of 18 recently downsized organisations finding that the factors that caused this perceived need were quite diverse. As expected, while declining sales, profits, and poor financial results were most important, greater responsiveness to customer needs and increased international competition were jointly rated third. Close behind were changes in strategy and a need to increase innovation and entrepreneurship. Rather surprisingly, the introduction of new technology and increasing unit labour costs were ranked seventh. Importantly, and in line with the central question of this thesis, no coherent strategy was applied once the decision to downsize was made. This concurs with the criticism by Block (1993:102) that many organisations carry out such exercises as if it were not their choice "but a mandate from nature."

While decreasing the labour force appears to lower costs, increase profit and transform companies into lean, mean production machines, Cooper (1999) argues that most organisations have only gone part of the way, becoming 'mean' but far from lean. Workers who remain are encouraged to work harder, under the threat of being laid off, and are thus working under severe social and personal pressure. Working side by side with peripheral workers would appear to encourage this fear. Even within the high technology end of the work, the impact of such instability upon these valued core workers increases the likelihood that they will quit their jobs - whether their own job security is at risk or not (Schellenberg, 1996).

In summary then the situation facing organisations is that the global pressures that create management interest in new organisational practices are also associated with precariousness (Thurman et. al., 1993:4). The ability to deal with a necessarily flexible and unpredictable workforce is a major challenge for management, whose traditional philosophy is based on uniformity and predictability in the workforce. To understand the employment alternatives, however transitory they may be, it is necessary to look at the models that have dominated organisational operation and structure in the past.

2.3.3: New Organisational Models

The demise of large scale public sector employment and the radical downsizing of large organisations means that people no longer work for an abstract entity such as "the state" or "the company", but "for their customer, for their employer and ultimately, for themselves" (Kuddo, 1995:44). Accordingly, organisation growth is as one of the key means to gaining and sustaining competitive advantage.

The three main strategies to achieve this are for the organisation to focus on innovation, quality enhancement and cost reduction (Schuler and Jackson, 1987:208). While various blends of these are also possible, the key question for this thesis is the implications of each on the workforce. For example, an organisation seeking advantage through innovation emphasises qualities such as creativity and risk-taking in its employees and tends to adopt a longer-term focus on the activities of employees. Quality enhancement has tended to be reflected in Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies. In contrast, cost reduction is operationalised through Just-In-Time (JIT) strategies. The basis for deciding which form of labour flexibility to utilise often seems to be "according to what are (euphemistically) termed the 'needs of the enterprise' " (Campbell, 1995:7). These 'needs' produce very marked changes in the patterns and paths of employment.

2.3.4: Changing Labour Markets

One tangible aspect of these changes is the reshaping of the labour markets. Large numbers of workers are moving out of traditional forms of employment and into non-traditional (commonly called peripheral) arrangements as well as increasing the ranks of the unemployed. Peripheral workers now make up the fastest growing workforce within the industrialised world with growth in the US between 1980 and 1995 at over 60%. One in every five workers in that country are now in outsource, contract or temporary employment (Bridges, 1995; duRivage, 1992; Peak, 1995). Yet despite its growth, outsourcing is frequently poorly controlled, high in cost, and a drain on quality and service performance (Jacobs, 1993; 169). Very little is known about how a labour market, increasingly characterised by larger numbers of peripheral workers, actually operates.

While the quest for one single new labour market paradigm noted by Abraham and McKersie (1990) is no closer to completion, there are a number of alternatives now available. The most influential of these are examined in this section but, prior to this, the historical basis of the models can be basically categorised as describing labour market trends in terms of the:

- traditional market framework of human capital;
- nature of the employing organisation (Piore and Sabel, 1984);
- personal characteristics of the workforce (Handy, 1989; Reich, 1992) and;
- characteristics of the work performed (Atkinson, 1984; Loveridge, 1983).

The first and second points focus on the theory of segmented labour markets to explain how the nature, size and market power of the employing firm and investment in technology produce structural divisions. An alternative focus is provided by Handy (1989) and Reich (1992) who examine personal characteristics of the labour itself. Age, ethnicity and gender explain the divisions in workforce status and earnings. This fundamentally economic perspective identifies the changes occurring but provides little explanation of why particular groupings are moving into these new arrangements. As with the fourth point, the supply/demand issue is essentially unresolved, as the perspective is essentially a large scale, aggregate one that treats a very heterogeneous population in a very simplistic manner. All make it easy to ignore the issues of exploitation, marginalisation and unemployment associated with many of the employment arrangements actually pertaining to various groups of workers.

A number of more explanatory models, which incorporate all four of these aspects and address the problems detailed above, have been advanced. Five of the most influential are discussed next.

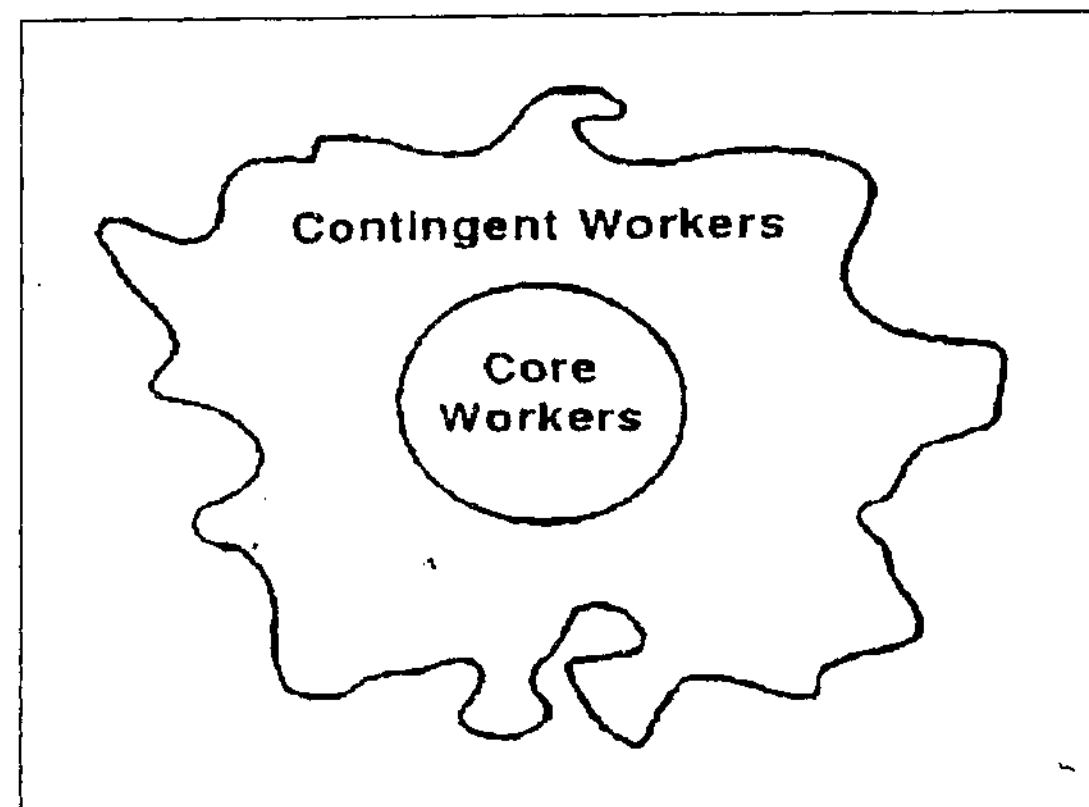
A: Core and Contingent Labour Model

The former chief economist for the American National Planning Association, Richard Belous (1989), provides a model which overcomes many of the problems previously discussed.

Illustrated in Figure 2.2, the basic division is between the core and contingent labour market. This model clarifies key challenges to the fundamentals underlying internal labour markets. Chief among these is the existence of career ladders that encourage a long-term relationship of attachment between organisation and employee. This relationship allows employees to develop organisation or industry specific skills that are unavailable to more mobile (less 'attached') workers. The theory is that attachment enhances workforce productivity (Abraham, 1990:85).

The question Belous's model raises is how can this productivity be achieved when attachment is no longer provided to increasingly larger numbers of the workforce?

Figure 2.2: The Changing Labour Market



Source: Belous, 1989:54

B: The Shamrock

The same issue of attachment is dealt with slightly differently in Britain where Charles Handy's 1989 book, *The Age of Unreason*, predicted that future organisations will be characterised as increasingly contractual, professional and federal. In terms of structure, this translates to corporations consisting of a small staff of permanent employees. The core group makes all strategic decisions and hires workers with specific skills to accomplish specific projects. Once the tasks are completed, workers return to a temporary help pool.

Even greater flexibility is achieved by 'contracting out' activities at the periphery of the organisation. This model would appear to place the professional clearly in the core workforce. Called 'knowledge workers' they will need to be a committed, versatile,

knowledgeable, and skilled group which knows the products and problems of the organisation (Handy, 1989). This is compensated for by the organisation's willingness to invest in their training and development and greater job security. He believes that this increasingly federal nature of organisations reflects a move to relatively small, decentralised and semi-autonomous units that provide for flexibility, low costs and manageability. The actual structure of the workforce is represented as a shamrock "based on a core of essential executives and workers supported by outside contractors and part time help" whom collaborate with each other and undertake joint ventures (Handy, 1989:32).

In a similar vein, Hildebrand (1995) advocates the adoption of Senge's (1990) model of a learning organisation as a way to ensure that the 'smart' company stays smart by creating a company full of inquisitive, lifelong learners who are comfortable with fluidity. The division of the workforce into three distinct groups based on functions is also found in the works of Reich (1992) where the knowledge workers of Handy (1989) become 'symbolic analysts.' The common feature of all the models mentioned to date is that they remain in the realm of theory.

C: Network Structures

In contrast, Drucker's (1988) article 'The Coming of the New Organisation' heralded the arrival of the network structure, characterised by a 'flatter' look, due to fewer layers of 'command and control,' fewer permanent employees and teams that form and disband as required, which operationalised the theories. In a book designed for the Harvard MBA program, Cash, Eccles, Nohra & Nolan (1993:34) extol the virtues of the network structure in terms of

flexibility adaptation in a constantly changing environment ... best suited to volatile environments that change rapidly and dramatically, and when innovation is the primary basis of strategic advantage.

Grenier and Metes (1992) advance a socio-technical perspective of network organisations structured around the use of Information Technology (IT). More detailed than Cash et. al. (1993), they propose a networked organisation that is based on a workforce akin to Reich's (1992) 'symbolic analysts' or Handy's (1989) 'knowledge workers'. Grenier and Metes (1992:14) clarify how IT allows an organisation to "compress time; and by using geographically dispersed teams to electronically build products and services through information."

The ability of new structures to utilise technology is further explained by Johansen and Swigart's (1994) description of the new corporate structure as a 'fishnet' with temporary hierarchies appearing as a 'node' of the 'net' is lifted. This provides a flexible web of teams that is supported by an IT infrastructure which allows for telecommuting, working from home and permanent temporary work arrangements.

A common criticism of network models is that they are very context specific, relevant only to high tech and IT environments. The logical conclusion from the dominance of information based work is to take the view expressed by Porat (1977 cited in Jones, 1995:47) and divide the labour force into information and non-information based workers. This underlies Jones's (1995:49) contention that the real move is from a manual to a mind labour market - a view he supports with Australian data where, in 1992, the information sector was already 42.5% of the total workforce.

Bridges (1995:54) perceives the changes to be even greater, stating that "the job is not going to be part of tomorrow's economic reality.... the job is a social artefact" presenting a rigidity that is "no longer socially adaptive." The vision offered is one where each worker operates as a business and must provide their own business plan. Similar to the models already discussed, work is team and project based and the attitude one of "acting towards the business as if you had an ownership stake in it (Bridges, 1995:57). It is a view that echoes Hakim's (1994) book *We Are All Self-Employed*. Again, the individual is a career 'self manager' who 'joins' rather than works for an organisation. A criticism of both books is that a series of vignettes are used to illustrate the key points rather than quantitative data being used to provide a basis. Of specific interest to the professional contractor workforce is the fact that the vignettes used by both Bridges (1995) and Hakim (1994) refer predominantly to professional contractors and consultants and are very optimistic.

D: Co-Management

Bluestone and Bluestone (1992) offer a different but still optimistic perspective moving to a more operationally based example. They explore the role of the 'contract' in the employment relationship within the future of work and propose the 'enterprise compact.' Basically a restructuring of labour-management relations away from the standard workplace contract to a system of co-management with organised labour, this model is based on the premise that the traditional adversarial relationship between labour and management threatens profits, wages, stock dividends and, ultimately, job security. A number of American case studies are included to suggest that the enterprise

compact is already occurring and that co-management does deliver on the promises made.

However, a number of criticisms must be made. Firstly there is a lack of detail contained in the case studies which provide little evidence to support the success of these 'enterprise compacts' examples. The longest study, the Saturn facility in Spring Hills, Tennessee, is only 12 pages. Secondly, the exclusive focus on manufacturing enterprises can hardly be said to provide the 'Perspective on American Business' suggested by the title of the book. Thirdly, while the argument of benefits to all is emphasised, the reality of co-management appears more clearly a strategy for union survival, where "strong and independent unions are even one of the preconditions for a successful modernisation of our economy" (Randow, 1995:3).

The logical consequence of this co-management model of the workplace is presented by Block's (1993) philosophical concept of 'stewardship.' This replaces the term 'management' with 'governance' and represents a partnership where control shifts from managers to core workers (Block, 1993:28). One aspect of the stewardship concept is that traditional staff functions, such as personnel, become economically self-supporting by offering their services to the work 'units.' While interesting, this concept extends well beyond the scope of this research investigation.

E: Atkinson's (1984) 'Flexible firm' Model

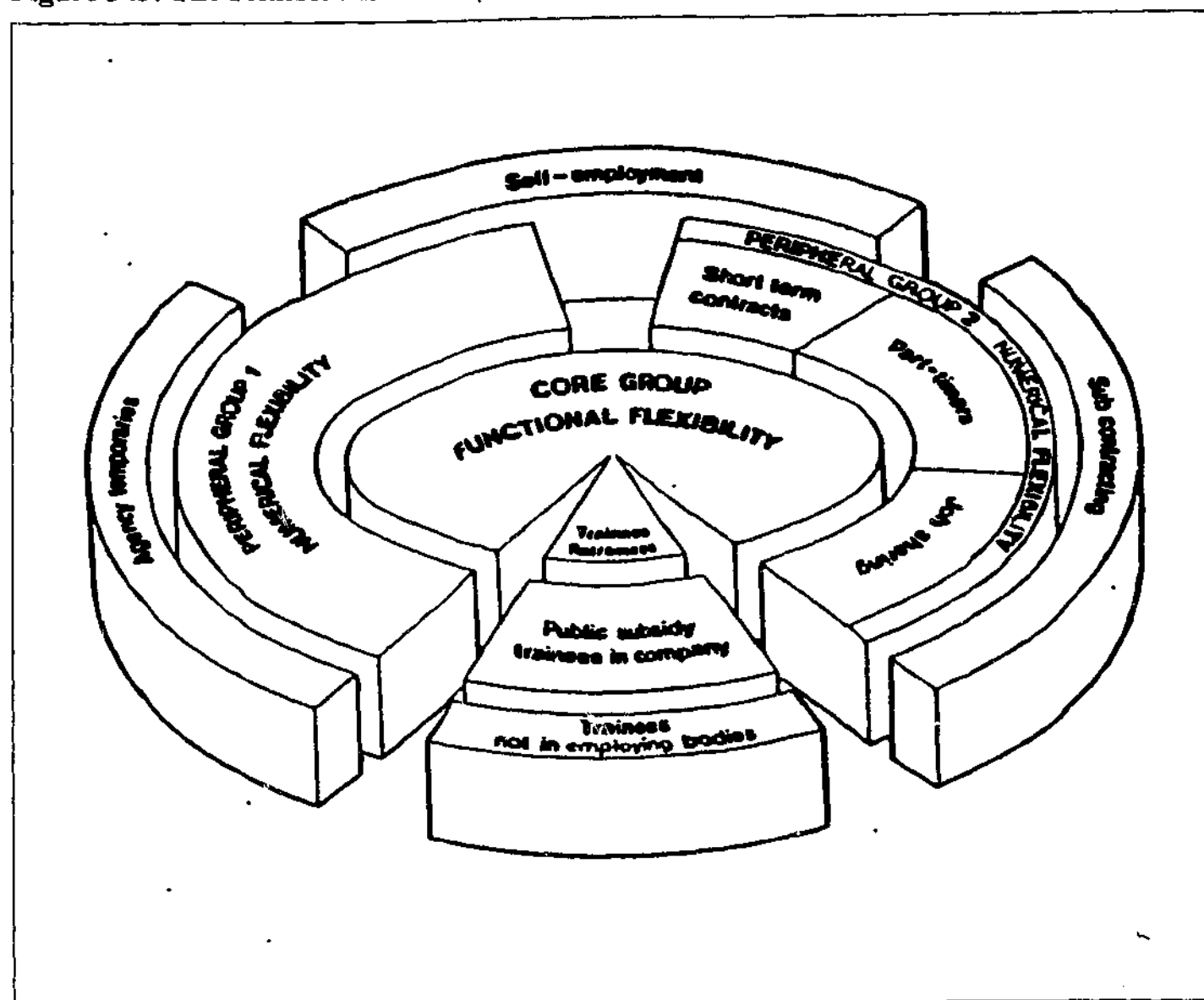
An influential employment model that is closely aligned to the specific focus of the thesis is Atkinson's (1988) flexible firm model. It divides the workforce into two broad categories: 'core' and 'periphery'. This enables the employer to achieve greater flexibility through:

- a) reduced numbers of permanent staff due to market uncertainty and growing international competition;
- b) an unwillingness to commit to any increase in full-time, permanent staff, even in the event of an upturn in business and;
- c) a conscious search for new ways of organising work in response to pressures for reduced working hours, which would otherwise have increased costs (Evans and Bell, 1986 p10).

Illustrated in Figure 2.3, the flexible firm model derives from a survey of seventy-two British firms in the food, drink, manufacturing, engineering, retail and financial services sector who employed over 660,000 workers between them.

The concept of flexibility was the key finding and Atkinson (1984) saw flexibility as providing three major dimensions of organisational change. The first is functional flexibility, allowing employees with appropriate re/training to be re-deployed across the organisation. Secondly is numerical flexibility so that an organisation can alter workforce numbers in response to demand and third, financial flexibility. The latter provides the establishment of payment systems that can reinforce the organisations quest for flexibility, for example, the use of performance pay rather than 'across the board' increases.

Figure 3.3: The Flexible Firm Model



Source: Atkinson, 1988:137

The flexible firm model provides a visual representation of the manipulations of these three kinds of flexibility to differentiate the core and peripheral workforces. Full-time, permanent employees who are seen as central to the long-term future of the organisation characterise the core group. They are rewarded with training and development opportunities and access to traditional internal labour market features such as career paths, promotion and greater job security. In exchange for this, the core group is required to be more flexible and to accept retraining and relocation so both functional and financial flexibility become features of their employment.

In contrast, the peripheral group is further divided into two sub-groups, both characterised as marginal to the organisation and used to provide numerical flexibility. The first peripheral sub-group is that of full-time permanent employees with skills readily available on the external labour market. They equate with the disposable worker of Castro (1993) and include secretarial, clerical and other lesser skilled manual jobs. While this group still retains some access to internal labour market conditions, they are characterised by higher labour turnover and thus easily reduced through natural attrition. The second peripheral sub-group provides the main source of numerical flexibility and includes part timers, casuals, temporaries, fixed term contract staff and sub-contractors. They generally have little or no access to internal labour market conditions and even less job security than the first peripheral sub-group.

These findings have been the centre of considerable controversy since first publication. The most concerted criticism came from sociologist Anna Pollert. Her 1991 book, *A Farewell To Flexibility?* is a "consignment of flexibility to the dustbin of history" (Pollert, 1991a:3). Her sustained attack on what she sees as a 'simplistic fad' is based on two criticisms. The first is that the peripheral labour markets are not anything new. This is supported by a study of part time, temporary and casual work that rejects the notion that these are "radical departures" and examples of a new or post-Fordist form of working (Casey, 1991:12). The second criticism is the lack of explicit evidence of employer strategies which develop a core/periphery labour force. Her basic assertion is that the flexibility debate goes around in circles (Pollert, 1992:311).

Atkinson (1994, 1996) supports the 'ad hoc' nature of the use of flexible strategies. Similarly, a number of large scale studies by the British Department of Employment investigating the labour use strategies of employers failed to find explicit strategies of workforce differentiation (Wood and Smith, 1989; Hunter and McInnes, 1991).

However, these results have been re-examined more recently in the light of contributions from the field of strategic HRM and refinements to the definition of strategy (Blyton and Morris, 1993; Claydon, 1994; Mayne et. al., 1996; Proctor, Rowlinson McArdle, Hassard and Forrester, 1994). In a concerted defence of the flexible firm model, Proctor et. al. (1994:222) suggest that criticism of piecemeal and ad hoc rather than strategic change is overcome if strategy is looked at as a pattern rather than a plan. The view that business strategies develop over time as a pattern rather than consciously and systematically are echoed in a survey of human resource consultants (Cooke and Armstrong, 1990:31). Mayne et. al. (1996) advance this argument with the assertion that the common factor is the opportunistic use of labour by employers.

Australian support for the flexible firm model comes from the work of Blunsden (1995) and the findings of a study by the Business Council of Australia (1992:8) that:

...patterns are changing. Many employers will be managing two workforces. One of these will be core workers, those who have survived the downsizing and restructuring efforts of the past few years and who will receive the benefits of increased remuneration, training, and possibly, job security. The other workforce will be sub-contractors, part timers and others supporting the enterprise on a highly flexible basis.

The international applicability of the model is supported by the New Zealand results of Anderson, Brosnan and Walsh (1996:7) who add that businesses that are more certain of their future growth are less likely to use a core/periphery labour market strategy.

The model has also been investigated within the high technology sector where Penn et. al. (1992) found that high technology can actually restrict the use of peripheral forms of labour. Thus, in a labour market of high demand and low supply "management...did not dare to remove traditional skill boundaries but rather sought effective methods of co-operation" (Penn et. al., 1992:227). Overall, this model provides a strong base from which to advance an exploration of the almost unknown arrangement of professional contracting.

Review of the Models

There are some themes common to all of the models reviewed. One is that of reciprocal commitment between the organisation and its workers. This workforce is often characterised as highly skilled and/or educated individuals within the 'core' of the organisation within the models presented by Belous (1989), Handy (1989) and Atkinson (1984). The organisation clearly requires and values such workers and has an incentive to establish an ongoing relationship where loyalty is exchanged for security and other rewards.

The second common theme is that of work being performed in groups (also often called teams), rather than on an individual basis. The relationship between these two factors is made clear in Grenier and Metes (1992) networking model with a:

framework based on the human, cultural and social principles of commitment and trust ... through the enterprise, management must build and maintain a visible commitment to teaming, to open sharing of information ...

(Grenier and Metes, 1992:65).

These teamworking structures can be viewed from another, less complimentary perspective advanced by some European unionists as "management by stress" because of the emphasis it places on driving the team to the limits of its capabilities (Gregory & Hethy in Thurman et. al., 1993:176). Added to this is the emphasis on team rather than individual needs, the constant monitoring of results, often enhanced by sophisticated electronic monitoring systems, and employment uncertainty. The models thus present contrasting views of the potential for worker empowerment versus worker manipulation.

The first and second themes produce the third and most important theme for this thesis, the division of the workforce into different employment relationships. Of the five alternatives presented, the flexible firm is the most conceptually and empirically convincing model. The notion of varying distances in the quality and the quantity of the relationship between organisation and worker is integral in the three forms of flexibility the model incorporates. Overall, the flexible firm model thus provides a basis for investigating labour market explanations for the professionals moves into the peripheral work arrangements of contracting.

2.3.5: The Changing Contract of Employment

Attitudes and expectations of employment are also changing. Lifelong employment as an organisational responsibility is no longer sustainable and the onus becomes one of individual career management (Hammonds, Kelly and Thurston, 1994). Concepts such as commitment and loyalty are questioned, from both the organisational and the individual worker perspective. Managing the 'survivors' of organisational restructuring, as well as peripheral workers, have become key organisational concerns (Peak, 1995). The situation for those 'lucky' enough to keep their full-time jobs is well summarised by Butterfield (1993:14):

Workloads are increasing, incomes dropping, benefits disappearing. But more debilitating than the loss of pay or reduced health benefits, the full-time jobs many hold today no longer carry any sense of security or cooperation. One slip, one lost contract, one change in the global marketplace or corporate policy or ownership, and even the safest of work is suddenly on the line - even at companies where productivity is high.

Related to this 'no assurances' employment approach are two primary changes. The first is in the nature of the legal relationship while the second is the concept of a 'psychological contract of employment.' Both have important consequences for the management of the interface between the 'core' workforce of full-time, permanent employees and the temporaries, casuals, part timers and others who make up the 'peripheral' workforce (Beard and Edwards, 1995). Each will be examined in turn.

The Employment Relationship

The numerical and functional flexibility of peripheral work arrangements is dependent, not only on the costs, availability and skills of these workers but also on the legal status of the practices themselves. The literature on labour law provides a great deal of detail

into what the term contractor actually means within the Australian working environment. It strongly reflects the British roots of Australia's system of labour relations. This is important as, unlike European countries where statute law defines, structures and controls the nature of the employment contract, the British (and thus Australian systems) are based on the common law, which "does not provide the sharp definitions and rules that statute law seeks" (Hakim, 1990:161). The complexity and difficulty of operating within the less structured British system in practice is highlighted by Tyson and Fell's (1992) research into human resource functions where one of the three main models of the personnel function was that of the 'contract manager'. The basis of this function was quite simply one of technical expertise.

The legal distinction between employee and non-employee status is a very important and complicated issue within the Australian industrial relations system. Not being an employee tends to be associated with a variety of potentially negative consequences related to entitlement and protection such as not being able to join a union, lack of protection of wages and being ineligible for entitlements under workers compensation legislation (Brooks, 1992:12). Collins (1990) explains labour law concern with peripheral workers as a recognition of the plight of "marginal" workers', failure to acquire employment rights, simply because of "legislative artefact" (Collins, 1990:354). Creighton (1994:60) develops this further to explain the confusing and inconsistent nature of changes occurring within peripheral working arrangements as partly the:

inevitable consequence of a continued reliance upon the common law contract of employment as a vehicle for the delivery of, or as a determinant of access to, employment protection.

Labour law has a long history of being used as a "tool for the social engineering" of the employment relationship (Brooks, 1992:249) and the strength of this tool has been tested considerably in the area of contractors and contracting.

As with all peripheral work arrangements, contracting can be legally defined through a variety of mechanisms. These include aspects such as the relationship/s with the employer/employing organisation or agent, payment and income tax arrangements, through to the liability for workers compensation payments. More specifically, the move to peripheral employment is seen as an effort by employers to achieve greater flexibility by reducing wage and non-wage labour costs (Collins, 1990; Healey, 1994; Macken, 1992). The advantage of peripheral workers, specifically the self employed contractor, is enhanced by the ease with which the arrangement can be terminated, and the fact that the risks of fluctuating demand are borne by the individual (Stanworth and Stanworth, 1991:52).

The crucial legal difference between the traditional employee and peripheral worker (whether styled as a contractor or employee) is the distinction made between a contract of employment and a commercial contract. The contract of employment is "a contract of subordination based on the service of the employee while a commercial contract

exchanges commercial services between independent individuals" (Clark, 1994:442).

The increasing difficulty "blurring of the lines of distinction between employee and contractor" is of concern in a number of areas of government (EPAC, 1996:84). The issues that bring the vagaries of the changing contract of employment to official

attention tend to be those associated with potential revenue loss - such as taxation, workers compensation and occupational health and safety (OH&S) liability (CCH, 1994; James, 1993; Quinlan, 1993).

Within the academic community, the need for further specific study of the Australian contractor workforce is supported by the research of Mayhew, 1996; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995; Wooden and VandenHeuvel, 1996. These studies also raise concerns about the less tangible aspects of such employment and key amongst these is that of the psychological functions work fulfils.

The notion that work is more than a simple economic transaction where the worker exchanges their labour for a wage or salary is commonly accepted. However, the other reasons motivating individuals to work are as difficult to disentangle as the legal aspects of differentiating worker from contractor. The psychological constructs of socialisation and job satisfaction are key factors. One aspect that determines job satisfaction is the support a worker receives from others at the workplace, as well as from family and friends (Lim, 1996). Working arrangements that place workers outside of, or at a distance from, the traditional interactions of the workplace can be expected to have a number of potential consequences in terms of individuals:

- seeking alternative support mechanisms;
- increasing the importance of the support structures provided by family and friends;
- accepting decreased job satisfaction.

These aspects consolidate the information on changing labour markets to produce a picture that is capable of explicitly distinguishing between the affiliation or attachment employers have with their core and peripheral workforces.

Figure 2.4 illustrates the potential consequences that the lack of ongoing attachment between employer and the peripheral worker has in terms of career, training and commitment for this workforce. It makes explicit the advantages and the costs to both the employer and to the peripheral worker.

Figure 2.4: The Changing Employment Relationship

Core Employment Mode (Strong Affiliation)	Peripheral Employment Model (Weak Affiliation)
❖ Expectations of lifelong career with one company	❖ Employment based on fixed term agreements
❖ Reciprocal deep commitment and long-term responsibilities to each other	❖ Commitments and responsibility limited to aspects of work
❖ Employee identity and career linked to the fate of specific	❖ High degree of flexibility and freedom with identity

modified from Belous, 1989:3

Overall, Figure 2.4 summarises the changes occurring within the world of work at the organisational level and introduces the next level of Tyson's analyses, the sentient or individual peripheral work arrangement.

2.4: The Sentient Level

This section forms the basis for chapter 3 which will examine the major individual arrangements of peripheral employment. Prior to this, the last section of chapter 2 deals

with the problems of definition and access to adequate data sources that beleaguer the research of peripheral work arrangements. These are addressed through a detailed examination of contracting and where possible, with a specific focus on Australian data and research. The legal literature best addresses the issues of definition and will be referred to in order to establish the importance of the level of independence a peripheral worker has on the issues of entitlements to employment benefits and protection. The dimension of independence also provides the basis for a model of a 'Continuum of Independence' for professional contractors which will be developed further in the next two chapters.

2.4.1: The Rise of the Peripheral Workforce

Employment arrangements within Australia continue to change. The rise in casual employment, increasing from 19 percent of the workforce in 1988 to 27 per cent by 1998, prompted the ABS to state that "new arrangements, which are generally less secure, have been evolving" (ABS, 2000a:1). The rise in casual employment is set against a background of a declining annual growth rate of employment. The average growth of 1.9 per cent between 1979 and 1998 had fallen to 1.6 per cent in 1998-99 and is projected to fall to 0.4 per cent in 2015-16 (ABS, 1999). A key factor explaining this expected decline is the general ageing of the labour force, with over 80 per cent of the

projected growth occurring in the 45 years and over age group (ABS, 1999). It is also a workforce where the gender composition continues to change. For females, the proportion participating in the labour force has steadily increased, from 65 per cent in 1989 to 70 per cent in 1997, while males have remained relatively unchanged over this same time period at 85 per cent (ABS, 1999a). Despite this increase in female

participation rate, women's hourly earnings fell as a proportion of men's hourly earnings between 1994 and 1998 and, overall, the difference in earnings between low and high income earners has continued to widen (ABS, 2000a).

In summary, the forces that have brought about change in the Australian workforce include:

- A world-wide recession that has brought about the slowing down of the Australian economy over the last two decades. This has been characterised by shorter periods of growth punctuated by slowdowns and recession (Jackson, 1996:13);
- As national economies become more interdependent, multi and transnational organisations grow, promoting a movement of both capital, trade and people across national boundaries and outside of traditional trading blocs (de Ruyter and Burgess, 2000; Standing, 1997);
- The changing sectorial nature of employment, away from the declining manufacturing industries and into the rapidly expanding services sector (Quinlan, 1998).

Overall though, the reasons for the growth of peripheral arrangements are contested. Theories of supply and demand have been briefly addressed and arguments that the growth has been in terms of an increase in the supply of low paid, low skill jobs that are increasingly offered on a casual or temporary basis have been examined. An explanation offered by Burtless (1990) centres on an increase in the need for skilled positions. More controversially it has been argued that peripheral employment is

cheaper and employers prefer it (Handy, 1989:32). This appears to be the argument that finds strongest support. Before investigating this in terms of any workforce, there are two key issues which must be dealt with. Primary amongst these is the problem of defining the peripheral worker.

2.4.2: Defining the Peripheral Worker

As noted in section 2.3, the changes occurring within employment are both structural and attitudinal, challenging the standard definition of employment as being a full-time, stable job of an indefinite duration (Collins, 1990; Campbell and Burgess, 1993). There is a great diversity in the arrangements pertaining to this 'new' form of work and the only common attribute among them being that they deviate from this standard definition. This diversity encompasses legal status, hours of work, periods and rates of pay, through to conditions and entitlements. Further evidence of this diversity is seen in the range of 'umbrella' terms such as *contingent*, *atypical*, *disposable*, *non standard* and *peripheral*, which are used in the literature to refer to non standard arrangements. These range from. While none of these terms avoid the criticism of a failure to highlight the important differences between the various arrangements, they all clearly indicate a departure from the norm. It is also important to note the national differences which can be implicit within these terms. The term *contingent* is widely accepted in American literature - to the degree that the American Bureau of Labor Statistics defines it as:

any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long term employment and one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner.

(Polivka and Nardonne, 1989:9).

An important aspect of this definition, when comparing American data with that from other countries, is that it specifically excludes the self-employed.

Meulders, Plasman and Plasman's (1994:xo) study of *atypical employment* arrangements provides a straightforward definition, incorporating "all forms of employment diverging from the legal norm of the full-time, open ended contract." This definition of the term encompasses a wide range of practices and resulted in an extremely thorough, comparative analysis of a diverse range of practices throughout 13 member countries of the European Commission. Covering over 14 employment practices, it encompassed immense diversity in terms of the hours worked, when and how work was performed, the method of production, the location of the organisation, wage formation and the legal status of the arrangement. The depth and breadth of the study also highlights the deficiencies in the data on atypical employment made available by most international governments. The consequences of poor quality data, or the total lack of it, is a major theme and one that will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Another variation on the 'outside the norm' arrangement is the term *non standard*. Writing from an industrial relations (IR) perspective, Campbell and Burgess (1993:87) provide a more precise definition than the ABS, defining non standard as "all forms that deviate in some way from the standard or typical pattern." A criticism these writers level at the study of non standard arrangements in Australia is that they are almost solely devoted to the constituent forms rather than providing an overview of the range of deviations that are occurring. This criticism still remains relevant today, and certainly nothing approaching the scope of Meulders et. al.'s (1994) study has been

carried out within Australia.² While Campbell and Burgess (1993) provide an important distinction within non standard employment, that between employee and non-employee status. The peculiarly Australian and British significance of this legal differentiation has already been referred to (see section 2.3.5) but is important here as it is this status that tends to separate the permanent and casual workforce, generally comprised of employees, from the self-employed and contractor, which generally consists of non-employees. The concept of distancing within peripheral arrangements, introduced in the flexible firm model, reflects this distinction.

Lastly, there are also a number of pejorative terms to define peripheral arrangements and most of these originate in the American popular press and sociological literature. These include the terms "disposable or throwaway workers" (Aronowitz and DeFazio, 1994:1). Overall, the complete range of terms can be found in Australian academic and legal literature but what is very often lacking, as the next section will reveal, is the data to investigate such arrangements in the first place.

Peripheral Workforce Statistics in Australia

Official data on peripheral employment arrangements within Australia tends originate from one of four sources within the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The most regular is the Monthly Population Surveys, which derives from a random survey administered to an Australian wide random selection of households on a fortnightly basis. It gathers, among other items, details on employment issues. There are also

² The greatest range of peripheral arrangements studied within Australia are found in the monograph of Bray and Taylor (1991); Romeyn's two reports on part time and casual workers (1992) and the examination of fixed term and temporary work (1994); and Bieback (1992).

special ABS surveys, such as the supplementary Labour Force Surveys which add dimensions such as full-time/part time temporary and, in the case of the Queensland survey, fixed-term employment. A third source is the joint ABS/ Department of Employment and Training Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey. This has been administered only twice, in 1990 and 1995. In terms of peripheral arrangements, it provides a great deal more detail on issues such as the training and productivity of casual and part time workers (Simpson, Dawkins and Madden, 1996:10). A major limitation of the AWIRS data is that the unit of analysis is that of the workplace, not the individual (Harley, 1994:27). The fourth source is the Population Census Survey.

Overall, despite the growth in numbers in peripheral work arrangements and knowledge of the potential consequences of this increase, official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) continues to be restricted. The focus is still specifically confined to the standard definition and arrangements of full-time work, as well as the basic, original divisions from this of part time, temporary and casual work (Macken, 1992:55).

The end result is that research in Australia has tended to concentrate on limited categories of peripheral work. Unfortunately, the growing numbers of workers involved in arrangements that elude ABS data collection translates into a restriction on the ability of researchers to study a number of peripheral work arrangements at other than the anecdotal, case study or industry specific level. While these research limitations are important in the constraints they provide for this thesis, there are much more important consequences at the level of government policy making.

It has already been noted that the inadequacy of national statistics is not unique to Australia. In a European Commission wide study, Meulders et. al. (1994:230) also noted:

a certain delay in the taking into account of new phenomena by the statistical apparatus is naturally inevitable ... the availability of accurate statistics on different forms of employment is essential for national and community authorities when they wish to adopt appropriate employment policies or when their aim is to measure and test their effectiveness.

This makes clear the value of timely and accurate statistics as the lack of information may hinder or retard the ability to recognise and implement changes within the formal systems governing work. Perhaps of even greater concern though is the implicit message that the lack of such data may bear some of the responsibility for the acknowledged marginalisation of the peripheral workforce. Bieback (1992) raises this issue in terms of the dual standards of equity and the potential of these to undermine the government's labour and social security systems. MacNeil (1995) echoes this within the Australian context in terms of the need to prevent new forms of disadvantage and inequality. There is the prediction that, by the year 2020, the Australian peripheral workforce will consist of casual and subcontract workers who are not unionised and are less skilled, less educated and with poorer pay and conditions than their non-peripheral counterparts (HRSCITS, 1995). This prediction presents a compelling argument for official data collection on all forms of peripheral employment.

The problems associated with peripheral work are not just statistical. Establishing the demarcations and producing adequate definitions may allow the numbers to be counted but reference to the labour law literature makes it clear that it is the legal implications associated with differentiating employee from non-employee that may be the real

barrier (Burgess, 1990). The complexity of this task is well illustrated by the review of one of these neglected peripheral working arrangements, that of contracting.

2.4.3: Defining the Peripheral Worker

Reference to the historical, legal definition of an employee reveals one of the most comprehensive explanations of what constitutes a standard or typical work. The definition is based on the premise that a man "needed a full-time job on which to live and maintain his family" (Macken, 1992:54). It is a view of work as employment on a full-time, permanent basis and "in a position which provides access to a wide range of legal and statutory benefits and protections" (Bray and Taylor, 1991:87). Those who fall outside of the bounds of this traditional view may be denied access to benefits such as paid leave, training and superannuation which have been built into the traditional employment relationship. They are also not offered the protection of minimum guaranteed wages and secure employment. The conceptual dominance of this view is still so strong that most peripheral arrangements are expressed in terms of how they deviate from it. Collins (1990) archetypal worker of a male, working in a full-time job of indefinite duration is thus described by Burgess (1991) as being replaced by an increasingly feminised, non full-time, non permanent, non unionised white collar worker.

Another aspect to the issue of definition is the fact that most peripheral work arrangements, and the consequences associated with them, are not new developments. What is new is the growth, both in terms of absolute numbers and as a proportion of the overall workforce, of workers in peripheral employment. This is particularly true in

Australia, where the degree of workforce change, especially the casualisation that has occurred, makes it notable amongst other OECD nations (OECD, 1998). Approximately 24% of Australian workers are in positions which are associated with a lack of job security, access to standard employment entitlements and protection (Long, 1996:11).

Contracting is a particularly useful work arrangement for an examination of peripheral work because it can subsume a number of other arrangements. This is because contracting clearly identifies the macro level nature of the alternative relationship to the traditional contract for services by replacing it with one of a contract of service. The basic differentiation is between contract of service, as distinct from contract for service. Put simply:

Contract of service means a person is employed as part of a business and the work done is an integral part of the business while contract for services means that, although work is done by a person for the business, it is not integrated into it but is only an accessory to it
(Brooks, 1992:12).

While the controversy surrounding this definition is explained in more detail below the consequences are that it separates out different aspects of peripheral work. Thus, terms such as part time and casual work relate to the temporal aspects of the arrangement while home and teleworking refer to locational and modality aspects.

Defining the Contractor - an Australian Perspective

As with many of the other forms of peripheral employment, contract work has been a standard feature of a number of industries in Australia for a long time. It is so much a part of the construction and transport industries that the industrial classification system

used by the ABS (ANZSIC) specifically includes contractors within these industries (ABS, 1996). However, statistical information on contractors is masked within the ABS category of 'own account workers' (previously known as 'self employed'). The definition of an 'own account worker' is:

A person who operates or owns his or her own economic enterprise or engages independently in a profession or trade, and has no employees and the business is not incorporated.

(ABS, 1995a:66)

This obviously includes a range of people (such as the corner milkbar owner), who would not call themselves contractors but also fails to capture a large number who are contractors. This is despite the fact that the growth in both contract work and self-employment has been noted as a phenomenon in Australia and internationally (Bieback, 1992; Bogenhold and Staber, 1991; Bridges, 1995; VanderHeuvel and Wooden, 1995).

Further, it is interesting to note the omission of 'own account' worker data in two of the major official Australian reports of the last few years. Both 'Working Arrangements Australia' (ABS, 1996d) and 'Trends In The Australian Labor Market (ABS, 1995a), are restricted to detailing changes in terms of the original, standard divisions of atypical employment, the part time and casual workforces. The only recent ABS publication which may provide some insight into the contractor workforce is the '1978-1995 Labour Force Australia' report (ABS, 1996b). But, as noted above, these data are contained within the ambit of the self-employed and so provide an indication only.

The lack of data and the need for research into contract employment has been noted by a number of Australian researchers (Bennett and Quinlan, 1992; Campbell, 1995; Romeyn, 1994; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1996). The best approximation as to the

size of the contractor workforce comes from the series of studies by VandenHeuvel and Wooden (1994, 1995 and 1996). These suggest that their indications of self-employed contractors comprising 10.3% of the workforce are likely to be an underestimate (VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995:39).

The confusion surrounding self-employment and contract arrangements has also been a key topic of debate among labour lawyers for some decades. There are four main tests used for determining the issue of the relationship between employer, worker and contractor (Creighton and Stewart, 1994). The key test still remains that of control. The test has a long history and its application has been a chief concern of the law courts. The decision that established the basis of this test, the master/servant relationship, dates back to 1880 (Beazley, 1984). It centres on the way an employer may exercise control over work in respect of where it is to be done, when it is to be done, the designation of the actual work and the way in which it is to be done and, lastly, the supervision of the work (Brooks, 1992). However, modern technology and the diversity and complexity of working arrangements have developed and expanded to such a degree that the concept of 'control' can be very difficult to determine in any consistent and rational manner (Burgess, 1991; Lloyd and Rawlinson, 1993). Some of the 'how-to' material on practices such as teleworking and virtual work provide quite explicit guidelines, presumably for employers, on how to circumvent employment obligations which centre on this issue of control (Stanworth and Stanworth 1991; Upton 1995).

The legal response to the increasing complexity has been to attempt to develop more sophisticated tests. This has led to the control test being re-stated in other forms. The key feature of both of the two major variations, the integrative and the complex tests, is not economic but the personal subordination and integration of the employee into the employers business operations (Bieback, 1992:21). Also known as the organisation test, the integration test seeks to determine whether the contractor is truly independent. Submission to orders may still not be seen as an adequate guide. The test actually ignores the activities of the person performing the work and looks instead at the organisational framework within which the work is being performed. If the work and the circumstances under which it is being performed are integral, or closely related, to the business activities, then, according to this test, the person is an employee. The questions focus on establishing whether or not the worker is 'part and parcel' of the employer's organisation. The example of the contract electrician hired to install extra lighting is clearly differentiated from the clothing outworker/homeworker by this test. Significantly, the High Court has taken the approach that integration is just one of the factors that may be considered relevant when categorising a relationship (Creighton and Stewart, 1994).

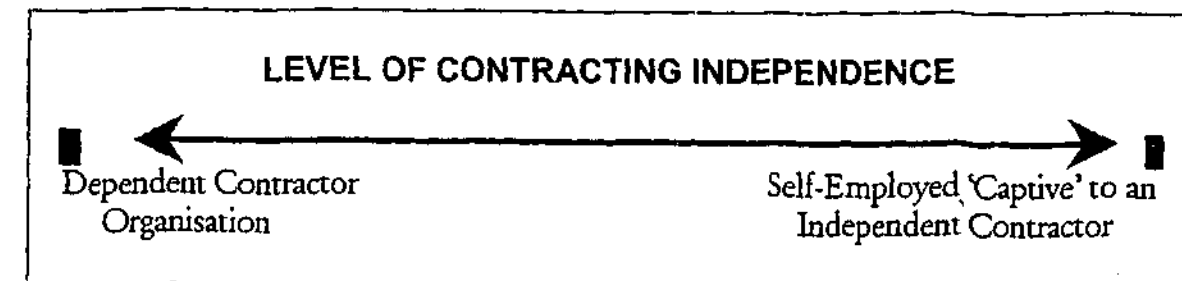
Again, the legal response to the increasing complexity has been to develop a further test. The third test is the complex or 'consistency' test. It is a fourfold test that looks at control, ownership of tools, chance of profit and the risk of loss and involves an analysis of the activities of the person actually doing the work. These four aspects are examined to determine whether or not, "on balance," the relationship is that of employer and employee (Creighton, 1994:58). The main issue is whether the person is

carrying 'on a business for their own account' or whether the conditions are really more like those of a contract of employment. The criticisms are that the complex test is circular and negative in its approach and is very difficult to practically apply (Brooks, 1992:24).

The last and most recent approach is the multi factor test. It combines features of the other three and focuses on the 'economic reality' of the relationship (Creighton, 1994:58). This last test reflects Australian legal opinion on more recent employment practices, such as the reclassification of formerly permanent workers to contract status. While an explicit strategy for corporate success by organisations like Semco, Nike, IBM and AT&T (Jacobs, 1994; Harrison, 1994a; Semler, 1994), Australian labour law appears to be taking a very different view and generally finding in the workers favour in the few instances of where this practice has emerged amongst employers, particularly in public sector and smaller (less than 100 employees) organisations (Wooden and VandenHeuvel, 1996:24).

The essential element the various tests are seeking to establish is that of genuine independence. Within contracting, this level of dependence can be seen to lie along a continuum, from the contractor in name only, through to the contractor who really works for an employment agency, to the independent, self-employed contractor. (Collins, 1990:378). This notion provides the basis for the development of a tool that will assist this research investigation to provide some form of measurement of independence. A rudimentary model is presented in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: The Continuum of Contracting Independence



The consequences of the level of independence for peripheral employment arrangements and the ability of the legal debate over definition to cloud original intent is crystallised in the issue of worker protection. Occupational health and safety (OH&S) and workers compensation are perhaps the highest public profile aspects of worker entitlement, dealing as they do with injury and death in the course of employment.

Within these legislative contexts, the relationship between the use of contract labour and health and safety issues is recognised (Quinlan and Bohle, 1991:16). The most active area of legislation in day to day dealings with contractors continues to be within the context of taxation. The main tenet of this interest appears to be to deal with employer evasion of the "on-costs associated with the employment relationship" (Phillips Fox, 1996:1) by "making life complicated – and expensive – for contract workers" (Dixon, 1999:74).

2.5: Summary

In terms of the broader perspective, continued adherence to the standard definition of employment that has shaped our legal, social and industrial relations systems hinders the ability to research, understand or evaluate the issues of peripheral work

arrangements. This has been demonstrated in a brief review of contracting arrangements. The problem of defining the contractor is inextricably linked to the future of work as a whole. The growth of peripheral arrangements, while only partially supported by national data sets in Australia is already large enough to challenge the viability of existing legal and social systems. Key issues within these arrangements are entitlement, protection and the ability of these systems to adapt. At the individual level too, there is increasing concern that the advantages of such arrangements for the worker are often "illusory" and that the "real value of the statutory and award benefits foregone" are underestimated (Creighton and Stewart, 1994:135). This is investigated in the next chapter through a review of the literature focussed on individual peripheral work arrangements.

CHAPTER 3

INDIVIDUAL PERIPHERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The discussion in this chapter moves from the general, sentient view which concluded the last chapter to focus on an examination of the most commonly researched peripheral arrangements. These cover the arrangements of outsourcing, temporary and part time work, home and teleworking as well as casual employment and are reviewed from the perspectives of definition as well as key research findings. The flexible firm model discussed in chapter 2 provides a number of specific variables which can be used to examine each arrangement. These are:

- reasons for employers' use;
- voluntary/involuntary worker participation in the type of employment;
- demographic characteristics of the workforce and;
- relationships with 'core' workers.

Holmes' (1986) categorisation of employer use of peripheral labour provides a further instrument to ensure a consistent view of each arrangement occurs. Illustrated in Figure 3.1, this tool builds on the earlier work of Rubery and Wilkinson (1981) to support the themes of the flexible firm model.

While capacity relates to management's use of peripheral labour to deal with uncertain or irregular demand, specialisation provides access to specialised skills and equipment not available in-house and labour cost minimisation is quite simply, to achieve reduced labour costs.

Figure 3.1: Employer Reasons for using Peripheral Labour

- CAPACITY REASONS:**
- To cope with periods of peak demand
 - Cover for short term absences of regular employees

- SPECIALISATION REASONS:**
- Access specialised skills unavailable in-house
 - Deal with one-off tasks
 - Access specialised equipment unavailable in-house

- REDUCE LABOUR COSTS**
- Straightforward reduction of labour costs
 - Cheaper than in-house staff
 - Avoid government regulations and charges

- OTHER REASONS**
- Way around staff ceilings
 - Enable work outside normal hours
 - Increase job security of permanent employees
 - Overcome recruitment problems
 - Peripheral workers more productive
 - Reduce union influence
 - Workers prefer to be on contract

Source: Adapted from Holmes, 1986:79

The three categories of capacity, specialisation and labour cost minimisation match Schuler and Jackson's (1987) HRM strategies discussed in section 2.3.3 and have been further validated in the research of McGregor and Sproull (1991), Harrison and Kelley (1993) and Wooden and VandenHeuvel (1996). Common to all of these studies was the extensive use of peripheral labour to reduce costs. Coupled with the lack of worker-oriented concerns, as only the last of the 15 reasons provided incorporates worker preference, the overall view is one of employer lead demand where the employer exercises both choice and control. It is a result which introduces the theme of marginalisation that typifies much of the literature on peripheral work.

It is a theme which will be examined in detail in this chapter through reference to

individual peripheral work arrangements and is the starting point for investigation of the thesis question: does the professional contractor mark the high end of a continuum of peripheral work? If this is so, the reasons employers use professional contractors, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, should be dominated by workers preferences for contract work. This question also foreshadows the concept of the self-managed career and provides for a conclusion focussed on the relationship between the organisation and the peripheral workforce.

3.1: Contracting

Within labour law literature, the move to contracting is associated with a structural view involving the vertical disintegration of large organisations and the development of horizontal networks of firms (Collins 1990; Prieto and Martin, 1990). Within the British inspired structures of labour law which still dominate the Australian arena, the ability of the courts to tip the balance in favour of the replacement of employees by contract labour is well-recognised (Creighton, 1994:118). Former NSW High Court Judge J.J. Macken (1992:38) sees the use of contractors as a means by which employers can institutionalise insecurity of employment.

The movement of workers into contracting arrangements returns to the supply and demand arguments of peripheral work, but also presents some compelling arguments against employers utilising contractors. The first is that of higher cost where it is argued that it is the contractors who are primarily motivated by profit and the overheads of this form of employment are higher than the cost of the same activity accomplished in-house

(Radeloff, 1995). Added to this is the issue of quality, where it is argued that the contract employee does not have the loyalty and dedication of the on-payroll employee and this is seen to result in a lack of service and reliability (Colclough and Tolbert, 1992; Rubach, 1995). Thirdly and perhaps most importantly are concerns of risk, safety and the extent to which contractors can be managed. This issue has been identified within a number of studies of high-risk industries such as petrochemicals, transport, building and meat industries (Fenwick 1992; James 1993; Kochan, Smith, Wells and Rebitzer, 1994; Mayhew, 1996; Underhill and Kelly 1993).

Another perspective is offered by Williamson and Ouchi (1983) who explain the contracting relationship in terms of transactions and transaction costs. This differentiates workers into two types, the 'opportunistic' and 'bounded rationalist'. Whereas opportunists exhibit "calculating behaviour" in pursuit of their own self interest, rationalists attempt to simplify and understand the world in terms of their own perceptions of what is reasonable. Tyson's (1995) framework, used in chapter 2 to examine the literature on the changing world of work, integrates the work of Williamson and Ouchi (1983). Illustrated in Figure 2.1, the original model was applied to specific organisational structures and their relationship to divisional offices. In this chapter, Tyson's (1995) framework is applied to the work arrangements of professional contracting. The review of economic events (the societal level of analysis) in the last chapter to reveal the resultant differences in contractual relationships with employees at the organisational level. The effects of this relationship on the employees (the sentient level) will now be addressed through an examination of the major peripheral arrangements and the variables of perceptions about work, career, rewards and attachment to the employer (Tyson, 1995:116-117).

3.1.1: Professional Contractors

As already established, the professional contractor has a continuum of employment possibilities along which to operate. This was illustrated in Figure 2.6 and is determined by their level of contracting independence. Four significant stages along the continuum are:

1. a 'captive' employee/employer relationship;
2. working through a contracting agency.
3. the incorporated contractor;
4. the self-employed contractor;

Issues of third party liability, ability to provide workers compensation and income tax minimisation vary depending on which stage or levels of independence is chosen (Collins, 1990; Macken, 1992; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995).

For the professional contractor, the choice of an arrangement other than a permanent '9 to 5' job is purportedly an increasingly popular option (Kirkpatrick, 1988; Bridges, 1995). One of the most detailed accounts of the expanding role of the self employed professional who works on a contract basis comes from Canada. According to Scott (1993:16) a partner with Peat Marwick Stevenson & Kellogg in Calgary, nearly 30% of the professionals in their Career Centre in the last 12 months had accepted contract positions. A further 19% set up their own business and a total of 47% chose other than permanent jobs. Similar movements of professionals into contract employment in Australia has also documented (Foley, 2001).

The traditional basis of contracting is the guarantee of competent work that carries liability for performance. While Scott (1993) believes this can be managed through a clear contract in writing, there is also a problem for the organisation in using contractors. Jacobs (1994:3) sums this up as:

In an age in which behavioral scientists are crying out for empowerment, contracting is one of the most decentralized, disbursed, and delegated authorities given to any supervisor. The problem is that few managers and supervisors have a basis for evaluating outsourcing as a management tool.

Further insight into this is provided by the sociological literature on the professions which has tended to concentrate on aspects such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In a study of lawyers, Gunz and Gunz (1994) found this occupation was highly mobile and that career paths play an important role in fostering attachment to an organisation. Kirkpatrick (1988) and Whittington (1991) question the ability or even the desire of an organisation to offer security and career paths in their work on research and development workers. These findings are consistent with an alternative theory, that of the Prima Donna and Grunt workforces (Lozano, 1989). In line with Atkinson's (1984) flexible firm model, this alternative theory proposes that the employer consciously decide not to bring a group of workers into the core. The reason here, however, is that high skill, equates with an uncontrollable and aberrant workforce whose presence has negative effects on other workers. This introduces the notion of the professional in peripheral employment somehow being different and requiring a different style of management.

Overall, while there are very few Australian studies of contracting, those available provide a rare insight into the workforce which is of relevance to the thesis investigation. These

include the studies of James (1993) and Mayhew (1996) which focussed specifically on workers compensation, Makkai's (1992) focussed on engineering and Probert and Wajcman's (1991) study of computing professionals.

The changes in the professional contract workforce are part of a larger shift occurring in the 'job' which marks a transition away from the permanent workforce, with "classifications and titles becoming irrelevant as work becomes 'projects' with team members coming and going as needed" (Swigart and Johansen, 1995: 56). These features of free-flowing attachments are also key attributes of the worker of the future advanced by 'futuurologists' such as Hakim (1994), Bridges (1995) and Rifkin (1995) as well as a common theme amongst some studies of self-employment.

Before moving on to look at self-employment in detail, it should be noted that some voices of concern have been raised about employers obligations in relation to overwork, ill health and such, especially in high tech areas such as Silicon Valley (Lozano, 1989).

3.2: Self-Employment, Contracting-Out and Outsourcing

The literature on the self-employed typically subsumes that of contracting and the variations of outsourcing and contracting as well as entrepreneurs and unemployment (see for example Bogenhold and Staber, 1991; deVries, 1995; Rainbird, 1990). This latter focus is often the result of government programs that have been established to reduce unemployment. These are mainly in the form of grants, increased benefits and other cash

incentives for an individual to set up their own business (Meulders et. al., 1994). Scott (1993) also uses the term 'midpreneurship' to describe the midpoint between standard, full-time employment and full entrepreneurship. The world of work as a self-employed worker appears to offer an increasing array of choices, from permanent, temporary, job share positions to contract work, consulting and setting up your own business.

Within these options, outsourcing or contracting out is related to the rationale of core competencies and downsizing detailed in section 2.3.2. It involves the movement of work to others outside of the organisation and has always been a component of corporate operations, especially in areas such as legal advice, advertising, accounting, construction and recruiting. One form of this practice is for the company to sell an activity to a group of its employees, who then sell their services back to the company. Jacobs (1994) cites this practice as one of the determinants of the dramatic growth in contracting overall. While corporate examples such as IBM (Bleichner and Collins 1995) or SEMCO (Semler, 1994) advocate the benefits of such a move to both organisations and individuals, there is a rather less palatable rationale as well. In depressed economic times, it is tempting to downsize and 'hire back' a former salaried employee without benefits and often at reduced wages (Harrison, 1994). An extreme example of the 'Outsourcing to the Max' philosophy is the 'Topsy Tail' company, a multi million dollar a year organisation that has only three 'employees' (Garrett, 1994). Yet despite such success stories and its dramatic growth, Jacobs (1993:3) contends that "outsourcing is frequently poorly controlled, high in cost, and a drain on quality and service performance."

