TIHEI MAURI ORA:

THE HUMAN STORIES OF WHAKATU

A qualitative study of involuntary job loss following the closure of the Whakatu Freezing Works.

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ISBN 978-0-9583608-6-9
Published by:
Te Rōpū Rangahau a Eru Pōmare,
Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences,
University of Otago,
Mein st, Newtown,
Wellington

Front cover design: Mahea Tomoana
Layout design: Flax Digital Limited
This research project was funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

ABSTRACT

The closure of the Hawkes Bay Farmers Meat Co-operative (HBFMC) at Whakatu in 1986 was a shock to the workforce, to their whānau, and to the wider community. The HBFMC, known simply as 'Whakatu', had provided employment for many Māori in Hawkes Bay. The present qualitative study asked ex-Whakatu workers: what it was like to work at Whakatu, how they coped with losing their jobs, and how their lives were ten years after the closure. A group of eight Māori men addressed all three questions over a series of three evenings using a Memorywork method. Individual interviews were also conducted with 14 key informants and two focus groups were held; one with seven Māori women and the second with five Māori young people whose whānau were affected by the closure. When participants talked about working at Whakatu they emphasised the reputation of the Works, the money they earned and the camaraderie among the workers. The closure meant the loss of all these for many participants, although a redundancy payment eased the financial burden for whānau. In the long-term the repercussions of the closure were still felt by some, with participants reporting that older Māori men were particularly vulnerable to depression. Many participants described how they had pursued new training and employment experiences and opportunities, including Māori cultural knowledge. Often the women were responsible for motivating their partners/husbands to become more active following the closure, and to seek re-employment. There is little doubt that the closure of the Works was a blow for many participants and their whānau, and a challenge to the stability and economic viability of their communities. The women adjusted more quickly than the men, and older men were hit the hardest. The main lesson learned is about the support systems that need to be put in place for workers when large workplaces close. These support systems can be pivotal to facilitating training and employment opportunities for workers, providing financial advice, and maintaining social support networks.

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Undertaking any research project is a mammoth task. This one is no exception. It has taken a number of years since the project application was written, the fieldwork and analysis done and the report writing completed. This is a collective effort. Without the support and trust of so many people, it would not have reached completion. I pay special tribute to my parents, my beloved father Did Moana Keefe who passed away in 1996 and to my feisty, determined mother Sophie Ropina who never turned down a challenge. To other whānau members like Clint who worked at Whakatu and assisted with the fieldwork and the odd babysitting and housekeeping chores with our son Jayden. My youngest brother Dukie worked there on an intermittent basis while Pana made it his career pathway as a sticker on the chain until the closure. An excellent scholar, he chose Whakatu over an administrative position with the former NAC-National Airways Corporation. My two older sisters Koea who maintains the 'burning fires' back home with mum and the hapū and Olga always there providing support and challenging whakaaro for the wairua. To the whānau o Whakatu from the Ormsbys to the Robins, Unahi, Cunningham, Paku, Panapa, Tomoana and many more, what can I say but a big thank you. I am humbled that my whakapapa stretches from Ngāti Hikairo o Rongomaiwahine to Nga Tumapuhia a Rangi ki Ngāti Kahungunu - that is the beauty of whanaungatanga.

I must acknowledge some special people. To a favourite Aunty, Paki Keefe, threatening me (in a loving way) she would use her tokotoko, if I forgot my obligations to whānau, hapū and iwi. Ngahiwi Tomoana often encouraging me to carry on, finish the project and get home because there is still a lot more to do. It was a privilege to travel with Ngahiwi to present the research findings of the 'Health Effects of Unemployment-Closure of Whakatu and Tomoana Works at the 7th Behavioural Science Conference in Helsinki, Finland. I appreciate the sharing of information and knowledge that Ngahiwi has about working at the Whakatu Works as well as the political reality of iwi development. Thanks also for his pertinent advice that doing a Masters 'does not feed the cultural soul'. If there is a 'Professor Whakatu' then that has to be Hape Huata / Stewart. Hape lived and breathed Whakatu - you can feel it in every breath he takes when he talks about Whakatu. Thank you Hape for sharing your information, and most of all your stories. Also, I need to thank Dave Stone for his support of this portfolio. Thank you Fii for playing a major part in this project from supervisor to whanaunga. My whānau at Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare especially Papaarangi and Bridget - what can I say, I will only get tongue tied and anyway only one sentence can describe our journey together - We are sovereign UNTS.

To the Whakatu Whānau – all those we interviewed and nagged and pursued for your precious time and energy - thank you for the privilege. The contribution you make to this thesis is insurmountable. Having to represent your voices and encapsulate the ihi, wehi, mana and mauri is an enormous and scary challenge. A special tribute goes to my whānau the late Adrienne Hesketh, Campbell Luke, Uncle Wally Konia, Uncle Bill Bennett and Aunty Lena.

In 2004 part of the Whakatu Works building was demolished. We decided to stop and reflect on ‘old times’ as we watched the demolition workers at work. For me it was a sad time as Whakatu had been a friend to many people in so many ways. On the 14 October 2004, my brother Pana died in tragic circumstances; he and a mate Chris Pardoe drowned at Pania Reef, Napier while out diving for mussels for a whānau tangi. He loved a number of people and many things like ‘chasing the horses’ (a habit he learnt at Whakatu, I think). Whakatu Works was one of his great loves. On many occasions when former workers got together, you could guarantee that Whakatu storytelling would begin. These stories, repeated many times, with a slight twist here and there, captured the audience and never seemed to bore them. It was amazing to see. Stories that can enrich life and provide lessons for the future. I remember the tears in Pana's eyes, the ‘heavy heart’ when he came out home the day after the Whakatu Works closed. Like others, he was in shock. His untimely death shocked the whānau, especially my mum. It made me revise a number of things in my life that I need to ‘unlearn’, most of all that I am not too busy to finish this important piece of work. My deepest regret was not telling him often enough that I loved him. This project I dedicate to him and the unsung heroes of the Whakatu Works and Rogernomics.

Vera Keefe-Ormsby

8 Paenga-Whāwhā 2005

In 26 August 2005 I lost my friend, my workmate and my cherished whanaunga Vera. I still feel her loss deeply, as I know do many others. In finishing this work on her behalf I have tried to stay true to what I think she would have written. And so I’ve expanded on the notes she left about how she intended to revise her draft to produce a final thesis. I hope that those who read it will do so with some thought of Vera and the commitment she had to this kaupapa.

I would like to thank Ruruhira Rameka and Bridget Robson for their support in this endeavour, as well as Vera’s whānau, and all those at Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare. And many thanks also to Kevin Dew and Tim McCreanor for their feedback on an earlier draft of this thesis. Kia ora koutou katoa.

Fiona Cram

1 Haratua 2008

INTRODUCTION

Gosh dad that smell is stink (from Whakatu Works).

That smell my girl is the smell of money, the day you don't smell it is the day Whakatu dies.

Seeing Hape's head buried in his hands, his wife asked, 'What's wrong Hape?'

'Mum, I've just lost a friend, the best friend I've ever had'.

'Who Hape? Who?'

'Whakatu! It's closed. They've closed the Works'.

Workers described the Hawkes Bay Farmers Meat Co-operative (HBFMC) at Whakatu as the 'University of Life'. The curriculum for this University was unique. Academic and scientific freedoms were practiced on a daily basis where the workers contributed towards the social, political, economic and cultural development of Aotearoa. Around 40 percent of the workforce was Māori and the Works was a place where they learned reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and culture), as well as the intricacies of the meat industry. People from all walks of life were employed at HBFMC and some went on to become managers, CEOs, doctors, trades people, nurses, teachers and so forth. Simply known as 'Whakatu', the Works was one of the many industries that contributed to the economic backbone of both Hawkes Bay and New Zealand.

On Friday, 10 October 1986, the Hawkes Bay community experienced a traumatic industrial earthquake: the closure of Whakatu. The rationalisation of the meat industry in the lower North Island led to the closure. Both the management and the workers were shocked; not only about the closure, but by the way they were told about it. Many, like Hape above, heard through their mates, family or the media. How could this happen to the largest freezing works in the country and to the 'best friend' of a number of the workers? The shock waves of redundancies and the loss of this second home reverberated across the region, impacting on individual workers, their families, and their communities.

The closure of Whakatu provided a context in which to study the impact of involuntary job loss of plant closures on Māori. Such research could provide snapshots of the different realities of people's working lives when Whakatu was open and after the sudden closure. Through research, the wide diversity of human experience, behaviour and

the complexities of people's lives can come to the attention of policy makers and government.

Such factory closure studies are also important in the causal/selection debate. They offer an opportunity to examine whether unemployment causes ill health or whether sick individuals are more likely to lose their jobs and less likely to be re-employed. Where job-loss affects the entire workplace, and becoming unemployed is not dependent on selection factors such as lifestyle, health status, or the personal and socio-economic characteristics of individuals, conclusions about the health effects of unemployment should be possible.

New Zealand studies on involuntary job loss among Māori are also necessary for at least two, inter-related reasons:

- To challenge the universality of the notion of work-based identity. Descent, as well as achievements, contributes to Māori self-esteem. The Whakatu freezing works was not just a place of employment. It was a physical embodiment of social networks and context. It is therefore important to examine theories about the psychological impact of involuntary job loss to test whether and in what ways they may hold for Māori; and,

- To demonstrate that involuntary job loss is associated with unrecognised health costs for Māori; at iwi, hapū and whānau, as well as individual, levels.

With these concerns in mind, the health researchers at Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare[1] (Eru Pōmare Māori Health Research Centre), University of Otago, Wellington, embarked on an ambitious research programme looking at the health impacts of involuntary job loss.

Mauri Mahi, Mauri Ora, Mauri Noho, Mauri Mate: Health Effects of Unemployment

Mauri Mahi, Mauri Ora, Mauri Noho, Mauri Mate: Health Effects of Unemployment is a major research portfolio for Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare (The Centre), led by Vera Keefe Ormsby.[2] This portfolio provides a comprehensive multi-method approach to studying the health effects of unemployment. The Centre believes this is necessary to optimise policy outcomes and to effectively inform intervention planning. The portfolio consists of a range of quantitative and qualitative, current and planned Māori health research projects within the rohe o Ngāti Kahungunu. The projects introduced below provide a context for the qualitative research project that is the topic of this thesis. An overview of this thesis follows.

The Whakatu Freezing Works closure in 1986 forms the basis of two of the projects. The first is a large cohort study examining the impact of the closure on mortality and morbidity. This project, by Māori health researchers in partnership with Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated and community, is the largest, longest, most well controlled factory closure study in the world and is unprecedented internationally. The study compared mortality, hospital admissions and cancer registrations of the Whakatu freezing workers made redundant in 1986, with a similar workforce from the nearby Tomoana freezing works that remained open until August 1994. During this first eight years, the redundant group experienced a significant increased risk of serious self-harm (Keefe, Reid, Ormsby, Robson, Purdie, Baxter & Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated, 2002).

[1] The Centre was named following the death of Dr Eru Pōmare in 1995. Prior to this, it had been named Te Pūmanawa Hauora ki Whanganui-a-Tara. Dr Pōmare was an important instigator and supporter of this research programme.
[2] Up until her untimely death in August 2005.

This study then extended the follow-up to 11 years, three years after the closure of the control Works and hence past the official end of the study. The extension revealed a significantly increased risk of overall mortality and of dying from cancer among the Whakatu cohort, although the risk of cancer registration was not increased. The relative risk of cancer registration or death from smoking-related cancers was lower than that for non smoking-related cancers. There was also no difference in the risk of admission or death from cardiovascular disease. The higher risk of death rate among the Whakatu cohort is thus unlikely to be due to smoking.

Recruiting a new control group will overcome the methodological difficulties presented when the control Works closed in 1994, exposing about 36 percent of the control cohort to involuntary job loss. Because of this, the differences found in the preliminary study extension are likely to be underestimates. To examine accurately the effects of involuntary job loss on health a new control group needed to be recruited.

In 2003, the Centre received further Health Research Council funding to extend the cohort study and recruit another control group. This factory closure study will investigate the long-term effects of involuntary job loss on mortality and morbidity. It will compare deaths, cancer registrations and hospital admissions among freezing workers made redundant in 1994 (Tomoana), with control workers from four Hawkes Bay freezing works that remained open. This study is unique in the world and provides an opportunity to establish the causal effects of involuntary job loss, and test the reverse causality hypothesis. Māori have been disproportionately affected by involuntary job loss during the last two decades. The study aims to influence policies concerning economic, social and health inequalities and equitable access to health care.

The second project based on the closure of Whakatu is the topic of this thesis. While the cohort study can present convincing evidence about the effects of job loss on health, the human stories about the impacts on individual workers and their families are also powerful and need to be heard. The qualitative study set out to talk with men, women and young people about what Whakatu meant to them and how they felt following the closure. More detail about this study is presented below.

A third project is a joint venture between our Centre and the Health Services Research Centre. This project investigated whether and how to use the Tomoana database with the NZ Deprivation 1991 index, and whether or not a comparison could be made using the planned NZDep96.

The fourth project was a process evaluation of the Tomoana Resource Centre. This Resource Centre was established after the Tomoana Works closure in 1994 to support those workers who had been made redundant. The Resource provided a one-stop shop for advice, assistance, guidance, training and re-employment. The process evaluation documented this assistance over the life span of the Centre (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, 2000).

Whilst studying the impact of unemployment on Māori, we wanted to address some overarching concerns (also see Cram, Keefe, Ormsby, Ormsby & Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc., 1997):

- Our first concern was to develop a non-exploitative and collaborative methodology for researching this issue. Any subject or participant in a research project is affected by their experience. In this research we wanted that experience to range from pleasant to empowering;

- Our second concern was to record the experiences of participants so that their experiences might help others in similar situations and/or with similar histories; as well as informing those whose ideas about the impact of (un)employment on Māori were naive and/or stereotypical; and ,

- Finally, we wanted the research to inform policy. Any intervention stemming from the research would be firmly based within the experience of participants and therefore more likely to address their needs.

As stated above, this thesis is based on the second study about the closure of Whakatu. An overview of what will be covered in the thesis is presented below.

1. The thesis begins with a brief history of Hawkes Bay that starts from the migration of Ngāti Kahungunu into Hawkes Bay and then describes how, when the British newcomers arrived in the 19th Century, lands swiftly passed into Pākehā hands. An overview of the beginning of the freezing works industry in this country then sets the context for the establishment of the Whakatu works. Finally, in this chapter, the role of the union within the industry is discussed.

2. Chapter 2 focuses on employment and unemployment, especially involuntary job loss. Two issues, stigmatisation and health, are touched upon in the unemployment section. The involuntary job loss section again looks at health impacts as well as impacts on family relationships and the impact of re-employment.

3. Chapter 3 looks at both methodology/ philosophy and method/tools. In the methodology section the philosophical drivers of this thesis, namely Kaupapa Māori and Kaupapa Māori research, are introduced. In addition, a background to Memorywork is provided. This method was trialled with the men's focus group in the present study. In the method section the Memorywork process is described, along with the women's and the rangatahi focus groups. Overall, this chapter emphasises the role whanaungatanga played in the present research.

   The findings of the present research are presented in the next three chapters (4, 5 and 6). These chapters reflect the three main research questions that were asked of participants; namely what was it like: working at Whakatu, at the time of the redundancies, and ten years after the closure of the Works. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction and concludes with a summary and conclusion.

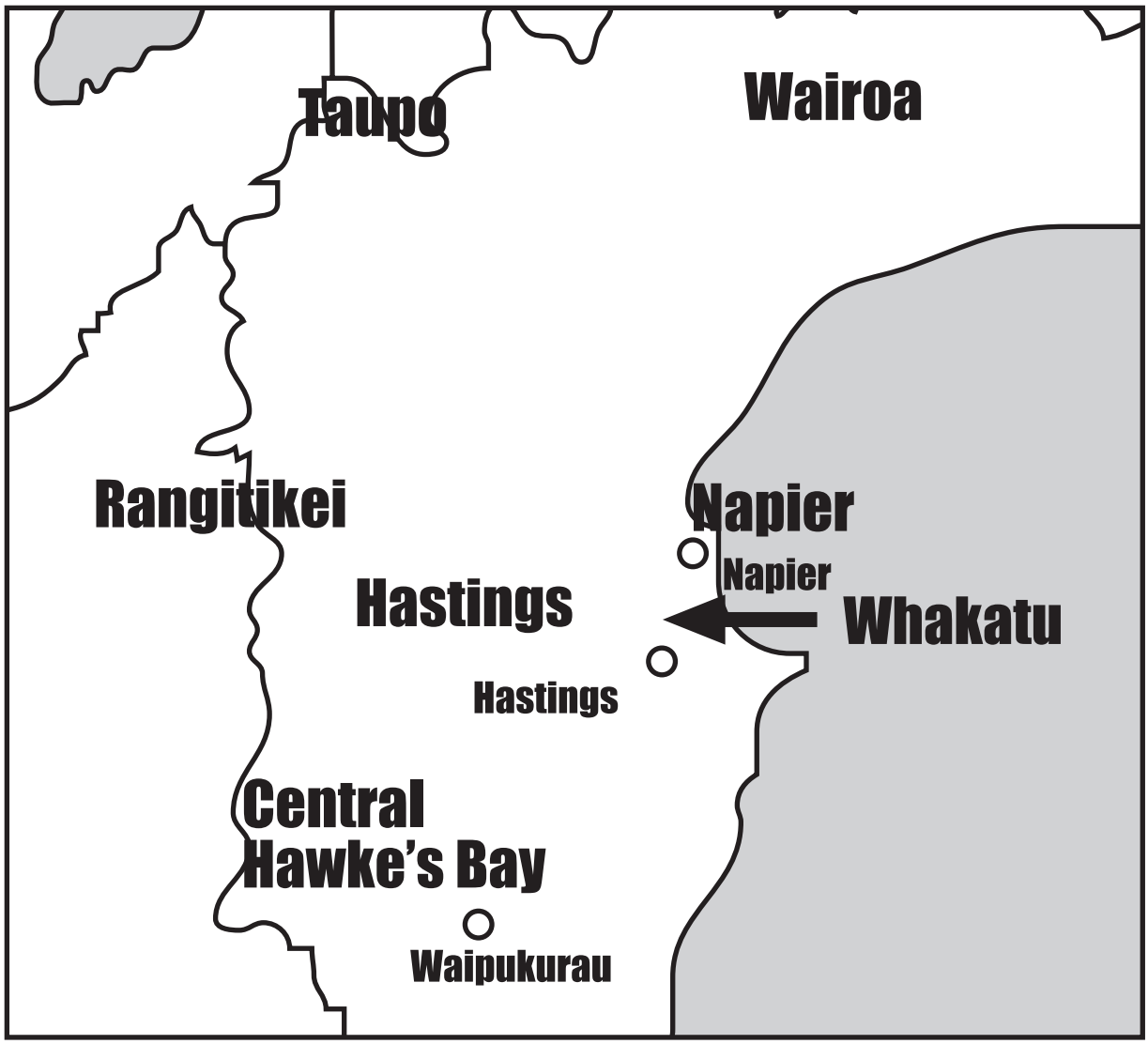
4. Chapter 4 explores what life was like working at Whakatu prior to its closure. Participants stressed the importance of the reputation of the Works and the camaraderie among the workers that was surpassed only in importance by the money they earned (and sometimes not even by this). The role of the Works in workers' health and well-being is also touched upon.

5. Chapter 5 describes the immediate impacts of the closure of Whakatu on workers. Participants talked about the loss of both camaraderie and financial security. Some of the latter was restored by the hard fought for redundancy payout workers received some months after the closure. The impact of the closure on relationships and on whānau more generally are also explored.

