The Lived Experience of Job Loss: Consequences for Health and Well-being and Implications for Social Policy

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June 2011

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Summary

This thesis is a case study of job loss in an Australian state with historical dependence on manufacturing industry. The overall aim is to describe and explain the consequences of job loss for the health and well-being of South Australian automotive workers who were retrenched as part of industry restructuring. The job loss occurred as a result of the downsizing and partial closure of Mitsubishi Motors' South Australian plant in 2004 and 2005 when over 1000 workers lost their employment. The study situates workers' experiences within the historical context of the broader Australian policy environment, and uses its findings to identify implications for Australian social policy in the 21st century.

This thesis adopts a critical theoretical approach, with an agency and structure perspective informed by the revival of interest in human agency in social policy and welfare research in recent decades. The study comprises two stages. The first stage includes two waves of 33 in-depth semi-structured interviews which capture the personal accounts of retrenched workers. The second stage utilises policy and other documents to present the values, views, and policy intentions of several key policy actors in the Howard Coalition Federal Government in a thematic analysis of welfare conditionality. A key finding from the first research stage was the severe consequences of job loss for workers' mental health. Another key finding was that formal supports were constrained by the structures of a neoliberal policy environment; in particular welfare-to-work policy. Other findings include a more precarious employment environment than the Mitsubishi workplace, with reduced income, poorer working conditions, and heightened insecurity. Main findings from the second research stage were that the neoliberal values informing policy actors' intentions underpinned welfare-to-work policies that were arguably harsh and judgemental. These reflected negative assumptions concerning welfare dependency and welfare recipients' motivation and agency; assumptions that contrast with the agency and resilience often displayed by the retrenched workers. Study findings reveal a dichotomy between the needs of retrenched workers and the values and intentions underpinning neoliberal policy. Theorising this dichotomy highlighted policy implications, with a range of enabling values and concepts outlined to inform more protective Australian social policy for the 21st century.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Julia Anaf

Acknowledgements

humour in the face of my preoccupation, and for being a 'sounding board' on many aspects of my work. I also thank my daughter Sophie and son Alex for their encouragement and support: Sophie for helpful insights gained from having completed her own PhD and Alex for plying me with good coffee. I also appreciate the interest shown by my mother Laurie in her 'perpetual student's' project.

I dedicate this thesis to my first grandchild, Chloe, born in 2010.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

In May 2004 Japanese automotive analyst Koji Endo (2004) made the following
statement to the Australian media:

> The unfortunate thing is that Australia for Mitsubishi Motors has never been a cash
> cow so to speak, never been a solid earnings base. Mitsubishi Motors resources are
> very limited … They might be able to keep Australia, or they might not be able to
> keep Australia. But at least a priority of Australia is, unfortunately, probably lower
> than the priority in Asia or Japan or the United States.

Endo's prediction was borne out, and during 2004 and 2005 mass job loss occurred
at Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (MMAL) in South Australia. This was in
response to the global changes that lead to industry restructuring, plant downsizing,
and plant closure. This thesis explores the personal experiences of job loss and the
consequences for the health and well-being of retrenched workers. As job loss does
not exist in a political or policy vacuum, this thesis makes the link between job loss
and the broader Australian policy environment influencing retrenched workers'
experiences. While there is a wealth of job loss research there has been more limited
Australian qualitative research linking retrenched workers' personal accounts to
wider social or policy structures. The antecedents and consequences of job loss are
examined by adopting a *structure and agency* approach. This chapter briefly outlines
the research aims, rationale and questions, research approach, and explanation of key
concepts. It concludes with an overview of the nine chapters that constitute this
thesis.

Research aims

The overall aim of this research is to explore the consequences for retrenched
automotive workers' health and well-being from job losses experienced as a result of
industry restructuring, to situate these experiences within a broader historical policy
context and identify implications for social policy in 21st century Australia. Another
aim, in Mason's (2002) terms, is to answer the research questions in ways that not

only discover new facts but also foster the critical thought and judgement necessary for theorising more enabling future policy. This research also aims to augment existing Australian research by providing a South Australian perspective on the local downsizing and partial closure of a large multinational corporation representing a manufacturing sector in decline throughout Australia.

Research rationale

Job loss is an important area for further research as it is likely to remain an enduring feature of changes to capitalism; at least in the foreseeable future. While job loss has important outcomes for affected industries, local communities and the state, it particularly stands to affect the health and well-being of retrenched workers and their families. Job loss has marked consequences for the large number of unskilled workers in declining manufacturing industries, as many full-time jobs have been increasingly replaced in the last few decades by casual, insecure and part-time work (Carney & Hanks 1994). This case study may provide insights that help to understand what it means to lose a job, and inform ways to reduce the negative consequences of future job losses. Prevailing welfare-to-work policy mediates workers' experiences of job loss by influencing both their material and psychosocial health and well-being. This is due to the level of welfare conditionality experienced, and other issues discussed throughout this thesis.

Research questions

The three questions posed for this research are:

1. What are workers' health and well-being experiences following job loss occurring as a result of industry restructuring?
2. What is the broader industrial and welfare policy environment shaping the experience of job loss in Australia?
3. What lessons are there from this study for Australian social policy in the 21st century?

Critical theoretical approach

The research uses a qualitative approach with a critical theoretical perspective, or what Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) refer to as a 'criticalist' approach defined in methodology chapter four. In adopting a structure and agency perspective this thesis

explores recent critiques of agency perspectives held by the political 'right' which have influenced prevailing neoliberal policy over recent decades, and examines expanding conceptions of agency in social policy and welfare research.

Key concepts

It is important to clarify a range of key concepts discussed in this thesis. The term *job loss* refers to the termination of a worker's employment, either in response to planned closure or company downsizing, or as a consequence of economic change, company organisation, or the increased use of technology (Parker et al. 1971). *Globalisation*, an antecedent of job loss, is a contested term covering a range of dimensions, with a hegemonic link to *neoliberal economic theory*, or *neoliberalism*. These two terms are ideological constructs incorporating a range of principles and ideas promoting self-regulation, individual choice, a commercialised public sector, free markets, low taxation and 'user-pays' principles (Clarke 2004; Mc Knight 2005; Ramia & Carney 2001).

Neoliberal economic theory has a strong influence on public policy throughout Western nation states, including Australia. It heavily influences welfare-to-work policies that help shape the experience of job loss and its aftermath for those retrenched workers who must negotiate the policy terrain for managing their labour market transition. This study explores the consequences of job loss for the *health* and *well-being* of retrenched workers, with these two concepts examined more fully in chapter three. The World Health Organisation (WHO1984, p. 20) defines *health* broadly as a resource for everyday life, including social and personal resources and physical capacity. Health and well-being are often conceptually linked, with *well-being* understood as the material, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions in life that allow for human flourishing (Nussbaum & Sen 1993).

The debate concerning *human agency* and the extent to which this is enabled and constrained by *social structure* is theorised through a co-deterministic perspective. *Co-determinism* is a compromise position seeking to bridge the polarity between the priority given to *either* structure *or* agency in social theory (Depelteau 2008). In this thesis it is explored by using insights from a range of theorists discussed in chapter five. A structure and agency perspective is the vehicle for examining the ways in

which retrenched Mitsubishi workers used their agency to deal with a range of social structures, especially the identified policy structures associated with job loss.

Welfare conditionality is another term discussed throughout this thesis. It refers to the contested extent to which the state guarantees social or material rights along with civil and political rights. It involves a targeted form of welfare generally associated with negative assumptions of welfare recipients' agency; often using stigma and economic coercion to manipulate behaviour (Popay 2008). While social welfare provision has always been conditional, this study explores the ways in which conditionality has been strengthened under neoliberalism, especially under Mutual Obligations social policy in Australia. While welfare conditionality applies to numerous national and international programs, in this thesis it is confined to the context of welfare-to-work policy. Mutual Obligations policy is predicated on the need for welfare recipients to 'give something back' in return for state support. It was the Australian policy paradigm at the time of the downsizing and partial closure of MMAL during 2004 and 2005.

Chapter outline

This thesis comprises nine chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two entitled 'Industry restructuring and automotive job loss' briefly situates the downsizing and partial closure of MMAL (referred to throughout this thesis as Mitsubishi) within changes to capitalism over recent decades, and provides background literature on automotive manufacturing to situate job loss in context. This chapter foregrounds the subjective accounts of job loss at Mitsubishi that recounted in chapter eight. Chapter three, 'Employment as a social determinant of health', reviews relevant literature on the nexus between health and well-being and employment status, including unemployment occurring as a consequence of mass job loss. It reviews selected job loss research and makes the link between job loss and the social policies designed to ameliorate it. Chapter four discusses the research methodology, including research design, theoretical perspective, aims, objectives and study questions, and situates this study and this researcher within the context of a multidisciplinary longitudinal research project. It includes an overview of the social theory informing the study, the methods adopted for data collection and analysis, and how research rigour was maintained.

Chapter five, 'Reappraising the agent in social policy', focuses on human agency, including the revival of interest in agency perspectives in social policy and welfare research in recent decades. It provides the theoretical background to the social theory drawn upon throughout the thesis, especially in chapter eight in respect of workers' subjective experiences and the ways in which they engaged their agency in dealing with job loss. Chapter six, 'Australian policy in historical context', shifts the theoretical focus from human agency to social structure. It provides an historical overview of the evolution of Australia's federal system of government to situate the contemporary policy environment within a broader historical context. It discusses the industry, industrial relations and social policies that mesh to influence employment and welfare policies that are pivotal in the lives of many retrenched workers.

This chapter also provides the theoretical and historical background to chapter seven, 'Policy actors' values and intentions', which presents a thematic analysis of the views and values of key policy actors associated with more stringent welfare conditionality imposed through industrial and welfare policies during the tenure of the Howard Coalition Government that was in office at the time of the Mitsubishi restructuring. Chapter eight, 'Subjective experiences of job loss', presents a thematic analysis of retrenched workers' accounts of the experiential nature of job loss and of dealing with its consequences, including policy consequences. Chapter nine, 'Discussion and conclusion' completes the thesis. It discusses policy implications arising from the findings of the two theoretically integrated thematic analyses. It reflects on the structure and agency perspective adopted for the thesis and promotes a progressive policy frame for welfare reform. The chapter concludes with an overview of thesis strengths and weaknesses, ideas for how it may influence further research, and some closing reflections.

The following chapter sets the study context concerned with the antecedents and consequences of job loss at Mitsubishi, linked to the hegemony of globalisation and neoliberal economic theory. It also discusses global, national and state perspectives on automotive manufacturing and the context in which job loss occurred at Mitsubishi during 2004 and 2005.

Chapter 2:

Industry restructuring and automotive job loss

> Political choices and policy structures constitute an integral concept of the globalisation process through their contribution to patterns of economic interconnection and the moulding of the perceptions about the possibilities of political action (Conley 2002, p. 262).
>
> We should use markets for the provision of services in which our only interest is as consumers, and governments for those in which we have an interest as citizens (Neutze 1996, p. 21).

Introduction

This thesis tells a story of job loss due to industry restructuring under globalisation and the changing nature of capitalism. These changes have impacted heavily on the automotive sector (Spoehr 2004a), with Mitsubishi providing one example of a multinational corporation confronted by the challenges of a global operating environment (Beer et al. 2006) common in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states. The consequences of industry restructuring are borne by workers through job losses experienced within the context of prevailing welfare-to-work policy that either ameliorates or exacerbates job loss outcomes. The focus of this chapter is on the antecedents and consequences of job loss rooted in the hegemonic link between globalisation and neoliberal economic theory. Globalisation and associated industry restructuring are antecedents of job loss, while neoliberalism is the policy context further shaping job loss experiences. The latter is a key focus of this thesis which examines the ways neoliberal welfare-to-work policies interacted with the agency of the retrenched workers.

This chapter also discusses automotive manufacturing from global, national, and state perspectives, and the history of Mitsubishi in South Australia including the global challenges leading to plant downsizing and closure, and to job loss. It provides the historical, political and policy context under which Mitsubishi restructured its South Australian operations in 2004-2005, and contextualises the

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thematic analysis of workers' subjective accounts of job loss experiences presented in chapter eight.

The nexus between globalisation and neoliberalism

A vast academic literature reveals that 'globalisation', an antecedent of job loss, is a term that is debated within many disciplinary bases. Baum (2008, p. 99) notes that global changes include political, technological, cultural, economic and ideological dimensions. The term 'political globalisation' concerns the role of global institutions and global governance, 'technological' explains new forms of communication, 'cultural' transmits ideas through cultural exchange and new social movements, 'economic' refers to free-market capitalism, and 'ideological' explains the hegemony of neoliberalism, or the growing influence of classic economic theories. Of particular relevance to this thesis are economic globalisation in OECD states and the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism that have both impacted on the welfare state. For Labonte and Schrecker (2007, p. 3) economic globalisation is the most critical global aspect, being:

> a process of greater integration within the world economy through movements of goods and services, capital, technology and (to a lesser extent) labour, which lead increasingly to economic decisions being influenced by global conditions, in other words, to the emergence of a 'global marketplace'.

The notion of a 'global marketplace' is a concept that will be discussed in retrenched Mitsubishi workers' personal accounts of job loss in chapter eight.

From the perspective of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health Globalization Knowledge Network (CSDH 2008), economic globalisation is a major driving force in promoting free-market capitalism. Large corporations are key political players through their power to influence major economic decisions. Rifkin (1995) maintains that the spatial grounding of nation states precludes their timely response to the pace of global forces, with corporations becoming powerful quasi-political institutions controlling commercial agendas. A distinction may be drawn between multinational and transnational corporations, with multinationals developing subsidiary companies in other countries historically by utilising local products and attracting local shareholders. Transnational corporations are distinctive in not relying on a home base, as goods may be bought and sold anywhere. Cars are a typical example as they may be assembled from components

manufactured in a range of countries, transferred to an assembly site and exported internationally (Beresford 2000).

Economic globalisation is also a key trigger for the industry restructuring that leads to job losses. Baum (2008) explains that economic globalisation takes the form of tariff cuts, deregulation, trade liberalisation and standards harmonisation that lead to increased international trade, transnational investment and capital mobilisation. In the modern, industrialised or Fordist era mass production was nationally based and linked to legitimated labour unions that are powerful entities for developing collective labour rights (CSDH 2008). However, as noted by Twaddle (1996) under post-Fordism or the global era, decentralised economics and globally-sourced goods have led to a decline in the number of full-time unionised workers. This has weakened the bargaining power and collective agency of the union movement as well as employment security. Globalisation also impacts upon national policies, with the fear of losing capital investment resulting in reduced welfare commitments by Western nation states (Deacon 2007).

Globalisation, neoliberal economic theory and welfare states therefore co-exist within a particular historical moment and hegemonic context. This is referred to by Bell (1997) as a neoliberal convergence with an ideological influence over people's lives (Heron 2008). As McKnight (2005, p. 19) maintains, under economic globalisation 'everything is a product and everyone is a consumer'. Chapter six discusses the ways in which citizens are now constructed as consumers under neoliberal policies, with the implications discussed throughout this thesis. Neoliberal economic theory is an echo of classical liberal political economy (Esping-Andersen 1990) with the free-market promoted by its proponents as a vehicle for providing efficient and just social and economic outcomes (Baum 2008). However, this has implications for the functioning of the welfare state and for welfare recipients who include retrenched workers. As Cerny (2008, p. 2) explains, neoliberalism has 'framed' both intellectual and political debates as an 'economic doctrine, public policy agenda, descriptive framework, analytic paradigm, and social discourse'. For Harvey (2007, p. 3) the process of neoliberalism has involved 'creative destruction'; not only of institutional frameworks, social relations and welfare provision but also 'ways of life ... and habits of the heart'.

The re-focusing on classic economic theory is a reaction against the statist strategies that prevailed between the 1930s and the 1970s. These strategies reflected the view that social development is best promoted by governments, administrators and policy makers, with the state embodying the well-being of society due to its ability to mobilise necessary resources. Statism, or centralised state administration and control (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003), involves strategies including financial redistribution, unified socioeconomic planning, universal welfare provision and public ownership. In distinction, a neoliberal economic system demands a less interventionist state, including deregulated labour and financial markets. The main objective is to focus only on the state's core functions, thereby minimising its role. This involves contracting out, 'dissolving', or taking a 'light handed' approach to economic regulation, while rejecting income redistribution other than through a minimalist welfare 'safety-net' (Quiggin 2005, p. 32). For Menigisteab (1999, pp. 140-144) it is a theory endorsing the market as the 'mover and shaker' of the economy and the vehicle by which to solve social problems. Harvey (2007a, pp. 22-23) explains that under neoliberal economic hegemony the role of the state is to:

> be concerned, for example, with the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up military, defense, police, and juridical functions required to secure private property rights and to support freely functioning markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution), then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.

Limitations of neoliberal economic hegemony

In the power shift from labour to capital and from the state to the market under neoliberalism, citizens are denied access to major decisions affecting their health and well-being. As Heron (2008, p. 93) maintains, 'with less investment in human capital by the state, individuals have less opportunity and access to the betterment of their own lives'. Neoliberalism promotes a development strategy emphasising efficiency, growth and competitiveness over social justice and redistribution (Heron 2008). Neoliberal economic theory also underpinned the move from a bureaucratic-professional welfare regime to what Williams (1999, p. 670) refers to as 'the three "M"s of 'markets, managers and mixed economies'; often referred to as economic rationalism in Australia (Pusey 1991). The basic tenet of economic rationalism, or the view that the values of the market should prevail, underpins

changes to public policy and their consequences drawn out in the following chapters.

As Baum (2008, p. 95) contends economic rationalism emphasises measuring the output of expenditures, 'elevating the quantifiable over the worthwhile'. Baum (2008) points out that the implications of economic rationalism and managerialism lie in applying market logic to non-market activities, transforming public services into 'products', focusing only on short-term measurable outcomes which leads to growing inequity, and the effacing of broader social goals. Bryson (1987) notes the contradiction in the rhetoric concerned with improving outcomes while at the same time focusing on processes and structural reorganisation: issues discussed in later chapters within a welfare-to-work policy context. Under neoliberalism, appeals for personal responsibility lead to social costs being increasingly borne by civil society and the family (Bryson & Verity 2009). Profits are privatised and external costs socialised (Friedman 2009).

As Howard and King (2008) argue, it is impossible for the market to encompass all activity, and many forms of contract must be shielded from market influences to be effective. However, inappropriate privatisations, unsuitable deregulation, and excessive government outsourcing are neoliberal measures often imposed to reduce government expenditures or debt level, contrary to what might be deemed a reasonable concept of economic efficiency. The term 'efficiency' underpins promotion of neoliberal economic theory based on a view that the market provides what society seeks, and at the lowest possible cost. Economic 'efficiency' is promoted not only for goods and services, but for all areas of life, including health, welfare and education (Beeson & Firth 1998). As Connell et al. (2009, p. 331) put it 'Neoliberals have had astonishing success in creating markets for things whose commodification was once almost unimaginable: water, body parts, pollution and social welfare among them', with this thesis exploring aspects of the commodification of social welfare under neoliberalism.

Creighton (2011) contends that such 'efficiencies' result in adverse consequences including economic insecurity, 'a plethora of social vices' and threats to humanity. Assessing 'efficiency' depends on how the term is defined and:

> If efficiency is defined in terms of productive capacity and its goal is producing the most quality goods, it is again difficult, but not impossible to question capitalist

efficiency. If, on the other hand, efficiency is defined as satisfying every human's needs at the least cost (monetary, human life, resource, labor, environmental, etc.), capitalist efficiency is clearly in question.

Lambert (2004, p. 298) points out that another cardinal tenet of rational economic policy is promoting competition; referring to it as a form of 'warfare' whereby corporations become 'winners' or 'losers'. Under this state of affairs plant closures and job losses are logical outcomes, providing an efficiency signal under which only the best survive. Automotive manufacturing is one example of a fiercely competitive industry sector, with implications for the agency of workers who are affected by mass job loss. The automotive industry and the circumstances under which Mitsubishi workers experienced job loss are the focus of the rest of this chapter which situates in context both the policy terrain and the workers' subjective experiences discussed in later chapters.

The automotive manufacturing sector

The automotive manufacturing sector undergoing major restructuring has global, national and state dimensions explored in the following sections.

The global automotive sector

The automotive sector is a key manufacturing sector facing radical change, even though its importance to the global economy remains undisputed (Rifkin 1995). Between the 1960s and the 1990s the manufacturing labour force of the average OECD country declined from one quarter to one fifth of its total labour force (Alderson 1999). The automotive is also the world's largest manufacturing sector, evolving from a craft industry to mass production, followed by 'lean' production. Lewchuk and Robertson (1997) explain that while the meaning of lean production may be debated, it is based on four key principles. These are designing products linked to manufacturability, using more flexible machinery, reorganising production processes to improve product flows and reduce inventories, and reorganising work to optimise workers' knowledge of the production process.

The automotive sector is important in emerging economies including Eastern Europe, South America and North and East Asia. It is anticipated that between 2006 and 2014 these countries will contribute two thirds of all light vehicle assembly. For example, China became the world's second largest automotive

supplier, producing nine million vehicles in 2007, representing a 23% increase in one year (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a). As Baker (2007) notes, in the last two decades vehicle manufacturing has been linked to global operations and deregulation, as well as to the application of neoliberal economic theory, or what Navarro (2007, p. 1) refers to as 'capitalism without borders'. The recent decline in Australian automotive manufacturing can be attributed to deregulating the Australian financial market, floating its currency, and from the economic rise of China and India that both offer much cheaper labour costs than the Australian automotive sector. These are part of a policy trajectory discussed in chapter six.