Evidence for this view is found in the Australian studies of outsourcing which have tended to concentrate on the public sector. Albin's (1992) study of 58 metropolitan councils Australia wide is one of the most extensive undertaken. The aim was to examine the cost efficiency of contracting out, as measured by "lower rate outcomes or a greater range of services being offered by local government to the taxpayer" (Albin, 1992:4). While contracting out of council services did not necessarily produce any of these benefits, it did support the secondary contention - that the outcomes of contracting arrangements can "further the interests of senior managers, expanding the number of supervisory and professional staff while reducing the number of blue collar employees" (Albin, 1992:25). The April 1997 findings of an investigation into the Victorian ambulance dispatch system reflect similar concerns (Long, 1997).

The lack of empirical evidence supporting the benefits of outsourcing is further borne out in Hodges (1996) extensive literature review of contracting effectiveness. In a review of 129 studies of outsourcing, Hodge (1996:v) concludes that the overall impetus for contracting out was the simple belief that "the private sector was more efficient than the government sector."

The use of contracting out arrangements within the private sector is also widely documented. Within Australia, concerns about this practice tend to focus on OH&S concerns. Similar to concerns discussed earlier within the context of the Australian meat, construction and road transport industries, the mining industry has also raised issues about the competence of core management employees who are legally responsible for contractors who carry out the actual mining operations (Morgan,

1995:11). Once again, the central concerns are those of definition and how these relate to control.

3.3: Temporary and Part time Workers

The definition of temporary employment focuses on the lack of an ongoing relationship between employer and the temporary worker. In reality however, it is not unusual for such arrangements to be long term. An extreme example of this is cited by Kirkpatrick (1988 p.62) of a 'temporary' library assistant who had been working for over 30 years in her position - with no leave, superannuation or other such entitlements.

In terms of part time employment, Meulders et. al. (1994:1) point to the existence of two distinct definitions, the legal and the statistical, which are further broken down into divisions of relative and absolute. The relative division is concerned with the number of hours worked. The Australian statistical definition of part time employment reflects this concern with hours and defines part time workers as employees who usually work less than 35 hour a week in their main job (ABS, 1996d:46). How many fewer than the legal, contractual or customary standard work hours an employee must work before a position is classified as part time varies considerably - as reflected in the British definition which begins at less than 30 hours. The definitions provide a lower and upper end reference point for differentiating part time from other forms of employment. Another matter of importance also noted by Meulders et. al. (1994) is how the data is actually established - by an objective frame of reference or by workers classifying

themselves. The latter is seen in the ABS Labour Surveys where workers identify themselves as full-time or part time. The significance for this research is that the variation in definitions, and thus the data, is an important aspect to note for any data comparisons.

The contention that employer demand is the basis of the growth in part time or temporary work arrangements is the explicit focus of Parker's (1994) study of the American Temporary Help industry. Based on interviews with 11 branch managers of temporary work agencies and 40 clerical and industrial temporary workers, the uncertainty and degradation reported by the temporary workers contrasts with the industry view that they were serving the interests of workers who wanted something different from the usual, permanent work arrangement. A key feature of the triadic relationship between agency/worker/host organisation was the agencies' perception of their role as being one of serving the business clients' desire for flexibility and cost saving.

Studies examining the female dominated area of clerical and secretarial temporary employment confirm the involuntary nature of this work arrangement for the women involved (Gottfried, 1991; Natti, 1993; Rogers, 1995). Many such workers report they would prefer to be in full-time, permanent employment. Temporary employment can thus be seen as a form of underemployment. This is confirmed by ABS data which shows that 21 percent of part time workers want to work more hours (ABS, 2000b).

Similar results emerge in a large and detailed study of over 700 part time workers by Feldman and Doeringhaus (1992). A key finding was the differences between the type of part time work arrangement, employing organisation and actual job category. While temporary or seasonal employees viewed such work as a "stop-gap measure", most of the permanent, year-round employees found "part time work is a reasonable compromise between the desire to have a career and the desire to have a family" (Feldman and Doeringhaus, 1992:71). The study is important in that it makes explicit the need to link human resource policies that recognise the differences among part time workers with an organisations strategic plan. As previously illustrated in Figure 3.1, low-cost, disposable employees are equated with low cost goods and a strategy based on cost competition. A strategy based on customer service however is seen to necessitate "more highly skilled and more organisationally committed employees" (Feldman and Doeringhaus, 1992:72).

O'Reilly (1994) presents a similar analysis in her study of numerical flexibility within the retail-banking sector in Britain and France. The picture presented is complex with the relatively modest increase in temporary labour in both countries varying considerably. As would be expected, given the differences in legislative protection afforded workers under British, compared to European labour legislation previously noted in section 2.3.5, the more restrictive employment legislation in France encouraged employers to develop flexibility in a more formalised manner. Fixed-term contracts were more common and served to screen new recruits, access specialist staff and cover vacation leave. British banks on the other hand used casual labour to cover workload fluctuations and many of these workers were females who had been

permanent staff. The lack of an interventionist approach by British labour law was actually seen to encourage the development of flexibility in a "very informal, incremental and capricious way" (O'Reilly, 1994:210).

Redundancies across the banking industry in both the UK and Australia (Alexander and Frank, 1990; Austrin, 1991; Lawson, 1996) serve to emphasise the flexibility enjoyed by employers and the precariousness of most forms of employment in the 1990's. What is at issue, in the long run is whether society is committed to pursuing what Freeman (1994:358) has called the "high road" to economic growth and development.

3.4: Temporary Employment Agencies

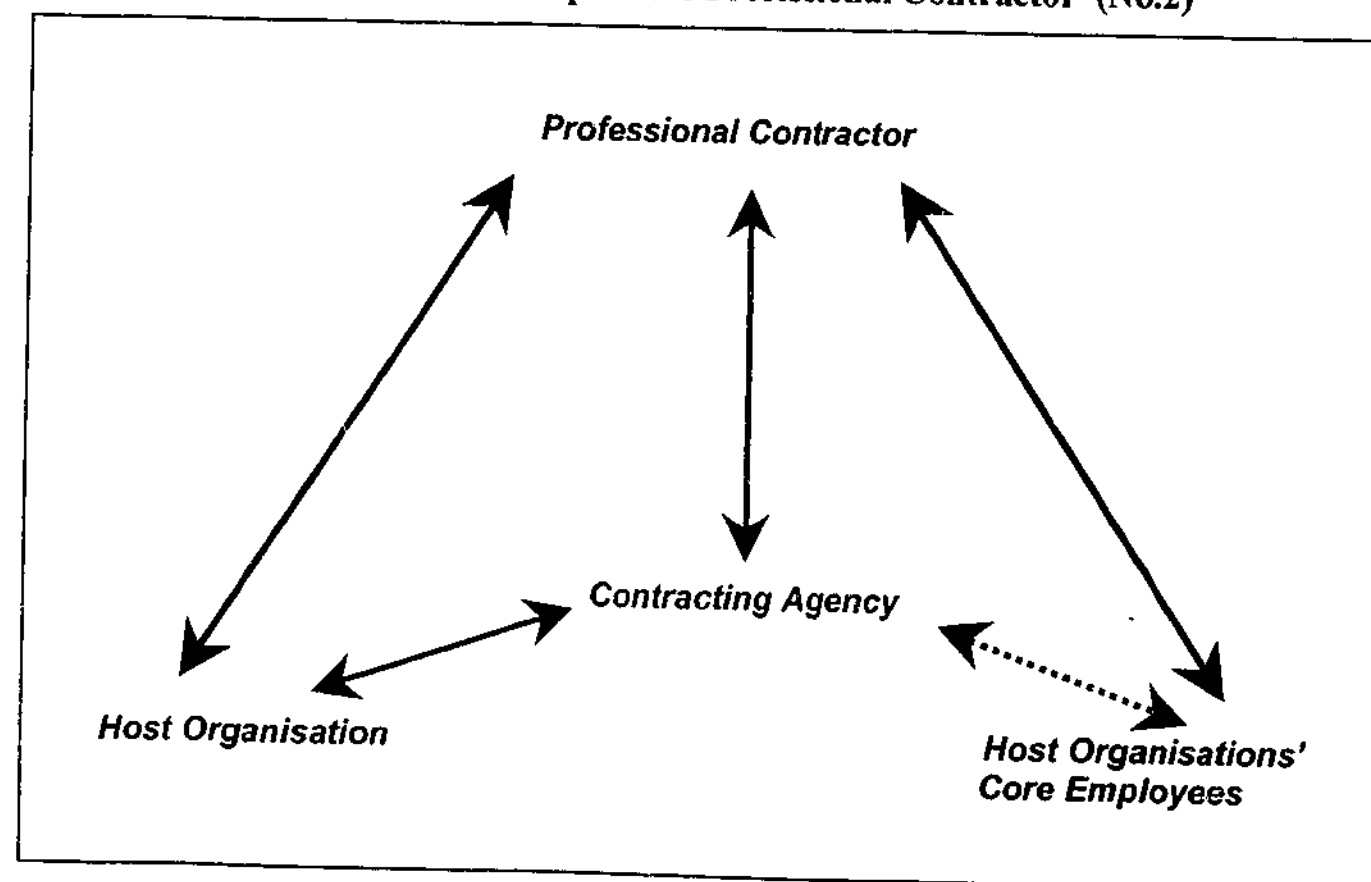
The Temporary Help Agency or Service forms a midpoint for many peripheral workers between true self-employment and employee status.

Flint (1994) provides an insight into the temporary help agency business that differs from that examined in the previous section. His case study of Butler International deals with a temporary help business at the 'high end' of the market. Rather than hiring out the traditional secretarial and clerical office workers for a few days, engineers, computer programmers and managers are leased out to big companies for assignments that usually last six to nine months. Corporate clients include AT&T and Boeing and the average annual salary of these workers as temporaries typically exceeds (US) \$50,000 while the

'cut' the agency takes is 13% of their earnings. The company has about 6,500 people working on assignment at any time, and more than 500,000 resumes in its system from people who range from the young starting out and those who have lost jobs to early retirees interested in working six months or so in a year.

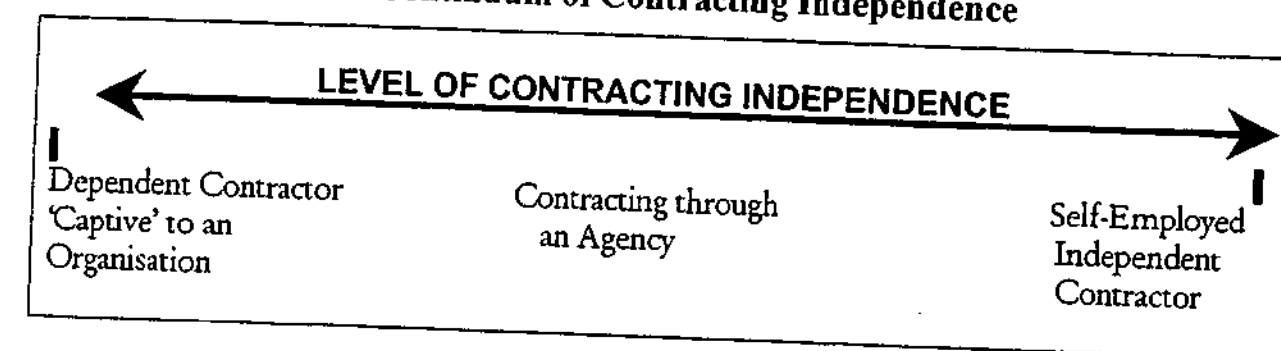
This interpretation of the employment agency arrangement has direct bearing on the professional contractor workforce. The contracting agency relationship has been integrated into the diagram presented in chapter 1 (refer Figure 1.1) to refine the working relationships of the professional contractor, as illustrated in Figure 3.2. Relating this information back to the earlier definition of contractor, the Agency contractor would appear to fall within the proposed continuum between the traditional contract of employment and that of the independent, self-employed professional contractor.

Figure 3.2: The Work Relationships of the Professional Contractor (No.2)



The employment agency also offers a continuum of its own, from providing the traditional employer relationship to its workers, to acting as a placement agency only. Based on the writings of Macken (1992) and Collins (1990) the continuum originally outlined in Figure 2.6 is modified in Figure 3.3 to incorporate the additional aspect of the relationship between the agency, the host organisation and the contractor.

Figure 3.3: Amended Continuum of Contracting Independence



This refined model now incorporates another aspect of independence to measure and provides for the possibility of a range of alternatives within the relationships a contractor may have with an Agency.

3.5: Casual Workers

As already noted, the long accepted deviations from standard employment have been those of casual and part time work (Macken, 1992). For this reason, there are numerous studies of both arrangements within Australia. The ABS definition of a casual worker is an employee not entitled to either annual or sick leave (ABS, 1995a:45). This corresponds to the European definition used by Meulders et. al. (1994) in their extensive study of peripheral arrangements throughout thirteen EC nations. The levels of casual employment

within Australia have risen from 15.8 per cent of total employment in 1984 to nearly 26 per cent in 1996 (ABS, 1998a).

The most important features of casual employment in Australia for this research are that such workers do not receive annual or sick leave payments and termination is relatively easy and inexpensive. Overall, the use of casual workers within Australia has been found to be predominantly determined by the level of unionisation and size of the workplace rather than factors such as wage differentials relative to the permanent hourly wage (Simpson, Dawkins and Madden, 1996:10).

3.6: Teleworkers

While the previous section dealt with a relatively well-defined area of peripheral work, this one moves into a less well researched arrangement. The clearest definition of telework is provided by a large scale study undertaken by Huws, Korte and Robinson (1990) which provides a complex picture based on technological, organisational, locational and contractual variables that would appear to clearly separate it from other peripheral arrangements. It also appears to represent a more genuinely 'new' work practice. There are a number of writers who dispute this, asserting clear links with the cottage workers of the past. The only difference is that the work is now performed in locations such as the 'electronic cottage' of Toffler (1980).

Teleworking obviously has close associations, if not overlap, with the arrangements of self-employment, homeworking and virtual working. Here, virtual work is subsumed into teleworking on the rationale that it is the reliance on communications technology that is the key feature of both. This collapsing of the two arrangements is in line with findings that both tend to cater to a specific market, that of the small company (Huws et. al., 1990).

One group of researchers argues that the chief reason employers use teleworkers is to retain or attract staff with scarce skills (Burch, 1991; Stanworth and Stanworth, 1991). This implies that teleworking is not an option available to all workers and is the result of two factors:

- the worker is probably already employed by the organisation;
- and has a strong negotiating position because he/she possesses skills that the employer wants.

The view of teleworking provided by Stanworth and Stanworth (1991) is almost entirely one of mutual benefit to teleworkers and organisation. Similarly, Burch's (1991:9) 'how to' type guide advocates telework as a "viable route to lead managers out of structural problems with the organisation, and in some cases, towards new business opportunities."

One potential problem for the organisation is noted, however. In common with many of the arrangements dealt with already above, commitment and loyalty to the goals of the organisation are questioned (Stanworth and Stanworth, 1991:28). It seems that the lack of a physical presence within the core of the organisation creates this doubt. This is not

always the case however. One Australian study showed that professional male workers tended to be accommodated in ways that included them in the 'core' activities of the organisation (Prebert and Wajcman, 1991).

A 1984 survey of the teleworker population in Britain revealed that it is predominantly made up of data processing professionals, insurance representatives, word processing staff, translating services and schemes for people with disabilities (Huws et. al., 1990). The study also found a strong gender bias. The first two occupational groups were overwhelmingly male while word processing and translating service workers were predominantly female.

Telecommuting appears to be gaining strength as a viable work option for large organisations. Smith (1994) details the expansion of Bell Atlantic's original telecommuting trial of 100 managers in 1991 to an option for all 16,000 of the company's management staff in 1994. He claims that Bell Atlantic's experience helped to discount some of the lingering doubts about telecommuting. For example, individuals performance appraisals either remained constant or improved in every case. "With response time at a minimum, employees will increasingly work on ever-shifting, cross-disciplinary teams that can address all aspects of a customer need or a competitive challenge simultaneously" (Smith, 1994:13).

There is another side of teleworking associated with the potential for marginalising the workforce involved in such arrangements. The social consequences, especially the isolation, of teleworking leads to fears for the "atomisation of the workforce, bringing

with it exploitative practices and the loss of worker protection" (Huws et. al., 1990 p.215). As with the self-employed and contractor workforces, the need for teleworkers to verify the extent of their coverage by workers compensation, health and pension schemes and such like are often a feature of telework guides (see for example Burch, 1991; Huws et. al., 1990).

A factor rarely mentioned in the debate over telecommuting is the downward pressure on salaries where the very factors that make telecommuting attractive also mire workers in a downward spiral of income possibilities as work is transferred to less expensive producers. Internationalisation, made possible by the very same information technology that makes teleworking viable, also means telecommuters are competing against similar workers throughout the world (Buerger, 1995). This problem is more commonly associated with the better known and closely related workforce next under review, that of the homemaker.

3.7: Homeworkers

This arrangement is well known and almost exclusively associated with female labour.

A very complete definition of homeworking is provided by a German report on atypical female employment:

A homemaker is any person who, in response to requests from manufacturers or traders, undertakes vocational work either alone or with the help of his or her family in a place of his or her own choosing, but who ceded the exploitation of the results of this activity to the manufacturer or trader commissioning it.

(Langkau-Herrmann, 1988 cited in Meulders et. al., 1994:147).

Prieto and Martin's (1986) study on homeworking in Italy separates the critical features of homeworking. Firstly, the place of work tends to be the home or domicile and secondly, the worker tends to be dependent upon a principal. The third key aspect is control over the product, with homeworkers having little to no control over the product market.

There are clear links with features of contracting, self-employment and teleworking and considerable overlap between them. The 1996 ABS report *'Persons Employed At Home'* provides statistical confirmation of the difficulty in separating employment arrangements as in September 1995, approximately 26% of the workforce worked some hours at home. Females outnumbered male homeworkers by two to one and were predominantly in clerical positions (39%). Of greatest relevance to this thesis is the reason given by 27% of the homeworkers for being in this type of employment to open/operate own/family business.

What distinguishes this arrangement from others is the documented capacity for homeworkers to be easily marginalised. A detailed case study of 25 homeworkers within the Bay area of San Francisco demonstrated the wide range of occupations, from computer programming to secretarial services, that can be organised this way (Lozano, 1989). While this was a very small case study approach, the common theme Lozano (1989) identified was that, even at the higher end of the employment market, the well paid computer software designer, the employer had a very strong agenda for preferring the worker be in a homeworker arrangement. She advances a 'prima donna/grunt' theory to explain why the non-conformist nature of the creative type of person (the

prima donna) required to produce gaming software provided employers with an explicit reason for not having them in the 'core' (or grunt) workforce. This provides quite a different explanation of potential relevance to the workforce under investigation in this thesis and one that focuses on the personality characteristics and attributes of both the core and peripheral workforces. It also suggests one way in which employers manage the interface between the two workforces – namely, by keeping them apart.

Returning to the more common theme of marginalisation and the homeworker, Australian evidence of this is revealed in a study of 'outworkers' in the clothing industry conducted by Ellem (1991). The workforce consists almost exclusively of females, many of them migrants. This labour force has family responsibilities, long hours of work and negligible access to 'standard' employment entitlements. International support for this view of homeworking arrangements is provided by Meulders et. al. (1994) studies, especially from Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

3.8: Common Themes

The review of the most common forms of peripheral work generally confirms the classifications developed by Holmes (1986) and illustrated in Figure 3.1. Within the three categories this provides, the pursuit of labour maximisation techniques to reduce costs, as advocated by Atkinson's (1988) flexible firm model, emerges strongly. In accordance with this model, the basic core of personnel and skill sets can be seen to be supplemented on an as needs basis with a variety of peripheral work arrangements to

provide numerical and functional flexibility. Then, as the need declines, both the numbers and types of peripheral workers can be reduced. The review has produced evidence of this, even at the highest end of the peripheral workforce. There were also a number of common themes identified through the review process.

3.8.1: Marginalisation

The research on peripheral work arrangements concentrates on the temporary, casual and part time workforces. Of the 135 studies reviewed over sections 3.1 to 3.6, a common theme was that:

non standard employment.. more colourfully characterised as ..'marginal' or 'peripheral' ..is directly associated with substantive features of disadvantage.. growth is directly integrated into a general arrangement of marginalisation and deprivation... non standard is directly equated with sub-standard

(Campbell and Burgess, 1993:87).

The growth in these arrangements is most commonly explained as the result of employer demand. This is supported by a number of studies in which the majority of workers indicate a preference for standard employment (refer for example ABS, 1996; Gottfried, 1991; Rogers, 1995). The bargaining power is clearly with the employer in many cases because of the large supply of skill on the outside market (Capelli, 1995; Long, 1996). However, the effects of the perceived inequity of the treatment of peripheral workers by an organisation's core workers, can have negative effects on their trust, loyalty and commitment (Beard and Edwards, 1995; Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Geary, 1992; Pearce, 1993).

Choice and control emerge as the two key issues within peripheral work. There is evidence that some workers choose this form of employment and, are well paid for it. This is especially the case for professional white women who work in such fields as freelance editing or computer programming (Appelbaum and Batt, 1995; Blau, 1995; Granger, Stanworth and Stanworth, 1995). However, Tilly (1990) concludes that over two thirds of the increase in the rate of part time employment in the US since the 1970s has been involuntary. Similarly, Belous (1989) estimates that contingent workers constitute a quarter to a third of the civilian work force. The contingent workforce includes part timers, temps, and 'discouraged' workers who give up looking for jobs because they feel they will not find one. Overall, the themes of marginalisation and disadvantage dominate much of the peripheral literature.

3.8.2: Polarisation

While many writers note the polarisation between core and peripheral workforces they are less explicit about the essential conflict inherent in managing these two workforces simultaneously. Kuttner (1993) sums up the situation as the opposing credos of competitiveness. On one hand the core workforce of highly skilled workers are exhorted to practice teamwork, empowerment, partnership and have a long term focus. Running counter to this is the "orgy of downsizing" that demands that anyone that can be made redundant should be (Kuttner, 1993:12). The challenge for employers is managing both workforces to allow a seemingly seamless and integrated delivery of product and/or services.

This ability to manage the two workforces is likely to correlate with the depth of thought and planning that went into the original restructuring decision - the 'quick fix' compared to the longer term, strategic repositioning horizon. Under this latter view, the strategically downsized firm would be expected to have a greater planned use of professional contract labour and more detailed and ordered contractual arrangements with contractors (either directly or via agencies). At the workforce level, it would be reasonable to expect greater cohesiveness, satisfaction and clearer expectations at the interfaces between the two workforces (Jacobs, 1994). The 'us' and 'them' perceptions should not be as great as those in companies who have experienced less a structured approach to downsizing and the use of contract labour (Beard and Edwards, 1995; Pearce, 1993). While this is the theory, it must be acknowledged that analysis of downsizing projects to date shows little application of the knowledge of strategic planning developed in recent decades (Capelli, 1995 & 1997; Drew, 1994; Eisenberg, 1997).

While there is a clear polarisation between core and peripheral workers within the context of the organisation, there is also polarisation within the arrangements of peripheral work itself. This polarisation is a key focus of the thesis investigation and, in terms of professional contracting, appears to be concentrated in the middle to lower levels of the Continuum of Contracting Independence arrangements. Examining the place of the professional contractor within the 'new world of work' identifies a major gap in this literature as there is almost an exclusive focus on manual and clerical workers, while neglecting the work problems of a large segment of the labour force: professionals, managers and the self-employed. While the themes of exploitation and

marginalisation already discussed dominate the literature on the former class of worker, there is evidence to suggest that they may be just as relevant to the latter.

The 'other' perspective of this latter class is that of an 'elite' or privileged group of workers who experience little of the negatives of working outside the bounds of standard employment. On the contrary, they appear to enjoy a life that integrates the best aspects of work. This is certainly the view presented by writers such as Handy (1989; 1996), Hakim (1994), Rifkin (1995), Block (1993) and Bridges (1995). The individual is seen to operate as a self-employed, independent contractor with a clear focus on individual self-management (Van Huss, 1995). Notably, the workers in such studies are in the middle management to professional levels with skills that are in high demand (Bogenhold and Staber, 1991; Herriot, and Pemberton, 1996). Overall though, an important feature of these writings is their speculative rather than empirical nature. While the professional contractor tends to be presented as the worker of the future, rigorous empirical work, including case studies and interviews is needed to establish the accuracy of this characterisation.

Similarly, studies of loyalty and commitment amongst peripheral workers tend to deal with traditionally self-employed groups such as lawyers and dentists (Gunz and Gunz, 1994; Kaldenberg, Becker and Zvonkovic, 1995). Overall, the notion of independence is only indirectly dealt with by studies of self-employment (Bogenhold and Staber, 1991; 1993; Bryson and White, 1996; 1997).

Overall, the lack of investigation of the professional contractor workforce is at odds with the fact that it is increasing twice as fast as the much vaunted rapidly expanding temporary workforce (Bridges 1995; Kirkpatrick, 1988; Winner 1995).

3.9: A Review of the Professional Contractor Workforce

This chapter has drawn together a large body of research across most of the acknowledged arrangements of peripheral work. In doing so, it has established that research on contractors is very limited and this lack has been noted by a number of Australian studies (Benson, 1996; Campbell, 1995; Harley, 1994; Romeyn, 1994). The only large scale studies on contracting in Australia are by VandenHeuvel and Wooden (1995 and 1996) which give an estimate of some 553,900 self-employed contractors in Australia (in 1994). While there are no estimates of professional contractor numbers in Australia, Bridges (1995) and Winner (1995) both indicate that the professional contractor population in the US is growing at twice the rate of the well-documented temporary workforce. The types of occupation identified as being involved in professional contracting range from accountants (Sweet, 1994) and computer programmers (Lozano, 1989; Probert and Wajcman, 1991) to chief financial controllers (Kirkpatrick, 1988; Bridges, 1995).

The reasons for organisations' use of professional contractors have been attributed to organisations requiring a highly skilled and committed workforce (Davis-Blake & Uzzi,

1993; Burton-Jones, 1999). At the high end of the contracting spectrum, the professional contractor workforce appears to be unlike most other peripheral arrangements as it operates in an area characterised by high demand and short supply (Crean, 1995; EPAC, 1996; Jones, 1995; Van Huss, 1995). This provides a strong negotiating position for the individual professional contractor. The most obvious parallel is with teleworkers who have been offered the arrangement by an employer anxious to retain their skills or, the self-employed person who owns and operates a 'successful' business.

There is also some affinity with temporary agency workers at the apparent midpoint between the truly independent worker and the worker who is a contractor in name only, but in reality, is captive to a contracting agency. Control emerges as an issue in the recruitment or temporary help agencies (see for example Gottfried, 1991; Jacobs, 1994; Lee and Johnson, 1991) as well as a general concern in studies of the implications of peripheral work (Fenwick, 1992; Macken, 1992; Underhill and Kelly, 1993).

Drawing together the literature on self-employment, professionals and contracting provides an extremely optimistic picture of the self determined, self actualised worker variously described as a 'symbolic analyst' (Reich, 1992), an 'intelligence worker' (Handy, 1989) and a 'knowledge worker' (Jones, 1995). These terms clearly differentiate the professional contractor workforce and insulate it from many of the negative aspects that surround other peripheral arrangements such as exploitation, marginalisation and the involuntary nature of such employment (see for example Belous, 1989; duRivage, 1992; Romeyn, 1992; Walby, 1989). The contrast presented

is so great that it is possible to argue that the professional contractor may represent the high end of a continuum of peripheral work arrangements suggested by Milkman (1998). The existence of such a continuum within the heterogeneous mix that constitutes peripheral work is noted in cutting edge research on the changing world of work (Burton-Jones, 1999; O'Reilly, 2000). These studies indicate that there are also very important similarities between the professional contractor and other peripheral workers, similarities that may in fact be more important than the differences.

Overall, these similarities indicate that there are a number of themes that could be usefully expanded on and investigated within the context of the professional contractor, particularly the reasons for individuals originally entering peripheral work arrangements. The first theme identifies the factors involved in initial move, or the antecedents to the decision. It is a concern dealt with extensively by studies of self-employment and appears just as applicable to the professional contractor. These factors include the push from prior employment because of redundancy or lack of career opportunity as well as the pull of more money and career autonomy. More extensive investigation of the original motivations, of the antecedents to the decision to become a professional contractor, is indicated.

A second theme, common to many of the studies of peripheral work is that they involve changes in the legal and psychological contracts of employment. The works of Herriot and Pemberton (1996) and Rousseau (1989) provide a model that integrates previous studies on contracts of employment with psychological contracts where differentiation between transactional and relational contracts provides the basis for establishing the

key features of the core and peripheral workforces. This differentiation would appear to align with the flexible firm model and the reasons for employer using peripheral labour illustrated in Figure 3.1 and provides the basis for an examination of the professional contractor workforce in terms of a changing 'contract' of work.

The third common theme from the review is the concept of independence. It emerged as a key concern in many of the arrangements reviewed and, within this, the constructs of choice and control appear to be the central issues. While there are various legal tests which can be employed to investigate these, the review of labour law literature revealed a complexity and uncertainty that extends well beyond the scope of this research. Further investigation of this theme of independence within the professional contractor context is indicated.

A number of studies on the varying levels of independence, particularly of self-employed females, isolated the need that individuals have for social support (Meulders et al., 1994; Morris, 1995). This produces the fourth area of commonality and relates it back to the first theme of antecedents as it addresses the issues raised by Bryson and White's studies of self-employment (1996 & 1997). These studies questioned how individuals make the move and then sustain working in these arrangements, especially in terms of the support received from others.

The notion of support is also linked to the fifth theme common to many of the studies reviewed, the issue of loyalty and commitment. This issue has been a specific area of research within professional populations (see for example Gunz and Gunz 1994;

Granger et. al., 1995). It can also be usefully integrated with the concept of dual commitment identified in temporary employment agency arrangements (see for example Benson 1996; Reed, Young and McHugh, 1994). From the perspective of the flexible firm, it also raises questions, dealt with by a number of researchers concerning the effect it has on an organisations ability to make different commitments to core and peripheral workforces (Csoka 1995; Jacobs 1994; Pearce 1993).

In summary, these five themes establish the parameters for a focused examination of the professional contractor workforce in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR WORKFORCE

This chapter provides a focussed review of the five key themes identified in chapter 3. The previous chapter provided a detailed examination of the literature on the changing world of work in order to locate the professional contractor within the peripheral workforce and substantiated the need for rigorous empirical investigation. The aim of this chapter is to develop these broad themes into a detailed research proposition that will form the basis of the empirical work in chapters 7 to 9.

Overall, two major issues relevant to the professional contractor workforce have been identified. Firstly, there is a polarisation within the literature in terms of the widely cited 'elite' position of the professional contractor (see for examples Bridges, 1995; Handy, 1996; Kanter, 1989; Reich, 1992). The contrast between the empirical and theoretical literature on the place of the professional in the future of work is beyond the scope of this investigation and has been dealt with more thoroughly by McKeown (1998a). However, this contrast does introduce a second issue which is of direct relevance. The very broad continuum of arrangements which exist in contracting provides the potential for marginalisation of the professional contractor. This continuum appears to range from highly paid entrepreneurs to individuals operating in a transitional form of employment, on the road to more permanent employment arrangements through to contractors who are employees in all but name.

There are also indications that contracting can be a 'trap' associated with job insecurity, low earnings and periods of unemployment. This diversity within professional contracting was a common element amongst the five themes arising from the previous chapter. These five themes are the:

- antecedents of the move to contracting;
- changing nature of the 'contract of work';
- varying levels of independence;
- role of social support in explaining and maintaining the move to contracting; and the
- role of commitment within the working relationships of the contractor.

The rest of this chapter will be divided into sections that will examine each theme individually. Each section reviews the relevant literature to develop these themes into focussed research questions. The chapter concludes by integrating each of the five themes into a research framework that provides the foundation for the development of research hypotheses in the next chapter.

4.1: The Antecedents to the Decision to Contract

This section of the chapter is the longest and most detailed as the question of antecedence underpins the entire thesis. Examination of the nature of the move into contracting necessitates consideration of the process of how individual professionals change or move from their previous jobs. The literature on self-employment and future

of work suggests professionals initially move into contracting due to advantageous labour market conditions and for career reasons. Furthermore, a fundamental assertion of much of the theoretical literature on the future of work is that professionals are well suited to take advantage of the changes occurring (see for example Bridges 1995; Kanter, 1989; McRae, 1996; Rifkin, 1995). There are two presumptions which underlie these views of the professional contractor. Firstly, it is assumed that a privileged labour market position is inherent in professional occupations and secondly, that these particular professionals have a strong and proactive affiliation with a chosen 'career'.

While this section will deal first with labour markets and then individual careers, these elements obviously do not operate as completely distinct factors. The push/pull dichotomy is the concept that unites them. It is a concept that dominates the economic and sociological literature on self-employment (see for example Bryson and White, 1997; Hakim, 1994; Granger et. al., 1995) and owes much to the work of Bogenhold and Staber (1991; 1993). Historically, the dichotomy arises from the classic economic theories of 'career' (Knight, 1933) and 'default' (Schumpeter, 1934) and is essentially a self-employment/paid-employment choice, based on the individual identifying the opportunities and constraints associated with each (Rees & Shah, 1986:95). This section concludes by translating and applying these ideas to the arrangement of professional contracting.

4.1.1 The Labour Market

The position of advantage which professionals hold within the labour market is well established. It is:

more and more common to find atypical contracts in place at fairly senior and specialized areas within organizations. This was particularly true of hi-tech areas where freelancers and independent consultants were the norm ... Labour within these occupational groups are broadly considered to be in short supply and to prefer looser contractual ties with employers, allowing labour to dictate conditions. Staff in these occupations are commonly well paid and turnover rates are high.

(Atkinson, Rick, Morris & Williams, 1996:23-27).

A common theme of mainstream views is that professionals have an advantaged labour market position and that this advantage is primarily the result of skill shortages. While it is a view widely accepted in Australia (see for example ABS, 1998; EPAC, 1996; Jones, 1995a) and America (Judy and D'Amico, 1997; Van Huss, 1995), it appears at odds with some of the findings examined in chapter 3. Previously, redundancy and limited options, rather than advantage and opportunity, dominated explanations of the move to peripheral arrangements. These earlier explanations accord more with Bosworth, Dutton and Lewis's (1992) proposition that relative scarcity in some professions may, in fact, be giving way to surpluses while compelling evidence of the latter explanations comes from a large scale British survey by Atkinson et. al. (1996). Supply side factors were found to cause employers considerable difficulty, especially where labour market conditions were tight and skill levels high. Contract work with high levels of pay becomes more prevalent under such conditions, particularly for the specialist skills associated with information technology, telecommunications and information systems (Atkinson et. al., 1996: 27-28). Whether professionals proactively take steps to maintain labour market advantage is beyond the scope of this research but is certainly an area where some tentative indications may emerge.

Overall though, many of the studies on self employment found that individuals often explain their motives for entering contracting in terms of various 'negative' experiences associated with previous employee roles. The seminal work of Scase and Goffee (1987) on twenty-five self-employed sole proprietors found that most did not express a strong prior commitment to notions of personal advancement through self-employment. A key difference between this and any current research is that job loss through redundancy, either actual or perceived, is now the single major factor associated with the move from previous employment (Butterfield, 1993; Devine, 1994; Galt & Moenning, 1996; Wagar, 1996). Relating this to the professional contractor workforce, it seems reasonable to assume there will be a proportion that has an increased vulnerability due to redundancy. Furthermore, in common with general studies on peripheral employment, such moves are likely to be associated with downward mobility, particularly for childbearing women (Dex and McCulloch, 1997; Morris, 1995). This notion of contracting, as a planned, versus an unplanned move, is important as it introduces the concept of career.

4.1.2: Career Theory

Both traditional career theory and the professional worker are the subject of well developed bodies of literature which focus on concepts familiar to writers on the future of work (see for example Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Kanter, 1989; Reich, 1992; Rifkin, 1995). The attainment of self actualisation through various career stages is a well known example of one such concept (Hall, 1986). Professionals in the first stage of their career thus seek self-actualisation and autonomy by changing jobs and/or

organisations. This is called the 'trial' stage and lasts to about 35 years of age. The next stage lasts about fifteen years and is characterised by individuals seeking achievement. After the age of 50, security becomes the dominant concern (Hall, 1986:113). More recent studies of professionals have also added an age and stage factor, proposing 'routine busting' as a mid-career identity change process, facilitated by the desire for autonomy, feedback and support (Mirvis & Hall, 1995).

A key criticism of the traditional view of career is relevant to the professional in contract employment in that it is essentially a 'positivist' approach where lifespan and career are categorised in terms of a series of standard stages of development. Careers unfold across the lifespan, early actions affect those that come later and the various ages or stages have their own developmental tasks or problems (Jepson, 1996 cited in Hurley and Giannantonio, 1999). It presents a pre-ordained view where;

if one knew a person's age, tenure (in the organisation or in a particular career), personality, values and/or learning style, one could predict fairly accurately what that person's salient career concerns and developmental task might be.

(Kram, 1996:136 cited in Davies, 2000).

This very influential view of the career is exemplified in Super's (1957) lifespan development theory with its stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, decline (later seen as disengagement) and its various career development measures (Savickas and Lent, 1994). However, more recent works acknowledge that career is both a concept and a study and, as Collins (1998:413) points out, arises from the interaction of individuals with organisations and society. Such challenges to the traditional notion of career are particularly relevant to the conduct of this thesis which aims to test whether the working life of the professional contractor will, one day,

become the way of work for the majority. Thus, one such assertion which this section of the research questions is Handy's (1994:1975) statement that:

more and more individuals are behaving as professionals always have, charging fees not wages. They are "going portfolio" ...exchanging full-time employment for independence ...the word "job" now means a client.

The focus is clearly on individuals who would appear to have both made such a career choice and operate at the 'high end' of the peripheral labour market. However, the actual debate surrounding the 'portfolio' career is largely bereft of empirical investigation. The evidence tends to be focussed on people still employed in organisations (Goffee and Scase, 1992). Cash et. al. (1992:25) suggest that there is "little comprehensive evidence that these are truly revolutionary times", that the facts adduced are "typically anecdotal" and that the "empirical evidence... is rather slippery." Similar caution also appears appropriate when discussing changes in the field of career. The view that "the nature of careers has changed fundamentally" (as made by writers such as Hall et. al. 1996:13; Holbeche, 1997; Peters, 1987) is countered by the advice of Guest and McKenzie-Davey (1996:22-23 cited in Guest, 1998) not to "write off the traditional career".

To put these arguments into the context of the current research, the fundamental assumption that individuals entering the 'portfolio' world of work do so by exiting from organisations already appears questionable where the professional contractor is concerned (Mallon, 1998:362). The previous chapter suggests the importance of unemployment and, particularly for females, the role that caring for dependents may have prior to entering contracting. Furthermore, while childbearing has typically been associated with life stages for females, more recent moves towards paternity leave and

caring for the elderly and disabled within the family home, now challenge the validity of traditional career models. These have been further weakened by the organisational restructuring of the 1980s and 90s and the large scale retrenchment of management and professionals within organisations (Buchanan et. al., 1992; Holbeche, 1997; Wagar and Gilson, 1996).

Another view is that the distinction between "career and life stages, and indeed between career and self development, may prove arbitrary and ultimately meaningless" (Mirvis & Hall, 1996:93). Instead, the career is seen as "boundaryless" and encompassing moves between organisations, as well as within flexible, non-hierarchical organisations (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996:6), in which there are no (or few) objectively observable pathways, and no norms of objectively observable progress or success. Such a view does not assume universal, objectively identifiable or normative stages in careers but rather individual rates and directions of change or development.

Writing of the 'protean' or boundaryless career over twenty years ago, Hall (1986:201) identified the key characteristics as those where "personal career choices and search for self-fulfilment are the unifying or integrative elements in life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external." The type of career has significant implications for the experience and construction of the individual:

as new career options open up boundaries around work so also will they open up boundaries of identity... the freedom and flexibility to more fully engage in life's work and find...greater balance in their lives
(Mirvis & Hall, 1994:372-373).

It difficult to incorporate the newly emerging constructs of career into the existing, largely positivist theories of career and traditional scientific research methodologies are

similarly limited (Collins & Watts, 1996:418; Collins, 1998). Career has only recently begun to be interpreted in terms of context and construction and the methods employed are those of the narrative and of hermeneutics. For the current research project, the challenge is to map "surface changes, without drawing rapid conclusions about deep-seated changes and emergent properties, though remaining alert to their possibility" (Collins & Watts, 1996:419).

The key question raised in literature on career is what do individuals require to support them in a career in the twenty first century? According to Collin and Watts (1996) the requirement is to develop their own employability, while Arthur and Rousseau (1996) write of expanding 'social capital' through networking. Factors such as career guidance, practical support, mentoring and efforts to mesh community and work identities become considerations for both the individual and the organisations to which they are contracted (IPD, 1999a). A key contribution from the career literature is that endemic, dynamic change and individual insecurity no longer have to be examined against supposed norms of stability, upward mobility and self-actualisation. Removing these constraints provides the basis for combining the concept of career with that of labour market movements.

4.1.3: The Contracting Career: Pushed or Pulled to it?

The combined themes of labour market and career have produced a large body of

literature examining large scale rises in the numbers of self-employed over the past two decades. The basic question is whether people make the choice because they are drawn

by the intrinsic 'pull of the potential benefits. This is what Bogenhold and Staber (1991) call the "logic of autonomy", or because they are 'pushed' into it by economic necessity arising out of their poor labour market standing or redundancy for example. While this summarises the 'push' versus 'pull' dichotomy of the self-employment choice, it also explicitly assumes that the decision to enter an employment arrangement is the result of rational, calculative decisions.

Schumpeter's (1934) theory of default adds another dimension to the dichotomy with the suggestion that push factors associated with self-employment can be extrapolated further to reflect structural constraints. Building on this notion of self-employment as a default option, Philips (1962 cited in Carr, 1996:29) concluded that it acts principally as a defence against unemployment or as a refuge for groups such as older workers, ethnic groups and the disabled. The difference between push and default is developed further in Carr's (1996) examination of self-employed women which found that women do not default to self-employment because they have no option. Rather, they opt for self-employment because of structural constraints (most notably, young children) and the opportunity for flexibility and greater autonomy (Carr, 1996:30).

The push/pull dichotomy, with the addition of the default, provides a diversity of motives for professional contracting. While there may be some individuals who are pushed into contracting as a defensive move against unemployment, for the most able and ambitious it may be a proactive career option. Furthermore, there could also be professionals whose moves "may actually be seen as a default career choice - the result of organisational retrenchment rather than individual initiative" (Carr, 1996:48). It is

an option distinct from those clearly pushed as it still suggests that either some choice or control may be exercised - as opposed to the lack of both choice and control for those pushed.

Of particular relevance, in light of the positivist debate surrounding the concept of career, is Granger et. al.'s (1995) study on the increase in freelance work within the publishing industry. Utilising both qualitative and historical perspectives, this study examined individuals' moves into self-employment within the broader context of their life. It is a perspective that explicitly recognises and deals with the relationship between personal and situational factors - something that emerges as an important aspect from the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the study develops the notion of labour market and career factors operating as both a push from a prior employment arrangement and a pull into a new employment arrangement.

While that study was limited to a sociological approach to the push/pull dichotomy, Mallon (1998) expanded it to produce characteristics of four distinct self-employed career types. As shown in Table 4.1, the typology incorporates both attitudinal and structural factors. Summarising the original categorisations into a table format makes it easier to identify the relationship between personal and situational factors in the decision to move into professional contracting. Although Mallon's (1998) study applied only to a specific group who were consciously self employed, it would appear to be just as relevant to the situation of those who leave organisations to develop an independent portfolio of work - which may well encompass self employment. Theoretically, relating the typology in Table 4.1 to the professional contractor, the

literature on the future of work would undoubtedly place them in the 'missionary' category. However, the findings from both this and chapter 3 suggests that all four categories would be relevant to the professional contract workforce. The diversity incorporated within the categories accords with the range contained within the continuum of contracting independence illustrated previously in Figure 3.3.

Table 4.1: Mallon's (1998) Self-Employment Typology

Refugees

- The biggest group in both studies
- Pushed to self employment by labour market factors
- Retain an orientation toward organisational employment

Missionaries

- They either have a positive orientation to entrepreneurial work or
- Have taken the opportunity to regain some autonomy in their career

Trade offs

- They are seeking to balance work with other needs, perhaps on a temporary basis
- Their central concern shifts from work to home

Converts

- They have come to appreciate the lure of self-employment.
- They come from all categories but;
- Are likely to start as refugees before converting

Adapted from Granger, Stanworth & Stanworth, 1995:363 and Mallon, 1998

Interpreting Table 4.1 into the language of Schumpeter's (1934) and Knight's (1933) theories, as well as more recent studies of self-employment identifies some key factors which underlie the nature of the individual's decisions within the push/pull dichotomy. The first is the nature of the move into another arrangement- whether it is by a choice or not. The voluntary versus involuntary nature of this decision is explicit in Mallon's (1998) typology. The second aspect of the decision process is less explicit and this is the timing of the move, either direct or delayed.

The focus of this research into the professional contract workforce is the antecedents to the original decision and, for this reason, the timing of the move is important. It is this aspect which should differentiate between individuals who make a planned career move straight into contracting, perhaps from an 'incubator' organisation (Birley and Westhead, 1993), and those who move for reasons such as caring for dependents or a return to study. It is a distinction made clear in the matrix structure illustrated in Figure 4.1. This translates the aspects of the push/pull dichotomy and default theory into a structure that can then be applied to the arrangement of professional contracting. The factors of timing and the choice provide sharp distinctions between the four options in Figure 4.1 as well as between each pairing.

The matrix structure illustrated in Figure 4.1 expands Schumpeter's (1934) default hypothesis to distinguish between two quite distinct alternatives.

Figure 4.1: The Push/Pull Matrix

	Left to Become a Contractor	Left and Later Became a Contractor
Contractor By Choice	PULL	DEFAULT 1
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH

The first, the Default 1 option is where the individual professional became a contractor by choice but only some time after the termination of the prior employment arrangement. Reasons for such a profile may be an individual choosing to return to studies or caring for dependents. It is quite distinct from the Default 2 option, where

the move into contracting is immediate but not by choice. Examples from the literature suggest that such a profile may be the result of organisational outsourcing, where former employees are transferred to the outsourcing company with the functions or, where employees are forced into becoming 'pseudo-contractors' (Casey et. al., 1997; Creighton, 1994).

The matrix adapts the push/pull dichotomy to the language of career and labour markets and so provides the basis of a detailed research proposition about the antecedents of the professional's move into contracting which is developed in the next chapter. The matrix also makes explicit the large scale uncertainty about ongoing employment within the ranks of the professional workforce and leads to the next key theme that emerged from the previous chapter - the nature of the changes occurring in the world of work.

A specific theme that emerged from the general literature already reviewed was that of changes within the contract of employment. In accordance with Tyson's (1995) levels of analysis which guided this prior review, this second of the five key themes moves from the level of individual motivations for exiting a prior work arrangement and entering contracting to examining the reasons at a societal level.

4.2: The Changing Psychological Employment Contract

The notion of a 'new contract' of employment, where the central concept is one of exchanging job security for 'employability', expands upon the themes of career and

labour markets covered in the last section (Csoka, 1995; Bridges, 1994; Hakim, 1994). Individual motivations for employment move away from aspirations of promotion and stability to focus on personal reputation, teamwork and challenging assignments (Kanter, 1994). Theoretically at least, it is an approach to work that should be evident in the working life of the professional contractor.

There is however an increasing body of empirical literature on the grim realities of work practices such as team-working and organisational restructuring (see for example Eisenberg, 1997; Gregory & Hethy, 1993). The negative consequences that pervade both peripheral and core workforces range from increased insecurity, inequity and powerlessness to decreased risk taking and organisational commitment (Gallie & White, 1993; Herriot, 1995; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997). One of the largest longitudinal studies of restructuring to date (Rajan, 1997:68) concludes that "employability" has failed to be translated into anything meaningful and the 'empty rhetoric of employability' (Pascale, 1995:87) appears to apply equally to both core and peripheral worker.

The notion of employability underlies the larger change occurring within the psychological contract of employment. This contract posits the existence of both a transactional and relational component to the traditional employer/employee relationship and suggests that the changes within the world of work are seen to move the relationship to a more transactional one (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990; Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau and Parks, 1993; Stiles, Gratton and Truss, 1997). This is exemplified in the arrangement of professional contracting where the initial relationship between

professional contractor and organisation should clearly be a transactional one, based on economic exchange. However, in one of the few studies of contractor behaviour within the organisational setting, Pearce (1993), found that contractors engaged in a significant level of extra-role behaviour – a result interpreted as an indication that contractors attempt to move the relationship from a transactional to a relational one.

The move within the psychological contract from one built on relationships to one more focussed on transactions is characterised as the shift from an organisational to a protean career (Hall, 1986; Hall and Mirvis, 1994, 1995). It is a move that has been identified as occurring within both the peripheral and the core workforces in Australia (MacNeil, 1990; 1995). It is a move that shifts the focus of responsibility for careers from the organisation to the individual and it is a move relevant to all workers.

This focus also provides a very clear return to the concept of the 'push' versus 'pull' dichotomy but places the dichotomy within the current perspective, raising questions as to the extent to which the decision to now remain a professional contractor is the result of rational, calculative evaluations.

Overall, it appears that the plans and motivations for exiting one form of employment may not be the same as those for entering another form. A number of studies have investigated non standard employment options as a 'trap' or a 'bridge' (Buchtemann, 1991; Carr, 1996, 1989; Natti, 1993; 1995). Interpreting this in the context of the professional contractor, contracting is seen as a 'trap' if it is associated with

unemployment, is involuntary and provides few opportunities for more permanent employment. If the converse should be true, it is seen as a 'bridge'.

The contribution that this second theme of the changing psychological contract adds is a comparative one. The typology developed by Granger et. al. (1995) and extended by Mallon (1998) provides an historical, and perhaps, post hoc, rationalisation of moves away from traditional employment. The focus is now on the consequences of the move into contracting. Factors such as the features of and satisfaction with the contracting lifestyle can be measured in terms of professional contractors ability to balance work and non-work life (Casey et. al., 1997; Natti, 1995; Rees and Fielder, 1992). Non-work aspects include family and professional affiliations, while work factors consider hours worked on a daily, weekly and through to annual basis (Lee and Johnson, 1991; Loscocco, 1997). This information provides a longitudinal perspective from which to examine the concept of 'employability' within the changing nature of the psychological contract of employment.

The second broad theme that has emerged from the literature reviewed in chapter 1 to 4 is that of a changing contract of work. The 'push' versus 'pull' dichotomy is developed through the integration of the concept of 'employability' and also introduces the third common theme that emerged from the review of the general literature in the last chapter. Most studies on employability fail to consider the very wide variation that peripheral employment arrangements actually cover.

The continuum of contracting independence, illustrated previously in Figure 3.3, demonstrates the complexity of independence as a concept when applied to the professional contractor. The apparent desire for homogeneity within peripheral work underlies much of the literature on 'employability'. There is an implicit belief that the 'push' is out of traditional, organisational employment and into the 'portfolio', 'protean' or 'boundaryless' careers – and the brave new world of employability. The key attribute of this new world appears to be the need for individual independence. The next section will examine this third key theme, independence, in more detail.

4.3: Independence

The heterogeneous nature of self-employment in terms of true independent status is well established (Bogenhold and Staber, 1991 and 1993; Granger et. al., 1995; OECD, 1993). Thus, the entrepreneur who risks everything in pursuit of the innovative idea occupies quite a different position from the homebased clothing outworker. The continuum of contracting independence, developed from the literature on contracting in the last chapter reflects this diversity. Within the context of self-employment, the professional contractor workforce has traditionally been allied to the entrepreneurial or 'high' end of the scale of independence (Bogenhold & Staber, 1991; Bridges, 1995; Casey et. al., 1997; Handy, 1989).

However, the last chapter has already shown a much more heterogeneous picture is likely to be found in reality. Adapting the terminology of studies of self-employment,

arrangements are likely to vary from the dependent or de facto employee through to the independent self-employed contractor (CCH, 1995a; Collins, 1990; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995 & 1996). Between these broadly defined poles the continuum illustrated in Figure 3.3 plots a midpoint in the form of agency contracting. The results from the review of peripheral arrangements, especially temporary work, in the last chapter indicate that this midpoint is also likely to be complex and include distinct variations in the arrangements of Agency contracting. Further examination is required.

4.3.1: Agency Employment

Studies of temporary employment arrangements provide a valuable contribution in explaining the role of agency employment for the professional contractor. Within the temporary help industry (THI), such arrangements vary from the agency acting in a placement role only, through to actually being an employer of the contractor who it then hires out to other organisations (Carre, 1992; Collins, 1990; Feldman, 1990; Feldman, Doeringhaus and Turnley, 1994; Gottfried, 1991; Macken, 1992). If this variation also exists within the professional contractor workforce, the continuum of contracting independence illustrated in Figure 3.3 needs to be expanded to incorporate these added dimensions.

Despite the limited nature of the literature available on the professional contractor, evidence from studies of temporary workers who work as contractors reveals a stark polarisation. Agency employment for the professional contractor, in the best circumstances, may provide the benefits of both self-employed and employed status with the ability to negotiate conditions, access training and development opportunities,

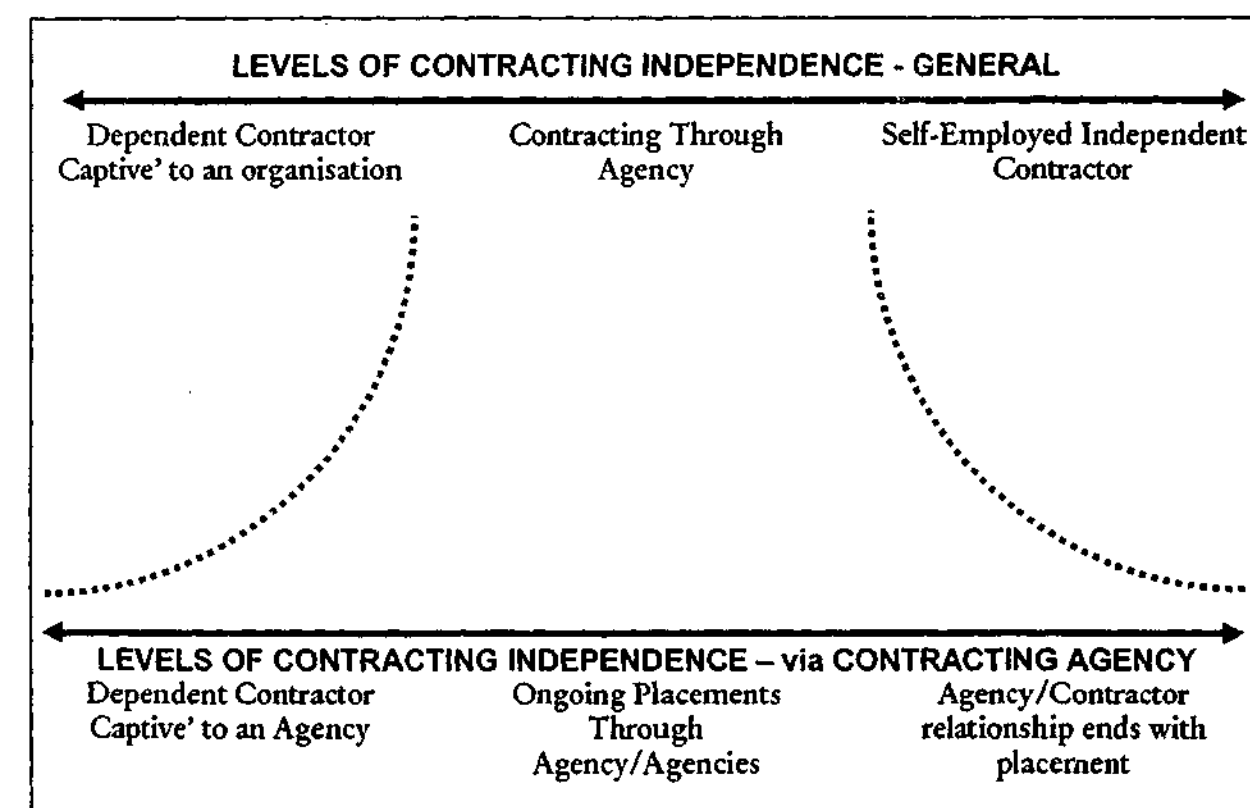
and have a steady, predictable client base and income (Krasas-Rogers, 1995; Natti, 1993; Tilly, 1992). By contrast, Agency employment for the professional contractor in the worst circumstances brings all of the obligations of dependent employment, without the attendant privileges of employee status (Campbell, 1996; Cappelli, 1997; Cascio, 1993). Further to this is a growing body of evidence of organisations increasingly adopting such employment practices amongst the professional workforce as a cost saving mechanism as well as using agencies to do the recruitment and selection for them (Casto, 1995; Winner, 1996).

Studies of the unemployed, recently retrenched or 'plateaued' professional offer another perspective to the role of Agency employment (Hodgkinson, Kelly and Verucci, 1993; Bryson and White, 1996; White and Bryson, 1998; White and Forth, 1998). Contract work may be seen as preferable to unemployment because it provides income, experience and training and enhances occupational and industrial mobility as well as increasing future employability. The cheapest way of finding such work is through labour market intermediaries such as Contracting Agencies (Freedman, 1996). The range of actual employment options, in terms of level of independence that Agency employment offers, may thus further enhance its desirability.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the range of levels of independence possible within Agency arrangements. The diagram integrates the Temporary Help Industry perspective into the Continuum of Contracting Independence developed in the previous chapter. An area of the continuum, which falls between the Dependent Contractor and the Self-employed Independent Contractor, is designated 'Contracting through an Agency'. This is shown by the white section, between the dotted curves in Figure 4.2. Those in

the left of this area view the agency as their employer (illustrated in section 3.4 with Flints' (1995) example of the Butler contracting agency). This section is characterised by contractor reliance on the agency for employment. At the right end of this area, the agency acts in a placement role only. Burton-Jones (1999:109 cited in Davies, 2000) has described the relationship between the agency and the contractor here as one where the agency acts as a "mediated service provider... akin to that between a talent agency and the actors it represents". Unlike the contractors on the left, those in this section are not dependent upon the maintenance of a relationship with the agency.