6. In chapter 6, participants reflected on life after the closure of Whakatu. At the time of the interviews (1996) the Works had been closed for some ten years. Many things had changed during this time. Participants described new employment and training opportunities, including those relating to cultural endeavours. Once more the impact on finances and on relationships were discussed. The penultimate section of this chapter looks at long-term health and well-being outcomes. Following this, the impact of the closure on communities is looked at.

7. Chapter 7 brings the thesis to a close with an overall discussion of the findings, followed by some concluding remarks.

Finally, a map of Hawkes Bay is provided below for those unfamiliar with the area (Map 1). Whakatu township is pointed to by the arrow.



Map 1. Location of Whakatu township in Hawkes Bay (Source: www.localcouncils.govt.nz)

CHAPTER 1.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF HAWKES BAY

This first chapter sets the context for the development and demise of the freezing works at Whakatu in the Hawkes Bay. The history of the Whakatu works does not begin with the decision to build the Works on the site at Whakatu; rather it begins with a brief history of how that site came under Ngāti Kahungunu control; was vested in Whakatu, the first lieutenant of Kahungunu; and subsequently passed into the control and ownership of Pākehā farmers. This context is about Māori ties to the land upon which the Works stood while the next chapter addresses issues related to employment and then redundancy. This chapter also touches upon the broader development of the freezing works industry in this country, including the Union.

The ongoing colonisation[3]

One of the stories told is that the Ngāti Kahungunu people from Mahia migrated into the northern and central Hawkes Bay in the sixteenth century. Kahungunu was the grandson son of Tamatea Ariki nui who captained the waka Takitimu that travelled down the coast of Aotearoa, dropping people off at intervals along the coast. Legends of Kahungunu describe him as a great traveller and a provider of food for his people. He was a frequent visitor to Hawkes Bay, Poverty Bay and other parts of the North Island. He originally settled in Poverty Bay but a dispute forced him to migrate south to Mahia (Wright, 1994).

While at Mahia, the Ngāti Kahungunu chief Rakaihikuroa was outraged to find that the bones of his son Tupurupuru had been used to make fishhooks. Rakaihikuroa declared war and defeated the local tribes. Ngāti Kahungunu then migrated south towards Mohaka, defeating Rakaiweriweri, the chief of the district. Taraia, the son of Rakaihikuroa, led Ngāti Kahungunu south into Hawkes Bay. Taraia did not have enough force to take on Whatumamoa, Ngāti Awa and Rangitane so the migration was completed by means of diplomacy and intermarriage. Even so, the next two centuries were characterised by hapū rivalry and warfare (Wright, 1994).

A major change took place in the lives of Ngāti Kahungunu during the early 1800s due to the influx of European settlers and the push for land, alongside the introduction of both technology and diseases. In June 1840 Te Hapuku, a Ngāti Kahungunu chief, along with many other rangatira, signed the Treaty of Waitangi. Thus the Treaty formally forged the relationship between Māori and the Crown, which was itself a product of a particular movement in the history of British colonisation. The signing of the Treaty should have led to a period of calm and of partnership, in which the Crown protected Māori from the unjust loss of their resources. Instead, multiple pressures were exerted for Māori to relinquish their rangatiratanga over Aotearoa and its resources, and to become assimilated into European culture, institutions and worldviews (McCreanor, 1989; Orange, 1987).

The greatly accelerated influx of Pākehā following the signing of the Treaty, combined with germs and warfare, quickly led to Māori becoming a numerical minority in their own country. A consequence of this colonisation was the erosion of Māori culture, institutions and worldviews. The seizure of Māori land was a principle strategy of colonial expansion. It was also instrumental in dismantling iwi, hapū and whānau communities and their way of life (Durie,

[3] Parts of this history are paraphrased from Wright (1994) and Boyd (1984). Care has been taken to ensure that all direct quotations are acknowledged. Apologies are extended if this has been neglected at any stage.

1998). By the end of the nineteenth century, the assimilation of Māori was virtually complete. Most significant resistance was quashed, Māori health care practices were largely replaced by western medicine, and the use of the Māori language had began to decline and in some areas was prohibited altogether. Māori had to adapt to a culture and way of life that was foreign to them. They had to adapt to loss of land and resources, on unequal terms with Pākehā, in the course of assimilation. In effect, race relations were bound to take the form of a false partnership of unequals (cf. Reid & Cram, 2004; Simon & Smith, 2001).

Hastings

Prior to 1873, Hastings was known as Karamu. The Heretaunga purchase was the best-known land deal in Hawkes Bay during the 1860s. Kurupo Te Moananui, Karaitiana and Renata offered to lease their land to the Crown shortly after the land sales were halted in 1861. In 1864, Thomas Tanner made an agreement with Henare Tomoana for the lease of the Heretaunga Block. Henare said he would agree to a lease for 'Tanner's racehorse, two guns' and six hundred pounds per annum (Wright, 1994:95). Henare shared ownership of the Block with his half brother Karaitiana. Karaitiana was not entirely happy with the idea of leasing the Block and doubted Tanner's ability to pay. Tanner thought the price was too high and sought partners. Tanner and his associates, who became known as the twelve apostles, divided the block up into twelve sections. The Provincial Council viewed the activities of the 'apostles' with apprehension. The chair, Henry Tiffen petitioned McLean in September 1864 to the effect that he should not 'sanction illegal occupation'. McLean did nothing, possibly because much of his political power base came from leading apostles such as Ormond (paraphrased from Wright, 1994:95).

The next step was to put the Heretaunga Block through the Native Lands Court to translate Māori ownership into European Law and a Crown grant was issued in ten names. A 21 year contract was drawn up for one thousand, two hundred and fifty pounds for ten years and one thousand and seven hundred and fifty pounds for the remaining eleven years. In practice the land belonged to the Heretaunga Māori, represented by their chiefs. However land laws permitted division between ten owners from the tribal group, each named as a lessee of a block. The apostles' appointed Paramena, a supporter of Te Hapuku, and Arihi, a granddaughter of Te Hapuku, as two of the lessees. Henare protested against Paramena's appointment as lessee, because he claimed that he had lost his grant by Te Hapuku defeat in 1857. The lease also included a clause to deduct improvements from the rent. Because the apostles bought the land, drained it, built fences and houses, they had the land virtually rent-free. In 1865 legislation was introduced that enabled Europeans to buy land directly from Māori. Owners of the Heretaunga Block were pressured to sell, using debt as a lever (paraphrased from Wright, 1994:96).

Henare Matua, a Porangahau chief, became concerned about the land sales and 'by 1871 was calling for a repudiation of all Crown land deals on the basis of fraud. Grievances of the Repudiationists included charges that some of the early settlers had simply squatted on Māori land' (Wright, 1994:99-100). Prominent European businessmen and politicians were quick to seize the opportunity to use the Repudiation movement for their own benefit. For example, Henry Russell saw the movement as an opportunity to undermine his political opponents, particularly the 'apostles' (Wright, 1994:100). 'The main grievance of the Māori was the way in which they had been relieved of their land' (ibid:101). Karaitiana, Henry Tomoana and other Kahungunu chiefs went to Wellington and eventually the government set up the Hawkes Bay Native Land Alienation Commission.

The Commission noted that many of the complaints were based on the exchange of land for debts related to goods and alcohol. The problem faced by the Commission was that land for goods exchanges in themselves were not illegal, but that there were

aspects of detail, including gratuities and the style of pressure applied to the grantees, that were questionable. The Commission found in favour of the Heretaunga purchases even though there was admission that secret gratuities had been paid. In addition the Commission noted that the law was lacking when it came to the nominated owners. A number of Māori owners were omitted from the certificate of title issued under the 23rd Section of the 1865 Native Lands Act. Although Kahungunu Māori 'were quick to understand European business practices and eager to acquire European consumer goods, they did not forget or lose their cultural beliefs. For many Māori the discovery that land was a mere commodity to property-obsessed middle class Europeans was a bitter pill to swallow' (Wright, 1994:103).

Meat Industry

Pastoralism, with large-scale intensity farming on huge grassland sheep runs, operating from isolated homesteads, offered immense potential profit for those bold enough to engage in it. The first settlers of Hawkes Bay had managed to take over very large sheep runs. They were concerned to get these stocked as soon as possible. The settlers were concerned with the wool; the carcass was regarded as a by-product. For some time this by-product was very profitable. People had to be fed with the gold rushes in both the South Island and Coromandel, and with the land wars. By the 1860s, Hawkes Bay had reached its carrying capacity and sheep were culled. To boil down sheep fat, the Hawkes Bay Steam Boiling Down Company at Whakatu was established in January 1867. Experiments with preserved meat and refrigeration were carried out and attempts were made to find out the best use of the refuse from the Works. At the same time, various key players in the meat industry negotiated engineering, legal, commercial and financial difficulties.

In December 1883, the Nelson Brothers were ready to freeze at Tomoana. They advertised that vessels fitted with freezing apparatus would call at Napier in March, April, June and July of 1884. William Nelson, often described as the father of the freezing industry, sent the first shipment of frozen meat on the 'Turakina' from Hawkes Bay to England in 1884. Much of the credit of the freezing industry needs to go to those who carried out the experiments that made it possible for Nelson to get into the freezing meat business.

On February 1892, the Dunedin steamed out of Otago harbour with its first cargo of refrigerated meat, on its way from New Zealand to European markets. This cargo fetched twice as much as it could have locally. New Zealand had the raw material. Now it had the technology. The export meat industry was about to explode. The meat industry was to become the centre of employment in many provincial towns like Hastings. Hastings can be described as the hub of the Heretaunga Plains. Its history has been largely determined by the changing land use of the plains. With refrigeration, three meat freezing works were established on its outskirts at Tomoana, Pakipaki and Whakatu.

By the 1970s, Hawkes Bay became a major powerbase for both the meat industry and New Zealand. A freezing works was a familiar landmark and source of employment in most small New Zealand communities. Meat is a global business. The meat industry has performed remarkably well for its farmers to its marketers, in both the domestic and international environments.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, stringent hygiene regulations led to major capital investment by meat companies and put pressure on industrial relations within the freezing works. Also, the Government had provided subsidies to farmers. This led to significant increases in production and the opening up of smaller new satellite Works. Then, in 1981 the Government deregulated the meat industry. Cuts in subsidies to farmers followed. About the same time, international prices for agricultural commodities fell and traditional markets declined (Calder & Tyson, 1999).

Whakatu

According to the Whakatu Times, Whakatu was the name of the first lieutenant of Kahungunu, who greatly aided the chief in his conquest of the Hawkes Bay land when the new people swept down from the north in the sixteenth century. According to legend, now largely forgotten, Kahungunu wished to reward Whakatu for his services. He felt that Whakatu had not been completely honest in all his dealings. So Kahungunu said 'I shall reward you with a gift of land on the bank of the river. You may have all the land that one mat will cover.' Whakatu's face fell when he realised that the chief, with a wry sense of humour was paying him out for his nefarious dealings. Whakatu was a shrewd man. He unravelled that mat, and with the twined flax encompassed a large bit of land, which he claimed as his own. Thereupon he built a substantial kainga (dwelling), became a power in the land, and far outlived his erstwhile benefactor.

In 1902, a movement for farmer owned and operated Works gained support among farmers who considered they were getting insufficient returns from local freezing companies. By 1912, a meeting of about 50 farmers in Waipukurau agreed to form a cooperative freezing company. New settlers were coming to the district and supporters were mainly small farm holders. In 1913, enough funds were raised to begin negotiations to build a freezing works. Land was bought at Whakatu, and Bull Brothers of Napier were accepted to build the Works that was designed by A.S Mitchell of Wellington. Barracks, cottages and a railway siding were provided. The total cost of the Works was approximately 70,000 pounds. Killing commenced in January 1915. Helped by the wartime commandeer for meat for the British market, the Works processed 123,900 sheep and lambs and 3,190 cattle in their first season and was immediately profitable (Boyd, 1984).

A small community developed around the Whakatu Works. Land was subdivided for cropping and fattening stock and rose in value. By the 1970s, Whakatu had flourished into a thriving community with a shop, butchery, garage and community hall. Many of the residents were employed at Whakatu. Likewise, many of the residents in the various marae communities such as Kohupatiki, Waipatu, Omahu, Wai-o-hiki, Ruahapia and Matahiwi were also employed at Whakatu. It was common for parents and siblings to be working side by side at the Works and to arrange for jobs for sons, brothers, wives and even distant relatives. Often, several generations could claim a common work history at the plant. As a consequence, very strong family and kin networks had grown and extended throughout the Works and social contact in the community was reflected by, and reinforced in the workforce (Ormsby & Keefe-Ormsby, 1996).

In 1985 key stakeholders in the meat industry began a process to rationalise the meat industry in the lower North Island region. They considered various scenarios, such as the length of killing seasons and throughput of stock. The conclusion they came to was that 9 to 14 chains needed to be closed in the lower North Island. This recommendation was reconsidered, and it was decided that it was more economical to close a total slaughter-board facility, like Whakatu, than to cut chains in a number of separate Works (Calder & Tyson, 1999).

The first step in the plan to close Whakatu was the sale by all shareholders of Hawkes Bay Farmers Meat Co-operative (HBFMC) shares to Richmond, a company with interests in several freezing works. Waitaki International Ltd was the central player in this part of the action because it owned 53 percent of HBFMC. The plan involved Richmonds buying HBFMC and taking over its Takapau operation.

HBFMC would then sell the physical assets of the Whakatu Works (land and building etc) to Weddel Crown. Weddel Crown would act as an agent to close down the slaughtering facilities at Whakatu. The costs of closure would be shared between Waitaki Weddel Crown and Richmonds proportional to their market shares in the lower half of the North Island (Calder & Tyson, 1999).

Freezing Works Union

The history of the Freezing Workers Union has been one of consistent struggle for unity. From the 1880s to 1917 there existed different unions in the freezing industry, for example, different unions covered slaughtermen and labourers. In March 1917, a Unity Conference held at Wellington formed one national organisation of freezing workers to be known as the New Zealand Freezing Workers and Related Trades Industrial Association of Workers. A set of rules was drawn up and registration was obtained under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The rules provided for organisation on a district basis with district unions. By 1928, the decision to form one national union was carried, This never came to fruition. According to one commentator, the union was in a chaotic state, both organisationally and financially (McNulty, 1960).

Over the next 60 years improvements in both wages and conditions came about through legislation and union action. Certain conditions had been won but the position remained that, until the workers obtained a guarantee of employment and a voice in the operation of the industry, there was danger of reverting to the conditions of the 1930s. During that period, a general order was made to reduce wages and the I.C. & A Act provided voluntary arbitration giving the employers assistance through the Court to reduce wages. Also in the 1932-33 season, the freezing companies had installed the chain system of slaughtering in place of the solo system.

The Employment Contracts Act (ECA)1991, represented a watershed in industrial relations. After years of negotiations by the Unions, the ECA saw the demise of the structure of the awards and arbitration. It put the employment relationship on the same basis as any other commercial contract. It also encouraged direct negotiations between employer and employee. The Freedom of Association clause allowed people to choose which, if any, union they wished to join. A significant change, which defused all demarcation disputes, was the removal of ownership of work. Changed employment and economic circumstances are fully reflected in the meat industry, which still employs thousands of workers (Calder & Tyson, 1999).

Summary

Māori connections with the Whakatu Freezing Works are woven into the history of the land that the Works occupied. Once the providence of Heretaunga Māori, this land slipped all too easily into the hands of Pākehā farmers. These farmers at Whakatu then established the Freezing Works. Māori, rather than being the producers of export goods, became workers employed in the meat industry. It was an industry in which the unions were strong, and the pay and conditions were seductive. However, even the union could not hold back political forces bent on rationalisation. Whakatu was closed. The next chapter examines the role of employment within people's lives and the impact of unemployment.

CHAPTER 2.
INVOLUNTARY JOB LOSS

'Layoffs are a part of any market economy. But it's widely accepted as a fact that involuntary job dislocations are on the rise, the unfortunate residual of a technology-driven, productivity-surging, outsource-crazed economy' (Wirtz, 2005:3).

A job can occupy a large portion of a person's life, so it should not be surprising that work can play a part in how someone structures their day, thinks about themselves, and interacts with others. Job redundancy is a particular kind of unemployment event that can have a dramatic effect on the lives of workers, their whānau, and the communities in which they live. The impact of this event on workers depends upon, for example: the length of time that the worker has been employed in the work place; the time it takes them to find other employment; what this other employment is (e.g., conditions, pay, working hours); the availability of social support; the age of the worker and the dependence of their whānau on their income.

In this chapter, the impact of involuntary job loss is examined from three angles. Firstly, the role of employment in people's lives is examined in order to understand why the loss of a job might impact, so greatly, upon the lives and the health of workers. Secondly, we explore the literature on unemployment. Thirdly, we examine the special case of involuntary job loss as a cause of unemployment In the second and third sections, the health impacts of unemployment are explored, with an emphasis on understanding ways in which unemployment affects both physical and mental health and well-being. Combined with Chapter 1, this chapter sets the context for the present study and the methodology chapter follows. The literature is sourced from the social sciences, including psychology, and from medical and health sources, including public health.

Employment

Employment is examined, first in terms of the general literature on the role of employment in people's lives and next, how this role is disrupted within a Māori context. This is by no means to imply that Māori are aberrant from the 'mainstream' but, rather, to highlight that Māori identity comes from multiple sources, of which employment may just be one.

In western society, work equates with paid employment. However, work is an activity or action for a purpose or the product of such an action whereas employment is a contractual arrangement between employer and employee based on exchange. Employment is therefore a subset of work, with unemployment being the absence of paid employment, rather than the mere absence of work. Even so, work outside of paid employment is often constructed as 'not real' work; for example, the work of a housewife (cf. Waring, 1977). Locker (1997:13), for example, writes that 'in the eyes of the world we are, indeed, what we do. At least what we do for paid work'.

The main manifest characteristic of paid employment is that it provides people with a way of earning a living. Jahoda (1979:313) points out, there are also underlying consequences of employment as a social institution that meet human needs:

> **'First among them is the fact that employment imposes a time structure on the working day. Secondly, employment implies regularly shared experiences and contacts with people outside the family. Thirdly, employment links an individual to goals and purposes which transcend his own. Fourthly, employment defines aspects of status and identity. Finally employment enforces activity'.**

It is these consequences that help us to understand the motivation to work, beyond earning a living; it helps us understand why work is supported, even when working conditions are not satisfactory.

Employment & Māori

As noted by Jahoda (1996), at the personal level, 'a person's job is an indicator of their status in society' (Furnham, 1984); giving an individual a sense of identity and self-esteem. However, it is possible that the reason for these effects lies largely in the role given to employment in the establishment of an individual's identity within western society. Within this cultural context, newly introduced people will often ask, 'what do you do?'. Contrast this with Māori society where identity is whakapapa-based and the first question asked is 'nō hea koe?' or 'where do you come from?'.

Some authors note that for Māori employment may not tell the whole story. Social class classifications based on occupation had little meaning in traditional Māori society. Rather, the status of a person was determined by their mana (Durie, 1985:485):

> **'To Māori people, the socio-economic scale has diminished relevance and can hardly be used as an index of social standing or good health. Occupation is of comparatively little consequence within Māori society. A manual labourer performing the most menial task not infrequently turns out be a gifted orator, or a person with exceptional prestige widely regarded by his tribe as healthy; while a professional who is hesitant within Māoridom may invoke the type of pity normally reserved for those in ill health'.**

While the present study does not address the links between occupation and social status for Māori, it examines the role that employment plays in the lives of Māori – both directly by asking participants to talk about their work and indirectly by considering the impact of involuntary job loss and a period of unemployment on participants and their whānau. It is also acknowledged that it may be naive to say that Māori workers do not gain from their work environment, and that they are not affected by the loss of that environment.