The Australian automotive sector

The development of the Australian automotive sector occurred within the historical context of post Second World War reconstruction. In distinction to current neoliberal hegemony, this was a time when the prevailing belief was that the so-called 'free-market' was unable to guarantee the regulation of capital or support the well-being of citizens (O'Connor, et al. 1998). Full employment was deemed the best foil against poverty, with policies focused on expanding manufacturing industries. In 1944 Australia's wartime Labor Prime Minister, John Curtin, sought a strong Australian manufacturing base, with General Motors Holden (GMH) launching Australia's iconic Holden car in 1948 (Loffler 2006). While the 1949 election of the Menzies Liberal (conservative) Government signified the end of wartime welfare levels, it was a time of major economic growth and low unemployment (O'Connor, et al. 1998). Following the success of GMH with the Holden automobile, Ford, Chrysler, Volkswagen and later the British Motor Corporation also produced cars locally, reflecting a rapidly increasing market due to population growth and rising incomes (The eScholarship Research Centre 2008).

The history of Australian automotive manufacturing is also the history of the various industry protection measures discussed further in chapter six. Industry protection measures facilitated the sale of one million Holden cars alone between 1960 and 1966. Between 1963 and 1966 the Tariff Board articulated potential changes, and the 1970s saw ongoing comprehensive reviews. The Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) boosted tariff liberalisation, while the Fraser Liberal Government (1975-1982) succumbed to industry pressures to maintain tariffs, even though Prime Minister Fraser was a freer trade advocate (Emmery 1999). It was in

the early 1980s that the need for competitiveness saw tariff reductions introduced under the *Motor Industry Development Plan* (1985) or 'Button Plan', named after John Button, the then Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry in the Hawke Labor Government (1983-1991). This was an attempt to maintain international competitiveness, although at the cost of local jobs. The Hawke and the Keating Labor Governments (1991-1996) both sponsored overall tariff reductions in order to restructure the Australian economy.

Australian automotive policy was reviewed under the Productivity Commission inquiry into post 2005 assistance to the industry (Productivity Commission 2002), and subsequently under the 2008 Review of the Australian Automotive Industry, known as the 'Bracks Review' (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a). This review was led by the Hon Steve Bracks, former Premier of Victoria. Following the 2002 Productivity Commission inquiry, the Howard Government (1996-2007: a Liberal and National Party coalition), reduced passenger vehicle tariffs from 15% to 10% to improve global competitiveness, with a further 5% cut due to apply from 2010. Ongoing industry support was through a funding commitment under the Automotive Competitiveness and Investment Scheme (ACIS). By November 2007 the Australian automotive industry employed approximately 61,000 people, representing a 25% reduction over two years (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a). This reflected the fact that employment levels depend upon domestic and international demand, productivity growth and the exchange rate.

Changes to the automotive industry following the 2002 Productivity Commission inquiry were the result of an appreciating Australian dollar and its effects on local industry; the adoption of free trade agreements with USA and Thailand; changing consumer preferences; and environmental concerns over fuel efficiencies (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a). The Bracks Review had Terms of Reference encompassing the aims of a globally integrated and internationally competitive automotive industry. It had been predicted that by 2010 greenhouse gas emissions would be 47% higher than 1997 levels, with likely repercussions for an automotive industry highly dependent on exports, 75% of which go to the Middle East (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a). While the globalised automotive industry also involves a national or Australian story, a state or territory perspective is

important within a federated Australia to understand the context of job loss at Mitsubishi in South Australia.

The South Australian automotive sector

South Australia, dubbed the 'Detroit of Australia' (Hurford 1981, p. 1296), has always been a major player in the national automotive sector. This is largely due to post-war reconstruction policies introduced by the then long-serving Premier of South Australia, the Liberal and Country League's Sir Thomas Playford. A key figure in South Australian post-war manufacturing, Playford held the office of Premier between 1938 and 1965. At the time of his election to the House of Assembly in 1933 only 42,000 South Australians were employed in manufacturing industries. By the end of his tenure in 1965 the population of South Australia had doubled to one million, with the number of manufacturing workers nearly tripling to 120,000 (Crocker 1983), with one in ten South Australians working in manufacturing industries.

Playford sought an economic revolution by focusing on secondary industries and investing in industrialisation. Although a member of the Liberal and Country League, Playford was an interventionist, providing overseas companies with incentives to set up in South Australia. His government offered cheap land and infrastructure including roads, water, electricity and housing. State-sponsored South Australian Housing Trust homes were provided for new workers at 25% less than those in other states (Cockburn & Playford 1991). Although socially and politically conservative, Playford has been characterised by Blewett and Jaensch (1971, p. 3) as having 'scant regard for the shibboleths of laissez-faire. Pragmatism was the keynote of his policy; economic advantage to South Australia the touchstone'.

Cockburn and Playford (1991, p. 175) refer to Premier Playford as the 'best socialist premier in the nation', while for Blewett and Jaensch (1971, p. 5) he was the 'nation's pace-setter'. While boosting the manufacturing sector, he opposed trade unions and spent less than other states on social welfare. Playford argued that there was no legitimate role for state welfare provision, stating that 'charity should be the most strictly private enterprise of all' (cited in Blewett & Jaensch 1971, p. 10). One of Playford's major achievements was the 1964 opening of the Chrysler

automotive manufacturing assembly plant at Tonsley Park in inner-southern Adelaide. The Chrysler Corporation was founded in Detroit Michigan in 1925, and from 1998 was controlled by German-based Daimler-Benz which subsequently acquired Mitsubishi Motors. In 1999 Daimler-Chrysler was listed as one of the world's top five corporations. The Tonsley Park Chrysler manufacturing site developed in the Playford era was later to house the South Australian operations of Mitsubishi, a corporation that was to have a key role in South Australian automotive manufacturing for a quarter of a century. It was also to have a pivotal role in the lives of its workers in ways that will be highlighted in retrenched workers' accounts in chapter eight.

Mitsubishi in South Australia

Mitsubishi's first car rolled off the Japanese assembly line in 1917, and by the 1980s success had driven its global expansion including into Australia. In contrast, by 1978 Chrysler Motors had reported a loss of AUS$50 million due to poor industrial relations, poor quality control, absenteeism, and worker turnover (Kriegler 1984). Mitsubishi Motors Japan acquired Chrysler's South Australian operations in April 1980, returning a profit by 1982 (Kriegler & Wooden 1985). This economic achievement is partly explained by Japanese management values and practice that became long-standing features of its South Australian operations, and were to have a major influence on the lives of its workers in ways that will be drawn out later in this thesis. Following the Second World War, Japanese corporations needed to create value in a climate of radical social change, including social and economic reconstruction (Picken 1987). Picken (1987, p. 140) explains that value-creation is more than a financial concept, 'involving innovative practices that benefit staff, customers and other stakeholders'.

Chrysler's Western authoritarian management style stood in stark contrast to Japanese values-based authority and the clear contractual obligations for employees and management designed to secure stable employment. Obligations included commitment to a long-term employer / employee relationship promoting shared values and co-operative industrial relations. Mitsubishi eschewed Scientific Management principles (Taylor 1911), investing instead in worker incentives. The Japanese capitalist system was also grounded in networks of trust and collaboration

between firms, reflecting the communitarian value system dominating the Pacific Rim countries (Dore 1983).

Mitsubishi boosted employment in South Australian by creating jobs for thousands of workers whose working and social lives played out together for a quarter of a century, including some of the workers whose job loss experiences will be discussed in chapter eight. As Australian tariff protection on motor vehicles was wound back it flagged the likelihood of manufacturing industries relocating to the burgeoning plants in China and India. Global forces impede governments' influence over the location of large multinational firms despite a wide range of corporate inducements, such as those provided by the Playford Government, with its high levels of state aid to industry designed to boost the automotive sector in South Australia.

Mitsubishi and the South Australian economy

Mitsubishi is one chapter in the history of the automotive manufacturing sector which is a critical part of the South Australian economy, especially in the northern and southern Adelaide regions. A joint submission to the 2002 Productivity Commission inquiry by three southern Adelaide councils (the Cities of Marion, Mitcham and Onkaparinga) cautioned against any further tariff reductions. At that time 14,000 people or 16 % of South Australian manufacturing workers were employed in the automotive sector, with a turnover of AUS$5.3 billion dollars, or 17% of annual state exports (Cities of Marion, Mitcham & Onkaparinga 2002). Mitsubishi alone employed over 3,000 people in their Lonsdale engine plant and Tonsley Park assembly plant, purchasing over AUS$416 million worth of goods and services annually, excluding wages and salaries (Cities of Marion, Mitcham & Onkaparinga 2002).

The three councils' joint submission emphasised that the automotive industry had already undertaken significant reforms by accommodating prior tariff reductions, and that it held strong links to the local economy and local component suppliers who also employed large numbers of workers in affiliated industries. In addition, their submission highlighted the potential hidden but significant costs for Adelaide's southern region. These included reduced demand for goods and services, costs associated with out-migration, training and labour market

adjustment, increased consumer debt, family stress, increased child abuse and domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and increased demand for housing assistance and income support (Cities of Marion, Mitcham & Onkaparinga 2002). Modelling undertaken for the report indicated that a 100% reduction in the scale of Mitsubishi's operations would result not only in the loss of over 3,000 jobs at the corporation, but also more than 19,000 jobs in associated sectors, especially business and property services (>3,900), other manufacturing (>3,600), trade (> 3,400) and other motor vehicle parts (Cities of Marion, Mitcham & Onkaparinga 2002).

Other concerns were the vulnerability of the many mature-age workers living close to these southern manufacturing plants, and the trend towards government support for industries located in northern Adelaide. Compared with some other Adelaide areas the southern region experiences poorer infrastructure and less efficient transport and telecommunications services (Beer 2007), as well as relatively low income, high youth unemployment, pressure on social services and lower levels of medical services. This range of issues underscored local government advocacy for retaining a viable automotive industry in the southern Adelaide region, especially a company the size of Mitsubishi which was facing global challenges common to the industrialised world.

Global challenges leading to job loss at Mitsubishi

In recent decades the industrial world has been challenged by organisational downsizing and the layoff of millions of workers (Cascio 2003). These processes respond to capitalism's drive for greater efficiency, discussed above. The term 'flexible capitalism' describes a system focusing on flexibility and the need for workers to behave 'nimbly' (Sennett 1998, p. 9). The drive for achieving greater efficiency leads to downsizing, which is defined as the 'planned elimination of positions or jobs' (Cascio 1993, p. 96; also Cameron et al. 1987). This involves different strategies which all result in staff losses. Mitsubishi was confronted by the challenges of a global operating environment and sought to restructure its operations following a reduction in its market share from 13.7% in 1993 to 7.4% in 2002 (Lansbury, et al. 2006). This resulted in plant downsizing and partial closure, and a reduction of over 1000 South Australian workers by 2005 (Baker 2007). At

the time the national unemployment rate was 5.3% and 45,800 people were unemployed in South Australia (ABS 2009). The decision to restructure followed the company's $2.8 billion loss in 2003 and the refusal of a $6.5 billion refinancing scheme by the company's majority shareholder, Daimler Chrysler (Spoehr 2004).

In May 2004 Mitsubishi's head office in Japan announced the closure of its engine plant at Lonsdale in South Australia (operated by MMAL), resulting in enforced redundancies for approximately 700 workers, with 400 voluntary redundancies offered at the Tonsley Park assembly plant. These were triggers for both political and policy action. The Federal Government's response was an $AUS50 million Structural Adjustment Fund. This assistance package included $AUS10 million for employment and training, job-search support, career counselling, retraining and other assistance, as well as $AUS40 million towards attracting investment in the local region. The South Australian Government also allocated $AUS5 million to support employment and industry diversification in southern Adelaide (Spoehr 2004). Retaining Mitsubishi in South Australia was considered crucial, as Australia was facing a federal election in 2004. Half the Mitsubishi workforce lived in the Onkaparinga Council area represented by the marginal federal seat of Kingston which was held by the Howard Coalition Government by only 0.5% (Hutchinson 2004).

In response to the corporation's downsizing and partial closure, the State and Federal Governments adopted a short-term and politically motivated focus designed to bolster the electorate, rather than to support the programs and policies necessary to improve the region's economic future (Beer 2008). Historically, the automotive industry's political and symbolic significance has ensured ongoing financial and other supports by all levels of government, including the federal injection of over $AUS2 billion between 2001 and 2005 (Beer 2008). This highlights potential equity issues associated with the differing accountability structures for state redistribution, affecting the level of available social welfare provision, including the conditional welfare provided to retrenched workers. The context of job loss is therefore also one of welfare conditionality, which is the focus of a thematic analysis in chapter seven. This explores underpinning values, views and policy intentions of policy actors that had consequences for retrenched Mitsubishi workers and other welfare recipients when enacted as policy.

The context of the Mitsubishi restructure and associated job loss is also the overall decline in the Australian automotive manufacturing industry, mirroring declining vehicle sales (Wailes et al. 2009). The associated increase in precarious employment following job loss is a critical issue and union concern. However, as Lansbury et al. (2006) explain, there has been a low level of industrial disputation in the automotive sector, with unions mainly focussing on negotiating higher redundancy packages; an issue that will be discussed further in Mitsubishi workers' accounts. In the Australian automotive industry most employees are unionised and these unions have historically negotiated enterprise agreements on workers' behalf (Lansbury et al. 2006).

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), the union representing most workers in the automotive industry, has been augmented by the amalgamation of several industry-based unions, and covers approximately 70% of unionised employees within its Vehicle Division (Lansbury et al. 2006). While a strong advocate in negotiating employment conditions in the automotive industry Lansbury et al. (2006) note the 1999 agreement forged between Mitsubishi, the AMWU and Adecco, a labour hire firm, which allowed for employing 'flexible' or 'variable temporary labour'. The AMWU had been warned that unless there were gains in labour flexibility Mitsubishi Motors Japan may close the operations of MMAL, and this thesis explores the consequences of Japan's ultimate decision.

Chapter summary

This chapter set the thesis context by discussing antecedents and consequences of job loss occurring as a result of industry restructuring and changes to capitalism. Globalisation, deindustrialisation, industry restructuring, and plant downsizing and closure result in the human face of mass job loss. This chapter discussed the hegemonic link between globalisation, an antecedent of job loss, and neoliberal economic theory which sets the policy context under which the consequences of job loss are experienced. This has implications for the well-being of retrenched workers, as the prevailing policy environment into which workers emerge after losing their jobs either exacerbates or ameliorates the consequences, in ways discussed further throughout this thesis. This chapter noted the limitations of neoliberal or free-market policy approaches that focus on a narrow definition of

economic efficiency; underplaying or obliterating the external costs that may include people's health and well-being and reduced state commitment to welfare.

The chapter then focussed on the global, national, and South Australian dimensions of the automotive sector, and the global challenges faced by Mitsubishi which led to restructuring its operations and to the eventual mass job loss experienced by over 1000 of its workers in South Australia. It noted that policy and financial responses to retrenchment at Mitsubishi in 2004 and 2005 were politically motivated, primarily designed to shore up the electorate rather than a sustainable economy. While there were repercussions for industry and the state from the downsizing and partial closure of Mitsubishi in South Australia, the focus of this thesis is on the experiences and consequences of job loss for the health and well-being of the retrenched workers.

To understand the human dimension of job loss the following chapter reviews the literature on the nexus between health and well-being and employment status, and the relevant literature on job loss and the social policy designed to ameliorate the consequences. This chapter and the next provide the background literature for a case study of job loss at Mitsubishi, with the research methodology explained in chapter four.

Chapter 3:

Employment as a social determinant of health

> Employment conditions are closely linked to material deprivation and have a strong effect on chronic diseases and mental health via several psychosocial factors, life-style behaviours, and direct physio-pathological changes (CSDH 2007b, p. 121).

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the multifaceted concept of health and well-being and its links to employment status, including unemployment occurring as a result of mass job loss. This helps to situate the subjective accounts of job loss that will be presented later in this thesis. This chapter extends the focus of the previous chapter by discussing relevant literature on the ways in which employment is an important social determinant of health. It provides an overview of the social determinants of health and structural determinants of health inequity, as well as the critical and psychosocial health perspectives drawn upon throughout this thesis. The health and employment nexus is influenced in part by changing employment structures over recent decades, resulting from the changes within capitalism and public policy discussed in the previous chapter.

The focus of this chapter is also on selected international and Australian job loss research to contextualise this study. It identifies a shift of focus in job loss research in recent decades, and reviews more recent qualitative research which this thesis aims to extend. Finally, this chapter explores the links between job loss and social policy to inform the two thematic analyses that will be presented in chapters seven and eight.

Defining health and well-being

The World Health Organisation (WHO 1984, p. 20) maintains that health is:

> a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.

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As health is both a multifaceted and debated term, Baum (2008) contends that different definitions reflect particular world views, decision-making processes, policy development, and even its overall nature. The WHO promotes a social view of health, with health being a state of complete mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In respect of mental health, an issue explored later in this thesis in the context of retrenched workers' subjective experiences, Wilkinson and Marmot (2003, p. 7) explain:

> Concepts of mental health include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and recognition of the ability to realize one's intellectual and emotional potential. It has also been defined as a state of wellbeing whereby individuals recognize their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to their communities.

As Fisher and Baum (2010) note, the WHO recognises mental health as a major factor influencing the overall burden of disease in both developing and developed countries, and that this is more prevalent among populations subject to forms of disadvantage including insecure employment or recent unemployment. Chapter eight will include retrenched workers' accounts of the ways in which job loss affected their mental health within the broad context of the above definition.

Health and well-being are often conceptually linked in the literature, with well-being understood as the material, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of life that allow for human flourishing (Nussbaum & Sen 1993). As Jamrozik (2005) argues, the concept of well-being cannot be divorced from the core values of the public sphere which provides basic infrastructure to every citizen as a birthright; including health, education, public transport, clean air and clean water. It is commonly measured subjectively at the individual level, including by the key issues of life satisfaction, sense of mastery and avoidance of misery (Western 1999). Quality of life or well-being is more than the standard of living, longevity (Eckersley 2005), or even what is commonly termed the 'good life'. It is the opportunity to fulfil human potential. While well-being is not easily defined, its absence results in the breakdown of broader social relations (Beresford 2000).

The economist Sen (1985) links well-being to human capabilities, or the potential and opportunity to engage in lifestyles that support them. Well-being is influenced by a person's capacity or capability to acquire resources and convert these into

units of human value (Sen 1999). Nussbaum (2003, pp. 41-42) links well-being to capabilities and the 'functionings' which span elementary and complex activities, experiences and personal states. As Nussbaum maintains, together these allow for expressing full humanity through a political process that affords choice in identifying how they may best be attained. Well-being is also closely linked to personal control, which is one of ten human functional capabilities identified by Nussbaum (2000). These span life, bodily health, bodily integrity, thought, emotions, reason, affiliation, other species, play, and the individual's control over their environment.

Perceived control, reflecting the interaction of social structure and human agency, is critical to well-being, and will be discussed in relation to retrenched workers' experiences in chapter eight. Wallston et al. (1987) define perceived control as 'the belief that one can determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and / or bring about desired outcomes'. According to Wallston et al. (1987, p. 5) the term 'perceived control' relates to control over behaviour, outcomes, reinforcements, processes and situations. Pearlin and Schooler (1978, p. 5) instead define the term as 'the extent to which one's life-chances are under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled'. The concept of perceived control is widely discussed in the literature and is conceptualised in two ways. The first is within a self-determination framework in which a person perceives their behaviour to be self-determined rather than coerced. The second is as an impact framework in which the level of control is established by the extent to which a person believes they can influence important outcomes or make an impact (Brockner et al. 2004).

Research by Caplan and Schooler (2007) reveals the complex links between social structure, perceived control, and stress and coping. These researchers support a conclusion by Pearlin (1989, p. 242) that:

> Structural contexts of people's lives are not extraneous to the stress process but are fundamental to that process. They are the sources of hardship and privilege, threat and security, conflict and harmony.

The importance of social structure for mediating perceived control is discussed in findings by Caplan and Schooler (2007) which indicates that membership in less advantaged groups may influence individuals' reactions to stressful situations or

perceptions concerning control over their lives. The beliefs of more financially disadvantaged people may result in a double disadvantage, for as well as having fewer material resources, the lowered expectation of perceived control influences coping strategies. Caplan and Schooler (2007) state that these are strategies likely to compound rather than alleviate human problems. Employment status is linked to levels of disadvantage and is a major determinant of health.

Social determinants of health

Employment status is a major social determinant of health, or one of the conditions under which people live and work that influence their chances to lead healthy lives; with health differentially and unfairly distributed. Health and well-being is directly linked to inequality, not only to individual morbidity and mortality outcomes (Wilkinson & Pickett 2009). Social determinants of health are the factors which help people to remain healthy, rather than the services supporting them when they are ill (Graham 2004). Good available medical care for each individual is crucial, but unless the underlying social causes eroding people's health are addressed, well-being remains unachievable (Labonte & Shrecker 2007).While a range of models helps to explain the concept of social determinants, a common understanding is that health is the outcome of complex social influences (Brunner & Marmot 1999; Graham 2004; Wilkinson & Pickett 2009) linked to the structural determinants of health inequity.

Structural determinants of health inequity illustrate a further dimension to the social determinants of health, with both structural and intermediary health determinants linked to health inequity (CSDH 2007). This thesis explores structural elements which are the socio-economic and political contexts including governance, macroeconomic policies, social and public policies, and cultural and societal values that all impact on health. As Baum (2008) explains, through a dynamic relationship these influence intermediary determinants of health, including life circumstances governing living and employment conditions, behaviour, and biological and psychological factors. Structural determinants incorporate the social factors promoting and undermining health, as well as the social processes maintaining their unequal distribution (CSDH 2007a, p. 24, citing Graham 2004). Social and structural determinants of health may be theorised through critical and

psychosocial health perspectives, with the following section discussing critical health perspectives. Both critical and psychosocial health perspectives are drawn upon throughout this thesis to link retrenched workers' personal experiences and subjectivities to wider policy and equity issues.

