

LABOUR MARKET CHANGES AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: SOME ISSUES FOR SOCIAL POLICY

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Abstract

Research into multiple job holding in New Zealand has identified that in addition to holding two or more jobs, and the relatively long hours they work, these workers continue to make a considerable contribution to social capital. The research investigates the contribution of multiple job holders to families and voluntary work in community organizations through 360 in-depth interviews over six sectors. The findings show there are differences in community contribution between different occupational groups, sexes and age groups for the sectors surveyed. The research also reveals the importance of voluntary work across settlement types using 2001 census data. Some occupations place particular demands on individuals. White collar workers, especially accountants, are in demand for honorary positions reflecting an expectation that they give back to the community their professional skills, whereas there is lesser expectation on doctors, who already work in the social services. Farmers and small accommodation owner-operators fit their community contributions alongside the 24/7 nature of their businesses and farms and other work. However, respondents often commented that multiple job holding hinders their ability to contribute to their families and communities, raising the possibility of a social capital paradox. Knowledge about people who are central to social capital, and potential constraints to their involvement, in particular for rural areas, has implications for social cohesion and policy formulation in relation to community based development and service delivery, and to participation in local area and major project planning.

Introduction

A research programme investigating multiple job holding in New Zealand has identified that in addition to holding two or more jobs, and the relatively long hours they work, these workers continue to make a considerable contribution to the social networking and voluntary collaborations that contribute to social capital in communities.

The research¹ has investigated the way individuals, families and communities in New Zealand adapt to social and economic change through multiple job holding. The programme began in 2001 and is contracted through to June 2007. It is organised into two main objectives:

- Development of a profile of multiple job holding in New Zealand over recent years based initially on 2001 census data for factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, work-force status and occupation, then an analysis of changes 1981 to 2001 and comparisons with other official statistics such as the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey.
- Identification of factors that encourage or inhibit multiple job holding and an assessment of the impacts from multiple job holding on individuals, families and communities through qualitative research utilising in-depth interviews.

The research investigated the contribution of multiple job holders to families and voluntary work in community organisations through 360 in-depth interviews over six sectors, with three sectors covered in the first round during 2003-4 (farming, health professionals, and café and restaurant workers) and a further round of three sectors in 2005 (accounting, creative workers and accommodation providers).

A purposive sample of 60 men and women was selected for each of the six sectors. They were identified through directories, local contacts and snow balling. People were selected to participate in the research on the criterion² that they had more than one job for more than one employer or family business or farm in the course of the most recent week. The interviews were based on a comprehensive schedule that combined closed and open questions and usually took between 60 and 90 minutes to complete³.

The research findings are proving of interest to a wide range of social policy agencies and organisations, including those assisting both urban and rural labour-market groups and communities responding to social and economic change. In this regard, the rise in non-standard forms of employment, such as multiple job holding, and subsequent impacts on social capital, require consideration.

The main thesis of this paper concerns the links between increasing levels of multiple job holding with increasing rurality based on settlement type, alongside increasing levels of contribution to social capital with increasing rurality.⁴ Furthermore, the research found that multiple job holders

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² Based on the Census definition.

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are consistently higher than non multiple job holders in their contribution to social capital judged by the measures available from the 2001 census. Results from interviews across six sectors show respondents identify issues around their ability to contribute to social capital. As rural areas diversify their economies further and create a range of employment opportunities, the people who take up these opportunities, hold their jobs for longer periods and through into “retirement” ages, and work longer hours, could create a social capital paradox because there is reduced capacity to retain the social capital which helped create these opportunities in the first place.

Social capital and employment

The concept of social capital has broad sociological and economic roots and was brought into the social policy arena as a concept in the 1990s by writers such as Bourdieu, Coleman, Portes and Putman (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000). A broad literature and numerous definitions tend to view social capital in terms of social connections including formal and informal associations, work ties and family and personal relationships (Woodhouse, 2006). Falk and Kilpatrick (2000:106) add the dimension of social learning through group and community processes, finding evidence that informal learning through micro and meso level interactions in community projects enhance the capacity of the rural community to survive harsh economic conditions.