Figure 4.2: The Agency Role Within the Continuum of Contracting Independence



This expansion of the continuum to incorporate the diversity within agency employment graphically demonstrates the heterogeneity proposed to exist within professional contracting. An important contribution that the concept of independence makes through its extrapolation into the original Continuum illustrated in Figure 3.3, is

that it attempts to represent the differences between secure and insecure forms of professional contract employment.

Standard indicators such as occupation or income do not capture this perspective. It also makes explicit the polarisation within the varied arrangements of contracting of an insecure, low paid underclass and a secure, well paid elite. It is a theme familiar to the wider body of literature on the changing world of work, but unfamiliar to discussions of the professional contractor. As with themes 1 and 2 of antecedence and of the changing contract of employment, the professional contractor supposedly occupies the elite position. In the case of Figure 3.3, the expected position of the professional contractor would therefore be at the extreme right of either general or agency levels of independence. Figure 4.2 provides for a greater diversity and permits the notion of a changing psychological contract of employment to be explicitly linked to the construct of independence. Thus, Figure 4.2 suggests that the more dependent contractors are on either an agency or employer, the more likely they are to pursue a traditional relational contract to sustain an ongoing relationship. On the other hand, the genuine independent contractor may have ongoing relationships with a number of agencies or host organisations but these relationships are more likely to be transactional contracts of employment.

Overall, Figure 4.2 has developed the concept of independence to incorporate the previous research propositions of 'push' versus 'pull' and 'employability' to provide the basis for the development of a third hypothesis in the next chapter.

The differentiation between various contracting arrangements in terms of independence identifies the fourth theme - the question of "what do individuals need to support these new forms of career?" While the notion of developing individual employability (Collins and Watts, 1996) has already been dealt with, further answers are offered in terms of building their 'social capital' through networking (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), mentoring (Hall and Mirvis, 1995), career guidance and other forms of practical support (Collins and Watts, 1996). The next section moves on to examine the general theme of support and how individuals may access and use varying forms of support to construct coherent identities as professional contractors.

4.4: Support Factors

The theme of support appeared in two main areas of the general literature review of the last chapter. The first related to the reasons individuals gave for being able to make the move into contracting from a prior work arrangement or activity. The second explained how and why individuals were then able to remain in peripheral working arrangements. While financial considerations are clearly an important part of the decision-making process in both cases, several studies have identified that the social support of others, either actively sought or perceived to be available if required, is a crucial factor (see for example Lim, 1996; Morris, 1995). The literature on professionals has a substantial literature developed over many years and this provides a strong basis for examining the concept of social support from both work and non-

work sources (see for example Daniels and Guppy, 1994; Gunz and Gunz, 1994; Kaldenberg and Reve, 1995).

Overall, social support is shown to act as both a buffer against negative factors, such as workplace stressors, like a high workload or lack of control, as well as to impact on job satisfaction and well-being (Sarason, Pierce & Sarason, 1994). Further research has also identified additional factors as relevant, including spouses/partners joint involvement in the employment decision, length of professional tenure and the duration of self-employment (Carr, 1996:35; Dodd-McCue and Wright, 1996). The wider literature on peripheral employment, particularly studies comparing male and female self-employment and temporary work, also indicates marital status, career status and the age of dependents are important considerations in explaining the importance of social support (Aryee and Luk, 1996; Carr, 1996; Natti, 1993). These latter factors may be particularly important determinants of the type and quality of social support the professional requires when making and then maintaining a move to contracting. Further, family characteristics may also differently effect the work outcomes of men and women (Beilby and Beilby, 1989; Loscocco, 1990). The diverse nature of the factors involved indicates that attention must be given to what actually constitutes 'social support.'

4.4.1: Defining Social Support

Turner (1992:217) suggests that there "would be a significant advantage to reserving the term "social support" to refer to perceived or experienced support. According to

Cobb (1976) what makes support social in nature is that it is composed entirely of the belief that one:

- a) is cared for and loved;
- b) is esteemed and valued;
- c) belongs to a network of communicant and mutual obligation in which one can count on others should the necessity arise.

The term social support, therefore, refers to the clarity or certainty with which the individual experiences being loved, valued, and able to count on others should the need arise. Cobb (1976) differentiates social support from support that is:

- a) instrumental - such as counselling or assisting
- b) active - such as mothering
- c) material - where goods and/or services are provided.

A further important inference is that "social support is likely to be effective only to the extent it is perceived" (House, 1981:27). There is evidence that perceived support is most enduring and is powerfully associated with various health outcomes. There must be a clear distinction between social support as a social-psycho variable and the various factors, transactions and processes that may contribute and/or detract from the experience of being supported by others. It is a view that recognises that the effective measurement of perceived support - compared to actual, is the key focus. Many of the scales developed to measure support therefore assess the experience of support provided by networks rather than individuals. The distinction between available and received support and accessing support in the form of networks is widely acknowledged in the literature (Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990; Sarason et. al.; 1987; Turner, 1992; Weiss, 1974).

Sarason, Pierce and Sarason (1994) acknowledge that the primary source of misunderstanding about social support is that it is linked to both objective events (actual availability of others) and subjective estimates (perceptions of others willingness to help). Social support measures are thus usually divided into three general categories; network support, support actually received and support perceived to be available. These three categories are implicit in much of the self-employment literature and provide the basis for the fourth research hypothesis to be developed in the next chapter. The roles of social support both from within and external to the workplace indirectly lead to the fifth theme which emerged from the discussion of the previous chapter – that of the relationship between professional contractors and the organisations that use their services. The literature most commonly refers to this relationship in terms of the construct, commitment.

4.5: Commitment

Commitment is generally accepted as being the “strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation” (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974:604). This definition provides three facets of commitment:

1. a belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values;
2. the willingness to exert considerable effort; and
3. a desire to maintain organisational membership.

These facets translate into the traditional ‘currency’ of commitment between organisation and employee, the exchange of skills for employment security (Ehrlich, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). As already noted in this chapter, the widespread

organisational restructuring which has characterised the last decade means that organisations are unable to guarantee employment security - yet paradoxically, they still require commitment from their employees (Baruch and Hind, 1999; Hartman and Patrickson, 2000).

While there is mounting evidence to support the view that the growth of peripheral work results from both the displacement of workers as a result of restructuring there is also evidence of the advantaged labour market position of other workers (Bridges, 1994; Casto, 1993; Lasch, 1995; Pfeffer & Baron, 1988). Despite the diverse reasons for individuals entering peripheral work arrangements, such workers are overwhelmingly characterised as having lesser commitment to the organisation than core workers and, this reduced commitment is associated with a range of negative consequences for the employer (Kerr, 1995; Krauz, Brandwien and Fox, 1995; Mottaz, 1988). These include reduced motivation and involvement (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Stumpf and Hartman, 1984), lowered levels of job performance (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982; Steers, 1977; Angle and Perry, 1981), less acceptance of change (Iverson, 1996) and a greater propensity to resign (Leong, Furnham and Cooper, 1996; Williams and Hazer, 1986).

The reasons why individuals move into peripheral work may therefore be an important

factor for potential employers to consider. The consequences in terms of the commitment of the professional contractor, are important considerations for both the host organisations that utilise contractors and the contracting agencies.

The literature reviewed in chapter 3 also implied that commitment forms an important part of the relationship between core and peripheral worker. Re-examining the core/periphery workforce relationship now within the context of organisational restructuring raises two important points. Firstly, reductions of staff numbers within professional and managerial levels has emerged as a key 'push' factor in the decision to become a professional contractor. Secondly, there is evidence that the employment of professional contractors impacts upon the commitment of the core workforce of the employing or host organisation. Integrating these points now with the literature on commitment suggests that the changes occurring in the nature of the employment contract have both legal and psychological dimensions (see for example Ebadan and Winstanley, 1997; Gallagher and McLean-Parks, 2001; McLean-Parks and Kidder, 1994; Rousseau, 1989) which provide potential sources of conflict between core and professional contract workers (Jacobs, 1994). It seems it is important for the host organisation to consider the impact that the presence of contractors has or may have on their core workforce.

In one of the few studies in this area to date, Pearce (1993) found no evidence of differences in commitment to the organisation between contractor and core workforces. This finding was partially explained by the fact that while contractors tended to adopt extra-role behaviours to avoid social ostracism, the presence of contractors was associated with lower trust among the organisations core workforce (Pearce, 1993:1094). This result is supported by studies of other peripheral work arrangements (see for example Butterfield, 1993; Geary 1992; McLellan, 1993). The potentially severe consequence of contractor employment in terms of occupational

health and safety issues is also emerging (Kochan, Smith, Wells and Rebitzer, 1994; Mayhew 1996; Quinlan, 1993, 1997, 1998).

Another aspect of the increasing numbers of workers making the move to peripheral work is the view that individuals may hold multiple commitments. For the professional contractor this translates into the perceived ability to juggle a growing number of demands as part of balanced lifestyle where aspects of work and non-work life are seen as mutually reinforcing (Aryee and Luk, 1996:466). An important example of this is the professional contractor who works through a contracting agency.

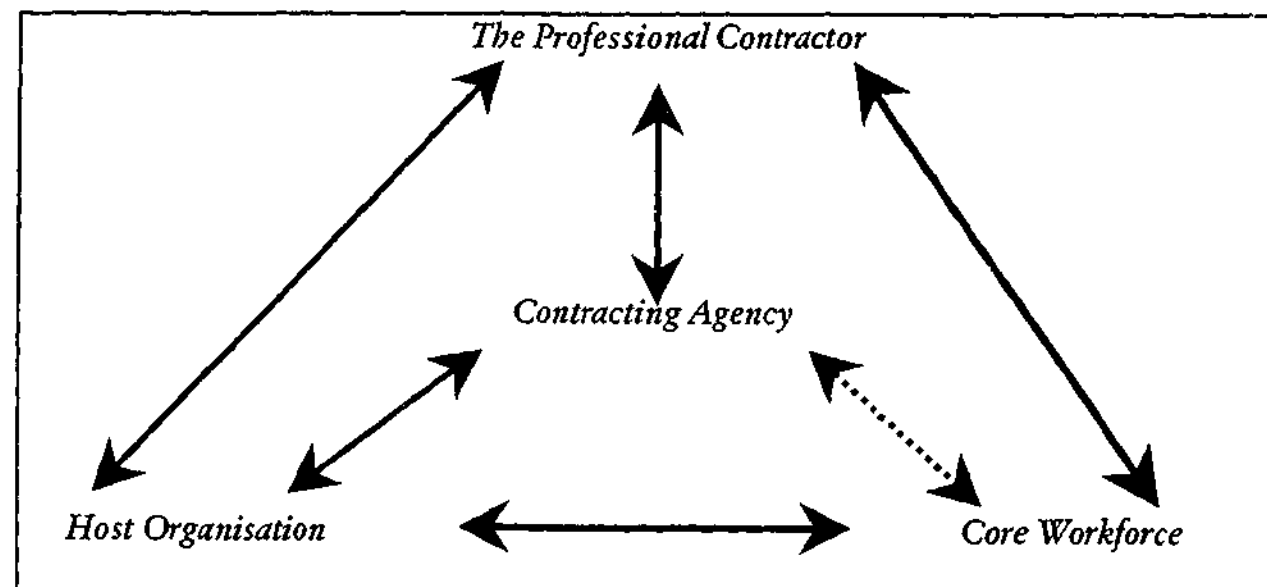
4.5.1: The Agency Contractor - Divided or Dual Commitment?

For some professional contractors, there is an additional party involved in the set of working relationships, the employment agency. The range of relationships that agency employment may cover varies from the limited role of matching host organisation with the professional contractor through to engaging the contractor as an employee. This adds another dimension to the tripartite working relationship structure first developed in Figure 1.1 which centred on the contractor, host organisation and host organisations core workforce.

Figure 4.3 illustrates that, as well as the direct relationship between professional contractor, host organisation and the agency there is the possibility of a less direct one between agency and core workforce. This can be seen in some moves to outsourcing where an agency may actually assume varying levels of control over a host organisation's workers (Benson, 1996; 1999). Another aspect of this set of

relationships is that core workers may also view the agency as a potential source of employment. For these reasons, a dotted line exists in Figure 4.3 tentatively connecting the agency and the host organisations core workforce.

Figure 4.3: The Working Relationships of the Agency Contractor



Gottfried's (1991) study, based on her own participation as a worker in four temporary help placement agencies, specifically refers to the contradictory relationship between the firm, the client and the worker. It is one she argues that can actually provide the worker with some bargaining power (Gottfried, 1991:710). However, Singh and Vinnicombe (2000) note that it provides a situation where workers negotiate in a context of job uncertainty. The review carried out in chapter 3 suggests that dualistic control mechanisms operate over the worker from both the contracting agency's and from the host organisation's perspective. To put this in the context of the relationships illustrated in Figure 4.3, agency control would seem most likely to occur:

- at intake - where the agency can administer the range of tasks and information gathering that is used to modify the number and type of tasks the worker is allocated;

- during the assignment- when the agency can "use a combination of employee recognition programs and employee uncertainty in the allocation of jobs to retain good workers" (Gottfried, 1991:706). Contact in most studies of Temporary Help Agencies is usually through the contractor 'phoning in';
- between assignments - when there is a constant state of uncertainty in allocation of work, especially where this is accentuated by short notice of work allocation (such as over the phone).

By contrast, host organisation control is more likely to occur at the placement site through mechanisms such as the:

- physical separation from other workers (Gottfried, 1991:708);
- lack of well-defined work rules which has the effect of intensifying labour (Henson, 1996);
- technical control, ranging from a time clock in the word processor or computer to having the obligatory use of monitored security tags to enter and exit the workplace.

Studies of control mechanisms within temporary agency employment focus on the

dependence such workers have on the agency in terms of receiving new assignments. The results of this dependence are seen to be that any loyalty a temporary worker may have is directed towards the agency and not the host organisation (Gottfried, 1991; Henson, 1996; Krasas-Rogers, 1995:161). The concepts of control and dependence and their relationship to commitment raise the possibility that a contractor may hold divided or dual commitment.

Another perspective on this question is raised by the results from an Australian study on contracting and organisational commitment (Benson, 1996; 1999). In this survey contractors' commitment to the host organisation was generally significantly higher than to the agency – except where the contractor had been retrenched prior to employment as a contractor when commitment was higher to the agency than to the host (Benson, 1996:3). Again, the notion of the antecedents to the decision to become a contractor emerge as an important issue.

Most of the empirical studies of dual commitment are restricted to organisational versus union loyalties (see for example Bemmels, 1995; Deery, Iverson and Erwin, 1994; Deery, Erwin and Iverson, 1995; Reed, Young and McHugh, 1994). For the professional contractor, a related notion is that of commitment to profession where studies again tend to focus on descriptions of conflict between organisation and the profession (Aranya and Ferris, 1984; Blau, 1962; Gunz and Gunz, 1994; Kaldenberg et. al., 1995). The notion of commitment to a profession is relevant to the professional contractor workforce in terms of an "attachment to skill", whereby an individual's concern is not for those for whom they work but for the 'chance to apply their skills (Halaby, 1989:58).

There is also another aspect of commitment that appears relevant to the professional contractor workforce, that of the balance between work and non-work roles. The tendency has been to treat "work and family as mutually constraining" and investigate this as a lifestyle option for dual income couples (Aryee and Luk, 1996:466). A central finding in research on work/family balance has been the "trade-off required for women

and the minimal involvement of men" (Aryee and Luk, 1996:483; Beilby and Bielby, 1989; Bielby, 1992). In terms of professional commitment and gender however, only subtle gender differences have been found (Kaldenberg et. al., 1995). The gender differences that have been found are explained in terms of the weight of social sanctions. This, and the low probability that women can off load aspects of the wife and mother roles onto their husbands or children, reduce the likelihood for successful negotiation between their workplace and non-workplace roles. It thus appears that women have fewer options than men do to achieve control over competing roles (Barnett and Baruch, 1987:135).

Commitment, as the last of the five key themes arising from the general review of the literature conducted in chapter 3 has integrated aspects of the other four themes and set them within the context of the organisation. In this way, the chapter has moved from the individual level of antecedence to the societal level of changes in the contract of employment, levels of independence and social support. These are now, translated into the wider world of the working relationships of the professional contractor. In this chapter, the five themes have been developed into specific research propositions questioning the :

- antecedents of the move to contracting;
- changing nature of the 'contract of work';
- varying levels of independence;
- role of social support in explaining and maintaining the move to contracting; and the
- role of commitment in the working relationships of the contractor.

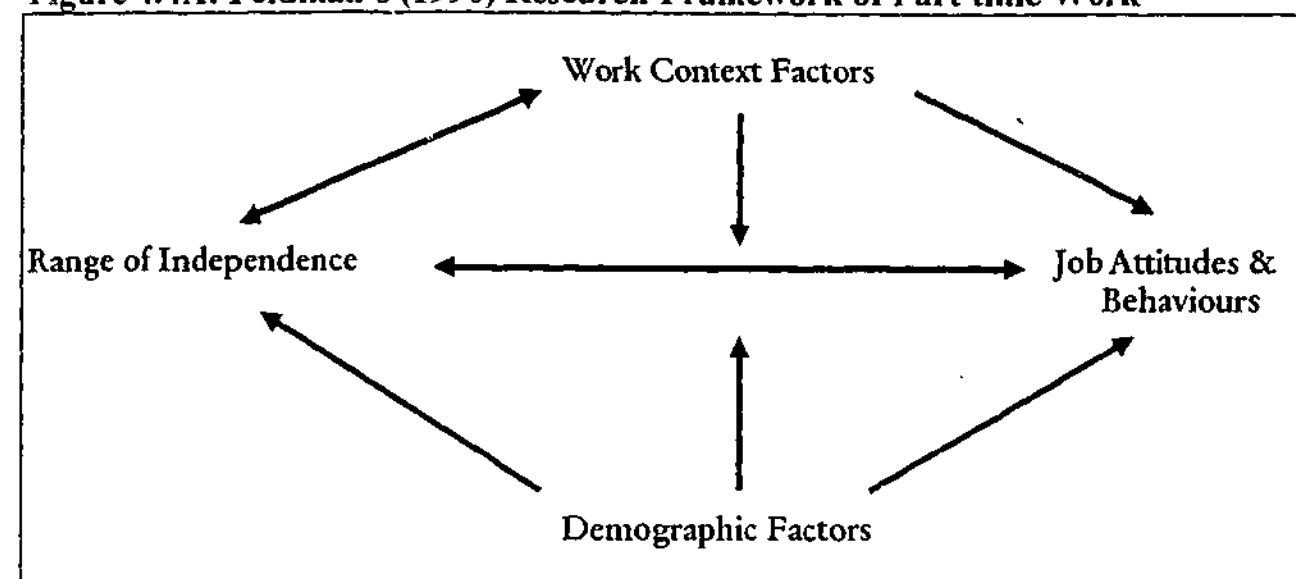
Before proceeding to the task of refining the hypotheses in the next chapter, the relationship between the research propositions needs to be addressed in terms of the research framework that integrates them.

4.6: The Research Framework

The five themes developed in this chapter have concentrated primarily on the role of individual action and motivation within the key structural and textual considerations identified as contributing to the initial decision to change employment status and then, to remain working as a professional contractor. A common criticism of studies on peripheral work arrangements is that traditional reliance on quantitative approaches fails to capture the nature of the changes occurring, because the focus of the change is qualitative (Collins, 1997, 1998; Mirvis and Hall, 1994; Morris, 1995). A methodology that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches is particularly appropriate to an examination of the professional contractor workforce.

Feldman's (1990) research on part time work arrangements, illustrated in Figure 4.4A, provides a robust framework incorporating both quantitative and qualitative aspects. It presents the view of a dynamic world of work where the key factors of work context, job attitudes and behaviours, independence and demographic features all interact with each other. The inclusion of independence and the important two way role it plays in interacting with the work environment context) is particularly appropriate in an investigation of the contract workforce.

Figure 4.4A: Feldman's (1990) Research Framework of Part time Work

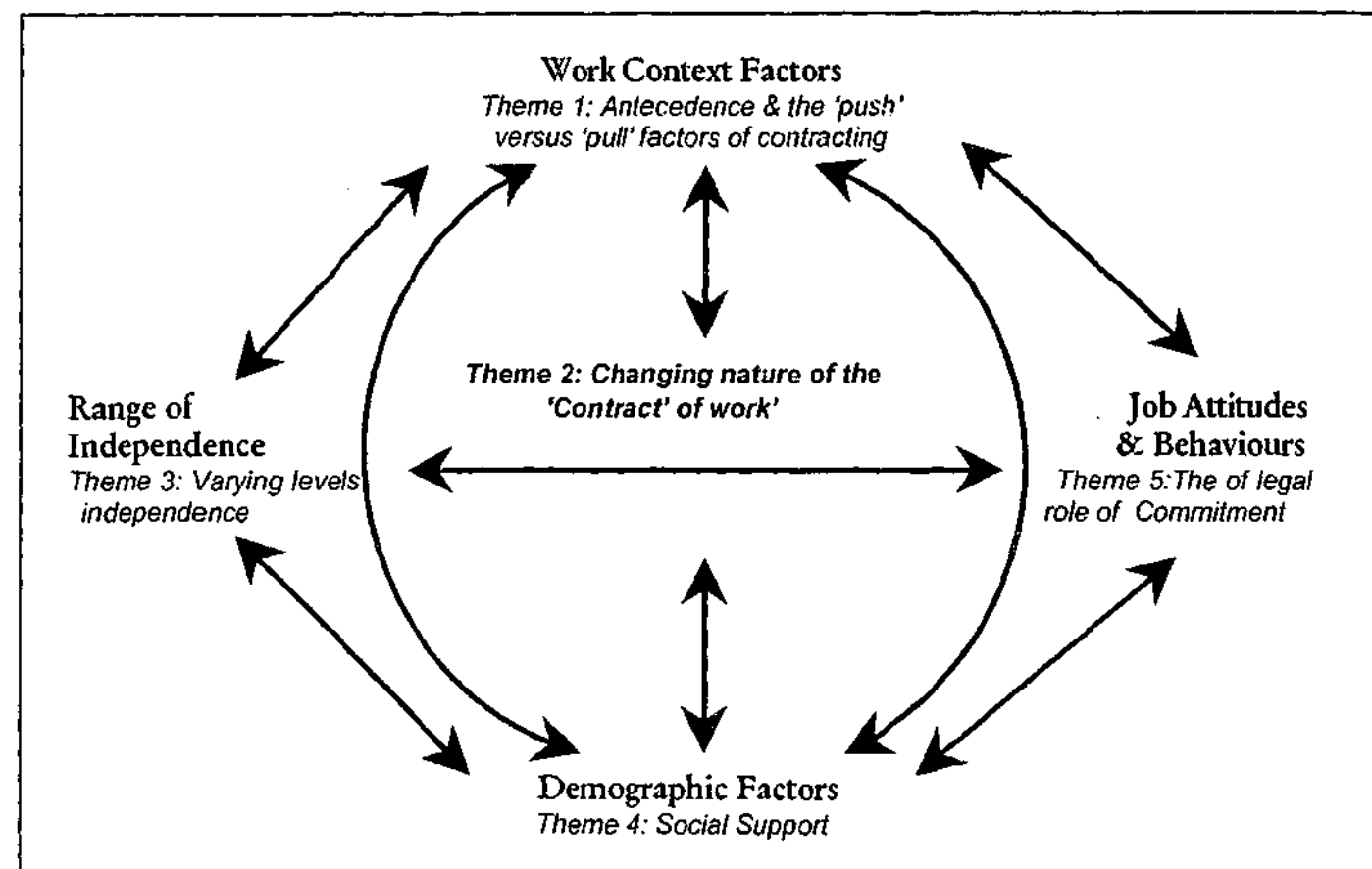


Source: Feldman, 1990:110

Evidence from the literature in chapters 2 and 3 indicates that the simple, one way nature of many of the other relationships illustrated in Figure 4.4A may be more complex than suggested by Feldman (1990).

Therefore, the simple structure of the original framework has been adapted to reflect insights generated from the discussion. In Figure 4.4B, the five propositions have been integrated into a causal relationship model of professional contracting. Four of the propositions are presented alongside the original domains of Work Context, Job Attitudes and Behaviours, Demographic Factors and Range of Independence while the second research proposition, the changing nature of the 'contract' of work, provides the common feature in all of them. The inclusion of the research propositions in the model concentrates the focus of the broad factors Feldman (1990) provided into specific issues of relevance to the professional contractor workforce.

Figure 4.4B: Feldman's (1990) Research Framework Applied to the Professional Contractor



Adapted from: Feldman, 1990:110

The modified version of the framework also suggests that there may be a much greater interaction between all five of the research propositions and this is reflected in the reciprocal nature of all of the relationships indicated by the arrows in Figure 4.4B.

The central focus of this research framework is to explain the experiences of the

professional contractor from a multi-dimensional perspective rather than the traditional, simple view and so provide insight into the dynamics of this arrangement. Chapter 2 first identified the need for this perspective the material reviewed in this chapter further substantiates the need to deal with changing work arrangements as an ongoing process.

The framework adapted from the work of Feldman (1990) provides a working model that incorporates key elements of the dynamics of working life. It integrates the diverse themes from the literature into five specific research areas that can be developed into research hypotheses.

4.7: Summary

An important reason for studying the professional contract workforce is the opportunity it provides to test assertions about the changes in work, such as Hendry and Pettigrew's (1990:42) that "insecurity is an attitude of the mind." Overall, the aim of this research is to provide an empirical investigation into the individual reality behind the rhetoric of terms such as 'employability', going 'portfolio' and the 'boundaryless' careers. Examining this 'reality' from the perspective of the professional contractor will hopefully provide a microcosm of the consequences of the changes occurring in the world of work.

The results from the literature reviewed in chapters 2 to 4 demonstrate that the professional contractor workforce also reproduces the general polarisation present within the peripheral workforce rather than just being an arrangement dominated by those at the 'high end' of the spectrum. Professional contractors thus appear to range from the employed and overworked through to the underemployed and jobless. The existence of this range challenges much of the rhetoric of those who write on the future

of work and establishes clear parallels with the wider world of peripheral employment arrangements.

The themes of antecedence, the changing contract of employment, levels of independence, social support and commitment that arose in the previous chapter have been examined in depth to develop five research propositions. The task of the next chapter is to refine these into a series of hypotheses that will direct an investigation of the professional contractor workforce.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The limited nature of research specifically addressing the arrangements of professional contracting has been established in chapters 2 to 4. Most of the material derives from the literature on contracting, the self-employed and professionals. Drawing this material together presents two distinct views. The first is the extremely optimistic picture of the self determined, self actualised individual of Reich's (1992) 'symbolic analyst', Handy's (1989) 'intelligence' worker or Jones's (1995) 'knowledge' worker. The second presents the world of peripheral work as characterised by exploitation, marginalisation and involuntary in nature (Belous, 1989; duRivage, 1992; Romeyn, 1992; Walby, 1989).

The discussion above has also revealed very important similarities between the professional contractor and other peripheral arrangements that may be more important than the differences. Five principal research propositions that capture the key features of both similarity and difference have been identified through the review process and integrated into a coherent framework by the model provided by Feldman (1990). The task of this chapter is to develop each into a research hypothesis. The first theme, that of antecedents has been refined into the notion of 'push' versus 'pull' factors into

contracting. A tool called the Push/Pull Matrix has been developed from the literature to provide a framework that can be used to guide this part of an investigation into the professional contractor workforce. The second theme isolates specific legal and psychological factors in the changing nature of the 'contract' of work. The importance of the legal aspects of employment is further addressed in the third theme, that of independence. A tool called the continuum of contracting independence has been developed as an aid to dealing with the complexity of this concept. The fourth and fifth themes have largely been refined from psychological and sociological literature and centre on the constructs of social support and commitment. Each of these five themes will be dealt with separately to produce specific research hypotheses.

5.1: Antecedents and the Push and Pull of Contracting

The Push/Pull Matrix developed in the last chapter (see Figure 4.1) synthesises key aspects raised by studies of self-employment (such as Bogenhold and Staber, 1991; Bryson and White, 1996; 1997; Granger et. al., 1995) and Atkinson's (1988) flexible firm model to construct a theoretical context for the professional contractor workforce. The matrix expands the classical economic theories of Smith (1776), Ricardo (1817), Schumpeter (1934) and Knight (1933) to interpret the push/pull dichotomy of the initial move into contracting in terms of various positive and negative career and labour market factors. The result is a hypothesis about the antecedents of the decision.

Hypothesis 1: The 'pull' forces into a contracting career are positively related to perceived labour market opportunity, while the 'Push' forces

are positively related to the movement out of (exit from) the previous career.

Hypothesis 1 separates the positive 'pull' factors of the move into contracting from the negative 'push' factors of the movement out of the previous form of employment. It also allows for the two quite distinct 'default' options that also underlie Mallon's (1998) typology and makes no assumption that exit from a prior arrangement is necessarily a direct factor in the decision involved in the entry into contracting. Most importantly, it overcomes a fundamental flaw in many of the economic studies of self-employment – that the decision to move into options such as self-employment is the result of rational, calculative decision making. The advent of redundancies and retrenchment amongst professional and managerial level workers in the nineteen nineties is one key aspect that may negate retaining this assumption (Flecker and Hofbauer, 1998; Greenbaum, 1998). The combination of the choice/not by choice and delayed versus direct entry into contracting underlying the two default options, aims to capture the complex nature of the situation which the literature suggests redundancy and retrenchment present the professional contractor with.

Redundancy and retrenchment also raise the issue of potential uncertainty about ongoing employment within the ranks of the professional workforce and introduce the next key theme that emerged from the literature review - that of the nature of the large scale changes occurring within the 'contract' of work.

5.2: Changing Factors in the 'Contract' of Employment

This second of the five key themes which emerged from the two stage literature review examines the motivations for exiting a prior work arrangement and entering contracting, starting at the individual level, then moving to the societal level. It builds upon the push/pull dichotomy to investigate the concept of 'employability' firstly in the initial move into contracting and secondly, as an ongoing feature of an individuals working life. Much of the literature in this area has a psychological and sociological focus and the issue of changing attitudes and emotions attached to the meaning of work is expressed in terms of a changing psychological contract of employment. It is a view reflecting the understanding that work provides more than income to the individual and introduces the notion that satisfaction with work is also an important motivator. This is articulated in the second research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 - Satisfaction with a contracting career is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

This hypothesis also provides a clearly subjective dimension to studying the professional contractor. It has long been argued that an interpretative research position is valuable in allowing a contextualisation of an individual's "moving perspective" on his/her life and meaning (Young and Collin, 1992:210). This is an important consideration given the nature and extent of the changes occurring within the world of work where the possible impact on the individual are widely discussed but

infrequently examined (see for example Lloyd and Bridges, 1995; Herriot and Pemberton, 1995; 1996; Rifkin, 1995).

This hypothesis uses the concept of satisfaction to integrate factors such as the voluntary nature or otherwise of this employment arrangement, the self-management skills of the professional contractor and long-term plans for continuing. A key aspect identified by studies on both self-employment and professionals is that satisfaction with these work arrangements correlates with the level of autonomy. The continuum of contracting independence, developed over the last two chapters, demonstrates effectively the degrees of autonomy possible within professional contracting. This leads to the third proposition, the range of levels of independence possible within contracting.

5.3: The Levels of Independence within Contracting

The third research proposition builds directly upon hypotheses 1 and 2, integrating the push/pull dichotomy and antecedents with the concept of employability to interpret the consequences for an individual in terms of independence. Based on the view that independence can be translated into factors that are measurable, these notions have been combined to propose:

Hypothesis 3 - The level of contracting independence is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting

and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

The continuum of contracting independence provides a framework for this hypothesis. The two parts of Hypothesis 3 also offer the possibility that individuals may move along the continuum over time – that the level of contracting independence may change. It is a proposition which is seldom explicit in studies of self-employment and even then, tends to be considered from the position that individuals either fail and leave, or are successful and end up employing others. By adapting Feldman's (1990) model of part time work (illustrated in Figure 4.4B), this investigation will examine contracting as a dynamic arrangement which experiences flows inwards and outwards, as well as movement in the various levels of independence within contracting. Furthermore, different levels of independence may reflect aspects such as career, life cycle and labour markets that were the focus of Hypothesis 2.

The differentiation between various contracting arrangements in terms of independence leads directly to the fourth research proposition, namely What do individuals need to support these new forms of career? While the notion of developing individual employability (Collins and Watts, 1996) has already been dealt with, further answers are offered in terms of building their "social capital" through networking, mentoring (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), career guidance and other forms of practical support (Collins and Watts, 1996).

5.4: Social Support

Social support measures are usually divided into three general categories: network, support actually received and that perceived to be available. These three aspects underlie much of the sociological and self-employment literature which presents studies from the perspective of the individual operating within the larger context of society. It is a view which reinforces the extent to which work is interrelated with all aspects of an individual's life.

Hypothesis 4 - The level of Social Support is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to maintain working as a contractor.

This fourth hypothesis translates the research proposition of social support into the two key areas identified within the literature – the role social support plays as an antecedent in the decision and the role it subsequently plays in an individual's decision to continue with the professional contracting arrangement.

The role of social support from both within, and external to, the workplace indirectly leads to the fifth research proposition generated from the literature reviews – the relationship between the professional contractor and the organisations that use their services. The term most commonly used in the wider literature on peripheral work to refer to this relationship is commitment.

5.5: Contractors and the Role of Commitment

The construct of commitment is a key element of research on traditional employment arrangements. The assumption is that greater commitment translates into a more motivated and productive worker for the employing organisation. In contrast, studies of the peripheral workforce tend to presume that reduced commitment is a feature of such workers. More recently, there has been interest in the notion of divided commitment within the employment relationships of peripheral workers and this research proposition provides the basis for the final hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5 - The level of commitment a contractor has to the:

Host Organisation is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting; and

The level of commitment a contractor has to the:

Contracting Agency is positively related to the initial 'push' factors associated with the move into contracting.

The factors of contractor independence and individual work preference are implicit within Hypothesis 5. Professional contractors who have a preference for employment as core workers would be expected to exhibit greater commitment to the host organisation than professional contractors who are satisfied with their employment status. There are circumstances under which this may not hold. Returning to the continuum of contracting independence (see Figure 4.2) where the Contracting Agency acts as an employer in their own right, the professional contractor may then have a preference for core employment within the Agency - rather than with a host organisation.

5.6: Summary

This chapter has moved from the individual level of antecedents to the societal level of changes in the contract of employment and the levels of independence and social support and then applied these into the wider world of the working relationships of the professional contractor. Overall, the aim of the five research hypotheses is to provide the basis for an empirical investigation into the professional contractor. The future of work rhetoric, which uses terms such as 'employability', going 'portfolio' and the 'boundaryless' careers, can be examined in depth from the perspective of the professional contractor and should provide a microcosm of some of the positive consequences of the changes occurring in the nature of work.

However, the results from the review process of chapters 2 to 4 also suggest that the professional contractor workforce reproduce the general polarisation present within the peripheral workforce, rather than just representing an arrangement dominated by those at the 'high' end of the spectrum. Professional contractors thus appear to range from the employed and overworked to the underemployed and jobless. The existence of this range challenges much of the rhetoric of those who write on the future of work and highlights the neglect of this polarisation by those investigating peripheral work arrangements.

Collectively, the five research propositions generated from the three-stage review process have been refined in this chapter into five research hypotheses. The richness and diversity of those aspects of professional contracting which these hypotheses cover

reflects the value of the approach taken in the literature reviews of crossing boundaries to integrate key aspects across disciplines. Together with the research framework illustrated in Figure 4.4B, these five hypotheses provide the basis for the next chapter which establishes the methodology for an investigation of the professional contractor workforce.

CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY

At the outset of this research it was difficult to reconcile the disparate views of the professional contract workforce provided by the theoretical and empirical literatures on the changes occurring within the world of work. The review of the literature detailed in chapters 2 to 4 provided evidence of a much more complex reality behind the working world of the professional contractor than suggested by either body of literature. Specifically, the literature examined in chapter 3 produced five broad themes for further investigation, which were developed into research propositions in chapter 4 and refined into hypotheses in chapter 5. The hypotheses focus on the role of individual action and motivation in terms of the:

- extent to which the initial decision to become and then remain a contractor was a result of rational, calculative decisions such as those traditionally argued to underlie action and negotiation governed by market principles; and
- degree to which social and personal influences are involved and detectable in these decisions.

These two questions provide the basis for a research project which will cross many of the disciplinary boundaries that have inhibited prior investigations of the peripheral workforce. The aim of this chapter is to outline the research methodology and in particular, develop the concept of the Push/Pull Matrix discussed in chapter 1, into an

analytical research tool. The lack of data and information on professional contractors on which to ground the investigation provided a significant problem. Therefore, a key element in the process of translating the research objectives into empirical investigation was the need for a qualitative base, specific to the professional contractor workforce, from which to construct a quantitative investigation. This was provided through a series of interviews which provided a rich source of data and underpinned the development of the survey instrument. The chapter then moves on to its major focus, the items of the questionnaire which make up the survey.

6.1: Overview of the Research Process

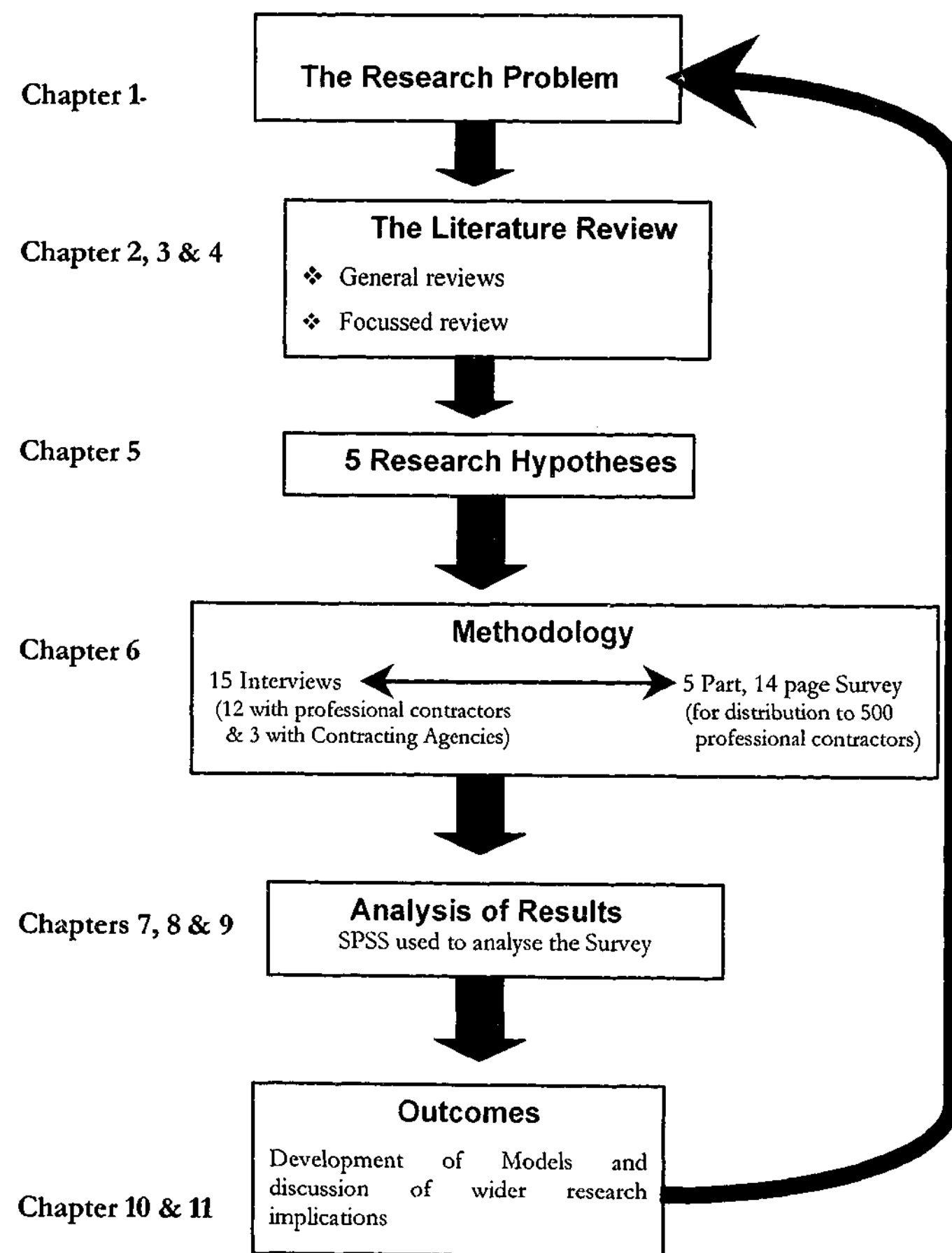
This chapter integrates various studies and works from the literature discussed in chapters 2 to 4 to develop a research investigation appropriate for the professional contractor which is illustrated in the flowchart structure of Figure 6.1. This process shows the pathway to the development of the survey instrument as the research tool for this investigation, and shows how it will evolve in the following chapters. The adoption of an ethnographic and qualitatively based approach based on semi-structured interviews has been widely used and validated in previous research on similarly diverse and heterogeneous populations. This ranges from small firms (Granger et. al., 1995; Payne and Payne, 1993) to the self-employed (Bogenhold and Staber 1991; Bradbury, 1996; Scott, 1993).

Besides clarifying and testing the items developed to operationalise the research hypotheses, this qualitative approach has the ability to overcome acknowledged problem of the lack of contact points for professional contractors (Probert & Wajcman, 1991).

The two groups targeted for interview were individual professional contractors (PCs) and the largest single identifiable body that deals with contractors - contracting agencies (CAs). Inclusion of this latter group appears especially appropriate given that evidence of the growth of the contracting workforce is often given by citing the growth in the number and size of contracting agencies (see for example Bridges, 1995a & 1995b; Casto, 1993; Garson, 1992, 1998; Macken, 1992). The 'large scale' perspective offered by the CA representatives is used to confirm the individual perspective offered by the PC interviews.

While the survey technique is well suited to the task of this current investigation, an important aspect raised in a number of other studies is that of the wording used in surveys. Casey, Metcalf and Milward (1997) note that the actual terms used to identify a peripheral arrangement, such as 'contractor' versus 'consultant' or 'freelancer,' can have different connotations depending on the occupation or industry. The need to use consistent and appropriate language that is recognisable by the target population is another reason to ground the development of the survey in a series of interviews with professional contractors and contracting agency representatives. As Figure 6.1 reveals, incorporating this step into the methodology allows for clarification and an initial testing of the research propositions underlying the hypotheses.

Figure 6.1: Development of the Research Process



Overall, the interview step in the development of the research methodology consequently aids significantly in the subsequent design of a survey relevant to the target population of the professional contractor.

6.2: The Interviews

While there is no specific information available on professionals in contracting employment, some indications can be extrapolated from data on professional occupations and self-employment from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 1998 & 1998a), as well as occupational projections (ACIRRT, 1999; Crean, 1995; DEET, 1991; Jones, 1995). The resulting data produced a rank ordering of professional occupations from management, computing, and healthcare to education professionals, accountants and engineers. The lack of data on contractors, let alone professionals contractors, means there is no way of knowing whether this rank ordering is actually representative of the numbers in professional contracting.

However, this introductory stage of the research aimed to have at least one representative for each of the targeted professions and formed the basis of an ad hoc sampling of twelve individual contractors. They were recruited from a variety of work contact sources in the relevant identified industries and asked to participate in an individual interview. The demographic profile, in terms of age, sex, occupation and such of the 12 contractors interviewed is shown below in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Characteristics

PC	Sex	Age	Years Contracting	Years Working	Own Classification	ANZSIC Classification	Qualifications
1	M	38	10	16	Systems Analyst	Computing	BCA
2	F	34	0.6	10	*Consultant	Healthcare	PG DIP
3	M	50	0.5	23	Economist	Education	PhD
4	M	52	20	27	Programmer	Computing	BA
#5	F	50	18	21	a) Programmer b) Tutor	a) Computing b) Education	MA
6	M	32	1	5	Scientist	Healthcare	PhD
7	M	57	4.3	32	Consultant	Management	BA
8	F	39	3	12	Disability Adviser	Healthcare	BA
9	M	56	1.6	26	Consultant	Management	PhD
#10	M	35	9	12	a) Engineer b) Designer c) Lecturer	a) Engineer/Mining b) Engineer/Design c) Education	BA
11	M	43	0.9	25	Accountant	Accountant	BBA
12	F	40	7	15	Consultant Engineer	Engineer/Petrochemical	MSC
Tot		526	75.5	224			
Av.		44	6.3	18.7			

*PC 2 objected to some of the connotations of this classification but agreed it is the most accurate

#PC 5 and PC 10 have both contracted in more than one industry and occupation

All contractors were asked to provide their own description of their current employment status, shown in the 'Own Classification' column in Table 6.1, follows the practice of both the Australian and British Labour Force Surveys.

The individual descriptions were then translated into the standard language of industries as defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification of Occupations (ANZSIC) 1993, confirming coverage of the target industries. The twelve professional contractor participants, 4 female and 8 male, ranged from 32 to 67 years of age, with an average of 44. Workforce experience working ranged from 5 to 32 years. Actual years contracting shows the group split between what labour force surveys would generally define as a 'seasoned' group of five individuals with five to twenty years experience and, a 'novice' group of four individuals, with one years experience or less. There was also a midpoint group of three who had been contracting between one and a half to just over four and a half years. The industry groupings covered the required

range of classifications while also indicating that variations within industries, such as engineering or education, require the added information of occupation to make it meaningful.

Three large Australia-wide contracting agencies covering at least one of the main occupational groups targeted were contacted at random. Representatives from each of the agencies were selected for interview on the basis that they were the people in charge of the Professional/Executive area of that agency. As illustrated in Table 6.2, two of the three agencies (CA's 1 & 3) can be represented as generalist while CA2 provided specialist expertise in the areas of draughting and engineering. In fact though, the interview revealed that "the only area we don't cover is accounting and, having said that, we are looking for a financial controller position at the moment for a client" (CA 2).

Table 6.2: Summary of Contracting Agency (CA) Attributes

	CA Reputation	Years Operating	Contractors Onsite	Contractors On Agency Books	Relationship of CA & PC
CA 1	Executive	46	350	2,500	Independent Contractor
CA 2	Technical	30	150	12,000	Subcontractor
CA 3	Professional/Executive	10	500	4,000	Independent Contractor
Totals			1,000	18,000	

The 'Reputation' column in Table 6.2 relates to what one Contracting Agency representatives called their "brand name" - what they are known for rather than what they actually do (CA 1). Collectively, the agencies cover the array of professions required for this research. Also, the years of operating for each is impressive given that contracting in Australia was "still pretty unusual until the eighties, when it really got off

the ground" (CA 1); a view confirmed by Macken (1992) in one of the few Australian studies which comments on agency employment arrangements.

Although none of the agencies could provide a general 'profile' of a generic professional contractor, all noted an increasing move to clients requiring the contractors they hire possess degrees and professional accreditation. Whereas such requirements have long been the norm amongst some professions such as accountancy and engineering, it is a more recent phenomenon in management and IT. Thus "an overall trend that we are seeing is that more and more, professional qualifications are almost a prerequisite to come and play" (CA 3). The key aim of all the agencies however was "providing a contractor that meets the clients' needs"(CA 1, 2 & 3).

Between them, the three agencies had approximately 1,000 professional contractors actually working 'in the field' at the time of interview and another 18,000 registered 'on the books.' The latter, very large number must take into account the multiple registering all Agencies noted as common practice amongst contractors. As one Agency representative commented:

Most who are working on a regular subcontract basis are registered with half a dozen agencies at least. It's basically a big pool with all the agencies sitting around like fisher people with big rods. All the same fish are in there and every now and then we'll pick one out and when we are finished with them, we throw them back in and someone else will get them (CA 2).

6.2.1: The Interview Schedule

As a result of an extensive review of the literature on contracting, temporary and part time work and self-employment, a 27 item, semi-structured interview schedule for

individual professional contractors was developed (see Appendix 2). Many of the items derive from the large scale and widely used British and Australian labour force studies, such as the monthly ABS Labour Force Survey, the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (AWIRS 1985; 1990) and the British Working Life Survey (BWLS). The main alteration has been to tailor the questions to the arrangement of contracting. Initial discussions with six professional contractors known to the researcher reduced the original number of items from 29 through the exclusion of 2 items that appeared potentially offensive to some. These items requested details of income and the parental experience of self-employment.

The feedback from contractors in the pilot survey also highlighted the important role of contracting agencies for some professional contractors. Five of the six contractors in these preliminary discussions had had some form of involvement with a contracting agency in their contracting career. This confirmed the addition of the midpoint on the continuum of contracting independence between dependence and full independence advanced in chapter 3 (see Figure 3.3). The literature on temporary employment and the role of the temporary help agency tends to portray a rather more simple relationship than appears to be the case for the professional contractor (Feldman, 1990; Negrey, 1990). Australian literature indicates the complexity of the legal relationships and reinforces the importance of the concept of contractor independence (Fenwick, 1992; Macken, 1992; Underhill and Kelly, 1993; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995). These factors appeared to confirm the need for the interview process to include contracting agency (CA) representatives.

As with professional contractors, a semi-structured interview schedule approach was adopted to capture the CA perspective. The resultant contracting agency schedule (see Appendix 2B) is a modified version of that used for professional contractors. The focus of agency involvement is to provide another perspective on the professionals' decision to take up contract employment.

The Interview Schedule for Professional Contractors

The 27 item Professional Contractor Interview Schedule is divided into the five subject areas of 'Background Details', 'Becoming a Contractor', 'Level of Independence', 'General Relationship With Employing Organisation' and 'Career' (refer 2A). The four items in 'Background Details' establish the professional contractors' current status in terms of occupation, work history and qualifications in his/her own words. The emphasis on 'own words' reflects the wide range of terminology in current use, from freelancer to consultant, as well as the possibility that some individuals may identify their work through a professional affiliation or title rather than an employment status. Part of the aim of this qualitative phase of the research is to establish whether there is a common language amongst the heterogeneous array of individuals in professional contracting.

The six items under the heading 'Becoming a Contractor' specifically deal with the first research hypothesis examining the reasons for an individual becoming a professional contractor. Essentially, they sought to discover whether the move was voluntary, whether they 'pulled' or 'pushed', what forms of support (both physical and mental) they needed to be able to make this decision and how this support assisted. These

questions drew on prior research on the self-employed in particular studies which have isolated factors such as experience, capital and social support networks as important components in the decision (Blanchflower and Oswald, 1991; Bryson and White, 1996; Rubery and Wilkinson, 1981; Rubery, Earnshaw and Burchell, 1993). These factors are also directly related to the third research hypothesis and makes explicit the linkages in the research framework illustrated in Figure 4.4B.

The level of independence addressed in the fourth hypothesis is a legally complex area and is covered by thirteen items from both the 'Level of Independence' and the 'General Relationship with Employing Organisation' sections of the interview schedule. These two sections address the second research aim on the changing contract of employment and worker satisfaction and establish factors such as the method of obtaining work through to key elements of the relationship with an employing organisation and their workers. The items derive from the standard legal tests used under taxation and workers compensation laws to determine employee versus contractor status (CCH, 1994; IDS, 1994; VWA, 1997).

The responses to these items provide the first test of the continuum of contracting independence proposed in chapter 4. The twelve contractors in the interviews were plotted against the continuum of contracting independence to assess true independent contractor status as distinct from the 'pseudo self-employment' growth documented in some sectors (Curran, 1990; Harvey, 1995; Granger et. al., 1995). The Professional Contractor Interview Schedule concludes with four items on future career plans and intention to remain in contracting, the theme of the second research hypothesis. These

also captured the dynamic nature of contract employment indicated by research on self-employment (Bryson and White, 1994, 1996; Bogenhold and Staber, 1991 & 1993).

The Interview Schedule for Contracting Agencies

The Schedule for Contracting Agencies follows a similar format to that described above. The key difference is that it asks information about professional contractors from the agencies' perspective (refer Appendix 2B). The 26-item schedule divides into the similar topic areas of 'Background', 'Becoming a Contractor', 'Independence' and 'Relationships.'

The first six 'Background' questions requested details about the agency and the professional contractors they cover. These questions aim to establish some estimate of the size and profile of the professional contractor population. The five items under 'Becoming a Contractor' focussed on the factors influencing individual decisions to seek contract employment through an agency. They address the first and, to some degree the second, research aim from an agency perspective. Agency representatives are asked for details of why professionals become contractors *per se* as well as why they become contractors through an agency.

The level of independence actually enjoyed by the professional contractors who used the particular agency were dealt with by five items that reflected the complex legal debate surrounding the contracting agency/contractor discussed in chapter 4. The formal versus the informal nature of the three way relationship, between contracting agency, professional contractor and employing organisation is also dealt with in this section.

The last five items explicitly deal with the emotional side of the three way relationship, particularly with the potential sources of conflict commonly identified by previous studies on the temporary help industry (see for example Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Feldman, 1990; Feldman and Doeringhaus, 1992; Negrey, 1990; Pearce, 1993).

Overall, three contracting agencies and twelve professional contractors took part in the interviews each of which lasted approximately 1-hour. All three contracting agency representatives elected to be interviewed on their premises while professional contractors were evenly divided between the university venue and their own offices. The results from both sets of interviews were analysed using the qualitative assessment software package QSR NUD*ist to identify linkages and common themes. The areas of commonality which emerged are outlined in detail in Appendix 3.1 and then summarised in Appendix 3.2.

Overall, the interview results clarified and provided direction on how to translate the five research hypotheses of chapter 5 into a survey tool. The importance of this process in underpinning the design of the survey is especially important for the complex areas of independence, dealt with in Appendices 3.3 and 3.4, and social support, in Appendix 3.5.

6.3: The Survey

While the use of interviews to support survey design is an accepted practice in a generative research methodology, it provides more than a way of validating results

within a larger population in this study (Simon, Sohal and Brown 1996; Simpson and Simpson 1981; Sohal, Simon and Lu 1996). The information from the interviews was used to produce questions tailored to the professional contractor and thus, redress the notoriously low response rate associated with surveys in general, and mail surveys in particular (Miller and Crabtree, 1992). The interview results also confirmed the advice of Schmitt and Klimoski (1991) and Sekaran (1992:68) that a range of methods in the way in which questions were structured, phrased and rated would increase response rates. Even more important, in this instance, was the means of distribution. The contracting agencies initially contacted for participation in the interviews became the solution to the research dilemma of reaching sufficient numbers of professional contractors. The role of the agencies in the distribution of the surveys is discussed in greater detail in section 6.4.

However, the first task was to design a survey which addressed each of the five research hypotheses. The complete survey which evolved, called 'Working as a Professional Contractor,' can be found in Appendix 3.2. The arrangement of the survey follows the order of the five research hypotheses developed in chapter 5. An abridged version of the items comprising each part of the survey is displayed at the commencement of each section and each item is addressed in detail. An important aspect of the discussion of each item is the distinction between those based on others' studies of peripheral work and items that have been developed specifically for this investigation.

6.3.1: The Role of 'Push' versus 'Pull' Factors

Hypothesis 1 - The 'pull' forces into a contracting career are positively related to perceived labour market opportunity while 'Push' forces are positively related to the movement out of (exit from) the previous career.

The views from the economic and sociological literature investigating motivations for entering self-employment tend to concentrate on the examination of opportunities and constraints (see for example Bogenhold and Staber, 1991 & 1993; Hakim, 1989; Stanworth et. al., 1995). The classic economic theories of self-employment, Knight's (1933) career and Schumpeter's (1934) default theory, provide the starting point for identifying the opportunities and constraints associated with the individual's decision to become a professional contractor. The possibilities for professional contracting have emerged as ranging from a defensive move against unemployment to being a career option for the most able and ambitious.

Part A of the Survey makes use of five questions to establish several perspectives of the professional contractors move into contracting. Illustrated in Figure 6.1 below, each of the items required different types of responses.

Figure 6.1: The Items from Part A of the Survey

The items establish:

A.1: The date of initial entry into contracting

A.2: The work arrangement/s immediately prior to becoming a professional contractor and level of satisfaction with this arrangement

A.3: The choice and timing of the move into contracting

A.4: The reason/s for becoming a professional contractor and how important these were in the overall decision

A.5: The sources of advice and/or support used when considering becoming a contractor and how important each was in the decision

Items A1 and A2 establish the date of entry into contracting and then, the type of employment immediately prior to contracting. While A1 merely requires a month and year to be filled in, prior work was established in A2 by selecting from a range of ten options standard to employment surveys (ranging from full-time permanent to unemployed). Information from these two items, when reconciled with a number of later items from Part C, indicates a range of exit points. The aim is to provide a longitudinal perspective similar to Curran and Curran's (1973) study which revealed the self-employed to be a diverse group of individuals who ranged from those in high - income positions with job security and opportunity for advancement to those who were economically and socially marginalised.

The actual nature of the move is dealt with in the third item of this section. Item A3 examines aspects of the choice and timing of the move into contracting. The responses of choice or no choice and of a direct or delayed move offered in the survey provide an extension of the Push/Pull Matrix developed in chapter 4. This further refinement is illustrated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: The Push/Pull Matrix – Stage2

	Left to Become a Contractor	Later Became a Contractor
Contractor by Choice	PULL (active choice)	DEFAULT 1 (later and by choice)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 (active but not choice)	PUSH (later but not choice)

The matrix allows examination of indications from the interviews for agreement with Carr's (1996:48) finding that some movements "may actually be seen as a default career choice - the result of organisational retrenchment rather than individual initiative." Further exploration of default explanations for contracting are provided by combining items from Parts A and C on Independence. Comparing previous status and income with contracting allows comparison with Uchitelle's (1993) finding, where many of the newly self-employed 'consultants' actually earned less than they did in their former salaried occupations.