Critical health perspectives

Adopting a critical health perspective helps to illuminate the societal factors producing and reproducing inequalities in population health and well-being (Kawachi & Kennedy 1997; Wilkinson 1999; Wilkinson & Pickett 2009). A critical health perspective acknowledges that the structures and social relations of capitalist societies exacerbate illness by maximising profits and benefitting the more advantaged, instead of meeting human needs. Capitalism is a dominant force with the power to define and control health (Navarro 1979). Baum (2008) contends that it is a critical health perspective that questions who benefits or loses as a result of policy action, whose knowledge base underpins this action, as well as critiquing resulting social inequities. Baum (2008) argues further that public health is inherently political, potentially controversial, and disputed in its reflection of broader social inequities.

A critical health perspective also unmasks underlying social and economic factors and the contexts in which subjective experiences of fear, misery and suffering are ignored. For example, depression is a major public health issue with wide-ranging impacts, as emotional and psychological aspects of life are partly shaped by political and social forces. Stavropoulos (2008) notes the paradox that in Western societies that afford both high levels of freedom and relative affluence, there are also high levels of depression. She states that a range of studies show that depression cannot be viewed in individualistic terms alone as it is also socially influenced. Stavropoulos argues that while individual factors including life experiences, temperament, family influences and biochemical and genetic predisposition are crucial, depression cannot be attributed to a single cause. Focussing only on the individual is to ignore a wider socio-political context which exerts ongoing influence on emotional well-being. For Stavropoulos (2008, p. 9), 'living under [neo] liberalism is itself a risk factor for depression'.

From a critical health perspective, Navarro (1976) maintains that calls for self-reliance, and for exercising autonomy and personal responsibility to address negative health outcomes all support the rationale of capital by focusing on individual rather than collective forms of remediation. This thesis draws out calls for self-reliance and personal responsibility under neoliberal policy hegemony as reflected through the views, values and policy intentions of policy actors that will be described in chapter seven. A critical theoretical perspective acknowledges the relationship between the individual and broader social relations, or the health context that links 'personal troubles of milieu' with the 'public issues of social structure' (Mills 1959, p. 8). It accords with Durkheim's (1979 [1897]) 19th century analysis of suicide rates which he linked to wider societal characteristics, along with his call to address their underlying 'collective malady' (cited in Baum 2008, p. 15) . Critical socioeconomic, ethical and political problems are brought to light in accounts of personal distress in a global world (Stavropoulos 2008). Taking a critical perspective on health is also to acknowledge the importance of a psychosocial health perspective. These health perspectives are mutually reinforcing for enabling health. Structures identified from adopting a critical perspective, together with psychosocial factors, including emotions and issues of control that often flow from structural constraints, both have an impact on human agency.

Psychosocial health perspectives

While critical health perspectives adopt an equity health focus, identifying who wins or loses in respect of health, psychosocial health perspectives illuminate the important link between subjective experience and mental health outcomes that will be drawn out in chapter eight. A psychosocial health perspective acknowledges that subjective experiences and emotions may trigger the acute and chronic stress that affects human biology, resulting in physical and mental illness. Marmot (2006) notes that material, behavioural and psychological factors all influence health. Health and well-being are also affected by powerful psychosocial risk factors including social status, personal control, and social affiliations and stress in early life (Wilkinson 2006).

Research suggests that factors contributing to chronic anxiety are also likely to influence health (Brunner & Marmot 1999; Wilkinson 1999), as anxiety is a

response to both material and psychological factors. Job loss involves both material and psychological outcomes, as will be revealed in retrenched workers' subjective accounts. The more people are denied the status and respect linked to employment and income, the more vulnerable they are to feelings of disrespect, based on feeling inferior and worthless (Wilkinson 1999). As Sennett (1998) points out, feelings of failure leading to stigma and shame are no longer mainly the prospect of the poor or disadvantaged. Under changes to capitalism, downsizing and industry restructuring impose on middle-class people the sudden disasters that were previously mainly faced by the working class.

A psychosocial health perspective also helps to explain why loss of income and other material benefits can be so traumatic. Material loss is a burden experienced in tandem with the 'burden of stigma and threatened loss of status and respect' (Wilkinson 1999, p. 61). This is acknowledged by Giddens (1998) who contends that welfare is both an economic term and psychological concept, fostered by the personal capacity to deal with life's changes and challenges. Therefore, as Peel (2003) argues, social justice also involves responding to psychological and emotional issues, not only to financial outcomes.

A psychosocial health perspective acknowledges that two aspects of self-regard are critical to human well-being. Bandura (1986) refers to these as self-efficacy, a generative capability, as well as the self-esteem endorsed by attendant feelings of approval and success from 'high attainment'. Health and well-being are influenced by the extent to which social opportunities endorse these attributes, with the nature of work a key psychosocial factor (Marmot et al. 2006). A psychosocial health approach recognises that emotions including shame, anger, guilt and shock may also be associated with becoming unemployed (Ritchie et al. 2005).

As this thesis draws out, a psychosocial perspective also recognises the individual as ambivalent and emotionally driven, with an unconscious subjective dimension. As Frost and Hoggett (2008, p. 440) contend, the individual is a subject living in 'a world of power relations and status hierarchies: a social subject with agency, though not necessarily in a position to exercise this reflexively'. The exercise of human agency is linked to the nature of the psychosocial environment, or the range of opportunities necessary for meeting positive self-regard and productivity (Marmot et al. 2006). This environment encompasses the interaction between

individual behaviours, cognitions and emotions and the material and social contexts of life. A psychosocial research perspective allows for a broad affective focus while also situating the individual within a wider social context, as Stenner and Taylor (2008, p. 432) explain:

> Well-being cannot be considered outside of social context and social relations. Likewise, we would argue that welfare [doing well] cannot be grasped without an understanding of the subjective and emotional. Participation in social relations has an essentially affective dimension. A psychosocial approach to welfare, then, brings together questions of doing and being, of acting and feeling.

A psychosocial health perspective recognises that the 'psycho' and 'social' both resonate in understanding health and welfare. It reflects a shift in focus from the health and well-being of a 'hypothetically a-social' individual to encompass welfare as a social project (Stenner & Taylor 2008, p. 416). It links individual biographies and social processes, as well as acknowledging the way in which social relations are internalised (Frost & Hoggett 2008). Such an approach recognises that social problems have psychological dimensions and that psychological problems are linked to the 'social and material milieu' (Stenner, Barnes & Taylor 2008, p. 411).

Stenner & Taylor (2008) note the paradox that all social sciences, including psychology, emerged from the relationship between subject and society but traditionally maintained a focus on opposite sides of this relationship. They explain that an increasing number of academics and practitioners now adopt a psychosocial approach by theorising the social and psychological together (Cooper & Lousada 2005; Froggett 2002; Hoggett 2001). Critical and psychosocial health perspectives both help to theorise the links between health and well-being and employment status, including unemployment occurring as a result of mass job loss.

The nexus between employment and health

A wide literature reviews the impact of unemployment on health, including mental health. Findings of a systematic review of the impact of unemployment on health provide evidence of an association between unemployment and morbidity, measured by physical and mental illness and related use of medical services at both individual and population levels (Jin et al. 1995). Employment conditions have a powerful influence on health and on equity in health (CSDH 2008), and research

reveals that the links between employment and health are much broader than the range of occupational diseases (Schilling 1989).

Marmot et al. (2006, p. 99) explain that employment provides secure income and socioeconomic status, socialisation, personal growth, opportunities to be a part of a range of social networks and the 'experience of self in a core social role'. These issues will be highlighted in different ways throughout workers' subjective accounts of job loss. In reviewing the 10 year time-span between the 1998 UK Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health Report (Acheson 1999), and the post-2010 Strategic Review by Marmot (UK Department of Health 2009), the UK Department of Health reiterated the importance of emphasising the foundational role of employment highlighted in the Acheson Report. It referred to employment as the 'glue that keeps society together', and argued that levelling-up opportunities for rewarding work is an important strategy for reducing health inequalities (cited in UK Department of Health 2009, p. 11). From this perspective the causes of and solutions to health inequalities are social, economic, cultural and political.

In respect of the links between employment and health, factory closure studies suggest that psychosocial factors may be important contributors to the social gradient in health. They show that health deteriorates not only at the point of becoming unemployed but also much earlier. People experience chronic insecurity in response to impending redundancy (Wilkinson 1999). Ferrie et al. (1998) note that the anticipation of major organisational change results in increased self-reported morbidity, with findings in a study by Beale and Nethercott (1987) showing that increased morbidity begins as early as when workers learn that their jobs are in jeopardy. However, as research by Broom et al. (2006) shows, even though health benefits accrue from paid work, employment involving several psychosocial stressors may be worse than having no job at all. These researchers argue that industrial relations policy that impacts negatively on worker security and autonomy, discussed in later chapters, may result in economic gains for the state in the shorter-term, but ultimately results in health burdens for workers and the health care system. The UK Department of Health (2009) also explains that the relationship between poor health and unemployment runs in both directions. Poor health increases the likelihood of unemployment, while unemployment contributes to ill health.

Employment status and mental health

People who are unemployed or lack job security consistently report the lowest levels of subjective well-being and self-rated health (Cummins et al. 2006). There is some evidence that it is more recent experiences of, rather than the cumulative level of unemployment over time that places the individual at risk of deteriorating mental health (Bartley et al. 2006). Several reasons are presented in the literature for why decline in psychological health is steepest in those who have recently lost their jobs, including experiencing loss of income or poverty, unemployment being a stressful life event, and changes in health-related behaviours at the time of unemployment (Bartley et al. 2006). In respect of the first, even though unemployment may not lead to immediate poverty, the level of available social benefits is a critical factor (Bartley et al. 2006), highlighting the importance of enabling social policy.

A second factor affecting the psychosocial environment in relation to unemployment is stress; a state of mental, emotional, or other strain (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). Factors causing stress are designated as 'stressors', rooted in both the external world, including economic downturns and 'layoffs', as well as in a non-observable internal state, including the fear of failure (Davis & Mantler 2004). Financial stress is often chronic and experienced as uncontrollable, with stress triggers including job loss also perceived as both unpredictable and unavoidable (Davis & Mantler 2004). Financial stress is defined by Davis and Mantler (2004, p. 4) as 'the unpleasant feeling that one is unable to meet financial demands, afford the necessities of life and have sufficient funds to make ends meet'. Davis and Mantler explain that emotions of dread, anxiety and fear, as well as anger and frustration are experienced in response. Unemployment is therefore recognised as a highly stressful life event and a potential trigger for anxiety and depression. It is the basic hypothesis of life-events research that stressful events may influence physical and mental health and may be additive (Williams et al. 1981). Losing a job is high on the list of stressful life events (Holmes & Rahe 1967; Kaplan & Sadock 2007).

A third way in which unemployment affects psychosocial health is the link to health-damaging behaviours (Bartley et al. 2006). This includes the risk of suicide, especially for men aged between 35 and 44 years (Moser et al. 1990), and

parasuicide, or non-fatal deliberate self-harm (Platt & Kreitman 1985; Platt 1986). Parasuicide is also defined as suicidal gestures without the intention of death (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). For their research Moser and colleagues reviewed unemployed job-seeking men in the UK, finding a decade later that these men were 20% more likely to have died than were employed men of the same age. The Moser study also linked higher mortality and suicide rates to un-skilled and semi-skilled men (Moser et al. 1984). In more recent research undertaken in New Zealand to determine the independent associations of labour force status and socioeconomic position with death by suicide, unemployment was strongly associated with suicide death among 18-24 year old men (Blakely et al. 2003).

While unemployment is not necessarily a suicide trigger it increases the likelihood of other negative life outcomes, with decreased social and psychological resources or reserves available as coping mechanisms (Kessler et al. 1988). Understanding the nexus between health and well-being and employment status within the context of this study also requires an understanding of the changing employment structures that are a growing feature under globalisation and changes to capitalism discussed in the previous chapter.

Changing employment structures

The structure of working life and work / life balance continues to undergo changes related to global economic competition. There have been shifts away from traditionally stable manufacturing jobs towards more insecure arrangements (Carney & Hanks 1994; Pocock 2003). In the last 30 years employment has been restructured as a result of shifts in the organisation and nature of the capitalist world economy, resulting in rising unemployment, precarious employment, industry restructuring and corresponding widespread job loss. Unemployment, forced mobility and unstable jobs are becoming more prevalent, resulting in career interruption, involuntary retirement and job loss (Marmot et al. 2006). While unemployment may result from a wide range of personal contingencies or potential triggers, as Bartley et al. (2006) explain large scale job loss due to industry restructuring is largely the outcome of global forces. Underemployment is another manifestation of unemployment, with 27% of working Australians employed on a part-time basis by 2005 (ABS 2006).

Economic and labour market changes in industrialised countries during the 1990s have heightened job insecurity, a chronic health stressor experienced from the stage of threatened unemployment (Wilkinson & Marmot 2003). While adverse health effects of long-term unemployment are well established, health effects linked to new employment structures, including precarious work, multiple work arrangements, and flexible or home-based work are yet to be determined (Marmot et al. 2006). Mass job loss due to industry restructuring is another factor in the nexus between health and well-being and employment status. Job loss is a phenomenon examined within wide-ranging research, with aspects relevant to this thesis discussed in the following section.

Job loss

As defined in chapter one job loss relates to terminating a worker's employment in response to planned company closure or downsizing as a consequence of economic change, company organisation, or increased use of technology (Parker et al. 1971). Blau (2006) points out that organisational downsizing as a strategy is based on the contention that employees are costs to be cut rather than assets to be fostered. Downsizing as a global strategy continues to be utilised to reduce operating costs and to increase earnings and stock prices (Cascio, 1993, 2003). As Hanisch (1999, p. 188) explains, the resulting job loss is a 'life event' (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) for the individual workers, due to the involuntary removal of their paid employment (Latack et al. 1995). This is distinct from unemployment which reflects the state of being unemployed, or of not being engaged in a gainful occupation (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). The following section reviews a range of literature on job loss and job insecurity relevant to this case study and thesis, including international and Australian research and the influence of neoliberalism on its focus.

Job loss and job insecurity

Unemployed people experience worse health than those who are employed, with employment status a critical social determinant of health; especially when work is unavailable, unsafe and insecure, or when it attracts lower wages and conditions as a consequence of job loss (Baum 2008). Price et al. (2002) explain that job loss has potential for a range of adverse impacts, including depression, health complaints

and impaired psychosocial functioning. Depression in turn triggers a decline in personal control, emotional functioning and physical health. Price et al. (2002, p. 309) refer to the multiple adverse effects of job loss as a 'chain of adversity' which may have a lasting impact.

Following their international review of published research on the health impact of job insecurity, downsizing, and organisational restructuring, Quinlan et al. (2001) found that 88% of the 68 identified studies revealed an adverse effect in relation to at least one of a range of indices, including the increased risk of occupational violence, work-related injury, cardiovascular disease, distress and mental illness. The major sectors included manufacturing, public sector and healthcare which all employ large numbers of workers and are all 'conspicuous targets' for downsizing and restructuring (Quinlan et al. 2001, p. 38). Even though this review included only one qualitative study the researchers state that the choice of method did not have a major effect on the findings and the large sample size made the results more significant (Quinlan et al. 2001, p. 43).

A study by Beale and Nethercott (1986, p. 266) found that men 'jettisoned unceremoniously' from their jobs, rather than retiring at a predetermined time, adapted less easily than women due to the deprivation of what they understood to be their main role in life. This dominant male role is often distinct from what is commonly a dual role for women, encompassing paid employment and responsibility for children and domestic duties. Beale and Nethercott's research also identified that associated anxieties concerned with the loss of work as a dominant life role led to at least a doubling of general practitioner consultations.

Hamilton et al. (1993) conducted research into coping with the unemployment arising from plant closures associated with General Motors Holden in the USA. These researchers explored three measures of psychological distress, finding that of these measures including symptoms of depression, anxiety and somatisation, it was depression that was most closely linked to workers' unemployment. Vickers and Parris (2007) conducted in-depth interviews which showed that becoming redundant was also an alienating experience. Workers were found to be less resilient than sometimes assumed, reporting negative outcomes including fear for the future, family disruption and a decline in trust; issues that will be explored further in workers' subjective accounts. Vickers & Parris (2007, p. 114) argue that

it is a mistake to assume that workers are 'pliable' and able to bounce back unscathed from redundancy. Beer et al. (2006) make the point that the wide scope of international research on the full impacts of plant closures is not mirrored by Australian research. However, these researchers also note that international studies may not be directly relevant for the Australian context due to Australia's unique welfare system and workforce arrangements.

Wooden (1987) published a review of over 50 international case studies of job loss undertaken prior to 1986, including 17 Australian studies. He noted that the main Australian focus was on the labour market outcomes of retrenched workers recounted in quantitative studies from the 1970s, especially on regional displacement. Wooden examined a range of issues including duration of unemployment, pre-redundancy and post-redundancy job comparisons, job search activity, and the psychological consequences of job loss. He noted that psychological consequences had not been well addressed in the Australian literature and that the effects of redundancy on broader social issues, including social integration and family life, had also not been addressed methodically.

Beer (2008) points out that job loss is a major feature of contemporary Australian society and that Mitsubishi was not the only major employer to downsize its workforce in recent years. The South Australian operations of the multinational mining firm BHP Billiton reduced its workforce by one third. A clothing manufacturing firm Fletcher Jones closed its factory in Victoria, and Kodak retrenched 600 workers in Melbourne in 2004. Ford announced the impending closure of its engine plant in Victoria from 2010 with a loss of over 600 jobs.

Of note is a shift of focus in job loss research in recent decades prioritising adoption of a focus on human agency over structural issues as discussed in the following section.

Neoliberalism and job loss research

Weller (2007) notes that over time job loss research in Australia and overseas has provided evidence of a range of impacts leading to policy measures that were designed to help ease labour market adjustment. However, Weller states that the rise of neoliberal economic theory has seen a shift in the analyses of experiences and consequences of job loss towards a focus on workers' own psychological traits.

These include their possible inadequate motivation, dysfunctional responses to adversity, and inability to handle risk: all ignoring the extent to which job loss is also a structural issue with policy implications. For example, Blau (2006) researched employees' emotional processes for dealing with the grieving process associated with downsizing and closure. While the research model adopted Kubler-Ross' (1969) identified stages of grieving associated with dying, including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, exploration and acceptance these are disembedded from any structural context.

Kets de Vries and Balazs (1997) undertook research focused on the different coping strategies adopted by the so-called 'victims', 'survivors' and 'executioners' in the downsizing process. These terms relate respectively to those people who lose their jobs, those who remain in the workplace, and those who must implement the downsizing decision. These researchers argue that the term 'downsizing' should be replaced by what they believe to be the more appropriate term 'corporate transformation' (Kets de Vries & Balazs 1997, p. 47). They maintain that this term better reflects the constant re-shaping of organisational structures within which the 'encouragement of new challenges remains central'. This focus on individual adaptability reflects a neoliberal turn in which the onus is on the individual to successfully readjust to the dynamics of restructuring, rather than focussing on the need to mediate structural factors. It misses the point raised by Caplan and Schooler (2007), and noted earlier in this chapter, that financial or structural issues influence the coping mechanisms adopted for dealing with new challenges. Sennett (1998, p. 9) too argues that 'flexible capitalism' demanding individual adaptability is changing the meaning of work and arousing anxiety, as people are unable to assess which risks will pay off.

In distinction to a focus on individual agency, research by Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) on job insecurity linked experiential and structural issues. They found an association between job insecurity and deteriorating psychological health, including stress and burnout. However, outcomes were counter-intuitive to the extent that support from colleagues, management and unions did not protect against negative psychological outcomes. These researchers argue that constantly working in a 'brittle' environment may gradually increase individual experiences of insecurity and its adverse psychological effects. They contend that it is the

increasing levels of distress which may in turn trigger the proactive seeking out of social supports, and conclude that the stressor of insecurity must itself be addressed. Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) maintain that this calls for careful planning, recruitment procedures, training and career counselling to obviate the need for forced dismissals. However, they make the further point relevant to this thesis that if restructuring must occur, the period of uncertainty should be kept to a minimum. Chapter eight will discuss this issue within the context of Mitsubishi workers' own employment experiences, including working in an insecure or 'brittle' environment over several years.

Research focusing solely on the psychological outcomes of job loss described above provides an important contribution to the wider literature by augmenting an exclusively economic or material emphasis. However it often adopts methodological individualism and dis-embeds the individual from wider social relations. Downplaying economic and structural issues limits the capacity for research to consider the multi-dimensional outcomes of retrenchment on workers' health and well-being (Weller 2007). In distinction, a psychosocial research perspective allows for a broad affective focus while also situating the individual within a wider social context (Mills 1959; Stenner, Barnes & Taylor 2008).

Extensive Australian research focusing on labour market outcomes of redundancy has led to evidence identifying particular worker attributes that are consistently associated with poorer re-employment outcomes (Weller 2007). An examination of Australian data by Murtough and Waite (2000) confirms that retrenchment is more likely to affect particular types of workers, with a disproportionate share of retrenchments occurring among people with low levels of education, those in 'blue collar' occupations, those who are full-time casual employees, or those employed in manufacturing industries. Research by Green and Leeves (2003) on displacement risk confirmed overseas evidence that lower-skilled male occupations are at greater risk. Australian research (Borland & McDonald 2000) which identifies that males face a higher incidence of retrenchment, also notes that older workers are at a greater risk. Manufacturing industry workers face longer periods of non-employment than those in primary industries, with Green and Leeves (2003, p. 329) stating that these workers tend to be, on average:

lower skilled, have longer job tenure, and come from larger firms, than those in other industries; characteristics that compound their difficulties to achieve re-employment.