Before the economy changed radically in the 1980s, Māori had higher levels of participation in the labour market than non-Māori (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment, 1994). However, non-Māori,

for the most part, were occupied in the skilled and professional labour market (including business), whereas Māori tended to be employed in unskilled and semi-skilled work. Māori representation within the freezing works and manufacturing industries was high during this time (Department of Labour, 2005).

The Whakatu Works provided its workers with more than a source of occupational identification and status within their own communities and kin networks. Researchers like Jahoda (1979) have commented on the 'sense of pride' that manual workers develop. Work is, therefore, about more than income, and job loss is likewise, as much about health and social cohesion as it is about the loss of that income (Shortt, 1996). The next section examines unemployment, and the impact of involuntary job loss on workers.

Unemployment

During the 1930s Depression, unemployment blighted the lives of several generations of New Zealanders. Prior to the Depression, the government had no state mechanism in place for the relief of unemployment. In 1931, the government finally set up a relief scheme for the unemployed. Within a couple of weeks of setting up the scheme, about 23,000 men were registered and by June that year, this had increased to 51,000. The men were paid an unemployment rate of 21 shillings a week for a wife and four shillings for each child under the age of 16. Even though the New Zealand branch of the British Medical Association calculated this rate, it was not sufficient to maintain the health and working capacity of the ordinary man (cf, Simpson, 1997).

Unemployment began to emerge as a significant problem again for New Zealanders during the late 1970s. Previously, Aotearoa New Zealand had enjoyed three decades of very low unemployment (Prime Ministerial Taskforce on Unemployment, 1994). Toward the end of the 1980s, unemployment was the single greatest social concern of all New Zealanders (Bascand, 1988). Following the economic changes in the 1980s and 1990s, when over 40,000 Māori became redundant, Māori had a lower participation rate in the labour force than non-Māori.

The ideology of the economic reforms of the 1980s were based on salvation by the free market (Smith, Fitzsimons & Roderick, 1998). The government 'unshackled' the economy from regulatory controls, removed state subsidies, and reformed the agricultural, manufacturing, industrial and state sector with privatisation. This was matched with an increase in unemployment, a decrease in benefits, and more poor health for the population (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson Tobias & Bonne, 2003; Pōmare, Keefe-Ormsby, Ormsby, Pearce, Reid, Robson & Watene-Hayden, 1995).

Māori suffered the effects of economic dislocation, including Māori farmers on marginal land with high debts. In many cases, entire communities were made redundant by wholesale closures of industries such as freezing works, forestry and the railways. The rate of unemployment during the 1990s increased more sharply for Māori than for non-Māori. The Māori rate of unemployment had reached 22.8 percent by 1994, up from 12 percent in 1984. In contrast, the general unemployment rate in 1994 was 9.4 percent. By 1998, unemployment had hit its highest level in four years, increasing by 10,000 in the June quarter and expected to worsen as the economic recession took its toll (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998). (Note that this was the time when the people in the present study were spoken to about the on-going impact of the closure of the Whakatu.)

Māori were vulnerable to unemployment in times of economic recession and slow to benefit in times of recovery because of (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998):

- a youthful age structure
- low levels of educational attainment
- under-representation in formal training
- over representation in low skilled occupations
- under-representation in high growth industries; and
- the large proportion of long term unemployed.

In 1998, Scott and Brislen identified Māori youth unemployment as a sociological time bomb. They stated that mainstream delivery of services in the market economy had failed Māori and called for numerous reviews of government and non-government departments, including immediate targeted intervention to several areas. They argued that the government needed to demonstrate its commitment to increasing Māori participation in the workforce by acknowledging the special training and pre-employment needs of Māori youth (Scott & Brislen, 1998).

The former Māori Affairs Minister Tau Henare (Smith et al., 1998) also challenged government agencies to urgently address Māori unemployment. The politics of the economic reforms had left a legacy of job losses and upheavals. Throughout the 1990s, unemployment remained unacceptably high for Māori and was a critical issue for Māori individuals, whānau and communities, and thus for Māori development. However, there are usually two sides to every story and, as Durie (1994:18) writes;

> **'Ironically unemployment has not been totally disastrous for whānau. Anecdotal accounts of families finding greater strength as they have moved together into new cultural pursuits are not isolated'.**

In the sections below the impact of unemployment is examined, from the stigmatisation that the unemployed often face through to the mental and physical effects of being jobless. Many of these issues are explored in relation to involuntary job loss, so that what is included here is more about the general impacts of unemployment.

Stigmatisation

Conventionally unemployment is seen as temporary or abnormal. This has led to the stigmatisation of those who are unemployed, for example, the labelling of these people as 'dole bludgers'. The moral obligation to work in paid employment is embedded within western society's powerful work ethic. It is the source of society's stigma of those who do not work in paid employment. Employment therefore has a culturally constructed meaning.

As with employment, it is important to acknowledge that there are differing perspectives on unemployment. As Paul Stanley (1998:19) states;

> **...just because a [Māori] man hasn't got a job doesn't necessarily mean that he has a problem.**

However, as Stanley described in his research, the issues of negativity associated with unemployment for Māori men are particularly harsh. Māori have to

deal with society's perception that unemployment is the result of personal irresponsibility. Graham Smith and colleagues agree with Stanley's view, arguing that it is necessary to question the unproblematic acceptance of employment as a central fact of life (Smith et al., 1998). It is not an individual issue of cultural deficiency. Māori employment and wellbeing has been affected adversely by neo-liberal government policies.

Health

> **'But even though unemployment is an ongoing issue for our society, the shame associated with job loss and the tendency for people to blame themselves for their unemployment continue to increase the population's vulnerability to mental health and substance abuse problems' (BC Partners, 2006:1).**

Unemployment is associated with major health problems among the unemployed, their families and their wider community (Bethwaite, Baker, Pearce & Kawachi, 1990). These include increased risks of various causes of death (including suicide), increased hospital admissions (including psychiatric admissions), anxiety, depression and other health problems. Research has demonstrated that the physical and mental health impacts of unemployment on an individual can often be devastating. It can affect people dramatically, even to the point of death (cf. Broom, D'Souza, Strazdins, Butterworth, Parslow & Rodgers, 2006).

A study in England and Wales, for example, found that unemployed men had a relative risk of death of 1.4 when compared with employed men, and among middle-aged men the risk of death was doubled. The death rates were particularly elevated for suicide, cancer, accidents and violence. In addition, the men's wives and children were also at increased risk of dying (Moser, Fox & Jones, 1984; Moser, Fox, Jones & Goldblatt, 1986). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Blakely, Collings and Atkinson (2003:594) report that being unemployed is associated with a two- to three-fold increase in the risk of suicide, although 'about half of this association might be attributable to confounding by mental illness'.

Unemployment is also said to lead to apathy, depression and a loss of self-esteem (Jahoda, 1979). These are said to result from the lack of structure that unemployed people experience and the social stigma attached to being unemployed. Breakwell (1985), for example, found that unemployment led to lowered self-esteem, more physical illness, social isolation and depression. Viney (1985) found anxiety, depression, helplessness and alienation among her unemployed sample. Madge (1983) found that the children of unemployed parents might be at risk from material, physical, educational and emotional stress.

Beland, Birch and Stoddart (2002:2033) begin their article on unemployment and health by stating that 'unemployment is consistently associated with poor health for individuals. Although part of this association is undoubtedly a selection effect, healthier people are more likely to be employed, sufficient evidence exists to suggest that employment protects and fosters health'.

There are, however, gender differences in people's responses to unemployment. For example, 'passivity and inactivity may be more strongly characteristic of unemployed men than of unemployed women' (Walsh & Jackson, 1995: 254). Women tend to occupy themselves with more of the activities that filled their non-work hours when they were in employment, for example, childcare and domestic tasks (Martin & Wallace, 1985).

In summary, unemployment has social, economic and health impacts even if these are just temporary.

Involuntary Job Loss

Involuntary job loss, due to organisational downsizing or closure, creates a particular type of unemployment in which the severance of workers from their day-to-day work environment can be abrupt and surprising. Involuntary job loss can also be a long-anticipated consequence of a downturn in business. Even so, it has been suggested that involuntary job loss is one of the ten most traumatic life experiences (Spera, Buhrfeind & Pennebaker, 1994). Stress can arise from both the job loss event (and other losses that ensue), as well as the need to make a new start (Paulin, 1999). Much of the literature discusses the shock of involuntary job loss with a transition for people through stages of optimism to pessimism (if they fail to find re-employment). This may seem reasonably straightforward, but it is noted in this section that people are complicated and can often view events as both a threat and an opportunity. So just as moving house and weddings are stressful, involuntary job loss needs to be turned over and looked at from multiple angles in order to understand that stress can arise from both happy and sad occasions and feelings, often revolving around the one event.

This section first examines the literature on involuntary job loss and the general impacts it has on workers. Following this it describes the specific impacts on family relationships and on health and well-being. Finally, the issue of re-employment is addressed, particularly as it relates to the alleviation (or not) of the impacts of involuntary job loss.

Hill (1978) makes a distinction between unemployment and the loss of a job; namely, that in the loss of a job through redundancy the psychological effects are similar to those of bereavement. Like bereavement, the impact on those affected depends on multiple factors, for example, Hill (1978:119) mentions 'the quality of the relationship which an individual makes with his work and on how far he has established a satisfactory occupational identity through it' as an important factor. Other factors include whether people losing their jobs have dependants, and whether or not there is adequate (or any) notice about the job loss (BC Partners, 2006).

This second characteristic of involuntary job loss, namely its occurrence without notice, can be particularly hurtful for workers, as events overtake them with surprising abruptness (Brewington, Nassar-McMillan, Flowers & Furr, 2004). Anger and bitterness often result when there is an insensitive lack of warning over job loss (Paulin, 1999). As Swineburne (1981:51) notes, 'Warning, discussion and information are of paramount importance to those being made unemployed, and could lessen considerably its negative impact'.

The New Zealand Planning Council (1980:5) documented that 'to be declared redundant is a traumatic experience which often evokes feelings of anger, bitterness, and betrayal. Redundancies are typically fraught with tension and uncertainty, but are unfortunately inevitable in an industrial structure undergoing rapid development and change'. Those who feel they have been treated unfairly will blame the organisation for their job loss and, in their anger, older ex-smokers may relapse and non-drinkers start drinking (BC Partners, 2006) (also see below, 'Health').

The involuntary loss of a job can therefore be traumatic, especially if it comes at the end of a long period of employment with the one company or firm (Butcher & Hallock, 2005). Like Hill (1978),

Swineburne (1981:53) argues that 'the more central occupational identity [was] to the self concept and the purpose of life, the greater the experience of loss'. When the Tomoana Freezing Works closed, the local newspaper reported that many of the workers found themselves in this position:

> **'Most said the closure had yet to sink in, although the older hands had been predicting the closure for the past year with a run down in maintenance programmes. Those longtimers who had never been unemployed in their lives gazed fondly at their 'home' of forty years and said they were dreading the 'loss of pride' from a first visit to the dole office. The closure will affect vast families... whose fathers, brothers and cousins all worked at Tomoana' (Banks, 1994).**

In 1938 Eisenburg and Lazarfield (1938, cited in Harrison, 1976:339) described the stages workers go through when experiencing unemployment.

> **'First there is shock, which is followed by an active hunt for a job, during which the individual is still optimistic and unresigned; he still maintains an unbroken attitude. Second when all efforts fail the individual becomes pessimistic, anxious, and suffers active distress; this is the most crucial state of all. And third, the individual becomes fatalistic and adapts himself to his new state, but with a narrower scope. He now has a broken attitude'.**

These stages are represented in the diagram below, from Harrison (1976).

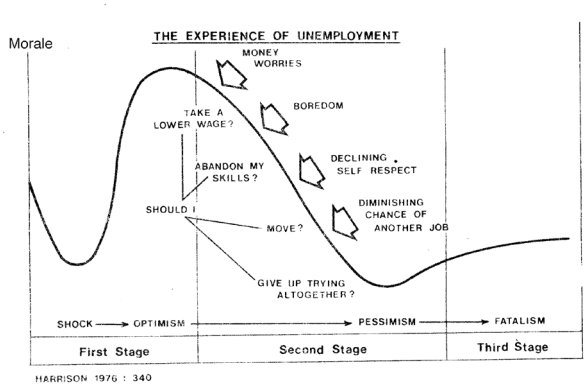


Diagram 1. The experience of unemployment

Source. Harrison (1976:340)

While unemployment is a state, involuntary job loss is an event that often results in a phase of unemployment for workers (Latack, Kinicki & Prussia, 1995). These phases may also be relevant for those experiencing involuntary job loss to the extent that a period of unemployment follows. In 1986 Castro, Romero and Cervantes found that Latino women made redundant because of a plant closure were still stressed some 18 months later as the majority remained unemployed. In addition, research in the United States demonstrates that reemployment is more likely for those with a college degree, compared to those with a high school diploma. Re-employment rates are lower for women and 'moderately lower' among African Americans (Butcher & Hallock, 2004). Elder (2002) also reports that older workers (i.e., those over 50 years of age) spend more time unemployed than their younger counterparts and experience greater losses in earnings when they find new employment.

Other challenges faced by those experiencing involuntary job loss include the loss of self-confidence and disrupted social and familial

relationships (Paulin, 1999) (see below). If those losing their job fail to obtain another job, or sometimes even if they find unsatisfactory reemployment, then the third stage of fatalism may well be a long-term outcome (cf. Dooley & Prause, nd). However, more recent research has found people to be emotionally complex, to the point where this simple stage of the cycle may not fully capture what people experience following job loss and subsequent unemployment. For example, LaFarge (1994) found that people's feelings of betrayal often co-exist with feelings of excitement about the future and a sense of personal development.

Similarly, Paulin (1999) describes a 'process of psychological revision' following involuntary job loss, as people re-evaluate their careers and the place and meaning of work in their lives. Paulin (1999:3-4) speculates that the participants in her research were attempting to 'comprehend and integrate the experience in order to construct personal meaning or 'interpretive control'' over an otherwise unpredictable and uncontrollable event. This re-evaluation, in turn, was often a catalyst for people, moving them to explore new employment and life opportunities.

In the next two sections, the impact of involuntary job loss on family relationships and on people's health and well-being are discussed. Following on from this we examine the issue of re-employment.

Family relationships

As the family of the unemployed person is usually their main source of social contact, the family becomes the social setting in which the stresses created by involuntary job loss are played out. Seigel, Bradley, Gallo and Kasi (2003) report that involuntary job loss did not significantly affect older workers' wives' mental health. Still, relationships can disintegrate with the stress of job loss and the diminishing confidence of those unable to find other employment. As noted by Hill (1978:120) 'sometimes stresses of unemployment threaten the marriage itself'.

In the 1960s it was the financial insecurity following job loss that was a prime cause of the deterioration of family and interpersonal relationships (Wilcock & Frank, 1963, cited in Castro et al., 1986). More recently, Charles and Stephens (2004) report that the chances of a couple divorcing increase significantly following job loss from being laid-off (rather than from plant closure). On the other hand, social support can mitigate the effects of job loss (cf. Turner, Kessler & House, 1991). When a partner provides this support, then relationships can actually improve in quality (Walsh & Jackson, 1995). Little research has looked at the impacts of job loss on children (Butcher & Hallock, 2004).

Health

When people lose their jobs suddenly, they also lose their income and many of the support structures available to them with their work environment. Loss of income can disrupt people's access to healthcare, healthy food, healthy housing and other material benefits that maintain good health (Broom et al., 2006). These effects can be particularly harsh for those who go on to experience a long period of unemployment (see above).

The cohort study conducted by Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare compared the health of Whakatu workers with the health of a cohort of workers employed at the Tomoana Freezing Works (which stayed open until 1994) (Keefe et al., 2002). This eight-year follow-up (1986-1994) found that there was an increased risk of serious self-harm

resulting in hospitalisation or death among the Whakatu cohort who had been made redundant compared to the employed, Tomoana cohort (RR=2.47, 95% CI: 1.04-5.89). The relative risk of admission to hospital with a mental health diagnosis was also greater for the Whakatu cohort (RR=1.17, 95% CI: 0.68-2.01). Other studies have also found evidence of short-term adverse effects of factory closures on the well-being of redundant workers (Kasl, Cobb & Gore, 1972; Iverson & Sabroe, 1988; Viinamaki, Koskela & Niskane, 1996).

Gallo (1999) writes that older American workers are among the most vulnerable as the years preceding retirement are the ones when workers accumulate retirement funds. Involuntary job loss can therefore have devastating physical and emotional consequences for the remainder of older workers' lives. Using data from the US Health and Retirement Survey, Gallo and his colleagues have found that older workers who suffer involuntary job loss are:

More than two times as likely to relapse into smoking (Falba, Teng, Sindelar & Gallo, 2005);

More likely, if non-drinkers, to start drinking (Gallo, Bradley, Siegel & Kasi, 2001); more likely to suffer physical functioning and mental health problems (Gallo, Bradley, Siegel & Kasi, 2000); and

More than two times as likely to suffer from a myocardial infarction and stroke (Gallo, Teng, Falba, Kasi, Krumholz & Bradley, 2006).

Re-employment

While re-employment can alleviate many of the mental health symptoms associated with unemployment, much may depend on the type of employment people find (BC Partners, 2006). BC Partners (2006) report on research showing that no mental health benefits accrue to people who find work in less satisfactory jobs, and that those who find themselves underemployed or in low wage jobs actually experience decreases in their mental health compared to being unemployed. This is problematic given that in the United States, at least, workers who lose their jobs during a recession are likely to find themselves in post-recession employment that is less desirable; that is, employment involving less hours, less security, and/or less money (Dooley & Prause, nd). In citing research by Gardner (1995), Dooley and Prause (nd:1) write that:

> **'Of displaced workers [in the United States] who lost full time jobs between January 1991 and December 1992, only 31.8% had full-time jobs at equal or greater pay by February 1994. Almost as many had full-time jobs at lower wages (28.3%), and others had taken part-time jobs (7.9%), left the labor force (12.4%) or were still looking for work (11.5%)'.**

Even in a post-recession phase of low unemployment, the changing job market may mean that the type of employment people need in order to feel secure is not available to them. Deindustrialisation, technological innovation, globalisation and free market economics have all contributed to huge changes in labour markets over the past two decades (Ferrie, 2001).

One way of looking at less than satisfactory re-employment is in terms of job insecurity. Job insecurity is defined as the difference between a person's desired level of job security and the actual level of security they experience in their employment. It can be externally attributed or self-perceived, with the latter being the more potent

stressor (Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1991). Perceived job insecurity has been linked to self-reported physical and emotional health problems, increased sick leave from work, and increased tension in the home (Ferrie, 2001). While only briefly explored here, it is clear that finding another job, any other job, may not be the solution that offsets the negative effects of unemployment following involuntary job loss. As Broom et al. (2006:575) conclude:

> **'Thus, workplace and industrial relations policies that diminish worker autonomy and security may generate short-term economic gains, but place longer-term burdens on the health of employees and the health-care system'.**

Summary

Unemployment affects people's mental and physical health, often dramatically. Professor Woodward, a member of the National Health Committee notes that 'we just have to be aware that long term unemployment and under employment do have serious consequences for people's health' (Dominion, 1998). When this unemployment happens through redundancy the impact can be sudden and shocking, leaving people reeling through the loss of the social and financial security that their job gave them. But people are complex; events can be both troubling and exciting at the same time as workers grieve job loss but also look forward to new opportunities. Negative impacts are often greatest for those whose opportunities are limited by societal 'isms'; for example, ageism, racism, sexism. Perhaps this is where attention needs to be paid.