The focussed nature of the matrix is extended by item A4 through the provision of a list of thirteen of the established push/pull options taken from economic (such as Bogenhold and Staber, 1991 & 1993), econometric (such as Taylor, 1994) and sociological (see Morris, 1995) studies. The interview process also lead to enhancements of the standard options so that the items differentiate between voluntary and involuntary redundancy as well as between the desire to set up in business by oneself and going into business with others.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the importance of each factor they have selected in their overall decision to become a contractor. Importance was measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The need for a qualitative dimension as a tool for evaluation was made clear by the results from the literature review and confirmed by the individual interviews supporting the design of this survey. The interviews highlighted the deficiencies of a simplistic approach where counting the number of push or pull factors, or even reconciling the two, would not provide a satisfactory explanation of the move into contracting. What was required was a weighting factor to add a 'value'

aspect to individual choices. The addition of this qualitative dimension to the push/pull dichotomy of Part A aimed to confirm the 'meta' qualities revealed in the interviews that the redundancy or retrenchment options have in pushing professionals into contracting.

Together with the demographic factors from Part F of the survey, the data from items 1 to 4 of Part A developed a profile of the professionals in contract employment. This provided the independent variables of age, gender and past work experience which are consistent with examining Knight's (1933) career and Schumpeter's (1934) default theory in terms of professional contract employment. Furthermore, age and stage factors can be incorporated into the investigation, so propositions such as Hall's (1986a) 'routine busting' can be examined in explaining the move to professional contractor status. The quantitative and qualitative aspects of these items also incorporate the work of Granger et. al., 1995 and Mallon, 1998 as well as the research framework of Feldman (1990) in that they recognise the relationship between personal and situational factors in the decision to move into professional contracting.

The last item of Part A extends the notions of linkages and relationships further as it requests information about the sources of advice and support individuals actually sought when considering the move into contracting. While A5 is more directly related to a later section of the Survey (Part D on Social Support), its role here is to differentiate between formal and informal sources and job search strategies in the initial stages of moving into contracting.

The sources of support in decision making are a well-established area of investigation in sociological studies of self-employment (see for example Granger et. al., 1995; Morris, 1995). This survey extends previous research endeavours by providing a comparison between the sources used prior to the move to contracting and the general 'support pool' an individual has (which will be established in Part D). The value of the responses to this item was further enhanced by the addition of a qualitative dimension where individuals rated the importance of each support person they nominated on a seven point Likert scale. The eleven support options provided ranged from 'no one' to 'family', 'work-mates' and a number of professional sources. The options derive from the three general groupings identified by Morris (1995) of kith and kin, of work associates and of professional services such as accountancy.

Together, Chapters 2 to 5 and the results of the interviews provided the basis for five items which investigate the nature of the initial move into contracting. In particular, the interviews identified the need to interpret 'push' as something more than redundancy or unemployment, and that some depth was needed beyond the traditional way of examining moves from one employment status to another. This has introduced an element of complexity as a lot of information is requested and this could be expected to reduce the response rate. Again, the interview process allowed the trial of this 'look' in terms of a number of pilot presentations to interview participants until a successful presentation was found. This laid the groundwork for investigating suggestions that "informal contacts are important in the job search strategies of short-term contract labour" (Morris, 1995:25) and that differences in social support structure and social contact may be directly linked to employment status (Gallie and White, 1993). Overall,

Part A provides a historical view of the decision to move into contracting. The logical step is to move to the current contracting situation. This is the task of Part B of the Survey.

6.3.2: The Changing Nature of the 'Contract of Work'

Hypothesis 2 - Satisfaction with a contracting career is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

Part B of the Survey is titled 'Being a Professional Contractor Today' and covers six areas which build on the historical perspective of the prior section. An overview of the items is illustrated in Figure 6.2 below and collectively, they progress the perspective of the Push/Pull Matrix to investigate the:

- movement within and between contracting and other forms of work;
- differing motives which explain why and how contractors remain in the arrangement;
- advantages and disadvantages that contractors believe are attributes of contracting; and
- intent to remain in contracting.

A key theme underlying Part B is the notion of potential disadvantage amongst the professional contract workforce. The movement between unemployment and various forms of peripheral work suggested in the works of Bryson and White (1994, 1996, 1997) and Atkinson et. al. (1996) was confirmed by the interviews with professional contractors and contracting agency representatives

Figure 6.2: The Items from Part B of the Survey

B.1: The work arrangement/s individuals are currently in and the level of satisfaction with the arrangement/s;
B.2: Preferred working arrangement/s and how important these preferences are;
B.3: The reason/s for being a professional contractor today and their importance;
B.4: The aspects of contracting individuals don't like and the importance of these dislikes;
B.5: Any changes in work arrangements since first becoming a professional contractor;
B.6: The likelihood an individual will cease being a professional contractor within the next 1, 2, 3 and 3 plus years

As with Part A, there was a second dimension underlying many of the items illustrated in Figure 6.2 which provided a weighting in terms of how important each selection made was or how satisfied an individual was with each selection. Many items in Part B relate to or mirror those in Section A - but the perspective has moved from the historical, initial decision to the present day. Thus, the eleven employment options offered in question 2 of Part A are presented again in B1 but in terms of details of the current working arrangement. Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with their current work arrangement/s on a seven point Likert scale. The same eleven options are also presented in item B2 but the focus moves to preferred working arrangements and the importance of this preference. The data from these two questions combines with Part A to compare satisfaction with the prior arrangement, satisfaction today and the arrangement the individual prefers

The focus on examining both past and current perspectives is carried through to the third set of items in Part B. This presents twelve of the fifteen options offered in Part A which describe the reasons for moving into contracting but rephrases them in terms of reasons the individual is a contractor now. The two 'redundancy' and one of the 'other' options are no longer relevant and are replaced with 'unlikely/unable to find

other work' and 'offers more stimulating work.' This allows the durability and consequences of the Push/Pull Matrix's focus on antecedence to be investigated.

The fourth set of items moves to examine current experience in terms of the unwelcome aspects of contracting. Fifteen disincentives to contracting are provided and respondents are asked to rate their importance on a 7-point Likert scale. The combined results of Parts A and B provide a foundation for answering the thesis questions:

- are professionals moving into contracting because of perceived opportunity, especially that related to the labour market?
- in terms of a 'contracting career', to what extent are such moves pre-planned?
- do individuals see contracting as a long term, sustainable way of work?

Question B.5 investigates this notion of contracting as a dynamic arrangement that may range from being a path out of unemployment to being a 'trap' or a 'bridge' (Buchtemann, 1989; Casey et. al., 1989; Natti, 1993;1995). Professional contracting as a 'trap', would be connected with unemployment and involuntary moves, and would provide few opportunities for more permanent employment. If it is a 'bridge', the converse is true.

The idea of movement between employment arrangements is advanced into a future perspective by item B.6 which questions the intent to remain in contracting over the periods of the next one, two, three and more than three years. The notion of

contracting as a dynamic work arrangement also provide an introduction to Part C of the survey, the aim of which is to determine the real character and nature of contracting as a way of work. This is the subject of the next section.

6.3.3: The Varying Levels of Legal Independence

Hypothesis 3 - The level of contracting Independence is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

This research Hypothesis examines the factors that motivate the individual to assume professional contractor status at a certain level of legal independence. The nineteen items in Part C provide the most lengthy and detailed area of the survey and build a comprehensive picture of independence within the world of the professional contractor. Many are derived from the labour law literature and actual legal tests of contractor versus employee status (Burgess, 1990; CCH, 1995b, 1996; Macken, 1992; VWA, 1997).

The complexities and discrepancies involved in making the distinction between contractor and employee are dealt with in more detail elsewhere (see McKeown, 1999) but there are a number of common indicators used by studies of self-employment. These range from incorporated versus unincorporated status (Aronson, 1991; Carr, 1996) through to place and hours of work, to details and sources of income (Bryson and White, 1996, 1997). These concerns are reflected in the synopsis of Part C items illustrated in Figure 6.3 below. Referring to Figure 6.3, items C.1 to C.5 develop a

profile of independence that can be translated into the Continuum of Contracting Independence (CCI). The applicability of the CCI as a tool for measuring independence was confirmed by the interviews (see Appendix 3.4).

The focus on income changes in item C.6 which seeks information on personal and spousal annual income. While other researchers note that such requests can cause offence to some individuals, this information provides a very simple basis for materially differentiating 'success' as a contractor. It permits comparison with the current average Australian income of the day as well as with specific professional occupations. The format of the options provided is taken from the regular ABS Monthly Statistics survey so provides direct comparison with official Australian income statistics.

Figure 6.4: The Items from Part C of the Survey

- C.1: The basis on which individuals are currently working;*
- C.2: Whether contractors have any employees;*
- C.3: The place individuals usually work from and satisfaction with this workplace;*
- C.4: The basis on which they are paid and satisfaction with this method;*
- C.5: How individuals determine the amount they charge for their services and satisfaction with this method;*
- C.6: Average annual income as a contractor and average annual income of spouse/partner;*
- C.7: Any other source/s of household income and the importance of these in terms of total household income;*
- C.8: Any variation in income and ability to control this variation;*
- C.9: How contracting currently pays compared to employees, prior contract work and prior non-contracting work;*
- C.10: Details of any money needed to set up as a contractor;*
- C.11: The number of clients worked for since first becoming a contractor and in the last year;*
- C.12: The sort of clients individuals work for and how many of each in the last year;*
- C.13: The percentage of time in an average working week individuals work for each client;*
- C.14: Whether individuals have ever been a direct employee of an organisation/client for whom they now provide services;*
- C.15: How individuals acquire work and how important each method is in obtaining work;*
- C.16: Choice of time and hours of work;*
- C.17: Control over the way work is performed;*
- C.18: The hours per week usually worked and satisfaction with working these hours;*
- C.19: Any employment 'extras' individuals have or do and how important they are.*

In a similar vein item C.7 requests an indication of the household's other income sources and comes directly from the ABS's regular Household Income Questionnaire. This information is used to indicate the importance of the professional contracting income in relation to the overall household income. An important issue which emerged from the interviews was the problem of income fluctuation. This is an issue associated in the literature with marginal work and control by others and it is examined in item eight of Part C both in terms of how much and how often it tends to occur.

The last two items in this subsection on finance (items C.9 & C.10) ask the individual to compare their current pay to an employee, previous contracts and any previous non-contracting jobs and then, to detail any sources of finance required to start up as a contractor. The results of Item C.9 provide an indication of both the role contracting plays in the life of the professional contractor and provides an indication of whether contracting is a bridge or a trap.

A different perspective on the role of contracting as a bridge or trap is provided through the notion of 'start-up capital' in item C.10. Generally, low start-up cost is associated with low risk and low commitment to an arrangement, while high cost is associated with higher risk and a greater likelihood of remaining in such employment (Galt and Moenning, 1996; Goffee and Scase, 1995; Taylor, 1994).

There are also some important legal aspects of contracting work and these were examined in the remaining items of Part C (refer to items C11-C19 in Figure 6.3). The number and type of clients and the percentage of time spent working for each is established by items C11 to C14. These four items provide a distinction between

'pseudo-contractors' who are really captive to one employer or agency and those who are genuinely independent. They also provide the data for investigation of the possibility of 'incubator' organisations, raised by Birley and Westhead (1993), especially when examined in conjunction with the next set of items on methods of acquiring work.

Four of the twelve options (including one 'other') presented in C.15 relate to work contact points. This item also differentiates between the contractors who actively seek work on their own behalf and those who rely on others to supply details to them. Providing a rating scale that accompanies each selection accommodates the likelihood of multiple methods of obtaining work. Items C.16 and C.17 questions choice of hours worked and control over the way in which it is done. Over the last century, these two concepts have provided the central basis for debate about contractor versus employee status. Dealt with in some detail in the discussions on defining contractors in chapters 3 and 4, the very basic rule is that the more choice and control an individual exercises, the more likely s/he is to be a self-employed, independent contractor rather than an employee. Choice and control are also relevant to the next item, which asks how many hours per week an individual works and how satisfied they are with this. This information can be directly compared with ABS statistics on working hours for professionals, for various work arrangements and for the 'average' Australian worker.

The last item of Part C requests information on plans and provisions for the future. The options derive from standard Questionnaires such as the British Labour Force Survey and have been further refined through the interview process. For each of the options

such as liability insurance, active savings plans and long-term career paths, the respondents are asked to indicate which ones they have and how important they believe them to be. Again, a seven point Likert scale, from 'not at all important' to 'extremely important' is used to rate each selection.

Overall, the responses to the nineteen areas of questioning of Part C can be used to differentiate between the various contracting arrangements as suggested by the Continuum of Contracting Independence developed in the previous two chapters. As with Parts A and B, Part C often incorporates weighting to the options selected to add insight into the actual mechanics and practicalities of working as a professional contractor. Also, much of the data can be directly compared with results from large scale studies of self-employment to indicate whether professional contractors are part of this more general population or, as claimed by many writers on the future of work, a distinct workforce in their own right.

The next section moves beyond the traditional areas of investigation for peripheral work outlined in the first three research themes, to the less conventional theme suggested by sociologist Lydia Morris (1995), - the role other people play in supporting and maintaining an individual in peripheral employment.

6.3.4: The Role of Social Support

Hypothesis 4 - The level of Social Support is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to maintain working as a contractor.

Morris's (1995) investigation of the social networks of informal association and exchange represent an under-explored aspect of social and economic life in peripheral work arrangements. The interviews which supported the development of the survey revealed that social support combines with the previously discussed factors of independence to offer a key to understanding the dynamics of the structural change which occurs when professionals move into contracting. Appendix 3.5 provides a summary of the interview results illustrating this.

Part D of the survey aims to formally establish the role social support plays in the working life of the professional contractor. It does so by building on item A.5 from Part A which established the key sources of support accessed in the initial decision to become a contractor. This section also enhances the picture on the changing contract of employment investigated in Part B. The items in Part D also encompass the material reviewed in chapters 3 and 4. These two chapters showed that writers on the new forms of career viewed networking and other forms of practical support as essential elements in constructing coherent identities in the 'boundaryless career' (see Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Collins and Watt, 1996; Collins, 1998).

However, there are some key terms that must be explained before examining the items that make up Part D. The concept of social support has largely been the domain of psychological research where it addresses individual patterns of contact, association and participation. The term itself refers to the clarity or certainty with which the individual experiences being loved, valued, and able to count on others should the need arise (Cobb, 1976). An important corollary to this definition is that "social support is likely

to be effective only to the extent it is perceived" and House (1981:27) argues that effective measurement of perceived support provides the best way in which to assess its relative importance.

There are a number of scales that have been developed to measure social support and, given the acknowledged validity and reliability factors associated with many of these, it is prudent to investigate these rather than develop and trial a new instrument. According to a large scale review of the area by Dunkel-Schetter (1992), the most common instruments used to measure social support are:

1. the International Support Evaluation List (ISEL) of Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck and Hoberman (1985);
2. the Perceived Support Scales for Family and Friends (PSS-Fa, PSS-Fr) of Procidano and Heeler (1983);
3. and the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) of Sarason and Sarason (1983 & 1987).

These three instruments are very similar and are highly correlated with one another (Sarason, Sarason, Shearin and Pierce, 1987). Of the three, the SSQ is the most widely used outside of a clinical setting and is the one most suited for use in this survey. The factors counting in its favour compared to the other two measures are the user-friendly language (refer Figure 6.4 for details of the SSQ items) as well as the less cumbersome nature (nine items compared to the fifteen in the PSS-Fa and twelve in ISEL).

The only other scale which appears appropriate is Turner's (1992) revised version of the Kaplan (1977) Scale, which includes aspects of love, esteem and network support

as well as integrating Weiss's (1974) Provisions of Social Relations (PSR) Scale. This latter scale assesses perception in relation to attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, reliability, alliance and guidance of family, friends and spousal support. The factors measured go into a great deal more depth than required for this investigation and an examination of the instrument reveals its complexity, language and depth of questioning is not really suitable for inclusion in this survey. A further factor in favour of Sarason et. al. (1987) scale is the fact that it makes a distinction it which appears highly relevant to this investigation, between that of available and received support - where available refers to the perception of the support available if needed. More recently, Sarason and Sarason (1994) have acknowledged that the primary source of confusion surrounding social support is that it is linked to both objective events (the actual availability of others) and to subjective estimates (the perception of others' willingness to help). The fact that this survey investigates the notion of social support within the context of becoming, and then subsequently remaining, a professional contractor, should overcome some of this confusion. The items of the SSQ are shown in Figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6.5: The Items of Part D of the Survey

Who Can You:
D.1: really count on to be dependable when they need help and how satisfied the professional contractor is with the help they receive;
D.2: really count on to help them feel more relaxed when under pressure or tense and how satisfied they are with the help received;
D.3: feel accepts you totally, including both worst and best points and how satisfied they are with the help received;
D.4: count on to really care about them, regardless of what is happening to them and how satisfied they are with the help received;
D.5: really count on to help you feel better when feeling generally down - in - the - dumps and how satisfied they are with the help received;
D.6: count on to console you when very upset and how satisfied they are with the help received.

Overall, the results from this section answer the basic question of whether friendship or kinship is the more important source of support, raised in Morris's (1995) study.

Furthermore, comparing the results of this study, firstly for within group variations and then, with the results of other studies (as the SSQ is a very popularly published research tool) will hopefully provide further insight into the Thesis question of whether the professional contractor represents a widely accepted or used new way of working.

6.3.5: The Question of Commitment

Hypothesis 5 - The level of commitment a contractor has to the:

- a) *Host Organisation is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting;*
- b) *Contracting Agency is positively related to the initial 'push' factors associated with the move into contracting.*

Commitment is generally accepted as being the "strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation" (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian, 1974:604). This definition provides three distinct factors that are relevant to this study:

1. a belief and acceptance of Organisational goals and values;
2. the willingness to exert considerable effort; and
3. a desire to maintain organisational membership.

While these three aspects are reflected in the nine areas of questioning that makes up Part E of the Survey, the literature review process in chapters 2 to 4 indicated that the concept of commitment has undergone some fundamental changes. Thus, while the

traditional 'currency' of commitment between organisation and employee has been the exchange of skills for employment security (Ehrlich, 1994; Rousseau, 1989) it is a notion that is severely challenged when the individual moves into contracting arrangements. The notion of commitment has more recently been extended to consider the possibility of dual or even multiple commitments (Bemmels, 1995; Reed, Young and McHugh, 1994). The relationships of contracting (previously illustrated in Figure 4.3) must also be placed within the context of organisational restructuring.

The interviews conducted in the development of the survey indicated that professional contractors who have a preference for traditional employment may exhibit greater commitment to the host organisation than professional contractors who are satisfied with their employment status. However, as Figure 4.3 demonstrates, the situation can become even more complex with the addition of the contracting agency into the working relationships of the professional contractor. Furthermore, the relationships that agency employment may cover were also verified by the interviews as varying from the limited role of matching a host organisation with a contractor through to being the actual employer of the contractor. The role and effect of agency employment in terms of commitment to the host organisation and to the agency consequently becomes an important issue for investigation within the professional contractor workforce.

Benson's (1996) study of this aspect of commitment found that commitment was significantly higher to the host organisation than the to employment agency, except where the contractor had been retrenched prior to employment as a contractor. In this case, commitment to the agency may be higher than the Host Organisation (Benson,

1996:3). The instrument Benson (1996) used to measure commitment was the nine item version of the Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire. The reliability and validity of the scale is well established (Mowday, Steers et. al., 1979, 1982) and has lead to its widespread use (see for example Deery, Erwin and Iverson, 1994; Iverson, Mcleod and Irwin, 1995; Kalleberg and Reve, 1993; Mottaz, 1985, 1988; Pearce, 1993). The OCQ has also been used to compare full-time with part time workers (Lee and Johnson 1991). The widespread use and acceptability of the OCQ, it's brevity, the comparability with other work arrangements and particularly, the ability to compare with another Australian example makes it a very suitable base for Part E of this Survey.

As Figure 6.4 below illustrates, the nine item OCQ was modified to request respondents to rate each of the nine items in terms of both the host organisation they are currently working for *and* the contracting agency they are "currently actively registered with" (see Appendix 3.2).

Figure 6.6: The Items of Part E of the Survey

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| In terms of the; | a) Host organisation |
| | b) Contracting Agency |
| E.1: | willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help an organisation be successful; |
| E.2: | talk up an organisation to friends as a great organisation to work for; |
| E.3: | would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for an organisation; |
| E.4: | find that their values and the values of an organisation are very similar; |
| E.5: | are proud to tell others that they are part of an organisation; |
| E.6: | feel an organisation really inspires the best in them in the way of job performance; |
| E.7: | are extremely glad that they chose this organisation to work for over the others being considered at the time that they joined; |
| E.8: | really care about the fate of an organisation; |
| E.9: | feel that this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work. |

The Agency component of each respondent's answer was assured as mail out of the survey was through one of three participating Contracting Agencies - thereby ensuring that all respondents are currently registered with at least one agency. The addition of the dual options of Client/Host Organisation and Contracting Agency into the OCQ provides for direct comparison between the two most obvious sources of commitment. It directly tests the hypothesis as to whether these dual sources can both be satisfied or whether commitment to one is at the expense of the other.

In summary, the construct of commitment within the changing world of work, its place within the professional contractor realm of the peripheral workforce and the implications it has for both Host Organisation and Agency are directly examined in this part of the survey.

6.3.6: Demographic Details

Part F of the Survey supplies the demographic variables that are commonly used as the foundations of statistical analysis. These range from industry and profession to country of birth, age and sex to marital status and number of dependents. Unlike the traditional survey, these details are requested at the end of the survey, as there are indications that this placement directly increases the response rate (Diamotopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 1996). Given that the survey consists of fourteen pages and often requests complex and detailed information, any means of encouraging survey completion is important (Babbie, 1998).

6.4: Administering the Survey

Together with an explanatory front cover, the translation of the five research hypotheses into a measuring instrument produced a fourteen page survey. The variables covered by the survey formalise the content of a series of semi-structured interviews that have clarified and tested key issues (King, 1994a; Kvale, 1996). The complexity and length of the result, however, clearly exceeds that recommended for a high response rate from participants (Gay and Deihl, 1992).

Administering the survey in a way, which maximises the chances of completion, was complicated by the fact that professional contractors do not form a single identifiable group or have any set contact points. The use of the three contracting agencies from the interview process as the distribution points for the survey overcame these two problems. Firstly, Agencies appear to be the only bodies with access to large scale populations of contractors and secondly, the individuals registered with them will all be familiar with the label of 'contractor'. Furthermore, the need to access a population who could relate to the term "contractor" emerged clearly in the interviews and was supported in the findings of other researchers (see for example Casey et. al., 1997; Mallon, 1999; Meulders et. al., 1994).

Although this study has only used the term 'professional contractor', the Interviews found individuals themselves may have a variety of different labels that can be applied - such as 'management consultant,' 'freelancer' or 'temporary worker.'

In summary, the three contracting agencies who participated in the interviews also provided the distribution point for a total of five hundred surveys between them. The actual number distributed to each was based on their current active registrations of professional contractors and provided for a distribution of two hundred surveys to CA 1, fifty to CA 2 and two hundred and fifty to CA 3. The surveys themselves were identical across the three CAs and included return paid envelopes. Each CA attached its own covering letter, (refer Appendix 4) and then distributed to the professional contractors currently actively working through them.

6.5: Defence of Research Method

The lack of any Australian statistics on contractors, let alone professional contractors, already noted in chapters 3 and 4, is further compounded by the absence of a body representing professional contractors. These two factors present considerable problems for any attempt to ground this investigation in statistics, to substantiate claims of generalisability or to easily access numbers of professional contractors. The research method is of necessity, exploratory and displays aspects of grounded theory whereby it builds on existing literature to test, clarify and identify variables for examination in the professional contractor workforce. Previous studies of peripheral work arrangements have found ways to deal with similar problems and this has led to the development of a survey to undertake a quantitative examination of the target workforce (see for example Meulders et. al., 1994; Quinlan, 1998; Upton, 1995). The process used to develop the survey also provided the mechanism for overcoming

problems of isolating sufficient numbers of professional contractors through the use of Contracting Agencies. Because the study has set out to identify rather than validate relationships, the non-random nature of this part of the research process. Consequently, the most serious limitations this investigation was originally presented with have been overcome.

6.6: Summary

This chapter has developed the five hypotheses that have evolved from the literature reviews into a research investigation of the professional contractor workforce. The research methodology that has resulted will achieve this through a mix of both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. This is a distinctive feature which sets this investigation apart from the traditional ways in which work is examined. The aim is to capture the nature of the dynamic and complex reality behind the working world of the professional contractor.

CHAPTER 7

ESTABLISHING THE PUSH/PULL MATRIX

This chapter presents the findings of two of the six sections of the professional contractor survey. The two sections, Parts A and F, provide details of respondents' initial reasons for entering contracting and their demographic information. Together, these two are the subject of the first research hypothesis which establishes the push and pull forces operating in the move into contracting. Analysing the results of the reasons individuals initially entered contracting provides the basic framework for the Push/Pull Matrix which underpins this research. The progressive development of the framework in this chapter produces an increasingly revealing profile of the professionals' initial move into contract employment. The chapter concludes by introducing the task for the next chapter, the use of the Push/Pull Matrix to examine the current world of work.

7.0: Overview of the Survey Results

Of the 500 surveys sent out by the three Contracting Agencies to the professional contractors registered with them, 240 completed and useable questionnaires were returned. This 48 percent response rate is much higher than the 33 percent normally achieved in a mail out survey (Diamotopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 1996; Gay and Diehl, 1992; Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991). The use of three Contracting Agencies (CAs) as

the means for distribution appears to have aided in the high response rate and comments on a number of completed surveys also indicated that individuals felt justified as being 'recognised' as comprising a separate workforce.

7.1: Demographic Details

Part F of the Survey requested seven items of personal information to address areas typically associated with labour force investigations.

7.1.1: Industry & Occupation

The first two items required respondents to indicate the industry in which they were currently working and the professional occupation they best or most fitted into. While both industry and occupation were relevant to this investigation, the emphasis is on professions. It is a focus common to the literature on labour market supply (see for example Abraham and Housman 1993; Aronson 1991; Broadbent, Dietrich and Roberts, 1997; Granovetter, 1994; Koshiro, 1992) and the professional occupations data consequently forms the basis for most of the comparative analysis that follows.

One very clear but unexpected result that emerged from the occupational classifications was eleven respondents who nominated to physically write in and replace one of the 'other' options available with that of 'Accountants'. While this profession is generally dealt with in official databases as a subset within the Business/Manager/Administrator option (refer Appendix 1: Definitions), these respondents obviously felt strongly that

they were a distinct grouping. While there may be other 'accountants' who have not identified themselves, those who have will be treated as a distinct group for analysis.

The cross tabulation of industry with occupation is presented in Table 7. 1 to reveal very clear industry groupings of Engineers within mining and then manufacturing and IT professionals in Finance & Insurance and then, Communication Services and Public Administration. Another feature is that both Business/Manager/Administrators and IT professional contractors are present in all but three of the thirteen industries.

Table 7.1: Respondents by Industry & Occupation

	PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS										
	Scientist	Arch/Draught	Bus/Manager/Admin	IT	Health & Welfare	Educator	School Teacher	Engineer	Social/Arts Misc.	Unsure	Accountants
Mining	1	2	3	1				20			27
Manufacturing		3	11	2				11			27
Utilities*								1			1
Construction		11						6			18
Wholesale**			6	2							9
Transport/Storage		1		6							7
Communication	3	6	1	12						1	23
Finance/Insurance			3	21							24
Education			5	1		8	2				16
Public Admin/Defence		1	14	12	2			2			37
Health/Community			8	4	10						23
Recreation***	1		4		4						9
Property/Business		4	6	4	1				2		19
TOTALS	5	28	61	65	17	8	2	40	2	1	11240

*of Electricity, Gas & Water ** and Retail Trade ***and Personal and other Services

Overall, the three dominant professions are IT, Business/Manager/Administrators and Engineers, a result that reflects key areas of identified labour demand in Australia (see for example Barnes, Johnson, Kulys and Hook, 1999; EPAC, 1996; Sunderland, 2000). The translation of this shortage into labour market advantage is well documented,

especially for IT professionals where there has been ongoing media attention to widespread "chronic" shortages (Drake, 1999:30; Evans, 2000). These results provide some early indication of support for the 'pull' theory of contracting – for some professional occupations at least.

Examining the industry perspective provided by Table 7.1 in terms of labour markets provides two potential explanations of professional contracting. Firstly, the industries of Public Admin/Defence, Health & Community and Education are traditionally associated with the public sector. The size of their representation in these results appears to reflect the large scale moves to outsourcing, contracting out and privatisation in the state and local government sector in Victoria over recent years. Researchers in the public sector/outsourcing area generally consider such moves to be indicative of a change in the employment relationship and in the composition of the workforce which provide a 'push' into contracting (Albin, 1992; Hodge, 1996; Trifiletti, 1996). Accordingly, former public servants who faced the option of unemployment or a changed employment relationship as a result of privatisation, end up contracting, virtually by default. Secondly, there is the view which argues that the restructuring of the public sector provides individuals with the opportunity to change their employment status, a move perhaps made easier for some by the size of the redundancy payouts which are offered (Broadbent et. al., 1997a; Coulter, 1993; Grinker, 1996).

The first explanation also encompasses the option of 'forced' contractor status where individuals are moved from employee to contractor status either as an employer strategy

to reduce the size of their core workforce or as part of the outsourcing arrangement. While quite distinctly different studies, Benson (1998) and Hodge (1998) have both documented such moves in the State of Victoria and these may be relevant to the results of this study. The importance of structural changes within an industry also needs to be considered together with moves by employers to alter the composition of their workforce. Evidence of this can be seen in Table 7.1 which shows the very minor role that the Electricity, Gas & Water Supply now plays in contracting. It is an industry which has experienced a 43 per cent reduction in employment numbers over the period 1978 to 1997 (Barnes et. al., 1999:xiii). While the minimal response rate for this industry means it will be omitted from further analysis, it serves as a reminder that the data for this study was obtained from three large, generalist contracting agencies and that there are also large numbers of smaller, industry-specific agencies also operating. It is highly possible that contractors in the Electricity, Gas & Water Supply industry operate through such agencies. Overall, the view presented by the results in Table 7.1 is that contracting is a dynamic arrangement for both industry and profession.

7.1.2: Gender

Introducing the gender variable to the analysis reinforces the domination of the three occupations of IT, Business/Management/Administration and Engineering. Table 7.2 shows that 179 respondents (74.6%) were males and sixty-one (25.4%) were females. While there is no data available to gauge whether this ratio adequately represents females in contract employment, it does under-represent the ratio of females in professional occupations where, in 1995 there were 3 females to every 5 males (ABS, 1997). However, comparisons can be made with other forms of peripheral work in

Australia. The ratio of males to females contrasts sharply with part time employment where women constitute over two thirds of the workforce, and casual employment, where women constitute just over half the workforce (Burgess and Campbell 1998; Simpson et. al., 1996).

Table 7.2: Respondents by Occupation and by Gender

OCCUPATION	Male	Female	% Male	%Female	Total	%
Scientist	5	0	2.1	0	5	2.1
Architect/Draught/Build	25	3	10.4	1.3	28	11.7
Bus/Manager/Admin.	47	14	19.6	5.8	61	25.4
Information Technology	53	12	22.1	5.0	65	27.1
Health & Welfare	0	17	0	7.1	17	7.1
Education	2	6	0.8	2.5	8	3.3
School Teacher	2	0	0.8	0	2	0.8
Engineer	34	6	14.2	2.5	40	16.7
Social/Arts/Miscell.	0	2	0	0.8	2	0.8
Unsure	1	0	0.4	0	1	0.4
Accountant	10	1	4.2	0.4	11	4.6
TOTALS	179	61	74.6%	25.4%	240	100%

These findings suggest that the marginalisation associated with females' dominance of the most common forms of peripheral employment, are not relevant in professional contracting. As suggested by writers on the future of work, professional contractors may occupy a distinctive position within the wider peripheral workforce. The combination of occupation and gender presented in Table 7.2 also reveals that female respondents were concentrated in the Health & Welfare profession, constituting 100 per cent of professional contractors.

While IT and Bus/Man/Admin represent the two largest occupational groupings for both males and females, the gender distribution for the rest of the professions diverge

While IT and Bus/Man/Admin represent the two largest occupational groupings for both males and females, the gender distribution for the rest of the professions diverge quite markedly. Overall, the ratio of male to female contractors is higher than that found for the professional in standard employment (ABS, 1997). This is true for the three dominant professions (IT, Bus/Man/Admin and Engineering), where males account for 77 per cent, 81.5 per cent and 85 per cent of these professions respectively. The only occupation where male dominance is statistically significant is that of Architect/Draught/Building ($p = .019$) while both Health & Welfare and Education have a significant female dominance ($p = .000$ and $.003$ respectively).

7.1.3: Age

The dominance of the three professions is further investigated in Table 7.3 where the interactions of respondent's age, gender and occupation are shown. Of the 178 respondents (45 per cent) between 35 and 44 years of age, 73 (nearly 79 per cent) were from the IT, Bus/Man/Admin. and Engineering occupations. While the dominance of the 35-44 age group corresponds to their overall position within the general labour force, they only account for 26 per cent of this general population, compared to the 45 per cent in the survey (ABS, 1998a). This comparison suggests that some caution may need to be exercised as the population represented in this survey may be skewed and requires further investigation before inferences can be made about the professional contractor workforce in general. The results also show that the 35-44 age concentration accounts for just over half female respondents (32 out of the 62) and they are spread over eight of the eleven occupations. Males however concentrate in distinct age and

occupational groupings. The IT profession has two such clusters, one of 15 males aged 25-29 and another of 18 aged 40-44.

Similarly, Business/Management/Administration has two groups of 14 individuals in the 50-54 and 55-59 age groups. Engineering also has one distinct cluster under the 40-44 age group.

Table 7.3: Respondents by Age, Gender & Occupation

AGE GROUP																				
	Under 24		25 to 29		30 to 34		35 to 39		40 to 44		45 to 49		50 to 54		55 to 59		60 to 64		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Scientist			1		3								1					5	5	
Architect/Draught/Build					2	1	7	1	6		2		6	1	1			25	3	28
Bus//Manager/Admin.			3	2	2	4	6	4	3	2	3	2	14		14			47	14	61
IT	1	2	15		3	2	9	5	18	2	1	1	2		4			53	12	65
Health & Welfare						1		5		3		3				5			17	17
Education								2		2		2	1		1			2	6	8
Engineer			1	2	2		4		17	3	4	2	1		4		1	34	6	40
Accountant							1		5	1	2		1		1			10	1	11
TOTALS	1	2	20	4	12	8	27	19	49	13	12	9	26	1	28	5	4			
TOTAL	3		24		30		46		62		21		27		33		4		*240	

*Includes data omitted from the Table due to small sample size for occupations of School Teachers, Social/Arts/Misc. & Unsure

These clusters seem to indicate patterns of movement into various occupations. Looking firstly at IT, Table 7.3 reveals that it accounts for 75 per cent of the 25-29 age group. Reference to career theory, discussed in section 4.1.2, suggests this younger grouping reflects a stage of early career exploration which will be followed by a later movement into traditional employment. The second move into alternative employment for IT professionals appears to be at age 40-44 and is typically associated with an escape from career 'plateauing'. It is an explanation which may also be relevant to this

age group in general as, in Table 7.3, it is the group with the largest number of respondents. It accounts for 50 per cent of male engineers and male accountants. The 50-59 year age group is also important with nearly 50 per cent being male Bus/Man/Admin. professionals. The concentration in this age group tends to be explained by career theory in terms of the desire for new challenges. It is a stage that is not necessarily associated with the traditional work goals of financial reward, status and power. These explanations will be explored in more detail in the section 7.2 of this chapter.

7.1.4: Ethnicity, Marital Status & Dependents

Examination of the data on country of origin reveals that 60 per cent of professional contractors (144 of the 240 respondents) were Australian born (see Appendix 7A). The UK & Ireland and NZ provide the two main sources of non-Australian respondents, accounting for a further 55 individuals and together, these three countries account for 83 per cent of respondents. Overall, as Table 7.4 shows, these results do not appear to support Schumpeter's (1921) default explanation whereby individuals entering contracting because standard employment is denied to them on the grounds of ethnicity.

Table 7.4: Respondents by Country of Origin and Gender

Country of Origin																				
		Australia		NZ		Other Oceania		UK & Ireland		Other European		Asia		Africa		USA & Canada		NH/ Sib America		
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	112	32	14	11	1	0	23	7	10	6	5	2	1	0	12	1	1	1	2	1

Asia covers the options of Southeast, Northeast & Southern Asia but the data is collapsed in this table because of the low response rate

However, when the factor of gender is added to the analysis, default explanations emerge as significant for females as exactly half of the female respondents are from non-Australian origins.

Table 7.5 shows that marital status is also important since 79 per cent of respondents were either married or in a de facto relationship. Males comprise 77.4 per cent (146 out of 189) of the married/defacto group yet, nearly 82 percent of all male respondents (146 out of 179) belonged to this group. This compares with just over 70 per cent for all female respondents.

Table 7.5: Respondents by Gender & Marital Status

	Marital Status				Total
	Single	Married/ De Facto	Widow/er	Divorced/ Separated	
Male	23	146	1	9	179
Female	8	43	2	8	61
	31	189	3	17	240

The picture emerging is that women move into contracting regardless of their marital status, whereas having a partner appears to increase the likelihood of men making the move into contracting. The interviews which aided in the development of the survey identified this gender difference and suggest that the social and financial support a partner provides is important to males. Conversely, the absence of a partner appears to be important to women. These propositions will be further investigated in subsequent sections of the survey.

Another distinct area of gender difference is revealed in Table 7.6 which examines the impact of dependents.

Table 7.6: Respondents by Gender & Number of Dependents

	Number of Dependents				Total
	None	One	Two	Three Plus	
Male	91	45	27	15	178
Female	29	9	19	4	61
	120	54	46	19	239*

*data missing for one male respondent

Nearly twice as many females (30 per cent of all female respondents) as males have two dependents which suggests that there may be different motivations for males and females entering contracting. While examination of the correlation between marital status and number of dependents (refer Appendix 7B) provided no useful explanations of this result. However, reference to the career literature (refer section 4.1.2) indicated that aspects such as the age of respondents and of dependents would be more helpful.

With this in mind, Table 7.7 shows that, for women, dependants are predominantly school age children. Only male respondents had dependent spouses. There are distinct concentrations both within the age groupings of the parents (respondents) and of their dependent children. The concentration of children is spread throughout the age groups for males but peaks in the 6-12 and 13-18 age groups. For females the peak is very clearly in the pre-school (under 5 years) and primary school (6-12 years) age groups while the age of these women is predominantly in the 35-44 age range. This

finding correlates to ABS statistics on the child rearing age for females in professional occupations (ABS, 1998b).

Table 7.7: Effects of Age, Gender & Number of Dependents

Age Group	Sex	Depend spouse	Child 5 & under	Child 6-12	Child 13-18	19+ Dependent	Total Dependents
Under 24	M						0
	F				*2		2
25-29	M		1				1
	F						0
30-34	M		1				1
	F		1	1	1		3
35-39	M	3	4	5			12
	F		6	5	1		12
40-44	M	2	8	18	19	2	49
	F		4	9	2		15
45-49	M	3		5	8		13
	F			4	1	1	6
50-54	M	2	1	6	8	6	23
	F						0
55-59	M	5		3	7	1	16
	F						0
60 plus	M	1			1		2
	F						0
Total	M	16	15	37	43	9	120
	F	0	11	19	7	1	38
			26	56	50	10	158

NB: This table presents dependents as separate categories with no links between them. It thus over represents the number of respondents with dependents as some may have dependents within a number of categories

*both these young women had much older spouses and it may be intimated that the presence of older dependent children were the products of their partner's earlier marriages

Given that women still bear most of the direct responsibility for childcare (Allen, 1994; Brown, 1995; Carr, 1996; Devine, 1994; Ferguson, 1995) there is evidence emerging from these results to support Schumpeter's (1934) default explanation of employment for some women in professional contracting. Thus, while professional women have primary responsibility for dependent children, standard employment options are not available to them. Alternatively, the results may support the recent

research findings of Mallon (1999) and Shaw, Taylor and Harris (1999) which suggest that the new concept of career, encapsulated in the arrangement of professional contracting, may be especially appropriate to women caring for dependent children. The issue of whether the move is one of choice is investigated in depth in the next section of this chapter on the push and pull of the initial move into contracting

7.1.5: Summary

This section has addressed each of the seven demographic variables from Part F of the Professional Contractor Survey. Indications of differing patterns in the concentration of respondents amongst the professions of IT, Business/Management/Administration and Engineering has emerged and the factors of age and sex of respondents provide profiles of two distinct groups of males who may have quite different motivations for contracting.

For women, both ethnicity and the presence of dependent children emerge as important within the 35-49 year old age group. The different factors which make up the emerging profile suggests a number of push/pull and default explanations of employment that guide the analysis of the results in later sections of this chapter. To gain further insight into the relationships between the different factors requires the results on the initial move into contracting (from Part A of the Survey) be analysed. These establish the framework of Push/Pull Matrix and then permit the first research hypothesis to be tested.

7.2: The role of Push versus Pull factors

Four of the items in Part A establish the exit point from prior employment and the point of entry into contracting. The items build consecutively on each other to provide a snapshot of the original move as one of either being 'pushed' by constraint or 'pulled' by opportunity. Together, the items develop the basic structure of the Push/Pull Matrix and provide detail of individual causal factors and personal relationships suggested by the first research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 - The 'pull' forces into a contracting career are positively related to perceived labour market opportunity while 'Push' forces are positively related to the movement out of (exit from) the previous career.

The first stage for examination of this hypothesis commences with details of the initial move into contracting.

7.2.1: The Initial Move into Contracting

Item A1 establishes the date of the original move into contracting. While this date may not necessarily relate to a continuing or unbroken career as a contractor, it does provide a useful reference point for comparison between individuals. As shown in Table 7.8, the elapsed time since first entering contracting reveals some clear patterns when age and sex of respondent are examined. There appear to be two distinct groupings for males. The first of is a cluster of 58 who entered contracting between two to three years ago and the second a group of 60 who entered between five to fifteen years ago. These two groups account for over 56 per cent of the total male population.

Examining the composition of these two clusters in Table 7.8 above reveals a fairly general distribution over the age range for the first cluster (of 58) but two concentrated age groupings within the second (of 60). The 30-39 age range in the 5 to 10 years of contracting option captures 11 of the 39 responses while 40-44 year old males with 5-15 years since entering contracting account for 22 of the 60 responses. These two age related clusters within the male population correspond with the groupings found in the previous section of this chapter and provides evidence of a solid nucleus of male professionals dedicated to working as contractors and who made this decision in their early to mid thirties.

Table 7.8: Entry into Contracting by Gender & Age

Age	Sex	Time since First Entered Contracting										Total
		Under 6 months	Under 1 year	Under 2 yrs	Under 3 yrs	Under 4 yrs	Under 5 yrs	5 to 10 yrs	11 to 15 yrs	16 to 20 yrs	Over 20 yrs	
Under 24	M	1										1
	F		1	1								2
25-29	M	3	4	9	3		1					20
	F		1	1	2							4
30-34	M	2		4	4	1		1				12
	F		2	1	2			2	1			8
35-39	M		2	3	4	2	3	10	3			27
	F		1	3	2	3	2	6	2			19
40-44	M		5	8	6	2	1	11	11	5		49
	F	1	1	1	1	1	2	6	1			13
45-49	M		1	2	1		2	4	1		1	12
	F			1		1	5	1		1		9
50-54	M	4	3	2	2			5	2	2	6	26
	F						1					1
55-59	M			4	5	2	5	7	4		1	28
	F		2	3								5
60 plus	M				1		1	1		1		4
	F											0
	M	10	15	32	26	7	13	39	21	8	8	179
	F	1	7	11	7	5	10	15	4	1	0	61
Total		11	22	43	33	12	23	54	25	9	8	240

Women also fell into two distinct groupings, one at between 1 and 2 years since entering contracting and a second at between 4 to 10 years. While this second grouping falls in a lower "time spent contracting" option than it did for males, these two clusters of women account for 18 per cent and 41 per cent respectively, making up 59 per cent of the total female population of the survey.

As with the results for males, females in the first cluster are distributed throughout the age groups. Twelve of the 15 females who entered contracting 5 to 10 years ago are aged between 35-44. Prior results have also indicated that dependent children are a feature of female professional contractors within the 35-44 age ranges so both occupation and dependents need to be included in the analysis.

Table 7.9 provides a view which combines occupation, gender and date of entry into contracting. The main point to arise from these results is that only a small proportion of the total population appears to have a long-term attachment to contracting. Also, the concentration of males in Information Technology (IT), Business, Management, Administration (Bus/Man/Admin) and Engineering previously identified as the dominant occupations, now displays quite distinct patterns in terms of initial time since first entering contracting. Table 7.9 shows that Bus/Man/Admin. Professionals are fairly new entrants in the contractor workforce. Combined with the fact that this occupation represents over 25 per cent of the total contractor population in the survey, there is indication that growth in this occupation within contracting is the result of recent labour market activity. Whether this is the result of push or pull factors will be examined shortly.

Table 7.9 displays quite a different distribution for the IT profession where 30 of the individuals (46 per cent) first entered contracting over 5 years ago. The overall distribution is fairly even, with one exception being the group of 12 males who entered less than 2 years ago. Overall, the view of IT is one where longer-term attachment reflects the widely cited position of labour market advantage as well as perhaps providing evidence of an occupation where contracting is sustainable as a long term employment arrangement.

Table 7.9: Entry into Contracting by Occupation & Gender

Occupation	Sex	Time Since First Entered Contracting										Total
		Under 6 months	Under 1 year	Under 2 yrs	Under 3 yrs	Under 4 yrs	Under 5 yrs	5 to 10 yrs	11 to 15 yrs	15 to 20 yrs	Over 20 yrs	
Scientist	M	1		1						3		5
	F											0
Arch/Draught/Build	M		1	1	4	1	2	6	3	4	3	25
	F						1	2				3
Bus/Manager/Admin	M	6	5	10	11	2	5	7			1	47
	F		3	2	3	3	2		1			14
IT	M	3	6	12	4	3	3	8	9	4	2	54
	F			4			1	4	2	1		12
Health & Welfare	M											0
	F		2	3	1	1	4	6				17
Education	M		1	1								2
	F		1	1		1	2	1				6
Engineers	M			4	3	1	1	18	7			34
	F	1			3			2				6
Accountant	M		2	3	1		2		1		1	10
	F			1								1
	M	10	15	32	25	7	13	39	21	8	8	178
	F	1	7	11	7	5	10	15	4	1		61
TOTAL		11	22	43	32	12	23	54	25	9	8	239*

NB: The Totals include data omitted within the body of the Table due to small sample size
* 1 respondents who was "unsure" of their occupation has been omitted

The results also support the 'occupational norm' explanations of contracting expressed by the IT participants in the interviews that assisted in the development of the survey. This is demonstrated for the occupation of engineering in Table 7.9 where a group of 18

males entered contracting in this profession 5 to 10 years ago. Overall, 67 per cent of Engineers entered contracting between 5 to 15 years ago. As with IT, Engineering emerges as an 'older' contracting profession but one where labour market opportunity, or other 'pull' forces, may no longer be operating as strongly as they once did. While the lower numbers make it difficult to extrapolate, the totally female occupation of Health & Welfare also demonstrates concentration in years contracting, this time for those with 4 to 10 years in contracting.

Overall, the results from the survey provide further evidence of labour market explanations for the initial move into contracting but also indicate other factors need to be explored.

7.2.2: Prior Employment Status

The focus now moves with item A2 of the survey to employment status immediately prior to contracting. The results of this item provide another perspective to the normal occupation/labour market explanations of non standard employment. The aim of this part of the survey is to investigate the possibility that contracting may operate as an alternative to unemployment or, to what have traditionally been seen as less secure forms of work, such as temporary, casual and part time employment.

Table 7.10 below reveals that over 45 per cent of respondents' (219) were in traditional full-time, permanent employment prior to contracting. Contrary to many studies on non standard work, unemployment appears to play a very minor role with only three reporting being unemployed prior to becoming contractors. While the previous studies

reporting being unemployed prior to becoming contractors. While the previous studies are unlikely to include contractors, it was made clear in the interviews that the perceived threat or potential for unemployment can also be a powerful motivator in the move into contracting.

Table 7.10: Prior Employment Status

	Nos. of Responses	% of Responses
Full-time temporary	30	6.3
Full-time permanent	219	45.8
Full-time casual	35	7.3
Part time temporary	32	6.7
Part time permanent	25	5.2
Part time casual	74	15.5
Self-employed	33	6.9
Caring for dependants	10	2.1
Unemployed	3	0.6
Other	17	3.6
TOTALS	478	100

NB: Some individuals were in multiple employment arrangements prior to contracting

Also, despite being in traditional employment prior to contracting, many respondents were in various forms of non standard (that is, not full-time permanent) employment at the same time. The level of involvement in non standard forms of employment is consistent with Australian Bureau of Statistics estimations of 48 per cent (ABS, 1995; ABS, 1995d; Barnes et. al., 1999; Long, 1996). However, the ABS data deals with employment alternatives as single, distinct categories rather than allowing individuals to fall into more than one of the multiple options allowable in this research.

Confirmation that individuals hold multiple working arrangements while maintaining traditional full-time jobs comes from Bryson and White's (1996, 1997) studies of self-

employment operating as a period of transition prior to individuals fully committing to the one arrangement. It may provide a 'try before you buy' option for individuals who are uncertain about really wanting to leave traditional work arrangements. Interview data from the survey development stage of this research also indicated that multiple job-holding provided a safety-net in terms of guaranteeing that financial commitments can be met or allowing an individual to pursue their real or 'other' interests with reduced risk.

Overall, the results from Table 7.10 offer support for the view that professionals are moving into contracting by choice - that they are being pulled by the opportunity offered by non standard employment rather than being pushed by constraints such as unemployment or from marginal positions of employment. The accuracy of this perception is examined in detail in the next item on the issue of choice and the timing in the initial move into contracting.

7.2.3: The Nature of the Move into Contracting

The results illustrated in Table 7.11 arose from the question; "Which of the following would best describe your move to contracting?" The results from this item establish the framework of the Push/Pull Matrix to make explicit the interaction of choice and timing of entry in the individuals' move into professional contracting. The first major factor the table displays is the timing of the move into contracting is in terms of whether it was straight into contracting from the prior arrangement or not. The second factor is the simple

choice/not by choice nature of the initial move. These are plotted to produce the main matrix quadrants of Push, Pull and Default 1 and Default 2. While these capture the relationship between the two factors of timing and choice, the Matrix also allows for individuals to select a single option.

Table 7.11: The Push/Pull Matrix

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor N = 22	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor N = 13	Totals
Contractor By Choice N = 20	PULL N = 66	DEFAULT 1 N = 38	By Choice N = 124
Contractor Not by Choice N = 18	DEFAULT 2 N = 11	PUSH N = 46	No Choice N = 75
Totals	Direct Entry N = 99	Delayed Entry N = 97	Total of 240 Respondents

The four quadrants of Push, Pull and Default 1 and Default 2 reflect a response rate of over 80 per cent. This means they represent numbers from which statistically significant inferences can be made. The analysis of the results moves from the purely descriptive level used in the previous sections to applying tests of statistical significance that will allow the inferences from prior results to be either dismissed or corroborated.

The populations represented by each of the four main quadrants of Push, Pull, Default 1 and Default 2 are all significant at the $p < .05$ level. Overall, Contracting by Choice accounts for 124 or 30.7% of respondents and clearly dominates the results. There is also a significant group who are not contracting because they wish to and the 'forced move' option of Default 2 is significant in its own right. The four options of the matrix

were isolated and extracted from the data and recoded to become the principle factors for further analysis.

Table 7.12 examines the factors of occupation, marital status, gender and age within the matrix framework to determine whether previous findings are substantiated. The four options are shown to operate quite distinctly and produce clear profiles of contractors within each. In terms of the professions, IT and Engineering dominate the 'Pull' option, while Health & Welfare, Bus/Manager/Admin and Architect/Draught/Building and Education are the significant 'Pushed' professions.

The distinction between professional occupations either pushed or pull into contracting is not so clear in the two default sectors. Thus, while IT was a feature of the 'Pull' option, it also features in the delayed route of 'Default 1'. However, the placement of IT in this default sector appears to be the result of individuals in this profession consciously exercising choice as a result of the labour market power they exercise - in contrast to the 'Push' and 'Default 2' or 'Not by Choice' options. Written comments attached to the survey thus cited extended overseas travel and return to study as reasons for this delayed entry into contracting for at least some of the twenty-two IT respondents in this category.

A clear distinction in the role of the two default options was also made by the placement of the other dominant professions of engineering and Business/Manager/Administrators. Engineers featured in default 2 (entry Straight into Contracting but Not by Choice) while Business/Manager/Administrator professionals in default 1 (by choice but delayed).

Explanation for this result is provided in section 7.2.4, where reasons for contracting are investigated. Marital status was only significant when analysed in conjunction with gender. While the 'contracting by choice' options capture over 50 per cent of both males and females (93 males and 31 females), Table 7.12 reveals a key difference between them as males are the significant group within the 'Pull' option (both married males and males in the age range of 40-44 years). This bears out the Interview results from section 6.1.4 where men appeared to make the move into contracting more easily when they had a spouse, particularly a working spouse (for more details refer to McKeown, 1998).

Married females with two or more dependent children emerge as significant within the Default 1 option. The need to care for dependent children also emerges as important in the 'Push' quadrant. It thus seems that, for women, the delayed entry into contracting may operate as a default arrangement with positive implications for some women, as it allows them to balance work and family but negative for others, who see it as the only option available. This negative option constitutes a move into which women are forced. Furthermore, the results from Table 7.7 have already shown that most of these dependents for women in the Default 1 sector are children in the pre school and primary school age groups of 1-12 years. Delayed timing of the move into contracting is significant for married women, especially those between the ages of 35-49. This age range accounts for 21 of the 22 women who chose a delayed route into contracting. While the presence of two or more dependent children provides a key explanation for females in 'Default 1', the males in this sector have quite a different profile and require another explanation.

Table 7.12: Push/Pull Matrix by Occupation, Marital Status, Gender & Age

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL (53 males/13 females) • IT** (N = 25) • Engineers* (N = 15) • Married men** (N = 40) • Males aged 40-44** (N = 26)	DEFAULT 1 (27 males/11 females) • IT* (N = 22) • Business/Manager/Admin* (N = 15) • Married women with 2+ dependents* (N = 9)	By Choice (93 males/31 females) • Dependent children - under 5* & primary school aged* (N=55) • IT* (N=41) • Males aged 40-45* (N=34)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 (9 males/2 females) • Married Male Engineers** (N = 7)	PUSH (36 males/10 females) • Married females in Health & Welfare* (N = 5) • Males in Business/Man/Admin* (N = 19) • Architect/Draught/Building* (N = 7) • Education* (N = 4) • Females aged 45-49** (N = 5)	No Choice (55 males/20 females) • Business/Man/Admin** (N = 29) • Health & Welfare* (N=12) • Males aged 50-59* (N=21)
Totals	Direct Entry (81 males/18 females) • IT* (N = 34) • Engineers ** (N = 27) • Males aged 40-49* (N = 40)	Delayed Entry (75 males/22 females) • Females aged 35-49* (N = 21) • Males 25-29* (N=13) & 55-59* (N=17) • Married females* (N = 18)	

*Results significant at $p < 0.05$ level**Results significant at $p < 0.01$ level

Of the 27 males in this quadrant, 24 (or 89 per cent) are married and have no dependents or, only one dependent who is more likely to be a spouse than a child. Taking the interview results from chapter 6 and the literature reviewed in chapters 2 to 4 into consideration, this profile appears to be consistent with 'lifestyle' aspects such as return to study, prolonged overseas travel or a period of no work after retrenchment. These factors will all be examined later in the chapter.

Table 7.12 shows that the 'Default 2' option produces a distinct and significant population dominated by married male engineers. This quadrant isolates the forced choice nature of the move identified by a number of writers on contracting (such as Brooks, 1994; Macken, 1992; Winner, 1995), where employees are terminated as employees and re-hired as contractors. It was not expected to be relevant to the professional workforce but, as Table 7.12 shows, captures nearly 5 per cent of the total sample and is a group worthy of further examination.

Table 7.13 shows the Push/Pull Matrix from an industry perspective. It reveals that the forced choice route of 'Default 2' is dominated by the mining industry. This is an industry which is itself dominated by a few major corporations, and moves within these organisations to promote more flexible work arrangements are well-documented (Gilson and Wagar, 1996; Kaspar, 1996; Moodie, 1998). The results illustrated in Table 7.13 also highlight the role of the traditional public sector areas such as Health & Community Services for females and Public Administration for males.

Table 7.13: Push/Pull Matrix by Industry

	Left to Become a Contractor	Later Became a Contractor
Contractor By Choice	PULL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport (N = 7) • Finance (N = 12) 	DEFAULT 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Admin. (N = 12) • Communication (N = 7) • Education (N = 6)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining (N = 5) 	PUSH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale (N = 6) • Public Admin. (N = 7) • Health (N = 5)

*All results significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Overall, Public Administration provides the single largest industry in the Delayed Entry into contracting being represented in both the 'Default 1' and the 'Push' sectors. This result would appear to offer strong support for the important role the 'old' public sector areas now plays as a user of professional contractor labour. The large scale moves of both State and Federal governments into outsourcing and privatisation in recent years indicate that the changes have provided opportunity for some and constraint for others.

In summary, Tables 7.12 and 7.13 confirm some of the earlier indications from the analysis of the demographic data collected from the respondents. 'Choice' is characterised by a distinct age grouping for males (aged 40-44) but earlier indications of a second, younger grouping of males aged 30-34 has not emerged as significant. However, previous results showing IT and Engineering dominating the 'Pull' option are substantiated while those most strongly 'pushed' emerge from the professions of Business/Manager/Administrator for men and from Health & Welfare for women. The delayed routes into contracting are strongly linked with dependent

children for females but for men it appears to be the pursuit of 'other' activities that is important. The importance of this delayed route for women with dependent children is further borne out in the results of Table 7.14 where the date of entry into contracting is incorporated into the Matrix.