Weller (2007) argues that by building an evidence base on worker characteristics, responsibility for the consequences of job loss may then be linked to personal attributes, rather than to the lack of jobs or any other structural constraints. Inferior wages and conditions often experienced in subsequent employment may then be understood as merely reflecting rational shifts in labour pricing. However, as Willis (1995) contends, ignoring the structural issues associated with job loss leads to the brunt of economic and social consequences being borne by individual workers through 'victim-blaming'; identifying the need for a more holistic job loss research focus.

In respect of Australian research the qualitative responses in research examining the 1999 BHP closure in Newcastle (Pond et al. 2002) expressed the range of difficulties experienced by workers negotiating the policy environment following job loss. This concerned the social security agency, Centrelink, which delivers Government services, programs and payments as a 'one stop shop'. This agency was seen by retrenched BHP workers as 'unhelpful or threatening and that interacting with it lowered their self-esteem' (Pond et al. 2002, p. 82). Workers also revealed negative outcomes from the casual, insecure and more poorly paid jobs that followed retrenchment. These were all part of reported wide-ranging outcomes from largely negative changes to workers' mental health, finances, lifestyle, coping, and issues associated with re-employment (Pond et al. 2002).

When examining the 2000 acquisition of the whitegoods company Email by the Swedish multinational company Electrolux, Lambert et al. (2005) conducted field research with the aim of stimulating debate between positive views on deregulation and neoliberal economic theory, and an alternative values-base focusing on the community impacts of job loss. Their research was set within the context of industrial relations changes under the 1996 Australian *Workplace Relations* Act and a labour movement constrained by the fate of a national industrial relations system set within an increasingly globalised context. In his analysis of the research, Lambert (2004, p. 312) invoked the need for 'extending the sociological imagination' to imagining, and then working towards alternative ways of organising economic and social relations. This was by focusing on revitalising

civic society and reasserting the social as a counterfoil to economic rationalism. Lambert called for a shift away from market-driven policy approaches, calling on social movements opposing these approaches to draw the 'voiceless victims' of restructuring into a change-movement, thereby directing their anger towards devising alternative futures. However, Lambert (2004, p. 312) makes the point that, unlike other parts of the world in which the World Social Forum has been a mobilising force, this has not been the case in Australia. Instead, retrenched Australian workers must 'confront their predicament on personal, not social terms'.

Findings from research conducted with 235 Ansett Customer Service Officers, who were among 16,000 employees made redundant following this Australian airline's collapse in 2001 are also relevant for this study. These included diminished levels of trust in management, unions and the government (Mitchell & Kristovics 2005). Workers stated that the labour market had changed since the 1990s to one of precarious, part-time and casual work. A further analysis of the Ansett closure (Weller 2007 p. 12) revealed that a subgroup of between 15% and 20% of respondents experienced multidimensional negative impacts and that:

> the longer-term costs of redundancy for workers are not only a matter of 'recovering' emotionally, finding a new job, or returning to financial security. The costs are all these things.

Job loss and social policy

Job loss and social policy are integrally related. Put simply, social policy is the application by governments of the principles and values of a welfare state (Graycar & Jamrozik 1993). Social policy is actions taken by government towards improving the quality of people's lives though resource allocations programs, community services and income support. The UK Dept of Health (2009) maintains that to get unemployed people back into jobs it is critically important that work be sustainable. It must offer a decent wage, opportunities for development, provide a work and life balance, and protect against conditions that are damaging to health.

A feature of job losses in the industrial sector and the focus of this thesis is often its large scale, as evidenced by the Mitsubishi downsizing and closure. As Beer et al. (2006, p. 1) note, many lesser-skilled workers exiting declining manufacturing industries may not have their needs addressed by current policies and programs, as these may not acknowledge wider dimensions of well-being outlined in the

literature review. These dimensions include 'the strain of employment loss; health impacts; threats to housing security; or pressures to move location'. As Weller (2000, p. 164) contends:

> Firms and plants will forever fail, but in a dogmatically market-driven environment their failure is more spectacular. Workers still lose their jobs, but they are more likely to lose entitlements and more likely to be thrown onto an unforgiving labour market flooded with competition from their former colleagues.

In respect of social policy responses to industrial restructuring, including responses following the retrenchments at Mitsubishi, Beer (2007) contends that Labour Adjustment Program (LAP) funding should be redirected to provide further training or re-skilling opportunities to help retrenched workers take advantage of job opportunities in other growing industries. Another recommended policy response, suitable for large scale job loss in the industrial sector, is a measure adopted by the UK Government for dealing with the closure of the Rover plant at Longbridge. This response was to support individual workers while ensuring retention of valuable manufacturing skills (MG Rover Task Force 2005), and included travel subsidies to encourage employment opportunities located at a greater distance.

This was also a potentially valuable option for supporting retrenched Mitsubishi workers, as many burgeoning industrial plants are in the northern region of Adelaide but involve additional travel time and costs for southern suburbs workers that many found prohibitive (Beer et al. 2006). The policy template afforded by the closure of the UK Rover plant was in the form of a 'Skills Hub' providing a travel subsidy of 75 UK pounds per week for up to 20 weeks; a minimum National Vocational Qualification Level 2 training for each employee; and a wage induction subsidy to employers optimised by being implemented under a skills matching service (Beer et al. 2006).

Webber and Weller (2002) make the point in respect of job loss in the industrial sector, that each group of retrenched workers is unique. This is in respect of their retrenchment event, whether the labour market was buoyant or not, and the nature of their skills base. Weller (2007) also notes how the impact of Work Choices industrial relations policy and changes to unfair dismissal laws have made it easier for firms to shed workers, and that workers experiencing subsequent job loss rarely find employment opportunities matching the security of their previous job. The

nature of subsequent employment secured by retrenched Mitsubishi workers following job loss will be a feature of their subjective accounts in chapter eight.

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the wider literature on the nexus between health and well-being and employment status. Employment is a key health determinant, especially given the impact of the changing nature of employment over the last few decades. The chapter began by defining health and well-being, and then discussed the social determinants of health and the critical and psychosocial perspectives that are adopted in this thesis to link retrenched workers' subjective experiences and wider policy issues. Literature linking health and well-being and the phenomenon of mass job loss and job insecurity was also examined by discussing selected international and Australian job loss research.

A neoliberal shift was identified in research focus from structural issues to individual human attributes, with the chapter then turning to more recent Australian industrial job loss research. Finally, this chapter addressed the nexus between job loss and social policy, noting that existing policies may not meet the needs of workers facing job loss, including those within declining manufacturing industries. Together with chapter two, this chapter provides the relevant literature for undertaking a case study of job loss at Mitsubishi in South Australia to explore the consequences for the health and well-being of retrenched Mitsubishi workers within a policy context. The methodology governing this study is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Research methodology

Introduction and research paradigm

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and design of this research project, drawing upon relevant literature. For Smith and Dainty (1991) research is a process of enquiry that augments the knowledge of a phenomenon. Bennett (1991, in Smith & Dainty 1991, p. 68) states:

> Research is a systematic careful inquiry or examination to discover new information or relationships and to expand / verify existing knowledge for some specified purpose.

This chapter begins by outlining the qualitative research paradigm and critical theoretical perspective adopted for a case study of job loss at Mitsubishi in South Australia. The research aims, rationale, and three research questions are presented, and the social theory informing the study discussed. The case study is then situated within the context of a two year longitudinal study on the wider impacts of retrenchment at Mitsubishi, followed by discussion on the research methods including data collection and analysis. Next there is an explanation of how research rigour was maintained, including by engaging reflexivity in the research process. The chapter concludes with reflections on the potential for research to be influenced by a researcher's own standpoint, including this researcher's personal standpoint.

A research paradigm is a framework for theory development, reflecting the researcher's philosophical standpoint by incorporating a set of beliefs that guides their action (Creswell 2007, p. 248; Denzin & Lincoln 2000). This standpoint influences both professional practice and personal behaviour by defining the 'nature of the world, the individual's place within it, and the range of possible relationships to that world' (Guba & Lincoln 1994, pp. 107-108). Positivism, interpretivism and critical theory are three main paradigms. Positivism, a philosophy of strict empiricism, deems that legitimate knowledge is based on direct experience

(Schwandt 2001). Interpretivism assumes that meaning is inherent in human action, with the role of the researcher to uncover that meaning (Schwandt 2001). This thesis adopts the third paradigm, or critical theoretical perspective, and within this takes a structure and agency approach.

Critical theoretical perspective

Critical theory builds upon an interpretivist paradigm by acknowledging that reality is also governed by tensions resulting from underlying social, political and cultural structures, and that knowledge is the result of both subjective experiences and the social relations structuring these experiences. A critical theoretical perspective recognises that individuals work towards reconstructing their world through both action and reflection. Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) maintain that there are many critical theories, with the tradition in constant evolution. Critical theory therefore holds an optimistic stance on human nature, while still acknowledging and challenging the impact of historic coercion and oppression by a minority of powerful people (Willis 1995). Critical theory calls ideologies into question, maintains a focus on unequal power relations in society, and fosters reflection by the researcher. Its aim is to 'move beyond the surface and expose the taken-for-granted; to analyse the gaps, silences, and ambiguities present in social contexts' (Cheek et al. 1996, p. 164). Critical theory is also concerned with the socio-historic basis of the facts it explores, a factor drawn out in this study, as well as the context in which research results will take effect (Hoy & McCarthy 1994).

This thesis adopts a 'criticalist' approach. Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) state that a criticalist is a researcher or theorist who attempts to use their own work as a form of social or cultural criticism. A criticalist recognises that oppression is greater if those who are oppressed fail to mount a challenge due to a belief that oppression is natural, necessary, or inevitable. A criticalist acknowledges that oppression has many faces, and that focusing on one at the expense of another may the miss important interconnections between them (Kincheloe & McLaren 2003). Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, p. 279) make the further point that criticalist research has the potential to produce 'dangerous knowledge, the kind of information and insights that upset institutions and threaten to overturn sovereign regimes of truth'. In summary, adopting a criticalist approach is to acknowledge the many faces of oppression and

its many interlinkages by focusing on injustice, subjugation and power, and by promoting change. Within a criticalist approach several enabling concepts and values for promoting change are theorised in chapter nine.

A criticalist theoretical perspective is appropriate for undertaking research which supports aspirations for social change and for improving public health (Baum 2008). It is adopted for this thesis as the focus is on workers' experiences of, and responses to job loss, explored through the interplay of their agency with wider enabling and constraining social structures; including policy structures. The criticalist perspective in this thesis includes issues of subjugation and power within the context of job loss from industry restructuring under changes to capitalism. It explores the interlinkages between the consequences for retrenched workers' health and well-being and a neoliberal policy environment entrenched by the values and intentions of powerful policy actors. A criticalist approach allows for documenting accounts of authentic lived experience, as recounted by retrenched Mitsubishi workers, as well as for identifying forms of domination from inherited traditions or prevailing cultures. In this study these forms of domination are embedded within prevailing policy structures and captured within policy actors' discourses.

Research design, aims and rationale

Silverman (2005) states that qualitative research must identify contested theoretical bases of methodologies, and identify the analytic and chance factors that influenced the research path. Murcott (1997) summarises this as the need to explain how one goes about research; what overall strategy is adopted and why; the design and techniques used; and why these were chosen over others. Research design is therefore a prior statement of the value of a project which helps to plan an integrated approach (Blaikie 2000). The aim is to support consistency and critical evaluation. Research design covers the entire process of research and is not only confined to research methods including data collection, analysis and report writing (Bogdan & Taylor 1975; Creswell 2007). It includes the research aims, objectives and rationale, or why a problem needs to be addressed.

The overall aim of the research in this thesis is to explore how the experience of job loss from industry restructuring affects the health and well-being of retrenched automotive workers. It also aims to situate these experiences within the context of

the broader policy environment and identify any implications for social policy in Australia in the early 21st century. A further research aim is to answer the research questions in ways that discover new facts and foster critical thought and judgement; including ways to inform alternative policy futures (Mason 2002) as part of a criticalist approach. As discussed in the literature review in chapter three, there is wide international literature on industry restructuring and job loss but little Australian research focusing on workers' subjective accounts of job loss within a policy context. This study aims to help bridge this gap, as well as provide a South Australian perspective on job loss. This is achieved by exploring the consequences of restructuring the South Australian operations of a large multinational automotive corporation representing a manufacturing sector in decline throughout Australia.

As noted in the introductory chapter, one rationale for undertaking this research is that industry restructuring will remain an enduring feature of the Australian and South Australian economy in the foreseeable future. This has important outcomes for affected industries, local communities and the state, but especially for the health and well-being of retrenched workers and their families. In particular it affects the large number of unskilled workers within declining manufacturing industries. Another research rationale is that the multiple consequences of job loss often include a decline in workers' welfare due to the peripheral or marginal nature of much alternative employment. As Carney and Hanks (1994) point out, many permanent full-time jobs have been increasingly replaced in the last few decades by insecure, casual and part-time work that can lead to inferior employment options and personal insecurity.

An important rationale underpinning the research design is a recognition that the personal experiences of job loss do not exist in a vacuum, but are closely linked to the prevailing policy environment mediating these experiences. It is therefore important to explore the broader policy terrain influencing both material and psychosocial health and well-being, and identify the implications for future policy.

Research questions

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 18), when devising and answering research questions, the researcher:

approaches the world with a set of ideas, an epistemological standpoint around what they believe can be known, and a framework (theory, ontology) that is then examined in specific ways (methodology or analysis).

Formulating research questions may be the most critical and difficult aspect of research design (Blaikie 2000). Mason (2002) contends that instead of finding fixed solutions, questions act as tools for guiding and focusing enquiry. Questions for this study are designed to interrogate the connections between what Mills (1959, p. 15) refers to as the 'personal troubles of milieu', affecting individual workers' immediate relationships and biographies, and the 'public issues' associated with widespread job loss from industry restructuring under specific socio-historic circumstances. Questions for this thesis are also devised to explore the nature of the broader historical policy environment shaping the experience of job loss and the implications this holds for future Australian social policy.

Blaikie (2000, p. 62) contends that while researchers may be inclined to include ambitious 'why' and 'how' questions in research projects, the importance of tackling 'what' questions cannot be overestimated. This is because 'we need to know what is going on before we can explain it' (Blaikie 2000, p 62, cited in Lewis-Beck et al. 2004 p. 966). To recap from the research overview in chapter one, the three questions designed for this study are:

1. What are workers' health and well-being experiences following job loss occurring as a result of industry restructuring?

2. What is the broader industrial and welfare policy environment shaping the experience of job loss in Australia?

3. What lessons are there from this study for Australian social policy in the 21st century?

These questions are linked methodologically under a single agency and structure theoretical framework.

Qualitative research approach

The above questions are addressed within a qualitative research approach concerned with understanding the multi-layered social world by using data reflecting the social context in which it is situated (Mason 2002). For Bouma and Ling (2004, p. 165)

qualitative research aims to provide an impression, and explain what it is like to 'be, do or think something'. It is a research approach that also seeks meaning by referring to the 'all roundedness' of social phenomena (Daly 2003, p. 193). Qualitative research may also assist policy-makers by providing a theory of social action based upon the world view of those likely to be affected by policy outcomes (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). In respect of this study, the people most directly affected by policy outcomes are retrenched automotive workers whose own accounts of job loss provide key insights.

While the strength of qualitative research is in the ability to access meanings and interpretations not examined within positivist research, 'scientific' methods still remain dominant in policy making, research funding and publications (Ezzy 2002a). However, there is a range of identified applications for qualitative research in public health within the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) framework and ethical guidelines (NHMRC 2007). These include studying and explaining the economic, social, cultural and political factors that impact on health; gaining an understanding of individual interpretations of health experiences; and providing data to improve survey instruments (Baum 2008). This thesis addresses the first two applications by gaining an understanding of individual retrenched workers' health experiences and describing and helping to explain the social structures, including policy structures, influencing the health and well-being of a particular research cohort. The research is guided by insights from a range of social theorists outlined in the following section.

Social theory

This research involves two levels of theory, including the insights of writers who seek to understand social life in terms of basic concepts, as well as the theory generated in the course of research (Blaikie 2000). The range of social theory begins with Mills' concept of the 'sociological imagination' (1959), followed by Giddens' structuration theory (1984). These theorists provide a starting point for adopting a wider range of perspectives on the relationship between social structure and human agency. This thesis is concerned with linking the 'public issue' of industry restructuring, and associated plant downsizing and closure, with its experiential

nature as the human face of job loss, or each worker's own 'private troubles' (Mills 1959).

To understand these links the research examines the relationship between social structure and human agency by describing retrenched workers' experiences of, and responses to, job loss, and linking these to the broader structural and policy issues influencing their experiences. In this thesis 'structure' relates to macro issues including deindustrialisation and public policy, with 'agency' relating to the experiences concerned with retrenchment and associated losses. The social theory of Mills and Giddens is augmented and mediated by other perspectives, including those of Williams and Popay (1999), Lister (1997, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2010) and Hoggett (2000, 2001, 2006, 2006a), discussed in chapter five. These theorists make further contributions to the debate on the interrelationship between structure and agency, seeing it more as a spectrum rather than a polarity. Their theoretical insights shaped the analysis of workers' subjective experiences of job loss.

Case study design

Due to its exploratory nature qualitative research fits well with several research designs, including case studies (Hakim 1987). This thesis presents a case study of job loss at Mitsubishi in South Australia. Yin (1989) states that a well-designed case study includes several attributes: it must be significant, complete, offer sufficient evidence, and consider alternative perspectives. It should also provide a logical sequence of action linking the data to both the research questions and conclusions (Yin 1989). These attributes have implications for maintaining research rigour, an issue addressed later in this chapter.

Goode and Hatt (1981, p. 331) state that a case study organises data in ways to 'preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied'. Data include documents, artefacts, interviews and observations (Yin 1989). The case study in this thesis utilises a range of documents, including semi-structured interview transcripts, policy documents, Hansard and other material discussed in the research methods. Baum (2008, p. 181) maintains that case studies are also 'empirical enquiries' utilising multiple data sources. A 'case' may be a community, institution or individual, with the research being descriptive or explanatory, and often undertaken by using mixed methods. A holistic approach is commonly adopted to include the

greatest number of contexts. Jorgenson (1989, p. 19) explains that the phenomena embraced within case studies include:

> culture, society, community, subculture, organisation, group or phenomenon such as beliefs, practices, or interactions as well as almost any other aspect of human existence.

This case study explores the phenomenon of job loss. Case study design was selected as case studies are valuable for both their commonality and their uniqueness, as well as for their ability to deal with both the complexity and specificity of the case in question (Stake 1995). Case studies are also a preferred strategy when the researcher does not have control over the events being studied, as in this project, or when the focus is on a real life context (Yin 1989). A common concern is that case studies have little basis for scientific generalisation. While not easily generalisable, this case study may have lessons for other communities or individuals facing future plant closures and job losses, as well as for those organisations and individuals charged with dealing with the welfare of retrenched workers, their families and communities.

The wider research context

This section describes the wider research context of this thesis and case study. In May 2004 Mitsubishi announced the closure of its Lonsdale engine foundry, leading to 700 forced retrenchments, as well as 400 voluntary redundancies at the allied assembly plant at Tonsley Park in Adelaide's inner-south. Some contract staff left the Lonsdale factory as early as June 2004, with progressive departures from both sites throughout 2004 and 2005 (Beer et al. 2006). Following the announcement of the impending mass retrenchments, a multidisciplinary research project was designed by a group of researchers from different departments at Flinders University, covering Public Health, Housing, Labour Market Economics and Community Development. This was to take the opportunity to explore the effects of the retrenchment on workers, their families and the broader community. The two year longitudinal study focused on social capital, health and well-being, housing, employment and labour market outcomes (Beer et al. 2006). The research was initially supported by the South Australian Department of Health and the Department of Families and Communities through the Human Services Research and Innovation Program (HSRIP). Subsequently a successful application was made to the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Program on which the South Australian Department of

Human Services served as an Industry Partner. Ethics approval was granted by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee prior to commencement.

The study had three waves of data collection. Focus groups of workers facing retrenchment provided relevant information for developing the Stage One structured survey, which was completed between March and November 2005 face to face with 371 workers. Stage Two structured surveys were conducted by telephone between November 2005 and October 2006, and Stage Three between December 2006 and August 2007. A brief overview of findings from these structured surveys in the longitudinal study will be provided in chapter eight to contextualise the case study findings. All survey respondents were also asked if they would be willing to participate in a subsequent interview stage. These further discussions were designed to allow for more nuanced and detailed information to be gathered through two waves of in-depth semi-structured interviews (Beer et al. 2006).

Two hundred and sixty four of the 371 retrenched workers agreed, from which 40 were randomly selected for the first round of in-depth interviews. The case study is based on the 33 of these 40 respondents who completed both interviews which were conducted in their own homes. The two stages of qualitative research were undertaken by several members of the research team between 2005 and 2007. Interview guides were semi-structured to allow the interviewer discretion in following participants' leads, with the average interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. A signed consent form was completed by each participant at the time of each interview. A sub-study was also conducted by interviewing 35 children of the retrenched workers (reported in Newman et al. 2009) and with 15 service providers (reported in Verity & Jolley 2008).

A review of the time lapses between the two interviews for each worker showed that these were from four to 18 months. The first set of interviews was conducted between November 2005 and April 2006 and the second set between November 2006 and July 2007. The interviews were then transcribed by independent contractors. The interview guide for the first wave included 72 questions (Appendix 1) and the second 75 questions (Appendix 2).