The present study followed up on Whakatu workers and their whānau to find out first-hand about the impacts of the closure of the Works on them and those closest to them. The qualitative nature of the study allowed for 'surprises' so that both the closing down of old opportunities as well as the opening up of new ones could be explored. Those involved in the study looked back on what life was like at the Works, as well as reflecting on where they had come to and what the future held for them.

Currently Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing the lowest unemployment rate for many years. However this does not mean that redundancies cease. There is an increasing likelihood of redundancies from industries that withdraw from New Zealand and relocate in lower wage environments such as China. This 'strategic' relocation resulted in the loss of an estimated 22 million jobs in the United States between 1969 and 1976 alone (Castro et al., 1986). In the 1991-92 period the jobs of five and a half million adult workers were eliminated (Dooley & Prause, nd). In addition, lack of job security can have an equally detrimental impact on workers' health and well-being. While the present study examined involuntary job loss at a time when unemployment was high, the significance of the findings for today should not be underestimated.

CHAPTER 3.
METHODOLOGY & METHOD

This chapter on the methodology of the present study is separated into two main parts. The first part, on Kaupapa Māori, examines the methodology, or philosophy, underpinning this study. This approach distinguishes the methodology from the methods, or tools, used within research (Linda Smith, 1999). Methodology is important because it frames the questions being asked, and determines the set of instruments and framework for the research. Methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research. It is at this level that researchers have to clarify and justify their intentions. Methods, on the other hand, are the means and procedures through which the central problems of the research are addressed. The second part of this chapter describes the methods used in the present research, alongside the approach taken to the analysis of the data.

Methodology

It is well known that Māori tipuna were rigorous researchers following structured processes in activities that were essential for health and wellbeing. There is evidence that whānau, hapū and iwi acquired knowledge in areas such as horticulture, astronomy, navigation, food, public health pharmacology and technology. Also it is noted that the development of a recipe that transformed karaka berries from a highly toxic plant to a safe food source could not have been accomplished without some form of clinical trial (Pōmare et al., 1995). The application of these research projects within a framework that was designed to benefit the people is the forerunner of what many researchers are attempting to achieve today through 'by Māori, for Māori' research. This section first introduces one philosophical strand to this framework that has developed through the past 20 years; namely, Kaupapa Māori theory. The second part of this section looks at the methodology behind the Memorywork method that was used in the Men's Focus Group. This extension of qualitative research was compatible with Kaupapa Māori research as it sought to put the research participants even more in the 'driver's seat' of research participation and analysis.

Kaupapa Māori

Research on, with, and/or for people involves the gathering of information which may be done for its own sake but is often done with a view to informing resource allocation and facilitating control by research participants, even if these subsequent tasks are carried out by a third party other than the researcher. Research is therefore about power and power commands resources (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Kaupapa Māori research – research that is by, with and for Māori, under Māori control – is about Māori owning the research process and maintaining control over Māori knowledge and resources. In addition Kaupapa Māori research cannot be divorced or alienated from whānau, hapū and iwi. Jackson (1996) notes that research should be a liberating exercise. However it can only be so if we are in control of the process, undertaking the research in ways that we know are appropriate and right for us.

A discussion of Kaupapa Māori must begin with one of its key principles: Tino Rangatiratanga – the self-determination principle (Smith, 1997). Tino Rangatiratanga sets the scene for the description of Kaupapa Māori research by defining it within the context of indigenous rights to more meaningful control over one's own life and cultural well-being. For Māori, these rights are affirmed by the Treaty of Waitangi and speak to many things, including our right to conduct research (Jackson, 1996). Following on from this discussion, the nature of Kaupapa Māori research is explored.

Tino rangatiratanga at a collective level is about giving voice to a widely held view that social, economic and cultural development can only be achieved by increased autonomy with less dependence on others. Tino rangatiratanga can be interpreted in different ways depending on the person and/or context, for example (cf. Barlow, 1991; Mead, 2003):

- Māori power and empowerment
- Self determination and control over jurisdictions and destinies
- Biculturalism and partnership
- Māori control over Māori things within a Māori value system
- Maintenance of Māori mana
- Living together and interacting with each other through a shared philosophy
- Māori cultural autonomy and territorial development

For some Tino Rangatiratanga resides within the hapū; for others, the iwi, for still others, Māori as a collective; and yet for others still, within the individual. Within any research project these multiple and varied expressions of Tino Rangatiratanga must be acknowledged and respected.

One question raised within Kaupapa Māori is whether Tino Rangatiratanga is truly achievable within a Pākehā dominated society (cf. Pihama, Cram & Walker, 2002). The sovereign rights of Māori have been undermined by a model of colonial government that has ignored the newcomers' Treaty obligations. Within this context Kaupapa Māori cannot be taken for granted and must include an examination and critique of the dominant power relations in this country (Pihama, 1993). Such an examination reveals that within this country there is no partnership of equals because the social structure was founded on institutionalised inequality. Without redressing the factors that have institutionalised the social and economic disadvantage of Māori there will never be an equal relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

In recent years, the reducing of health inequalities has become a priority for the Crown and its agencies. The framing of Māori as the 'other' promotes explanations of disparities that focus on Māori behaviour, culture, genes, use of health services and socio-economic status as the 'problem'. Pihama (1993) described this framing as the 'deficit model'. This model is a continuation of the systematic shaming of Māori. It nestles the 'race blame shame' of internalised racism and maintains and perpetuates institutional racism. Interventions based on this framing are premised on desires for Māori to behave more like Pākehā for health development, and hence encourage assimilation goals (Cram, 1997). Of further concern, this analysis does not acknowledge structural societal influences on health and assumes that New Zealand society and systems, including the health system, are neutral towards Māori despite compelling evidence to the contrary (Robson & Reid, 2001).

Durie (1998), for example, points to the failure of mainstream health services to demonstrate anything other than an observer's appreciation of Māori philosophical understandings and priorities, largely because of limited theoretical frameworks that have been unable to accommodate holistic views and values. Hence health service interventions for Māori need to be sourced from within their community and Māori tikanga and knowledge otherwise we continue the assimilationist practices that, since 1840, have

led us to the current health inequalities between Māori and non-Māori. In addition, Kaupapa Māori interventions within health begin to address the Tino Rangatiratanga promise of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Within this dominant context, Kaupapa Māori is a counter hegemonic liberatory practice taking place within a dominant context. By engaging in Kaupapa Māori research, a Māori worldview is validated and Māori are the norm (Moewaka Barnes, 2000). Kaupapa Māori research is therefore an act of resistance that challenges the 'commonsense' understandings held by colonial society about what it means to be Māori. The Treaty affirms our rights to develop the processes of research which are appropriate for our people, and to do that, the only people we have to seek permission from are our own. The only people that we need to seek guidance from to whom we are accountable are the mokopuna of those who also claimed the reaffirmation in the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Jackson, 1996).

As research is about seeking out and accessing knowledge, Māori research cannot divorce or alienate itself from the Māori world. Endorsements from the whānau, hapū and iwi to support and participate in health research is to ensure the sharing of the knowledge, empowering the people and providing controls to prevent the misuse and abuse of power. The research process relates to who controls the resources for the research project and as such, who determines the framework within which that research is to be conducted, what methodologies are to be used and how the results are to be interpreted and disseminated to whānau, hapū and iwi.

Jackson (1996) notes that as Māori researchers we have the responsibility to be aware of the difficulties and dangers of our work, so that we can create protocols and ideas to safeguard the areas of knowledge in which we work, to protect those of our people with whom we will work, and to protect the transmission of the knowledge which we gained from those people. To be able to do that we need to understand:

- Who we are as Māori;
- What our rights as Māori are; and,
- What our rights are as we stand on this land.

Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare have a number of qualitative research projects. Kaupapa Māori is an essentialist approach and located within three central platforms: it frames Māori as the norm; uses a Treaty of Waitangi framework and uses a kaupapa that is Māori centred and seeks to make a difference in the lives of Māori. Our approach to the consultation and engagement with iwi and with participants is sourced within Kaupapa Māori and this approach is described next.[4]

'Kanohi kitea' is the overarching principle for Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare when communicating and consulting with iwi/ Māori communities. This is always preferable to unaccompanied written communication. It is our firm belief that the best assurance of community reciprocity is to establish an ongoing relationship with the whānau, hapū and iwi which allows trust and respect to develop throughout, and beyond, the life of a research project.

For the 'Mauri Mahi, Mauri Ora, Mauri Noho, Mauri Mate: Health effects of unemployment' portfolio of research, the principle of whakapapa has been the essence of the consultation process with the community within the rohe of Ngāti Kahungunu. Through whakapapa there has developed a reciprocal relationship between the researchers

[4] This description, from Cram et al. (1997), was written by Vera Keefe (Ormsby), the second author of the paper.

and the researched community. An example of how whakapapa operated within the context of the present study was in the recruitment of participants. Linkages were first made through whakapapa and then a 'snowball' effect was used to identify and invite others, usually people who turned out to be also linked by whakapapa to the research team, to participate in the project.

A community group was established to provide feedback on the progress of the research portfolio and to provide a forum for discussion and information about the portfolio as well as about research more generally. The community were sent pānui advising them about hui, which were also advertised in the local media. Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare has also supported the community in various ways, such as providing the publication for the 10th anniversary Whakatu Reunion held at Matahiwi Marae, and providing supervision and/or assistance with research projects.

Since the initial consultation we have had the mentorship of kaumātua and the support of members of the whānau, hapū and iwi, as well as other individuals, interested agencies and organisations. Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare recognise and acknowledge that a relationship-driven consultation is far more productive and proactive. This involves having a transparent process and keeping whānau, hapū and iwi up-to-date with what the Centre's roles and responsibilities are and also making enquiries as to their interests in ongoing involvement regarding the 'Mauri Mahi, Mauri Ora, Mauri Noho, Mauri Mate: Health effects of unemployment' research portfolio. This has created a reciprocal relationship with the community based on the values of trust and respect. It has been these values, gained as members of the whakapapa whānau, hapū and iwi and the wider community, that have created and sanctioned our research entry points to the community within the rohe of Ngāti Kahungunu.

The decision to use qualitative methods in the present study was motivated by our desire to talk with participants and let them take a lead in deciding what experiences they would share, as well as what they were thinking about those experiences. This method allowed participants to be in the 'driving seat' during the research. As a research tool, Bishop (1996b) suggests that story-telling is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversity of truth' within which the storyteller, rather than the researcher, retains control. Bishop (1996a:152) also suggests that 'the indigenous community becomes a story that is a collection of individual stories, ever unfolding through the lives of the people who share the life of that community'. The present research combined stakeholder interviews, a women's focus group interview, a rangatahi focus group interview, and a men's research meeting over three nights using a Memorywork method (see below).

We also chose to remove the 'label' of Māori health researchers as an attempt to temper any potential tension of a 'them' (researched) and 'us' (researchers) situation. We felt that this created a whānau environment where information and knowledge could be exchanged in a reciprocal manner. In these ways, the present project complemented the quantitative, epidemiological methods being used in other projects in the research programme.

In summary, this section has provided a relatively brief overview of Kaupapa Māori, located within Tino Rangatiratanga and contemporary New Zealand society, as a way of both re-centring Māori and de-centring Pākehā privilege within this country. The brevity has been possible because over the past 10-15 years Kaupapa Māori has been described and validated within the academy and across Māori communities (Smith, 1999). It resonates with Māori aspirations and dreams and hence it is pivotal to

Māori research endeavours, including the present project. With respect to the present research, this section has provided the broader consultative and collaborative context within which the research was conducted. The second part of this section of methodology outlines in more detail the philosophy behind the Memorywork approach that was used with the men's focus group.

Memorywork[5]

One goal of the present study was to use the Memorywork method with Māori. To our knowledge, this was the first time this had been done. At the first session with the men's focus group we shared our plan to 'test the water' with this method and that we were unsure whether it would work. In this way, we sought the men's consent to be involved in this 'pilot'. While there may have been some initial apprehension on the part of the participants, they agreed to take part. Our feeling was that their agreement was based on their trust of the researchers as members of whānau, hapū and iwi (i.e., as 'insiders'), more so than our capabilities as researchers.

In using Memorywork (Haug et al., 1987) our goal was to involve the participants in the analytical phase of the research so that the themes and the meanings derived from their discussions were also grounded in their own experiences and interpretations. This was informed by Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton and Radley's (1988) notion of 'lived ideology', whereby people have an array of beliefs and explanations that they draw upon to interpret everyday experiences. Memorywork offered a research method that could facilitate participants explanations for their experiences, allowing them to tap into their own interpretive frameworks.

Frigga Haug and colleagues (1987) developed Memorywork as a way of exploring human experiences. Her argument rests within socialisation theory; namely, that the events we remember and how we remember them can tell us a lot about who we are today. This fitted with our qualitative approach in which the emphasis was also on the construction and function of talk. Perhaps one of the best examples of this is the common occurrence of talking with a family member or close friend about a significant past event that you both were party to (e.g., a family celebration). It is unlikely that the memories of both individuals will be identical as each will stress different aspects of the event, including their own thoughts and feelings. The memories may give insight into the construction of self as well as say something about the social context surrounding the event (e.g., socialisation practices relating to family celebrations and people's roles and responsibilities). As Haug et al. (1987:50) argues, '…our basic premise was that anything and everything remembered constitutes a relevant trace – precisely because it is remembered – for the formation of identity'. If the remembered event is one that a community has a common recollection of then that event will, likewise, have a part to play in the way that the community constructs its identity.

Memorywork is a tool for revealing the processes of social construction that have been captured in individuals' reflections and memories. The basis of the method is a Memorywork group in which participants' memories, recalled in response to the same cue, are compared and contrasted by the participants themselves. The discussion, interpretation and theorising of memories therefore takes place within the group as they attempt to untangle the constructed nature of their experiences.

[5] This description is from Cram et al.. (1997).

Phase One

The memories are written according to a set of rules. For example:

1. Write a memory;
2. of a particular episode, action or event;
3. in the third person;
4. in as much detail as is possible, including even 'inconsequential' or trivial detail (it may be helpful to think of a key image, sound, taste, smell, touch);
5. but without importing interpretation, explanation or biography.

The force of rule one through to rule five is to ensure that the co-researcher writes a description of a particular event or episode rather than an account or a general abstracted description. Individual members of a Memorywork group follow these rules in writing their memories, a process which often requires a week's gestation.

Phase Two

Having written their memories, the group meets to read and analyse all the memories. The rules or guidelines for this phase of the Memorywork are given below:

1. Each Memorywork group member expresses opinions and ideas about each memory in turn;
2. then looks for similarities and differences between the memories and looks for continuous elements among memories whose relation to each other is not immediately apparent. Each member should question particularly those aspects of the events which do not appear amenable to comparison. They should not, however, resort to autobiography or biography;
3. each Memorywork member identifies cliches, generalisations, contradictions, cultural imperatives and metaphor;
4. and discusses theories, popular conceptions, sayings and images about the topic;
5. finally, each member examines what is not written in the memories (but what might be expected to be); and,
6. rewrites the memories.

The piloting of the Memorywork method occurred within the men's focus group. In introducing this method to the group we were very clear that it was a method that we were very interested in and that we thought held a lot of promise for qualitative Māori health research. We also stated that we were unsure as to whether or how the method would work in this particular context. By making these provisos explicit, as well as providing an overview of the reasons for the research and how we envisaged Memorywork working, we were attempting to ensure that the men were fully appraised of the research and therefore able to give informed consent. In addition we negotiated with the participants about the nature of the recording and presentation of their memories. In this way the form that the Memorywork method took within this study developed very much in collaboration with participants and was therefore a variation on the method described above (see Method section below).

Overall, the qualitative methods used to engage with the participants in the present research produced a rich data base within which we were able to search for pattern and meaning in participants' experiences, while at the same time acknowledging the contradictions and complexity within and between those experiences. More detail about the methods employed is given below.

Method

Participants in the present research were recruited through whakapapa, personal and/or former Whakatu networks. In total 14 interviews were held with key informants and three focus groups were held with a further 20 participants (eight in the men's group (Memorywork), seven in the women's group, and five in the rangatahi group) In total 34 people were involved in research interviews (see Table 1 right). The interviews and focus groups all touched upon three main topics:

1. Life at the freezing works;
2. The positive and negatives of the closure; and
3. Life after Whakatu.

Table 1. Interview participants

Group	N	No. of hui	Method
Key informants	14	1	One-to-one interviews
Men's group	8	3	Memorywork
Women's group	7	1	Focus group
Rangatahi group	5	1	Focus group
Total	34		

All the interviews were tape recorded (with participants' consent) and transcribed. Key informants were sent both the tape and transcript for corrections, additions, etc, prior to analysis, while focus group members were sent transcripts only. In addition, we asked the participants if they had any memorabilia (e.g. newspaper clippings, photographs, etc) that we could copy to add to our database. Participants were assured that any contribution to the study they made (from the interview or memorabilia) would be shown to them for approval before it is included in the final report.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were held with 14 Māori participants who had been in the area throughout the operation and closure of Whakatu. They were recruited through personal and professional networks as people who had an overview of the Whakatu Works, including the impact of its closure. These interviews enabled us to document their stories, recollections, and explanations for the closure and its impact on the health and well-being of the Māori

community. The interviews each took two to three hours.

Men's group – Memorywork

The recruitment of the men for the Memorywork group was done through whakapapa networks, ensuring that we had a range of ages, lengths of time employed at Whakatu, and also a spread across departments. The men were asked to commit to attending all three sessions, with this proving to be quite time consuming considering all the men were employed at the time in either full-time or part-time/casual/seasonal work.

A total of three evening sessions were held over the course of a week. Each session began and finished with karakia and also incorporated dinner. The researchers sat in on the sessions, and two of the research team who had worked at Whakatu and had very similar experiences to the men were involved as both participants and facilitators.

At the first session the men were given a prompt and then given some time to think about a story that related to that prompt. For the second and third sessions thinking of a story was treated as 'homework'. The first session focused on the participants recollections of working at Whakatu. The second session focused on the closure of the Works, while the final session focused on participants' views of the positive and negative impacts of the closure.

The memories were retold verbally rather than being read from a written account. In addition they were often recounted in the first person if the men themselves were part of the story. The men contextualised their memories by describing the details of the time, place and key characters in their stories, often adding in other details as the story progressed. Unlike the women involved in the Crawford et al. study (1992), who were retelling personal memories, the men's memories were often shared memories as others in the group recognised the key players and events being described. These alterations to the process did not compromise the men's ability to describe particular events.

Within a session the men took turns telling their stories. When they had finished they were asked to come up with any themes that were common to the stories and/or any themes that particularly stood out for them. These were then listed on a whiteboard so that the group could refer back to them. Some common themes that evolved from the three sessions were:

Session One

- comradeship at the Works;
- hierarchy of organisations.

Session Two

- adjustment to lifestyle;
- change of economy for whānau and communities;
- some loss of whanaungatanga and comradeship.

Session Three

- negative impact of the way in which the Works closed;
- loss of whanaungatanga and comradeship;
- redundancy;
- training and career development;
- cultural identity and social support.

Once the themes had been listed they were discussed by the group. This discussion expanded upon each theme, brought up other stories related to the theme, examined how the themes were interrelated and raised other important themes and issues. Therefore, unlike the more formalised, turn-taking analysis procedure described above in Phase Two of the Memorywork method (see above), the analysis of the memories was done through more informal, group interaction with the facilitators asking only occasional questions. In this way the bulk of the analytical work was done within the session by the participants. The role of the researchers was then to have the taped sessions transcribed and to document the information contained.