Table 7.14: Push/Pull Matrix by Date of Entry into Contracting

	Left to Become a Contractor	Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor By Choice	PULL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11-15 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT** & Engineering** • Married females** • Males & females aged 35-39 • Males aged 40-44 16-20 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT** • Married males** • Males aged 55-59** 	Default 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* • married men* 5 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT** & Bus/Man/Admin** • Married men** • Males aged 55-59 5-10 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* • Married females* 	By Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-10 years age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females aged 40-44* 11-15 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT** & Bus/Man/Admin** • Married females* • Males & females aged 35-39* • Females aged 40-44 & males aged 55-59* 16-20 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married females* • Males aged 40-44
Contractor Not by Choice	Default 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineers** • Married men* 5-10 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineers** • Married men** • Males aged 45-49* 	PUSH - 46 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females in Health & Welfare** • Married men** • Males aged 35-39** & • Females aged 45-49** 5-10 years ago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married men* 	No Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-10 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineers*, Bus/Man/Admin* • Females in Health & Welfare* • Married females* • Females aged 35-39* • Males aged 55-59*
	Direct Entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* & Engineers* • Females aged 35-39* 5-10 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* & Engineers* 11-15 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* & Engineers* 16-20 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT* & Engineers* 	Delayed Entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT** & Bus/Man/Admin** • Males aged 25-29** 2 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT*, Bus/Man/Admin* • Males aged 25-29* & 55-59* 5 years ago** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus/Man/Admin** • Females in Health & Welfare** • Married men aged 35-39 & 55-59* • Males & females aged 45-39 5-10 years ago* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married females** 11-15 years ago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Females aged 40-44** 	

Results significant at $p < 0.05$ level and ** results significant at $p < 0.01$ level

These results draw together the previous discussion and allows the approximate age of initial entry into contracting to be examined and provides a measure of the duration of the attachment to contracting to emerge.

One of the most striking features Table 7.14 reveals is that contractors who first entered at least five years ago dominate the results. It indicates that, having made the transition into contracting, a significant number of individuals choose to remain in the arrangement. As expected, the two 'By Choice' options display the longest periods of attachment. Earlier indications that males, especially from the professions of IT and Engineering, make the decision to become a contractor early in their career are borne out in these results. Furthermore, these two occupations emerge as dominant groups in all but the Push quadrant.

Earlier indications from sections 6.2 and 7.2.1 of a contracting norm in these two occupations are validated, especially by the results of those who moved straight into contracting. Only IT provides statistically significant results when dates of entry of less than 4 years ago are taken into account. Whether the apparent decline in contracting within the engineering profession arises from factors of labour supply, or from structural changes occurring within industries, as indicated in Table 7.14, is an issue taken up in the later discussion in section 7.2.4 on the forced choice options of contracting.

Table 7.14 demonstrates that the delayed route into contracting is weighted towards a more recent date of entry but it also provides evidence of a nucleus of professionals dedicated to working as contractors. This result supports the dual nature of this sector,

capturing both individuals who have made the delayed move into contracting by choice and those who are contracting because of the lack of alternatives. A significant female population, first entering 5-15 years ago come into the delayed category. Their break between prior work and the move into contracting work generally appears to occur at 35-40 years of age and is a return to the workforce that is either one of choice (the 'Default 1' option) or constraint (the Pushed option). The Health & Welfare profession emerges as an area where females have experienced a significant Push into contracting within the last 5 years and is a result that again appears to correspond with reports on the effects of outsourcing and privatisation within what was the Public Sector.

Business/Management/Administration is also significant for those contractors who entered by 'Choice' and those who did so with 'No Choice.' There are important differences however. Those entering by 'Choice' come from a wide age range (35-59) while the 'No Choice' on the other hand, is significant for females aged 35-39 and older males of 55-59. This older age grouping of males may be linked to the forced retrenchments and redundancies amongst middle managers in the mid eighties to late nineties and is an aspect that will be examined in the next item of Part A.

In summary, the pattern emerging is of a solid core of married male professionals who work either in IT or Engineering and whose decision to contract was made early in their professional careers. There is also a more diverse group of married women with dependents and of older males from Business/management/Administration who made the decisions to enter contracting in their early to mid thirties and later.

Overall, the results presented in Table 7.14 demonstrate a wide range of ages and initial dates of entry for women who have actively chosen to contract, a result that supports earlier suggestions that contracting holds a more general attraction for women than for men. There are many who enter contracting involuntarily but are still in the arrangement many years later. For them, contracting may be associated with ongoing job insecurity and reduced options for other forms of employment.

7.2.4 The Push & Pull Factors of Contracting

The ability of the Matrix structure to explain professionals' movement into contracting is enhanced by an examination of the factors that underlie each of the main quadrants. This information is drawn from item A4. Table 7.15 summarises the matrix in terms of the items that emerged as significant for each quadrant as well as the key factors of choice and timing.

These results were further confirmed by the correlation matrix shown in Table 7.15 which illustrates the cluster of items within each option as well as highlighting the negative relationship between items in the Pull and Push options. The negative correlation between items also provides another perspective on the implications of the move into contracting. An example of this is that respondents in the 'Push' quadrant did not select items such as 'Always Wanted' or to 'Make More Money'. In addition, individuals who were 'Pulled' did not perceive that they had a lack of career prospects or view contracting as the 'Best Option' amongst a limited range of choices.

Table 7.15: Items underlying the Push/Pull Matrix

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wanted** • To be own Boss** • More Money** • Professional Norm** 	DEFAULT 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance** • Flexible lifestyle** • Voluntary Redundancy** 	BY CHOICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wanted** • To be own Boss** • More Money** • Professional Norm** • Other Reasons*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one reason explains the move - But combinations do. • Invol. Redundancy & Business with others** 	PUSH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involuntary Redundancy** • Lack of Career Prospects** • Best Option** 	NO CHOICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involuntary Redundancy** • Lack of Career Prospects** • Best Option*
	DIRECT ENTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wanted** • To be own Boss** • More Money** • Professional Norm** • Business with Others** 	DELAYED ENTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involuntary Redundancy** • Lack of Career Prospects** • Voluntary Redundancy** • Best Option** • Balance** 	

**Item significant at the .001 level

* Item significant at the .005 level

The results presented in Tables 7.15 and 7.16 justify the distinction made in this research between voluntary and involuntary redundancy as voluntary moves were significantly linked to the options of Default 1 and, to a lesser extent Default 2 while Involuntary was linked to Default 2 and Push options. It seems that individuals who described their move into contracting via a path of voluntary redundancy may have viewed it as presenting a career opportunity rather than the lack of it. This is further confirmed through the cross correlation matrix in Table 7.16 where it is significantly *negatively* related to Push factors such as 'Lack of Career Prospects'.

Table 7.16: Correlation Matrix of the Items underlying the Push/Pull Matrix

	always	be own boss	more money	Vol. redundancy	professional norm	best option	lifestyle reasons	employer request	no career prospects	balance	want own business	business w. others
always	1.000	.266**	.324**	-.077	.028	-.154*	.025	.035	.050	-.007	.065	.047
own boss	.266**	1.000	.377**	-.162*	.301**	-.144*	.115	.065	-.243**	.065	.108	.096
more money	.324**	.377**	1.000	-.321**	.362**	-.354**	-.118	-.048	-.099	-.240	.055	.138
Vol. redundancy	-.077	-.162*	-.321**	1.000	-.257**	.016	.067	.461	.125	.000	.359	.354
Prof. norm	.028	.301**	.362**	-.257**	1.000	-.145*	.119	.746	.000	.001	.365	.009
best option	.661	.000	.000	.000	.000	.025	.375	.015	-.311**	-.030	.024	.118
lifestyle reasons	.017	-.144*	-.354**	.155*	-.145*	1.000	.144*	.048	.106	.155*	.103	-.017
employer request	.025	.025	.000	.016	.025	.144*	.026	.464	.101	.016	.110	.793
lack of career	.097	.115	-.118	.101	-.057	.144*	1.000	.130*	-.054	.572**	.198**	-.021
balance	.035	.065	-.048	.119	.375	.026	.130*	.045	.407	.000	.002	.746
own business	.588	.315	.461	.746	.015	.464	.045	1.000	-.163*	.332**	-.116	-.125
business w. others	.050	-.243**	-.099	.229**	-.311**	.106	-.054	-.163	1.000	.000	.073	.054
	.440	.000	.125	.000	.000	.101	.407	.012	.000	-.068	.116	-.060
	-.007	.065	-.240**	.217**	-.030	.155*	.572**	.332	-.068	1.000	.073	.356
	.918	.314	.000	.001	.644	.016	.000	.000	.296	.000	.011	.905
	.065	.108	.055	.059	.024	-.103	.198**	-.116	.116	-.164	1.000	-.129*
	.320	.095	.393	.365	.707	.110	.002	.073	.073	.011	.046	.046
	.047	.096	.060	-.169**	.118	-.017	-.021	-.125	-.060	.008	-.129*	1.000
	.471	.138	.354	.009	.068	.793	.746	.054	.356	.905	.046	

**significant at 0.01 level *significant at 0.05

Table 7.17 demonstrates significant differences between males and females when the sectors of the matrix are used to develop profiles of the professional contractor which characterises each sector. Generally, when males move into contracting they are more likely to be motivated by money whereas females tend to in order to achieve a work/family balance because they see contracting as the best option for lifestyle reasons. Females also tend to enter from the route of voluntary redundancy.

The two Default options also emerge differently when examined in terms of individual reasons for entering. 'Employer Request' is concentrated in 'Default 1', a result difficult to explain until put in the context of sex and dependents where it emerges as related to married females with children (Balancing Work and Children). The Default 1 option appears to be interpreted by respondents as an option of choice rather than coercion in that 'Employer Request' has positive connotations, providing an opportunity not offered by traditional forms of employment, rather than the constraint first advanced in section 4.1.3.

Single versus married status also produced quite distinct profiles of the common characteristics of professional contractor within each sector of the matrix. Firstly, single males compared to single females revealed males entered contracting because of voluntary redundancy and employer request (which also emerged as the route for married female), as well as a lack of career prospects. Single females, however, entered because of a desire to have their own Business; the only distinct group for this option. Secondly, married females produce a distinct, homogeneous profile while married males do not.

Table 7.17: Profiles Created by the Items underlying the Push/Pull Matrix

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor By Choice	PULL More Money** • Males in general • Married Males specifically • Males in IT aged 25-29* Own Business • Single Females	DEFAULT 1 More Money • Married Males aged 40-44** • Flexible Lifestyle & Balance** • Females* & Married females w. dependents ** Voluntary Redundancy • Females generally** & Married Females w. Dependents* • Single Males** Employer Request • Single Males • Married Females w. Dependents	BY CHOICE More Money** • Males in IT Voluntary Redundancy** • Married females w. dependents specifically* • Married Males** Professional Norm** • IT* and Engineering* Other Reasons* • Females aged 50-59
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Invol. Redundancy & Business with others** • Males	PUSH Involuntary Redundancy** • Bus/Man/Admin and Health & Welfare Lack of Career Prospects** • Males Best Option** • Married Females*	NO CHOICE Involuntary Redundancy** • Females aged 35-39 & Males aged 55-59 • Married Males • Bus/Man/Admin, Health & Welfare and Engineering Lack of Career Prospects** • Males
	DIRECT ENTRY More Money** • Males Professional Norm** • IT* and Engineering**	DELAYED ENTRY Voluntary Redundancy** • Females Balance** • Females generally & Males in Bus/Man/Admin aged 50-59	

**Item significant at the .001 level * Item significant at the .005 level

Generally, married women enter contracting because they see it as the best option, they are seeking work/family balance, for lifestyle reasons as a consequence of voluntary redundancy. All of these factors were significant at the alpha < .05 level but increased to $p < .01$ when the women had two or more dependents. The single characteristic of married men was that they generally opt for the pull of more money.

The difference in the single male compared to the married male is emphasised in the IT profession where single males form a group of 25-29 year olds in the Pull group and married males form another of 40-44 year olds in Default 1. Earlier explanations from career theory (discussed in section 4.1.2) are now supported. The first grouping of younger males aged 25-29 seem to reflect stages of early career exploration followed by movement into traditional employment. The second move into contracting in the 40-44 age group appears to be associated with an escape from career 'plateauing' – an explanation also significant for a group of 17 male engineers and five male accountants who fall into this age bracket.

The concentration of male Bus/Man/Admin. Professionals in the 50-59 age group within the Delayed sectors of the Matrix has also earlier been tentatively explained by career theory in terms of the desire for new challenges, but not necessarily associated with financial reward, status or power. Neither males nor females in this age range stated that they were contracting for more money or from a desire to be their Own Boss. Instead these older male respondents gave explanations of 'Balancing Work and Family' while women were doing it for 'Other' reasons.

7.2.5: Summary

The results from a survey of 240 professionals registered as contractors revealed that, despite the widely cited 'elite' position of the professional, contracting actually covered a continuum of arrangements. These indications ranged from contracting as:

1. a trap associated with job insecurity, low earnings and periods of unemployment entering as a defensive move against unemployment, through to
2. a transitional form of employment on the road to more permanent employment arrangements for some, to
3. being a career option for the most able and ambitious for others.

The third option was particularly associated with IT professionals and, to a lesser extent, Bus/Man/Admin. and Engineering professionals who were clearly aware of their position of advantage within the labour market. A key factor of the pull into contracting for these individuals was the incentive of more money. The results also indicate that changes do occur within this position of privilege, demonstrated by a group in the profession of Engineering within the Default 2 section of the matrix.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the movement of professionals into self-employment options such as management consultancies may be the result of a default career choice, resulting from organisational retrenchment rather than individual choice. The majority of the professionals surveyed explained their motive for entering contracting in terms of various 'negative' experiences associated with their previous employee role. Most respondents did not express a strong prior commitment to notions of personal advancement through self-employment and instead, gave reasons related to

illness, childcare, redundancy and unemployment as well as dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their previous employment situation.

Overall, the results indicate that for men, job loss through redundancy was the single major factor associated with the move from previous employment. Consequently, there is a proportion of the professional contract workforce who have an increased vulnerability because of redundancy and, as general studies on peripheral employment, such moves are associated with decreased earnings and potentially downward mobility for childbearing women and older men. Very clear occupation/industry differences emerged, particularly in relation to the IT and engineering professions where there were clear norms of contracting.

The results clearly reflect the impact of economic recession and the restructuring of employment which has reduced not only the prospects of unemployment for the professional worker, but also increased work fragmentation and insecurity. The results support Morris's (1995) conjecture that such moves represent changes in the employment trajectory of workers in a manner that may well affect different age cohorts in different ways is borne out in these results. There are clear differences between secure and insecure forms of professional contracting that are not easily captured by the traditional indicators of occupation or even by notions of polarisation of an underclass and an elite. Further, the results lend support to the indications of chapter 6 where the interviews revealed complex work histories.

The labour market explanations of skill shortages and high demand do not explain how individuals made or had the ability to accomplish, the move from employee to professional contractor status, or why some individuals choose to remain in contracting

while others leave. Furthermore, plans and motivations for remaining or exiting may not be the same as those for entering. This returns to the concept of the 'push' versus 'pull' dichotomy and raises questions about the extent to which the decision to become a professional contractor is the result of rational, calculative decision. There is also the question of the role contracting plays for the professional who enters it – is it a 'trap' or a 'bridge'? Professional contracting is a 'trap', if it is connected with unemployment, is involuntary and provides few opportunities for more permanent employment. It is a 'bridge' if the notion of contracting as a planned career move becomes important. These issues are dealt with in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 8

TESTING THE PUSH/PULL MATRIX PART 1

This chapter presents the analysis of the Professional Contractor Survey. While the previous chapter was devoted to the first research hypothesis and established the Push/Pull Matrix, this chapter will test the matrix on the basis of the two distinct themes from Parts B and C of the survey. The emphasis of the investigation thus moves from the historical perspective of the reasons why individuals initially moved into contracting to examine why they have remained working as a contractor. This chapter thus develops a comparative focus to examine the second research hypothesis on the changing nature of the 'contract of work' and the third research hypothesis on varying levels of legal independence in contracting arrangements. A key concept within the comparative focus of the second and third research hypotheses is that of satisfaction with various aspects of current contract work and the overall aim is to confirm the sustainability of a contracting career.

Each of the two hypotheses will be analysed separately within the structure of the Push/Pull Matrix to facilitate comparison between respondents in terms of both similarities and differences. Section 8.1 deals with factors within the changing contract of work while the bulk of this chapter, contained in section 8.2, examines the complex legal issue of independence. The practical implications of the findings from the two

sections are then consolidated for a more general discussion in section 8.3. The chapter concludes by establishing the task for the next chapter, an investigation of the key qualitative aspects of the survey.

To briefly reiterate, the analysis undertaken in this chapter draws on data from 240 surveys returned from 500 that were distributed to contractors registered with one of three large professional contracting agencies. The key demographic features of the respondents are summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.6 of the previous chapter.

8.1: The Changing Nature of the 'Contract of Work'

This section presents the results from the investigation of the second research hypothesis. Hypothesis 2 (henceforth called Hypothesis 2: satisfaction and the pull into contracting) introduces the notion of satisfaction to investigate the relationship between the initial reasons for entering contracting and those for remaining in contracting by proposing that

Satisfaction with a contracting career is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

The seven items which comprise this section derive from Part B of the survey and focus on the individual professional's current view of contracting as a way of work.

8.1.1: Current Work Arrangements

The ten employment options initially offered in Part A are re-presented, with the addition of contracting, to ascertain current working status. As Table 8.1 shows, the options range from the traditional employment arrangement of full-time permanent work through to unemployment.

Table 8.1: Current Work Status

	Primary Current Status	% of total	Secondary Current Status	% of total	Total
Contracting	229	95.4	6	2.5	235
Full-time temporary	-	-	9	3.8	9
Full-time permanent	3	1.3	8	3.3	11
Full-time casual	2	.8	12	5.0	14
Part time temporary	-	-	4	1.7	4
Part time permanent	-	-	3	1.3	3
Part time casual	2	.8	12	5.0	14
Self-employed	2	.8	14	5.8	16
Unemployed	2	.8	6	2.5	8
Other	-	-	3	1.3	3
Total	240	100.0	77	32.1	317

An interesting result displayed in Table 8.1 is the fact that 77 (32 per cent) individuals nominated a primary and a secondary employment status. While a similar result was found in Part A (refer to section 7.2.2), there may be different explanations for this apparent dual work status. One reason may be the need to ensure that financial and other commitments can be met and means that dual employment acts as a safety net. Alternatively, it may be indicative of a transition between arrangements or, evidence of the entrepreneurial spirit suggested by writers such as Bridges (1995) and Hakim (1994). Furthermore, comments made on a number of surveys revealed that the second option selected may not indicate another employment status but rather clarification of the basis on which individuals were contracting. The contractors themselves appeared to see

distinctions between classifications such as being self-employed and permanent full-time, as an important feature of the way that they work as contractors.

Another feature Table 8.1 reveals is that while 95 percent of respondents identified themselves primarily as contractors, 11 individuals (4.6 per cent) did not. Given that the basis of the contact with all of the respondents was their current active placement in a contract position by one of three contracting agencies, this result appears to indicate a degree of resistance by some individuals to being identified as a contractor.

Table 8.2 shows the translation of both primary and secondary employment status into the matrix. While the dominance of contracting is clearly demonstrated, no significant differences emerge when comparing matrix sectors to each other. However, secondary employment status was significantly linked to the pull and delayed entry sectors but, comments on the surveys from individuals in these two sectors indicated very different reasons for the selection of a second status. In the pull sector, comments indicated the second status was an explanation of the type of contract being undertaken, such as part time permanent. However, in the delayed entry sector, comments supported earlier indications from section 7.2.2 that the selection of a second option was the result of dual employment and was undertaken due to the need for financial security.

Table 8.2: The Push/Pull Matrix by Current Work Status

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor (N = 22)	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor (N = 13)	Totals
Contractor By Choice N = 20	PULL (N = 66) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 63 2 Full-time perm. 3 6 Full-time casual 1 1 Part-time temp. 1 1 Self-employed 4 4 Other 2 2 TOTALS 66 16 / 82	DEFAULT 1 (N = 38) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 36 1 Full-time perm. 5 5 Full-time casual 2 2 Self-employed 2 2 Unemployed 38 10 / 48 TOTALS	Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 119 3 Full-time perm. 8 8 Full-time casual 1 1 Part-time temp. 2 2 Part-time perm. 5 5 Self-employed 7 7 Unemployed 2 2 Other 2 2 TOTALS 124 29 / 153
Contractor Not by Choice N = 18	DEFAULT 2 (N = 11) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 11 2 Full-time casual 2 13 TOTALS	PUSH (N = 46) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 45 6 Full-time temp. 1 4 Full-time casual 2 2 Part-time temp. 2 2 Part-time perm. 1 1 Part-time casual 4 4 Unemployed 46 19 / 65 TOTALS	No Choice (N = 75) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 72 8 Full-time temp. 1 6 Full-time casual 2 2 Part-time temp. 3 3 Part-time perm. 4 4 Part-time casual 2 2 Self-employed 2 2 Unemployed 4 4 TOTALS 75 29 / 104
Totals	Direct Entry (N = 99) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 96 6 Full-time perm. 3 6 Full-time casual 8 1 Part-time temp. 1 6 Self-employed 3 3 Other 99 30 / 129 TOTALS	Delayed Entry (N = 97) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 94 7 Full-time temp. 1 1 Full-time perm. 4 4 Full-time casual 2 2 Part-time temp. 2 2 Part-time perm. 6 6 Part-time casual 5 5 Self-employed 2 6 Unemployed 97 33 / 130 TOTALS	

**Item significant at the .005 level *Item significant at the .05 level

The desire for security was further evidenced when examining unemployment which was clearly and significantly linked with the delayed entry option. It seems that these individuals move into contracting as a result of a lack of other employment options and indicates that contracting can be associated with ongoing job insecurity. It also raises the issue of the choice individuals have over the decision to remain contracting. This concern is dealt with in the next item of Part B.

8.1.2: Preferred Work Arrangements

The employment options offered in 8.1.1 are repeated again but the focus moves to preferred rather than present employment status. The results shown in Table 8.3 provide a very different perspective on contracting. While those categorised in the pull and the two default options are still significantly dominated by a preference for contracting ($p < 0.05$) the push option reveals a preference for traditional full-time permanent and part time permanent employment. Overall, this result is exemplified in the not by choice option. In contrast, a significant proportion of those who entered contracting by choice or via direct entry expressed a primary preference for self-employment ($N = 21$, $p < .05$ and $N = 17$ $p < .05$). Overall, the matrix framework clearly reveals that preference for contracting is significantly stronger for those who initially entered by choice while those pushed or not contracting by choice demonstrates a strong desire for permanent employment. This polarisation accords with the seminal theories of self-employment examined in chapters 2 and 3.

Table 8.3: The Push/Pull Matrix by Preferred Work Status

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor (N = 22)	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor (N = 13)	Totals
Contractor By Choice N = 20	PULL (N = 66) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 47* 2 Full-time perm. 5 2 Full-time temp - 1 Part-time perm. 2 2 Part-time casual - 1 Self-employed 12 7 TOTALS 66 13	DEFAULT 1 (N = 38) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 21* 2 Full-time perm. 6 4 Full-time casual 1 3 Part-time perm. 4 3 Part-time casual 1 - Self-employed 5 4 TOTALS 38 10	By Choice (N = 124) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 80* 2 Full-time temp. 2 1 Full-time perm. 13 6 Full-time casual 1 3 Part-time perm. 6 6 Part-time casual 1 1 Self-employed 21* 12* TOTALS 124 31
Contractor Not by Choice N = 18	DEFAULT 2 (N = 11) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 8* - Full-time perm. 1 1 Full-time temp. - 1 Part-time perm. 2 - Self-employed 11 2 TOTALS 11 2	PUSH (N = 46) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 5 4 Full-time temp. 1 1 Full-time perm. 16* - Part-time perm. 2 - Part-time casual 12* - Self-employed 5 5 TOTALS 46 10	No Choice (N = 75) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 18 4 Full-time temp. 1 1 Full-time perm. 24* 3 Part-time perm. 2 1 Part-time casual 17* 1 Self-employed 5 4 Caring for Depdts 8 9 TOTALS 75 25
Totals	Direct Entry (N = 99) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 70* - Full-time temp. - 1 Full-time perm. 8 4 Full-time casual 2 - Part-time perm. 2 7 Part-time casual - 1 Self-employed 17* 9* TOTALS 99 22	Delayed Entry (N = 97) Status 1 Status 2 Contracting 32 6 Full-time temp. 1 - Full-time perm. 22* 13* Full-time casual 1 3 Part-time perm. 2 1 Part-time casual 16* 3 Self-employed 6 - TOTALS 97 35 /132	

*Item significant at the .05 level

Contracting thus emerges as a career option for the most able and ambitious, as advanced by Knight (1933), as well as being a default option as offered by Schumpeter (1934). While the former group actively enters non-traditional employment because of perceived benefits, the latter are there because traditional employment is denied to them. The consequences of these different routes into contracting are dealt with in the next item from the survey.

8.1.3: Current Views on Contracting

The ability of the original matrix structure to explain why professionals remain in contracting is enhanced by examining the items that underlie each of the main quadrants. While the original matrix structure was developed from an historical perspective, establishing why professionals initially moved into contracting, the focus has moved to examine why they remain contracting. Thus, twelve of the original fourteen options offered to respondents to explain their initial move into contracting (refer section 7.2.4) were rephrased by replacing the past tense with the present contracting (the voluntary/involuntary redundancy options were no longer applicable).

The options presented ranged from pull factors such as the desire 'To Be your Own Boss' and 'More Money, through to the push of 'Unable to Find Other Work' and being the 'Best Option Available'. The results presented in Table 8.4A still reflect the initial push/pull nature of the original move into contracting. The strength of this polarisation between push and pull factors is further illustrated through the Pearson correlation matrix results shown in Table 8.4B which reveals distinct

clusters of items in the Push and Pull sectors. Furthermore, the relationships between the items in the push and pull clusters were significantly negative. This latter result enhances the view of what being a contractor today means for respondents, namely that individuals in the 'Push' quadrant are not contracting because they had always wanted to or to make more money.

Table 8.4A: The Push/Pull Matrix & Current Views on Contracting

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be Own Boss*** (N=33) More Money*** (N=57) Enjoy Contracting*** (N=52) Better Career*** (N=41) More Stimulating Work*** (N=36) 	DEFAULT 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance Work & Family*** (N=13) More Money* (N=16) Enjoy Contracting* (N=25) More Stimulating Work* (N=7) Other*** (N=8) 	BY CHOICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be Own Boss*** (N=48) More Money*** (N=88) Enjoy Contracting*** (N=90) Better Career*** (N=54) More Stimulating Work*** (N=53) Flexible Lifestyle* (N=60)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 <p>No one reason explains the move - But combinations do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer Requires It & Business with others* (N=7) 	PUSH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable Find Other Work*** (N=37) Best Option Available*** (N=34) 	NO CHOICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable Find Other Work*** (N=48) Best Option*** (N=51)
	PULL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be Own Boss*** (N=38) More Money*** (N=82) Enjoy Contracting*** (N=70) Better Career*** (N=50) More Stimulating Work*** (N=50) Business with Others** (N=13) 	DELAYED ENTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable Find Other Work*** (N=48) Best Option Available* (N=58) Other* (N=11) 	

***Item significant at the .001 level **Item significant at the .005 level *Item significant at the .05 level

By contrast, individuals who were initially 'Pulled' into contracting have remained contracting for these very reasons but, they have not remained

contracting due to a perceived lack of career prospects or see contracting as the best option amongst a limited range of choices. Instead, these reasons apply to respondents who were initially pushed into contracting.

The results presented in Table 8.4A and 8.4B also justify the distinction made between inability to find work and best option available as separate options. The latter proved to be significantly linked to the options of Default 1 and, to a lesser extent Default 2, while the former was linked to Default 2 and Push options. It seems that individuals who remain contracting because it is the best option available in fact view this quite positively - perhaps indicative of a perceived short-term career opportunity rather than the lack of it. This is confirmed in the cross correlations in Table 8.4B where it was significantly *negatively* related to the Push factors of lack of career prospects.

Overall, the items in the Pull quadrant in Table 8.4A support the portrayal by writers of the future of work, such as Bridges (1995) and Rifkin (1995), of the professional contractor as entrepreneurial, individualistic and self-motivated individuals. Conversely, the items that have emerged as significant within the Push quadrant conform to Schumpeter's (1934) Default explanation of self-employment. Furthermore, the exclusive nature of the items in each of the push and pull quadrants is further confirmed by the Pearson correlation matrix results of Table 8.4B. These results highlight the fact that, just as there are well acknowledged benefits of contracting, there also appear to be some less well known costs and disadvantages.

Table 8.4B: Correlation Matrix & Current Reasons for Contracting

	Better career	Flexible lifestyle	Work & children	No other work	More Money	Enjoy	Business w. others	Own business	Own boss	Best option	Stim. work	Prof. norm	Employer request
better career	1.000	.240	-.116	-.184	.316	.400	.067	.123	.320	-.158	.368	-.127	-.164
flexible lifestyle	.240	1.000	.036	.002	.040	.000	.149	.029	.000	.007	.000	.025	.005
work & children	.000	.222	1.000	.198	.270	.000	.009	.005	.000	.006	.000	.045	.377
No other work	-.116	.222	.000	1.000	-.205	-.054	-.002	-.163	-.052	.145	-.205	-.130	.339
More Money	.316	.040	.270	.001	1.000	.201	.488	.006	.210	.012	.001	.022	.000
enjoy	.400	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.002	.024	.003	.000	.000	.001	.293
business w. others	.067	.009	.003	.000	.049	.000	1.000	.096	.015	-.111	.089	.178	-.027
own business	.123	.029	.134	.049	.069	.226	.009	1.000	.411	.043	.086	.003	.339
own boss	.320	.000	.457	.228	.228	.134	.009	.000	.223	-.185	.220	-.138	-.187
best option	.007	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.016	.002
Stim. work	.368	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Prof. norm	.025	.045	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
employer request	-.164	.020	.377	.339	.000	.001	.339	.002	.001	.049	.010	-.057	1.000

8.1.4: Negative Aspects of Contracting

Chapters 3 and 4 developed the argument that a key feature of much of the literature on the future of work is that it ascribes positive benefits to changes occurring within work to professionals while studies of peripheral workers, such as temporaries and casuals raise concerns over marginalisation and disadvantage. However, the results of this research study have already produced evidence that professional contractors are not immune from the issues of job insecurity and financial disadvantage. The aim of the next item of the survey is to examine in detail key features of what can be termed ‘the downside’ of professional contracting. To this end, fourteen of the most commonly identified negative features of peripheral from the material covered in chapters 3 and 4 were translated into the language of contracting. The options ranged from long hours of work to lack of co-operation from a clients employee workforce and, as Table 8.5 shows, both the number and the spread of options varied across the matrix. The Push sector accounts for the greatest number of negative aspects while the Delayed and Not By Choice sectors reveal very similar item loadings.

As with the previous section, a very clear polarisation is revealed within the push and pull quadrants. The picture that emerges for those initially pushed into contracting is one of an unpredictable work and personal life that is exacerbated by poor pay and difficulties in working with the employees of clients. Combined with factors such as loneliness and a lack of friends, these results correspond with the concerns raised by studies such as ACOSS (1996), Buchanan and Bearfield (1997) and MacNeil (1995) of the unemployed and underemployed.

Table 8.5: The Push/Pull Matrix and Negative Aspects of Contracting

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Long Hours*** (N=20)	DEFAULT 1	BY CHOICE Long Hours*** (N=26)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Book keeping/legal requirements* (N=6)	PUSH Irregular Work* (N=14) Erratic Lifestyle*** (N=17) Loneliness*** (N=15) Unable to Find Other Work*** (N=23) Inadequate Pay*** (N=6) Co-operation of Clients Employees* (N=18)	NO CHOICE Irregular Work* (N=22) Erratic Lifestyle*** (N=20) Loneliness*** (N=22) Unable to Find Other Work*** (N=29) Inadequate Pay*** (N=9) Search for Next Contract* (N=46)
	DIRECT ENTRY Long Hours*** (N=27)	DELAYED ENTRY Irregular Work* (N=20) Erratic Lifestyle*** (N=25) Loneliness* (N=23) Lack of Friends* (N=27) Unable to Find Other Work*** (N=34) Search for Next Contract*** (N=64) Co-operation of Clients Employees** (N=30)	

***Item significant at the .001 level **Item significant at the .005 level
and *Item significant at the .05 level

Against this very negative result, the only significant negative item for the Pull/Choice/Direct Entry segments were the long hours of work. Again however, this result reflects a more recent concern where the ‘overpaid and overworked’ are also acknowledged as having serious work issues (ABS, 2000a; ABS, 2000b; ACOSS, 2001). Just how serious the negative aspects are for either those pushed or pulled into contracting can be gauged by the next section which deals with the issue of an ongoing affiliation to contracting.

8.1.5: Changes since Initial Entry

The notion of a lack of attachment to one specific work arrangement is frequently cited as a key feature of the changing world of work. It is a view that provides a useful counterpoint to the results from section 8.1.2 which examined work arrangement preferences, particularly as those pushed into contracting revealed a distinct desire for traditional permanent employment whereas those pulled preferred contracting work. The next item of the survey thus establishes the patterns of flows out of and back into contracting since initial entry.

The results shown in Table 8.6 reveals that, in terms of the number of moves from contracting into other work arrangements and then back into contracting, the maximum number of moves recorded by respondents was three

Table 8.6: Flows Into and Out of Contracting

Movements	First Move	%	Second Move	%	Third Move	%	Total
No response to item	6	2.5	191	79.6	216	90	413
Contracted whole Time	179	74.6	-	-	-	-	179
Left Contracting	17	7.1	-	-	-	-	17
Became Part time casual	5	2.1	1	0.4	-	-	6
Became Full-time casual	-	-	5	2.1	-	-	5
Became Full-time permanen	9	3.8	9	3.8	-	-	18
Became Self-employed	9	3.8	3	1.3	5	1	17
Left to care for depdts	5	2.1	3	1.3	1	0.4	9
Unemployed	5	2.1	3	1.3	-	-	8
Changed occup/professn	4	1.7	2	0.8	1	0.4	7
Moved back into contracting	-	-	23	9.6	17	7.1	40
Other	1	0.4	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	240		240		240		

As Table 8.6 shows, only 24 (10 per cent) of the total of 240 contractors have made three moves. Overall, the majority (nearly 75 per cent), have remained

contracting since initial entry – a result that either provides strong evidence of either an ongoing affiliation to contracting as a way of work or, of being trapped in contracting as a way of work. The two key arrangements associated with the move from contracting were standard employment (full-time permanent) and self-employment. Placing this information into the matrix revealed that the greatest movement occurred in the Push quadrant and was male dominated but, overall, the small numbers in the flow options were insufficient to provide statistically significant results (and thus no results are tabled).

The key result from this item then is the demonstration of an ongoing attachment to contracting once an individual has entered. What is unclear is whether this ongoing employment as a contractor has been by choice and whether contracting acts as a sustainable way of work or as a trap. However, there are indications that those pushed into contracting have tried to move out and this result is supported by the results shown in Table 8.5 where these individuals cited the inability to find other work as a significant feature of contracting.

8.1.6: Plans to Remain Contracting

Some resolution to the issue of contracting as a bridge or a trap can be gained by viewing another aspect of affiliation, that of future plans to remain working as a contractor. As Table 8.7 shows, the majority (nearly 77 per cent) of those currently contracting intend to persist with this arrangement for the next year. However, over longer time periods were suggested the rates decrease dramatically. For example, even among those 'extremely unlikely' to leave contracting, the numbers who

intend to remain decline with time. Looking into the future by three years sees the level drop to just under 32 per cent and is down to nearly 16 per cent after three years.

Table 8.7: Future Plans for Working as a Contractor

Will Leave Contracting	Within 1 year	%	Within 2 years	%	Within 3 years	%	After 3+ years	%
Extremely Unlikely	184	76.7	107	44.6	76	31.7	38	15.8
Very Unlikely	10	4.2	39	16.3	18	7.5	16	6.7
Quite Unlikely	8	3.3	11	4.6	19	7.9	22	9.2
50/50	9	3.8	19	7.9	34	14.2	21	8.8
Quite Likely	10	4.2	4	1.7	8	3.3	6	2.5
Very Likely	3	1.3	8	3.3	11	4.6	8	3.3
Extremely Likely	3	1.3	10	4.2	21	8.8	58	24.2
Unsure	13	5.4	35	14.6	46	19.2	63	26.3
TOTAL	240		233		233		232	

Incorporating each of these time periods into the matrix framework, illustrated in Table 8.8, reveals that longer-term attachment to contracting clearly falls in the Pull and Direct Entry segments while a lack of ongoing attachment falls in the Push, No Choice and Delayed Entry sectors.

Table 8.8: The Push/Pull Matrix and Likelihood of Leaving Contracting*

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL 1 year - Very Unlikely 2 years - Quite Unlikely 3 years - Very Unlikely 3+ years - Quite Unlikely	DEFAULT 1 3 years - Quite Likely 3+ years - Very Likely	CHOICE 1 year - Very Unlikely 2 years - Extremely Unlikely 3 years - Very Unlikely 3+ years - Very Likely
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH 1 year - 50/50 2 years - Quite Likely 3 years - Very Likely 3+ years - Unsure	NO CHOICE 1 year - Very Likely 2 years - Quite Likely 3 years - Unsure 3+ years - Unsure
	DIRECT ENTRY 1 year Very Unlikely 2 to 3+ years - Quite Unlikely	DELAYED ENTRY 1 year - Quite Likely 2 years to 3+ years - Very Likely	

*All results significant at the .001 level

Overall, the results for the Pull sector confirm the indications of an attachment to contracting but they now suggest that this affiliation is subject to quite short term, as in less than 3 years, review. Even more clear now is the lack of long term attachment to contracting within the Push sector. When combined with the results on movement into other work arrangements and the negatives of contracting from sections 8.1.4 and 8.1.5, it appears that for those pushed, contracting is either perceived as an unsustainable work/lifestyle or, that the current attachment is the result of short-term labour market opportunity.

8.1.7: Summary of the Changing Nature of the 'Contract of Work'

In terms of Hypothesis 2 on satisfaction and the pull into contracting, it is clear that those initially Pulled into contracting, and to a lesser extent, most of those who entered by choice appear significantly more satisfied with their contracting career than those who were Pushed into it. The positive factors of contracting, especially those of 'more money', the ability to 'balance work & family' and to have a 'flexible lifestyle' emerge as important motivators in sustaining individuals in contracting. conversely, negative factors such as 'irregular work', the 'erratic lifestyle', 'loneliness' and 'inadequate pay' are all significant features of contracting for those who initially did not enter contracting by choice. These same factors also appear important for those participants who expressed a desire to leave contracting - a move, however, they currently perceived as being unlikely due to 'inability to find other work'. As a result, for these individuals contracting is not only the 'best option available' but probably, the only option.

This was most clearly reflected in the last item illustrated in Table 8.8 where the attachment to contracting emerged as very weak for individuals in the Push and No Choice sectors compared to those in the Pull and Choice segments.

Overall, analysis of the data from this part of the Survey supports Hypothesis 2. Satisfaction, measured firstly in terms of current reasons for contracting is positively related to the initial 'Pull' factors associated with the move into contracting. So too was the second measure of satisfaction, intent to remain with a contracting career. The results also confirm previous indications that professional contracting arrangements vary from being:

- A transitional form of employment - on the road to more permanent employment arrangements for some, to being
- A trap associated with job insecurity, low earnings and periods of unemployment with entry a defensive move against unemployment through to
- A career option for the most able and ambitious.

The implications of these findings are investigated in greater detail in the next section dealing with legal independence where key factors such as income, choice and control over work will be expanded upon.

8.2: Varying Levels of Legal Independence

As previously discussed in section 3.1, defining the independent contractor involves complex legal issues. The nineteen items of Part C of investigate the broad range of factors encapsulated by the continuum of contracting

independence and ratified in the interviews that assisted in the development of the survey. The items of this part of the survey examine the hypothesis that -

The level of contracting Independence is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

The complex nature of the concept of independence is reflected in the diverse range of areas the items cover as they progress from a strong legal focus through to comparisons of income and employment extras. These areas combine to provide a catalogue of the attributes of the truly independent contractor, which derives from both the legal and conceptual literature on the future of work discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and which can be assessed against the survey results.

8.2.1: Current Legal Status

While the distinction between contracting and employee status is a very basic legal concept in contracting, it is also one that is very difficult to operationalise. Thus, the different arrangements for contractors, such as sole trader or registering a Proprietary Limited (P/L) Company, can combine or be separate forms of working and confer different weightings in terms of legal obligations and the amount of formality involved. What is important is that the obligations attached to the status often translate directly into legal levels of independence. The options presented in Table 8.9 cover the various legal arrangements possible for contractors. The order of the options in Table 8.9 presents them in order of

complexity from the most complex and independent to the simplest and most dependent. It reveals that a quarter (60 of the 240) of survey respondents classified themselves as currently working as employees.

Table 8.9: Current Legal Status of Respondents

	Frequency	%
P/L Company	109	45.4
Partnership	6	2.5
Sole Trader	7	2.9
Own Business	50	20.8
Employee	60	25.0
Other	8	3.3
Total	240	100.0

Given that previous results established that all respondents were currently working as contractors, Table 8.9 suggests that a significant number are employees of the agencies through which they contract. An employee relationship within contracting indicates the lowest level of actual legal independence. Translating the results of legal status into the matrix framework in Table 8.10 demonstrates significantly higher levels of independence within the Pull sector and significantly lower levels within the Push sector.

Table 8.10: The Push/Pull Matrix and Current Legal Status

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL P/L Company (N=42)***	DEFAULT 1 Own Business (N=17)***	CHOICE P/L Company (N=63)*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 P/L Company (N=10)**	PUSH Partnership (N=3)*** Own Business (N=16)* Employee (N=19)**	
	DIRECT ENTRY P/L Company (N=71)***	DELAYED ENTRY Partnership*(N=5)*** Own Business (N=33)*** Employee (N=33)*	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

Table 8.10: The Push/Pull Matrix and Current Legal Status

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL P/L Company (N=42)***	DEFAULT 1 Own Business (N=17)***	CHOICE P/L Company (N=63)*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 P/L Company (N=10)**	PUSH Partnership (N=3)*** Own Business (N=16)* Employee (N=19)**	
	DIRECT ENTRY P/L Company (N=71)***	DELAYED ENTRY Partnership*(N=5)*** Own Business (N=33)*** Employee (N=33)*	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

This is illustrated most clearly in the direct entry sector where males from a broad age range of 30 up to 54 years of age are significant in the legal status of P/L companies. Males also dominate the other end of the dependence spectrum in regards to the legal status of employee. Here though, the age range is focussed on males aged between 35 to 44 years of age.

A result of note in the apparent polarisation between P/L and employee status is that IT and architectural professionals are the significant occupations which emerge in both sectors. This finding suggests that there may be different dynamics operating within as well between professions. The results also offer support for the contention that the reasons an individual has for initially entering contracting may continue to exert a lasting effect.

While age is generally well distributed across the options of legal status for men, it does appear to be a significant determinant of independence for women aged 35-44 where they feature significantly within the high independence P/L option in the Direct Entry sector of the Matrix.

Table 8.11: The Push/Pull Matrix by Legal Status & Age, Sex and Occupation

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL P/L Company (N=42)*** • Males (N=35)** • Males aged (N=5) 50-54* • Females aged 35-39 (N=3)* • IT (N=20)**	DEFAULT 1 Own Business (N=17)*** • Males (M=16)*** • Males aged 35-39 (N=3)*** • Males aged 40-44 (N=5)*** • Males aged 55-59 (N=3)**	CHOICE P/L Company (N=63)** • Females aged 35-39 (N=6)* • Males aged 50-54 (N=9)**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 P/L Company (N=10)*** • Males (N=8)* & Females (N=2)** • Engineers (N=7)*	PUSH Own Business (N=16)** • Females (N=5)* • Males aged 50-54 (N=5)* Employee (N=19)*** • Males (N=15)*** • Males aged 35-39 (N=6)/ 40-44 (N=3)*** • Architects (N=5)***	NO CHOICE
	DIRECT ENTRY P/L Company (N=71)*** • Males (N=59)* & Females (N=12)*** • Males aged 30-34 (N=5)* • Males & Females aged 35-39 (N= 9& 5)*** • Males & Females aged 40-44 (N= 16& 4)** • Males aged 50-54 (N=8)** • IT (N=29)** & Arch. (N=17)***	DELAYED ENTRY Own Business (N=33)*** • Males (N=27)*** • Males aged 30-34 (N=4) & 35-39 (N=4) & 40-44 (N=5)* • Males aged 50-54 (N=6) / 55-59 (N=5)** • Bus/Manager (N=17)*** Employee (N=33)** • Males (N=23)* • Males aged 35-39 (N=6)* / 40-44 (N=4)** • IT (N=7)*** • Architects (N=6)***	

***Results significant at the .001 level; ** .005; * .05

The notion of a particular suitability to a career in contracting also seems applicable for males aged from 30 up to 54 years, who work in the IT and architect/draftsman professions and are set up in their P/L business. Overall, the results from this section of the survey provide further evidence of a polarisation, this time with increasingly independent legal status being associated with the pull into contracting and decreasing with the pull.

8.2.2: Employees

Another perspective to legal independence to that offered in the previous section above is whether the contractors themselves have any employees. Generally, an affirmative response to this question would imply that a sub-contracting, or some other form of work arrangement is operating because contractors should operate independently. Therefore, the presence of employees would give the individual a status other than that of independent contractor. Placing the results within the matrix, as shown in Table 8.12, revealed that a quarter of the respondents (60) did have employees – but only the results for the push and delayed entry sectors were significant.

Table 8.12: The Push/Pull Matrix and Contractors with Employees

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL • 10 with employees	DEFAULT 1 • 7 with employees	CHOICE • 22 with employees
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH • 19 with employees**	NO CHOICE • 24 with employees
	DIRECT ENTRY • 11 with employees	DELAYED ENTRY • 33 with employees*	60 in total have employees

**Results significant at .005; *Results significant at .05 levels

This finding suggests that 'Employees' may be linked with the 'Own Business' option identified in the last section and illustrated in Table 8.11 (and thus likely to be a spouse who does bookkeeping and similar support tasks). If this link is correct, the role of 'Employee' relates more to the tax benefits associated with contracting than to any direct association with the actual services supplied by the contractor – providing evidence for the "opportunists" of the thesis title.

8.2.3: Location of Work

The location or place of work provides another perspective on independence. While the physical need for access to specialised plant or equipment for work may predetermine the options such as 'Own Office' through to 'Home as a Base' that an individual may select from, the ability to choose and work in a variety of settings is generally associated with greater contracting independence.

Table 8.13 reveals that nearly 48 percent of contractors commonly work from two locations of work while just over 9 per cent work from 3 locations. The increasing choice in locations of work is generally associated with increasing independence. The single most common venue where most work occurs was at someone else's office, accounting for 85 per cent of respondents. While working from home emerged as the second most common workplace, it only accounted for fewer than 45 per cent of respondents. Overall, the results from Table 8.13 appear to indicate that there is only a small amount of variability amongst contractors and this was confirmed when placing these results within the matrix.

Table 8.13: Main Places of Work

	Place 1	%	Place 2	%	Place 3	%	Total
• None	-	-	126	52.5	218	90.8	-
• Own office/not home	16	6.7	2	.8	-	-	18
• Someone else's office	199	82.9	5	2.1	-	-	204
• Home	9	3.8	96	40.0	2	.8	107
• Home as base	15	6.3	9	3.8	20	8.3	44
• Other	1	.4	2	.8	-	-	3
• Total	240	100.0	240	100.0	240	100.0	-

As illustrated in Table 8.14, 'Home' emerges as the only significant location overall. A key feature of these results was the fact that working at home was significantly positive for those in the Pull/By Choice sector, (N= 38 and 62 with $p = 0.028$ and 0.031 respectively), but was negatively associated for those in the Pull/Not By Choice sectors (N= 14 and 23 with $p = -0.05$ and -0.001 respectively). Thus, working from home appears to have two distinct connotations in contracting. On the one hand, it is associated with high independence where individuals have chosen to contract and have chosen to perform this work from home. On the other hand, it appears to be more the result of captivity or entrapment associated with a lack of choice for those who did not want to be contractors in the first place.

The common point of both connotations of working from home is that they emerged as significant (either positively for the Pull, Default 1 and Choice sectors or negatively for the Push and No Choice sectors) as the second place where work is carried out. This result offers further support to the polarisation between those working from home because they want to and those forced to work there.

Table 8.14: The Push/Pull Matrix and Main Places of Work

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor					Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor									
	PULL					DEFAULT 1					CHOICE				
Contractor by Choice	1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total	
	Own office	7	-	7		Someone's else's office	35	-	35		Own office	7	-	7	
	Someone's else's office	54	2	56		Home	3	17*	20		Someone's else's office	108	2	110	
	Home	6	32*	38*		Home as a Base	-	4	4		Home	3	59*	62*	
	Home as a Base	5	4	9	18		38	17	59		Home as a Base	6	4	15	25
	Other	2	2	2	2						Other	2	2	2	2
	72	40	9	121							124	67	15	206	
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2					PUSH					NO CHOICE				
	1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total	
	Someone's else's office	11	-	11		Own office	3	-	3		Own office	3	-	3	
	Home	5	5	10	5	Someone's else's office	34	-	34		Someone's else's office	59	-	59	
	Home as a Base	11	5	16	17	Home	4	11**	15**		Home	6	13**	19**	
						Home as a Base	5	-	5		Home as a Base	5	4	9	18
							46	11	59		Other	7	2	9	
											80	24	13	127	
	DIRECT ENTRY					DELAYED ENTRY									
	1	2	3	Total		1	2	3	Total						
	Own office	7	-	7		Own office	6	-	6						
	Someone's else's office	87	2	89		Someone's else's office	76	3	79						
	Home	50	50	100		Home	7	29	36						
	Home as a Base	5	4	9	19	Home as a Base	7	3	10						
	Other	2	2	2	2	Other	2	2	4						
	99	58	10	167			96	37	141						

*Denotes results significant at the 0.05 level ** Denotes results significant at the negative 0.05 level

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Furthermore, the polarised view of opportunity and choice of workplace for contractors pulled into contracting compared to the lack of both opportunity and choice for those pushed is further highlighted by the range of up to three workplaces used by those in the Pull sector compared to the Push sector.

8.2.4: Basis of Payment

The method or basis of payment for work provides another legally based perspective on independence. The order of the options presented in Table 8.15 is generally indicative of increasing dependence on a client or employer.

Table 8.15: Main Basis of Payment of Work

	Basis 1	%	Basis 2	%	Total
Hours worked	196	81.7	-	-	196
Fixed fee	25	10.4	42	17.5	67
Goods/services sold	5	2.1	13	5.4	18
Fixed salary	9	3.8	2	.8	11
Other	4	1.7	4	1.7	8
	239	99.6	61	25.8	300

Payment on the basis of goods/services sold is associated with self-employment amongst artisans and the trades rather than professionals, whilst fixed salaries are more typical of standard employee status. The principal method of payment associated with contracting is payment for hours worked and this emerges as the dominant option, however a fixed fee, regardless of hours worked, is also quite common. This latter option is often associated with project work where a date for completion is set and the contractor submits a bid or tender for the work.

Placing these results within the framework of the matrix, illustrated in Table 8.16, revealed that the only statistically significant payment methods were 'Hours Worked' and 'Other' in the 'By Choice' sector. Overall, the main value of this item its confirmation that the majority of respondents work in a non-traditional way and are paid in a non-traditional manner.

Table 8.16: The Push/Pull Matrix and Methods of Payment

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL • Hours worked (N= 59) • Goods/services sold (N= 4) • Fixed fee (N= 17) • Fixed salary (N= 7) • Other payments (N= 4)	DEFAULT 1 • Hours worked (N= 30) • Goods/services sold (N= 3) • Fixed fee (N= 10) • Other payments (N= 2)	CHOICE • Hours worked (N= 108)* • Goods/services sold (N= 8) • Fixed fee (N= 29) • Fixed salary (N= 7) • Other payments (N= 7)*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 • Hours worked (N= 10) • Goods/services sold (N= 1) • Fixed fee (N= 4)	PUSH • Hours worked (N= 35) • Goods/services sold (N= 6) • Fixed fee (N= 15)	NO CHOICE • Hours worked (N= 59) • Goods/services sold (N= 9) • Fixed fee (N= 21) • Fixed salary (N= 4) • Other payments (N= 1)
	DIRECT ENTRY • Hours worked (N= 86) • Goods/services sold (N= 5) • Fixed fee (N= 30) • Fixed salary (N= 7) • Other payments (N= 4)	DELAYED ENTRY • Hours worked (N= 76) • Goods/services sold (N= 10) • Fixed fee (N= 32) • Other payments (N= 2)	

* Results significant at .05 levels

The group that again emerges as the most independent is the group which entered contracting by choice.

8.2.5: Charging for Services

Examining how individual contractors charge for the services they provide reveals a different aspect of payment for services. The options presented in Table 8.17

are follow a descending order of independence, with self-determined being the most independent and set/offered by the Agency being the most dependent.

Table 8.17 identifies a broad range of methods used by the respondents overall with some contractors utilising up to three methods to determine charges. However, what emerges most clearly from the results of Table 8.17 is the important role of the contracting agency as a mediator in the contractor/client relationship. Over 74 per cent (178) of respondents either negotiated with or had their charges determined by an agency.

Table 8.17: Determining Charges

	Method 1	%	Method 2	%	Method 3	%	Totals
0	1	.4	110	45.8	177	73.8	-
1. Self determined	48	20.0	14	5.8	5	2.1	67
2. Determined by market	24	10.0	22	9.2	4	1.7	50
3. Negotiated w. Client	31	12.9	40	16.7	24	10.0	95
4. Negotiated w. Agency	9	3.8	44	18.3	28	11.7	81
5. Set/offered by Client	41	17.1	-	-	-	-	41
6. Set/offered by Agency	86	35.8	10	4.2	1	.4	97
Total	240	100	240	100	239	99.7	-

Placing these results within the matrix illustrated in Table 8.18 exposed distinct patterns between and within the various charging options. Overall, greater independence in determining charges is associated with the Pull sectors and characterised by men in the 40-44 age group and in the IT profession.

Table 8.18: The Push/Pull Matrix and Methods of Charging for Services

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Set by Agency • Men aged 40-44 (N=6)*** Self determined (N=33)* • Men (N=29)* aged 40-44 (N=15)*** • IT (N=5)* Current market rates (N=22)** all Men Negotiated with client - Bus/Manager (N=6)*** Negotiated with Agency (N=31)** • Men (N=27) & aged 40-44 (N=15)***	DEFAULT 1 Negotiated with client • Men aged 25-29 (N=5)**	CHOICE Set/offered by client - Men (N=20)*** • IT (N=8)***&Bus/Manager (N=7)*** Set/offered by Agency - Men aged 53-39 (N=6)*** Self determined (N=48)* Men (N=38)* aged 40-44 (N=19)* • Engineer (N=12)* Negotiated with client - Bus/Manager (N=16)*** • Males aged 55-59 (N=9)*** Negotiated w. Agency - Men aged 25-29 (N=7) • Women (N=10)***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Set/offered by Agency - Men (N=7)*** Current market rates (N=6)** all Men	PUSH Set/offered by client • Architects (N=5)** Men aged 35-39 (N=6)* • Set/offered by Agency (N=34)* Men (N=25)* & Women (N=9)* • Bus/manager (N=16)* & Women in H & W (N=5)*** • Men aged 45-49 (N=5)*** & 50-54 (N=7)* & 55-59 (N=8)* • Women aged 35-39 (N=5) & 45-49 (N=5)*** Negotiated w. Client - men aged 35-39 (N=7)*	NO CHOICE Set/offered by client • Architects (N=5)*** Set/offered by Agency (N=49)* Men (N=37)* & Women (N=12) • Bus/manager (N=20)* • Women Health & Welfare (N=7)*** • Men aged 45-49 (N=7)* 50-54 (N=7)* & 55-59 (N=11)* • Women aged 45-49 (N=5)***
	DIRECT ENTRY Self determined (N=43)* • Men (N=36)* aged 50-54 (N=8)* • IT (N=17)* & Architects (N=13)* Current market rates (N=35)* all Men • Men aged 35-39 (N=6)* & 40-44 (N=18)** • Engineers (N=20)* Negotiated w. client (N=49)*** • Women (N=8)*** • Men aged 40-44 (N=17) & 50-54 (N=7)*** Negotiated w. Agency (N=50)* • Architects (N=13)* • Men (N=13)* aged 55-59 (N=6)***	DELAYED ENTRY Set/offered by client • Architect (N=6)* Set/offered by Agency (N=49)** • Men (N=37)*** & Women (N=12)*** • Women in Health & Welfare (N=5)*** • Women aged 35-39 (N=5)* • Men aged 50-54 (N=7)** Negotiated w. Client • Men aged 35-39 (N=7)***	

* Results significant at .001 ** Results significant at .005 *** Results significant at .01 levels **** Results significant at .05 levels

In contrast, those in the Push sector tend to have their charges set by the Agency or client and are either male or female Business/manager/Admin professionals, women in Health & Welfare or male Architects. Also, the role of market rates and presumably, labour market advantage is seen to be significant for men within the Pull/Direct entry sectors - especially for men aged 35-44 in the engineering profession. How these charges translate into income is explored next.

8.2.6: Personal and Spouse Income

Examining the levels of income provides a quantifiable aspect to this notion of independence. In theory, individuals left low to middle income jobs to pursue a more lucrative contracting career. This item allows the current income to be established as well as providing the basis for comparison with prior income which will be the subject of section of 8.2.9. Also, because the interview results, discussed in chapter 6, indicated that a partner's or spouse's income was regarded as important contribution, this information was also requested in the survey. The partner/spouse's income is added to the contractor's income to determine total income and is shown in Table 8.19.