Positioning the case study and thesis in relation to the longitudinal study

This section documents the positioning of my thesis and case study in relation to the longitudinal study and wider research context. In late 2007 I was awarded a scholarship to undertake a doctoral thesis utilising the two sets of primary in-depth interview data that had been completed by the 33 retrenched workers, as outlined above. The scholarship was funded by the Australian Health Inequities Program (AHIP) which was a five year capacity building program, funded by the National Health & Medical Research Council (NH&MRC). The focus of AHIP was on strengthening the understanding of ways in which health inequities are created and sustained in Australia and identifying the potential role of policy in addressing them.

I therefore became involved at a later research stage than the original study and did not have a role in the research design, the compilation of the semi-structured interview questions, the interview process itself, or the transcription of the data. The doctoral research proposal, broadly reflecting the aims of AHIP, adopted a focus on exploring the retrenched workers' health and well-being experiences following job loss within the context of the broader policy environment of the time, and identifying any implications for social policy. Data which highlighted the policy context of job loss were not analysed as part of the main study, and I therefore had the opportunity to analyse the interview transcripts to provide a policy perspective. With my supervisors all being researchers on the longitudinal study, this thesis took a 'parallel' focus to this main study, utilising the semi-structured interview transcripts which had been designed to elicit a range of information reflecting the specialist interest areas of the multidisciplinary research team.

This thesis therefore draws on data from the 33 respondents who completed the two waves of qualitative interviews. The positioning of this thesis in respect of the longitudinal study is clarified in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Positioning of the thesis in relation to the main longitudinal study
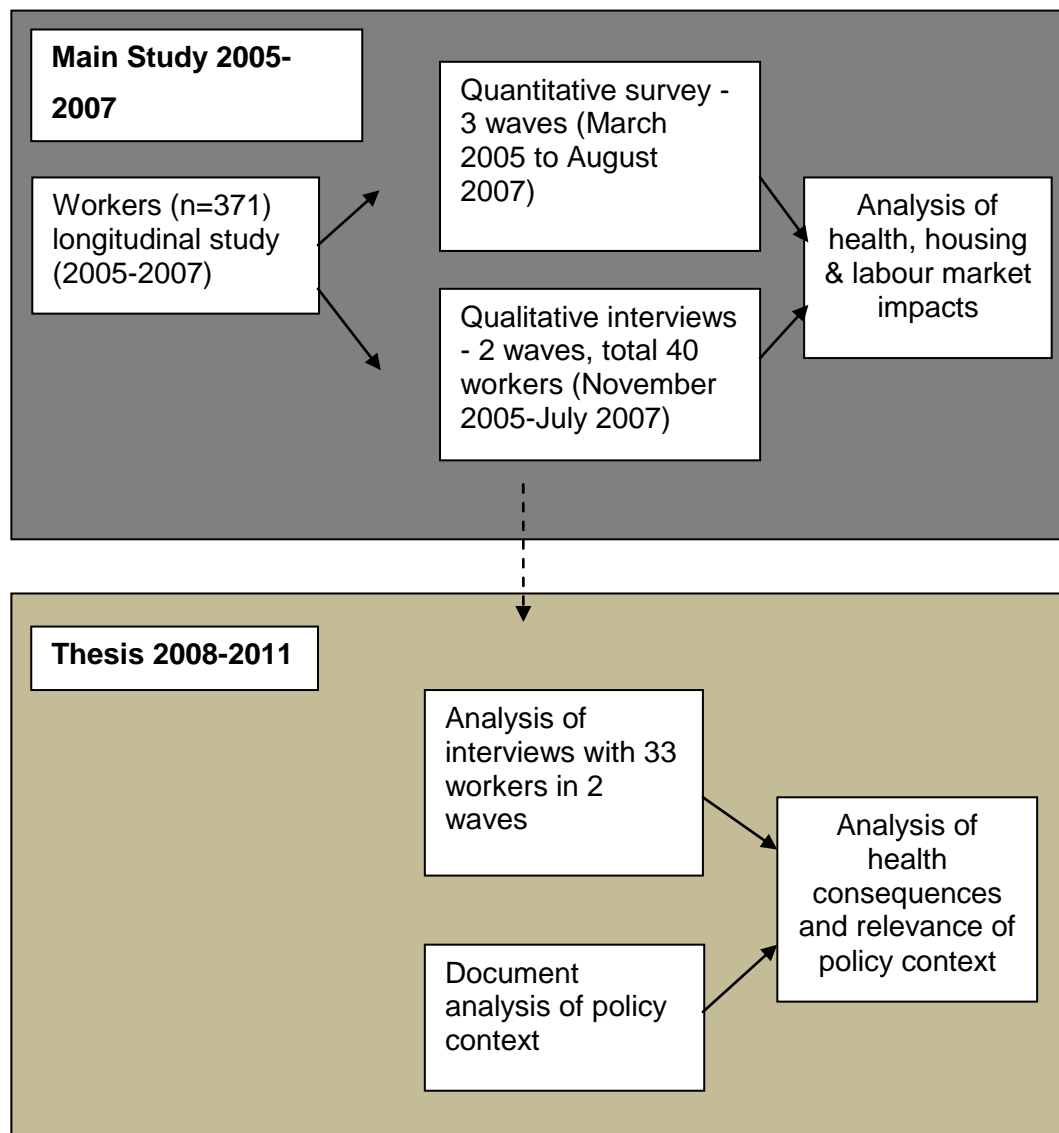
As depicted in Figure 1 this thesis therefore provides a snapshot of one cohort of workers who were also part of a much larger research project but with the potential to reveal more nuanced information than that provided in the quantitative part of the longitudinal study. This thesis study was also concerned with interpreting the workers' experiences in relation to the policy environment shaping these experiences, with an additional data set compiled through an original analysis of policy and other documents. The specific research methods used in the thesis are discussed further in the following section.

Research methods

Research methods are the specific procedures and techniques used for collecting and analysing the data relating to a research question (Crotty 1998) and the logic behind the generation of knowledge from data sources (Mason 2002). There are no specific methods prescribed for case studies (Merriam 1991). Ezzy (2002a) states that research strategies are neither objective nor inherently superior one to another, but adopt appropriate methods for particular political, theoretical or philosophical stances underpinning the research. As qualitative research is exploratory and context-sensitive it offers a range of data-generating methods including interviews, observation and textual analysis, documents and audio / visual recordings. The three study questions are addressed by using interview data from the two waves of semi-structured interviews outlined above, and documentary data analysis.

Interview methods

Data set 1: Semi-structured interviews

The data set for the first stage of the case study is the two waves of semi-structured interviews which are used to explore the first research question on workers' experiences and their health and well-being outcomes following job loss. The analysis focused on retrenched workers' interview responses in respect of their perceptions, views, feelings and motivations at the time of each interview. The interviews highlighted key structures and policy issues influencing the experience of job loss and these were subsequently explored in the second research stage. As described above the interview transcripts are documents reflecting research conducted by other researchers, collected as part of a larger study, and subsequently transcribed by independent contractors. While these are primary data utilised in this case study, they do pose methodological limitations documented below.

Firstly, as Heaton (2003) maintains, a methodological limitation may arise when primary data is collected by interviews or observation involving more than one researcher. Secondly, while the multidisciplinary approach facilitated the gathering of important and wide-ranging information, the large number of questions sometimes precluded the opportunity for more open-ended responses. Different researchers' interviewing styles and their engagement with a range of very different respondents led to the quality of responses being influenced by the extent to which individual

researchers probed, or did not, and the extent to which participants were forthcoming or constrained in their responses. However, such limitations may also occur with research conducted by a sole researcher. The data therefore reflects the ways in which researchers followed or foreclosed on participant leads, or dealt with difficult and on occasion confronting emotional responses. Sometimes a researcher's or a respondent's truncated response to a question or an answer that allowed for further prompting, limited the opportunity for more nuanced analysis.

Thirdly, there was the occasional conflation of terms by interviewers. For example, the term 'health' sometimes conflated physical and mental health when these may be discrete areas for analysis, as well as being analysed together. A fourth limitation is that original questions designed for addressing the aims of the longitudinal study were not necessarily devised to *invite* rich responses in respect of agency as action or participation. For example, although eliciting important insights on human agency that had triggered my focus on structure and agency, questions such as 'what did you miss most?' or 'how did you feel?' did not always draw out agency in interaction with social structure, even though highlighting *implicit* agency, which is also explored as part of respondents' subjective accounts.

Therefore, the large number of structured questions provided extensive data but sometimes limited the potential for drawing out what might be respondents' heroic and / or tragic narratives within the transcripts (Ezzy 2000). As Holloway and Jefferson (2000) explain, all structured interviews fall within a question-and-answer type. Here the interviewer sets the agenda and in principle, at least, controls the information produced. In Bauer's (1996, p. 2) terms this is in three ways, 'by selecting the theme and topics; by ordering the questions; and by wording questions in his or her language'. I understand that while I did not have a role in gathering the empirical data, framing the interview schedules and conducting and transcribing the interviews, there is still scope for reading and interpreting the data in a particular way which may allow for unconscious bias to intrude unknowingly. This is a point considered more fully later in this chapter in respect of maintaining research rigour.

Upon reflection I also recognised that under different research circumstances I would have devised questions to more explicitly fit the aims of my own research by adopting a less structured interview design, by focusing on drawing out agency and structure within a narrative focus. I understood as Ezzy (2000, p. 132) contends:

> Individuals sometimes portray themselves as autonomous agents in control of their lives, or, on the other hand, victims helpless in the face of their fate and social forces beyond their control … the extent to which people blame, or credit themselves for their current situation in part is an expression of the narrative structure of their account. Heroic narratives tend to emphasize agency; tragic stories tend to emphasize the influence of external forces.

However, in reflecting on these constraints I became aware that even though I did not take part in designing the multi-disciplinary research questions or conducting and transcribing the interviews, as Mullings contends (1999, p. 347), 'power is almost uniformly invested in the researcher' when interpreting and writing-up the research. I therefore acknowledge significant authority over the chosen study focus, interpretation of the data, and the selection of quotations that illuminate the analysis and research presentation. Methodological limitations may arise in any research project, and the first data set provided important insights into the multifaceted consequences of job loss which are explored throughout this thesis. The following section moves the discussion from the interview methods to the documentary methods adopted for Stage Two of the case study.

Documentary methods

Documents have always been utilised as data sources in social research (Sarantakos 1998) as they are likely to be relevant for every research topic, and for corroborating or augmenting other evidence (Yin 1989). Their scope includes personal, public, administrative and formal documents relating to a research topic. Documentary methods are valuable because they are easy to access, spontaneous, often of high quality, non-reactive, low-cost and sometimes the only source of information. Their limitations include the possibility of bias, that documents may not be representative, or that they may not always be accessible (Sarantakos 1998). Potential limitations include access, understanding how and why they were produced, determining their accuracy, linking these to other sources, including interviews, and deconstructing or 'demystifying' them (Patton 2002, p. 499).

The second research stage utilises documentary methods which are discussed below, after first noting a change in my focus of the documentary analysis at an early research stage. The original intention of the second study stage was an equity focus on the dichotomy between the welfare conditionality attaching to social welfare provision for the retrenched workers under neoliberal social policy, and that

attaching to the 'corporate' welfare provided to Mitsubishi as part of state aid to industry over the 25 years of its South Australian operations. Corporate welfare is part of the broader policy environment that has implications for the level of social welfare provision and therefore the well-being of welfare recipients. While this thesis still argues the importance of acknowledging equity issues relating to all forms of state redistribution or welfare, my focus shifted to the interaction of agency and structure. Of particular interest, and partly triggering this change, were recent reappraisals of human agency in social policy and welfare research that are discussed in the next chapter.

From the familiarisation stage through to the analysis of the two sets of interview transcripts, retrenched workers' accounts reflecting the interplay of agency and structure became a key issue for exploration, including the ways they employed their agency in the face of enabling and constraining policies. The criticalist approach adopted for the study focuses on the power disparity between the agency of retrenched workers' and that of policy actors. This underlying disparity was one influence on my decision to focus the second thematic analysis on prevailing policy and other documents relating to the Howard Coalition Government. Conducting a second thematic analysis also helped to illuminate and then preserve the range of 'multiple realities' revealed through different or contradictory views that arise in the case study (Stake 1995, p. 12). This change of focus in Stage Two also accords with Blaikie's (2000) contention that in qualitative research some decisions concerned with data collection may have to be made during the research process, and that some issues are refined throughout the study.

Data set 2: Policy-related documents

Following the early change of document focus, data collection for the second research stage shifted from documents concerned with the dichotomy between social and corporate welfare conditionality to policy and other documents highlighting key policy actors' values and policy intentions which underpin welfare-to-work policies and social welfare conditionality. These policies are also structures impacting on welfare recipients' well-being and agency. Policy and other structures are clearly identified in workers' accounts of job loss in chapter eight. The data set for the second research stage is designed to address the second research question on the nature of the broader policy environment helping to shape the experience of job loss.

The intention is to complement the first research stage by gaining a greater understanding of the policy arena under the Howard Coalition Government that was in office at the time of the Mitsubishi restructure. Chapter six provides an overview of Australian policy in historical context which situates the Howard Government's policy moment as part of an evolving bi-partisan neoliberal policy trajectory; albeit one entrenching more stringent forms of welfare conditionality based on a unique marriage between neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

Stage Two of the study aims to illuminate further this distinctive policy environment by examining key welfare reform documents, but also by bringing in the voices of key policy actors in the social and industrial relations policy arenas (Appendix 4). Documents reveal the Howard Coalition Government and individual policy actors' philosophical standpoints, expressed values, and assumptions concerning welfare recipients' agency and welfare dependency. These values and assumptions underpinned the adoption of 'Mutual Obligations' as social policy and 'Work Choices' as industrial relations policy in Australia. These two policy arenas converged in the lives of retrenched workers as they engaged with welfare-to-work policy following job loss.

Document selection

The rationale behind document selection for the second research stage was to identify views and values revealed within the key welfare reform documents of the Howard Government era, but also from political debates, speeches and other media which express these values in a richer context. Key policy actors were also elected political players, with welfare reform documents which form the basis of the analysis including the Discussion Paper *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century* (Newman 1999); the Howard Government's commissioned report on welfare reform, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* (McClure 2000b); and the Government's response to this report, *Australians Working Together* (Vanstone & Abbott 2001). The report *Australians Working Together - helping people to move forward*: *Listening to the community* (Vanstone & Abbott 2002) discussed the community consultation process concerned with proposed welfare changes.

These main policy documents are augmented by other policy-related material collected via key-word searches from within Hansard, Parliamentary Library holdings and internet search engines. Key words included 'Mutual Obligations', 'Work Choices', 'Job Network', and 'welfare dependency'. Sixty five documents including ministerial speeches, media releases, newspaper articles, media interviews, and party political and other documents were drawn upon to inform a thematic analysis of welfare conditionality to be presented in chapter seven.

Data analysis

This study involves the key features of qualitative data analysis as it is heavily based in and driven by the documentation of people's original accounts. In this study these accounts include those of retrenched Mitsubishi workers and policy actors. The main challenge for qualitative research analysis is investigating large volumes of raw data to communicate the essence of what is revealed (Patton 2002). This involves what Geertz (1973, p. 28) refers to as 'thick description' or drawing large conclusions from 'densely textured facts' and attending to the ways people find meaning in even small gestures: providing detailed and nuanced descriptions (Patton 2002). In qualitative data analysis the potential distancing of the researcher from the data must also be acknowledged, for as Padgett (2004) points out, it is the researcher and not a software package that interprets and engages empathy, self-awareness and insight in research.

In Tesch's (1990, pp. 95-97) view qualitative analysis is 'intellectual craftsmanship'. It is neither mechanistic nor scientific but looks to higher-level analysis. Tesch (1990, pp. 93-94) argues that case studies may be conceptualised as 'dialoguing with the data', a theoretical perspective which fits the approach for this study. Interview transcripts for the first research stage capture the retrospective alliances between several researchers and 33 respondents over two waves. 'Dialoguing with the data' aptly expresses my experience of analysing the transcribed outcomes of research conducted by other researchers: an issue explored above within the context of the methodological limitations. Within the scope of analytic processes this case study draws on systematic thematic analysis to identify concepts and themes which allow for the emergence of theory (Ezzy 2002). Boyatsis (1998, pp. 4-5) calls this a 'way of seeing' and 'making sense of seemingly unrelated material'. Thematic analysis is

systematic in allowing for the methodical treatment of all similar units of analysis, and comprehensive by allowing a full review of material (Ritchie & Spencer 1994).

Ritchie and Spencer's 'framework' analysis

Thematic analysis employed in this case study is guided by a framework including five stages identified by Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p. 179):

1. Familiarisation, or gaining a broad overview through 'immersion' in the data, reading transcripts and documents and listing key ideas and themes;

2. Identifying a thematic framework;

3. Indexing or applying the thematic framework to the data by coding;

4. Charting or taking data from its original context and rearranging it into charts laid out in the best form for writing up the study;

5. Mapping and interpretation or reviewing themes, comparing experiences, looking for patterns and connections.

Data analysis Stage 1: Interview transcripts

The familiarisation process for the first data set involved reading all first and second wave interview transcripts in hard copy. The first reading did not include note-taking or documentation: its purpose was to gain an initial 'feel' for overall meanings captured within the different interviewer / respondent alliances across both waves. Transcripts were read sequentially as two discrete sets then re-read while listing key ideas and recurrent themes for each of the two waves of interviews. A thematic framework was drawn up for each wave, partly based upon the range of questions posed in the interview topic guides (Appendices 1 & 2) and also on emerging themes. Due to the multidisciplinary approach adopted for the longitudinal study the interview format focused on six broad topic areas. These included an introductory section, followed by sections covering employment; formal assistance provided to retrenched workers from Mitsubishi, the union and Job Network employment providers; housing; health and social capital; and a concluding section.

Although not all questions and responses recorded in the transcripts would be relevant to the focus of the case study, all were carefully considered for potential

relevance prior to drawing up the thematic framework which was later refined as the research progressed. Questions from all domains had the potential for gaining important insights for the case study. After drawing up the thematic framework transcripts were coded: what Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p. 180) refer to as indexing, or a mechanism for labelling data in 'manageable bites'. This allows for subsequent retrieval and exploration and for retaining an overview of all categories. Coding allows for all views relating to a particular issue to be able to be accessed at one point to aid reflection and analysis. The thematic framework was also applied to the data by recording the thematic numbering system in the margins of the transcripts of both waves of interviews to allow for easy linking back to the thematic index and for aiding overall data management. As Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p. 150) maintain, 'code and retrieve' is both a technique of data control and data retention. Part of this analytic stage (for both data sets) was to identify and code textual passages that exemplified a particular concept or idea for utilising pertinent quotations to enrich analyses. Data management was assisted by NVivo 8 computer software (Gibbs 2002).

In the fourth stage the data were 'lifted' from their original context and rearranged in a process which Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p. 182) refer to as charting. Charts are designed to aid analysis by theme or by case and to assist the writing up process; with charts for this study thematically based. The charting stage allowed for the key characteristics of both waves of interviews to be pulled together in a way that facilitates interpretation and the writing- up process (Ritchie & Spencer 1994, p. 186). Interview transcripts were constantly revisited while linking back to the research questions and theoretical concepts. Mapping and interpretation of the first data set was augmented by social theory and the wider literature: in particular insights on human agency from Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001) discussed in the following chapter.

Data analysis Stage 2: Policy-related documents

The familiarisation process outlined above was also adopted for the range of policy and other documents included in the second data set. Documents were read and then re-read, identifying key themes and issues and then imported into NVivo software and coded. The scope of analysis of selected documents was intentionally confined to the views, values, and intentions of key policy actors in the social policy and

industrial relations arenas of the Howard Government (Appendix 4), even though policy is enacted at many different levels and by a range of policy makers. This decision reflects the aim of a tightly bounded analysis in respect of key political and policy architects, and the fact that the second data set is designed to augment the first. It seeks to further illuminate the main policy structures interacting with workers' agency that were identified in the interview transcripts.

As in the first research stage part of this analytic process involved identifying textual passages which provide the rich descriptions and pertinent quotations to augment the presentation of the analysis. In distinction to the first research stage and data set, a formal charting process (Ritchie & Spencer 1994) was not undertaken as a separate analytic phase. The broader, more thematically-focused coding process facilitated the writing-up phase following the final mapping and interpretation stage. This fifth stage in Ritchie and Spencer's framework was guided by Lakoff's (1995, 2003, 2004) theories on 'framing'. Lakoff identifies the ways in which mental structures or conceptual metaphors help to shape a political world view in ways that may influence institutions and policies, or the structures in interaction with human agency. From a criticalist perspective Lakoff brings to light the way structures may be 'framed' in ways to promote the world view and policy outcomes of powerful and potentially oppressive agents.

The separate mapping and interpretation of the data sets for both research stages, utilising the insights from Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001) for the interview analysis and Lakoff (1995, 2003, 2004) for the document analysis, helped to highlight the divergent views of retrenched workers and policy actors. Insights gained from the two separate mapping and interpretation stages of the research triggered further analysis and reflection on the nexus between the two. These views are integrated theoretically within two thematic analyses in chapters seven and eight and highlight implications for future social policy discussed in chapter nine, the concluding chapter.

Maintaining research rigour

Introduction

Maintaining research rigour is a critical part of all research, involving a multi-faceted approach which is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. Maintaining rigour

involves documenting the ways in which interpretations are reached while justifying the research steps (Mason 2002). There are significant differences between what is held to be good quantitative and good qualitative research. The non-standard nature of many qualitative research methods means that simple reliability tests generally conducted for quantitative research cannot be used, as traditional empirical research methods constrain the scope of qualitative research. Different theorists have identified a range of theoretical approaches for maintaining qualitative research rigour. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to 'transferability', 'credibility', 'confirmability' and 'dependability' as valid means.