Social capital is a contested concept (Johannesson et al., 2003) that has been employed in a variety of contexts from sociological inquiry to economic development and social policy analysis. An important part of these debates is the issue of measuring social capital. The literature shows that methodologies used for analysing social capital range from highly qualitative approaches to completely quantitative - methods using official statistics. Similarly, analysis ranges from micro to macro social settings (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000). An Australian study used a questionnaire-based approach to test aspects of social capital across five communities ranging from rural to inner Sydney using “measurable” factors such as membership in a local organisation or club (Onyx and Bullen, 2000). A Canadian study involving First Nation communities combined survey research with in-depth interviews in a phased approach (Mathews, 2003).

A number of writers consider there is a connection between the level of social capital and the level of economic development. Of particular interest here is the role of social capital in supporting economic diversification and employment opportunities in rural areas. Woodhouse (2006), finds some evidence from two small regional towns in Australia to support the premise that the presence of social capital makes other forms of capital more efficient. Pretty and Ward (2001) suggest that social capital is important in sustainable livelihoods and economic development and can range in character from personal social connections to collective effort and include local to local, and local to external, connections. Johannesson *et al.* (2003) found evidence in Iceland of social capital in the networks of small tourism firms that support “local coping strategies” during transformation from a strongly resource-based economy to a “cultural” economy.

The importance of rurality in rates of multiple job holding

Over the twenty years 1981 to 2001, a period marked by major change in the New Zealand economy, the overall rate of multiple job holding in the New Zealand workforce increased nearly two and a half times (Table 1). At the same time other forms of non-standard work also increased markedly, especially part-time work and self employment (Baines and Newell, 2005).

Most importantly, the rate of multiple job holding increased in many farming areas and in rural areas and for agricultural occupations in particular (Taylor *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, the rate of multiple job holding increases with rurality, peaking in rural areas with a moderate urban influence, and remaining high even in predominantly rural and remote rural areas well distant from urban labour markets (Table 1).

While the rate of multiple job holding fell slightly for the three main urban categories in the 1996-2001 period, it continued to rise steeply for the four rural categories, including the highly rural/ remote areas. The research has identified two key narratives from the analysis of multiple job holding by settlement type. On one hand multiple job holding in the rural economy is of increasing importance as an adaptive response to a more diverse rural economy sustained by interlinked sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, services and infrastructure. On the other hand a different picture emerges of an urban economy settling back towards more traditional notions of wage and salary work after a period of economic change, with areas of specialised economic activity such as the health sector, hospitality services and the creative sector involving flexible work, including multiple job holding.

Table 1: Rates of multiple job holding by settlement type 1981-2001

Settlement type	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Main Urban Area	3.9	4.6	6.2	9.0	8.2
Satellite Urban Area	4	4.5	6.4	8.9	8.7
Independent Urban	4.0	4.5	7.1	10.2	9.2
Rural – high urban influence	7.3	8.7	12.2	16.8	19.6
Rural – moderate urban influence	6.3	8.0	12.0	16.5	20.6
Predominantly Rural	5.8	7.8	12.3	16.1	20.3
Highly Rural/remote	5.4	7.5	12.0	15.8	20.3
All Types	4.2	5.1	7.2	10.3	10.2

Notes: The settlement type concept used here follows the 2004 Statistics NZ definition of levels of urban influence classification.

Data from a library of statistics compiled from five censuses by Jamie Newell for the Multiple Job Holding programme.

The importance of rurality in understanding social capital contributions

Research in rural, resource-dependent communities shows that over their working lives people move between sectors and use a range of strategies including multiple job holding to cope with resource industry cycles and periods of rapid economic change (Fitzgerald, *et al.*, 2002). Alongside the portfolios that comprise people’s livelihood strategies typically are portfolios comprising substantial family and community contributions through voluntary or unpaid work.