The number of respondents whose own incomes exceeded the highest ABS income level of \$185,000 is comparatively low at 2.1 percent. This increases to over 20 per cent when the partner/spouse's income is included to provide a total income. The results now substantially exceeds ABS statistics which place less than 10 per cent of joint income households at this level (ABS, 2000).

Table 8.19: Annual Income

	Own	%	Spouse/ Partner	%	Total
No response	-	-	7	2.9	7
under \$15,000	12	5.0	25	10.4	37
\$15,001-25,000	40	16.7	21	8.8	61
\$25,001-35,000	17	7.1	32	13.3	49
\$35,001-45,000	17	7.1	47	19.6	64
\$45,001-55,000	15	6.3	14	5.8	29
\$55,001-65,000	18	7.5	8	3.3	26
\$65,001-75,000	23	9.6	12	5.0	35
\$75,001-85,000	18	7.5	10	4.2	28
\$85,001-95,000	17	7.1	2	.8	19
\$95,001-105,000	7	2.9	2	.8	9
\$105,001-125,000	10	4.2	2	.8	12
\$125,001-145,000	19	7.9	-	-	19
\$145,001-165,000	12	5.0	-	-	12
\$165,001-185,000	10	4.2	-	-	10
over \$185,000	5	2.1	-	-	5
N/A	-	-	58	24.2	58
Total	240	100.0			

Placing these results within the matrix further supports the important role of spouse/partner income. Table 8.20 shows that, while contractors in the Pull sector have the highest average income, in the Push sector it is the spouse or partner who earn more than their contractor spouse/partner and they are in fact the highest earners of all the spouse/partner groups.

The spouse/partners' income also exceeds that of the contractors in the Default 1 option - a result which makes sense when examined in terms of gender. While males dominated the higher wage levels of Own income ($N=27$, $p < .005$), the average was reduced when Own income was examined for women with dependents ($N=11$, $p < .01$). Thus, men in this Default 1 sector earned substantially more than their female counterparts who had dependent children. This result accords with earlier findings that women in this particular sector were contracting because it provided a flexibility option which allowed them to

combine career and family whereas more money was the attraction for men. The role of contracting suiting a lifestyle choice for women was further borne out in the examination of the contribution of the woman's partner/spouse as this generally increased the Spouse Income average and significantly impacted on the Total income. These results provide further evidence of the suitability of a contracting career for professional women with dependent children that was first raised in section 7.1.4.

Table 8.20: The Push/Pull Matrix and Contractors Average Income

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Become a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL OWN - \$95,000*** SPOUSE - \$60,000 TOTAL - \$125,000***	DEFAULT 1 OWN - \$45,000*** • men ($N=27$)** SPOUSE - \$55,000 TOTAL - \$85,000 • women ($N=11$)*	CHOICE OWN - \$85,000*** SPOUSE - \$60,000 TOTAL - \$105,000***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 OWN - \$95,000* SPOUSE - \$75,000 TOTAL - \$115,000	PUSH OWN - \$25,000*** SPOUSE - \$65,000 TOTAL - \$45,000***	NO CHOICE OWN - \$35,000*** SPOUSE - \$65,000 TOTAL - \$65,000***
	DIRECT ENTRY OWN - \$95,000*** SPOUSE - \$65,000 TOTAL - \$120,000***	DELAYED ENTRY OWN - \$40,000*** SPOUSE - \$60,000 TOTAL - \$70,000***	

***Results significant at .001 **Results significant at .005 * Results significant at .05 levels

Overall, Table 8.20 also demonstrates that greater personal and total income is significantly associated with greater contracting independence and that there is a very wide income differential associated with contracting. Generally, as contractor independence decreases, spousal income becomes more important in

terms of contribution to the total income and, presumably, in supporting the contractor in their work.

8.2.7: Other Sources of Income

The picture changes when other sources of household income are included. This issue was addressed through the provision of the main alternative sources of household income, shown in Table 8.21 below. Within the options provided, shares are generally associated with discretionary income, while the other sources tend to provide for everyday general living expenses. The results presented in Table 8.21 reveal that the majority of respondents had at least one alternative source of income with fewer than 46 per cent having two and 9 per cent with three sources. These findings suggest that contracting income is often supplemented by money from other sources.

Table 8.21: Other Sources of Income

	Source 1		Source 2		Source 3		Total
	1	%	2	%	3	%	
0	31	12.9	129	53.8	231	96.3	-
Shares/investmts.	33	13.8	54	22.5	-	-	87
Another job	15	6.3	2	.8	4	1.7	21
Working partner	148	61.7	6	2.5	-	-	154
Redundancy pay	6	2.5	42	17.5	5	2.1	53
Other	7	2.9	7	2.9	-	-	14
Total	240	100	240	100	240	100	-

Table 8.21 also confirms previous indications from the section above of the importance of working partners for over 64 per cent of respondents. In addition,

while the role of redundancy initially raised in section 7.2.4 emerges again, but in this case relates to the payments that resulted.

Applying the matrix framework, illustrated in Table 8.22, provides a different interpretation of these results. Shares were significant for the Pull/Direct Entry sectors (N=32, p =.015 and N =48, p = .001 respectively) while a working partner's income was a feature of Default 1 (N = 30, p = .038) and Delayed entry (N = 70, p = .033).

Table 8.22: The Push/Pull Matrix & the Impact of Other Income Sources

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Shares (N=32)**	DEFAULT 1 Working Partner (N=30)* Redundancy (N=16)***	CHOICE
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Redundancy (N=28)***	NO CHOICE Redundancy (N=32)***
	DIRECT ENTRY	DELAYED ENTRY Working Partner (N=70)* Redundancy (N=48)***	

***Results significant at .001 **Results significant at .005 * Results significant at .05 levels

The role of redundancy payments featured significantly in the Default 1 (N = 19, p =.001), the Push (N = 28, p = .000), the No Choice (N = 32, p , >.000) and Delayed Entry (N = 48, p = .000) sectors. This indicates that for those whom the move into contracting was voluntary, the redundancy payment afforded the choice of pursuing an option they would not otherwise have been able to. For those whom the move was involuntary, redundancy payments meant that they could delay the move into an arrangement they did not choose.

Overall, combining the results of the last two items on total and other sources of income shows the Pull/Direct Entry sectors are associated with greater personal total and discretionary income. This decreases significantly in the Push and related sectors of the matrix. Also, previous indications that a working partner's income is important for the Default 1 contractor and the importance of a secondary occupation as a safety net for those pushed, are confirmed.

8.2.8: Variation in Income

The interviews revealed the importance of fluctuations in income. For some, one of the difficulties associated with contracting was the impact of the unpredictability of work and income on overall lifestyle.

This issue was further examined through the questionnaire to discover how much and how often income varies. The results are presented in the matrix framework in Table 8.23 and provide further indications of greater advantage, control and independence for those in the Pull/Direct entry sectors. This contrasts with the vulnerability to income variations for those in the Push/Delayed Entry sectors and reinforces the view of increasing disadvantage, lack of control and dependence. The overall picture is one where opportunity for some contrasts with an arrangement which is a trap for others.

The statistics for the push and pull quadrants in Table 8.23 reveal that stability of income for those pulled into contracting is strongly associated with males in IT

and Engineering aged 40-44. On the other hand, the vulnerability of those pushed isolates both males, especially those aged 35-39, and females aged 45-49 with two or more dependents.

Table 8.23: The Push/Pull Matrix and Income Variation

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Little variation (N=35)*** • men (N=30)*** aged 40-44 (N=20)*** • IT (N=15)* • Engineering (N=12)*** Varies year to year (N=27)*** • Men (N=22)**	DEFAULT 1 Lot of variation (N=16)* Varies week to week (N=9)** Other (N=5)***	CHOICE Little variation (N=56)*** Varies year to year (N=42)***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Lot of variation (N=24)*** • Men (N=16)** aged 35-39 (N=7)*** • Females (N=8)** aged 45-49 with dependents (N=5)** • Architects (N=7)*** Varies week to week (N=15)*** • Men (N=8)* • Females (N=7)***	NO CHOICE Lot of variation (N=32)*** Varies week to week (N=16)***
	DIRECT ENTRY No variation (N=25)* Little variation (N=41)*** Varies year to year (N=36)**	DELAYED ENTRY Lot of variation (N=41)*** Varies week to week (N=24)***	

***Results significant at .001 **Results significant at .005 * Results significant at .05 levels

Combining these results with those from the last three items of C5, C6 and C7 shows that, for those pushed into contracting, incomes are not only lower but are also significantly less reliable. These individuals are also more vulnerable as they have fewer alternative income sources to cushion them between contracts.

8.2.9: Comparing Contracting Income

The focus on income now moves to compare current earnings with prior contract and non-contract work. Before examining the results it must be noted that some caution should be attached to the interpretation of the results in this section. They are not anchored in dollar amounts and either a halo or stereotyping effect may be in operation so that the results present the popularly expected rather than actual situation. With this in mind, Table 8.24 confirms the common perception that contractors are better paid than company employees performing the same work as just over 64 per cent (144 respondents) indicated that they are paid either better or much better.

Table 8.24: Comparisons of Contracting Income

Rating*	Employees	%	Prior Contracts	%	Prior Non-Contract work	%
0	4	1.7	14	5.8	13	5.4
1. N/A	1	.4	12	5.0	5	2.1
2. unsure	2	.8	-	-	-	-
3. much worse	2	.8	5	2.1	26	10.8
4. worse	12	5.0	31	12.9	34	14.2
5. the same	65	27.1	108	45.0	24	10.0
6. better	56	23.3	48	20.0	64	26.7
7. much better	98	40.8	22	9.2	74	30.8
Total	240	100.0	240	100.0	240	100.0

*The numbers 1-7 correspond to the Likert scale presented in the Survey and provide the basis for the mean scores used in Table 8.25

The financial advantage of the respondents current contracts are further borne out in comparisons to prior contract and non-contract work where over 65 per cent (178 and 162 respondents respectively) saw their current pay as the same, better, or much better.

The now familiar patterns of advantage versus disadvantage re-emerges when these results are translated into the matrix. The mean scores presented in Table 8.25 show that individuals in the Pull sector are paid significantly better than employees and both prior contract and non-contract work. Those pushed rated their current pay to be worse or the same as that of employees and prior contracts or non-contract work.

Table 8.25: The Push/Pull Matrix and Income Comparisons

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Employees - better to much better ($\mu = 6.7$)*** Prior Contracts - The same to Better ($\mu = 5.39$)*** Prior Non-Contract work - better to much better ($\mu = 6.41$)***	DEFAULT 1	CHOICE
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Employees - worse to the same ($\mu = 4.83$)*** Prior Contracts - worse to the same ($\mu = 4.26$)** Prior Non-Contract work - much worse to worse ($\mu = 3.39$)***	NO CHOICE
	DIRECT ENTRY	DELAYED ENTRY	

***Results significant at .001 **Results significant at .005

Further analysis revealed that IT professionals once again dominated the Pull sector, as well as a significant group of both Architect and Business/Management professionals, this time in terms of comparisons of pay with employees and prior contracts. Similarly, females in Health & Welfare and Education featured in the Push sector - but this result was only significant when comparing current pay with prior contract work.

The position of labour market advantage previously established within chapter 7 as a feature of the Pull quadrant is further evidenced when these results are put in the context of item B5, 'how contractors charged for their services.' The high pay rates these pulled-into-contracting contractors receive compared to employees is significantly correlated ($p < .001$) with being paid according to market rates, being able to set their own fee or negotiating with the Agency. These factors tend to be associated with a position of labour market advantage. In contrast, the slightly lower pay from prior contracts for the pull sector correlated significantly with individuals who either negotiated directly with clients or had their pay determined by the Agency – a result which implies that labour market advantage is a changing situation.

Also, the less lucrative nature of contractors negotiating directly with clients was further borne out for those in the Push sector where a significant group ($N = 19$, $p < .05$) emerged in both the prior contracting and non-contracting items. This line of comparison also revealed that higher pay rates than for employees tended to be associated with longer-term attachment to contracting which in turn is associated with the pull into contracting. Furthermore, a group in the Push option with 3-5 years contracting experience all indicated that they were earning less as contractors than they had earned from non-contract work ($N = 18$, $p < .05$).

The advantage of those in the Pull sector in terms of pay rates continues when they are compared to employees performing the same work while the same pay comparisons once again highlight the disadvantage of those in the Push sector.

Overall, the clear polarisation between the Push and Pull indicated from earlier sections has been further supported.

8.2.10: Cost of Setting up in Contracting

Studies of self-employment indicate that set-up costs can be a significant hurdle to entering alternative arrangements. With this in mind, the results presented in Table 8.26 shows only 27.5 per cent (66 individuals) required money to establish themselves and most of these required less than \$10,000 which they accessed from personal savings. While there were also a small number of respondents (4 in total) who used two resources of financial support, the results were not statistically significant.

Table 8.26: Set Up Costs of Contracting

\$ Amount	Redundancy Pay	Personal Savings	Bank Loan	Total
Under \$10,000	10	30	10	50
\$11 – 25,000	1	13	3	17
\$26 – 50,000	2	-	-	2
Over \$50,000	-	-	2	2
Total	13	43	15	71

Note: results based on 66 responses but 4 individuals accessed two sources of financial aid

The group who did require money to set themselves up in contacting consisted mainly of two professions:

- 18 architects, 17 of whom used either personal savings or Bank/Govt loans
- 27 engineers, 13 of whom used Personal Savings.

Translating these results into the Matrix produced only two areas of significant results and these are shown in Table 8.27. The key feature of these results is that they confirm different financial paths into contracting.

Table 8.27: The Push/Pull Matrix and Income to Set Up in Contracting

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Redundancy - 1 x \$26 - 50,000 Personal Savings* - 7 x \$10,000 - 10 x \$11-25,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 4 x \$10,000 - 2 x \$50,000+	DEFAULT 1 Redundancy - 3 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 1 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$50,000+	CHOICE Redundancy - 3 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 25,000 - 2 x \$26 - 50,000 Personal Savings* - 8 x \$10,000 - 11 x \$11-25,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 5 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 25,000 - 2 x \$50,000+
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Personal Savings - 3 x \$10,000	PUSH Redundancy - 5 x \$10,000 Personal Savings - 2 x \$10,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 1 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 25,000	NO CHOICE Redundancy - 7 x \$10,000 Personal Savings - 5 x \$10,000 - 2 x \$11-25,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 3 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 25,000
	DIRECT ENTRY Redundancy - 1 x \$26 - 50,000 Personal Savings** - 22 x \$10,000 - 10 x \$11-25,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 6 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 50,000 - 2 x \$50,000+	DELAYED ENTRY Redundancy* - 8 x \$10,000 - 1 x \$11 - 25,000 Personal Savings - 7 x \$10,000 Bank/Govt. Loan - 2 x \$10,000 - 2 x \$11 - 25,000	

**Results significant at .001 *Results significant at .005

The role of personal savings was important for individuals Pulled into contracting (N = 17, p = .002). For those who had a delayed entry (N = 9, P = .033), however, the redundancy package emerged as a valuable asset in assisting them into contracting. Overall though, the results suggest that contracting is not a high cost employment option.

8.2.11: Client History

This section establishes both the numbers of clients that individuals have contracted for over both;

- the last year, and
- since entering contracting.

Added to this, the clients over the last year are further examined in terms type, with options ranging from public or private sector to contracting agencies and private individuals. This level of information was not requested for all clients since initially entering contracting as previous studies of self-employment indicate that such data is notoriously incorrect and difficult for respondents to recall (see for example Bryson and White, 1997; Galt and Moening, 1996).

This dual view of the last year and total client population is presented in Table 8.28. The role of personal savings was important for individuals Pulled into contracting (N = 17, p = .002). For those who had a delayed entry (N = 9, P = .033), however, the redundancy package emerged as a valuable asset in assisting them into contracting.

Table 8.28: Comparisons of Client History

Number of Clients	Since Initial Entry	%	Types of Employer worked for over last 12 months				Total No.
			Private Sector	Public sector	Contracting Agencies	Private individuals	
1	23	9.6	99	52	73	13	237
2 to 3	51	21.3	32	41	26	14	113
4 to 10	76	31.7	32	11	17	17	77
11 to 20	49	20.4	17	2	-	1	20
21 to 49	30	12.5	-	-	-	-	-
50+	8	3.3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	240	100	180	106	116	45	

Overall though, the results suggest that contracting is not a high cost employment option. The role of personal savings was important for individuals Pulled into contracting (N = 17, p = .002). For those who had a delayed entry (N = 9, P = .033), however, the redundancy package emerged as a valuable asset in assisting them into contracting. Overall though, the results suggest that contracting is not a high cost employment option. The results presented in Table 8.28 also show the key role of the private sector as an employer of contract labour also appears – a role made clearer in the matrix framework shown in Table 8.29 below. Also, the important intermediary role played by the contracting agencies as actual employers of contract labour is confirmed.

Table 8.29 shows that contractors in the Pull and associated sectors (Direct Entry and By Choice), have had significantly more clients since first entering contracting. This result reinforces earlier results where these sectors also identifies groups with the greatest number of years working as contractors and indicated a much stronger and ongoing affiliation to contracting. Once again, IT and Engineering dominate the Pull sectors and Business/Management is represented in the Push sectors. In this instance, however, Architects are statistically significant in both the No Choice and the Pull/Direct Entry sectors. The emerging view is that the matrix sectors represent different types of contractors who provide services for different types of clients. This is borne out in the analysis of the clients over the last year where the role of the private sector is shown to feature significantly within the Pull and associated sectors of the matrix.

Table 8.29: The Matrix and Client History Since Initial Entry

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Since Initial Entry 11-20 clients(N=21)* 5 IT & 7 Engineers** 18 males with 10 aged 40-44* 50+ clients(N=8)*** 5 IT & 3 Architects* & 6 males aged 40-44* Over last year Private Sector (N=60)*** - of 32 with 1 employer** 23 are males*** with 20 aged 40-44 with 1-2 employers*** - 13 IT** & 9 Engineers*	DEFAULT 1 Since Initial Entry 4-10 clients(N=21)*** - 9 IT*** & 7 Bus/Mgt**	CHOICE Since Initial Entry 50+ clients(N=8)* 5 IT** & 7 males*** Over last year Private Sector (N=106)*** 60 with 1 employer** 36 are men** -38 IT***/ 23 w. 1 employer*** 28** Enginrs/15 w. 1 employer** -22** Bus/Mgts/14 w. employer**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Since Initial Entry 11-20 clients(N=6)* Over last year Private Sector(N=8) and 7 Engineers*** DIRECT ENTRY Since Initial Entry 11-20 clients(N=34)***30 men*** - 12 Engineers & 11 IT** -19 males aged 35-44* 21-49 clients(N=18)* - 15 men**with 7 aged 50-54*** 50+ clients(N=8)***7 men* - 5 IT & 3 Architects** Over last year Private Sector (N=91)*** -78 men*** 35 w. 1 employer** 34 IT & 27 Engineers** -45 with 1 employer*** - 19 IT & 16 Engineers* -28 males aged 40-44 with 1-2 employers*** Contract Agencies (N=53)**	PUSH Since Initial Entry 4-10 clients(N=24)*** -13 Bus/Mgt** -16 males aged 35-54*** DELAYED ENTRY Since Initial Entry 4-10 clients(N=46)*** -20 Bus/Mgt** -15 males aged 40-49*** Over last year Public Sector (N=55)*** -46 with 1 to 2 employers** - 10 males aged 40-44* - 21 Bus/Mgt**	NO CHOICE Since Initial Entry 4-10 clients(N=32)** 16 Bus/Mgt* & 8 Architects***

***Results significant at .001 **Results significant at .005 * Results significant at .05 levels

Despite the overall dominance of the private sector illustrated in Table 8.29, the matrix framework reveals that it is the public sector that is significant in the delayed entry route, while contracting agencies feature in the direct entry route.

Combining this result with previous items indicates that disadvantage and decreased contracting independence are associated with employment in the Public Sector, while advantage and increasing independence are associated with contracting in the Private Sector. How these differences arise and what they actually mean are examined below.

2.12: Prior Employment with Clients

An important issue raised in studies of self-employment is that of prior employment histories with current clients. The survey thus moves on to question whether contractors have ever been a direct employee of an organisation or client for whom they now provide contracting services. In terms of independence it raises the notion of work networks and the active maintenance of these by the more independent and successful contractor. The fact that over 45 per cent (109 out of 240) had prior experience with an employer demonstrates the importance of prior employment contacts. This is further reflected within the familiar patterns of responses in the matrix illustrated in Table 8.30. The Pull, Default 1 and 2 and Choice sectors yield significant affirmative responses, whereas Push, Delayed Entry and Not By Choice demonstrate significant negative relationships.

While the spread of the professions among the matrix sectors produces patterns similar to those from the previous sections, Table 8.30 also discloses some notable exceptions.

Table 8.30: The Push/Pull Matrix & Prior Employment Status

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL ♦ YES (N=41)*** -24 IT** & 5 Architects* -34 Males* with 19 aged 40-44* ♦ NO (N=25) -17 males aged 25-29***	DEFAULT 1 ♦ YES (N=18) -10 Bus/Managers* ♦ NO (N=25) -18 IT**	CHOICE ♦ YES (N=66)* -27 IT & 6 Architects** -52 males ** 10 aged 50-54* -5 females aged 40-44** ♦ NO (N=58)
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 ♦ YES (N=6) -5 Engineers*** ♦ NO (N=5)	PUSH ♦ YES (N=12) ♦ NO (N=34)** -27 males** with 7 aged 35-39* -15 Bus/Mgt*	NO CHOICE ♦ YES (N=24) ♦ NO (N=51)** -38 males** with 11 aged 55-59* -22 Bus/Mgt* & 9 Architects*
	DIRECT ENTRY ♦ YES (N=59)*** -49 males*** with 25 aged 40-44*** -31 IT*** & 17 Engineers* ♦ NO (N=40) -9 males aged 50-54*	DELAYED ENTRY ♦ YES (N=32) ♦ NO (N=65)*** -50 males** with 13 aged 25-29** & 18 aged 35-44** -20 IT*** & 8 Architects*** & 7 Education & Teaching*	

KEY: 'Yes' denotes prior employment with a client

'No' denotes the absence of prior employment with a client

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

While individuals in sectors associated with the Pull into contracting generally have worked as employees for clients, there are two distinct age groupings who have not. The first is a group of 17 males aged 25-29 ($p = 0.001$) and the second, an older group of 19 males aged 40-44 ($p = 0.001$). Neither group was linked to any one occupation but they correspond with earlier results from items which linked the younger group in direct moves to a lucrative contracting 'career' ($p = 0.02$) while the older were responding to career plateauing ($p = 0.05$) and the desire for a flexible lifestyle ($p = 0.043$). Overall, the Table offers further support for the view that the sectors of the matrix represent different types of contractors.

8.2.13: Acquiring Clients

Following on from the theme of the previous item is the question of how individuals acquire contracting work. To investigate this aspect of contracting, item C14 of the survey listed eleven of the most common methods of acquiring contract work and respondents were asked to indicate which methods they used.

Examining the results illustrated in Table 8.31, each of the 240 respondents on average used approximately four different methods of obtaining work. In terms of gross numbers, the results provide further support for the importance of previous employers (options 7 and 8). Contracting Agencies (options 3 and 4) also appear as an important source of work.

Table 8.31: How Contractors Acquire Work

Method of Acquiring Work	Number of responses	% of responses
1- Self Advertise	32	3.50
2- Respond to Advertisements	98	10.69
3- Contact Contracting Agencies	142	15.48
4- Contracting Agencies Contact Me	176	19.19
5- Contact Family & Friends	4	0.43
6- Family & Friends Contact Me	23	2.51
7- Contact Previous Employers	76	8.29
8- Previous Employers Contact Me	86	9.38
9- I Use My 'Contact Network'	90	9.81
10- My 'Contact Network' Tell Me	81	8.83
11- Others Recommend My Services	103	11.23
12- Other	6	0.65
Total	917	100.00

*Note: Due to the low response rate for options 5 and 12 were omitted from further analysis

Table 8.32 expands these results into the matrix to show that respondents in the Pull and associated sectors employed a greater number of methods to obtain work and that these methods can be characterised as the pro-active options generally associated with the successful, self employed entrepreneur. By comparison, those

in the Push and Delayed sectors access the more standard employee type options associated with traditional employment, such as responding to job advertisements and contacting agencies.

While labour market location may also be important, overall it seems that the effort and energy put into obtaining work from a variety of sources is concomitant with increasing independence, and the role of 'networks' is especially important for those at the highest levels of contracting independence. The notion of pro-actively investing effort in maintaining a contracting lifestyle is expanded further in the next sections of the chapter.

Table 8.32: The Push/Pull Matrix and how Contractors Acquire Work

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL CAs Contact Me (N=63)*** Prior Employers Contact Me (N=31)* I Contact Work Network (N=32)* Work Network Contacts Me (N=42)*** Others Recommend My Services (N=51)***	DEFAULT 1 I Contact Work Network (N=22)**	CHOICE CAs Contact Me (N=105)*** I Contact Work Network (N=62)*** Work Network Contacts Me (N=64)*** Others Recommend My Services (N=69)***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 CAs Contact Me (N=11)* Previous Employers Contact Me (N=9)*** Others Recommend My Services (N=10)***	PUSH Respond to Advertisements (N=33)*** I Contact CAs (N=33)*	NO CHOICE Respond to Advertisements (N=46)*** I Contact CAs (N=51)*
	DIRECT ENTRY Self Advertise services (N=21)* CAs Contact Me (N=93)*** Previous Employers Contact Me (N=54)*** Work Network Contacts Me (N=51)*** Others Recommend My Services (N=73)***	DELAYED ENTRY Respond to Advertisements (N=48)*	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

8.2.14: Choice in Time and Hours of Work

The issue of choice is considered a crucial one both in the legal context of contracting and the psychological literature on work satisfaction. The survey examines this concept in terms of the questions of the levels of control and choice respondents exercised over time and hours worked.

The results shown in Table 8.33 appear to indicate that most of the contractors in this survey experience 'moderate' to 'large amounts of choice' over hours and time worked.

Table 8.33: Choice over Time and Hours of Work

	Frequency	Percent
1 - No Choice At All	14	5.8
2 - A Small Amount	50	20.8
3 - A Moderate Amount	66	27.5
4 - A Large Amount	88	36.7
5 - Complete Choice	20	8.3
Total	238	100.0

Translating these into the matrix produces a very different picture and, as Table 8.34 reveals, the disadvantaged position of those in the Push and related sectors again emerge. These individuals are characterised by 'no' to 'small amounts of choice.' In contrast, the Pull and its associated sectors reflect the now-familiar patterns of advantage found in earlier sections of this chapter. In terms of the issues of choice over times and hours of work, this advantage varies from 'complete choice' for 14 respondents in the Pull sector, to a more generalised 'large amount of choice' for the Default 1 and Choice sectors.

Table 8.34: The Push/Pull Matrix & Choice in Time and Hours of Work

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contract or by Choice	PULL • Complete Choice (N=14)*** - 9 males aged 40-44*** - 5 Engineers*, 4 IT* & 4 Architects**	DEFAULT 1 • Large Amount of Choice (N=20)*	CHOICE • Large Amount of Choice (N=56)** - 5 men & 8 females aged 35-39** - 15 men aged 40-44* - 13 Bus/Mgrs* • Complete Choice (N=17)*
Contract or Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH • No Choice (N=8)*** • Small Amount of Choice (N=22)*** - 5 Architects***	NO CHOICE • No Choice (N=10)*** • Small Amount of Choice (N=26)***
	DIRECT ENTRY • Medium Amount of Choice (N=34)* - 8 men aged 50-54** • Complete Choice (N=16)*** - 9 men aged 40-44*	DELAYED ENTRY • No Choice (N=10)* • Small Amount of Choice (N=31)*** - 5 Architects* - 6 men aged 35-39* & 5 men aged 40-44* • Large Amount of Choice - 19 IT* & 13 men aged 24-29***	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

In terms of the larger picture of examining the matrix by factors such as gender, the issue of choice over time and hours of work generally remains a feature of each sector rather than concentrating within particular professions and age groups. As would be expected from earlier results, greater choice is associated with the Pull, By Choice and Direct Entry sectors while Push and Delayed Entry again reflect disadvantage - this time in the lack of choice. One notable exception in the Delayed Entry route is a group of IT professionals and young males who exercise a large amount of choice and they provide a reminder of the positive aspects of the Default option which makes up these results. Overall, higher levels of dependence are reflected in greater choice over time and hours of work and are again a feature of the Pull and associated sectors.

8.2.15: Control over Work

Control over how work is performed is another primary aspect dealt with by the legal literature on contracting as well as in the psychological literature which focuses on work satisfaction. Generally, greater control is equated with increased independence and higher job satisfaction. With this in mind, the survey moves on to the question of how much control respondents exercised over their work. The results presented in Table 8.35 indicate that over half of the contractors surveyed have a large degree of independence.

Table 8.35: Amount of Control over Work

Amount of Control	Frequency	Valid Percent
1. None	-	-
2. Small	61	25.4
3. Moderate	49	20.4
4. Large	99	41.3
5. Complete	31	12.9
Total	240	100.0

It is a result which accords with the view of contractors as autonomous and operating outside of the bounds traditionally imposed by work. Again, translating this data into the matrix in Table 8.36 reveals that significant differences exist.

As with the previous item on Choice, the control options tend to characterise each sector rather than produce distinct patterns for professions and age groups within each. High levels of control (from large to complete) fall within the Pull sector while small to moderate levels emerge strongly within the Default 1, Push, No Choice and Delayed sectors. The lack of clear patterns within these last two

items, which deal with issues fundamental to contracting and job satisfaction, does not accord with the view that has been emerging.

Table 8.36: The Push/Pull Matrix and Control Over Work

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Large Amount (N=35)** Complete Control (N=15)**	DEFAULT 1 Moderate Control (N=17)***	CHOICE Complete Control -12 men aged 40-44*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Small Amount (N=28)*** -13 Bus/Mgrs*** Moderate Amount - 5 men aged 50-54*	NO CHOICE Small Amount (N=33)*** -17 Bus/Mgrs** -7 men aged 55-59** Moderate Amount -6 Females in Health & Welfare* -5 men aged 50-54*
	DIRECT ENTRY Large Amount (N=52)* -20 men aged 40-44* -5 females aged 35-39** -7 Bus/Mgrs**	DELAYED ENTRY Small Amount (N=36)*** -14 men aged 35-44*** & 7 aged 50-54**	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 and *at the .05 level

Most results up to this point have increasingly added support to the hypothesis that workers in the Pull (and to a lesser degree, the associated) sectors represent the highly empowered, entrepreneurial and self-directed worker of the future. The next two sections dealing with the last items of Part C provide some explanation of these results.

8.2.16: Hours of Work per Week

The issue of overwork amongst the higher paid end of the labour market, (the 'overworked and overpaid') is in sharp contrast with the underemployed (or out of work) and underpaid in the literature on the future of work (see for example ACCOSS, 1996; Hakim, 1996; Judy and D'Amico, 1997).

Weekly working hours worked per week are summarised in Table 8.37 and shows that the largest single group of contractors work a "normal" working week of between 36 to 45 hours per week (ABS, 2000).

Table 8.37: Hours Worked Per Week

	Frequency	Percent
none	5	2.1
under ten	8	3.3
11-20	15	6.3
21-35	40	16.7
36-45	80	33.3
46-60	42	17.5
61-80	41	17.1
over 80	9	3.8
Total	240	100.0

However, the results in Table 8.37 reveal that just over 34 over cent work in excess of 46 hours per week and overall, indicates a wide range of working hours. The matrix structure confirms this interpretation.

Table 8.38 shows that contractors in the Pull sector, and those associated with it are working significantly longer hours. When these results are put into the larger context of the earlier results from Part C of the Survey which this section 8.2 has outlined, the view that now emerges is that the highly paid and independent also work very long hours. This finding is important as it supports the assertion as to

the complex nature of the issue of independence which underlies Part C of the survey (refer Appendix 5 for full details of questionnaire). Thus, sections 8.2.1 up until this section 8.2.16, have examined factors from income to choice and control to increasingly provide a view of advantage associated with increasing independence. The focus on actual hours of work now reveals overwork as a feature of the Pull sector, an aspect more commonly associated with disadvantage and being pushed into contracting. Furthermore, examination of these results from the perspective of professions confirms that those working long hours are from the previously identified more advantaged occupations of IT and Business/Management.

Disadvantage does still feature in the Push sector and its associated sectors but here it is associated with working less than the average number of hours per week. The Default 1 and Delayed Entry sectors have a dual nature with some groups working very few hours and others working average or above average hours. Consolidating these with previous results and the information from chapters 2 to 4, clear parallels with the broader scale changes occurring within the world of work emerges. The demands for greater autonomy and the rewards in terms of greater earnings are demonstrated by the Pull and associated sectors. There are indications that these benefits come at the expense of long hours of work and that increased control over work hours and the way in which work is done, is a general rather than specific feature of being pulled into contracting. The fact that these individuals generally exercise greater control over the hours and methods of work indicates that the pressure to work these longer hours may be self-generated.

Table 8.38: The Push/Pull Matrix and Hours of Work per Week

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	FULL 46-60 Hours (N=19)* • 17 men*** • 5 Engineers* 60-80 Hours (N=20)*** • 18 men*** with 12 aged 40-44* 80+ Hours (N=7)*** • 5 men*	DEFAULT 1 Under 10 Hours (N=6)*** • 6 Female*** 46-60 Hours (N=13)** • -10 men** • -7 Bus/Mgrs*	CHOICE 46-60 Hours (N=35)*** • 29 men*** 5 aged 30-34 and 6 aged 55-59** • 10 Bus/Mgrs*** 60-80 Hours (N=31)*** • 26 men*** with 13 aged 40-44* • 13 Engineers*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 60-80 Hours (N=5)**	PUSH 11-20 Hours (N=8)*** • 6 men*** 21-35 Hours (N=18)*** • 11 men* & 7 Females**	NO CHOICE
	DIRECT ENTRY 46-60 Hours (N=24)* 60-80 Hours (N=28)*** • 24 men*** with 8 aged 35-39** & 13 IT* 80+ Hours (N=9)*** • 7 men*	DELAYED ENTRY No Hours (N=5)* all men* Under 10 Hours (N=7)** • all Female*** 21-35 (N=23)* • 15 men** 5 men aged 40-44*** • 13 Bus/Mgrs* 36-45 Hours • 14 IT*** • 13 men aged 25-29* & 9 aged 35-39**	

***Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 level *at the .05 level

The individual's role in maintaining and sustaining a contracting career is developed further in the last section which draws on Part C of the survey.

8.2.17: Work Extras

The concept of the self managed career has emerged very strongly in the debates over the changes occurring in the world of work. Typified by writers such as Hall and Associates (1996) or Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni (1995) in terms of the 'boundaryless career', the underlying theme is that workers must now look to providing many of the traditional 'extras' of employment for themselves.

The last item of Part C examines the notion of self-management through nine of the most common 'extras' and 'essentials' traditionally associated with employment. The degree of independence is directly related to the number of these options selected – the more options, the greater the independence.

Table 8.39 shows that many of the 'essentials' of any working life, and of self-employed work in particular appear to be accessed. Having an accountant, superannuation and disability and health insurance cover fundamental areas of employment and their response rate indicates at least basic planning by many in the move from traditional employment. The items that cover the less obvious, and often more qualitative, longer-term aspects of contracting appear to be less well covered. Few seem to have a long-term focus on career or keeping their skills

current through training which is a key concept behind theories such as the portfolio or boundaryless career of the future.

Table 8.39: Work Extras

Extras & Essentials	Sum	% rate for each item*	% total overall**	Mean
Disability & health insurance	111	46.25	11.55	.4625
Income insurance	66	27.50	6.87	.2750
Personal superannuation	156	65.00	16.25	.6500
Own accountant	183	76.25	19.10	.7625
Active savings plan	83	35.58	8.65	.3458
Professional affiliation	120	50.00	12.5	.5000
Long term career plans	84	35.00	8.74	.3500
Undertake work related training	65	27.08	6.77	.2708
Planned annual holidays	84	35.00	8.74	.3500
Other	8	3.33	0.83	3.333E-02
Totals	960		100%	

*sum of individual ratings for each option (so equals more than 100%)

**total sum of all ratings compared to each other (so equals 100%)

This absence is further compounded by the generally low rate of active savings plans or income insurance. The lack of planning for annual holidays is also an issue closely related to both the overworked (who do not have the time) and the underworked (who may not have the money). In all, the results of Table 8.39 indicate an average of four 'extras' for each respondent.

The results illustrated in Table 8.40 expose the polarisation within the matrix that has typified this chapter. The Push and Delayed Entry sectors reveal only a few significant results which are related only to specific age/gender groups and contrasts with the very wide range across both age, gender and occupation in the Pull and associated sectors. These results isolate the item of work related training. The need to actively maintain and update skills is clearly identified in the literature (see for example Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Woodd, 1999) but

the results of the matrix place it within the areas generally associated with disadvantage and marginalisation. This item appears to be related to the acquisition of new skills to succour employment and attain marketability.

Long term career planning for the older group of 55-59 year old males in the Push sectors also fits with previous results that linked them to redundancy and retrenchment. The lack of any other concrete indications of commitment to non-traditional work also adds support to the view that this long-term career lies back in traditional employment. This result contrasts with the planned and long term attachment that emerges in the Pull and associated sectors of the matrix, particularly for men aged 40-44 and the IT, engineering and architectural professions.

Further support of the longer-term planning which appears to characterise the Pull sector is shown by the presence of the four items that extend beyond the staples of self-employment (the various insurances, superannuation and an accountant). These four 'extras' all feature in the dominant groups within the Pull and associated sectors. While this adds further weight to the advantaged position of individuals in the Pull sector, there was only one group with any overall consistency within the results for this sector.

Thus, 40-44 year olds emerge as the only distinct group pulled into contracting who have active savings plans, professional affiliations, long-term career plans and planned annual holidays.

Table 8.40: The Push/Pull Matrix and Work Extras

Contractor by Choice	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	CHOICE
	PULL Disability/Health Insurance - (N=49)*** -20 IT, 7 Arch & 6 Bus/Mgrs* 26 Men aged 40-44* & 6 35-39* Income insurance - (N=35)*** -13 Engrs*** 5 Arch. * 22 Men aged 40-44*** & 8 aged 35-39* Personal Super (N=50)* - 25 Men aged 40-44** Own accountant - (N=60)*** 10 Arch* 26 Men aged 40-44* Active savings plan - (N=39)*** 12 Engrs** & 5 Bus/Mgrs** & 22 Men aged 40-44*** Professional affiliation - 6 Arch.* Long term career plans - (N=34)*** 12 Engrs*** & 7 Bus/Mgrs & 11 Men aged 40-44* Plan annual holidays - (N=32)* - 15 IT* & 5 Arch* & 4 Men aged 35-39***	DEFAULT 1 Disability & Health Insurance - 9 Bus/Mgrs* Income insurance - 4 Bus/Mgrs* Personal super - 5 Men aged 25-29*** Active savings - 9 IT* & 5 Men aged 25-29*** Professional affiliation - 5 Men aged 25-29*** & 5 females aged 40-44* Long term career plans - 5 Men aged 40-44*	Disability & Health Insurance (N=76)*** 19 Bus/Mgrs* & 8 Arch* 11 Men aged 35-39***, 5 aged 50-54** & 8 55-59* Income Ins. (N=49)*** - 16 Engrs*** 6 Bus/Mgrs** 5 Arch* 6 Females aged 35-39* 22 Men aged 40-44*, 4 Men aged 50-54* & 4 Men aged 55-59* Personal Super - 36 IT* 13 Men aged 40-44* & 7 Females aged 25-29*** Own accountant - 11 Arch* Active savings plan - (N=62)*** 32 IT** 17 Engrs*** 8 Men aged 25-29*** & 22 40-44** 6 Females aged 35-39*** Prof. affiliation 6 Men aged 25-29** & 7 Females 40-44* Long term career plans (N=52)* 15 Engrs*** & 13 Men aged 40-44* Plan Annual Holidays - 5 Archls* 4 Men aged 35-39**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH	NO CHOICE
	DEFAULT 2 Disability/Health Insurance (N=9)* Personal Super (N=11)* Professional Affil. (N=10)** Plan annual holidays (N=8)*	Personal Super - 5 Females aged 45-49* Own accountant - 5 Females aged 45-49* Professional affiliation - 8 men aged 50-54* Long term career plans - 6 men aged 50-54** Work related training - 6 men aged 35-39***	Personal Super - 8 Architects & 5 females aged 45-49* Own accountant - 4 Edn* - 5 females aged 45-49* Prof. affiliation - 5 IT* 5 females aged 45-49* Long term career plans - 6 Men aged 50-54** Work related training - 6 Men aged 35-39*
	DIRECT ENTRY	DELAYED ENTRY	
	Disability/Health Insurance - (N=71) -28 IT*** & 26 Engrs* -5 Females aged 35-39* & 34 Men aged 40-44*** Income insurance - (N=48)*** 22 IT* & 7 Arch* 7 Men & 5 Females aged 35-39*** & 25 men aged 40-44*** Personal Super - (N=76)*** - 32 IT* & 26 Engrs* 5 Females aged 35-39** & 33 Men aged 40-44*** Own accountant - (N=95)*** 34 IT* & 28 Engrs** & 19 Arch*** 6 Men aged 30-34**, 11 at 35-39***, 34 40-44** & 6 45-49** Active savings plan (N=49)*** 5 Bus/Mgrs* 8 Men aged 35-39** & 25 40-44*** Prof. Affiln - 28 Engrs** 26 Men aged 40-44 & 5 45-49* Long term career - 8 Bus/Mgrs** 5 Men aged 30-34* Work related training - 9 Men aged 50-54** Plan annual holidays - (N=47)*** -20 Engrs*, 7 Arch*, 4 Men aged 35-39* 27 40-44***	Professional affiliation - 6 Females aged 40-44** & 8 Men aged 5-54* Long term career plans - 6 Men aged 50-54* Undertake work related training - 6 Men aged 35-39**	

*Denotes results significant at the .001 level **at the .005 level ***at the .05 level

Of more interest are the omissions of items such as 'professional affiliation' and 'long-term career plans' by the dominant groups such as IT professionals. These particular omissions provide evidence of an opportunistic, rather than a long-term attachment, to contracting amongst IT professionals. Similarly, the only profession whose members consistently planned annual holidays were Architects. The lack of 'time-out' from work for the other professions equates with the long hours of work which emerged from the last item for Engineers, IT and Business/Management professionals. Thus, while this item provides evidence of career self-management amongst professional contractors, it does not do so consistently, even for the area of highest independence, the Pull sector of the matrix.

8.2.18: Summary of the varying levels of legal independence

Overall, analysis of Part C of the Survey supports Hypothesis 3 in that the level of contracting independence is generally, positively related to the pull into contracting and assists the contractor to remain in a contracting career. The results confirm that professional contracting arrangements vary from being:

- a trap associated with job insecurity, low earnings and periods of unemployment with entry a defensive move against unemployment;
- a transitional form of employment, on the road to more permanent employment arrangements for some;
- a career option for the most able and ambitious.

Those initially pulled into contracting, and to a lesser extent, those who entered by choice are significantly more independent in their contracting career than those who were pushed into it. The positive factors of contracting from Part B, such as more money and the ability to balance work & family translate into higher actual incomes and control over times and methods of work. Having a flexible lifestyle emerged as an important motivator in sustaining individuals in contracting.

Those in the Pull sector appear to have a clear knowledge of their labour market position – how much they are worth, the level of demand for their skills in the long term. They view their position from a perspective of sustainable opportunism. These factors translate into increasing levels of independence as measured by the nineteen items of Part C of the survey. Just as clearly there are also a group of individuals who operate from a marginal position where a short-term attachment to contracting obscures the longer-term desire for permanent, traditional employment. This supports the findings of the interviews discussed in chapter 6, and of Parts A and B of the survey in chapter 7 which found that traditional employment was still the desired employment arrangement for those pushed into contracting.

Long hours of work and lack of leave emerged as issues for the apparently privileged groups, a situation compounded by a lack of long term career planning and lack of investment in skills – either upgrading them or developing new ones. Thus, while the findings do support the hypothesis that the initial pull factors associated with the move into contracting are positively related to increasing

independence, the notion that these factors subsequently assist the individual to continue working as a contractor is much less certain.

Overall, there is no indication of any 'visionary' approach amongst professional contractors to careers in the twenty-first century. Rather, the approach is opportunistic and related to labour market advantage which translates into higher independence and job satisfaction.

8.3: Conclusion

This chapter has successfully applied the matrix framework developed in the previous chapter to two of the key themes developed from the literature review and pilot interviews. A wide range of items has been analysed to test whether professionals contract from a position of advantage and examine whether this work arrangement is sustainable. Questions of opportunism and long versus short-term attachment to contracting have been dealt with by applying the concepts of changes occurring within work and varying levels of independence to determine whether professional contracting is a work arrangement of the future.

Evidence of the widely cited 'elite' professional was found, but so was evidence of the low paid and insecure workers that typify the literature on the marginalisation of non standard workers. The survey results indicate that lack of opportunity and disadvantage are as relevant to professionals in contracting as

they are to any worker moving out of traditional employment. There are both self-evident and unanticipated costs involved in contracting - even where individuals appear to be highly paid and rewarded for their labour. Those stepping outside the bounds of traditional work face ongoing challenges in ensuring their own 'employability'. With the challenges of redundancy, changing labour markets and altering expectations of work have created new opportunities in which some individuals adapt and flourish, others clearly do not. A key concern raised in this chapter is the lack of individuals pro-actively managing their own careers either in terms of both contingency planning and investing in training. Closely related to this lack is the issue of the long hours of work and lack of annual holidays experienced by those in the apparently most advantaged positions. These are factors not generally addressed in the standard legal factors of work independence but they are clearly key aspects within the realities of working lives and they serve to provide a salutary reminder of the costs of increasing independence from an employer.

Overall, the results of this chapter have produced support for the second research hypothesis in that satisfaction with a contracting career was positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assisted in enabling the individual to work as a contractor. There was also evidence supporting the third hypothesis in that the level of contracting independence was positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assisted in enabling the individual to work as a contractor. In summary, the results of testing the research hypotheses

on satisfaction and independence indicate that there are very powerful forces operating to both pull and push professionals into contracting. However, as with other peripheral work arrangements, the overall control of these forces does not seem to be in the hands of the contractor as, even in the most advantaged and independent professions of IT and engineering, there were significant groups of individuals within the Push and associated sectors. Linking these results back to the thesis title, one proposition alluded to in the title is that the growing numbers in professional contracting represent a prototype of a much larger scale move to a more autonomous and individually satisfying future of work. This contention finds only superficial support, whereas the second assertion, that some degree of opportunism underlies this growth, can be substantiated. What is not clear at this stage is just whose "opportunism" it is.

To conclude, the role of the employer and the use of contractors in response to labour market conditions featured in both the Push and Pull sectors of the matrix. The result for those in demand is increased advantage and independence. The converse is true for those not in demand. While labour demand is an external factor largely beyond the control of the individual contractor, the consequences for both the employer and contracting agency in terms of the quality of the employment relationship is not. While commitment is a key element of the traditional currency of exchange in the employer/employee relationship, it is also increasingly being seen as an important attribute in managing the peripheral workforce. There is also the issue of managing and control at the level of the individual contractor and a key factor this chapter has isolated here is the central role the support of others plays in

being able to take advantage of an opportunity and ensuring ongoing employability. Together, these two factors of social support and commitment provide the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 9

Testing the Matrix Part II

This chapter presents the third and final stage of analysis of the findings from the survey of the professional contractor workforce. The two previous chapters have established and tested the Push/Pull Matrix through an examination of three broad research hypotheses. This chapter will now apply two very specifically focused hypotheses to the matrix to address the concepts of social support and organisational commitment. Unlike previous sections of the survey, these two hypotheses deal with areas that are anchored in well-established areas of academic research and both utilise standard scales to measure the constructs under examination.

Firstly, Part D of the survey utilises Sarason and Sarason's (1987) Social Support Questionnaire to investigate the role of social support in sustaining the contracting lifestyle (refer to Appendix 5 for the full Survey). Combined with an earlier item from Part A of the survey, this provides the basis for Hypothesis 4 that states -

Hypothesis 4 - The level of Social Support is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to maintain working as a contractor.

Secondly, Part E of the survey employs Mowday, Steers and Porter's (1979) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire to examine the role of contractor commitment to both the contracting agency and the client organisation. Hypothesis 5 proposes that commitment is differentiated between these two groups in that:

The level of commitment a contractor has to a client organisation is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting
and;
the level of commitment a contractor has to a Contracting Agency is positively related to the initial 'push' factors associated with the move into contracting.

Each hypotheses is dealt with separately within the structure provided by the Push/Pull Matrix to facilitate comparison between the profiles of profession, age and gender that have already emerged. The implications of each are then synthesised into a general discussion of the findings within the context of the overall research investigation.

Social support and organisational commitment are dealt with separately but follow the same presentation format of:

- a brief review of the intent of the research hypothesis
- the number and nature of the items within the relevant part of the Survey
- key response rates and demographic details for each item
- analysis of results in terms of the Push/Pull Matrix and previous findings and lastly,

- a summary of key findings from all items in terms of the research hypothesis.

9.1: The Role of Social Support

The issue of social support is investigated from both an historical and a contemporary perspective. The role of others in assisting with the initial move into contracting was the subject of item A5 from Part A of the Survey (refer Appendix 5). The second perspective examines how others may assist in sustaining the individual in contracting and forms Part D of the Survey.

Based on the six item short version of Sarason and Sarason's (1987) Social Support Questionnaire (the SSQ), Part D was the most poorly answered section of the Survey and contained comments of frustration from respondents. As a whole, these comments indicated that respondents felt that questions were repetitive and that the language was overly simplistic. These concerns highlight the problem with using established scales where the translation involved here is from an American clinical context to an Australian commercial one where respondents typically have tertiary qualifications. The strength of this section is that it provides direct comparability with a number of sociological studies of self-employment (see for example the monologue by Morris, 1995). Use of the SSQ makes explicit the general concerns raised in the interviews which underpin the Survey and provides a well-recognised and validated measure. Further, the dual dimensions of network size and the quality of support which underlie the SSQ are compatible with the overall design of the Survey of the professional contractor workforce. The analysis of the results thus initially separates

the discussion on the size and type of network an individual has from the level of satisfaction with each support source. The general discussion then combines these two factors to provide an overall perspective of the role of social support.

9.1.1: Social Support in the Initial Move into Contracting

The first stage of analysis examines social support from the sources individuals accessed and how these individual sources then group together to provide a support network. Gender difference, which is a common theme of research in this area, is included in the results portrayed in Table 9.1. Overall, the results show that on average nearly three (2.7) sources of support are accessed. Analysing the results in terms of gender reveals that males had an average of 2.4 sources while females had 3.6. This result concurs with general studies on social support and on self-employment which found that females have significantly larger social support network than males ($p \leq 0.05$ in the case of the current investigation).

There were also important gender differences in the types of people accessed for support. While males dominate the 'No One' option, female support patterns cover a broad spectrum, from those close to them, such as 'Spouse', 'Family' and 'Friends', to a more distant group of 'Former Employers' and 'Professional Services'. Extending this notion of close too increasingly more distant relationships, the three groups which show no significant gender difference are those which are the most removed.

Table 9.1: Initial Sources of Social Support as a Network

Sources of Support	No. Responses	Responses		% Total responses	Overall Rank
		Male	Female		
No support person	31	29*	2	4.74	9
Spouse or partner	143	99	44*	21.87	1
Family	51	23	28**	7.80	6
Friends	80	46	34**	12.23	4
Former employer	35	15	20**	5.35	7
Work Mates	73	57	16	11.16	5
Work Contacts	114	84	30	17.43	2
Accountant	33	21	12	5.05	8
Other Professional Services	94	62	32**	14.37	3
	654	436	218	100%	

**Results significant at the $p < .001$ level * Results significant at the $p < .05$ level

The gender differences in Table 9.1 are more pronounced when the results are placed into the matrix framework. Presented in Table 9.2, these results are in direct contrast to the results of chapters 7 and 8 where males have dominated the Pull and related sectors. Table 9.2 instead reveals that females generally dominate the Pull and related sectors. Closer examination reveals the strong role that the family plays for females in all of the sectors, while the lack of any supportive 'others' is a feature of disadvantage associated with males in the No Choice and Delayed Entry sectors.

In terms of viewing social support from the perspective of a network, females access both a significantly larger number and a greater range of 'others' when they consider the move into contracting. Both of these dimensions of the support network increase as we move across the matrix sectors to the delayed and lack of choice options. These are increasingly associated with the features of disadvantage, such as lower pay, decreased independence and reduced satisfaction with work, identified in chapter 8.

Table 9.2: The Push/Pull Matrix & Initial Social Support Networks by Gender

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor)	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL Family -N=6 Females* Former Employer -N=4 Females*** Work Mates -N=33 Males*** Work Contacts -N=36 Males*** Accountant -N=12 Males* & 6 Females*	DEFAULT 1 Family -N= 9 Female*** Friends -N= 7 Females* Professional Services - N=16 males**	BY CHOICE Family -N=18 Females Friends -N=23 Females Former Employer -N=9 Female)* Work Mates -N= 37 Males* Work Contacts -N=55 Males***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Family -N= 8 Females*** Friends -N= 7 Female*** Work Mates -N=10 Females*** Work Contacts -N=10 females Accountant -N=5 Female**	NO CHOICE No One -N=15 Males* Spouse -N=17 Females*** Family -N=10 Females** Friends -N=11 Females*** Former Employer -N=6 Females* Work Contacts -N=15 Females** Professional Services - N=25 Males*
Totals	DIRECT ENTRY Family -N=17 Females* WorkMates -N=42 Male)*** WorkContacts -N= 47 Males Accountant -N=7 Females*	DELAYED ENTRY No One -N=12 Males* Spouse -N=19 Females*** Family -N=17 Females*** Friends -N=14 Females*** Work Contacts -N=19 Females*** Professional Services - N=41 Males***	

***Denotes Results significant at the $p < .001$ ** $p < .005$ and * $p < .05$ level

A more familiar picture emerges when the results are examined in terms of occupation and age, presented in Table 9.3. The occupations of engineering, business/management and architect/draughtsman are once again identified as dominant in the Pull sector. This sector is also significantly male dominated although the age range for the various sources is wider than generally featured in this sector. Overall, the importance of work based networks emerges clearly for these three dominant occupations of advantage and this is also the case for the by choice and direct entry sectors within Table 9.3.

A similar reliance on work based on networks is also seen in the Push sector but this time it is associated with females in Health & Welfare. By contrast, the males in this sector are significantly associated with seeking support from professional services. This result corresponds with the Push forces of involuntary redundancy identified earlier as a feature of the 55-59 year old group.

The inclusion of results from earlier sections in the interpretation of the information presented in Table 9.3 reveals some areas of further interest. The important financial role of the spouse in the Default 1 sector is paralleled but is not evident in the Push sector, where spouses were previously identified in sections 8.2.6 and 8.2.7, examining other sources of income, as a key source of financial support. This result would appear to offer further evidence of the marginal nature of professional contracting work for these individuals. As Morris (1995) suggests, they may in fact be providing the social support role for their working partners rather than the other way around.

Instead, Table 9.3 shows that respondents represented in this section elicit social support from relatively distant sources such as professional services and accountants. While accountants are a common source for males' aged 35-39 throughout the matrix, accessing professional services is concentrated in the Push and Delayed Entry sectors.

Table 9.3: The Push/Pull Matrix and Initial Social Support Networks

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL Family - 5 Bus/Mgrs* Spouse - 11 Engineers* WorkMates (N = 38)*** - 9 Engineers***, 6 Architects** & 5 Bus/Mgrs*** - 4 Males aged 25-29, 4 aged 30-34 & 4 aged 35-39* WorkContacts (N = 41)** - 13 Engineers* & 6 Architects** - 5 Males aged 35-39** & 22 aged 40-44*** Accountant - 5 Males aged 35-39***	DEFAULT 1 Spouse (N = 33)*** - 14 Bus/Mgrs* & 5 Males aged 25-29*** Family - 5 Females aged 40-44** Friends - 8 IT* and 5 Males aged 25-29*** WorkContacts - 5 Males aged 25-29* - 5 Females aged 40-44* & 6 Males 55-59** Professional Services (N = 22)*** - 7 Males aged 40-44***	BY CHOICE Spouse - 9 Males aged 50-54* & 22 at 40-44* Friends (N = 53) 22 IT* & 6 Males aged 25-29** WorkMates (N = 48)** - 9 Bus/Mgrs*** & 6 Architects* - 6 Males aged 35-39* WorkContacts (N = 69)* - 7 Architects* - 7 Males aged 35-39* Accountant - 5 Males aged 35-39**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Family (N = 15)* WorkMates - 5 Females in Health & Welfare* WorkContacts - 5 Females in Health & Welfare* & 5 Males aged 35-39** 22 aged 40-44*** Accountants - 5 Males aged 35-39*** Professional Services (N = 26)*** 8 Males aged 55-59***	NO CHOICE No One (N = 15)* Professional Services (N = 33)* WorkContacts - 8 Females in Health & Welfare*** Accountants - 4 IT**
Totals	DIRECT ENTRY Family - 5 Bus/Mgrs* & 4 Males aged 55-59*** Friends (N = 41)* 20 Males aged 40-44* WorkMates (N = 49)*** - 24 Engineers* 7 Architects* - 6 males aged 30-34***, 6 at 35-39* & 4 at 40-44* WorkContacts - 21 Engineers** - 7 Males aged 35-39* Accountant (N = 20)* - 5 Males aged 35-39**	Delayed Entry Spouse (N = 66)* - 28 Bus/Mgrs* & 8 Males aged 25-29** Family (N = 27)* 4 Males aged 30-34*** & 5 Females aged 35-39* & 5 Females aged 40-44* WorkContacts - 17 Bus/Mgrs* 5 Health & Welfare* 6 Females aged 40-44** 12 Males 50-59*** Professional Services (N = 55)*** - 10 IT*** 5 Females 35-39* & 9 aged 40-44*** - 6 males aged 45-49**	

*** Denotes results significant at the $p < .001$ ** $p < .005$ and * $p < .05$

This result again corresponds with involuntary redundancy and may well be associated with the outplacement services typically offered as part of severance 'packages' to professional and managerial groups. Overall, these results give an insight into the types of 'others' sought when individual professionals move into contracting. They suggest that men have a more work oriented network than the more general social flavour of the sources of support accessed by females.