Research is transferable if findings may be extrapolated to other settings. It is credible if it uses rigorous techniques and methods, with the researcher considered credible if suitably trained and experienced. Credibility also implies research triangulation, which is an important way of ensuring the validity of case study research. Data collection methods are triangulated when many methods are combined, with data sources and theory also forms of triangulation (Denzin 1978). Confirmability demands an 'audit trail' to allow for independent confirmation (Sandelowski 1986) and to provide a logical sequence of action linking the data to both the research questions and conclusions (Yin 1989). Dependability or reliability refers to the level of consistency in the research over time and across methods, with reliability dependent upon the level of the researcher's interviewing skills, observation and recording (Baum 2008). The following section documents how I maintained rigour in conducting this case study.

Maintaining research rigour in conducting this case study

Credibility was maintained in this study through triangulation of data sources and theory, supervisor triangulation, and by adopting rigorous techniques and methods. Supervisors for this study were all investigators in the longitudinal study and had been involved in the original design of the longitudinal research; data collection for which had been completed by the time I began my own study. Confirmability was addressed by storing research data in ways to allow for tracking thought processes, decision making, and the construction of themes etc. Dependability or reliability was supported by my prior experience as a social work research assistant, and the interviewing, observation and recording skills gained in that role. This vocational

background also facilitated engaging reflexivity throughout the case study to help maintain rigour.

The criterion of significance was met by providing a South Australian focus in job loss research. The criterion of completeness was met by reflecting on and drawing upon the full scope of information included in the different interview domains covered in the interview transcripts across the two waves. This was to ensure that all relevant material would be captured, even from within aspects not directly related to workers' health, well-being and welfare. Completeness was also met by undertaking a second complementary thematic analysis of policy and other documents which allowed for a contrasting perspective: juxtaposing retrenched workers' and policy actors' views. This provided an important alternative research perspective (Yin 1989) on the nexus between job loss and social policy. Taken together, the two thematic analyses highlight the integral role of social policy in mediating the consequences of job loss, which is the focus of the third study question addressed in chapter nine.

Maintaining theoretical adequacy

Maintaining research rigour also requires an adequate theoretical grounding. Key insights underpinning the development of a new framework for welfare research also provided a guide to maintaining theoretical adequacy for this study. Williams and Popay (1999, p. 179) argue the need to move beyond research prioritising *either* individuals *or* social structures as the key determinants of human welfare and action. These theorists have devised a conceptual bridge spanning globalisation and personal identity, including the effects of globalisation on work and on the boundaries of the nation state. These are key issues in the case study, with globalisation an antecedent of job loss with hegemonic links to neoliberalism, or the policy context in which the consequences of job loss are experienced; as discussed in chapter two.

Williams and Popay (1999) point to the implications arising from changes to welfare provision in industrialised Western nations where globalisation and neoliberalism shape the priorities of human needs. Their conceptual framework calls for avoiding the agency and structure dichotomy, focusing instead on agency and structure as a spectrum rather than a bifurcation; the position adopted for this study and discussed more fully in the next chapter. Further nuanced agency perspectives theorised by Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001) are the focus for the analysis of Mitsubishi

workers' subjective accounts. Maintaining theoretical adequacy in this study in respect of policy actors' values and intentions is aided by Lakoff's (1995, 2003, 2004) insights concerning the power of conceptual metaphors and 'framing', which help to illuminate and reinforce an understanding of the power of discourse in shaping policy.

Engaging reflexivity

This section discusses the importance of engaging reflexivity when conducting research, and the ways in which I engaged reflexively to help maintain research rigour. Firstly, this was partly by adopting a 'criticalist' rather than an exclusively interpretative approach (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000), as discussed earlier in this chapter. Secondly, it was by reflecting on and acknowledging the potential variety of roles adopted by a case study researcher. As Stake (1995) points out these include information gatherer, teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer, participant observer, interviewer, reader, storyteller and interpreter. The roles of information gatherer, storyteller and interpreter are the primary roles I adopted for this study; allowing for individual respondents' 'stories' to be recounted mainly in their own words. I understand that while each retrenched worker's story is unique it also bears certain similarities and patterns that identify his or her own 'private troubles' as part of a wider 'public issue' that warrant a collective as well as an individual focus (Mills 1959). However, workers' personal accounts highlight that responses to the consequences of job loss are necessarily complex and multifaceted, involving a complex range of unique individual subjectivities that cannot be generalised to the collective. In addition, I recognise that the nature of policy actors' values and unique subjectivities informing their policy intentions, and the ways these are expressed in the public domain, have major consequences for welfare recipients when enacted as policy. Policy actors' individual views and intentions informing policy are therefore highlighted and recounted mainly in their own words in chapter seven, to contextualise retrenched workers' accounts of engaging with the policy domain that are then presented in chapter eight.

Personal standpoint: potential influences on research

This section reflects on the potential for a qualitative researcher's own standpoint to influence his or her research. The generation of knowledge cannot be quarantined

from broader sociocultural conditions in which research is undertaken. It is important for the researcher to question his or her personal standpoint, or the place from where he or she views the world, as part of engaging reflexivity. This standpoint influences his or her focus, as well as what is obscured from view. Researchers are influenced by a range of personal attributes, and as Mullings (1999) contends, a researcher's knowledge is therefore only ever partial.

These attributes include class or socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, nationality and other identifiers [including age and dis / ability] which help shape the lens by which the world is viewed and interpreted. As Stretton (1976, pp. 138-139, cited in Martin 2006, p. 57) maintains, social research cannot be considered values-free as 'values are built into theories and methods in many and various ways'. In distinction to a positivist research approach, in qualitative research the researcher is enmeshed within the study and is never an objective observer. Mason (2002) argues that the researcher must also recognise his or her personal influence on a study by reflecting on the ways in which personal values, formed as a consequence of unique life experiences and personal history, together with political commitments and personal beliefs, may influence the nature or course of a study: an issue I refer to more fully below. In Nightingale's and Cromby's (1999, p. 228) terms, reflexivity demands that the researcher is aware of his or her contribution to the 'construction of meaning' in the research process. Given these potential influences Ezzy (2005, p. 33) argues 'It is no longer acceptable to hide behind a vague claim to be doing "objective" research'.

In turning now to my own standpoint, I acknowledge the potential for my own values to influence this case study and thesis. Firstly, I have lived under all Australian Liberal (conservative) and Labor political regimes spanning the Menzies era (1939-1966), and the Howard Coalition Government (1996-2007) that are discussed throughout this thesis. From a personal perspective, these regimes informing Australia's longer-term policy trajectory are not mere historical textbook abstractions about which I remain dispassionate. Instead, these have been an integral part of my personal lived experience, and foundational to informing my own political beliefs and values. Secondly, while I may bring a personal historical or longitudinal political perspective to the policy context informing this study, this has the potential to predispose me to bias, possibly through uncritical overstatement of the nature and

constraints of the welfare-to-work policy. This policy, impacting on retrenched workers examined in the case study, ran counter to my personal political beliefs.

Mullings (1999) also states that a researcher's subjectivity and personal attributes underpinning his or her standpoint are not fixed but are open to change. It is pertinent to note that after embarking on this doctoral thesis I had reason to reflect upon ways in which my personal standpoint, inscribed in my formative years but evolving over time, may have also consciously and / or unconsciously played a part in shaping my interpretation of the worker interviews. While I neither bring to this study the personal experience of being a retrenched automotive worker, nor of working professionally with people who have had this experience, I do have a personal and historical identification with the Tonsley Park automotive plant. More particularly it is with its iconic and symbolic representation of the solidarity and 'mateship' underpinning (generally male) working class labour: people with whom my own family strongly identified.

This class identification, based on a romanticised notion of working class values, and especially hegemonic masculinity, was entrenched by having lived near the Tonsley Park automotive precinct when young, and having family friends who were employed there under the former Chrysler management. I recognise the potential for this identification to be projected onto the workers in the study by interpreting their subjective accounts in a more sympathetic way. I also recognise that my own assumptions concerning the nature of this automotive work force were based upon this limited number of individuals from within a much earlier and more homogenous cohort of relatively unskilled, and largely uneducated male automotive production workers. Initially I assumed, albeit unreflectively, that these workers would still typify the general work force of the now Mitsubishi plant, and would be representative of the respondents in the longitudinal study and hence my own study. These assumptions were soon challenged by the diverse demographic profile of the 33 case study respondents (Appendix 3). This highlighted the potential for making unwarranted, unreflective and often unconscious generalisations in research.

In acknowledging these caveats in this brief reflection on my personal standpoint, I acknowledge Bailey's (1997) contention that a researcher's standpoint differs from a 'perspective' which is gained by merely opening ones' eyes. I have brought this to light in respect of my own research to clarify, in Stretton's (1976) terms, the ways in

which I am 'inherently entwined' within it. I recognise that my own personal and political standpoint cannot be completely divorced from the study (Mullings 1999), and therefore make no claim to completely objective research (Ezzy 2005).

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the chosen methodology for this case study of job loss at Mitsubishi. It outlined the research paradigm, including critical theoretical perspective, and the case study design, aims and rationale. It presented the three research questions to be addressed through two stages of qualitative research and a brief overview of the social theory informing the study. This chapter also situated this researcher and case study within the context of a multidisciplinary longitudinal study. The methods adopted for data collection and analysis were outlined for both stages of the case study, including Ritchie and Spencer's 'framework' for the analysis. Methodological limitations relevant to the interview methods in the first research stage were identified and discussed. The importance of maintaining research rigour, including theoretical adequacy and the need to engage reflexivity in the research process, was addressed by drawing upon relevant literature and linking it to the methods adopted for this study. The chapter concluded with reflections on my own personal standpoint, acknowledging the potential for consciously and / or unconsciously influencing interpretation of data.

The following chapter begins a more detailed discussion of human agency and social structure underpinning the case study and thesis. It outlines the agency and structure debate and explores recent reappraisals of the agent in social policy and welfare research. This in turn provides the theoretical grounding for undertaking a thematic analysis of retrenched workers' subjective experiences of job loss and how they engaged their agency in dealing with its consequences, presented in chapter eight.

Chapter 5:

Reappraising the agent in social policy

> It may be that the most radical discovery within recent psychology and social science is the discovery of how so many of the most intimate features of the person are socially patterned and even implanted. Within the broad limits of the glandular and nervous apparatus, the emotions of fear and hatred and love and rage, in all their varieties, must be understood in their close and continual reference to the social biography and the social context in which they are experienced and expressed (Mills 1959, p. 162).

Introduction

Mass job loss is both a personal and a structural story. The perspective in this thesis is that understanding its consequences may be facilitated by adopting an agency and structure approach. Implications for future policy may be brought to light by exploring the ways retrenched workers engaged their agency in interaction with enabling or constraining structures, especially policy structures. This chapter discusses the agency and structure debate by examining human agency and social structure as theoretical concepts. It adopts a co-deterministic perspective which is explored using theoretical concepts including Mill's (1959) 'sociological imagination', which situates the individual in a wider social context, and Giddens' (1984) structuration theory that brings in issues of enablement and constraint. The chapter also explores rights and obligations approaches to citizenship which influence the level of welfare conditionality imposed on welfare recipients, including retrenched workers. It introduces Lakoff's theories on the use of 'framing' and employing conceptual metaphors for entrenching neoliberal hegemony in policy in ways that influence institutions and policy direction.

Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001) have devised models of agency that reappraise the agent in social policy and welfare research, and these become the theoretical tools for exploring workers' agency accounts. This chapter and the next are theoretical chapters interrogating first agency and then structure as concepts. This chapter adopts an *agency* focus to provide the background for taking an agency perspective

in chapter eight when theorising workers' accounts of job loss and the ways they engaged their agency in response. Chapter six adopts a focus on *structure* to understand the policy structures that enabled or constrained workers' agency. These are reflected in policy actors' discourses presented in the thematic analysis in chapter seven.

The agency and structure debate

A key debate within sociological theory is the relationship between human agency and social structure, or the way social structures influence human action, how they are created, and any limits they place on the individual's capacity for independent action (Abercrombie et al. 1988, p. 6; Depelteau 2008; Giddens 1984). At its simplest level the debate questions whether social problems and their solutions rest with the behaviour of individuals or the extent to which broader social structures are relevant (Orton 2009).

Human agency

Human agency focuses on individual capacities and actions (Redmond 2008). While human goals are culturally specific they are based upon an individual's ability to articulate beliefs, act upon them, and assume both practical and moral responsibility for them (Doyal & Gough 1984). For Hernandez and Ivengar (2001) human agency has its origin in either the individual person or in the collective, depending on whether a culture promotes individualism or collectivism. Deacon and Mann (1999, p. 413) understand agency as 'actions, activities, decisions and behaviours that represent some measure of meaningful choice'; while Stenner and Taylor (2008, p. 432) see agency as rational, or cognitively directed action. The term 'agency' generally refers to purposive human action or behaviour, decision-making strategies and the exercise of choice in pursuing personal aims. It also raises issues concerned with levels of motivation and the personal and cultural resources that facilitate a person's capacity to act (Deacon 2004) that are examined later in this chapter. Also critical to human agency is the way it is exercised; whether it reduces or exacerbates inequality (Heron 2008).

People may live in constrained circumstances but their agency is not negated to the extent that actions are assumed to be done *by* them rather than *to* them; even within a range of structural, including policy, constraints. Human aspirations and strivings

imply agency and the will and capacity for action. Human agency is also understood as self-development, or 'becoming the person one chooses to be through carrying out those actions that express ones purposes and needs' (Gould 1988, p. 47). This allows for forming new capacities and enriching existing ones. As Mishra (1981) argues, determinism, or the claim that everything is decided upon in advance, forecloses on deliberative action which necessarily involves a presupposition of choice.

Sen (1999) understands the role of agency as the key to acknowledging individuals as responsible persons. How people view opportunities and obstacles in their environment shapes their lives and forms the foundation of human agency (Bandura 2000). Agency is therefore also about the world of structures. This thesis and case study discusses the ways in which agency is shaped by structures associated with job loss and its aftermath. In doing so it provides one window into insights from people at a particular historical moment, and becomes a story of agency in interaction with enabling and constraining structures. The thematic analysis of policy actors' values and policy intentions helps to illuminate the policy structures faced by the retrenched workers that will then be discussed in their subjective accounts.

Social structure

Social structure is defined as any recurring pattern of social behaviour relating to 'enduring, orderly and patterned relationships between elements of a society' even though not always visible (Abercrombie et al. 1988, pp. 228). The debate over the priority of agency or structure adopts three main positions. One is that structures are not determining, and the way individuals create the world around them should be the main emphasis. This position critiques a primary focus on social structures that are conceptualised as 'unobservable and therefore unverifiable; as denying human creativity and freedom' (Abercrombie et al. 1988, p. 229). A second position holds that social structures including rules, laws and policies, *do* determine the characteristics and actions or agency of individuals, while a third, co-determinism (Giddens 1984), attempts a compromise by seeking to bridge this dichotomy; the position adopted in this thesis. Giddens' views are drawn upon and mediated in this thesis.

Co-determinism: bridging agency and structure

Bridging agency and structure has become a focal point of sociological analysis, influenced by what Depelteau (2008, p. 51) refers to as 'two modes of perception of the social universe' over the last three decades. These are co-determinism and relationism, with the most influential being co-determinism. Co-determinism explains social phenomena through the interaction between agency and structure, rather than by prioritising one over the other. This is best understood as the 'both / and' approach rather than an 'either / or' binary; as theorised by Williams and Popay (1999) in respect of conducting welfare research. While the 'theoretical pendulum' has swung between structure and agency at different times, a more recent emphasis has been on this inter-relationship (Lister 2004, p. 126). Social theory and welfare research now focus on overcoming a strict dichotomy, with the influence of co-determinism partly due to ideological assumptions, but also the need to account for a level of individual freedom while still maintaining a stable social order (Depelteau 2008).

The Marxian compromise between agency and structure is understood in its aim to give meaning to the concept of a class struggle. A classical text expressing co-determinism is the statement by Karl Marx in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:

> Men [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living ([1869], 1972, p. 360).

A criticalist perspective identifies the ways in which inherited traditions act to constrain the present: for example, through the nature of the prevailing policy terrain. Following Marx, Mills (1959) endorsed a co-deterministic perspective in his concept of the 'sociological imagination' or the vehicle for connecting personal problems to wider political and social structures, and to a common cause requiring social rather than individual responses. Mills' perspective helps to keep in mind the relationship between 'private troubles' and 'public issues' theorised below which in turn helps to theorise workers' subjective accounts of job loss as the human face of industry restructuring.

Mills' 'sociological imagination'

The concept of the sociological imagination enables an 'intellectual grasp of history and biography and the relations between the two' (Mills 1959, p. 6). Mills argues that individuals are not merely 'outsiders' or 'permanent strangers' to the social world; nor is social life merely 'a series of traps' (1959, p. 5). Individuals are partly shaped by history, or structural changes beyond their control, but they also shape the social world through the influence of their biographies. Mills (1959, p. 7) highlights three key factors which must be accounted for in any social study. These are the 'structure of society as a whole', 'where it stands in human history', and 'the types of women and men who now prevail'; three questions addressed throughout this case study and thesis. Mills (1959, p. 7) asks:

> In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted? What kinds of 'human nature' are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society in this period? And what is the meaning for 'human nature' of each and every feature of society we are examining … For that, [sociological] imagination is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another – from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world … It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self- and to see the relations between the two.

For Mills (1959, p. 3) 'neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both'. His theoretical contribution helps to explain individual experiences based on a shared reality, or the conjunction of one person's 'private troubles' with wider societal or 'public issues'. Private troubles arise from a wide range of essentially personal or private contingencies. However, individuals also experience what they understand to be private troubles without being fully aware of their widespread nature, common cause and shared reality as a public issue. As Willis (1995) points out, one example of both private troubles and a public issue is mass job loss which occurs within a wider social context due to the way in which institutions are incorporated within social structures: in this study including policy structures.

A public issue represents the multiple private troubles unable to be solved by individual responses alone, calling for collective intervention or collective agency. While Mills' conceptual framework situates the individual within a wider social context it stops short of theorising the interrelationship between structural factors,

human agency and issues of enablement and constraint. It is here that insights from Anthony Giddens' structuration theory augment this understanding, as well as from theorists providing more nuanced perspectives drawn upon as part of theorising retrenched workers' agency accounts.

Giddens' structuration theory

Following Mills, Giddens' (1984) social theory incorporates what Tucker (1998, p. 1) refers to as the 'overall system-ness' of the modern social world through a synthetic approach. What it brings to the debate on structure and agency is the view that social life is neither the sum of *ad hoc* individual acts, nor is it determined by social forces alone. Instead, human agency and social structure are interrelated. While individuals are shaped by inherited social and policy structures, the repetitive acts of individuals reproduce or alter these structures which include traditions, institutions, moral codes, religions, policies and other established ways of acting. While a criticalist perspective keeps a focus on forms of oppressive structures and their potential interconnections (Kincheloe &McLaren 2003) critical theory also adopts an optimistic stance on human nature. This is through acknowledging the possibility of changing existing structures by ignoring, replacing, or reproducing them differently through individual and collective agency as capacities for social transformation, as will be theorised in chapter nine. As Giddens (1984, p. 117) maintains:

> In structuration theory human societies or social systems would not exist without human agency. But actors do not create social systems; they reproduce or transform them, remaking what is already made in the continuity of praxis.

Structuration theory acknowledges that society both precedes and outlives individuals but has no separate existence without them. In theorising the relationship between agency and structure Giddens (1979, p. 118) holds that social systems should not be conceptualised as systems formed by either individuals or structures. Instead, the social world incorporates 'socio-cultural practices', or the 'making' of history and the construction of social life. Functionalism and structuralism both emphasise the primacy of the social whole over that of the individual. Agency approaches instead prioritise the role of the individual, alone or collectively shaping the social world through small-scale human interactions. Structuration theory emphasises the agency / structure relationship as a dualism rather than a duality: two

sides of the same coin. Giddens (1984, p. 287) maintains that structuration theory is 'intrinsically incomplete if not linked to a conception of social science as critical theory'. He adopts a critical perspective based on his view that social processes are not grounded in unalterable laws. The transformative capacity of human agency lies in the individual's power to either intervene or refrain.

Within structuration theory people are recognised, in Garfinkel's (1967) terms, as 'knowledgeable' or 'creative' agents, not 'cultural dupes', or whom Mills (1959, p. 171) describes as 'cheerful robots'. The focus is not on an individual's intentions, but on their capacity to act in the first place (Kasperson 2000). It is in this context that agency implies power, or the capacity of the individual to make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs (Giddens 1984). However, what structuration theory arguably underplays is the true extent to which this capacity to act may be mediated by structures. As Heron (2008, p. 87) argues:

> A broader understanding [of agency] would be to see human agency as that inherent capacity in each person to think, make choices and act, within and based on the socio–economic, political and cultural forces around them, in order to improve themselves and their families and communities.

Dean (2003a, p. 702) argues that with ever-increasing economic risk and technical complexity, the human agent demands a greater degree of 'cleverness' or what Giddens terms 'reflexivity'. Giddens' notion of practical consciousness or 'know how' is also a key theme in structuration theory. This is what people understand about social conditions and about their own actions but are unable to articulate clearly (Giddens 1984). For Giddens (1984), it is through 'reflexive monitoring' that individuals also reveal a level of awareness of their actions for which they are also held responsible. For no matter the circumstances, Giddens argues, there is always scope for choice, even with structural constraints. However, Giddens' theoretical perspective is mediated by two theorists whose insights are discussed below within the context of recent reappraisals of agency in social policy. These are then drawn upon for analysing retrenched workers' accounts of job loss in chapter eight.

