

DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS

Seven discussion groups were formed based upon suggestions put forward by participants. The topics covered were : (1) Non-market work, (2) The changing structure of the New Zealand work force, (3) Ethnic groups and the labour market, (4) Migrant labour and policy, (5) Measuring hidden unemployment, (6) The relationship of labour and employment research and policy and (7) Women in the labour market.

The aim of the discussion groups was to identify for each topic : (a) the major questions for researchers, (b) the extent to which the questions are adequately answered at present, (c) of the questions not answered, which should have the highest priority in research? (d) the major obstacles to this research, (e) other relevant observations.

Each group was composed of researchers who had expertise and/or a particular interest in the topic. The group appointed a chairperson who recorded the group's views on questions (a) through (e). The group chairperson reported the results of the discussion to the plenary session the following day. A summary of the discussion for the plenary session follows each group's report.

In preparing the group reports and ensuing discussion for publication, it was decided to avoid the temptation to cite published work that was not mentioned in the report or discussion even though on occasions it might have seemed desirable for the editors to do this. At times lack of reference may appear frustrating to the reader who, for example, would have liked to know just *what* the "small amount of research on topic x" was. Similarly there are research questions raised by the discussion groups where recent findings are directly relevant. Again as editors we have decided not to run the risk of referring to someone's work and leaving out others. An adequate cross referencing system between discussion and bibliography would have meant an undertaking substantially exceeding our current resources. Readers can however use the bibliography to identify relevant work.

GROUP 1. NON-MARKET WORK

Members : Paul Brown, Maire Dwyer, Prue Hyman, Patricia Maunier, Philip Morrison, Rosemary Novitz.

Major questions

- (1) Do our official statistics adequately describe work in New Zealand society

if they only provide information about paid employment and the work of working proprietors?

(2) How adequate is our national accounting if it neglects information about non-market work?

(3) How to resolve crucial definitional problems? For example how are we to define "work" given that we need to include work which does not involve monetary exchanges? How do we classify different forms of unpaid work, e.g. work which involves communal reciprocity, work done in households for other household members, or voluntary work done for others in the community?

(4) How do we tackle central problems of measurement? For example, how does one measure the value (money, time, etc.) of unpaid work? How is the "productivity" of domestic/household production to be assessed? Are conventional measures of productivity appropriate? (Output per hour? Earnings lost as a result of time spent in unpaid work? Cost of equivalent services in the formal economy?) How do we get people to be reflective about the amount of time they spend in unpaid work when different people categorise tasks differently?

(5) What are the equity issues? Non-market and unpaid work is unequally divided between women and men in New Zealand. This inequality and its consequences for women should be documented.

(6) What are the policy implications of research into non-market work? Are there implications in such research for a better understanding of the supply of labour to the formal economy?

(7) Given the interrelationship between market and non-market work, to what extent is any understanding of the formal economy adequate if we do not also look at the relationships it has with the informal economy and non-market work?

(8) Empirical questions which need to be answered include :

- Who performs the various types of non-market work and how much time do they spend in this work?
- What sort of exchange relationships characterise different forms of non-market work? For example short-term reciprocity, long-term reciprocity, payments in kind, virtual slavery?
- Is the amount of non-market work in New Zealand increasing or decreasing?
- Are certain sections of the population doing less unpaid work while others do more?
- What is the relationship between these trends and people's availability for work in the formal economy?
- What is the relationship between the availability of work in the formal economy and people's involvement in non-market work?
- Is there evidence of increase in non-market work in periods of recession?

- What is the contribution of women's unpaid work to family farm production?
- To what extent is non-market work being commercialised/incorporated into the formal economy and vice versa?
- How do people distinguish the activities they define as work from those they regard as leisure, recreation or hobbies?

The extent to which questions are adequately answered A large amount of relevant theoretical work has been done overseas on which New Zealand researchers can draw. The international literature also provides some examples of empirical work in this field. By contrast, both theoretical and empirical work in New Zealand is seriously lacking on virtually all questions raised above.

Questions of highest priority We need to both refine our conceptual tools and accumulate information about non-market work and this involves reconsideration of the term work itself. This should involve both qualitative and quantitative research, small scale as well as national studies. There was strong support in the group for a national time-use survey to be conducted by the Department of Statistics.

The major obstacles to this research Our own lack of knowledge, the conceptual problems of convincing Government departments and funding agencies of the value of doing this sort of research. We need to clarify the policy implications of this type of research in order to present a convincing case for research funding.

DISCUSSION

Cook began the discussion at the plenary session by asking exactly what voluntary work meant and what can be done with it. Hyman noted that the difficulty of defining these kinds of non-market work meant that the census was not the right place in which to look for data of this kind. Novitz argued however that the observations do not preclude the census from being used to collect some relevant data perhaps on those items which can be defined satisfactorily. Imray pointed out that the terms unemployment, non-market work and work needed to be distinguished especially if we run the danger of calling unemployment non-market work. Williams then referred to the existence of a black market economy in which people engaged in non-market work can actually generate an income. The workshop then considered the extent to which so called unpaid work actually did allow the generation of some income.

GROUP 2. THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND WORK-FORCE

Members : George Barker, Charles Crothers, Andrew Frazer, Harvey Franklin,
David Smith, Nichola Swainson.

Major questions

The major questions for researchers in this field are to identify *what* it is they must decide and *why* it requires explanation. Trends must be identified and