Women's focus group

The seven women who participated in the women's focus group were recruited through whakapapa, personal and/or former Whakatu networks. All had had some connection, through their own and/or their husband's employment, with Whakatu. The women were aged between 36 and 50 years (mean age = 40 years). They met for three hours one evening and discussed the three topics in relation to themselves (if they had been employed at Whakatu), their husbands (who had been employed), their whānau and the general community.

Rangatahi focus group

Like the women's focus group, the five members of the rangatahi group were recruited through whakapapa, personal and/or former Whakatu networks. The rangatahi had some personal connection with Whakatu because a family member(s) had been employed there. The rangatahi were asked for their recollections of the Works, its closure and the subsequent impact on their whānau and community.

Analysis

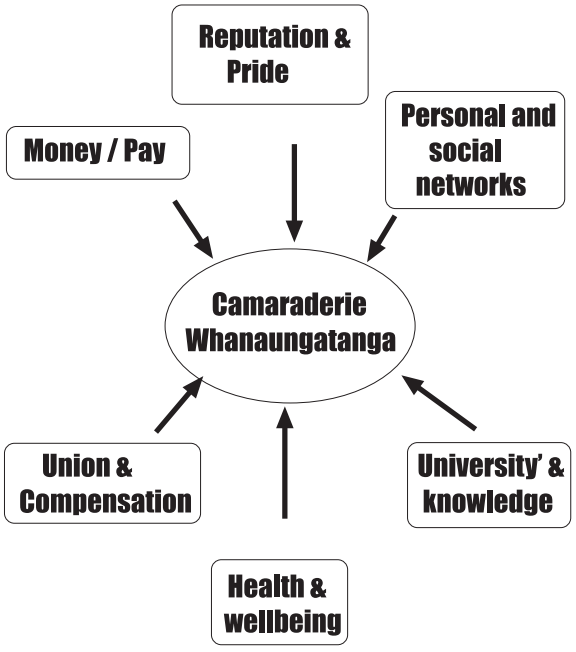
The interviews have been analysed for commonalities and differences in the recollections and explanations informants had. This was achieved by reading and re-reading transcripts, discussion of the transcripts among the research team, and feedback gathered from informants. This allowed for the identification of common themes, patterns and meanings in participants' experiences. The analysis of the Memorywork discussions was the most 'straightforward' as the men had identified themes in their own discussions and talked about them at length, along with the interconnections between themes and new insights that arose from the discussion. The themes are presented in the next three chapters, along with illustrative quotes from participants' interviews.

Participants talked about their own experiences as well as the experiences of other whānau and the communities. This was particularly true for the key informants who were chosen because they had this 'helicopter view' of events and their consequences. The findings therefore mention things that happened not only for participants but also, in their expert opinions, for their communities.

CHAPTER 4.
WORKING AT WHAKATU

The analysis of participants' discussions about working at Whakatu revealed several themes related to a central focus on camaraderie – whanaungatanga (kinship). For example, participants reported that relationships at the Works often crossed gang 'borders'; extended into personal and social networks; and brought to life the exchange of knowledge between workers that led to the Works being known as the 'University of Whakatu'. Initially the entry of female workers into Whakatu was viewed by some as a breach of camaraderie but over time the women too became enmeshed within the relationships at the Works. The pride that was engendered in Whakatu workers was no doubt enhanced by the pay they received. This money also enabled the expression of camaraderie in the form of the large koha given at workers' tangi. All these elements, alongside the health provisions at the Works, added up to the Works being seen as a source of health and well-being for workers and their whānau.

Diagram 2. Working at Whakatu themes



This chapter first looks at the theme of Whakatu's reputation and its close relationship with union activity. From here the theme of camaraderie – whanaungatanga is explored before an examination of the other, surrounding themes represented in Diagram 2 above. While these themes are presented here as separate components of participants' experience of working life at Whakatu, the themes are intertwined and not mutually exclusive.

Some of the stories the members of the men's group told to begin their Memorywork session on the topic of working at Whakatu are scattered throughout this chapter in boxed 'postcard' sections.

Reputation

The workers at Whakatu had a sense of pride about their work, 'Whakatu freezing Works had its own kaupapa and one could say that it had a strong commitment to achieving the ultimate of all its objectives, breaking and killing records for sheep, mutton and beef' (Male Key Informant). This 'sense of pride' went beyond work and encompassed, in a positive light, the rather egocentric feelings the workers felt about having worked at Whakatu. This was illustrated by some of the comments made:

> **'I don't mean to brag, but I thought Whakatu was the best trained freezing works in New Zealand... I've seen a lot of workers in different freezing works and to me, they just didn't match up to us' (Male Key Informant).**

'They were the biggest and the best. Their throughput was excellent. The rejection was down low. If there were records to be made Whakatu got up and done it. They went ahead in leaps and bounds. They picked up on anything that was modern. They were ready to try any new technology and make it work. Whakatu was that sort of place. Yeah. Whakatu was so far ahead of everybody else that there was this stigma that if you worked at Whakatu you were a gun butcher, even if you weren't' (Male Key Informant).

Whakatu was also referred to as the University of Whakatu, where people did not receive an orthodox academic training but learnt about life.

'My education started at the Works. I learnt off people. ... taught me how to do a crossword in the Dominion. They were guns. I learnt a lot of mathematics off R---, he taught me a lot about arithmetic. The day I started at Whakatu was when my education started and I was still learning right up until it closed. I learnt off people that had School Cert, UE scholarships, these are people that didn't want to [go to] university or to be a lecturer. They wanted to be freezing workers because the money was there. I could read the paper flat out, but I couldn't tell what it was about and it was these people that taught me how to understand. I learnt how to play rugby better cause we had the best rugby players in Hawkes Bay. We had the best fishermen. I learnt to fish from... He had the knack of catching snapper' (Male Key Informant).

'...That freezing works taught me a lot. The school of hard knocks. If you worked at the freezing works you were in the right place to learn about life' (Women's Focus Group).

While Whakatu provided 'experiences of life' for many of the young workers, it also provided work for those who were attending university. This was illustrated by a comment from a participant in the Women's Focus Group,

'...you know the doctor. We use to crack up. We've got a doctor from Kohupatiki working at the Works. My cousin...was an accountant working at the Works. All these brains were going to the freezing works because of the big money. My uncle use to say 'waste the time going back to university, good money at the Works'.

Many of the participants felt they were privileged to have worked at Whakatu and agreed that there were 'some real characters there' but they were 'as close as a family'. They spoke about the size of the workforce; they mentioned the six chains in the mutton room and then added in the beef house into it, and 'you've got a big workforce'.

However, 'just about each and every one of those jokers knew one another personally'. When they held monthly meetings the dining room used to be full to the point you could not even move. The participants reinforced that they were really close. An explanation was that teamwork underpinned their work at Whakatu.

> **'I think that's what made you close to your fellow work mates cause you all worked as a team and you relied on each other' (Men's Focus Group).**

I happened to have the privilege of working on the mutton chain as well as the beef and there were plenty of clowns in those departments, I can assure you of that. One incident was when a new chum asked for directions to the office. Firstly the office where the employers used to be was right opposite the sixth chain so when you come in the entry door you're facing number six chain. Anyway they'd ask for directions to the office, and there were these stairs going up to I don't know where, but these poor jokers would climb these stairs wondering where the employers office was. There used to be a lot of stirrers in there I tell ya.

Camaraderie

Kinship provided a stable workforce at Whakatu. Within that workforce there were whānau that had four generations working at the Works. Examples of these family and networks included father, sons and grandsons of three well-known Māori families. In another instance there were mother, daughter and son-in-law.

> **'...was the employment officer at the time and anyway my son-in-law used to sit by the phone waiting for it to ring and my daughter's saying to me 'oh mum, they still haven't rung...', so I got on the phone, 'why haven't you rung my son in law?' So you know, we did have pull and when he knew he was my son-in-law, next thing he's getting a phone call and starting work. But it is a fact, if you had family working there it was easier for their whānau to get in' (Women's Focus Group).**

Some workers gained employment through friendships that had developed and evolved through working at Whakatu, as noted by the following comments from participants in the Women's Focus Group;

> **'That's actually how I got my job. [Name] was my father's friend and he was also the general manager of the Works'.**

'I came back from Wellington after running a shop down there as well as managing several stores and, when I came back to Hastings, I thought what the hell am I going to do. It didn't really worry me about doing anything so I went out weeding, which is something to do. I applied for a departmental manager's job with Farmers. But then my mother had rung [name] so I started at the Works. So that was Farmers. When I got into the Works, I go thank god I never got that job'.

The union at Whakatu epitomised the concept of whanaungatanga or camaraderie. It maintained a stronghold over the way business was done at the Works.

'What I liked about working at the Works was that it gave one a chance to be part of the whole scene, in the union, the meetings. No matter who you were you were allowed to get up and voice your opinion – silly or whatever, but you still had the chance to do it aye and that's what I liked doing' (Male Key Informant).

Some of the men remarked that in today's economic environment the union would not have got away with some of the industrial action they had taken during the working life of Whakatu. However, a former union member remarked that 'the comradeship was phenomenal. We've had Black Power, Mongrel Mob, Highway 61 members, you name it they all worked at Whakatu. When they come in the gate they come in with their patches on, but once they got into their working area they became one big family'. He recalled how the workers referred to the president of the union as the 'godfather' and treated the union as family.

For many of the participants the camaraderie at the Works ran second only to the money they were earning. A big part of this camaraderie was the humour that was part of the Works' culture.

'It wasn't only the big money that one earned at Whakatu, it was I suppose a combination of things, the laughter and jokes, and from time to time the sad loss of a good work mate' (Male Key Informant).

Another incident was if you're a new chum they'd cut the tails off the lambs and put it on the back of your apron and yell out 'maa...' You're sort of looking around thinking 'gee, these fellas are porangi', and wondering why they're acting like a lamb. It didn't dawn on me because I came from the beef house but it was funny to see these chums walking around with a lamb's tail attached to the back of their apron, and it took a fair while before they realised.

Women working at Whakatu

In the 1940s some women were employed at Whakatu in areas like the bag room. By the 1970s women were employed at Whakatu on a regular basis. It appears that the first women workers were a selected lot who had partners/husbands also working there. The younger women, aged from 20 to 40 years, often went there to get 'quick money' to purchase a home or other material resource. Often they already had family employed there.

The women mentioned that they knew they were going to be working in an environment that had been a predominantly male domain and that they had expected to be the victims of some male backlash and resistance. The men's focus group also thought that when women first started at the Works they 'breached the comradeship', but as time evolved they thought that camaraderie had shifted towards companionship.

> **'It was an absolute man's world. They didn't really want women working there, they were really against it...' (Female Key Informant).**

Some of the women key informants described some of the humour and jokes as 'hassling' by the men: 'if you weren't one of them you got it in the neck, but it was no place for the faint hearted. If you felt a little bit intimidated by what some of them did and you showed it, well, you were doomed. You may as well pack up and leave because it would get worse – you had to learn to give as you got and then they would leave you alone'. The senior women who had been working at Whakatu tended to nurture the younger; 'we had an unwritten code that if we saw any of the women being hassled we would hassle back for her until they accepted women were there to stay and then they were left alone'. The older women also provided support and advice, especially those who had worked there for a long time. This role was similar to the older males who had mentored a number of the younger workers.

Once the younger women survived the rituals to the Works such as 'animal blood on the back of their white uniform' they generally adopted the behaviour of the male workers through socialising at department parties, or sports and union events and eventually becoming one of the 'boys'.

> **'I was one of the boys. We all were, and we enjoyed being that way' (Women's Focus Group).**

> **'It was pretty good in our department. How I got my job was through M--- hassling B---. Every time he'd see a new girl start he'd harp on at B---, 'when's [participant] going to start?'. I worked on the visceral tables and that was all bloody and yucky. I'll tell you who were the worst ones... the bloody gutties... I didn't know at the time but I was working away then next minute I get this, and I felt this, and then I saw old E--- go walking past. I could hear the whole floor bang, bang and laughing at me and I thought 'oh Christ, my clothes are all wet'. I just knew something had happened. He had put all this blood on my backside and it looked as though I had my period. I hated it. I swore I'd never wanted to work on the slaughter board again. We had a lot of fun here' (Women's Focus Group).**

Communication between the sexes improved as a result of women being at Whakatu and this was reflected in the exchange of advice, often from the women to the men;

> **'You got a lot of education when you were at the Works, especially when you talked to one another. ...I think when women came to the meat industry there was a lot of positive stuff about that. Although some guys had problems talking to females – somewhere along the line you know they'd start talking to one another. But I reckon they did a lot of good for a lot of the workers in the freezing works. I can say that there were different ones that gave me good advice' (Men's Focus Group).**

As time passed and the women had proven their worth, the men accepted the women and started to integrate them into their patriarchal realms such as meetings.

> **'When I first went there they had what they call a spokeswoman. I became the spokeswoman and it was like you were part of the union, but you were liaising between the union delegate and the women management. And then later the union started to sort of integrate us into their meetings, but not totally. It was a man's world' (Female Key Informant).**

The role identity that union involvement gave to the women facilitated their acceptance as 'one of the boys'. Over time the division of labour between male and female workers changed as the women began to be accepted as being able to 'handle the work', especially on the formidable chain where the workers reigned and seniority was everything.

> **'When the women broke into the butcher there was that unison between men and women. Men realised, after so many seasons, that women could do that type of work and that they were good as any man. They became the equal and it showed that women can become butchers' (Men's Focus Group).**

However there were still issues about pay parity. In response to a question about whether the union gave women a fair go, a Female Key Informant replied;

> **'No, the women never got a fair go. The men got what they wanted because they had to prepare the meat for the women to wrap and pack so they got their incentive, but the women still had to work twice as hard to get their incentive and nine times out of ten they didn't. The men always had the upper hand on the women in wages and it's still happening today. We were on $10/11 an hour and the men were getting about $12 or something like that: I know it was more than what we were getting and we were doing the dirty jobs.**

By the time we were ready to walk off the floor, to get changed and what not, the men were long gone cause 1 know they used to run, they were fit; not us. I don't know about the other departments, but in our department we got a raw deal.

Koha

Part of the camaraderie of the Works was the support the workers and company staff showed to one another, assisting in work situations as well as in personal and social events. In the event of bereavement, or if a worker was experiencing financial hardship, koha (donations) would be collected. The koha process became formalised, 'when they changed to that compulsory…$2.00 or $2.50 a head', and was deducted from wages for bereavements. It appears that the koha was always given rather generously by freezing workers, as recalled by some of the former workers,

'I used to do the finances when koha used to come in and I can quite honestly say that koha that came from Whakatu practically paid for the tangi; that's the generosity that everyone had. If someone passed away it was just a massive all rounder' (Women's Focus Group).

'If a member of a particular department died or he was well known throughout the whole Works those people would go and pay their respects. You saw the comradeship if somebody was in hard times. Regardless of whether it was a man or woman, they'd dip their pockets because they felt it was their brother or sister who needed that. I've seen the company staff do the same thing and vice versa. When the company members had a death or needed help or support the workers would do the same so both staff and employees of Whakatu became very close and that's what I miss. Right up until the closure, we had that comradeship and whānau atmosphere' (Male Key Informant).

A female participant shared her experience about the camaraderie at the Works by telling the story of her father's tangi,

'We were doing our marae up and when my dad died we had no kitchen at Kohupatiki so the Whakatu Fire Brigade put in pumps and they had a fire engine there to pump the water. The carpenters from the Works came over and they built a makeshift kitchen because we had nothing. Our cooking at the pa was an old fire place so they bought over stoves for us to cook on. They were actually really fantastic and they also sent over mutton and beef to us at the marae'.

This generosity is attested to by a former union delegate when he mentioned that the Hawkes Bay Farmers Meat Company 'would pay off people's mortgages because they were going to lose their homes, or they would help those that were in financial strife'. The Works also subsidised rates through water payments and power.

Sports

One of the annual events was the Works inter-sports tournament. The tournament would be hosted by one of the many freezing works. Some of the major activities were rugby, cricket, netball, tug-o-war and darts. Former workers have commented that the tournament was better than any representative game. The tug-o-war was the sports event, Whakatu had the best team. The day Whakatu competed against Ocean Beach Works there were a lot of bets going on,

> **'M---, K--- and R---, they were the bookies on the side line. It wasn't a problem for them to go over to an Ocean beach guy.. 'thousand bucks – Whakatu'. Or it was 'place your money against Whakatu'. K--- used to come home with thousands of dollars. Him and M--- were the biggest punters and everyone knew. Actually any event that was happening K--- and M--- were there to punt on it but when it came to the tug-o-war, man that was the event. It was just so tense. They were both really good teams' (Women's Focus Group).**

It is also referred to in the 'Whakatu Works: 10 Year Reunion' book that Whakatu had a 'wicked cricket team' that had an unbelievable 100 percent record of never winning a game and never scoring over 52 runs in any match they played but they were famous for their off-field antics (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, 1996).

Personal Lives

Camaraderie did not just exist at the work level, it also spilled over into the personal and social lives of the workers. Some of those interviewed mentioned that the Works was not a place to be working if you had some personal problems.

> **'You didn't want to have personal problems at the Works because it showed and everyone knew and... put you back into reality real quick' (Men's Focus group).**

> **'The rumours that used to [go] around that Works were shocking. There was one that went around about me not being nice at a party... it just about caused me to chuck my job in because I was so naive' (Women's Focus Group).**

Beyond kin links other members of the Works became absorbed into the Whakatu extended family with social ramifications outside working hours. These networks and social contacts were encouraged and reinforced by the Works sports teams, social events such as the picnic day, socialising with mates at favourite pubs and social events such as weddings, birthdays, hangi and other informal gatherings.

> **'It wasn't only the big money earned at Whakatu, it was I suppose a combination of things, the laughter and jokes, and from time to time the sad loss of a good work mate...I guess what it came down to at the end of the day was who could bullshit the best...' (Key Informant).**

While the participants acknowledged the earning of 'big money' it was also seen as 'second best to the people that worked there'. Whakatu has been described 'as a spiritual but entertaining environment', as most of the workers would remember the weeks leading up to Christmas everyone would sing Christmas carols. The memories of the Christmas carols was also reiterated in another interview when former workers were employed at another works and they sung a Christmas carol. He commented that bought back old memories, when they were at Whakatu '… we had six chains and fifteen hundred people singing…'.

Money

While the attraction of 'big money' was often given as a primary reason for working at the Works, for many of the participants the money was matched by the camaraderie that existed after one had been there for a certain length of time. 'Money was the biggest, then friendship' (Male Key Informant). The money provided a certain lifestyle and way of life.

The range of income varied depending upon the department you worked in, overtime and the incentives or bonuses given based on productivity. During the peak season chain butchers would take home a weekly wage ranging between $600-$1200 (compared to the 1986 average pre-tax earnings of $412 (CPAG, 2001)). As one woman participant said, 'Between my husband and I, we were bringing home just under a thousand [dollars] a week'.

> **'When I first started at Whakatu I was about 16 and when I got my first pay packet, $160, that was the most money I'd ever had in my life. All my mates were still at school and I just got my licence so I borrowed my Dad's car, picked the boys up from school and shouted them hamburgers and whatever' (Men's Focus Group).**

One worker who had been at Whakatu then left for eight years, returning in 1964 and then spending 22 years there until the closure, explained that,

> **'I had four kids in high school. An agriculture wage was eleven pound ten a week.... When I went back to the freezing works they were getting six pound a day. The highest wages in 1956 was around seven hundred pound a year; that's annual income. It doesn't sound like much, but you had to have a thousand pounds before they built your house' (Male Key Informant).**

> **'When you have two good incomes coming in, you don't think of money and I think that was what was happening with most of the people at the freezing works' (Women's Focus Group).**

Many had gone to Whakatu to earn 'quick money' for a deposit on a home or to repay a mortgage,

> **'...Mine wanted to own their own homes and things like that so that's why most young people went there to earn a deposit on their house... (Female Key Informant).**

> **'...and of course I needed a job handy to home plus were paying off a home and Whakatu was just the ideal place' (Male Key Informant).**

'...My wife wanted to buy a house, but I really didn't want to because I was too young. I didn't want to settle down and I thought somewhere along the line we may want to go overseas and you couldn't do that if you had a mortgage but the house was bought and the pressure was on to pay it off and now we are freehold' (Male Key Informant).