Reappraising human agency

A revival of interest in human agency over the last two decades reflects a paradigmatic shift in social policy. Until the 1980s the dominant paradigm of social policy in Western nation states was structural reform to minimise poverty and

promote equity. Agency accounts were considered unable to illuminate issues such as homelessness, poverty or unemployment (Deacon & Mann 1999). Researchers and scholars avoided agency debates seen to still resonate with the 'blame the victim' foundations of nineteenth century British Poor Laws. These laws distinguished between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, based on negative assumptions of agency (Deacon 2004, p. 447).

Williams et al. (1999) note that agency was ignored in social analyses of the 1960s and 1970s. Richard Titmuss, a dominant figure in British social administration following the Second World War, was a key theorist who chose to avoid addressing issues of agency and personal responsibility. Welshman (2004) notes that Titmuss' avoidance was a reaction to the individualism grounding the Poor Law, the Charity Organisation Society, and the approach of social casework in the 1940s and 1950s. Deacon and Mann (1999, p. 418) maintain that for Titmuss 'arguments about problem families or cycles of deprivation were an irrelevance or worse'. They contend:

> Attempts to address agency face formidable obstacles and arouse genuine fears that they will serve to endorse a punitive and atavistic individualism. It is these fears, however, which have constrained and confined the debate about welfare in the post-war years, and especially that on the centre and left of British politics (Deacon & Mann 1999, p. 414).

While Titmuss' stance is understandable, avoidance of agency allowed political conservatives, including Murray and Mead, the leverage to promote conservative views on human agency in social policy. Debates on agency are critically important at a policy level and for welfare research, as the revival of interest in human agency was triggered in part by Murray's (1984) claims concerned with 'cycles of deprivation', 'welfare dependency' and an 'underclass' thesis that have strongly influenced debates on welfare conditionality and informed public policy. Dependence on welfare is understood as the cause, rather than a symptom of labour market constraints (Carpenter, Speeden & Freda 2007). However, challenges to these prevailing views from the right, trigger a wider debate on agency and social policy.

The shift towards an agency perspective in social policy is based not only on voices from the right, but also from welfare researchers' calls for research that is more sensitive to people's health and welfare needs, by accounting for individual support networks, resources and social relations (Williams et al. 1999). There has been a

recent challenge to the dichotomy between research paradigms that prioritise structural or policy approaches and those that emphasise the welfare subject. There are now attempts to elaborate a more holistic theory of welfare that accounts for individual human action in its relationship to structural issues (Williams et al. 1999), based on co-determinism. The revival of interest in human agency is also due to the growing fragmentation of traditional social groups following women's changing economic and social role and expectations, as well as greater cultural diversity. Deacon and Mann (1999) argue that these changes hold implications for the welfare state in ways not envisaged in post Second World War welfare policies. As Deacon and Mann 1999, p. 431) explain:

> The diverse constituencies that make up the poor will require more reflexive policies that attempt to support those who try to address their specific needs, rather than telling them to conform to inappropriate models. Likewise a recognition that the development of welfare has itself been 'made', at least in part by active human subjects, ought to ensure we pay more attention to how 'people make history' (Mann 1992, page not cited).

As social, political, cultural and economic conditions sustaining the post Second World War settlement have changed, Western nation states, including Australia, are now in transition. Part of this transition is grounded in changes to capital and forged under the nexus between globalisation and neoliberalism outlined in chapter two. This raises the question of who should lead a new paradigm of welfare and the values that should prevail (Williams 1999). Adopting a sole focus on party politics undermines the importance and impact of the 'politics' of social activism emerging the 1960s, as new social movements, campaigning organisations, and self-help groups all make claims to welfare. Williams argues that while these groups and activities are not homogenous, collectively they critique the post-war welfare state in ways that differ from party political platforms. Williams (1999, p. 668) explains:

> They have put on the agenda needs to do with personhood and well-being which have expanded the moral repertoire for understanding people's engagement with welfare, and have widened the meanings of redistribution, equality, universalism and justice

Growing demands to recognise human rights, voice and citizenship imply that a politics of emancipation must focus not only on material redistribution but also on recognition and respect: an issue that will be brought to the fore in some retrenched workers' subjective accounts in chapter eight. It reflects the progressive politics that Lakoff (2004) argues must become ascendant through promoting an overarching

progressive conceptual metaphor, for 'reframing' social change, that will be discussed in later chapters.

Agency, recognition and respect

Acknowledging the importance of a focus on recognition and respect as well as redistribution in social policy is important for this thesis as it is part of theorising the third study question on the implications of the thesis findings for social policy that will be addressed in chapter nine. As Rawls (1973, p. 440) contends, self-respect is 'perhaps the most important primary good'. Fraser (1995) argues that it is a politics of recognition and respect that endorses the efforts of marginalised or excluded groups to assert their equal moral worth through identity politics. Struggles for recognition are now key issues in political debates through demands for recognition by group constituencies based upon ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, disability and sexuality (Fraser 1997). While this is not the whole story of course, as recognition struggles play out in a world of exacerbated material inequality, it is part of a debate on the intellectual task of developing a new critical theory of recognition and respect. Lister (2004, p. 188) points out a false dichotomy, as:

> recognition and redistribution do not relate to separate domains of the cultural and the economic, but represent two dimensions of, and perspectives on, social justice that are applicable to both, interconnected, domains.

A politics of redistribution as well as respect and recognition also underpins what Williams (1999, p. 675) theorises as 'good enough' principles for the future of welfare. In respect of this case study and thesis these principles help to theorise the implications for more enabling social policy and thereby help to address the third study question.

'Good enough' principles for welfare

Drawing upon Winnicott's (1965) 'good enough' principles for 'mothering', or socialisation of young children, Williams (1999) proposes 'good enough' principles for welfare by linking values concerned with redistribution and recognition and respect in social policy. Williams (1999, pp. 675-684) nominates seven 'good enough' principles: interdependence, care, intimacy, bodily integrity, identity, transnational welfare and voice. The first principle, interdependence, is a key issue for this study as dependence is commonly linked to largely negative agency

assumptions, and with independence and empowerment deemed attainable only through paid work. However, Greenberg and Mitchell (1983, p. 161, citing Fairbairn 1946) refer to full development of emotional health as a stage of 'mature dependence'. They argue that healthy adults are emotionally interdependent rather than forced to be dependent as in the infantile position. Never-the-less, the idea of mature dependence and cooperation, with obligations on both parties, is currently framed negatively under neoliberal policy paradigms. This framing of dependence as inherently infantile resonates within policy actors' calls for paternalism recounted in chapter seven. Chapter eight will also discuss how this issue resonated for workers in respect to how they believe they were perceived when managing their labour market transition.

Williams (1999, p. 673) notes the way in which independence is also often given a narrow 'market' perspective and that:

> the notion of dependency as [being] behaviourally driven rather than enforced or resisted, has served to obscure the struggles against dependency of those whose routes to labour market freedom, or economic independence, are more risky and tortuous.

Retrenched workers' accounts will also broach ways in which routes to new employment may be more difficult for some than for others. For Williams it is ironic that welfare claimants are designated as 'dependent' regardless of their responsibilities to others, while those whom she terms 'market dependent' are deemed to be 'independent'. This irony was not lost on the commissioned Reference Group for Welfare Reform in its report to the Howard Coalition Government, discussed further in later chapters. This report states:

> The broad concept [of economic and social participation] extends beyond the traditional focus on financial self-support and labour force status (employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force) to recognise the value of many other ways people can participate in society. It is not possible and probably desirable to draw a clear line between those activities that could be classed as economic participation. Paid work has social value and unpaid work has clear economic value. All activities that build relationships with others have both economic and social dimensions and should be encouraged and supported (McClure 2000b, p. 4).

Williams' 'good-enough' principles for welfare acknowledge the expanding conceptions of human agency in social policy over recent decades. These more nuanced conceptions are identified by Taylor-Gooby (2008) who cites two important reappraisals of this position by Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001). Lister (2004, p.

127) argues that her agency perspective 'aims to transcend the dichotomy between individualist and structuralist approaches'. Citing Williams (1999) Lister (2004, p. 127) acknowledges the capacity of people to be 'creative, reflexive human beings, that is, to be active agents in shaping their lives, experiencing, acting upon and reconstituting the outcomes of welfare policies in various ways'. She locates agency in the context of each individual's relation to 'wider forms of stratification and social relations of power'.

Taylor-Gooby also points out Hoggett's (2001) contribution to agency debates by illustrating the additional role of emotions, including stigma and shame, which is important for understanding the damaging effects of 'victim blaming' policies. Reiterating a point made in chapter three, feelings of failure, stigma and shame now have wider resonance than with the only the poor or disadvantaged, under changes to capitalism (Sennett 1998), and these feelings are often experienced in tandem with the loss of material benefits (Wilkinson,1999). Lister and Hoggett mediate Giddens' structuration theory in ways that reveal more nuanced accounts of agency, as outlined in the following section, while still maintaining a co-deterministic perspective.

Expanding conceptions of agency

Following Giddens, more nuanced accounts of agency are drawn upon in this thesis to assist the analysis of workers' accounts of their subjective experiences of job loss and their agency responses in dealing with its consequences. As Greener (2002) argues, views and values concerned with human agency are crucial for devising policies, as these must account for people's motivations and capacities; an issue theorised in the policy analysis in chapter seven. There are challenges to fixed and negative assumptions of agency underpinning policies designed to limit state responsibility for welfare. These challenges seek to transcend the existing 'demanding' forms of agency promoted by conservative theorists.

For the purposes of this thesis, the theoretical insights from two relatively recent models of agency highlight more subtle agency perspectives that are drawn upon to aid analysis. Lister and Hoggett, theorists from different disciplines exploring the new frontiers of social welfare research, both distance themselves from welfare accounts that blame those in poverty or reliant on welfare for their constrained

circumstances. Both also draw upon and mediate Giddens' structuration theory while still acknowledging the power of the individual's creative and reflexive agency. Each has devised a model of agency that together spans a focus on agency and participation embedded in unequal economic relations (Lister 2004), as well as a focus on the importance of individuals' interior states. This is to the extent that these affect the individual's capacity for reflexive agency (Hoggett 2001).

These models augment this thesis by adding to the literature on human agency while still endorsing Giddens' aim to move beyond overly deterministic and objectivist accounts. Their calls for respecting human agency do not fit well with the hegemony of neoliberal economic theory in social policy which demands a less interventionist state and therefore makes high demands on individual agency in social policy. Respecting rather than demanding welfare recipients' agency presupposes that policies should take heed of the wide range of personal circumstances and difficult commitments people face. In turn, this involves providing the practical assistance necessary for individuals to be able to employ their creative agency in supporting themselves and the wider community (Deacon & Williams 2004).

Lister's (2004) typology of agency is valuable as it provides insights on human agency based on acknowledging unequal economic relations, and the different forms of creative action people adopt for overcoming poverty or disadvantage at both the individual and collective levels. It focuses on agency without overlooking constraints stemming from a lack of power and material resources. Hoggett's (2001) model provides insights on human agency that also take account of individuals' internal states and levels of reflexivity, understood to be in a state of flux. Hoggett's perspective accounts for the reality that at times the individual may be understood as an 'active agent', while at other times he or she is a 'passive object'; displaying varying levels of reflexivity. Integral to Hoggett's position is the need to recognise agency in social policy in ways that capture non-rational as well as rational dimensions of human agency (Stenner & Taylor 2008). Lister's and Hoggett's perspectives provide more holistic agency accounts, albeit with the caveat that no single model of agency can ever be complete (Deacon 2004). These models are drawn upon in this thesis to help theorise the interaction between retrenched workers' agency and the structures of enablement and constraint, including the policy structures associated with job loss.

Lister's theoretical approach

For Lister (1997) agency and structure are mutually compatible, with individuals as social beings and self-development occurring within the context of social relationships. Lister's perspective allows for a debate that transcends agency approaches focusing on attributions of blame and dependency (Orton 2009). Lister (2004) contends that agency and the ability to take control of one's life, is closely linked to notions of dignity and respect. This means being recognised as a person not a problem, and treated non-judgmentally. As Lister (2006, p. 89) argues poverty or disadvantage is experienced as both a 'wretched and insecure economic condition' and a 'shameful and destructive social relation'. People experiencing poverty call for acknowledging, rather than discounting, their expertise when devising policy responses (Lister 2004). Lister (2004, p. 178) promotes the call for a new paradigm of welfare, arguing:

> We need to pay more attention to the positive exercise of agency by people in poverty. This cannot, though, be divorced from their severely disadvantaged structural position or the exercise of agency by powerful actors, which helps to perpetuate that structural position.

Lister endorses Fraser's (1995) call for a politics of redistribution as well as recognition and respect in welfare provision. While lack of respect and recognition may be less aggressive than more confronting or overtly insulting behaviour, it may be equally wounding. It is arguably inherent in policy actors' underlying values and intentions which then become enacted as policy, as will be explored in chapter seven. As Sennett (2003) argues, without due recognition a person cannot be acknowledged as a full human being whose presence matters. Research reported on by Eardley et al. (2001, p. 162) revealed that what welfare recipients value is 'simple respect and friendly treatment'. The underlying issue of respect is a recurring theme in the wider literature on the Job Network (Marston & McDonald 2006) concerning the implementation of welfare-to-work policy that is to be explored in later chapters. It indicates that both material and the emotional realms must be accommodated when dealing with the aftermath of job loss.

Lister's model of agency

Lister's model of agency is a theoretical construct for understanding the different forms of action people undertake to overcome poverty. Lister's model is extrapolated

in this case study and thesis to include people who are not impoverished but may be one step away from poverty, or facing the prospect of more constrained agency and social and financial circumstances due to a range of contingencies, such as job loss. Lister builds upon Giddens' (1984) conception of agency and structure to develop her typology of four forms of agency, spanning the 'everyday' to strategic, and the 'personal' to the political / citizenship levels as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Forms of agency: Lister
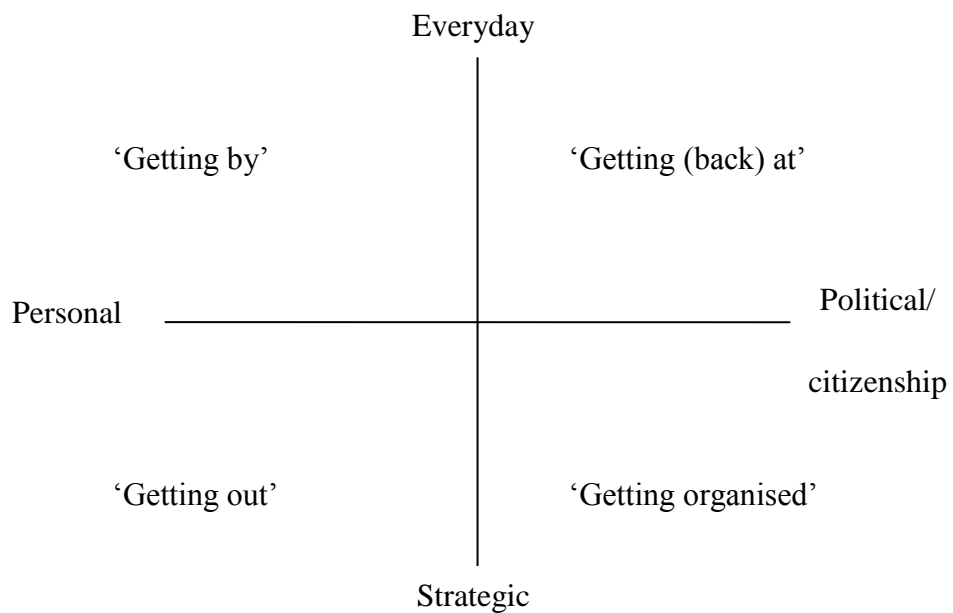
Lister's typology (2004, p. 130) is represented on two intersecting axes, with the vertical on a continuum spanning 'everyday' forms of agency and those that are more strategic. These differentiate between action to merely make ends meet on a daily basis and more strategic action towards longer-term well-being at the individual and family level. The intersecting horizontal axis spans personal and political / citizenship agency, with the latter understood to be those actions undertaken to improve wider societal living standards. The four quadrants reveal forms of constraint targeted by the exercise of these differing forms of agency, explained in terms of ' (just) getting by', 'getting out (of) ' 'getting (back) at' and 'getting organised', which are explained below and drawn upon later to theorise workers' subjective accounts.

'Getting by'

'Getting by' reflects small or everyday actions that help people cope with a lack of material resources. 'Getting by', in the everyday / personal quadrant, represents an aspect of the broader notion of coping, or what Pearlin and Schooler (1978, p. 1) refer to as 'the things people do to avoid being harmed by life-strains'. It still assumes a level of creative human agency in dealing with a range of challenges, including threats to welfare (Lister 2004). The agency engaged in just getting by often remains largely unacknowledged, but a new paradigm of welfare aims to acknowledge the greater sensitivity and diverse ways in which welfare recipients deal with constraints and assist others through utilising material and psychological resources (Lister 2004). For Lister (2006, p. 98) a politics of redistribution and recognition and respect would help eradicate poverty and disadvantage and obviate the need to 'just get by', while maintaining respect for those who will continue to wait for provision of material resources that are at a level 'consistent with human dignity'. Chapter eight will discuss how the concept of 'just getting by' relates to Mitsubishi workers' experiences in transitioning out of retrenchment.

'Getting out (of)'

'Getting out' of poverty or disadvantage requires more strategic efforts to increase individual or family resources for the longer term, including education, training, employment and other actions (Lister 2004). Ways of 'getting out' are represented at the strategic end of the personal / strategic quadrant. As well as undertaking employment and education, people also exercise strategic agency to negotiate and mediate cultural and structural issues that enable or constrain agency (Lister 2004). However, as Dean (2003) points out, limited resources act as a constraint to strategic agency, and the traumatic life histories of some unemployed people with complex needs can make even modest employment aspirations difficult. The subjective experiences of job loss recounted later in this thesis will also be theorised by drawing upon the concept of 'getting out of' retrenchment by utilising agency in more strategic ways.

'Getting (back) at'

Getting (back) at refers to the small rebellious actions taken against 'the system' or society to the extent that it oppresses people living in poverty or constrained

circumstances. Actions include petty welfare fraud, vandalism or engaging in informal employment (Lister 2004). For Lister, getting (back) at, or forms of everyday resistance, situated at the everyday end of the everyday-political / citizenship quadrant, challenge the assumed nexus between poverty and passivity. However, these actions directed against those with greater power, or 'power over', are employed in ways that are unlikely to disrupt existing social relations. These limitations are understood as constrained or 'first order' agency, representing a change within, rather than of, life-pattern (Hoggett 2001). The extent to which workers did, or did not, 'get back at' Mitsubishi following retrenchment will also be a point of discussion in chapter eight.

'Getting organised'

Getting organised includes engaging in community or political action to improve the well-being of the wider community and disadvantaged people in general (Lister 2004). Collective strategic agency, demonstrated in getting organised, is represented at the political end of the personal-political / citizenship quadrant. Lister (2004) cites collective forms of getting organised as political action and self-help groups in communities. Constraints to collective action include individual subjectivity and identity which, under a new paradigm of welfare, would be given greater attention by challenging ascribed inflexible social categorisation, expressed in terms including 'disabled', 'poor' or 'unemployed'. However, in distinction to the solidarity expressed by certain marginalised groups within new social movements, including those concerned with race, disability, gender and sexuality, there is a reluctance to identify with the stigma of poverty or material deprivation. This forms a major barrier to collective action for, as Lister puts it (2004, p. 152), 'proud to be poor is not a banner under which many are likely to march'.

Lister's typology of agency demonstrates the multifaceted ways in which people are actors in life, even though constrained by a range of structures that are also the products of more powerful actors' agency: a point that is raised in respect of perspectives on power in the next chapter. A 'criticalist' theoretical perspective helps to keep in mind the repressive agency of these more powerful forces (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000). As Bryson (1992, p. 55) and Bryson and Verity (2009) note, in respect of Australian social policy, it is 'getting by' strategies that are traditionally employed, reflecting the characteristics of welfare regimes in which state support is

contingent upon the failure or exhaustion of other informal supports. For Lister it is important to acknowledge that not everyone will be a creative moral agent all of the time (Deacon 2004). Limitations to positive and creative agency are displayed in the wide range of social problems that have a disproportionate impact on individuals with complex and difficult lives within more disadvantaged communities.

In moving to the second model of agency employed in this thesis, Hoggett's (2001) theoretical approach provides important insights from exploring further limits to creative agency. Hoggett's model is also employed to theorise the agency accounts of retrenched workers.

Hoggett's theoretical approach

Hoggett's (2001) theoretical approach and model of agency also draws on the work of Giddens (1984) and Williams et al. (1999) to bridge the dichotomy between 'blame the victim' and 'blame the system' approaches in the structure and agency debate. It informs this study through the focus it gives to a growing emphasis on 'reflexive' agency and the 'passionate, tragic and contradictory dimensions of human experience' (Hoggett 2001, p. 37). Hoggett (2000, 2001) challenges agency definitions that are confined to rational behaviour, or exclude impulsive or non-rational agency and its implications. Cooper and Lousada (2005, p. 3) support this challenge, arguing that 'integral thinking and analysis cannot be achieved without a link between the rational and the emotional, and between the rational and the irrational'.

Hoggett's model of agency is neither confined to the actions and motivations of welfare recipients nor to people living in poverty. It focuses instead on the potential array of agency responses to different life-triggers as experienced by most individuals under different life circumstances, thereby acknowledging individuals' unique interior selves. These reflect both past experiences rooted in diverse forms of social relationships, as well as the outcomes from dealing with a wide range of enabling and constraining structures. At times individual agency responses may reflect very different subjective positions and interior selves, as well as displaying varying levels of reflexivity.