Rates of participation in voluntary work in a group, organisation or marae by settlement type show that levels of participation are higher in rural areas generally and higher for females (Table 2). Areas that are predominantly rural and remote rural have the highest levels of participation. These findings are consistent with other countries, such as Australia, where survey research using a number of measures across five communities found higher social capital in rural areas compared to urban areas (Onyx and Bullen, 2000:38).

Table 2: Rates of participation in voluntary work by settlement type and sex 2001

Settlement type	% of males participating	% of females participating
Main Urban Area	13.8	16.7
Satellite Urban Area	15.7	19.4
Independent Urban	17.8	21.8
Rural – high urban influence	16.1	20.2
Rural – moderate urban influence	16.6	21.6
Predominantly Rural	19.6	25.4
Highly Rural/remote	22.7	26.6
All Types	15.7	19.3

Notes: The settlement type concept used here follows the 2004 Statistics NZ definition of levels of urban influence classification.

Participation is voluntary work in a organisation, group or marae.

Workforce are people aged 15 plus.

Percentages are calculated from area unit data.

Participation is strongly related to increasing rurality (Spearman’s Rho 0.50 for males and 0.57 for females, $p < 0.001$).

However, the anecdotal experience of the authors through participant observation in a variety of rural contexts has found a number of activities that place demand on rural social capital. It is increasingly common to find community members who are having difficulty allocating the necessary time to these activities. The types of activities that require such time include council planning, resource consent applications, submissions, community liaison groups and working parties, and economic development initiatives such as tourism groups and local festivals. Thus there is an important issue to consider in that the people who have the attributes and enthusiasm to contribute to social capital are very often those who have multiple jobs, as shown by the relatively high levels of multiple job holding in rural areas. Multiple job holding therefore is an additional factor to consider in relation to community participation, alongside factors such as farm and family life cycle patterns, changing patterns of community cohesion from reduced population in some areas and incoming population in others, closure of rural schools, and generally closer connections between town and country.

To understand this issue further it is useful to consider rates of participation in non-paid activities such as looking after a child or a person with illness or disability either living in the same household or a different household, plus other voluntary help for an organisation, group or marae at the time of the 2001 census (Table 3). The data are disaggregated by those who hold or don’t hold multiple jobs. The rates are consistently higher for all multiple job holders, male and female, than for the rest of the working-age population.

Table 3 Rates of participation (%) in activities without pay, 2001

	Same household - looking after child or person with illness or disability		Different household - looking after child or person with illness or disability		Other voluntary help for organisation, group or marae	
	MJHer	Non MJHer	MJHer	Non MJHer	MJHer	Non MJHer
Gender						
Male	37.8	32.6	20.5	15	24.8	13.2
Female	47.2	38.7	35.8	26.7	30.7	15.7
All	42.5	35.4	28.1	20.4	27.7	14.4

Source: 2001 census - library of statistics compiled by Jamie Newell for the Multiple Job Holding programme

Further analysis of the 2001 census data by settlement type, and changes in participation 1996-2006, could shed further light when the data are available.

Survey results across six sectors

The findings from 360 interviews across six sectors show there are differences in community contribution between different occupational groups, sexes and age groups for the sectors surveyed (Table 4)