The money also allowed workers to help out their children, their grandchildren, and their whānau.

Health and Wellbeing

The Works provided health benefits for workers. In financial terms, workers had the opportunity to purchase health insurance (namely, Medicare), and to access health services like the dentist and specialists. As one participant said, '…while I was working at the freezing works I could always afford having a health policy. If the children had to go into hospital you didn't care because you had that Medicare'. The Works also had its own General Practitioner and nurses, and ran its own Credit Union: 'Another thing that was really neat to be part of was the Credit Union' (Women's Focus Group).

The health and financial benefits, in addition to the wages that the workers received, added to the workers' well-being. As one participant stated, 'Working at Whakatu provided people with an independent lifestyle, stability and financial rewards to complement the needs and requirements of each individual who worked there'. There was a downside, however. The work was often monotonous and repetitive. Back pain was common, as were other injuries.

'It was a pretty dangerous job because you had knives that were razor sharp and any slight movement, because you're working so close together, you could cause damage to your fellow workers or to yourself. There wasn't a week that went by when someone always went on compo and such was the job' (Male Key Informant).

At times workers ignored the injuries they received – toughing it out only to suffer pain afterwards.

'I was doing some shift work when 1 injured my back. I didn't report it straight away because there was no one to report it to so 1 let it go. When 1 told the boss he told me to go to the doctors. I went to the doctors, told the doctor what happened and went back to work. They wouldn't pay me because I didn't report it straight away. The snag was the company didn't have to pay me, ACC would cover it, but 1 should've gone to the doctors straight away instead of trying to be a hero and carry on' (Men's Focus Group).

'I slipped at the Works. I was standing on this concrete platform; there was a bit of rubbish on the floor and I slipped and fell against the corner. It pushed my bone right down into the joints. It got that bad I couldn't use my arm. I had to carry it around so I told the boss I was finishing up' (Men's Focus Group).

Receiving accident compensation (compo) was a common event. It was recognised amongst the workers that the most common way to get compo was by being cut with a knife. However, one participant shared his story of discovering a new method, quite by accident. He recalled finishing legging the first leg of the sheep and as he lifted the sheep the top half of the hook broke off and whacked him in the eye. His reaction was 'I'm going on compo' and although this incident was accidental it was also another method of getting compensation.

The cold conditions in the Works affected arthritis and other sicknesses. One participant in the Men's Focus Group talked about his mother, '…she suffers from arthritis in her fingers'. Often the consequences of working at the Works were all too evident in older workers.

> **'You can tell a freezing worker. You only have to look at his hands. It's hard work alright. You don't really notice it until you get a bit older. When you're younger you're running up those stairs. To the latter years we had a lift and even the younger ones used to take the lift. Some of the old fellas, they'd only walk a couple of steps and then they'd stop and you wondered how they coped on the job, but that was their life' (Men's Focus Group).**

Looking after the workers was a priority at the Works and some senior workers were 'put on the broom' so they could stay employed. Often other workers would carry a worker if they were injured or aged, or there was a tangi or sickness.

'I remember one day when this young fella who was a student came up to get a job , I guess to pay for his tuition fees and one of the bosses of the labourers put him on the wash. If anyone knows or has worked on the wash its not the best job in the place, anyhow, the word got around that this guy was there, so I decided to give him a warm welcome and hosed him up the bum. Well you wouldn't believe it, I think it was about four years later when I was working on the chain, I whacked my finger with my knife, mind you I had made arrangements to go diving if the weather was good. Anyhow, my finger swelled up so off to the first aid room I went to see if I can get on compo and go out diving, and who should I run into in the first aid room was this very same guy that I used to hose up the bum. This guy had graduated and become a doctor, not only did he become a doctor, he became the Whakatu Work's doctor and like an elephant he certainly didn't forget my dial, the last laugh was on him.

Summary

The financial rewards of Whakatu were a large part of the appeal of working there. Another large part was the camaraderie that was engendered among the workers, both inside and outside of work hours. While the introduction of women into the workforce temporarily disrupted this camaraderie, the women soon showed that they could hold their own with 'the boys'; often sticking up for one another when the jokes and the humour of the Works became a little over-powering for junior women.

When participants were asked to talk about working at the Works it was stories about the camaraderie that they shared, along with comments about their pay packets. They did not talk much about the work itself, apart from some discussion of how senior workers mentored more junior workers into their jobs, about the fight women had to be accepted onto the chain, and about the injuries that the work often inflicted. The work itself fell into the background as the culture of Whakatu took centre stage in the discussions.

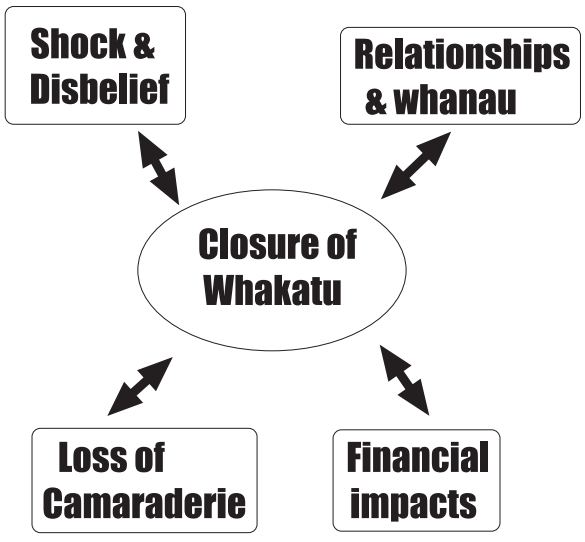
CHAPTER 5.
CLOSURE & REDUNDANCY

'I can still remember the day of the closure. We all got the message to go to the slaughterboard for a meeting. Most of us were going over to the bowling hall cause the boardwalk was having their break up. I shot over to the union office first and K--- said 'no, no G---' I said 'no, I've just heard the rumour, the Works is closing - where's uncle Bill, where's uncle Bill'. And he was over at the bowling club. So 1 went over there and said to A--- 'A--- I've just heard a rumour down the boning room, S--- C---'s going to make an announcement and everyone has to go to the slaughterboard, the Works is closing'. He started laughing. Everyone started chuckling and saying 'oh f...off.' Well that night my brother-in-law, down in Wellington, had heard and he rung me up. I rang A--- and he said 'oh bloody hell that's bullshit'. Next minute he rang back cause someone else had rung him. That's my remembrance of the closure' (Women's Focus Group).

On 10 October 1986 Whakatu closed suddenly and approximately 2,000 people were made redundant in a move that affected whole families and communities. The shock and grieving began when workers were told about the closure through mates, family or media networks. The workers felt betrayed by the company and to a degree by the union, however the Meat Industry and companies were into mergers at the time and Whakatu was sacrificed. The union had no bargaining power but managed to settle a redundancy for workers. Couples who were both working at Whakatu at the time felt that they were doubly penalised as both lost their jobs. Going on the dole was a big, and often demoralising, step for some workers. Some workers formed co-ops to buy bulk food until they received their redundancy. Some formed trusts and went out orchard picking. Everyone tried to cope the best they could with some doing a better job of this than others.

This chapter looks at the initial impact and aftermath of the closure of Whakatu. The themes explored start with how workers and others heard about the closure and their reactions to this news (see Diagram 3). The closure meant the loss of the camaraderie of the Works as well as the loss of financial well-being. These two themes are explored next. The final themes are about the effect of the closure on relationships and whānau. The longer-term impacts of the closure, both negative and positive, for workers, their whānau, and their communities is the topic of Chapter 6.

Diagram 3. Closure and redundancy themes



The Works Close

The initial reactions among participants to the sudden closure of Whakatu were of disbelief and deep shock.

> **'It was a shock. It was a shock to read that Whakatu had closed simply because of all the years I had spent there, the friends that had worked there and the things we used to do there. It was unbelievable' (Men's Focus Group).**

> **'When I look back on the situation then and try to retrace the moments of my thoughts I tend to shudder because I felt that I was robbed like most everyone else who worked at Whakatu' (Male Key Informant).**

Many of the workers received the news of the closure through the public media, particularly television. One of the male participants said he heard about the closure from his sister-in-law and was told to watch the news. Another participant was socialising at a local tavern with a group of workers when one of them noticed Whakatu on the television screen. However because they were listening to the jukebox, it was not until the next morning when he heard it on the radio that he realised why Whakatu was on the television the previous night.

One former worker said that he was asleep when his sister phoned him and he thought it was a bad dream until he double-checked the next morning. Another said that his brother-in-law at another freezing works had heard the rumour of Whakatu closing before it actually happened. One female informant said, 'I was sad to see it close. We went through the grieving process of lost friends and the company because of the whānau concept we had in the Works'.

The blow of the closure was particularly hard because of the reassurances from management that directly preceded it; that the Works would remain open.

> **'We were celebrating with the company staff that day after the general manager was thanking everybody for the [work done] because of the upheaval within the industry and he assured the workers, both staff and employees, that Whakatu's future was secured. Yet that very same night, in a matter of hours they closed the place down' (Male Key Informant).**

Participants described how they 'lost confidence in big league bosses' as a result. They were stunned by 'what a big liar that fella was, who came into the meeting and told us it was all still happening'.

For some, the explanation for why the Works closed was closely linked to its reputation. 'We were too big and too powerful and if we went, it was easy to knock off the rest and so it happened. After we went [the other works] just caved in'. This seemed the only plausible explanation for men and women who had seen millions of dollars poured into upgrading the Works prior to its closure, and had been party to management reassurances that the Works would stay open.

> **'We heard from one of the women that they spent two million dollars up in the slaughterboard on new technology' (Men's Focus Group).**

The way the workers were informed of the closure and the manner in which it was done left not only the workers 'in shock and disbelief' but also impacted on their whānau and the wider community. The closure often meant redundancy for several members of a family.

> **'I've got a lot of memories of Whakatu. I've seen it grow. I've seen people grow in a sense that they have had families of their own, their kids have grown up and have worked at Whakatu' (Male Key Informant).**

The rangatahi group recalled the impact the grieving and shock the closure had upon their whānau. They felt the closure was terrible. One participant noted that 'every member of the whānau worked there, right down to cousins and the stress from it all, was just incredible. A lot of things happened and it was all through the closure with no money and no food'.

> **'I never worked in the Works but the only thing I can remember after watching TV, was sitting there with tears in my eyes. It was just the whole effect upon the community and watching the different ones talking about it... Just knowing that a lot of lives would be shattered. It was just dramatic. That was the only life they had' (Women's Focus Group).**

The notion of the Works being the workers' 'only way of life' was reiterated in some of the interviews, for example: 'When it closed I was really sad and sorry and couldn't believe it, but I felt sorry for the Māori men that worked at the Works – to them it was a way of life, it wasn't just a job, they'd do the same thing at the same time every single day, it was like a ritual and no one dared break the ritual' (Female Key Informant). The impact was felt most by men in their fifties and older,

> **'Those that were in their fifties, they used to have a lifestyle: getting up in the morning and going to work. They were getting up all right but had nowhere to go' (Men's Focus Group).**

> **'When Māori Affairs got involved with the closure of Whakatu they sent some of their community workers out into the community and the half a dozen places that they visited they found that these guys were sitting at home with their drapes drawn. They didn't want any kind of help and told them where to go. One or two died not long after that' (Men's Focus Group).**

One worker said 'I think we were in deep mourning for a couple of years or so. Why us? We were the best works with the best throughput and had great fortunes and great everything – why did it happen to us?'

A former worker said like everyone else it was a bit of a shock that he did not want to accept. He was more fortunate because his wife worked but he did not know where he was going to go. The freezing works industry had been his life and he expressed to his wife his optimism that the Works would not close – 'it's not going to close, something will crop up and they'll open it again'. She, in response, was more pessimistic and reiterated that the Works was not going to re-open. Another participant also commented that prior to the closure the managing director of Whakatu had gone to the managers and told them 'that he wasn't sure whether Whakatu will

reopen. He said he couldn't give any assurance that Whakatu will start up the following season'. The implication of this was that there had been some forewarning that Whakatu was to close.

Even in the midst of the widespread shock and disbelief, some workers were relieved, if not actually glad, that the Works had closed.

> **'For me it was a kind of relief. My daughter was only three months old and you weren't allowed to have six months maternity leave and because I was on chain one the decision for me was quite hard. It was whether to go back to work or lose my seniority. But when [the Works closed] the decision was made for me' (Women's Focus Group).**

One participant said that he knew someone who 'was glad the place closed 'cause he always wanted to be a teacher but he stayed because of the friendships and the money. He said he was looking for a way out and when it closed he was actually glad'. Others, whose livelihoods depended on their jobs at the Works, were understandably not happy about this sentiment being expressed.

The impact of the closure was also felt across the wider community: 'Everyone in the pa at Kohupatiki was hit by the closure'. The closure drew out community support for workers:

> **'One good side we did see from the community came from the church. They got together and gave a huge amount of money to the workers. So you saw the goodness of people pull together for that' (Women's Focus Group).**

In the time immediately after the closure many workers were also optimistic about their future. Several workers gained re-employment in the meat industry: 'four months after, I picked up a job at Richmonds' and 'two weeks after the closure I started at Tomoana and was there for two seasons'. One group of workers created a cooperative at a local marae. Every week, members would contribute a set amount towards their fund to buy food in bulk. The cooperative survived until after the redundancy was paid out. Other workers tended to lock themselves away. A couple I know actually locked themselves away from everything.

Loss of Camaraderie

As described in Chapter 4, Whakatu not only provided an important source of occupational identification and status; it provided a bond of camaraderie between workers, and between the workers, management and union. Whakatu was a physical embodiment of social networks and context. The workers regarded the Works as a 'home away from home'. With the sudden closure, some of these bonds became disabled although for a lot of the workers the bonds may have strengthened through support offered and received after the closure.

> **'The guys that you worked with were fantastic. There was that camaraderie amongst [different groups of workers] and I guess throughout the whole system, you had that sort of allegiance group. They sort of stuck with each other. When you went down to the Clive it didn't take you long to congregate in one corner…' (Male Key Informant).**

From the interviews, it appears that many of the Māori workers had widespread family and social networks on which to rely for assistance, such as gaining re-employment, following the closure.

'When I went for a job as a packer M--- was the one doing the interview. I kind of had second thoughts about working there because I felt...well, I've worked with M--- at the Works. I didn't want to... I thought that my interview may have not been as thorough as somebody else's because I knew her sort of thing...I missed out on the day shift so she rung me to see if I want to go on the night shift' (Women's Focus Group).

Camaraderie was also maintained through initiatives to support people during the closure and hard financial times. One such initiative was buying bulk vegetables. This was considered to be 'all short term stuff. It was like, just keeping everyone together and everyone liked it' (Women's Focus Group).

There were those who did not gain re-employment, or whose social networks may have disintegrated, who longed for the camaraderie of their former work colleagues. The participants were of the view that it was the men who wanted 'to see or socialise with their former workmates'.

'He wanted to go to the Clive pub once or twice a month to meet his mates, I said your mates are all long gone, they've gone down south, they're over in Australia, they're gone' (Female Key Informant).

'Over the years I found that I was missing all the boys and the rivalry we used to have at work' (Male Key Informant).

A Female Key Informant summarised the need for the men to retain and maintain camaraderie. She commented that the men had been at the freezing works since it started and therefore found it harder to adapt to the closure. Hence their need to retain social ties with their former work comrades:

'See the thing is with the men, they were there from day one, when the Works opened, women came into the freezing works much later'.

Financial Strife

'Between my husband and I, we were bringing home under a thousand a week and the impact of it all was when the Works closed down. We didn't know how to save and everything hit us' (Female Key Informant).

When Whakatu closed there were financial pressures on those homeowners who still had mortgages. For many of the workers their home was important to them and this was borne out by the fact that they had managed to maintain their repayments. However, the homes workers had bought as an asset during the working life of Whakatu became a liability for most after the death of Whakatu. Many young workers were affected by the closure because they tended to have young dependent families and be committed to high mortgage repayments.

'I guess the first that hit me was how would I pay for my mortgage, what am I going to do without a job, who is going to pay the bills, all that stuff went through my mind in a flash... I was looking forward to getting back to work as soon as I was able to get mobile because I had at the time of purchasing the house taken out a higher rate of mortgage repayments' (Male Key Informant).

'I think the biggest shock for [my husband] and I was deciding what are we going to do and how we were going to pay our mortgage. But then we weren't the only ones in that situation...' (Women's Focus Group).

The stress of having no regular income was at times compounded by workers' reluctance to sign up for the dole. This, in turn, impacted on relationships and led to a participant in the Women's Focus Group threatening her husband because she could not take the situation. The impact of the closure on relationships is also explored more below.

'We were living off our savings for a while until we began to find it hard. So I said to him, 'I'm not prepared to live like this, if you don't sign up [for the dole] I'll go the other way and apply for the DPB'. I had to threaten him. The closure affected both of us, but him more than me. He had been at the Works for eighteen years and to have it suddenly close was as though there had been a death in the family. Sometimes I had to get out. I hated being at home because of that stress. It was quite horrible' (Women's Focus Group).

At the time of the closure, some of the workers had home finance from the Māori Affairs Department (now Te Puni Kōkiri). The Department offered advice and support to these workers so that they were able to keep up with their mortgage repayments.

One of the Female Key Informants mentioned how a work colleague of hers 'accidentally stumbled' across insurance for hire purchase,

'I'll tell you one thing that happened, when the Works closed, we didn't get our redundancy until a few months after the closure, so everyone was getting worried about all the things they had on hire purchase. Just quite by accident one of my friends went into this particular shop and told them that she didn't have that month's payment and that it might be a little while before she could get it. They looked up her file and she was actually insured against things like that. In fact 99 per cent of us were on hire purchase, but we never knew about the insurance. None of the businesses ever bought it to our attention and so when she told me we did some ringing around to let everybody know because some them were getting quite stressed out because they couldn't meet their payments. And of course once they knew they went straight down there 'aren't we insured against this?', and of course most of them were. There were some businesses that didn't have that kind of insurance or they don't let you know these things unless you ask. But we thought we were quite neat letting everybody know about that'.

Redundancy Payout

It took the Whakatu branch of the New Zealand Meat Workers and Related Trade Union a few months to bargain and negotiate a redundancy payout for the workers.

> **'When the closure happened on the 10 October, the union office remained open until June/July, 1987. We were busy negotiating the redundancy, but at the same time we were helping our people, getting them assistance with their mortgages etc.' (Male Key Informant).**

The redundancy from the closure provided some financial relief for many homeowners in terms of their mortgage repayments, and some workers were able to purchase a home using their redundancy,

> **'I used half of my redundancy to purchase my house at Takapau and the other half to pay off my bills and buy up what I wanted' (Women's Focus Group).**

> **'My old man was paid out his redundancy... by the time tax was taken out it dwindled down... We pulled our money together and we paid our house off and every lay-by thing we had...' (Female Key Informant).**

Other workers were not so considered with the redundancy money they received and, looking back, could see that it could have been spent in better ways. As one participant said, 'If you got $20,000 dropped into your lap, you wouldn't know how to handle it'.