The analysis of the results now moves to the second aspect of social support, the strength, in terms of importance, of the support seen to be available from the networks. This aspect is presented in Table 9.4 and shows that Spouse/Partners are clearly the most important source of support.

Table 9.4: Frequency & Strength of Initial Social Support

	Not at all	1-	2- A Bit	3- Somewhat	4- Quite	5- Moderate	6- Very	7- Extremely	Mean Score	Rank
No Support (N=31)	10	9	4	-	-	4	2	0.325	9	
Spouse/Partner (N=143)	-	3	1	12	22	42	63	3.583	1	
Family (N=51)	-	1	-	3	6	16	25	1.313	6	
Friends (N=80)	-	4	6	4	18	28	20	1.833	4	
Former Employer (N=35)	-	2	1	3	-	8	21	0.892	7	
WorkMates (N=73)	-	3	3	13	15	22	17	1.638	5	
WorkContacts (N=114)	-	3	4	15	19	31	42	2.721	2	
Accountant (N=33)	-	1	5	2	4	14	7	0.742	8	
Professional Services (N=94)	-	3	4	8	11	24	43	2.292	3	

Overall, the results for strength of networks mirrors the results for network size illustrated previously in Table 9.1. The correlation between network size and the strength of the resulting network is further evidenced in Table 9.5 where the mean scores of Table 9.4 are examined in terms of the gender of the contractor. The significant result areas in Table 9.5 thus match those from Table 9.1 where males

dominated no support and females dominated spouse or partner, family and friends. Bearing in mind that the mean scores shown in Table 9.5 are based on the rating scale where 7 equals 'extremely important' through to 1 being 'not at all important', males dominance of no sources of social support was found to be even less than 'not at all important' to them, while for females all support sources fell between 'a bit' and 'moderately' important.

Table 9.5: Strength of Initial Social Support by Gender

	Males mean	Females mean
No Support	0.424**	-3.279
Spouse/Partner	3.235	4.607*
Family	0.760	2.934**
Friends	1.296	3.41**
Former Employer	0.458	2.164**
WorkMates	1.67	1.54
WorkContacts	2.587	3.11
Accountant	0.603	1.148
Professional Services	1.911	3.41*

**Denotes results significant at the $p < .001$ and * $p < .005$ level

As with previous sections, key aspects of the results emerge when they interpreted in terms of the matrix framework. Again, based on the rating scale where 7 equals 'extremely important' through to 1 being 'not at all important', Table 9.6 shows that the various sources accessed by those in the Pull sector are all less than 'quite important'. For respondents in the Default 1 sector the support sources are at least 'quite important' (with an average rating of between 3 and 4) and, in many cases, the degree of importance is even greater. For males in the Push sector, the role of workmates is negligible, and for females in this sector professional services are 'moderately important'.

Overall, Tables 9.2 and 9.6 provide evidence that females not only accessed larger social support networks when initially moving into contracting, but these networks played a much greater role in assisting with the move.

Table 9.6: The Push/Pull Matrix & Initial Strength of Social Support Networks by Gender

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL WorkMates - Males ($\pi = 3.296$)* ** WorkContacts - Males ($\pi = 3.74$)* ** Accountant - Females ($\pi = 3$)* Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 1.75$)*	DEFAULT 1 Spouse - Females ($\pi = 6.4$)* Family - Females ($\pi = 5.3$)* ** WorkContacts - Females ($\pi = 4.5$)* ** Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 3.6$)* **	BY CHOICE Spouse - Females ($\pi = 4.1$)* ** Friends - Females ($\pi = 4.4$)* ** WorkMates - Males ($\pi = 2.2$)* WorkContacts - Males ($\pi = 3.4$)* **
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH WorkMates - Males ($\pi = .56$)* Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 5.3$)*	NO CHOICE No One - Males ($\pi = 1$)* ** WorkMates - Females ($\pi = 1.5$)* ** Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 4.2$)* **
Totals	DIRECT ENTRY Former Employer - Females ($\pi = 1.3$)* ** WorkMates - Males ($\pi = 2.7$)* Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 1.8$)*	Delayed Entry Friends - Females ($\pi = 4$)* ** WorkMates - Females ($\pi = 1.1$)* Professional Services - Females ($\pi = 4.2$)*	

***Results significant at the $p < .001$ ** $p < .005$ and * $p < .05$ level

The combined results from Table 9.2 and 9.6 clearly support the notion that gender is the key source of difference in relation to the construct of social support. It also provides some general support for the contention of the first part of Hypothesis 4, that the level of social support will be positively related to the initial pull factors associated with the move into contracting.

While the size of the support networks is similar in both the Pull and Push quadrants, the strength of the level of support accessed by individuals in the Push sector overall is significantly higher. The overall average strength of support accessed by respondents in the Pull sector generally rather modest, a result that accords with previous findings of advantaged labour market position, security of ongoing contracts and higher income associated with the Pull sector, which have been identified through earlier items of the survey. These positive features appear to outweigh or mitigate the need for high levels of social support for these individuals. Correspondingly, the features of disadvantage associated with the Push and related sectors appear to produce the need for both more support sources and higher levels of support. These will be examined in more detail within the context of the role social support plays in maintaining professionals in contracting arrangements.

9.1.2: Social Support and maintaining the Professional in Contracting

The role social support currently plays in the life of the professional contractor is examined through the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) developed by Sarason and Sarason in 1987. As with the previous section which dealt with initial sources of support identified by Item A5 of the survey, the SSQ results in this section will establish both the sources of support as a network structure and the strength of this support. This time however, there are no predetermined choices for individuals to choose from and they were free to use their own terms for their support sources. These were coded into the standard options offered in A5 and then expanded to deal with the wider range identified by this self-selection method. They fell into 12 major

categories and 1 miscellaneous area. It was often difficult to make the previous distinction between workmates and workcontacts so these two variables were amalgamated into a new one called workcontacts (refer Appendix 5).

The six aspects of social support covered by the six items of the SSQ deal with those people an individual feels:

- 1- that they can depend on;
- 2- that help them relax;
- 3- accepts them totally;
- 4- cares about them
- 5- helps them when they feel 'down in the dumps'
- 6- helps them when they need to be consoled.

The results of these six aspects are summarised and aggregated in Table 9.7 to produce a profile which is different from that in the previous section on initial support sources.

Table 9.7: Results of the Six Aspects of Current Social Support

	Depend	Relax	Accept	Care	Dumps	Console	Total	Rank
No One	9	34	34	16	27	22	142	5
Spouse	186	142	140	177	166	176	987	1
Family	133	88	122	140	116	98	697	2
Friends	118	96	62	82	101	87	546	3
Employer	2	-	-	-	-	2	4	12
Work contacts	70	41	36	39	55	51	292	4
Self	17	21	19	14	11	8	90	6
Accountant	17	1	-	-	-	-	18	11=
CA Rep.*	22	3	1	3	3	-	32	10
Medical specialist	11	20	-	1	8	6	46	9
Business partner	17	13	15	13	12	12	82	7
Childcare provider	4	4	-	2	4	4	18	11=
Animals/miscell.	3	11	10	9	10	10	53	8
	609	474	439	493	513	476	3007	

* CA Rep. = Contracting Agency Representative

While spouse/partners still provide the most common source of support, members of the family are now the second key area of ongoing support while prior employers disappear from the results altogether. As with the prior section on initial sources of support, the primary sources accessed as ongoing support structures are more immediately accessible individuals such as a partner or family member. As they become more removed they reduce in importance. Examining the sources of support by gender reveals only a few significant differences.

Table 9.8 shows that significantly more males than females access accountants, while females' reliance on spouse/partner support is no longer statistically significant as it was in the initial moves into contracting. They still do significantly rely on the family and friends.

Added to the female network is a group titled 'childcare providers' which comprises the nannies, crèches and other terms used to categorise a range of individuals and services. While much smaller in terms of totals numbers than any other support sources for females, this identified only by female respondents.

Table 9.8: Significant Sources of Current Social Support by Gender

	Males	Females
Family		N = 60 mean = 4.89**
Friends		N = 45 mean = 3.33**
Work contacts		N = 33 mean = 1.62*
Accountant	N = 17 mean = 9.5*	
Childcare provider		N = 4 mean = 0.3*
Total	1 source	4 sources

** Significant at $p < .001$ * Significant at $p < .05$ level

Once again, the view from the raw data changes quite dramatically when translated into the matrix framework. Summarised in terms of occupation and age as well as gender, Table 9.9 reveals a larger social support network being utilised than was evident in the initial move into contracting. This is true except for individuals in the Default 1 sector where the number of sources has actually decreased (refer back to Table 9.3 for comparison). Females actively make the greatest use of family and friends sources in every sector of the matrix. Bearing in mind that the Health & Welfare industry is almost totally female, the dominance of work contacts continues in all but the Pull sector and produces an overall view that women build extensive networks. By contrast, spouses as a support source feature in the Contractor by Choice sectors, where they provide support for males and engineers in particular.

Once again, males have indicated that they rely on no one to support them and this factor is statistically significant for males aged 55-59. As with the results of the initial move into contracting for the Push sector, this age range is significantly associated with males in Business/Management and reflects earlier findings that this group was particularly affected by involuntary redundancy. It seems that individuals in this group focus and rely on themselves to both start up in contracting and to continue in this arrangement. One consequence of this lack of social support may be the marginalisation and vulnerability in terms of overall income, income variation and fluctuation in chapter 8. By contrast, the female dominated group of Health and Welfare which has commonly emerged within the Push sector in chapters 7 and 8, has expanded their social support network from the initial one of workmates and workcontacts in section 9.1.1 to include the closer sources of friends and family.

These later inclusions accord with suggestions from studies of self-employment that some women initially move into alternative work arrangements due to economic necessity and without close consultation and support of those closest to them. However, as the viability of the arrangement is either established or is seen to necessitate more immediate forms of support, a more elaborate and developed network structures develops (Morris, 1995).

Males also appear to add to their initial support structures to sustain working as a contractor. Firstly, Table 9.8 identifies the importance of business partners in the Pull/Direct Entry sectors, particularly for men aged 40-44. Medical specialists also feature and, as the Delayed Entry option reveals, are significant for the 55-59 year olds – already characterised as initially moving due to involuntary redundancy. The self-selection of medical specialists as an ongoing source of support implies that there may also be some ongoing monitoring of a medical condition, otherwise these respondents would probably have identified the doctor/psychiatrist or other practitioner as a friend. This further reinforces the vulnerability and marginalisation that has been associated with this group. Finally, male reliance on social support from a specialist other is also seen in the importance contracting agency representatives play for a slightly younger group of males (50-54) in the Push/Delayed Entry sectors.

The picture which emerges from examining current social support networks is that females increase and build upon the networks they initially used to make the decision to enter contracting.

Table 9.9: Summary of the Matrix & Current Sources of Social Support

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL WorkContacts (N = 37)** & 13 Engineers*** Miscellaneous (N = 6)* Spouse – 15 Engineers** Family – 12 Females*** & 8 Bus/Mgrs* Friends – 9 Females** & 8 Males/Females aged 35-39** Business Partner – 5 Males aged 40-44*	DEFAULT 1 Family – 11 Females** Friends – 11 Females** & 5 males aged 25-29* Work Contacts – 10 Females*** with 5 aged 40-44* Spouse – 5 Males aged 25-29*	By Choice Friends (N = 89)*** & 28 Females***, 10 Males aged 25-29** & 21 Males & Females aged 35-39* Work contacts (N = 68)*** with 19 Engineers*** & 22 Females* & 34 Males aged 40-44** Family – 30 Females*** with 13 Males/Females aged 30-34* & 21 aged 35-39* No One – 15 Males* & 10 aged 55-59**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Medical Specialist (N=11)* No One – 29 Males** with 7 aged 55-59* & 17 Bus/Mgrs* Family – 10 females*** with 5 Health & Welfare***, 10 Bus/Mgrs* & 10 Males/ Females aged 45-49*** Friends – 4 Health & Welfare** WorkContacts – 4 Health & Welfare* Self – 4 Educ/Teaching** CA Rep. – 6 Males aged 50-54***	No Choice Child's Caregiver (N = 4)** No One – 36 Males* & 21 Bus/Mgrs** Family – 20 Females*** with 9 Health & Welfare*** 12 Males/ Females aged 45-49*** Friends – 15 Females*** & 8 in Health & Welfare*** 20 Males/ Females aged 35-39*** WorkContacts – 8 Health & Welfare*
Totals	Direct Entry Business Partner (N = 14)*7 Males 40-44*** Miscellaneous (N = 8)* Spouse – 27 Engineers** Family – 18 Females*** & 9 Engineers** WorkContacts – 19 Engineers*** Friends 12 Males/ Females aged 3-34 & 12 aged 35-39* No One – 7 Males aged 55-59* Accountant – 4 Males aged 35-39*	Delayed Entry Medical Specialist (N=15)*8 Males aged 55-59*** No One – 40 Males*** with 12 aged 55-59*** Family – 22 Females*** 15 Males/ Females 45-49*** Friends – 17 Females** 13 Males aged 25-29* WorkContacts – 15 Females*** 18 Males/ Females aged 40-44** Spouse – 11 Males aged 25-29* CA rep – 6 Males aged 50-54*** Business Partner – 4 Males aged 25-29***	

*** Significant at p < .001 ** Significant at p < .005 * Significant at p < .05

The added sources that are significant tend to be characterised as closer social relationships such as family and friends. Males also extend their networks but these remain smaller than womens and they tend to move to more work-focussed sources such as business partners, and socially distant sources such as ca representatives and medical specialists.

The next stage of the analysis is to investigate whether these changes in the size of network structures are also reflected in the strength of the networks. This is illustrated in Table 9.10 and, when compared with Table 9.7 on the current network structure or Table 9.4 on initial network strength, show a number of differences.

The overall difference can be generalised as a move to a much stronger, closer support network which concentrates on spouse, family, friends, work contacts and self. This strength aspect of the social network seems to support the maintenance of an ongoing working style rather than the building of a new one.

Table 9.10: The Strength of the Current Sources of Social Support

Source of Support	Total Score*	Mean Score	Averaged Total	Averaged mean	Rank Order
No support	356.00	1.4833	59.33	.2472	7
Spouse/Partner	5406.00	22.5250	901.00	3.7542	1
Family	3713.00	15.4708	618.83	2.5785	2
Friends	2888.00	12.0333	481.33	2.0056	3
Work contacts	1577.00	6.5708	262.83	1.0951	4
Self	475.00	1.9792	79.17	.3299	5
Accountant	109.00	.4542	18.17	7.569E-02	11
CA representative	150.00	.6250	25.00	.1042	10
Medical Specialist	192.00	.8000	32.00	.1333	9
Business Partner	421.00	1.7542	70.17	.2924	6
Children's Caregiver	93.00	.3875	15.50	6.458E-02	12
Miscellaneous	297.00	1.2375	49.50	.2063	8

*Total Score across the six items of the SSQ

While the general view emerging from the raw data has typically been completely reversed when placed into the matrix structure, the results in this case confirm the work-supportive nature of the strength of social support networks as illustrated in Table 9.11.

As expected, the close and strong nature of current social support networks is reflected in the Pull sector and focuses specifically on the groups which have traditionally dominated it. Thus males, particularly in IT and Engineering, aged 35-39 and 55-59, have closer and larger networks than those evident in earlier results.

Table 9.11: The Matrix and Strength of Social Support by Source & Gender

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Spouse - 15 Engineers* - 4 Males aged 55-59** Family - 33 Males* - 8 Business*** - 8 Males aged 35-39** Friends - 7 Bus/Managers** 6 Males aged 35-39** Work Contacts (N=37)** - 31 Males*, 15 aged 35-39** - 13 IT* Miscellaneous (N=7)* - 7 Males*	DEFAULT 1 Work Contacts - 10 Females*** 5 aged 40-44** 11 Bus/Managers*** Medical Specialist - 5 Males* 4 Bus/Managers** No One - 4 Males aged 40-44**	CHOICE Family (N=88)* - 58 Males* Friends (N=00)* - 68 Males** & 31 Females*** Work Contacts - 46 Males*** & 22 Females*** - 19 IT* Miscellaneous - 9 Males*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH No One (N=28)** - 28 Males*** 8 aged 50-54* - 5 Architects* Work Contacts - 4 Health & Welfare*** CA rep. - 6 Males aged 50-54*** Accountant - 5 Males aged 50-54*	NO CHOICE No One (N=35)** - 35 Males** Spouse - 20 Females** CA Rep. (N=12)* Child's Carer (N=4)** - 4 Females* in Health/Welfare*
	DIRECT ENTRY Spouse (N=77)* 66 Males** Self - 10 in IT* Business Partner (N=14)** Miscellaneous (N=9)* Work Contacts (N=39)***	DELAYED ENTRY Friends - 22 in IT* Work Contacts - 15 Males* Medical Spec. (N=15)* - 12 Males* No One (N=39)*** - 37 Males***	

***Results significant at the .001 ** .005 and * .05 level

By comparison, the Push sector reveals that the more socially distant network identified in section 9.1.1 as important in the initial move is still important to these individuals. It also confirms the previous dominance of a lack of any supporting others. What is missing from this analysis of the strength of the networks is the expected dominance by females. This indicates that generally, although women have a much more extensive network than males, the strength of the support anticipated from these is actually the same or lower than that for males. Overall, the second part of Hypothesis 4, which proposes that the level of social support is positively related to maintaining the individual in a contracting arrangement, is supported.

9.1.3: Summary of Social Support

In summary, the information generated from the survey provides strong evidence of the important role social support plays in the initial move into contracting and later, in sustaining the individual in this work. Women have generally been seen to have more extensive social networks than men. In the initial stages, the strength of these networks is important for women and they continue to access a much wider range of sources to support their working arrangement. Men, however, appear to concentrate on increasing the strength of the bonds established within the smaller network structures accessed during the initial move into contracting, and build on the structures to form a stronger, closer network. Thus, while the number of support sources for men does not generally increase over time, the strength of the general network does. This difference in network structures for men and between men and women has been found in other studies of social support (see for example Daniels and Guppy, 1994; House, 1981; Lim, 1996).

More recent work by Mallon (1999) and Legge (2001) suggests that the differences in networks between men and women indicate quite different approaches to work and that the more diverse but closer, looser networks generally created by women are particularly appropriate for sustaining work arrangements such as contracting. A key feature of this suitability for women is the ability to balance work and non-work roles and to deal with the absence of a long-term individual work-based identity commonly associated with the lack of attachment to one employer. This lack of attachment between contractor and employer could be expected to be reflected in some of the traditional forms of work related performance measures – such as loyalty and commitment. This introduces the second area dealt with in this chapter.

9.2: The Role of Commitment

The issue of commitment and its supposed absence in non-employee workforces appear to be a generally accepted fact, increasingly common in the core/periphery model of work. The validity of this for the professional contractor workforce is examined in this section which details the results of Part E of the survey from the perspective of both the host organisation and the Contracting Agency. The tool used is the nine-item version of Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire. The nine items are statements, each of which comments on a slightly different aspect of the construct of commitment so that, in total they cover the themes of work effort; public affirmation; ongoing attachment; shared

values; public affiliation; work motivation; satisfaction; personal attachment and personal affiliation.

As Appendix 5 shows, two ratings were requested for each statement for the most recent client organisation and contracting agency. Ratings were based on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong agreement through to means 'Strongly Disagree' and 7 indicates 'Strongly Agree.' As with last section there were a number of respondents who made comments objecting to the obviously American language and concepts of some items.

The results illustrated in Table 9.12 present the total (sum) and then the average (mean) scores on each of the nine items for both the organisation and contracting agency. The results in terms of mean scores reveal a clear cut and significant difference in the two levels of commitment – notably, that commitment to the organisation is consistently higher on all aspects except that of item E7 dealing with satisfaction (with the original decision to work for the organisation or Contracting Agency).

Table 9.12: Commitment to Organisations & Contracting Agencies

Items	Organisation		Contracting Agency	
	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean
E1/Work Effort	1356	5.65**	1173	4.89
E2/Public Affirmation	1161	4.84*	1064	4.43
E3/Ongoing Attachment	817	3.40**	768	3.20
E4/Shared Values	952	3.97**	894	3.73
E5/Public Affiliation	1155	4.81**	1095	4.56
E6/Work Motivation	1041	4.34**	951	3.96
E7/Satisfaction	1195	4.98	1097	4.57
E8/Personal Attachment	1217	5.07**	1101	4.59
E9/Personal Affiliation	949	3.95**	906	3.77
Average	1093	4.36**	1055.44	4.19

**Results significantly higher at the .001 level and * at the .005 level

Overall, the difference between commitment to the organisation and commitment to the Contracting Agency is significant at the .000 level. The results of this survey are similar to those reported in other studies of commitment which have used the nine-item form of the OCQ (see for example Benson, 1999; Deery et. al., 1994; Deery et. al., 1995 and Pearce, 1993).

Bearing in mind the fact that on the rating scale used to measure commitment, 4 indicates 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 5 indicates 'Slightly agree.' These results indicate that contractors are more committed to the organisation for which they are contracting, than to the Contracting Agency through which they are working. The strength of this commitment is, however, small. It does indicate that commitment to one party may not be at the expense of the other or perhaps, that commitment may be directed somewhere else altogether – perhaps at the profession.

Applying the matrix framework to the results of Table 9.12 produces some familiar patterns that provide quite a different perspective on the raw data. As Table 9.13 illustrates, males dominate both organisational and contracting agency commitment in the Pull, Default 1, Choice and Direct Entry sectors. Within each of these are distinct age groupings as well as distinct occupations and these results indicate that the logic behind the Matrix (of timing and choice in the move) produces clear variations in terms of commitment. Instead of equal or dual commitment to both, it appears that commitment to one party may be at the expense of the other. This is most clearly seen in the Choice sector where engineers express greater commitment to the client

organisation whereas architects are more committed to the agency through which they contract.

Table 9.13: The Push/Pull Matrix, Commitment and Demographics

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Organisation* $\pi = 4.8$ - 54 Males* with 26 aged 40-44* - 29 with no dependents* Agency - 6 males aged 35-39* 10 Architects*	DEFAULT 1 Organisation - 6 males aged 50-59** Agency - 7 males aged 40-44*	CHOICE Organisation** $\pi = 4.8$ - 93 Males*** with 62 married 8 aged 35-39* - 58 with no dependents*** - 23 Engineers* Agency* $\pi = 4.4$ - 93 Males* with 62 married 12 aged 35-39* & 10 aged 59* - 11 Architects*** - 8 Females aged 40-44* - 58 with no dependents** 4 with one** 36 with 2 or more***
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Organisation - 5 with 1 dependent*	NO CHOICE
	DIRECT ENTRY Organisation - 6 Males 30-34* Agency - 19 Architects* and 9 Bus/Man* - 5 Females aged 35-39*	DELAYED ENTRY Organisation - 18 with 1 dependent* Agency - 18 with 1 dependent**	

**Results significant at the .001 level ** .005 and * .05 level

While both engineers and architects have previously been linked to a norm of contracting, explanations for this difference comes from the interviews discussed in chapter 6 which found that agencies play a primary role in providing ongoing employment for architect/draughting professionals. However for engineering, one individual interviewed summarised the situation as:

Once you've been around a while your reputation spreads and you always have the next job waiting for you. You don't have to go looking, they come to you. (PC4)

Labour demand appears to play a role in the direction and strength of commitment to the parties involved in the contracting relationship. The role of dependents also reveals some interesting results in this sector as their absence produces a dual commitment to both parties whereas their presence results in a greater commitment to the contracting agency. Previous results linking lifestyle and flexibility as key reasons for entering contracting are possible explanations for these results. These indications will be tested in more depth shortly but first, the features of working as a contractor are investigated.

9.2.1: Commitment and Features of Working Life

Table 9.14 reveals that a number of the factors of work addressed in Part C of the survey and discussed in chapter 8 impact on the level and direction of commitment. Firstly, as the number of years spent in contracting increases commitment moves from the organisation to the contracting agency. The transition appears to occur after the individual has been contracting for five years and may mark either the acceptance of non-organisational employment and/or acceptance of professional contractor status as an ongoing career. While the literature generally deals with work location as an issue of control, the Choice sector of the matrix in Table 9.14 shows that working in someone else's office produces dual rather than divided commitment. However, individuals working from home generally seem likely to have increased commitment to the contracting agency.

Table 9.14: The Push/Pull Matrix, Commitment & Features of Working as a Contractor

Contractor by Choice	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	CHOICE
Contractor by Choice	PULL Organisation* $\pi = 4.8$ 9 with 2 years contracting* 56 work from someone else's office* 20 with pay set by Agency*** & 22 at market rates*** 14 with no pay variation*** 21 with monthly variation** and 5 with a lot of variation** 12 with moderate* Contract Agency 12 with 5-10 years contracting* 20 with pay set by Agency*** & 5 negotiated w. client* 5 with a lot of income variation*	DEFAULT 1 Organisation 8 with 5 years contracting Contract Agency 8 with 5 years contracting* 9 with weekly income variation*	CHOICE Organisation*** $\pi = 4.8$ 21 with 2 years contracting* 16 with 3** & 11 with 5 years*** 110 work from someone else's office*** 36 have fees set by Agency* 27 on market rates*** & 48 negotiate with the client*** 33 have moderate income variation** 36 very little* & 27 a lot* -9 earn \$75,000*, 7 earn \$105,000* & 37 earn \$185,000+** Contract Agency* $\pi = 4.4$ 11 with 5 years contracting** & 20 with 5-10 years*** 62 work from home*** & 110 from someone else's office*** 10 have weekly income variation* & 27 varies a lot*** 48 set own fee**, 25 have it set by client* 36 by the Agency & 48 negotiate w. Client* 6 earn \$35,45,000* & 5 earn \$65-75,000***
	DEFAULT 2 Organisation 6 negotiate pay with client* Contract Agency 5 work from home*	PUSH Organisation 5 with 1 dependent*	NO CHOICE Organisation 13 negotiate with Agency* 14 work from home as base*
Contractor Not by Choice	DIRECT ENTRY Organisation 10 with 2 years contracting* 8 have income that varies a lot* 9 earn \$75-85,000* Contract Agency 33 have pay set by Agency** 8 have income that varies a lot*	DELAYED ENTRY Agency 16 work from home as a base*	

***Results significant at the .001 ** .005 and * .05 level

Method of payment is another aspect of control but produces more complex results. While payment set by the agency results in dual commitment to both organisation and agency, payment set by market rates produce significantly higher commitment to the employing organisation. This latter situation tends to be associated with labour market advantage and has previously been linked with the high demand occupations of IT, engineering and, to a lesser extent, business/management.

The notion of dual commitment in the face of ongoing contract uncertainty and individual commitment when faced with uncertainty, is further reflected in the factor of income variation over the year. Where there is a lot of variation, individuals appear equally committed to both agency and organisation but, as variation decreases, commitment to the organisation increases, apparently at the expense of the agency. Consequently it seems that agency and organisation are both advantaged by professional contractors having unpredictable annual incomes. All told, organisations are most advantaged in terms of increased commitment by ensuring moderate to small fluctuations.

There appears to be a situation of mutual advantage between organisation and professional contractor where increased commitment from professional contractor results from decreased income fluctuation. This finding contrasts with the situation in respect to the agency where increased fluctuation is an advantage for

the agency but a disadvantage for the contractor. This is borne out in the results for annual earnings demonstrated in Table 9.14. For those entering contracting by Choice, commitment to the agency is optimal for those earning less than \$75,000 per annum. When income increases above this level, commitment moves abruptly to the organisation.

Table 9.15 desegregates the original items behind the matrix to explore the issue of commitment in terms of the initial motivations for becoming a professional contractor.

Table 9.15: The Push/Pull Matrix, Commitment & Initial Reasons for Contracting

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Organisation - 14 Best Option* Agency - 14 Best Option*	DEFAULT 1 Organisation - 23 Voluntary Redundancy*	CHOICE Organisation - 29 Voluntary Redundancy*** Agency - 58 Professional Norm* - 43 Best Option* - 37 Employer Request* - 21 Other reasons**
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 Organisation - 5 Lifestyle*	PUSH	NO CHOICE Organisation - 23 Invol. Redundancy* Agency - 5 Business w. Others*
	DIRECT ENTRY Organisation - 33 Lifestyle** Agency - 29 Best Option*	DELAYED ENTRY	

***Results significant at the .001 ** .005 and *.05 level

The results presented in Table 9.15 reveal distinctions in the Choice/Not by Choice and then the Direct Entry sectors rather than within the central quadrants of the matrix. Within these sectors, the role of redundancy re-emerges within the ambit of increased organisational commitment. It appears that organisations offering contracts to professionals who have been made redundant, whether voluntarily or not, benefit from higher levels of commitment.

Similarly, individuals contracting for 'lifestyle' reasons, who entered contracting directly from their previous employment are more committed to the organisation for which they work than to the agency which finds them contract employment. A rather more passive acceptance of the move into a different working life seems to be the reason for increased commitment to the agency. Here, individuals who moved into contracting because of a professional norm, previously linked to IT, engineering and architecture professionals, resides beside others who see contracting as the best option – apparently from amongst a limited range or after unsuccessful attempts elsewhere. Also, there are those who moved into contracting because of employer requests and they appear to question traditional employment expectations of commitment for security – and thus transfer this to the agency, explaining the resultant increase in commitment to the agency rather than the current employing organisation.

The passive versus active aspects of the move into contracting and the results for commitment are reflected in the results shown in Table 9.16. Here, the desire for a

more stimulating career that offers the flexible lifestyle, beloved of the writers on the future of work (e.g. Bridges, 1995; Handy, 1992, finds some substantiation. The results indicate that organisations benefit from increased commitment where contracting is seen to offer these. By comparison, increased commitment to the agency remains associated with the passive features previously identified in Table 9.15.

Table 9.16: The Push/Pull Matrix, Commitment & Current Reasons for Contracting

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	
Contractor by Choice	PULL Organisation - 41 Better Career* - 36 More Stimulating Work*** - 28 Flexible lifestyle*** - 7 Balance Work & Family* Contracting Agency - 22 Best Option* - 7 Balance Work & Family** - 6 Business with Others*	DEFAULT 1	CHOICE Organisation - 60 Flexible Lifestyle** - 53 More Stimulating Work*** - 26 Employer Requires It*** - 24 Balance Work & Family* Contracting Agency - 48 Best Option* - 6 Business With Others*
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2	PUSH Organisation - 14 Employer Request***	NO CHOICE Organisation - 21 More Money*
	DIRECT ENTRY Organisation - 50 More Stimulating Work* - 38 Flexible Lifestyle* Contracting Agency - 43 Best Option* - 25 Employer Requires It* - 14 Balance Work & Children**	DELAYED ENTRY Organisation - 4 Business with Others*** Contracting Agency - 7 Own Business*	

***Results significant at the .001 ** .005 and * .05 level

Agency commitment is thus linked to providing the best of a seemingly limited range of options: it offers more money than other options and provides some

feeling of security when an employer has not offered traditional employment, or at least allows some ability to balance work and family commitments. These are not the profile features of the protean career of Hall (1996) or the symbolic analyst of Reich (1992). They are however, a feature of commitment in many of the studies of temporary, casual and peripheral employment in general.

9.2.2: Summary of Commitment

Hypothesis 5 proposed that commitment is differentiated between the client organisation and the agency in that the level of commitment a contractor has to a client organisation will be positively related to the initial pull factors associated with the move into contracting. This has been largely borne out in the analysis of the results. Similarly, the hypothesis proposed that a contractors' level of commitment to an agency would be positively related to the initial push factors associated with the move into contracting. This has also largely been confirmed and indicates that, overall agencies benefit from increased professional contractor commitment in situations where the individual is disadvantaged. On the other hand, organisations gain greater commitment where the professional contractor is not disadvantaged. Within these indications, advantage and disadvantage are largely interpreted in terms of aspects of working life such as vulnerability to income fluctuation and lower annual incomes as well as active versus passive reasons for entering and remaining in contracting.

The findings presented have implications for the way organisations and agencies manage their professional contractor populations, especially if they want to maintain ongoing relationships with their contractors. The strategies an organisation uses to initially gain and subsequently retain the commitment of their professional contractor workforce focus on providing elements of mutual benefit. By contrast, the commitment of a professional contractor to an agency would appear to rest on a more uneven relationship where unpredictability becomes a key mechanism of control. The use of such strategies is echoed in studies of the temporary help industry (see for example Gottfried, 1998; Henson, 1996 and Natti, 1995).

In summary, this section of the chapter dealing with the issue of commitment, places some sectors of the professional contractor workforce well and truly within the bounds of the general debate and concerns about peripheral workers in general.

9.3: Conclusion

This chapter has advanced the investigation of the professional contractor workforce from the realms of the individual into the wider world of working relationships. Addressing the traditional and well-established areas of social support and commitment to the professional contract workforce it has revealed

clear parallels with other forms of peripheral work. The diverse arrangement covered by professional contracting have been substantiated and can confidently be said to comprise individuals from a broad spectrum with those who are as unempowered, marginalised and powerless as any home worker at one end, and the advantaged elite at the other.

The role of social support for the professional contractor appears to be similar to other workers with gender being the most significant factor overall. As with chapters 6 and 7, the matrix framework role has an explanatory value in identifying differences related to the issues of choice and timing of entry into contracting. Those pulled into contracting initially had and continue to operate stronger and closer networks than those pushed and these networks play an important part in sustaining the contracting lifestyle.

In contrast to the largely confirmatory nature of the role of social support, this investigation of the role of commitment fails to support previous empirical research that suggests that the move to non-traditional patterns of employment does have a negative impact on commitment to an employing organisation. Rather, those most advantaged in the move to contracting appear to exhibit increased commitment to the employing organisation. It is the contracting agency that appears to suffer from increasing professional contractor advantage but they do benefit from increased commitment as disadvantage for the professional contractor increases. As chapter 8 confirmed, traditional employment is still the

desired employment arrangement for many contractors and it is not until individuals have been contracting for more than 5 years that the real move to professional contracting really seems to occur.

Overall, many contractors appear to be struggling to come to terms with the challenges imposed by working outside the norm and will seek support from and bestow their commitment on whoever appears to offer the greater benefit. Once again, there is very little evidence of any 'visionary' approach for careers in the twenty-first century. Rather, it is an opportunistic approach, related to labour market advantage for some and lack of any other option for others. This polarised view of the professional contractor workforce is developed in the next chapter which will discuss the five research hypotheses in the context of the wider world of peripheral workers and changes in the world of work.

Chapter 10

Synthesis and Extrapolation of Findings

This chapter presents the key findings of chapters 7 to 9 which analysed the responses to a survey of the professional contracting workforce. Those three chapters tested the tool developed for this study, the Push/Pull Matrix, through an examination of five research hypotheses. This chapter integrates the separate issues dealt with by each hypothesis to test the thesis argument that professionals contract from a position of labour market advantage (opportunism) and that such work arrangements are sustainable and beneficial to all the parties in the employment relationship. If the latter is found to be true professional contracting may be considered as indicative of moves for this to become the more prevalent work arrangement in the future.

The robustness and explanatory ability of the Push/Pull Matrix has been demonstrated in chapters 7 to 9. It will be used again in this chapter to synthesise the key findings of the survey as they relate to the research hypotheses. The next section combines the results from Parts A and B of the survey on antecedence and current reasons for contracting. This synthesis moves the discussion forward to allow examination of the notion that the initial reasons behind the move into

contracting may not necessarily be the same as the reasons that sustain an individual in such work. Integrating the concepts of antecedence and sustainability allows for recognition of changes in work arrangements and provides the basis for a profile of the truly independent professional contractor to be developed. With this aim in mind, the second section therefore brings together the results on income, clients and conditions of work from Part C to provide an integrated view of contractor independence. These two sections of the chapter incorporate most of the traditional areas covered in studies of peripheral work but do not establish comparability between contracting and traditional employment. This is the task of the third and fourth sections where the results from these parts of the survey which focus on the themes of social support and loyalty and commitment are consolidated to complete the profile of the professional in contract employment.

10.1: The Initial Move and Current Reasons for Contracting

The first research hypothesis focused on the nature of the initial move into contracting in terms of choice and timing and the reasons that lead to the decision and stated that:

The 'pull' forces into a contracting career are positively related to perceived labour market opportunity while 'Push' forces are

positively related to the movement out of (exit from) the previous career.

The results from Part A of the survey testing this hypothesis provided the framework for the Push/Pull Matrix. A key assumption underlying the matrix is that the initial reasons underlying the decisions making process in the move to contracting will continue to exercise a significant and ongoing impact throughout the working life of the contractor. The accuracy of this assumption was tested in Hypothesis 2 which stated:

Satisfaction with a contracting career is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

Analysis of Parts A and B of the survey revealed that the hypothesis and therefore the assumptions it tested, were correct for this group.

The results presented in Table 10.1 reveals additional information which shows that generally, those pulled into contracting, or who enter by choice, do so for a variety of positive reasons that appear to be linked to perceived opportunity. The move for these individuals can be characterised as proactive and the positive aspect initially perceived carries over into the reason individuals remain in contracting. Overall, these results accord with the views of writers such as Bridges (1995), Handy (1978; 1992; 1996) and Peters (2000) who envisage workers of the future as being self-directed, entrepreneurial, self-managing.

Table 10.1: The Push/Pull Matrix – Initial Reasons for Entering and Reasons for Contracting Today

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	<p>PULL</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always Wanted - Own Boss - More Money - Professional Norm <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoy Contracting - Own Boss - More Money - Better Career - More Stimulating 	<p>DEFAULT 1</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance Work/family - More Money - Flexibility - Vol. Redundancy <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance Work/family - More Money - More Stimulating - Enjoy Contracting - Other 	<p>By Choice</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always Wanted - Own Boss - More Money - Professional Norm - Other <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoy Contracting - Better Career - More Stimulating - Flexibility
Contractor Not by Choice	<p>DEFAULT 2</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involuntary Redundancy - Business W. Others <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer Request - Business W. Others 	<p>PUSH</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involuntary Redundancy - Best Option - Lack of Career Prospects <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unable to find other work - Best Option 	<p>No Choice</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involuntary Redundancy - Best Option - Lack of Career Prospects <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unable to find other work - Best option
Totals	<p>Direct Entry</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always Wanted - Own Boss - More Money - Business w. others - Professional Norm <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoy Contracting - Own Boss - More Money - Business w. others - Better Career - More Stimulating 	<p>Delayed Entry</p> <p><i>Initial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involuntary Redundancy - Voluntary Redundancy - Best Option - Lack of career prospects - Balance Work/family <p><i>Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unable to find other work - Other - Best Option 	

In direct contrast, the results shown in the Push and No Choice sectors, can be summarised as reactive moves made in response to largely negative factors. Again, the reason for the initial move then persists and impacts on the reasons for individuals remaining in contracting.

The simple differences between the contractor who is pushed and the one who is pulled appears to be that those who are pulled into contracting by the perceived opportunities and promises find their expectations are met, while those pushed find their negative experiences confirmed. This is borne out by the fact that individuals in the Pull sector expressed a clear preference for contracting and self employment while those pushed desired full-time permanent employment and often experienced significant periods of unemployment.

Between the poles represented by the Push and Pull sectors are a number of combinations designated on the expanded Matrix as Default 1, Direct Entry and Delayed Entry. Of these, the Default 1 and Delayed Entry sectors in particular, combine aspects of both opportunity and constraint. The role of gender is an important explanation of these differences, especially for females where the presence of dependents was linked to the desire to balance work and family and have flexibility. This latter aspect was also a feature of older males (55+) where career theory literature suggests that the pursuit of money and status is replaced by quality of life concerns (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990; Sparrow, 1996).

The results in Table 10.1 also illustrate the need to desegregate the notion of redundancy into voluntary and involuntary as they are linked to quite distinct sectors in the matrix. This is most aptly demonstrated in the Default 2 sector of Table 10.1 where the initial move was as a result of involuntary redundancy and persistence into the present was due to request by the employer that the individual works as a contractor rather than as an employee. This result may be evidence of the erosion of professional status forecast by writers such as Marquand (1997), Broadbent and Laughlin (1997) and Williams (1995) whereby autonomy and privilege are replaced by dependence and disadvantage. In general, the results of the investigation into the first two research hypotheses confirm that the initial pull into contracting is positively related to factors associated with opportunity. Furthermore, these opportunities appear to be rewarding and assist in retaining the professional in contract employment. While not yet explicit, this opportunity is clearly related to labour market advantage. Conversely, those pushed into contracting do so as the result of negative factors associated with the movement out of their prior employment arrangement. Contracting for these individuals is essentially the result of their inability to find work as a full or part time permanent employee. The move is characterised as a negative and reactive move in contrast to the positive and proactive move of those pulled.

The consequences and implications of the differing nature of the move into contracting is illustrated clearly in the next section with the development of profiles of the professional contractor.

10.1A: Developing Professional Contractor Profiles

This section draws together a broad range of results ranging from occupation, date of entry into contracting and plans to remain contracting to income and negatives of contracting to build a profile which characterises each segment of the matrix.

The results presented in Table 10.2 offer further support of earlier indications from chapters 8 and 9. First are the labour market explanations of the move into contracting initially advanced in section 7.2.1. Overall, the impact of labour market factors indicated in Table 10.1 are borne out, with the high demand professions of IT and Engineering dominating the Pull sector. Typified by a long-term attachment to contracting, high incomes and the power to set or negotiate their rates of pay, members of these professions appear to be the consummate professional contractors and mirror the images of the worker of the future such as Bridges (1995a) and Handy (1996). These results appear to indicate that labour market opportunity (a shortage of in-demand skills in this case) has persisted for decades and that the product is a group of males in their 40s who entered at least 11 years ago. This does not accord with the more generalist profile advanced by writers on the worker of the future where a much diverse group in terms of age, gender and mobility would be expected.

However, if the long hours of work are also added to the picture, it is a profile which accords provides part of the argument that there is a polarisation of the

workforce occurring with between the overworked (and more contentiously, overpaid) and the under-employed or out-of-work and low paid. Such moves have been associated with the trend towards to casualisation and peripheral work, particularly in Australia (for example ACIRRT, 1999; Bray and Taylor 1991; Burgess and Campbell, 1998; MacNeill, 1995; 1995a). This latter group appears to be captured in the Push sector of Table 10.2 and manifests many of the features traditionally associated with the lack of security and protection which peripheral workers experience. This is evidenced most sharply in the contrast between their desire for traditional employment and the fact that many have worked as contractors for 5-10 years while continuing to express a short-term attachment to contracting.

The key role of the spouse in providing income is made clear within this polarisation between the Push and Pull sectors. When coupled with the irregular nature of contract employment for those in the Push sector and the short term plans to remain, despite having entered some 5 to 10 years previously, the key role of spousal income appears to be an assurance of stable income. These results offer further support for the view that for some, professional contracting is a marginal and insecure arrangement.

The fact that labour market conditions are dynamic is evidenced in the Default 2 sector, where Engineering is now identified as the most significant occupation.

Table 10.2: The Push/Pull Matrix and Professional Contractor Profiles

Contractor By Choice	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor Not by Choice	<p>PULL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT or Engineering professional - Married male aged 40-44 - Entered 11-15 or 16-20 years ago - Plans remain contracting 3+ years - Total income \$125,000 (own \$95,000 & spouse \$60,000) - Set own rates, negotiate with client/Agency - BUT Negative of long hours of work <p>DEFAULT 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering professional - Married male - Entered 4-10 years ago - Total income \$115,000 (own \$95,000 & spouse \$75,000) - Rates Set/offered by Agency or determined by market - Negative of Bookkeeping/legal requirements 	<p>DEFAULT 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT or Business professional - Married male aged 40-44 or married females with 2 or more dependents - Entered 1-5 or 5-10 years ago - Total income \$85,000 (own \$45,000 & spouse \$55,000) - Rates negotiated with client <p>PUSH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Male Business & Architecture, female Health & Welfare professionals - Females aged 45-49 - Entered 5-10 years ago - Short term plan to remain contracting - Prefer Full or Part Time permanent work - Total income \$45,000 (own \$25,000 & spouse \$65,000) - Rates neg. with client or set/offered by Agency - Many Negatives from irregular work, erratic lifestyle, loneliness, inability to find work and lack co-operation from clients employees 	<p>By Choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT, Engineering or Business professional - Married male aged 40-44 or married male/females with young dependents - Entered between 5 to 20 years ago - Total income \$105,000 (own \$85,000 & spouse \$60,000) - Set own rates or negotiate w. client/Agency - Prefer self-employment - BUT Negative of long hours of work <p>No Choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Male Business, females Health & Welfare professionals - Males aged 50-59 - Entered 5-10 years ago - Prefer Full or Part Time permanent work - Total income \$65,000 (own \$35,000 & spouse \$65,000) - Rates set/offered by Agency/Client - Many Negatives from irregular work, erratic lifestyle, loneliness, inability to find work and searching for next contract
Totals	<p>DIRECT ENTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT & Engineering professionals - Males aged 40-49 - Entered 5-20 years ago - Total income \$120,000 (own \$95,000 & spouse \$65,000) - Set own rates, negotiate with client/Agency or determined by market - BUT Negative of long hours of work 	<p>DELAYED ENTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Females aged 35-39, males 25-29 & 55-59 - Entered 1-15 years ago - Short term plan to remain contracting - Total income \$70,000 (own \$40,000 & spouse \$60,000) - Rates neg. with client or set/offered by Agency - Unemployment other significant work status - Many Negatives from irregular work, erratic lifestyle, loneliness, inability to find work and lack co-operation from clients employees 	

While rewards can be assessed in terms of a high income compared to other sectors, Table 10.2 identifies that the move into contracting is the result of involuntary redundancy. This forced move from employee to contractor status occurred some 4-10 years ago and the industry information analyses in chapter 6 suggests it is linked to a trend towards public sector outsourcing and declining demand for chemical engineers.

The dual nature of the delayed move into contracting for Default 1 is also clarified in Table 10.2 where the two key groups are married females with 2 or more dependents and 40-44 year old males. While time off to care for young children is the obvious explanation for the break women have before commencing contracting, the explanations for men ranged from extended travel to study and career change. This sector also produced some unusual results in terms of income, as spouses tended to have higher incomes than the professional contractor, a result that has been shown to be significant for female contractors with dependents.

All told, hypotheses 1 and 2 are overwhelmingly supported with the results confirming that the initial pull into contracting is positively related to factors associated with labour market opportunity and to the rewards perceived to be associated with contracting. These rewards assist in retaining the professional in contract employment as a long-term work arrangement. However, there are also forces pushing professionals from previous employment arrangements and into

contracting. For these individuals the contracting lifestyle holds few rewards but rather appears to offer unpredictable and insecure work, an arrangement exacerbated by difficulties in gaining the co-operation of the client's employees and the constant search for the next contract. The importance of these differences between the two sectors, with their origins in the nature of the initial move into contracting, is illustrated in the next section which, through the concept of contracting independence, examines the experience of working as a contractor.

10.2: Contracting Independence

The concept of contracting independence is a complex and often legally contentious area which is the focus of the third research hypothesis which states that:

The level of contracting independence is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to work as a contractor.

The issues of choice and timing and the reasons that lead to the decision to become a contractor are dealt with in the seventeen items of Part C of the Survey. As discussed in chapter 7, the issue of independence can be reduced to the three key factors of income, working conditions and the number and type of clients. An analysis of these factors, presented in Table 10.3, reinforces the polarisation

evident with the Push/Pull principle. The rewards of labour market advantage for those in the Pull/By Choice sectors are again in evidence with income being stable and higher than that of employees, prior contracts and prior non-contract employment. Those Pushed/with No Choice however, experience fluctuating and unpredictable incomes which are inferior to those of their pre-contracting days and are the same to worse than those of employees and prior contracts.

The proactive versus reactive response to the move into contracting is also reflected in the methods employed to obtain work. Individuals in the Pull sector use a proactive range of at least five methods to obtain work, whereas those in the Push sector rely on the traditional approach of responding to job advertisements and contacting contracting agencies. The dynamic and self-motivated style of the Pulled/By Choice contractor is also reflected in the larger number of clients that they have worked for, as well as the importance of prior employers and work based networks for work referral. These characteristics are all absent in the Push/Delayed Entry/No Choice sectors.

While these differences indicate the increasing independence of contractors proportional to the degree to which they were Pushed, it is the conditions of work in terms of the issues of choice and control that produce the most unambiguous results.

Table 10.3 shows that labour market advantage translates into high levels of both choice and control, while disadvantage produces little to no choice over the hours of work, and negligible control over the way in which work is performed. This result contradicts many of the assumptions of professional working conditions but again, provides further support for those who have expressed concern regarding moves to peripheral work and the de-professionalisation of occupations (Broadbent et. al., 1997; Marquand, 1997). The differences between the Push and Pull sectors also add further evidence for the overworked/overpaid and underworked/underpaid polarisation identified by Jackson (1996).

The results presented in Table 10.3 also show the advantaged professional contractor working well in excess of the standard 36-hour week, while the disadvantaged often fail to work 35 hours. The high levels of control and choice claimed by the former raises the question of where the pressure for working such long hours is coming from. Studies of the self-employed suggest that the individuals are their own source of coercion and that such overwork is a common problem amongst these workers (Lewin-Epstein and Yuchtman-Yaar, 1991; Eardley and Bradbury, 1997). This in turn raises questions about the benefits of career self-management championed by advocates of the 'portfolio' or 'boundaryless' career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Handy, 1992). Further, the propensity of the professional who has been 'pulled' into contracting to work excessive hours also raises doubts that the attributes of this theoretical worker of the future are actually desirable.

Table 10.3: The Push/Pull Matrix and Levels of Contracting Independence

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
Contractor By Choice	PULL INCOME - varies little from year to year - is better to much better than employees - is same to better than prior contracts - is better to much better than prior non contract work CLIENTS - obtained proactively - 11-50+ clients since first contracting - last years 1-2 client were from private sector - was previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - complete Choice over hours & large to complete Control over way work is done BUT work 46-80+ hours per week	DEFAULT 1 INCOME - varies a mod. from month to month CLIENTS - use work network to obtain contracts - 4-10 clients since first contracting CONDITIONS - large amount of Choice over hours & moderate complete Control over way work is done - either under 10 or 46-60 hours per week	BY CHOICE INCOME - varies little from year to year CLIENTS - obtained proactively - 50+ clients since first contracting - last years 1 client was from private sector - was previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - large to complete Choice over hours & complete Control over way work is done - work 46-80+ hours per week
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 CLIENTS - others supply contracts - 11-20 clients since first contracting - last years 1 client was from private sector CONDITIONS - work 60-80 hours per week	PUSH INCOME - varies lot from week to week - is worse to same as employees - is worse to same as prior contracts - is much worse than prior non contract work CLIENTS - obtained traditionally - 4-10 clients since first contracting - not previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - small to no Choice over hours & small to moderate Control over way work is done - work 11-35 hours per week	NO CHOICE INCOME - varies lot from week to week CLIENTS - obtained traditionally - 4-10 clients since first contracting - not previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - small to no Choice over hours & small to moderate Control over way work is done
Totals	DIRECT ENTRY INCOME - none to little variation year to year CLIENTS - obtained proactively - 11-50+ clients since first contracting - last years 1-2 client were from private sector - was previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - medium to complete Choice over hours & large Control over way work is done & work 46-80+ hours per week	DELAYED ENTRY INCOME - varies lot from week to week CLIENTS - obtained through Advertisements - 4-10 clients since first contracting - 1-2 employers last year were in Public Sector - not previously employee of a client CONDITIONS - small/no Choice over hours & small Control over way work is done & work 0 to 45 hours per week	

Overall, the results clearly support Hypothesis 3 which states that the level of contracting independence is positively related to the initial pull factors associated with the move into contracting and assists the individual to continue working as a contractor. However, closer investigations of the factors which comprise the notion of independence have also revealed that the positive features associated with higher levels of control and choice are not without cost. In this case the cost is the long hours of work of those characterised as the most advantaged.

Social support networks are often advanced as the key explanation for the contractors' ability to sustain such long (and often, prolonged) periods of work. This area was examined in the fourth research hypothesis which focused on the support networks available to contractors and the sources of support they actually use.

10.3: Social Support

The concept of social support was incorporated into the survey as a result of the interviews used to identify the main themes and concerns of contractors. The psychological and sociological notions indicated by the literature reviews of chapters 2 to 4 were the focus of in the fourth research hypothesis which states that:

The level of Social Support is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting and subsequently, assists in enabling the individual to maintain working as a contractor.

Survey respondents commonly identified the role of the spouse and various supportive 'others' as important. This result was first identified in terms of financial security in the analysis of Part B of the survey - especially for working women with dependents and for the lower income earners of the Push sector. Morris (1995) also suggests that more extensive forms of support in terms of networks are important for sustaining individuals in situations such as self-employment.

Table 10.4 incorporates an item from Part A of the Survey together with items from Part D to provide a comprehensive view of the role of social support in the life of the professional contractor. The main distinction revealed by this analysis is based on gender and shows that women generally have larger and stronger social support networks than men. While the literature supports this finding, closer examination of Table 10.4 extends the earlier results to reveals females in the Pull sector generally and in by choice/support today do not conform to these norms. Here it is generally men who have the greater number of support sources overall, while the female respondents in these sectors tend to restrict themselves to a more immediate circle. Recent research by Mallon (1999), Lineham and

Walsh (2000) and Woodd (2000) suggests that contracting careers may be more suited to females and these results offer limited substantiation of such claims.

Overall, the importance of past employers and work contacts as a source of social support is clearly identified in terms of their potential to become a future source of contract work and this is confirmed for all sectors. Data in the 'Left Later' column produces some new insights into the role of medical specialists who emerge as not only a significant network source, but also as a strong support within a network. The fact that this source is identified as current suggests that there may have been a medical reason for either the movement from prior work or the delay in entering contracting. This was confirmed by comments on some returned surveys indicating that the stress associated with redundancy was now an ongoing feature of working as a professional contractor.

While medical specialists tended to be a clear source of physiological as well as psychological support for males, children's caregivers emerged as a physical service required to maintain working mothers in contract employment. These two sources encapsulate the multi-faceted nature of support in the world of work. Support includes sources that provide direct, work related advice, support or services and also those who provide the less tangible quality of emotional support.

The responses given in the survey make it impossible to gauge the extent to which the perception of the availability of support from each source becomes a reality.

Table 10.4: The Push/Pull Matrix and Social Support Networks

Contractor By Choice	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor	Totals
	PULL	DEFAULT 1	By Choice
	<u>Initial Support</u> - Family - F, Bus/Mgrs - Spouse - Engrs - Work Contacts - M, Engrs and Arch - Former Employer - F - WorkMates - M, Engrs, and Arch, Bus/Mgrs - Accountant - M & F	<u>Initial Support</u> - Family - F - Friends - F, IT - Work Contacts - M - Spouse - Bus/Mgrs - Prof. Services - M - Med. Specialist - No One	<u>Initial Support</u> - Family - F - Friends - F, IT - Work Contacts - M - Former Employer - F - WorkMates - M, Arch & Bus/Mgrs - Spouse
Contractor Not by Choice	DEFAULT 2 - Family - F, Bus/Mgrs - Spouse - Engrs - Work Contacts - M, Engrs and Arch - Former Employer - F - WorkMates - M, Engrs, and Arch, Bus/Mgrs - Accountant - M & F	PUSH <u>Initial Support</u> - Family - F - H&W and Bus/Mgrs - Work Contacts - F, H&W & Welf. - Former Employer - F - WorkMates - F - Accountant - F - Prof. Services	No Choice <u>Initial Support</u> - No One - M - Family - F - Friends - F - Work Contacts - F, H&W & Welf. - Prof. Services - M - Spouse - F - Former Employer - F - WorkMates
Totals	<u>Initial Support</u> - Family - F, Bus/Mgrs - Work Contacts - M, Engrs - WorkMates - M, Engrs, & Arch - Accountant - F - Former Employer	<u>Initial Support</u> - No One - M - Spouse - F, Bus/Mgrs - Family - F - Friends - F - Work Contacts - M&F, H&W, Bus/Mgrs - Prof. Services - M, IT - WorkMates	<u>Initial Support</u> - No One - M - Family - F, H&W - Friends - F, H&W - Work Contacts - F, H&W - Prof. Services - M - Spouse - F - Former Employer - F - WorkMates

KEY - F = female M = male H&W = Health & Welfare Engrs = Engineers Bus/Mgrs = Business, Managers, Administration
 * = Significantly strong sources of support as well as a significant source (p < 0.05)

The issue is one of the congruence between perception and reality. Furthermore, the results do not indicate how the sources maintain the individual in contract employment. However, it is clear that the size of the networks, which characterise each sector of the matrix, has not changed significantly over time. Rather, it is the perception that these networks offer strong support, which has increased after the initial move and this may be important for assisting the individual to continue working as a contractor. Generally, these results do not support the fourth hypothesis that the level of social support is positively related to the move into contracting but they do indicate that social support is important for continuing to work as a contractor. It is the strength rather than the size of the network which increases over time.

A key departure from the expected result from the research hypothesis on social support is that neither the quality or quantity of the support actually capture the differences which were found between the Push/Pull sectors of the matrix. Rather, it is the concept of distance within the various sources of social support that emerged as important. Thus, those pulled into contracting tended to have more immediate networks of spouse, family and friends, whereas those pushed into contracting tended to rely on the more distant sources of CA representatives, work contacts and accountants, or have no one at all. Overall, these latter results confirm the picture of marginalisation and disadvantage in the Push sector which has consistently emerged with the application of the Matrix framework to the survey results.

10.4: Commitment

The exchange of employee commitment for ongoing job security has been advocated as the basis for good human resource management (Guest, 1998). The transitory nature of contracts, the presence of contract agencies as well as the client organisation combine to make the notion of commitment within contracting relationships difficult. The fifth research hypothesis focuses on these aspects and states that:

The level of commitment a contractor has to the:

- Host Organisation is positively related to the initial 'pull' factors associated with the move into contracting; and*
- Contracting Agency is positively related to the initial 'push' factors associated with the move into contracting.*

The notion of dual commitment is explicit in this hypothesis but, as the results in Table 10.5 show, it appears to be a reality for very few professionals. A surprising result was the absence of commitment to either the organisation or the agency from those in the 'Not By Choice' sector. Considering the implications of commitment in the current work environment and the negative features previously associated with the move into contracting (previously identified in Table 10.2), these results appear to confirm the "dark side" to commitment suggested in recent research by Gallagher and McLean Parks (2001:24) and Pate and Malone (2000).