Table 4: *Social capital contribution from respondents in six sectors*

Sector	Typical forms of activity contributing to social capital	Particular characteristics of the sector
Health	Officer/committee member of medical/health associations (8) Officer/committee member/volunteer of community organisations (4) Officer/coach/volunteer of sports clubs (1) Officer/volunteer of schools (1)	Voluntary work for professionally related organisations was the most frequently mentioned activity - interviews mainly located in Christchurch and Wellington
Accounting	Accounts/audits for voluntary organisations (9) Officer/committee member/volunteer of community organisations (6) Unpaid work for family members, friends & neighbours (4) Officer/coach/volunteer of sports clubs (3) Officer/volunteer of schools (2) Trustee of charitable trusts (2)	Work for voluntary organisations in a professional capacity and as an officer or committee were the most frequent activities undertaken - interviews mainly located in Christchurch and Wellington sample with some provincial town and rural accountants
Café and restaurants	Voluntary work (5)	Typically aged less than 30 and low levels of voluntary work - interviews mainly located in Christchurch and Wellington
Creative	Officer/volunteer of community or arts organisation (10)	Voluntary work focused on the creative sector - interviews located in Wellington
Small accommodation providers	Officer/committee member of community organisation (4) Officer/committee member or volunteer of tourism organisation (4) Officer/volunteer of pre-school (1) Officer/coach/volunteer of sports club (1)	Generally low level of community participation despite largely rural location - interviews mainly located in rural Canterbury
Farming	Officer/volunteer of schools (BOT, PTA etc) (12) Officer/volunteer of churches (10) Officer/committee member of other community organisations (9) Officer/volunteer of sports clubs (6)	Respondents talked in particular of balancing work, family and voluntary work, sport and leisure - interviews mainly located in Ashburton District

Note: the table is based on responses (number of responses in brackets) to a question asking whether survey respondents undertook any paid or unpaid current work in the past year that they considered to be “a job” which they had not previously mentioned. While some of the responses were about paid work, many respondents used this as an opportunity to describe their unpaid community work.

Some occupations place particular demands on individuals. White collar workers, especially accountants, are in demand for honorary positions where an expectation exists that they give back to the community their professional skills, whereas there is less expectation on doctors, who already work in the social services.

Responsibility to clients friends and community

E (age 67), a property manager, had five jobs in the week preceding his interview. He worked for 75 hours in these jobs; including 35 hours in property management and 30 hours in an accounting practice both of which are based at his home. E usually works five days a week in three of the jobs, and one or five days a month in the other two. His motivation for having these jobs is a sense of responsibility to clients, friends and the community which he fulfils not only through the two jobs described previously, but also as a chair of a social service organisation and a trustee of the estates of past clients. E expects to cease holding more than one job within the next three years. [Accounting Sector interview, 2005]

Farmers and small accommodation owner-operators fit their community contributions alongside the 24/7 nature of their businesses and farms and other work.

Paid and unpaid work in the community

H (age 43) worked in the week preceding her interview as a District Nurse 15 hours, a Practice Nurse Receptionist 5 hours and a Farmer 16 hours. H travels 120km during weekdays for her main job in the local district, travels 20km to the town for her second job, and works at home as a farmer. H was on the Board of Trustees for the last four years and Secretary for the local Tennis and Swimming Clubs. She says, "*[It is] important to realise in [a] rural community that people are multiple job holding whether it be paid or unpaid. Rural communities function with volunteers, so those going away to work impacts on those left, i.e. smaller pool of people, same few who do the work*". [Farming Sector interview, 2003]

However, respondents often commented that multiple job holding hinders their ability to contribute to their families and communities (Table 5).

Effects on health and working life

L (age 54) is a GP and specialist. While he worked 68 hours during the week preceding his interview, the actual number of hours he devotes to each job varies from week to week as both jobs roster him to be 'on call' for a substantial proportion of his scheduled hours of work. His other commitments include being a medical advisor to voluntary health organisations and sports clubs. L is married and still has one child living at home. His wife and other family members have been very supportive and understanding of his work even though their family life is often disturbed while he is 'on call'. For L there are economic, personal and community benefits of having more than one job, but it hinders his personal and family relationships, support of his children and other family members, friendships, health and fitness, entertainment and leisure, ongoing education and the balance between work and family life. He also considers that the lifestyle associated with his two jobs is detrimental to his mental and physical health. Yet he expects to continue holding more than one job until retirement. [Health Sector interview, 2003]