> **'... when I got my redundancy the sharemarket was in a high... and a friend of mine says 'come on boy, you'll make millions here'. I didn't even discuss it with my wife. So half of my redundancy went into the sharemarket and because I decided to get involved in it, my shares just started going down. It went from $3.55 to 19 cents and every so often my wife would ask 'how's it going?'. 'Oh, long-term dear, long-term" (Men's Focus Group).**

Looking back at how various workers had spent their redundancy payout, some participants suggested that 'people needed financial advice' at the time in order to help them make good decisions.

> **'We did really, really dumb things when I look back on it now. Our financial advice was investing in pyramid schemes. I lost $5000 and that's because I had it, they came, and I gave it. I learnt the hard way didn't I' (Female Key Informant).**

Relationships

The comments from the female participants were that the closure of the Works impacted more on the men than it did on the women who were working there at the time. This may be a reflection of the reasons given for why women went to work at the Works, namely, 'because of the money, to help with their income, and most women knew that they couldn't stay there forever so women had to be more adaptable than men' (Female Key Informant). Some of the women spoke about the impact of the closure on them, and also on the men:

> 'I noticed with a lot of the freezing workers, especially with husbands working there the women got out [after the closure] and did something else and the men moped around for ages before they actually got into other paid employment. I think they thought that one day Whakatu would open again. I'm not running the men down, it's just they way they were thinking at the time' (Female Key Informant).

It was noted by the women participants that the women who were made redundant tended to get on and do things – retrain, gain other employment, become involved in community activities. The men, on the other hand, tended to 'gather together and talk about the good old days and they'd relive it and relive it and were really getting nowhere' (Female Key Informant). This difference in reactions to the closure did not bode well for relationships between those who were caught up in the redundancies.

> **'There was a lot of 'blood sweat and tears'. When everything's running smoothly for the children, it's not running smoothly for him and I. We have our upsets too, but you have to get a grip on life – even if you have to start all over again and that's basically where we are, back to square one. Lucky the house and everything's paid for' (Female Key Informant).**

During the course of interviewing, many participants emphasised the severe family stress that had occurred since the closure. The stress of job loss, social contact, income and confidence to find and gain other employment created considerable tension in many relationships. One worker said the money was not coming in and he and his partner eventually divorced. Subsequently, he felt that his marriage was a greater loss than the closure of Whakatu, especially losing his daughter 'it was sad to see my partner with somebody else and my daughter calling him dad. I thought I had failed as a father'.

Participants in the Women's focus group said that finances underpinned their relationships and created stress that forced them into making decisions that they would not have made if there was a regular income:

> **We weren't getting income for about seven months, then one day I said, 'it's time for a pay you stay here, I'm off'. I wasn't prepared to get back together because of that' (Female Key Informant).**

> **'For some people we spoke to, applying for the benefit was a easy way of getting income. It started off that they would part and if you had two or more kids, the father would take one and the mother would have two or the other and they would both apply for the**

DPB. And they'd do that because they couldn't find jobs and being together was sort of stressful, but they wouldn't of been able to get it together anyway because they'd be too busy worrying about Social Welfare finding out. So it would become a major split' (Women's Focus Group).

'We had to live in two separate houses and we'd grown apart. I couldn't afford to go off the DPB and I couldn't live with him because I had the fear of being caught from Social Welfare and it was really hard for him to live away from us. He would come and visit and then go to his house, it was really hard' (Women's Focus Group).

One female key informant spoke about the jealous nature of her spouse and the violence within the relationship,

He's beaten me that many times, its not funny. The last time was two years ago and I had to admit him. I called the police and told them to take him. They couldn't control him in jail, so they'd ring me up' (Female Key Informant).

Many relationships experienced structural change such as the role reversal of husband and wife, or partners moving out of the household to relieve financial hardship or having to travel to another area for employment. Because of such pressures, participants in the Women's Focus Group commented that when they met former work colleagues they would enquire to see if they were in still in the same relationship,

'The comment that was made to us was 'are you two still together, everyone else I know have parted'. That must have been a major thing, aye, especially when the husbands go away' (Women's Focus Group).

The women also noted that there had been a number of divorces since the closure. Having said this, a participant in the Men's Focus Group said that, 'After the closure it made me and my wife stronger. The bond was tighter'.

Whānau

Changes also happened with whānau, both in terms of how people engaged with one another and how whānau were structured. One of the changes was the breaking up of whānau who had grown used to working together at the Works. As one participant in the Rangatahi Focus Group said, 'I miss working as a family unit. We've all split up and in different places'. In some cases family members not only worked in different places, they had left to find work in different locations including Australia, 'A lot of our families sort of went overseas or down south'.

People often left to relocate to other areas in order to find work. A participant in the Rangatahi Focus Group said that, 'It's mostly the young couples with families that have stayed here. It's pretty hard to go anywhere when you've got a family; you've sort of got to stick around and do what you can'.

Other families found structures that worked for them, offering support and assistance where it was needed and keeping them together.

‘We started a family trust which brought us all together and helped us all out…’ (Rangatahi Focus Group).

Summary

The sudden closure of Whakatu was hard on workers, their whānau, and their communities. While a few of the workers expressed relief at the closure, most were shocked and disbelieving. Participants acknowledged that the impact was hardest on the older men at Whakatu because the Work had become a ‘way of life’ for them. The women, on the other hand, were relatively quick to pick themselves up and look for other options; perhaps because they were often at the Works in order to earn money to support themselves and their whānau and had not made the Works their whole life. Some of the men were also able to move on to employment in other Works and/or to collaborative ventures to support the redundant workers (e.g., cooperative for buying vegetables). These endeavours may have facilitated some continuity of the camaraderie they had at the Works. The networks people had from the Works also assisted workers finding other employment.

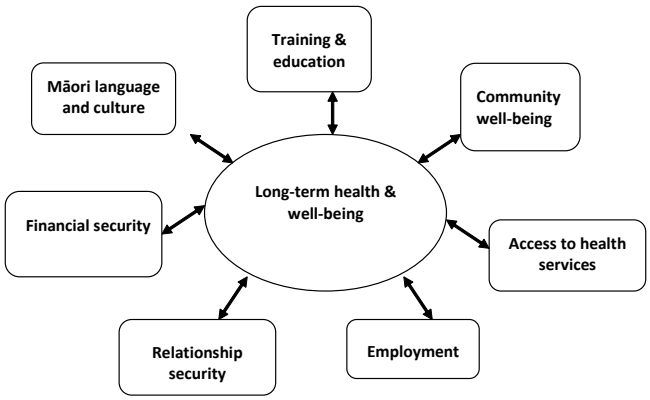
For some the loss of their jobs, especially the loss of their income, meant their relationships were placed under stress which, at times, led to separation or divorce. The financial stress, at least, was eased for many by the redundancy payment that workers eventually received, although some participants reported that financial advice on how to handle the payout would have been good. The female participants also reported that they often took charge within their relationships, organising their men folk and providing them with options (and sometimes ultimatums). Overall, the findings point to the women being a strength within whānau following the closure of the Works.

CHAPTER 6.
LIFE AFTER WHAKATU

'...ten years on, it's just a matter of progress. The memories are still there, but what you're doing now is getting on with your life. Life is what you make of it. Get in there and do what needs to be done' (Male Key Informant).

The immediate consequences of the closure of Whakatu were about the shock and disbelief of the redundant workers and their financial and personal concerns while they waited for their redundancy payouts. Having considered the closure and what happened to people shortly afterwards, the participants were asked to talk about the longer term consequences of the closure for themselves, their whānau and the wider community (see Diagram 4). At the time the interviews were carried out the Works had been closed for ten years.

Diagram 4. Life after Whakatu themes



Employment

A number of the workers from Whakatu found re-employment in other freezing works. While this utilized their skills they were often surprised that the conditions and the camaraderie that had existed at Whakatu were not present in other works.

'For me it's been really hard working at other premises. It's not the same. I worked in the --- boning room down in W--- and I couldn't handle it. When we worked at Whakatu, even though you had differences, you never got swamped with work; people always jumped in and helped you but at W--- nobody helped you' (Women's Focus Group).

'T--- was the same [as the works described above]. They were shocking to work for. When I went to T--- I hated the place. I took my seasons and finished' (Women's Focus Group).

'When J--- and I went to Australia we saw a lot of the freezing works and they were working in the open air, no hygiene. The sun was shining in on them. It was such an eye opener to how we used to work at Whakatu – cleanliness was godliness' (Women's Focus Group).

Similar comments about shocking hygiene practices were made by participants in the Women's Focus Group who had found employment in other food industries. However this was not everyone's experience, as a Male Key Informant pointed out,

‘When I first started at H--- I got on well with everybody. There may have been the odd one or two but other than that they were all down to earth people; good people... the work environment there had the same attitude as Whakatu. It was like a whānau situation’.

Often the work at other freezing works required workers to travel or re-locate. In one town the locals were resentful that ex-Whakatu workers had been employed over locals. ‘Being a new industry to the area the town’s people were quite put out so there was a lot of confrontation until the town’s people realised that these guys knew what they were doing and started to ease off’ (Women’s Focus Group). The travel took its toll on people, with workers being described as too tired to spend time with their family and, in at least one case, being involved in road accidents.

‘He did a fair bit of travelling back and forth. One part there he moved to T--- but then he started travelling back and forth again. The marriage was okay, but then he was taken out by a drunken driver’ (Women’s Focus Group).

In one case, a participant threatened that she would walk out on her husband if he did not finish up at another works and stop commuting because he was getting too tired and their children were missing him. Her solution was to fill in a form for another job for him, fake his signature, and convince him to go to the interview for another job which he subsequently got. In other cases, men chose to stay in the place where the work was rather than commute and this was also hard on relationships in its own way. As one participant in the Women’s Focus Group said, ‘Then there was T--- [place name]. Some of the husbands were staying in T--- because they didn’t like travelling back and forth so relationships would start up down there and then that was the end of that’.

A participant in the Men’s Focus Group talked about how getting out of the Works and experiencing other employment and places had opened up a whole new world for him.

‘I’ve found this whole new world. When we were at the freezing works we had all our mates – you’d get into your little groups... When I finished at W--- I ended up driving trucks, did a little stint in Aus, came back and got involved in [this research]... If the Works didn’t close I’d probably still be there’ (Men’s Focus Group).

Other participants also had found work that suited them, ‘some are teachers; some of them have got their own businesses’.

‘The sort of work I’m involved in now is horticulture. I wanted to do something outside’ (Men’s Focus Group).

‘The only thing I’ve done besides shearing is truck driving and I tried a bit of fruit picking then I started shearing again and I’m still shearing today and I enjoy it’ (Men’s Focus Group).

Sometimes the most important thing about the work was that it was a job rather than being on the dole,

'My impression from some people is there's no pride in getting the dole, they should be going out working for their money. I've known some who have been working in jobs and they're only getting a third of what they were getting, sometimes less, but they were doing something. When you haven't got employment and you're on the dole it doesn't look after health, it doesn't look after education' (Male Key Informant).

For another participant, the most important thing about the closure was a chance to have a break,

'To be quite honest, when I was made redundant I was looking forward to the day when I could just sleep in for as long as I liked. But it didn't happen and I started to get resentful of the things people were pushing me into... and so I realised that I would have to do it myself – just say 'no" (Female Key Informant).

Access schemes that offered short-term employment, training and work experience also benefited marae. Even when people were on the dole, marae still benefited.

'A few marae benefited from the closure. There were a lot of access schemes running with carpentry, carving and cooking classes and that enabled most of the maraes to be renovated... At M--- [marae] the carvings are finished and they've got a massive veranda' (Male Key Informant).

'...the closure of the Works helped to build the marae and the dining room. The boys were still on the dole so they came down there and volunteered their labour and the dining room went up' (Male Key Informant).

The tensions that were evident within relationships were sometimes played out when women were re-employed, or when they sought re-training (see below). One Male Key Informant commented that he'd noticed that 'a lot of the husbands weren't working and the wives are'. Even though husbands expressed their frustrations about not being employed and/or not being the breadwinner in a variety of ways, the women had ways of retaliating.

'As for work, I've had five jobs, one after the other. Soon as I started one job my husband would ring up to the boss and ask him to sack me and when I applied for another he'd do the same thing again. Now, when he tells me to go and look for a job I tell him to 'go and root your boot', but that's how we are today' (Female Key Informant).

Training and Education

This section looks at the mainstream training and educational opportunities that were picked up by the workers and their whānau. As one Key Informant said, 'A lot of Māoris got off their butt and a hell of a lot of them have gone through university and polytech; they've retrained and are living a new life'. All this was seen as very positive by this informant. Many also opted into Māori language courses and became more knowledgeable about tikanga (culture) and their marae. This type of training and education is explored below in the theme on Māori language and culture.

Training programmes offered ex-workers the chance to learn new skills and get paid a little bit more than they got on the dole (Male Key Informant). These programmes allowed some workers to change direction in the type of work they did,

> **'I wanted to do something outside. I was sick of working inside so I decided to apply for a course run by the Agricultural Department for pruning apple trees. I think there was 15 of us from all different areas, mostly Māori. At the end of the course you got a certificate saying that you'd been taught by the Agricultural Department. So that was another stage of my life' (Men's Focus Group).**

> **'I sat a few courses in carpentry and got a bus license through the dole. I couldn't get a job here but I did get one somewhere else and I like it there' (Men's Focus Group).**

The re-training was also viewed as positive for the community by one participant,

> **'I think a lot of people re-trained and up-skilled and because of that I believe that the community must benefit. You think of a thousand people in the community with the same skills, and then eight hundred of them start re-training and learning a whole lot more skills – I think it would benefit the community' (Men's Focus Group).**

However attending a training programme was no guarantee of work as jobs were still hard to come by at the time, and there were many people who had the same certification. As one of the Key Informants noted,

> **'I know quite a few people who have come through training programmes and I'd say a good 50 percent of them have learnt about five different programmes, but it still didn't give them a job; all it did give them was a certificate. There's about 10,000 other people with the same certificate, applying for the same job. That's ridiculous'.**

One of the most astounding issues described by the older women who had been employed at the Works was about their difficulties understanding people on the 'outside'. As it turned out, the Works had sheltered people from the bigger world outside its gates as many workers worked, lived and socialised with people who worked at the same place they did. Two of the older Female Key Informants recognised this when they attended a wānanga for redundant women and did not know what was being talked about. In the end, they realised that as their social life had revolved around the Works, they had missed out on changes in language and the way people talked.

> **'J--- and M--- set up this wānanga for redundant women, we had one of the sessions at the marae and J--- was standing in front of us talking and you know we didn't know what she was talking about. When we broke for a cup of tea one of my friends says to me "do you know what she's talking about?" I said**

"oh are you feeling it too", and she said "yes" so I went round asking the other women and we were all in the same boat. Our main topic of conversation was freezing works, kids, freezing works, husbands and suddenly here was this woman, that we all knew, standing in front of us gabbing away and we didn't even know what she was talking about and that was because the phrases she was using was all new to us - we'd been out of touch. It took me a long time to realise what she was talking about because we never used those words; we used others. At the end of that session I said 'J--- I don't know what you're talking about' 'and she said "why?" and so between the two of us we realised what it was; we've been stuck for 16 years, some a bit longer, talking about the same things while the world and these new phrases were passing us by. I didn't think I was that bad, but this soon proved me wrong and that's why that group was formed so that people could come and talk to us and we could familiarise ourselves with the changes. Okay we knew some things, but we weren't really with it, but from then on we started to learn the new terminologies. You'd be surprised how in 16 years so much had changed. We were just absolutely lost, but we were too scared to say, you're thinking am I that dumb and we were frightened to ask one another until one person opened the flood gates. But it was a real eye opener. To think that here we were living in Hastings and all these changes were going on - they were really minor changes, but quite drastic when you're sitting there listening to somebody and you don't know what she's talking about' (Female Key Informant).

Women who attended these types of courses often did not know what they were going to do, and it even took them a while to recall the skills that they had possessed prior to starting work at Whakatu.

'A lot of the women who were on our course didn't know what they were going to do. I told them to list the things you did before you went to work at the Works and for a split second they couldn't think of anything. I had to give them half a day because they were still thinking Works so it took them all of half a day to sort of suddenly realise; yes I had a life before the Works. Some of them went back to their old jobs, after upskilling themselves in the different areas, and they were good jobs. But they all went to the Works because of the quick money. One of the girls suddenly remembered she had office skills so she eventually got a job in Postbank. They all went back to what they used to do before they went to the Works, but you see the Works had that hold on you - if you stayed there too long you'd think you'd been there forever. It took a while to remember what they used to do; and remember the skills they had' (Female Key Informant).

There were other women whose husbands did not want them to pick themselves up and attend these types of courses:

> **'I attended a one week course out at W--- until my husband made me finish. He resented the fact that I had an outlet and he didn't' (Women's Focus Group).**

Some of the workers receiving their training informally through friends and new workmates. For example, when asked how some ex-workers had learned their carpentry skills a Male Key Informant answered that his brother had taught them; that they 'didn't know how to sharpen a saw, didn't even know how to use a hammer'.

Māori Language and Culture

When the Works closed more interest was generated in learning about Māori language and culture; 'there's been a big renaissance in Māori doing Māori things' (Key Informant). One participant talked about his cousin being lucky to fill a class when he first started teaching at the polytechnic to 'last year I think he had something like eight classes and he was asking the polytechnic for more space'.

> **'As far as Māoridom was concerned I suppose there was a boost in learning their Māoritanga by going to polytech which of course is generated by the introduction of Kōhanga Reo. People I know travel to Palmerston North just to learn the reo [Māori language]' (Male Key Informant).**

The payoffs of these courses and the learnings that workers gained were sometimes evident on the marae in the area. As a Key Informant said, 'it's good to see different ones standing up and speaking in their tongue'.

> **'I remember going to a tangi and we saw some of the guys from the Works standing on the paepae. I was thinking I would never have thought that they would be doing that one day' (Male Key Informant).**

> **'As time went by they started getting into their Māori culture and whaikōrero. It got to the stage where everybody wanted to get up and whaikōrero. So those were the kind of things that were happening and what I liked about the place' (Male Key Informant).**

Changing employment circumstances also meant that kawa (protocols) on the marae changed in response to workers' difficulties getting time off for tangi and needing to return to work relatively quickly.

> **'People who come to the marae don't stay as long as they used to; they just come, pay their respects, have a cup of tea and they're gone. You don't see them again whereas before they sat there right through. You'd always see a veranda full of our old people but you don't see many people sitting at a tangi, no matter who it is' (Male Key Informant).**

Practices have also changed at many marae so that now people could be welcomed onto marae after dark 'because they realise that their job is very

important to uphold', whereas previously the gates were closed and no-one would be called on after sunset.

> **'I think we were working under different conditions in those times... Ten years ago [the Kaumātua would] be encouraging people to turn up on the marae, on the day of the actual funeral, but for [him to now] stand up and say 'you fellas have showed your respects, look after your jobs now'. He must've foreseen something. Like you said, jobs are most important today' (Male Key Informant).**

Finances

The reduction in workers' wages if and when they found work after the closure could be seen as a negative aspect. Even those who went to work in other freezing works found that the conditions and the wages were not as good as they had been at Whakatu. For one participant, the lower wage had resulted in good life lessons,

> **'The positive is from a big way to a little way. I suppose it's learning how to count your pennies. Counting is a whole new thing to me. When you were at the Works you didn't worry about that sort of thing, but now you've got to look further down the track with your wages. It's not so easy just to spend up large any more' (Men's Focus Group).**

> **The generosity of the workers that had been noted in their contributions to tangi was now noted by its absence. At local tangi, 'the envelope is not as full as it used to be. There's not that abundance like there used to be' (Male Key Informant).**

Relationships

While separated out from the theme below on health and wellbeing, participants and their relationships (especially spousal relationships) are intimately tied to wellbeing. One participant, for example, described how 'how one of the biggest strains' was having both him and his wife at home at the same time, 'getting on one another's nerves'. 'So I used to end up sitting outside or going to work in the shed for a couple of hours or until the kids came and told me that tea was ready' (Māori Key Informant). The long-term strain of redundancy often showed up in relationship separations and splits.