Table 10.5: The Push/Pull Matrix and Commitment

Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor			Totals	
	PULL		By Choice	No Choice	
By Choice	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males aged 35-39 - Architects - Rates set by CA, neg. W/Client - 5-10 years contracting <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best Option - Better Career - More Stimulating Work - Balance Work&Family - Flexible Lifestyle 		<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males, married aged 35-39 - No Dependents - 2 or 5 years contracting - v. little income variation - earn \$75-185,000+ <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vol. Redundancy - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer requires it - More Stimulating Work - Balance Work&Family - Flexible Lifestyle 	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males, married aged 35-39 & 55-59 - No or 2+ Dependents - Architects - 5 or 10 years contracting - weekly-lot income variation - earn \$35-45/\$65-75,000 <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Norm/ Best Option - Employer Request - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best Option - Business w. Others 	
Not by Choice	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males aged 40-44 - 2 years contracting - income varies lot - earn more \$ <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifestyle - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More Stimulating Work - Flexible Lifestyle 		<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males aged 40-44 - 5 years contracting - weekly income variation <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vol. Redundancy 	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males, married aged 35-39 - No Dependents - 2 or 5 years contracting - v. little income variation - earn \$75-185,000+ <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vol. Redundancy - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer requires it - More Stimulating Work - Balance Work&Family - Flexible Lifestyle 	
Totals	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males aged 30-34 - 2 years contracting - income varies lot - earn more \$ <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifestyle - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More Stimulating Work - Flexible Lifestyle 		<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males aged 40-44 - 5 years contracting - weekly income variation <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vol. Redundancy 	<p>Contract Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Males, married aged 35-39 - No Dependents - 2 or 5 years contracting - v. little income variation - earn \$75-185,000+ <p>Initial Reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vol. Redundancy - Reasons Today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer requires it - More Stimulating Work - Balance Work&Family - Flexible Lifestyle 	

KEY - F = female M = male H&W = Health & Welfare Engrs = Engineers Bus/Mgrs = Business, Managers, Administration

The case study involved in the latter research suggests that the sense of violation of the psychological contract of employment caused by involuntary redundancy is enduring. This may explain the fact that the professionals in this survey who have faced such a situation appear generally unwilling to give commitment to either party.

Altogether, the clearest single factor which appears to determine which party receives the contractors' commitment is the length of time an individual has contracted. Those contracting for 2 to 5 years give commitment to the organisation, while after 5 years the commitment moves to the agency. After this time contractors seem to adopt the mantle of a professional contractor and significantly increase their commitment to the agency, at the expense of the organisation. This may be indicative of how long it takes to break down the strength of the traditional view of loyalty which holds that loyalty is due to an employer rather than to an intermediary such as an agency. However, as a longer term relationship between agency and contractor develops (which seems to take about 5 years), the focus of the loyalty appears to transfer from the traditional view to accept that ongoing work is more likely to be awarded from attachment to an agency rather than an organisation.

While the interviews conducted during the development of the survey indicated that this transfer of loyalty from organisation to agency is a highly desirable situation for the Agencies, it is unclear as to whether organisations actually want or need commitment from contractors. Given the 'disposable' nature of the contracting workforce, there is evidence to suggest that organisations may be comfortable for the relationship with the contractor to remain at the purely

transactional level, free of any of the traditional relational aspects which engender commitment (see for example Casto, 1993; Herriot, 1996; Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni, 1995).

Examining pay rates provides support for this contention. In this survey, the fact that in the 'By Choice' sector, the pay rate associated with increased commitment to the organisation greatly exceeds the rates of those committed to the agency, is evidence of this. The results suggest that lower rates, together with a fluctuating income, result in increased commitment to the agency while higher rates and low fluctuation increase commitment to the organisation. Further evidence of changing commitment is seen in long term professional contractors with over 5 years contracting experience who appear to see their work relationships as being maintained through the agency rather than through individual employers.

Agency representatives in the developmental interviews offered another perspective which may explain the seemingly higher levels of commitment to agencies. They identified their ability to provide training as an active tool used to increase contractor commitment. This seems an appropriate strategy for both an agency and an organisation to pursue, given that the rhetoric of the new career, be it 'protean', 'portfolio' or 'self-managed', is based on the premise that the employability of an individual is maintained through continual learning and updating of high-level skills (Arthur and Rousseau, 1995; Hall, 1998; Kanter, 1989).

The importance of the provision of training by agencies and organisations is underscored by the fact that individual professional contractor investment in relevant training and maintenance of skills was notable by its absence in the items of proactive career management in Part C of the survey. This held true even for the most advantaged individuals within the Pull sector. While this adds weight to the argument against regarding professional contractors as archetypal 'workers of the future', it does suggest a practical solution for consideration by parties who want to attain and maintain contractor commitment.

The use of training as a tool to increase commitment rather than transform skills, as suggested in the rhetoric of self-employability, is accepted practice in the core workforce (Bernardin and Russell, 1998; Collins, 1998; Mayo, 1991). The results here suggest it may be just as successful a strategy for employing organisations to use with their peripheral workforce. The obvious issue of the costs and benefits to employers was not even questioned by the three contracting agencies which took part in the interview stage of the survey development.

Overall, the results offer some support for the hypothesis that commitment to the organisation is positively related to the initial pull factors into contracting but they do not support the contention that agency commitment is positively related to the initial push factors. Also, the strength of the attachment to the organisation for those initially pulled into contracting was seen to dissipate over time and, after 5 years as a contractor, commitment moved to reside with the agency. The level and variability of income and access to training emerged as the two key features

which could be manipulated in the pursuit of commitment from professional contractors. While higher incomes were associated with organisational commitment in the 'By Choice' sector, they were also relatively stable compared to the lower and more variable incomes of those who expressed greater agency commitment. As suggested by studies from the temporary help industry (see for example Gottfried, 1991; Negrey, 1990 or Parker, 1994), unpredictability provides a mechanism for greater agency leverage over the contractor. By contrast, higher and more predictable incomes may satisfy the transactional requirements of the organisations in the employment relationship but they also produce greater commitment to the organisation from the contractor.

As already noted, the provision of access to training has been used by agencies as a major strategy in obtaining and retaining contractor loyalty. While it is unclear as to whether organisations have any desire for contractor loyalty, agencies have a clear and obvious incentive to win the loyalty of their contractor pool. The interview results discussed in section 6.2 revealed that agencies compete fiercely for the best contractors and the results presented in Table 10.5 suggest that the provision of training may, in fact, offset the somewhat lower salaries offered by agencies. Overall, these findings have implications for the way both organisations and agencies manage their professional contractor populations, especially if they want to maintain ongoing relationships with them. The strategies an organisation could use to obtain and then retain commitment from its professional contractor workforce may focus on providing features of mutual benefit whereas that between professional contractor and agency, where the

relationship is rather uneven, unpredictability may become a key mechanism of control. The use of such strategies is echoed in studies of the temporary help industry (see for example Feldman et. al., 1994; Natti, 1995).

The investigation of the role of commitment in the professional contractor workforce has failed to support previous empirical research suggesting that the move to peripheral work has a negative impact on commitment to an employing organisation. Instead, it seems that those most advantaged in the move to contracting appear to exhibit increased commitment to the employing organisation. It is the contracting agency that appears to bear the cost of increasing professional contractor advantage but it does benefit from increased commitment as disadvantage for the professional contractor increases. Findings from the interviews that traditional employment is still the desired employment arrangement for many contractors and that it is not until individuals have been contracting for more than 5 years that the real move to professional contracting really seems to occur are confirmed.

10.5 Conclusion

Past notions of the importance of traditional forms of employment have been severely tested over the last decade, with the advent of large scale redundancies and retrenchment of members of the professional workforce for the first time. Paralleling these are also well-publicised skill shortages within some professional occupations. Together, these two features of work today, provide explanations of

the push and pull of contracting. While the ability of the professional contractor to easily make the transfer into the self-managed or portfolio career envisaged by writers on the future of work has a great deal of appeal, this study has found that the reality is far more complex. Instead, the reasons an individual initially entered contracting continue to be a major influence on how individual professionals view the experience of contracting and how they actually operate as contractors. A key measurable outcome of the contracting experience was found to be contractors' willingness to remain in contracting and this is important for both the employing organisation and the agency.

Attachment and commitment emerged as important issues where too strong an attachment to an agency would be of concern to an employing organisation and vice versa. In essence, the contractor may wish to return to an employing organisation, without any benefits accruing to the agency who made the original placement. Alternatively, the contractor may become more committed to the agency that always supplies 'good' placements. The earlier interviews carried out with agency representatives indicated that this was the desirable situation for them as then the contractor becomes their "inside" person, letting them know of future contract opportunities. One of the key areas for developing commitment used by agencies was the provision of training and briefing sessions for their registered contractors. At the same time, agencies expressed an awareness of the fierce competition for the best contractors and were concerned that they may not see any return on their investment. The survey results clearly show that agencies which do provide these services, do in fact, receive increased commitment. The

exploratory interviews indicated that employing organisations generally exclude contractors from access to training and social events, a practice which results in reduced commitment and should be of interest to HR managers who are being exhorted to seamlessly integrate the contract and core employee workforces (Jacobs, 1994). Overall, provision of access to training is generally not considered the responsibility of the employing organisation or the agency. However, it appears to be an avenue worth considering as a tool for integrating and managing a contractor workforce within an organisation or as a means for an agency to retain exclusive access to high-demand contractors.

Chapter 11

Discussion, Limitations and Implications

This chapter draws together the separate findings pertaining to the five research hypotheses set out in the last chapter to present the practical implications of these findings as they relate to the professional contractor. The discussion encompasses examining the findings in terms of the context of the wider world of peripheral work as well as the macro changes occurring within the world of work. Limitations of this study are also considered. The chapter concludes by highlighting the areas for further research which extends beyond the scope of this investigation.

11.1: Consolidating the Results

The results of the survey of 240 professional contractors, supported by fifteen interviews, reveal that marginalisation and disadvantage are as relevant to professionals moving into contracting as they are to any worker moving into any non-traditional employment. Evidence of the widely cited 'elite' professional was found but so was evidence of the low paid, insecure worker which typifies the works of those concerned with the marginalisation of non standard workers (see for example ACOSS, 1996; ACIRRT, 1999). These findings substantiate

previous empirical research that suggests that any move to non-traditional patterns of employment has a negative impact on the expectations and rewards normally associated with work. Contractors initially pulled into contracting clearly reap many rewards from their move. However, the strong and responsive knowledge of their labour market position in terms of how much they are worth and the level of demand for their skills appear to be lacking. Instead, the results support a more limited view of short-term opportunism which has fortuitously been reasonably long-term for some professions. This is especially so for IT and some engineering professionals where this 'sustainable' labour market opportunity has lasted for twenty years or more. The abrupt changes that can occur were also evident, as illustrated by the Engineers who dominated the Default 2 sector.

Even the experience of the most advantaged individuals within the Pull/By Choice sector provided cause for doubt about claims that knowledge professionals such as IT workers represent the future of work. Evidence of the self-managed, portfolio or boundaryless career are hard to substantiate where no investment is being made in upgrading skills or developing new ones. Instead, the overwhelming view is that labour market opportunity translates into the ability to work outside of the traditional career boundaries but that the employer still essentially controls these boundaries when the labour market advantage ceases.

The matrix in Table 11.1 summarises the results of the survey and refers to the original theorists first consulted to investigate the phenomena of the growing professional contractor workforce. Thus, while the theories of Schumpeter (1934) and Knight (1933) are well over half a century old, their relevance in terms of

push, pull and default explanations of employment remain as current as ever. The results may now be reduced to summary statements for each of the main quadrants of the Matrix.

Table 11.1: The Push/Pull Matrix Summary

	Left Prior Work Arrangement To Become a Contractor	Left Prior Work Arrangement & Later Became a Contractor
Contractor By Choice	<p>PULL = Career Option for most Able and Ambitious</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial reasons for contracting were proactive and positive 2. Reasons for remaining are proactive and positive 3. High levels of contracting Independence 4. Moderate levels of social support 5. High levels & Dual Commitment 	<p>DEFAULT 1 = Bridge or Transition Point</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial reasons for contracting generally proactive and positive 2. Reasons for remaining are generally proactive and positive 3. Moderate levels of contracting Independence 4. Moderate levels of social support 5. Moderate levels & Dual Commitment
Contractor Not by Choice	<p>DEFAULT 2 = ? A mid point between Bridge & Trap</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial reasons for contracting were reactive and negative 2. Reasons for remaining are reactive and generally negative 3. Moderate levels of contracting Independence 4. Moderate levels of social support 5. Generally No Commitment 	<p>PUSH = A Trap</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial reasons for contracting were reactive and negative 2. Reasons for remaining are reactive and negative 3. Lower levels of contracting Independence 4. Moderate levels of social support 5. Generally No Commitment

Table 11.1 identifies those pulled into contracting are the most able and ambitious. They are able to take advantage of current and perhaps transitory labour market opportunity and use this to negotiate a career that has at least the veneer of the autonomy and control expounded as the archetypal qualities of the worker of the future. There are also some important costs not so readily popularised in the works of futurologists such as Bridges (1995a) and Peters (2000). The findings here of excessively long hours of work and a lack of investment in training for the acquisition and maintenance of skills is one that

challenges both the long-term sustainability of such a working life and the desirability of it becoming the norm.

Schumpeter's (1934) Default explanation of self-employment is expanded by applying the more recent language of Bogenhold and Staber (1991; 1993) and Natti (1995) to provide the transition and trap options of Table 11.1. These options demonstrate the boundary-spanning nature of a contracting career, lying outside the parameters of traditional employment but leaving room to return, in Default 1. The individuals in this quadrant ranged from females with dependent children, for whom the advantages of contracting lay in the ability to have flexibility and balance work and family, to older males who wanted the flexibility to pursue other interests in life after having faced the challenge of redundancy. This group can be largely characterised as having interests that placed them outside of the traditional labour market either temporarily or permanently. The transition for some may thus be into retirement or other non-work activities or, contracting may provide the bridge back into traditional employment. Again, the central feature of this group seems to be that the individuals will be able to exercise a degree of choice in terms of their future options.

The same cannot be said of individuals in the Default 2 or Push sectors. The presence of the traditionally high demand occupation of Engineering in the Default 2 sector raises a number of issues about the volatility and durability of labour market advantage for workers. While advantage has allowed some to negotiate a relationship with organisations (and sometimes contracting agencies)

that is at least mutually beneficial to all parties, if not biased towards the contractor, the lack of choice in the move into contractor status in both the Default 2 and Push sectors indicates that power is firmly in the hands of the traditional employer and agency. This is most clearly evidenced in the Push sector where the majority of individuals expressed preference for traditional working arrangements, despite many having been contractors for a decade or more.

Taken together, these findings substantiate previous empirical research on non-traditional work, but reveal an important aspect missing from most studies. Rather than dismissing the professionals as being capable of looking after their career and earning sufficient or even excessive amounts, this research found that many such common assumptions are not representative of the majority of experiences. Of the 240 contractors who took part in the large scale survey, only 66 survey respondents fit the professional contractor profile attributed to the worker of the future. The vast majority exhibited a far more diverse set of attributes.

11.2: Implications for Research

This thesis started with the proposition that professional contractors may be either the simple product of labour market opportunity, or forerunners of the worker of the future. While researchers have traditionally neglected the professional contractor as an elite aberration within the larger scale moves to peripheral work, one published source of data on such workers suggests that such assumptions are

presumptions (Judy and D'Amico, 1997, 1997). If Australia is to continue to follow American trends, then contractors, and professionals in particular, will become a more important feature of the future of work.

While Human Resource managers are exhorted to integrate peripheral and core workforces, thus raises several issues. As the relative ratio of peripheral workers increases on a given job, organisational trust may diminish (Pearce, 1993). Similarly, to the extent that those with whom we interact affect one's attitude, we might expect the commitment of the core workers to dissipate as the ratio of peripheral workers increases. Also, while the transitory nature of professional contracting emerged strongly, aspects such as commitment appear to strengthen as the length of time spent as a contractor increases. This has important theoretical and practical implications for the way in which both contracting agencies and client organisations manage this workforce. A key implication is that the management of contractors is an issue for both host organisations and for contracting agencies alike.

This survey examined one aspect of the notion of management in terms of the concept of commitment to the current or most recent agency and organisation for which a contractor worked. However, as many professional contractors register with multiple agencies, a more accurate measure of organisational commitment requires the measurement and possible comparison of commitment to all agencies with which they are registered. The fact that agencies do not provide all of the contract work emerged from the data in Part C of the survey on Independence and was further supported by the interviews. One professional contractor may thus be registered with several agencies while currently employed through one agency and can move relatively independently from one client to another. The duration

and quality of the assignments with the various client organisations and through different agencies may vary and create a hierarchy of preferred clients. Given the basically transactional basis of the initial agency/professional contractor relationship, it seems highly likely that the professional contractor will be more committed to the agency which is most effective in regularly placing them in 'quality' assignments.

On the other hand, the agencies who took part in the interviews clearly expressed the desire for the "complete loyalty and commitment of our contractors to be to us" (CA 1). The general agency view of a "good contractor" is one "who procures more work for the agency" (CA 3). While the work an individual contractor identifies may not necessarily be given to them, the implicit reward is that the agency will award them with quality assignments in the future. This agency view of desirable contractor behaviour has obvious potential to be at odds with that an organisation may want from their contractor workforce and the concept of commitment thus highlights some of the tensions involved in the three-way nature of the contractor/agency/organisation relationship.

There is clearly a great deal of scope for further research in light of the findings of this study. Firstly, a longitudinal study of individual professionals in contracting arrangements would provide a perspective on the arrangement over time. This is particularly important for a workforce which should, and in some cases, does, operate at the high end of a continuum which is representative of non-traditional work. These longitudinal studies are needed to provide benchmarks and establish world's best practice, especially in the area of training and entitlements which already acknowledged as crucial concerns at the low end of the continuum.

This research investigation has combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods to enhance the credibility of the study and the findings. An extension of the sample size would ensure greater generalisability of the results. A case study would be particularly useful to extend the perspectives offered by the various partners involved in the employment relationship where contractor labour is used. A stronger comparative analysis between employee, organisation and contractors could give some insight into the reasons why, when presented with the same opportunities/constraints, some individuals become contractors, while others do not.

The task of attempting to classify professional contractors can become very complex, due to both the variety of arrangements and the number of factors that can be used to differentiate between different types of work relationships. This research proposed that work relationships might be better differentiated on the basis of a continuum where aspects of choice and timing of the move into contracting determined the position of an individual relationship. This was based on the notion that it is how the worker *perceives* the work relationship that impacts on their decisions, attitudes and behaviours. In a future research agenda it may be useful to begin the task of trying to further develop different commitment levels that can be used as the basis of a continuum to compare the nature and types of contracting arrangements.

In summary, it was useful to recognise that attitudinal and behavioural differences which can be found between workers with different types of contracting

backgrounds may also be more reflective of personal characteristics and occupational differences (Feldman, 1990; McGinnis and Morrow 1990). For these reasons, future research on the topic of the professional contractor workforce may also consider giving attention to the personal and occupational characteristics of temporary workers, as well as their motivations or reasons for working as part of the contingent workforce (Feldman et. al., 1994; Krausz, Brandwein and Fox, 1995). The myriad of work relationships creates opportunities for a greater "fit" between the needs and desires of the worker and the nature of the work relationship. However, it also creates a greater opportunity for "misfit", for example, where workers who want to be "traditional" workers may only be able to find work as contractors.

11:3: Conclusion

This thesis has focused on one significant aspect of the changing world of work, the arrangement commonly known as professional contracting. The title of the thesis, 'The Professional Contractor - Worker of the Future or Opportunist of Today?' provided for two aspects of the debate surrounding many of the 'new' working arrangements to be examined. The first, the 'worker of the future' investigated the argument as to whether the changes in work are a radical departure from the past or simply a continuation of established patterns. In terms of the professional contractor, the argument has been largely shown to be one of evolution rather than revolution. Central to the evolution argument is the fact that

the results of the investigation have revealed that the most advantaged of the professions (such as IT, engineers and business/management) have a 'norm' of contracting. Overall, professional contracting is not 'new' at all but rather, it is the increasingly diverse range of occupations and numbers of people that professional contracting arrangements now encompass.

The second part of the thesis question related to opportunism on the part of professional contractors where the arguments centred on economic and labour market factors of supply and demand. The debate was one of employer led choice and control versus worker preference and, in the most advantaged cases, opportunism. The results of the study strongly support the argument for opportunism resulting from high labour market demand and short supply for the most advantaged professions. The short-term and unplanned nature of the initial move for this group of contractors is almost a definition of opportunism in itself and was most evident in the lack of personal investment in training and contingency planning amongst the most highly paid and seemingly, elite, of the professional contractor workforce. It is these deficiencies which also, most convincingly, disprove any suggestions that professional contractors may be an archetype of the worker of the future.

In summary, professional contracting incorporates a very broad and diverse range of aspects of both advantage and disadvantage. The uncertainty and lack of predictability which characterises peripheral work in general, is just as prevalent to the professional contract workforce. Clearly there are a group of individuals

who freely enter contracting because of the rewards it offers, but the ongoing and long-term sustainability of these rewards does not appear to be under the control of the contractor. These advantaged individuals are not the worker of the future but more accurately, the opportunist of today.

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APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

PROFESSIONALS:

PROFESSIONALS perform analytical, conceptual and creative tasks through the application of theoretical knowledge and experience in the fields of science, engineering, business and information, health, education, social welfare and the arts.

Most occupations in this major group have a level of skill commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification. In some instances relevant experience is required in addition to the formal qualification.

Some occupations such as those in Sub-Major Group 25 Social, Arts and Miscellaneous Professionals may require high levels of creative talent or personal commitment and interest as well as, or in place of, formal qualifications or experience.

Tasks performed by Professionals typically include:

conducting and analysing research to extend the body of knowledge in their field; developing techniques to apply this knowledge; designing products, physical structures and engineering systems; identifying and treating, and advising on, health, social, and personal problems; advising clients on legal matters; teaching students in a range of educational institutions or in a private setting; developing and coordinating administrative and marketing programs; and communicating ideas through language, communications media and artistic media including the visual and performing arts.

Occupations in this major group are classified into the following sub-major groups:

1. Science, Building and Engineering Professionals
2. Business and Information Professionals
3. Health Professionals
4. Education Professionals
5. Social, Arts and Miscellaneous Professionals

(Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO)
Second Edition ABS: 31/07/97)

CONTRACTORS:

The issue of defining the contractor is a complex one and dealt with in detail in sections 2.4 and 3.1. The very simplest distinction is that it replaces the traditional contract for services with one of a contract of service. The basic differentiation is between contract of service, as distinct from contract for service. Put simply:

Contract of service means a person is employed as part of a business and the work done is an integral part of the business while contract for services means that, although work is done by a person for the business, it is not integrated into it but is only an accessory to it

(Brooks, 1992:12).

FULL-TIME WORKERS:

Employed persons who have usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and others who, although usually working for less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week (ABS, 1996:57).

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDDULES

2A: Interview Schedule For Professional Contractors

Interview No:	Interviewee:
<u>Background Details</u>	
Q.1. What is your current occupational status?	
Q.2. Could I have same basic demographic details - Age, marital & dependent status, nationality & citizenship	
Q.3. Do you have any academic or professional qualifications?	
Q.4. Could you briefly outline your work History Occupation Years working and brief outline of career progression	
<u>Becoming a Contractor</u>	
Q.5. When did you become a contractor? - Year and month	
Q.6. How long had you been thinking about contracting?	
Q.7. Did you have a 'contract' straight away?	
Q.8. Why did you become a contractor?	
Q.9. Who did you talk to about becoming a contractor?	
Q.10. What support was important to you in your decision?	
<u>Level of Independence as a Contractor</u>	
Q.11. Do you operate your own P/L company?	
Q.12. How many contracts have you had since starting as a contractor?	
Q.13. How many employers/organisations have you worked for?	
Q.14. How do you obtain contracts?	
Q.15. What is the average length of a contract?	
<u>General relationship with an Employing Organisation</u>	
Q.16. Firstly, what do you call an organisation that uses your services?	
Q.17. How would you describe your relationship with an organisation that contracts you?	
Q.18. How would you describe your relationship with the workers of an organisation that contracts you?	
Q.19. What degree of negotiation do you generally have over a contract and what are the issues?	
Q.20. How formal is your current contract? Written vs verbal, degree of legality..	
Q.21. How are you paid? - Method and regularity of payment, average value of contract (p/h or lump sum)	
Q.22. What control over location, conditions and hours of work do you have?	
Q.23. What ability and grounds do you have to reject or terminate contract?	
<u>Career</u>	
Q.24. Have any of the factors influenced your decision to contract changed?	
Q.25. If so, what is the impact of these changes?	
Q.26. Do you intend to remain contracting	
Q.27. What are your career plans?	

APPENDIX 2B: Interview Schedule For Contracting Agencies

Interview No:	Interviewee:
<u>PART A: Background</u>	
Q.1. How long has your agency been operating?	
Q.2. How does your Agency operate? job placement only, ...	
Q.3. What are the professional occupations your agency covers?	
Q.4. How many of each occupation do you currently have actively a) in the field and b) on your books?	
Q.5. Is it possible to give a basic general profile of each of these occupations? - Age, sex, marital & dependent status, nationality & citizenship	
Q.6. Do you require your contractors to have academic or professional qualifications?	
<u>Becoming a Contractor</u>	
Q.7. Where do your contractors generally come from?..industry, work background, retrenched	
Q.8. How and Why do they come to your agency?	
Q.9. a) Why do you think most of them became contractors? b) through an agency? c) are agency contractors different from other forms of contractors, such as self-employed	
Q.10. What support do contractors need and who from? eg. family	
Q.11. How long do most contractors generally stay with your agency?	
Q.12. How long do most remain as contractors?	
<u>Contractor Independence</u>	
Q.13. What is the relationship between your contractors and the Agency? Employees, P/L companies?	
Q.14. What is an average 'contract' ? length, number in a year..formal, written document..	
Q.15. How do you allocate contracts to your contractors?	
Q.16. How are your contractors paid? - who pays, regularity and average value (p/h or lump sum)	
Q.17. Does the Agency provide any support services for the contractors?	
<u>General Relationship With the Organisations that Use Your Agencies Services</u>	
Q.18. What do you call an organisation that uses your Agency?..	
Q.19. How many 3organisations use your Agencies services? And why?	
Q.20. How would you describe your relationship with the [hiring organisation]?	
Q.19. What degree of negotiation generally occurs over a contract	
Q.21. Related to the above, what generally are the issues negotiated?	
Q.22.a) What control over location, conditions and hours of work does the Agency have? . b).. the contractor you allocate the contract to, have?	
Q.23 a) What ability and grounds do you have to reject or terminate a contract? b).. the contractor you allocate the contract have?	

Q.24.a) What contact do you have with the [hiring organisation] while your contractors are working for them?..

- b) what are the forms of contact and general reasons such contact is made
- c) what contact do you have with your contractors while they are on a contract

Q.25.a) How do you deal with any problems a [Hiring organisation] may have?

- b)...a contractor may have?

Q.24 a) How would you describe your relationship with the workers of the client?

- b).. your contractors relationship with the workers of the client?

And, to finish :

Q.25. What makes a 'good' contractor from an Agencies point of view?

Q.26. How does the Agency attract and then keep 'good' contractors?

³ Term established from Q.18 used in interview from herein and denoted by '[hiring organisation]' in the rest of this schedule

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESULTS

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Contractor 437

Appendix 3.1: Profile of Interviewees

- PC 1 has a working spouse and is in a high demand, highly paid industry where he has an established reputation. He therefore operates at a high level of independence. (Note. during the concluding stages of the interview PC 1 mentioned that he plans to return to traditional employee status in 1998 when he becomes a first time father).
- PC 2 works within a relatively "poorly paid industry" that has been greatly affected by Government moves to outsourcing. With limited avenues for career advancement and no financial obligations, the move to contracting through an Agency is explained as part of the process of establishing a reputation and, ultimately, becoming an independent, self-employed contractor.
- PC 3 is one of the newest contractors and still effectively in the process of psychologically 'separating' from an employer he has been involved with in some way for over 30 years. The move to contracting is thus still rather unstructured and tenuous and more reflective of the complete "lifestyle change" this individual has taken on.
- PC 4 has worked most of his career as a contractor within the well paid, in-demand IT industry. His current level of contracting independence appears to be decreasing, partly explained by his wife's change from full-time to part time status and his age - "I'm getting older and more decrepit..who is going to want a 60 year old contractor?". For these reasons he has apparently remained with his current employer for well over a year and intends to remain for as long as his contract continues to be renewed.
- PC 5 has moved from the highly paid IT field to the much lower paid one of education. The move was a forced one, due to the downturn in demand for some types of programmers in the early 1990s. Her spouse has continued in employment throughout however and a small but growing clientele in a new field of contracting is now being established, marked by increasing independence in the contracting relationship.
- PC 6 was one of the youngest but also most highly qualified contractors interviewed. Frustrated by the lack of opportunity and financial rewards, he has established his own enterprise and appears to be operating at the entrepreneurial end of contracting independence.
- Both PC 7 and 9 experienced the similar 'push' of redundancy from permanent employment while aged in their mid fifties and see the subsequent move into management consultancy as an "evolutionary" career move. While both operate at the independent end of the Contracting Continuum, PC 9s' younger family tends to mean he has greater pressure to form long term and ongoing relationships with clients. Perhaps as a consequence, he is willing to consider returning to "normal" employment arrangements.

- PC 8 and 12 also have similar profiles in that the move to contracting for both was instigated as the result of having children. While PC 8 works in the relatively low paid field of disability services, PC 12 works in the well paid, in-demand field of petrochemical engineering. PC 12 still works for the same employer she had prior to assuming the title of contractor and, in the legal sense, would be very difficult to separate from an employee. Similarly, PC 8 is really a pseudo contractor, working solely for only one employer with her contract subject to annual review.
- PC 10 has contracted in a range of fields, from the high paid, high demand area of engineering to the variable pay rates and demand of industrial design. He is currently working on an annual contract to a tertiary education institution but also continues to pursue freelance design on the side. In his words, "it helps to be single, to have no children and no mortgage even, so I can take a risk". All this translates to movement both up and down on the Contracting Continuum, with current work being mostly sourced through Agencies.
- PC 11 has recently moved to contracting as the direct result of accepting a redundancy package. Calling it "the best option of a range of choices", contracting also allows him to balance work and family. It is a choice supported both by the money from redundancy payments and his wife's part time employment. At the moment, work is sourced through an Agency rather than actively pursued. The level of contracting independence is expected to increase with time though as the first non-agency assignment appears to be coming up.

Appendix 3.2: The Push and Pull of Contracting

	REASONS GIVEN - PARTICIPANTS OWN WORDS	KEY REASONS	FACTORS:		
			Push	Pull	Both
PC1	"pays well..don't get bored..don't get stuck with office politics...I knew I was marketable"	Industry Norm Offered		✓	
PC2	"I had a perception that contracting gives me more autonomy over work situation..limited career options where I was...ability to pursue a Masters degree"	Career Block Sought	✓		
PC3	"Not a move to 'contracting' but a move 'out of ...career dreams had passed me by...now pursue lifestyle issues that are perhaps more important"	Career Block Redundancy Offered	✓		
PC4	"probably the money"	Industry Norm Sought		✓	
PC5	"pay and flexibility of lifestyle in IT and no danger of not having a job...able to spend time with family"	Industry Norm Sought	✓		
PC6	"wasn't going to make any real inroads...make anything more than make ends meet in academia...this way, have total freedom, have a lifestyle..ability to work as hard as I want and not have a boss"	Career Block Created	✓		
PC7	"It's fun. I really do enjoy it"	Redundancy Offered			✓
PC8	"It was interesting work and of limited duration...didn't really think about the contract side...fitted in with other plans"	Family Sought	✓		
PC9	"seemed the logical thing to do"	Redundancy Offered	✓		
PC10	"normal thing to do in the industry, it paid very well and it was the way to get ahead"	Industry Norm Sought		✓	
PC11	"best option of a range of choices...have a young family...I don't have the commitment to one employer any more"	Redundancy Family Sought	✓		
PC12	"pays very well...can work when I like and allows me to look after my three children"	Family Industry Norm Offered	✓		
CA1	"most of them..applied for a permanent position ...30-40% responded to a specific Ad."		✓		
CA2	"Labour market situation....companies are changing the way they operate and prefer to come to an Agency"		✓		
CA3	"the alliance they {Contractors} form with us is a conduit to work"		✓		
			11	3	2

KEY

Industry Norm = normal practice for that Industry (being IT and engineering)
 Offered = contracting opportunity offered to the individual rather than;
 Sought = contracting position actively sought by the individual contractor
 Career Block = perceived lack of career opportunities/ opportunities for advancement
 Redundancy = either made redundant from permanent position or perceived threat that would be
 Created = contractor created own opportunity for contracting work
 Family = family commitments (dependent children)

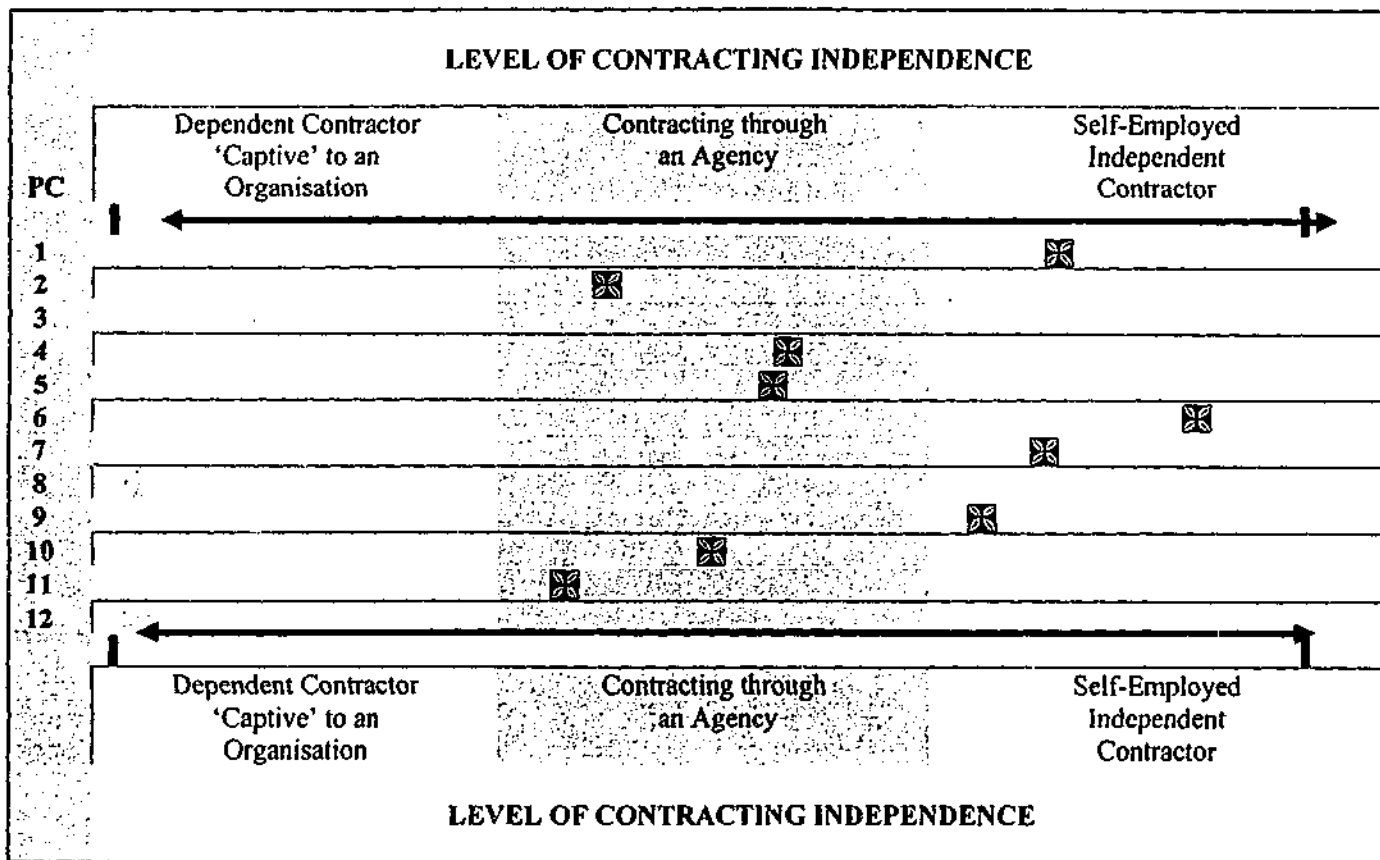
Appendix 3.3: Contracting and Level of Independence

PC Rank Order	PC	Professional Contractor Details			Sources of Support		
		Age	Yrs Wkg	Yrs Cntrtg	Social	Financi	Total
1	6	32	5	1	4	2	6
2	1	38	16	10	4	2	6
3	7	57	32	4.3	3	3	6
4	9	56	26	1.6	3	3	6
5	4	52	27	20	2	2	4
6	5	50	21	18	2	2	4
7	10	35	12	9	1	1	2
8	2	34	10	.6	2	0	2
9	11	43	25	.9	2	2	4
10	3	50	23	.5	2	1	3
11	8	39	12	3	2	1	3
12	12	40	15	7	3	1	4
					30	20	50

KEY

- **Indpnce in Rank Order** = Level of Independence for each PC in rank order (as per Figure 7: Professional Contractors Level of Independence)
- **Yrs Wkg** = total years in the workforce
- **Yrs Cntrtg** = Years Contracting
- **Social Support** are people that the individual contractor directly sought information, advice and opinions from to assist in their decision to become a contractor.
- **Financial Support** are the sources of economic independence that assisted in their decision to become a contractor.

Appendix 3.4: Individual Levels of Contracting Independence



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Appendix 3.5: Support Factors in the Decision to Become a Contractor

PC	SOURCES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT					SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT					Totals
	partner	friends	account -ant	other	Total	partner working	other income	redundancy package	own home	Total	
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	✓			✓	2	6
2			✓	✓	2						2
3			✓	✓	2			✓		1	3
4	✓	✓			2	✓			✓	2	4
5	✓	✓			2	✓			✓	2	4
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	✓	✓			2	6
7	✓	✓	✓		3	✓		✓	✓	3	6
8	✓	✓			2	✓				1	3
9	✓	✓	✓		3	✓		✓	✓	3	6
10		✓			1		✓			1	2
11	✓		✓		2	✓		✓		2	4
12	✓	✓	✓		3	✓				1	4
	9	9	8	4	30	9	2	4	5	20	50

APPENDIX 4: COVERING LETTER TO ACCOMPANY THE SURVEY

Xxx [Name of Contracting Agency] has been approached by Ms Tui McKeown, a doctoral student from Monash University, and invited to participate in an investigation of the professional contractor workforce. We are pleased to support research into this important area and hope that the results will assist us in our endeavours to foster a strong partnership between you, the professional contractor, and Xxx [Name of Contracting Agency]. As part of our commitment to this research, we have agreed to distribute the attached survey to our registered professional contractors. We strongly encourage you to participate in this unique opportunity and to contribute your personal insight into the working life of the professional contractor.

You will quickly see from reading the survey that your results will not only provide a valuable source of information for researchers but may also be of practical benefit to you as an individual - presenting you with ideas and options about life as a professional contractor that you may not have been aware of.

Xxx [Name of Contracting Agency] will be presented with a summary of the results of this research at the conclusion of the project and looks forward to informing you of these via our contractor newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

.....

APPENDIX 5: THE SURVEY – WORKING AS A PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR

All correspondence and enquires to:

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MONASH
UNIVERSITY

Aims and Scope of the Study

As you are probably aware, there are major changes occurring in the world of work. Despite significant interest, there has been virtually no research on the increasingly important work arrangement of professional contracting. This study seeks to investigate why professionals are taking up contracting and their experiences of working as contractors. The knowledge gained from this study will hopefully benefit both individual contractors and the clients who use their services.

Participation in the Study

This study seeks the co-operation of professional individuals who are currently working as contractors. The study is completely voluntary and you may choose to participate or not as you wish. However, I would sincerely request your involvement in this project so that information is gathered from as large a base as possible. Because there is no listing of professional contractors available, this survey has come to you through one of the Contracting Agencies you are registered with. If you receive more than one survey it will probably be because you are registered with more than one Contracting Agency. Please complete only one survey. Your completed survey should be returned via the enclosed prepaid envelope, directly to the researcher at Monash University - this ensures that it remains **Completely Confidential**. In return for your participation, a final report will be provided to the Contracting Agency you are registered with. The results in this report will be based on aggregate responses - ensuring that individuals cannot be identified.

To Complete the Survey

Please take the time to read the instructions and questions carefully. The questions can become quite detailed as they cover areas on which there is little information, so check that you have circled the response that you intend. Please take this opportunity to contribute towards an understanding of the working life of professional contractors.

Should you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans at the following:

The Secretary, The Standing Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans
Monash University, Wellington Rd Clayton, VIC 3168
Telephone: (03) 9905 2052 Fax: (03) 9905 1420

To Return the Survey

Please complete the survey and return it within **10 DAYS** in the prepaid envelope provided.

PART A: BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR

The following section asks general questions about how and why you became a contractor. Please answer the following questions by circling the number beside the most appropriate response. Many of the questions are divided into two parts and require you to make a response and then rate that response on a given scale (refer to example below). You are most welcome to add comments to your responses.

EXAMPLE

Please circle the number after the qualities you believe a contractor needs. Then indicate how important you believe each quality is.

	First circle here	.....and then circle your rating here						
	↓	Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Confidence.....	①	1	2	3	4	5	6	⑦
People skills.....	②	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self motivation....	③	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Technical skills....	④	1	2	3	4	5	⑥	7

QUESTIONS

A.1: When did you first become a professional contractor? (Include year and month if possible)

A.2: Please circle the number after the work arrangement/s you were in prior to becoming a professional contractor. Then indicate your level of satisfaction with this arrangement.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here						
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Not satisfied Or Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Full-time temporary.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time permanent.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time casual.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time temporary.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time permanent.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time casual.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-employed.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Caring for dependents.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unemployed.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Specify).....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A.3: Which of the following describe your move to contracting? (You may circle more than one item)

- I left my previous work arrangement to become a contractor..... 1
 I left my previous work arrangement and later became a contractor 2
 I became a contractor by choice..... 3
 I did not become a contractor by choice..... 4

A.4: Please circle the number after the reason/s you became a professional contractor. Then indicate the importance of each factor to your decision.

First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here					
Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

I had taken voluntary redundancy	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I had taken involuntary redundancy	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always wanted to do be a contractor...	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to be my own boss.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I wanted to make more money.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I wanted to set up in my own business	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I wanted to set up a business with others	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting is the best option available...	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting is normal in my profession...	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting balances work & family life.	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting offers a flexible lifestyle...	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No few career prospects in my last job...	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My employer requested it/goes with the job...	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A.5: Please circle the number after the sources of advice and/or support you used when considering becoming a contractor. Then indicate how important each source was in your decision.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here						
		Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
No One.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spouse/Partner.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friends.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Former Employer.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Workmates.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work Contacts (other than workmates)	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accountant.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Government Advisory Service.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Private Business Advisory Service.....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Professional/Trade Association.....	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART B: BEING A PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR TODAY

This section asks general questions about why you are a contractor today. Again, most of the questions are divided into two parts and require both a response and a rating to be made.

B.1: Please circle the number after the work arrangement/s you are currently in. Then indicate your level of satisfaction with the arrangement/s.

	First circle here	.....and then circle your rating here						
	↓	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Not satisfied Or Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Contracting.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time temporary.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time permanent.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time casual.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time temporary.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time permanent.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time casual.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-employed.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Caring for dependents.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unemployed.....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B.2 What is your preferred working arrangement/s. Then indicate how important these preferences are to you.

	First circle here	.....and then circle your rating here						
		Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Contracting.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time temporary.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time permanent.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full-time casual.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time temporary.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time permanent.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part time casual.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-employed.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Caring for dependents.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unemployed.....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B.3: What are the reason/s you are a professional contractor today. Then rate how important each factor is to you.

	First circle here ↓	..... and then circle your rating here						
		Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Contracting offers a better career	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting offers a flexible lifestyle	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can combine work & children...	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am unlikely/unable to find other work	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I earn more money contracting...	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy being a contractor.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am in business with others..	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am in my own business.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to be my own boss.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is the best option available..	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It offers more stimulating work...	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is normal in my profession/industry	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

My employer requires it/part of the job.	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B.4: What are the aspects of contracting that you don't like? Please rate how important these dislikes are to you.

	First circle here ↓	..... and then circle your rating here						
		Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately important	Very Important	Extremely Important
The irregular work.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The erratic lifestyle.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The loneliness	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The lack of work friendships.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The lack of control over my work..	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The lack of stimulating work.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The lack of training opportunities...	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The inability to find a permanent job..	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The inadequate pay.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The long hours of work.....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lack of work/hours available.....	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Constant searching for next contract.	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gaining cooperation of clients employees	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tax/bookkeeping/legal requirements.	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (Specify).....	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B.5: Please circle the number after any of the events that have occurred to you since first becoming a professional contractor and then record the date and details.

FIRST CIRCLE HERE ↓		.....AND THEN RECORD DATE AND DETAILS OF EVENT/S HERE	
Have Contracted the whole time	1		
Left Contracting	2		
Became Part time, temporary	3		
Became Part time, permanent	4		
Became Part time, casual	5		
Became Full-time, permanent	6		
Became Full-time, casual	7		
Became Full-time, temporary	8		
Became Self-employed	9		
Left work to care for dependents	10		
Became Unemployed	11		
Changed Professions	12		
Moved back into contracting	13		
Other (specify).....	14		

B.6: What is the likelihood that you will cease being a professional contractor within the next:

	Extremely Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Quite Unlikely	50/50	Quite Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	Unsure
year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
two years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
three years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
after 3+ years?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

PART C: INDEPENDENCE & FINANCIAL STATUS

This section asks questions about your working arrangements as a contractor. Again, some questions are divided into two parts and will ask you to rank the items as indicated.

C.1: Please circle the number that indicates the basis on which you are currently working.

Sole Trader.....	1
Partnership.....	2
P/L Company.....	3
Run own business.....	4
Employee.....	5
Other (specify).....	6

C.2: Do you have any employees? (Please circle the number that indicates your response)

No.....	1
Yes.....	2 If 'Yes' How many?.....

C.3: Where do you usually work from? Please rate how satisfied you are with this as a workplace.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here					
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Own office (not at home)	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone else's office...	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
At home.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6
From home as a base....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other (specify).....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6

C.4: On what basis are you paid? Please rate how satisfied you are with this method of payment.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here					
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
By hours worked.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
By goods & services sold	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fixed fee.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fixed salary.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other (specify).....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6

C.5: How do you determine the amount you charge for your services? Please rate how satisfied you are with this method.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here					
		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Set/offered by client.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Current market rates.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Negotiated with client.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Set by Professional Association	4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Set/offered by Agency.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fix my own price.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Negotiated with Agency....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other (specify).....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6

C.6: Please indicate the figure that best approximates YOUR average annual income as a contractor in Column 1. Then indicate the average annual income of your SPOUSE/PARTNER in Column 2.

Average Annual Income	(1) Self	(2) Spouse/partner	Average Annual Income	(1) Self	(2) Spouse/partner
Under \$15,000.....	1	1	\$85,001 - \$95,000.....	9	9
\$15,001 - \$25,000.....	2	2	\$95,001 - \$105,000.....	10	10
\$25,001 - \$35,000.....	3	3	\$105,001 - \$125,000.....	11	11
\$35,001 - \$45,000.....	4	4	\$125,001 - \$145,000.....	12	12
\$45,001 - \$55,000.....	5	5	\$145,001 - \$165,000.....	13	13
\$55,001 - \$65,000.....	6	6	\$165,001 - \$185,000.....	14	14
\$65,001 - \$75,000.....	7	7	Over 185,000.....	15	15
\$75,001 - \$85,000.....	8	8	Not Applicable.....	16	16

C.7: Circle the number beside any other source/s of household income. Then indicate how important these sources are in terms of your total household income.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here						
		Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Another job.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Working partner/spouse...	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shares/Investments/Real Estate	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Redundancy Package.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C.8: Does your income vary? If so, please indicate how much control you have over any variations.

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here				
		No Control	A Small Amount	Moderate Control	A Large Amount	Complete Control
No.....	1	1	2	3	4	5
Varies a lot.....	2	1	2	3	4	5
Varies a moderate amount	3	1	2	3	4	5
Varies a little.....	4	1	2	3	4	5
From week to week....	5	1	2	3	4	5
From month to month...	6	1	2	3	4	5
From year to year.....	7	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify).....	8	1	2	3	4	5

C.9: How does contracting currently pay compared to:

	N/A	Unsure	Much Worse	Worse	The Same	Better	Much Better
A paid employee doing the same job....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Previous contracting jobs you have had	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Previous non-contracting jobs you have had?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C.10: Did you need to use money from any of the following to set yourself up as a contractor? If 'yes', how much?

	First circle here ↓	.....and then circle your rating here			
		less than \$10,000	\$11 to \$25,000	\$26 to \$50,000	over \$50,000
No.....	1	-	-	-	-
Redundancy payment.....	2	1	2	3	4
Personal savings.....	3	1	2	3	4
Bank loan.....	4	1	2	3	4
Mortgage on house.....	5	1	2	3	4
Government Grant/loan...	6	1	2	3	4
Other (Specify).....	7	1	2	3	4

C.11: How many clients have you worked for -since becoming a contractor?.....n the last 12 months?

C.12: What sort of clients do you work for? Then please indicate how many of each you have provided services to in the last year.

First circle here ↓ and then circle here

	None	One	Two	3 to 5	6 to 10	Over 10
Private Sector Organisations...	1	1	2	3	4	5
Public Sector Organisations...	2	1	2	3	4	5
Contracting Agencies.....	3	1	2	3	4	5
Private Individuals.....	4	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify).....	5	1	2	3	4	5

C.13: What percentage of time in an average working week do you work for each?

	None	Under 10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
Private Sector Organisations...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public Sector Organisations...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agencies.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Private Individuals.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C.14: Have you ever been a direct employee of an organisation/client to whom you now provide services?

Yes..... 1
No..... 2

C.15: How do you acquire work? Please indicate how important each method is to you in obtaining work.

	First circle here ↓	Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Self-advertise.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Respond to advertisements.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I contact Contracting Agency/ies	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency/ies contact me.	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I contact family & friends.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family & friends contact me.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I contact Previous employers.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Previous employers contact me..	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I contact Work contacts/network	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work contacts/networks contact me	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Offered on Recommendation of others	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C.16: Please circle the number that indicates how much choice you have over time and hours of work.

No choice at all ..1 A small amount ..2 A moderate amount ..3 A large amount. ..4 Complete choice ..5

C.17: Please circle the number that indicates how much control you have over the way you do your work.

No control at all ..1 A small amount ..2 A moderate amount ..3 A large amount. ..4 Complete control ..5

C.18: How many hours per week do you usually work? How satisfied are you with working these hours.

First circle here ↓ and then circle your rating here
Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Slightly Dissatisfied Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied Slightly Satisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

None.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
under ten.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11 to 20	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21 to 35.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36 to 45.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46 to 60.....	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60 to 80.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
over 80.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C.19: Which of the following do you have or do? Please indicate how important each is to you.

	First circle here ↓	Not at all Important	A bit Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Disability/health insurance.....	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Income protection insurance.....	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Own superannuation scheme.....	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Own accountant.....	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
An active savings plan.....	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Professional affiliation/membership..	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Long-term career plans.....	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Undertake work related training.....	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Planned, annual holidays.....	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify).....	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART D: SOCIAL SUPPORT

This Section asks about people in your environment who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts.

For the first part, list all the people you know, excluding yourself, whom you can count on for help or support in the manner described. Give the persons' initials and their relationship to you (see example below). Please, do not list more than one person next to each number.

For the second part, rate each individual on the scale provided to indicate how satisfied you are with the individual support you have from each. If you have no support for a question, circle the words "No One" but still rate your level of satisfaction.

Example:

Who do you know whom you could trust with information that could get you in trouble? Then, how satisfied are you with the trust you have in this person?

	very unsatisfied	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. P.N. (Husband)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. M.D. (Friend)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. K.L. (Sister)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. B.G. (Friend)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Questions:

D.1: Whom can you really count on to be dependable when you need help? Then, how satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfie d	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

D.2: Whom do you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense? Then, how satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfie d	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

D.3: Who accepts you totally, including both your worst and best points? Then, how satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfie d	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

D.4: Whom can you count on to really care about you, regardless of what is happening to you? Then, how satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfie d	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

D.5: Whom can you really count on to help you feel better when you are feeling generally down - in - the - dumps? How satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfied	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

D.6: Whom can you count on to console you when you are very upset? How satisfied are you with the help you receive?

	very unsatisfie d	fairly unsatisfied	a little unsatisfied	a little satisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
No One	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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PART E: LOYALTY AND COMMITMENT

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organisation for which they work. Please answer these questions in respect of your own feelings about:

- the particular Client/organisation you are currently working for
- as well as the Contracting Agency/organisation you are registered with.

If you are unemployed at present, please respond in relation to the last Client and Contracting Agency you worked for and were registered with.

E.1: I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.2: I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.3: I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.4: I find that my values and the values of the organisation are very similar.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.5: I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.6: This organisation really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.7: I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over the others I was considering at the time I joined.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.8: I really care about the fate of this organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E.9: For me this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
Client/Organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contracting Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART F: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

This last section asks you to supply the basic demographic details that will form the general starting point for the data analysis of the results of this study.

F.1: In which industry are you currently employed?

Mining.....	1	Finance and Insurance.....	8
Manufacturing.....	2	Education.....	9
Electricity, Gas & Water supply..	3	Public Administration & Defence...	10
Construction.....	4	Health and Community Services....	11
Wholesale & Retail Trade.....	5	Recreation, Personal & Other Services	12
Transport & Storage.....	6	Property & Business services	13
Communication services.....	7		14

F.2: In which professional occupational category do you best/most fit?

Scientist.....	1	Educational.....	7
Architect/Draftsman/Building.....	2	School Teachers.....	8
Business/Manager/Administrator.....	3	Engineer.....	9
Information Technology.....	4	Social, Arts & Miscellaneous.....	10
Health & Welfare.....	5	Unsure (specify).....	11
Nursing.....	6	Other (specify).....	12

Where were you born?

Australia.....	1	Africa....	7
New Zealand.....	2	Southeast Asia.....	8

Other Oceania Country (eg. Fiji).....	3	Northeast Asia.....	9
United Kingdom & Ireland.....	4	Southern Asia.....	10
Other European Countries.....	5	USA & Canada.....	11
the Middle East & North Africa....	6	Middle & South America.....	12

F.3: What age range are you in?

Under 24.....	1	45 - 49.....	6
25 - 29.....	2	50 - 54.....	7
30 - 34.....	3	55 - 59.....	8
35 - 39.....	4	60 - 64.....	9
40 - 44.....	5	65 and over.....	10

F.4: What is your Sex?

Male.....	1
Female.....	2

F.5: What is your marital status?

Single.....	1	Divorced/separated..	4
Married.....	2	De Facto.....	5
Widowed.....	3		

F.6: Do you have any dependents?

No.....	1	Three.....	4
One.....	2	Four or more.....	5
Two.....	3	Age of dependents.....	

To Return the Survey

Please return the survey in the prepaid envelope supplied.

This survey is part of a larger research project investigating the working life of the professional contractor. If you would like to have the opportunity to participate further, please provide your contact details in the space below. (NB: This information will remain completely confidential to the Monash University researcher).

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode.....

Telephone No:

Email Address:

Appendix 6: Respondents by Country of Origin, Sex & Occupation

	Country of Origin																Total		
	Australia		NZ		Other Oceania		UK & Ireland		Other European		Asia*		Africa		USA & Canada				Mid/Slth America
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Scientist	5																5	0	5
Architect/Draught/Building	13		2	2			3		5						2	1	25	3	28
Business/Manager/Admin.	33	10	2	1			7	1	2	1	2	1			1		47	14	61
Information Technology	34	5	5	2			5	1	1	2	3	1		1	5		53	12	65
Health & Welfare			9	1					4		2					1	0	17	17
Education	2	2															2	6	8
School Teacher	1														1		2	0	2
Engineer	15	3	5	1	1		7	1	1	1				3	1		33	6	39
Social/Arts/Miscellaneous	2																0	2	2
Unsure																1	1	0	1
Accountant	9	1															10	1	11
TOTALS	112	32	14	11	1	0	23	7	10	6	5	2	10	12	1	1	178	62	
TOTAL	144		25		1		30		16		7		1	13		2	239**		

* Asia covers the options of Southeast, Northeast & Southern Asia but the data is collapsed in this table because of the low response rate
 ** 1 respondent did not select country of origin so total is less than 240

APPENDIX 7: RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION, MARITAL STATUS, SEX & NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS

		Marital Status																			
SEX	No. of Dependents	Married/DeFacto						Widowed						Divorced/ Separated						total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		0	0	1	1	2	2	3+	3+	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	2	2
Scientist		3		2																	
Architect/Draught/Building		7	2	4		4		8												1	
Business/Manager/Admin.		21	2	12	1	6	5	2	1							1	3				
Information Technology		25		6	3	9	2	2				1				3			2		1
Health & Welfare			5		5		4		2										1		
Education							3			1					1	1	1				
School Teacher				1			2														
Engineer		8	1	13		4		4	1							1				1	
Social/Arts/Miscellaneous			2																		
Unsure				1																	
Accountant				7		2	1									1					
TOTALS		64	12	46	9	25	17	16	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	7	4	0	3	2	1
TOTAL		76		55		42		20		1		1		1		11		3		3	