Table 5: *Effect of multiple job holding on involvement in community activities*

<i>Involvement in community activities</i>	No effect %	Helps %	Hinders %
Health	36.7	13.3	43.3
Farming	33.3	13.3	45.0
Accounting	31.7	18.3	36.7
Creative	15.0	36.7	36.7
Accommodation	25.0	13.3	41.7
Café and restaurants	31.7	8.3	21.7

Source: 2001 census - library of statistics compiled by Jamie Newell for the Multiple Job Holding programme

Involvement in voluntary activities within the community influences the potential to work in a variety of ways. One important influence of voluntary activity is on access to jobs in the first place (Davidson, 2005, 2006). The important sources of access to work across the six sectors surveyed were contact with others doing the same sort of work, followed by friends and family. Another important influence is through participation in community activities linked to economic development. The survey results show that in four sectors (health, accounting, accommodation providers and the creative sector) voluntary work is closely associated with activities in the respondent's particular sector of work.

Voluntary work in local tourism development

G (aged 56) is a self employed chef and accommodation provider who also does grounds work. In the week preceding the interview G worked 86 hours. His wife is also a multiple job holder. Prior to his current mix of jobs, he has held multiple jobs for 33.5 years (most of his adult life). G spends time on the local district tourism board, the committee for the local promotions association, whilst playing golf, and skiing for leisure. G described that being a MJHer hindered his life in 10 of the 11 areas we asked him about (stating it helped with family relationships). However, G explained that the situation was more positive than he had presented above because being self employed meant he had more control over his work than if he was an employee. Overall G described having more than one job as positive for him. [Accommodation Sector interview, 2005]

Discussion - the social capital paradox

The main thesis of this paper is that given increasing levels of multiple job holding over time and with the level of rurality, increasing levels of contribution to social capital with the level of rurality, and consistently higher contribution to social capital by multiple job holders judged by measures available from the census, there is a potential **social capital paradox**. The paradox is that as social capital helps to create a greater range of employment opportunities, and access to those opportunities, then some of those people who take up these opportunities will be lost from the accumulation of social capital. This is because individual multiple job holders tend to work long hours and hold their jobs for long periods through to "retirement".

Furthermore, the in-depth interviews with multiple job holders across six sectors show respondents identified issues around their ability to contribute to social capital. Increasing levels of multiple job holding, an important dimension in diversification of the rural economy, could undermine the ability of rural areas to diversify further, with reduced capacity to further build, or even retain, the social capital that created these economic opportunities in the first place.

Rural society has changed dramatically over the last century and is continuing to change at a rapid pace. For instance, groups like the CWI, renamed Women's Institute in 1952 to include all women, do not retain the same significance they once had during the early to mid twentieth century (Boyd, 2002). Expansion during the 1930s Depression saw numbers rise, "membership reached 38,000 by 1964, in 1032 institutes and 52 federations; by 1992 there were 19,000 members in 740 institutes" (Smith 1993:391). Lyndhurst CWI, in Ashburton District, began in 1931 and members found their meetings were a place to support one another (and their husbands in turn) during war years, droughts and economic restructuring. The meetings also met educational, social, creative, and productive needs of rural women. The Institute meetings and the friendships that emerged illustrate social capital in a small rural community. In latter years, however, this component of rural social capital changed as more women worked off farm and had a wider range of organisations to join outside their immediate district. Ultimately Lyndhurst CWI closed in 2001 when it had insufficient members to continue meeting formally, although the women still met informally after that. At the same time rural women in Ashburton District became more involved in organisations directly related to economic diversification, such as local tourism groups.

Interviews with rural multiple job holders reveal a mixture of personal motivations for this mode of work, including economic motivations along with personal and social drivers. These findings are similar to those in earlier research (Taylor and McCrostie Little, 1995) on off-farm employment. Jamal *et al.* (1998), with reference to the earlier, classical study of Wilensky (1963), argue that the prevailing view of multiple job holding as a product of relative economic deprivation needs extending. Analysis of multiple job holding has to recognise the high aspirations of many multiple job holders, along with their relatively high levels of energy in working two or more jobs and longer hours, as well as their other contributions to society or social capital. Jamal *et al.*'s study also reinforces the findings from the New Zealand research, whereby multiple job holding is highest for the top and bottom income deciles in 2001 (Baines and Newell, 2002) suggesting motivations of both deprivation and aspiration are important here.