> **'Many a times him and I nearly parted. Twice I took off and twice he came looking for me. I was moving round from house to house with the kids. He'd come to one place and I just move on' (Female Key Informant).**

The experience of having both husband and wife working at Whakatu, and then being made redundant led one Female Key Informant to advise her daughters to get jobs in places away from where their husbands were working at a freezing works. This paid off when Tomoana works closed: the husbands were made redundant but their wives still had employment.

Health & Wellbeing

'When the closure happened money was less and for some health did deteriorate, but on the other hand others' health had probably never been better' (Men's Focus Group).

The participants knew of workers who had not fared so well following the closure of Whakatu.

'Since the Works closed a lot of guys have died' (Men's Focus Group).

'There's a lot of Pākehā boys around here... they used to work at the Works... C--- went down the tubes. He didn't know what the hell to do; he went round the bend' (Male Key Informant).

'...a couple of our uncles got sick. I guess the closure had a bit to do with it. It makes you withdraw a lot, hold back a lot and don't sort of let your feelings out in case of what people might say' (Rangatahi Focus Group).

'As for the old fellas, it had a big affect on them... They lost that glint in their eye and they lost their standupness. I've seen fellas, two years later, walking around on walking sticks. Couple of my mates fell to pieces, some have new missus – heavy stuff' (Male Key Informant).

'I reckon a lot of the older ones passed away. A lot of my uncles that were working there had passed away. I don't think they handled it. They just stayed home and drank' (Men's Focus Group).

There was general agreement that the older men had been hit hardest by the closure and had had the most difficulty recovering after being made redundant; 'old fellas who used to be right on the ball, sharp as a cat, fall to pieces'. Men who were told by the employment office that they were too old to work were described as losing their 'zing'. An older Male Key Informant talked about how he still got 'a bit low'. One of the older Female Key Informants described how her husband was one of those who 'became depressed and just couldn't bear life without going to the Works… He became depressed and from then on he stayed like that till he died'. For another participant, the solution for her father lay in finding other employment in a freezing works.

'My dad got a bit depressed. He had worked all his life, then he was out of a job. Whatever mum did to try and get him going, he wouldn't budge. Then one day out of the blue he came home and he said 'we're going to Australia' and that was all on. But when they came back he couldn't get a job so he sort of went down again... Then a job came up... now he's perked up because he's doing some work. When he's kept busy he's fine but when he's got nothing he goes downhill' (Women's Focus Group).

'That was quite common with husbands and wives that worked there – most of the wives said that their husbands, mostly [older men] in our age group, just couldn't shake themselves out of it. The longer they stayed at home the more depressed

they got and it was quite sad really; they just couldn't see any other way alive. There just wasn't anything else because Whakatu had closed down' (Female Key Informant).

This Female Key Informant wondered 'why are they torturing themselves' and making life miserable for their wives and family.

People were described as being 'fit at the Works… The health back then was really good' (Male Key Informant). Since the closure of the Works participants had noticed that many ex-workers had put on weight and did not seem to be as fit as they had been at Whakatu. As one Male Key Informant exclaimed, 'I just look at a few fellas, man they're carrying around pot guts'. One of the Female Key Informants described the impact of the closure on herself and her family as 'nothing drastic'. She had just noticed that her fitness level was not as high as it used to be and that 'when the Works closed I found I was eating all the time'.

The rangatahi saw the closure of the Works as one of the key reasons for their age group smoking and drinking, and having little motivation. According to one, 'It would've been different if the Works was opened. They probably would've gone to the Works too, but now that the Works has closed there's really no incentive there'.

Access to Health Services

Participants commented that a lot of ex-workers did not go to health services because they could not afford to. Other solutions therefore had to be found such as sharing medication or going to the Māori doctor:

'Or just go to the chemist and try and get something that you think might cure it. Or you share the same medication that other family members have. If you're asthmatic just go around to your cousin's and get the asthma pump from there' (Men's Focus Group).

'They either go to the chemists and get a prescription or go to the Māori doctor over in M--- where you just give a koha. I think healthwise, a lot of them suffered' (Male Key Informant).

'My brother, he's on an invalid's benefit and he went to get a tooth out and it was going to cost him $60 or $70. He asked them how much it would cost without the anaesthetic and they told him $20 so that's how much he paid. And he went through all that pain just to save money' (Male Key Informant).

Community

There was a feeling among participants that 'Hawkes Bay still hasn't fully recovered' from the closure of Whakatu, followed by the closure of the Tomoana Works. As one Female Key Informant noted, '[Hastings] became like a ghost town – there was absolutely no money… after the closure you'd walk down the street and not meet a soul'. The flow-on effects of the closure impacted on other businesses that were associated with the Works and also on local schools.

'Since the freezing works has closed there's not as much tamariki going to M--- [school]; it's just like, dead now, and I think that was a lot to do with

the Works. They stopped the bus running. The shop's not even full anymore; only a quarter of what it used to be' (Rangatahi Focus Group).

'A lot of money went out of the community... That's why places like those $2 shops and warehouses are booming. I don't know if the community's over it' (Male Key Informant).

One Key Informant described the closure of Whakatu as 'the beginning of a new era of lower socio-economic people, families and individuals in Hastings, Napier and surrounding communities like Flaxmere'. What was surprising for this Informant was that the Government and local Government did not put in place the services needed to handle the closure of Whakatu.

'Government in many aspects of the political spectrum had the technology and resources to at least ease the burden of those affected by the closure, and those who were in great need of specialised support and services' (Key Informant).

However these resources were not mobilised and it was mainly left to 'some reputable ex-freezing workers [who] got together to coordinate and deliver family support services in the hope that it would relieve some of the problems for them'.

The impact on Whakatu was described by one of the Rangatahi as being quite dramatic: 'You knew who lived in every house in Whakatu. Now you'd be lucky to know twenty of them'. Others also described how there were a 'lot of strangers' in their area now, resulting in people not knowing 'whether to trust people'. In spite of this Whakatu was described by a Key Informant as 'a good community... everybody's good… sometimes we'd have a bit of a gathering… and we'd share one another's memories and have a good laugh'.

Summary

Life did go on for many of the workers after the closure of Whakatu, even if for some the wages and working conditions of their new employment were not as good as they had been at Whakatu. While some workers returned to trades and skills they had prior to working at Whakatu, a number also took the opportunity to retrain/up-skill and change the type of employment they undertook. This was a bonus for some local marae as the men, on work schemes and on the dole, had time to help build and renovate facilities. Courses in Māori language and culture also flourished as ex-workers sought this knowledge. One challenge for the women was learning a more modern language when they found that they could not understand people outside of the Whakatu-based circle of workmates and friends that had been part of their lives for so long. The realisation of how 'isolated' they had become was an eye-opener.

Some relationships grew stronger and some ended. The strength of women was matched, over the long term, by the strength of the men. The impacts on the older men, as noted in the previous chapter, were seen by many to be negative. This may well have been linked, in the long-term, with these men not being able to find other employment. Even so, whānau and communities changed. The rangatahi especially saw a missed opportunity for a whānau work environment and an encompassing whānau community.

CHAPTER 7.
DISCUSSION

The present study explored the role of employment, and the impacts of the loss of that employment through a factory closure, for Māori workers, their whānau, and the communities in which they lived. The opportunity to study this came in the mid-1990s when some of the pain of the closure of Whakatu ten years earlier had departed from people's lives and they were able to reflect on their relationship with Whakatu, both present and past. Key informants and focus group participants shared generously about their feelings and their experiences. This Discussion now explores these findings before looking at the method employed in the present study. Following on from this some conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

Involuntary Job Loss

The closure of Whakatu came as a surprise and, like other workers in similar situations, those employed at Whakatu were left shocked, angry and in denial (cf. Brewington et al., 2004). The closure hit the male workers hard, with the older men taking the biggest knock. Many participants talked about the depression they observed among older, male ex-Whakatu workers in their communities. The Works had been their life and, as their identity was very much intertwined with being employed there, it should not have been surprising that they experienced a great sense of loss (Swineburne, 1981). The closure of the Works also came at the beginning of a time of increasing unemployment in this country so these older men faced the prospect of long-term unemployment (cf. Elder, 2002).

It is probable that many older males made redundant by the closure of Whakatu followed the stages of unemployment documented by Eisenburg and Lazerfield (1938, cited in Harrison, 1976), whereby in the absence of job prospects they moved from shock to pessimism through to fatalism. This may have been facilitated by the removal of the structure from their day and the stigma they felt about being unemployed and/or needing to rely on welfare (Breakwell, 1985). Moreover, even if they had found re-employment it is doubtful that it would have been in a similar position of seniority as they had had at Whakatu (Elder, 2002). And, as such, even re-employment may have similarly left them feeling unvalued and, as a consequence, depressed (Broom et al., 2006).

Gallo, Bradley, Dublin, Jones, Falba, Teng and Kasi (2006) give multiple reasons why job loss places older workers at risk of depression, including: financial distress, limited re-employment prospects, loss of workplace identity and interaction, disruption of work-leisure balance, and interruption of wealth accumulation to support retirement. This suggests that special steps need to be taken to ensure that the skills and experience of these older workers are not wasted in times of economic downturn; that they are not left on the 'scrapheap' but rather encouraged to retrain if there are no jobs matching their expertise, and/or take on positions of responsibility within their families and community. This may preserve their dignity and pride, and protect them against depression (cf. Shortt, 1996).

Regardless of their age many of the men reminisced about the Works following the closure. It is likely that the gathering of men in groups for this purpose actually reconstructed the camaraderie that had existed at Whakatu. These reminiscences would undoubtedly have included their conviction that Whakatu was the best Works in the country, and maintained their sense of pride in having been part of that greatness (cf. Jahoda, 1979). In addition, the reminiscing was possibly part of a grieving process that many of the men needed to go through in order to accept that Whakatu had closed for good.

While the men reminisced, their wives/partners were often getting on with organising: the household, their own lives, and sometimes even the lives of their men folk. This difference between men and women, with women being more active in unemployment, is not unusual (Martin & Wallace, 1985; Walsh & Jackson, 1995). And this 'helping hand' of women may well have been a protective factor for the men, enabling them to avoid a loss of self-confidence and to look forward to a more positive future (Paulin, 1999). Even so, tensions still arose between husbands and wives which may have, in their own right, been a motivator for the women to find other options for their men.

The women's ability to organise themselves and their partners/husbands may have been because the women went to the Works for different reasons than the men, looking to earn extra money for their household rather than being the prime breadwinner. This explanation views women's participation in the workforce as optional, and their departure from it as less stressful than it is for men (Castro et al., 1986). These stereotyped views of male and female roles were, to some extent, reflected in participants' talk. Even so, the women were part of the kinship and friendship networks that existed at the Works, often sticking together and sticking up for one another. The provision of wānanga (learning opportunities) for women who had been made redundant meant that they could move as a collective and this may also have preserved their strength and courage to move forward.

Although the participants in the present research did not talk a lot about the work that they did while employed at Whakatu, it was clear that the work was hard. Workers were at risk of accidents and injuries, and often the nature of the work itself wore out joints and muscles. Whakatu looked after its workers well with healthcare plans and also by strong social support among the workers. Following the closure the health of people suffered as they were often less active and had less access to health care (Broom et al., 2006). The loss of camaraderie would also have impacted on wellbeing.

Another big risk for whānau after the closure of Whakatu was financial hardship. Kasl and Jones (2000) suggest that the impact of job loss and the effects of financial insecurity be separated with research on the relationship between job loss and health. In the present research the financial strife experienced by ex-workers was alleviated to a great extent by the redundancy payouts they received. However this cash flow did not always lead to good decision-making with the suggestion that, just as workers needed help when they were in financial difficulty, help and advice would also have been useful when dealing with large sums of money and trying to gain financial security. Many of those interviewed put their redundancy money to good use, however, and this led to a greater sense of financial wellbeing. Even so the loss they felt over the closure of Whakatu remained.

Re-employment following the closure of Whakatu was important for many workers and it is proposed above that the lack of re-employment opportunities for older workers may have been part of their ongoing grief and sadness. However, while employment is acknowledged as important for health, not all employment is equal. For example, Broom and colleagues (2006) found that sometimes a low-quality job, in which workers are exposed to psychosocial stressors, can be as bad for someone's health as no job at all. In the present study, ex-Whakatu workers who found re-employment in the freezing works industry found that their working conditions were of a lesser quality than at Whakatu. And while the lower rate of pay was discussed by participants, it may well be that the stress of their

general working conditions also took a toll on their health and wellbeing. So there is more to the link between employment and health than merely having a job.

This is especially relevant in the present day when there is an assumption that Māori employment is more 'future-proof' than it was in the 1980s as Māori are now employed in service industries rather than in the primary industries that were so drastically curtailed in the 1980s (such as freezing works). However the question remains about whether this 'future proofing' is putting the Māori workforce at risk because workers are now heavily engaged in service industries and most likely precarious, non-standard employment (Cram, 2007). One response to this was expressed by Mason Durie at Hui Taumata when he called for a shift in emphasis away from 'access and participation' to 'quality and high achievement' (Durie, 2005). While his focus was mainly on education, the same can be said of employment. We need to stop looking at workforce participation and unemployment statistics alone, and begin to ask questions about the quality of employment opportunities being experienced by Māori workers.

The report prepared for Hui Taumata in 2005 also states that this growth in Māori employment is largely due to Māori women entering the workforce. 'Māori men, on the other hand, are now considerably less likely to be in the workforce than they were before the reforms' (p.6). This is perhaps an indication of the precarious state still of Māori men's engagement with the labour market that may stem from the loss of employment in those primary industries.

While the shock of losing their job suddenly had immediate negative impacts for many Whakatu workers and their whānau, over time opportunities opened up that workers might never have explored had they remained in employment at Whakatu. These opportunities included retraining and more involvement with things Māori, including language learning and participation on marae. For all its benefits, including camaraderie and financial rewards, employment can lock people into a way of life that may narrow both their outlook and their life course. It must be acknowledged, however, that the ways in which the participants talked about these new opportunities bears a striking resemblance to Paulin's (1999) 'process of psychological revision'. This talk may therefore have enabled the ex-workers to gain a sense of control over an otherwise unpredictable situation (i.e., the loss of their job).

There were complex outcomes from the closure of Whakatu. For some workers doors opened, while for other workers doors shut. For some their marital relationship became a source of strength; for others their relationships fell by the wayside, unable to withstand the stress that ensued (Walsh & Jackson, 1995). What stood out in the present study was the lack of control the workers experienced when the Works closed, and the lack of support that was available to them when they found themselves jobless and in financial strife. Some lessons were learned from the Whakatu closure and when the Tomoana Works closed in 1994 more formalised support structures were put in place for workers (Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora A Eru Pōmare, 2000).

The Present Study

The present, qualitative study was a collaborative, community-centred way of investigating the effects of (un)employment on the health and wellbeing of Māori. The results of this study are firmly grounded in the experiences and lived reality of ex-Whakatu workers. In approaching this topic qualitatively our concern was to have participants be in the

'driver's seat', even though we brought the research topic to them and asked the questions. For some key informants, only one question (or even an introductory remark) brought forth their stories and experiences, as if the flood gates had opened and they reminisced and considered the changes that the closure of the Works had brought about. Key informants spoke in considered and insightful ways, with each interview following different pathways according to the experiences of the person being spoken with.

More time was spent with the men's focus group than with the women's or rangatahi group. The reason for this was the trialling of the Memorywork method. In this method the men not only told their stories, they also drew out key themes and then went on to discuss these themes and their interconnectedness. The analysis of these group sessions was greatly assisted by the work that the men's group had undertaken and reassured the researchers of the potential of the Memorywork method to engage Māori research participants.

Just as the method of gathering people's talk was determined to honour their experiences and perceptions, the analysis prioritised their talk for much the same reason. A decision was made to conduct a thematic analysis that would allow the participants' voices to tell their own stories. The role of the analyst then became one of drawing out these themes (and working with the themes developed by the men's focus group), to produce a narrative about each theme that was then illustrated by excerpts from key informant and focus group interviews. The weaving of the story about life at Whakatu, the closure of the Works, and life after Whakatu was about putting the analyst in the background while at the same time acknowledging that the theme development and the selection of illustrative quotes is inherently analytical. The test of the validity of the analysis presented here will be whether people recognise 'themselves' in this version of events. This goes beyond participants' recognition of their own contribution, to having those who have not been involved in the study recognising that an interesting and thought-provoking story about the closure of Whakatu has been told here (cf. Lee, 2003). Perhaps the truest test of validity is for those non-participants who worked at Whakatu to be able to 'recognise' their own and their whānau stories within this thesis.

In terms of the larger programme of research being conducted by Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, the present study shed some light on the changes workers and their whānau went through as they adjusted to life without Whakatu. The present study also raises some issues to be addressed in future research, for example:

The rangatahi focus group talked about the impact of the closure on their whānau and their community. Future research could look more specifically at factory closures and their impacts on the children of redundant workers. Often workers are either offered employment in other centres or have to move location in order to gain employment. How does this impact on Māori children of all ages if they are uprooted from their community and have to resettle into new schools and new communities?

The present study took place in 1996 at a time when unemployment was high, especially for Māori. Given the current high demand for workers it may be that the opportunities that opened up to workers in the present study, including the opportunity to get involved in cultural pursuits, may not be contemplated as workers move quickly into re-employment following redundancy. Is factory closure therefore less of an issue for this country, or

does involuntary job loss still hit workers hard and, if so, under what circumstances? (thus separating out the economic climate from involuntary job loss).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The effects of involuntary job loss are felt by individuals, their families and their communities. These effects are complex and depend upon, for example, the role that their work has played people's lives. For many of the Māori workers at Whakatu the initial shock of the work's closing led to opportunities that they might not otherwise have explored. Ten years on from the closure the participants in the present study spoke about their lives in positive terms, while still looking back in sadness that Whakatu was no more. And many knew of older, male ex-workers who had simply slipped away into depression following the closure.

In many ways the Māori workers at Whakatu followed similar pathways as those highlighted in other research on involuntary job loss; perhaps indicating that their work was a central part in their lives and a contributor to their identities, especially for the men (Jahoda, 1979). The other, cultural source of identity identified by Durie (1985) was present at the Works, and revitalised for many of the workers following the closure. It may not be that employment at Whakatu over-rode workers' Māori identity, but that both found a place as Māori workers exhibited their ability to juggle complex identities and demands. It was through this mechanism that Whakatu became known as the 'University of Life' and this, in and of itself, may well have been a protective factor for workers following its closure.

Recommendations

The findings from the present study suggest that there are steps that can be taken to support workers following factory closures, even if re-employment is relatively easy to obtain. These include:

The provision of a funded support service, for example a one-stop-shop, where ex-workers can receive help and advice.

The provision of in-home visits for ex-workers who are known to be disconnected from support networks and services.

The development of policies within industries that allow workers to feel that they have some control over, or at least some voice in, decisions affecting their work environment.

We also need to be wary that, while people want to work, not all work will be beneficial for their health and wellbeing. There is therefore a need for constant vigilance to guard the rights of Māori workers so that they can gain the benefits linked with being gainfully employed.

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