In addition, Jamal *et al.* (1998) note North American research that shows "moonlighters" have higher levels of social participation, with higher levels of voluntary activity than non multiple job holders, as reported in this paper for New Zealand. Findings reported here show that at the aggregate level both voluntary participation and rates of multiple job holding are higher in rural areas. Why therefore have any concern, given high levels of participation reflecting high levels of social capital and active labour-market diversification?

The qualitative research points strongly to a potential social capital paradox and the possibility that busy multiple job holders could be lost from the social capital pool. Further quantitative analysis, including trends up to the 2006 census could help identify any emerging trends. In particular, further analysis is need to desegregate levels of participation by multiple job holders by hours of work and settlement type.

The possibility that rural social capital is stronger than urban social capital, yet vulnerable to future labour market trends, raises important social policy issues. There is already a policy debate as to whether the focus of external support for economic development or voluntary services should be on communities with weak or strong social capital (Woodhouse, 2006). Now there should also be concern about the possibility that economic development in rural areas through diversified economic and labour market opportunities may impact on rural social capital, undermining aspects of social policy design, implementation and performance.

Walker (2004) points to the importance of analysis of social capital in the aftermath of neo-liberal administrative reforms in New Zealand. As a result of these reforms social service agencies are working under increased pressure and often look to better coordination or collaboration as ways to use scarce resources more efficiently. “The current emphasis on government and community partnerships has partly grown out of the recognition that the government is not able to accomplish socially desired levels of wellbeing on its own” (2004:5). There are, however, dangers of “fatigue” from efforts at improved collaboration, especially when they mean fewer people doing more. There are also potential problems in policies that encourage more people (particularly women) into the paid workforce at the same time as policy supporting government-community partnerships make increased demands on the time and energy of these people. Another potential issue is social exclusion from an approach that focuses attention on areas either low or high in social capital. As a result of such issues, Walker (2004:12) suggests use of policy network analysis in a social capital framework should contribute to “broader analysis of policy options and issues”.

The findings of the research reported here have implications for the design and evaluation of policies relating to labour markets, economic development, community-based sustainability initiatives and the delivery of social services. They suggest in particular that policy makers should be careful if they are assuming that rural and urban areas are similar in respect to delivery of social services when community participation is expected. Most importantly, there is a potential inconsistency between a continuing high level of economic diversification in rural areas and a high availability of voluntary workers. The research suggests that further analysis of the social capital paradox identified, within and across settlement types and over time, could certainly assist future social policy making and programme planning.

Conclusions

Knowledge about people who are central to social capital, and potential constraints to their involvement particularly for rural areas, has implications for social cohesion, policy formulation and evaluation in relation to community based development and service delivery, and participation in local area and major project planning.

The research found that multiple job holding is of increasing importance as an adaptive response to government restructuring through a more diverse rural economy, sustained by interlinked sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, social services and rural infrastructure. Levels of multiple job holding notably increase by settlement type (towards increasing rurality) over time. As well, census data on rates of participation in voluntary work in a group, organisation or marae by settlement type show that levels of participation are higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Furthermore, the research found that across the workforce generally multiple job holders are consistently higher than non multiple job holders in their contribution to social capital judged by measures available from the census.

There are therefore important issues to consider in that the people who have the attributes and enthusiasm to contribute to social capital are also often the people who are involved in multiple job holding, as shown by the levels of multiple job holding in rural settlement types and survey findings. A **social capital paradox** is suggested for consideration by social policy makers and planners, that as rural areas diversify and create a wider range of employment opportunities, the people who take up these opportunities may impact on the social capital that to some extent underpins economic development. Wherever relevant and possible, rural-urban differences and diversity within rural areas should be acknowledged in social policy.

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