Limits to reflexive agency

Within his standpoint on agency and structure Giddens holds individuals to be knowledgeable, creative, reflexive or self-monitoring agents. Self-monitoring refers to the degree to which a person is aware of social demands and expectations placed on their behaviour, and their ability to modify it accordingly. Giddens argues that due to their reflexivity, individuals are responsible for their actions as there are always choices even within constraints. However, Clarke et al. (2006) contend that much human activity is also non-reflexive, involving individuals' numerous everyday activities, whereas reflexive agency is more purposeful and conscious; a deliberative process for shaping the life-course. In acknowledging limits to reflexivity Hoggett (2001) argues that his agency model, shown in Figure 3, provides a more 'robust' account of the active welfare subject, as common definitions of agency (eg. Deacon & Mann 1999, p. 413) are limited by their exclusion of non-reflexive agency. Hoggett (2001) questions whether theories based upon rational choice can provide a sufficiently comprehensive grounding for a radical account of agency in social policy.

While Giddens' social theory adopts a co-deterministic perspective it arguably underplays the fact that at times individuals or groups are creative and reflexive, while at other times they become powerless objects with limited capacity for reflexivity; with some ideas even too difficult for reflection. Departing from Giddens' conception of agency as rational choice within constraints, Hoggett (2001, p. 40) understands choice as not simply something which occurs after deliberation, because:

> most choices we make are made on impulse in urgent and contingent encounters … Indeed, for much of the time we are not even aware of having made choices, it is as if they catch up with us later, often much, much later when the reasons for key choices in our lives- of partner, job, lover, etc- become clear to us. Or should I say, some of the reasons, for we can never quite seem to get to the bottom of the multi-determined nature of our own life histories.

While Giddens' structuration theory fits with rational decision-making, individuals experience events or situations that result in decision-making strategies not fitting this ideal. In addition, individuals may at times be impulsive, passionate and emotional in their agency responses, resulting in negative and unintended consequences. However, as Clarke et al. (2006) maintain, emotions are not merely

the antithesis of reason, but are recognised as important sources of information. Fitzpatrick (2008) points out that the concept of emotional intelligence implies that if humans have self-awareness, the ability to love and be loved, and have empathy for others they will have the capacity for better lives. Reason is therefore contextualised by care, emotion and compassion, and is interwoven with interdependencies.

Reasoning capacities and analytic skills are therefore necessary but insufficient for full human flourishing. Emotions are important guides to ethical living and the range of human needs, as well as being necessary for political mobilisation and action. Hoggett argues that compassion may be the key moral sentiment, along with anger at associated injustice. However, Hoggett (2006, p. 145) also makes the point that as with terms including 'community', 'social capital' and 'social justice', the term 'compassion' may be appropriated and theoretically skewed or 'framed' within concepts including 'compassionate conservatives' and 'tough love'. Using Lakoff's (1995, 2003, 2004) insights these and similar concepts will be theorised further in chapter seven within the context of the analysis of policy actors' values and policy intentions in relation to welfare conditionality.

Hoggett also argues for a move away from compassion understood as sentimentality or pity, towards a concept similar to solidarity, and linked to 'social misery' (Bourdieu et al. 1999). Hoggett (2006, p. 146) claims that this demands the difficult ability to show compassion towards even 'a flawed human subject, both a victim of circumstance and, always to some extent an agent of both their own misfortune and salvation'. The ability to relate to such a subject is part of the normative role of human service workers or 'street level' bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) who cannot abdicate the need to deal with clients' complex needs and complex subjectivities. This thesis discusses ways in which this normative role has been eroded under neoliberal economic policy, including by outsourced service provision.

Hoggett's analysis of different levels of human reflexivity provides important insights for this study. Without recognising the importance of complex subjectivity and what Hoggett terms 'non-unitary agency', there is no adequate explanation for addictions, depression, or self-harming behaviours, unless these are attributed to genetic or physiological factors. Understanding non-unitary agency is also important for issues such as health promotion, as agency must be understood within the context of an individual's whole life. It is also a useful concept that will be used in chapter

eight to theorise certain aspects of workers' subjective accounts of the consequences of job loss.

Hoggett's theoretical contribution includes the need to acknowledge limits to human reflexivity, as this affects the capacity to be a creative agent. Limits are imposed by the difficulties individuals experience in dealing with both personal fears and anxieties as well as with many forms of structural constraints including poverty and unemployment (Hoggett 2001). Hoggett's model of agency (2001, p. 37) is critical as it accounts for a range of subject positions which need to be better understood, otherwise:

> there is a danger that social policy develops a lop-sided model of agency which is insufficiently sensitive to the passionate, contradictory dimensions of human experience. A robust account of the active welfare subject must be prepared to confront the real experiences of powerlessness and psychic injury which result from injustice and oppression and acknowledge human capacities for destructiveness towards self and others.

Importantly, human agency is not necessarily constructive, for as Hoggett (2001, p. 43) contends:

> we should beware of smuggling normative assumptions into our thinking here, as if agency is good and absence of agency is bad. Just as we can be destructive agents, so too at times we can be constructive [even] in our dependency and powerlessness.

Models of human agency must account for both reflexive and non-reflexive agency and acknowledge the powerful 'self-as-agent' and the more constrained or passive 'self-as-object'. Hoggett (2001, p. 47) questions which 'self' it is that acts at a particular moment, devising a model (Figure 3) which accounts for the nexus between agency and reflexivity.

Hoggett's model of agency

As shown in Figure 3 Hoggett's (2001, p. 48) model is analysed across two intersecting planes. One denotes a level of reflexivity spanning high reflexivity through to habitual or instinctive behaviour or non-reflexivity. The other plane depicts a range of agency perspectives spanning the 'self-as-object' and the 'self-as-agent', with the model forming four quadrants. These subject positions are explored below to set the context for theorising retrenched workers' responses to job loss.

Figure 3: Hoggett's model of agency

Reflexivity

D | A

Self-as-object   Self-as-agent

C | B

Non-reflexivity
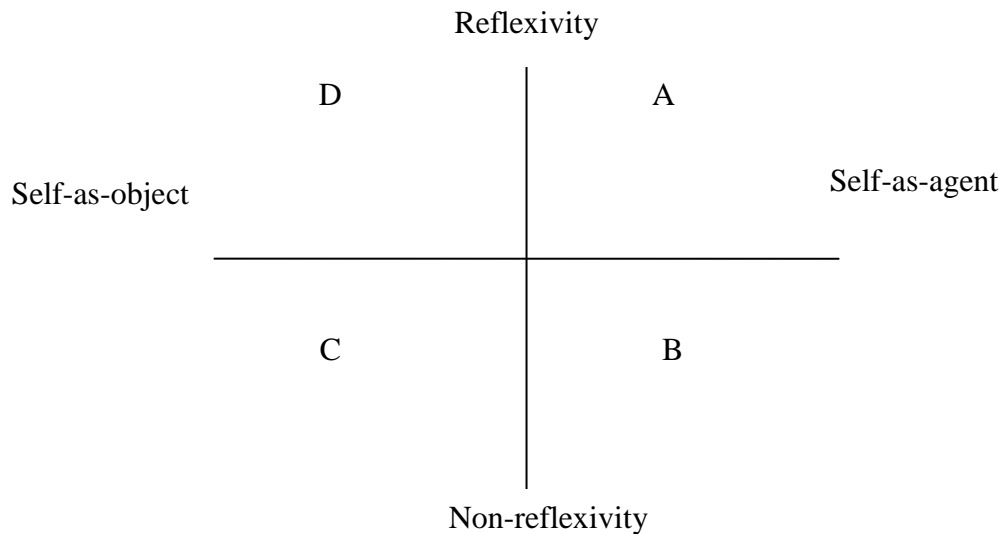
Reflexive agency

The most dynamic form of agency is situated in the reflexive self-as-agent quadrant (A), exemplifying forms of agency at the heart of Giddens' structuration theory. As Hoggett (2001, p. 47) puts it, this subject is not a 'passive victim of gender relations, welfare discourses or poor environment' but is an active shaper of personal destiny, even if not in circumstances of their own choosing'. Although held responsible for choices made or choices avoided, the active, reflexive agent is not necessarily moral or creative. Hoggett points out that insightful action is not always expressed positively and may be destructive towards self and others. For instance, the cynic is insightful about what he or she does, but their actions can be destructive towards others. Reflexivity is not a good thing *per se* (Hoggett 2001, p. 47).

Non-reflexive agency

Quadrant B depicts active agency, but that which is displayed in non-reflexive or impulsive ways. For example, it is revealed in cases of abuse where perpetrators enter a state of denial concerning their actions (Greener 2002), or even claim victim status themselves (Hoggett 2001). Individuals are capable of acts of extreme altruism or heroism, as well as self-destruction and cruelty when acting impulsively or non-reflexively. The ability to be reflexive about personal behaviour is often severely

restricted, but people have the ability to become more reflexive. For example anger management classes are predicated on this ability.

The self as non-reflexive object

Quadrant C denotes the most constrained form of agency in which individuals are 'trapped in their social position, unable or unwilling to attempt to escape' (Greener 2002, p. 696). This perspective acknowledges that an individual or group subjected to domination or oppression may experience a level of extreme powerlessness which limits their capacity to even articulate their experiences or sense of identity. In this subject position individuals act instinctively, with little awareness of or control over their environment. Constraints may be so ingrained that they become normalised (Greener 2002; Hoggett 2001). A criticalist perspective recognises that this may lead to even greater oppression (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000). As Hoggett (2001) points out, reflexivity potentially involves courage, but people sometimes lack the necessary courage for reflecting upon threatening aspects of themselves or others. It is this most constrained level of agency that strongly challenges Giddens' account of agency, for under a structuration perspective it arguably represents a denial or negation of agency.

The reflexive self-as-object

This final subject position of the reflexive self-as-object (quadrant D) recognises that individuals may well understand how they are constrained by powerful forces but remain powerless to change them. This very awareness has potential for increased suffering. Unlike self-as-*subject* actors, self-as-*object* actors are unable to 'impose their will on their environment' (Greener 2002, p. 689). Hoggett (2001, p. 50) explains that people who are acutely aware of their level of powerlessness 'teeter on the boundary between anger and despair'. For Greener (2002, p. 695) they are 'trapped actors, willing, but unable to engage with their surroundings, due to structural constraints'.

People may be constrained by lack of resources, lack of opportunity to express their capabilities, or by the prejudicial treatment of more powerful actors with their more powerful agency. This study highlights that more powerful actors include policy actors whose values and intentions influence levels of welfare conditionality, and

thereby welfare recipients' well-being. In theorising this subject position Greener (2002, p. 696) argues that:

> as a powerless object of multinationals, racist institutions or gendered relations, an individual may still fully understand the consequent injustices imposed upon them and adopt a particular subject position accordingly.

Hoggett reflects on the implications for the agency perspective inherent in Giddens' contention that, even as global changes throw up new challenges, individuals must just learn to confront them, understand and accept that life will be less secure. Hoggett (2001, p. 43, quoting Giddens 1994, p. 192) maintains:

> there is something compulsive about a subject destined to be constantly rolling with the punches, stretched and tested, needing to 'translate potential threats into rewarding challenges'.

In distinction to Giddens' call for hyper-agency responses to ever more constraining structures, the UK Commission on Social Justice (1994, p. 222) notes the way that current risks are 'less predictable and more probable than those of the 1950s' and:

> far from making the welfare state redundant, social and economic change creates a new and even more vital need for the security which the welfare state was designed to provide.

As Sennett (1998, p. 9) argues, one of these heightened risks is 'flexible capitalism', which arouses anxiety as people are unable to assess how risks will pay off. The nuanced conceptions of agency identified by Lister and Hoggett in this section also encompass the need to deal with the reality of 'social suffering' (Bourdieu et al. 1999).

Social suffering

Social suffering is the suffering associated with unequal distribution of resources as well as 'social misery', and will be discussed in chapter eight in relation to Mitsubishi workers' accounts of what it means to lose a job. According to Bourdieu et al. (1999), conceptualising well-being in material terms alone obscures a whole realm of suffering characteristic of the social world. Frost and Hoggett (2008, p. 440) maintain that social suffering is at the heart of subjective experience, expressing the social damage inflicted on the least powerful individuals under late capitalism, and:

> In other words, both inner worlds of psychic suffering and outer worlds of social structural oppression are constitutive of such subjects, their capacity for agency, and the forms of agency that are possible.

The concept of social suffering therefore includes both material and psychosocial consequences. Hoggett (2006, p. 160) maintains that social suffering is a powerful concept for it collapses a false dichotomy between an ethic of care (Gilligan 1982) with its emphasis on the 'passionate, relational and context-bound', and an ethic of justice, or more 'distanced', 'universal' and 'dispassionate' conceptions. According to Hoggett (2001, p. 44) the nature of social suffering is expressed through a 'passive' voice, reflecting feelings of abjection, misery or degradation. This is a subject position of the self-as-object, or an agency perspective of 'being done to' rather than 'doing'.

As Frost and Hoggett (2008, p. 442) point out, in unequal societies some are 'done to' more than others, especially in times of accelerated social change. This includes contemporary deindustrialisation under changes to capitalism which, in their term, 'ravages' whole communities, especially certain masculine identities. It shows the impact of the decline of working-class labour which traditionally involves solidarity and pride in manual skills and physical strength. For Frost & Hoggett (2008, p. 447) this has been revealed in the 'communities of labouring men shored-up and shoring-up such esteem and recognition'.

Such a depiction resonates in the decline of masculine solidarity as a consequence of job loss due to industry restructuring. Decline in the number of full-time unionised workers is one of the consequences of changes to capitalism, as noted in chapter two, with the decline of trade union power, increased social inequality, and the decline in collective agency and opportunities for 'second order agency' or changes in life-pattern (Hoggett 2001, p. 50). These are the potential consequences for workers made redundant under industry restructuring, threads of which will be drawn out in different ways in retrenched workers' personal accounts.

Social suffering is also a concept that relates to issues that are chronic, enduring, and not always open to 'quick fixes'. These include long-term unemployment and dealing with the physical and psychological consequences of job loss. Hoggett (2000, p. 166) refers to the passive voice as 'nature's shadow' within a culture that denies the shadow cast by illness, ageing, disability or extended periods of helplessness and dependency. The concept of the passive voice allows for greater consideration being given to the difficult and disempowering experiences faced by many welfare recipients and others who live complex lives and are unable to turn constraints or

impositions into opportunities or resources. This is an issue that will be theorised further in chapter eight in relation to retrenched Mitsubishi workers' own experiences.

Individuals are constantly reminded of their dependency when executing their agency for overcoming life's obstacles (Hoggett 2000). Western democracies that decry welfarism, or the principles and characteristics of the welfare state (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003), also decry dependency and even interdependency. This serves to scuttle the solidarity grounding a common welfare that is now commodified in a welfare 'market', an issue that will be explored in later chapters, including in workers' accounts of negotiating the welfare-to-work policy terrain post-retrenchment. It implies that any dependence on the state must be short-term and only following attempted creative employment strategies.

The denial of dependency pervading contemporary neoliberal policy also conflates human interdependence and malingering or 'dole bludging'. At the same time it denies the potential for attaining independence by properly dealing with the structural causes of dependency, including unemployment or insecure employment. Citing Archer (1990, p. 79), Hoggett argues that structuration theory may overemphasise the impact of agency from the implication that 'institutions are what people produce, not what they have to confront and grapple with'. Further, as Hoggett (2001) maintains, critical accounts of agency must also confront individuals' internal opposition and interior selves by incorporating non-reflexive action as a category of agency. This is to account for the different ways in which individuals act creatively but also involuntarily, or even against their better judgement, for:

> Only by exploring these different subject positions – victim, 'own worst enemy' and creative, reflexive agent- can we develop an understanding of the welfare subject that is optimistic without being naïve (Hoggett 2001, p. 37).

Hoggett (2001, p. 53) argues that without accounting for these different aspects of human behaviour 'neither the public nor policy-makers will take radical leftist voices seriously'. However, positive consequences for radical or collective action and agency are also brought to light, as this broader conception of agency also accounts for the triggering of radical action and is therefore an important dimension for critical social policy. As Hoggett et al. (2006) explain, this is revealed in forms of agency exemplified in the advocacy and practice of committed welfare practitioners and

reformers working within human service organisations, who implement policies of conditional welfare, with their normative role discussed later in this chapter.

Agency and conditional welfare

It is important to acknowledge the ways in which human agency has been foundational for theorising differing conceptions of citizenship, as full citizenship is conferred or denied on the basis of a view of agency from either a human rights or an obligations perspective. This distinction is critical for this thesis, as it is the tension between purported rights and obligations perspectives in social policy which influences the stringency of welfare conditionality imposed by policy actors and experienced by welfare recipients. As policy actors' values and intentions underpinning conditional welfare will be explored in a thematic analysis in chapter seven, the fundamentals of conditional welfare outlined below as a precursor to this analysis.

Conditional welfare is the contested extent to which the state guarantees social or material rights along with civil and political rights (Lister 1997). It comes into play in the absence of universal welfare provision, often imposes behavioural changes based on negative assumptions of agency, and commonly involves economic coercion. As Popay (2008) argues, 20th century welfare systems introduced by OECD nations shifted the welfare focus from a 'poverty problem' to concerns over inequality and aspirations for more inclusive and fair societies. However, cash transfers conditional on behavioural modification target the lives of poor people and, while providing a range of benefits, are commonly limited in their transformative capacity, as well as being stigmatising and failing to take a universal approach to welfare. Conditional welfare has become a central feature of income support in developed countries since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1970s; moving towards what Saunders (1995, p. 12) recognises as 'more narrowly defined and more rigorously policed conditionality' in social policy. It promotes an obligations-based rather than rights-based approach to welfare provision.

Rights-based approaches to welfare provision

Rights-based approaches underpinning welfare provision emphasise positive rights, or the state's obligation to grant all citizens access to economic and social rights. This stance reflects an ethic of mutual entitlement and endowed status, including the

right to work and to a decent standard of living (Lister 1998). Within rights-based approaches poverty alleviation is understood as a state obligation, not the role of charity (Office of the High Commission for Human Rights 2004). Welfare recipients are acknowledged as rights-holders who are actively engaged in decision-making processes. A rights-based approach has clear implications for questioning or challenging levels of conditional welfare.

Obligations-based approaches to welfare provision

In distinction, obligations-based approaches to welfare are grounded in the Aristotelian civic republican tradition in which political engagement is a civic duty and the measure of a 'political being' (Lister 1997, p. 14). They denote a practice designed to promote the welfare of the wider society (Lister 1998). This tradition prioritises the contemporary focus on participation as paid work, through what Roche (1992) calls a 'duties discourse'. The New Right, in particular neoconservatives, as well as communitarians, challenge a rights discourse; prioritising obligations over rights, especially the obligation of welfare recipients to engage in paid work (Lister 1997).

This view is exemplified in Australian welfare-to-work or 'work-first' employment programs in place at the time of the Mitsubishi restructure and explored in the policy background provided in the next chapter. These programs imposed the exercise of recipients' agency in ways sanctioned by the state when transitioning out of Mitsubishi. It is an issue that will be brought to light in later chapters in both the views expressed by policy actors, and in retrenched workers' agency accounts. The views of policy actors are clearly identified as based on a citizenship-as-obligation approach through Mutual Obligations policy. Their accounts highlight the ways in which these obligations are 'framed' within a range of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff 2004). By linking rights to responsibilities the inalienability of rights is denied; a position conceding that removal of rights may be both 'necessary and benign' (Carpenter & Speeden 2007, p. 134). These views are often articulated by political players through conceptual metaphors and 'framing' particular notions of morality, as outlined in the following section.

Imposing obligations-based social policy: metaphors and morality

In this thesis, and especially in the thematic analysis in chapter seven, an obligations or duties discourse underpinning welfare provision is theorised metaphorically as part of what Lakoff (1995, p. 1) refers to as a conservative or 'Strict Father' model of life. It is a model that has resonance in Australian political discourse during the tenure of the Howard Coalition Government and is theorised in chapter seven. George Lakoff, speaking from the US context, draws attention to the way in which individuals think in metaphors by adopting a concrete realm of thought to understand an unrelated domain. Lakoff (2003, p. 4) terms this a 'conceptual metaphor', based on an unconscious or automatic mechanism for adopting inference patterns and language from across a range of different domains. Frames are mental structures which shape the way one views the world, while at the same time shaping goals and plans in ways that influence institutions and policies. 'Reframing' is therefore social change (Baird 2004, Preface Lakoff, p. xv).

Lakoff argues that political liberals, as compared to political conservatives, do not fully understand the logic of conservatism and the ways in which it unifies and articulates conservative values through 'framing'. This is revealed by the ways in which the political 'left' often comprehends the world as it is promoted and projected through the lens of the political 'right', by adopting their conceptual 'frames'. Lakoff (1995) argues that critics of neoliberal welfare reform have generally failed to successfully challenge conservative theorists' conceptual frames by ignoring the importance of the way human agency and motivation is framed in political discourse. The political left has been instrumental in promoting the enabling rights-based and identity politics based on particularity, focusing on the politics of recognition and respect and on expanding the conceptions of agency in ways discussed in this chapter. However, Lakoff (1995, p. 13) identifies that one consequence of adopting a focus on particularity is that the political right can then 'divide-and-conquer'. He argues:

> Where conservatives have organized for an overall, unified onslaught on liberal culture, liberals are fragmented into isolated interest groups based on superficial localized issues: labor, the rights of ethnic groups, feminism, gay rights, environmentalism, abortion rights, homelessness, health care, education, the arts, and so on. This failure to see a unified picture of liberal politics has led to a divided consciousness and has allowed conservatives to employ a divide- and-conquer strategy. None of this need be the case, since there is a worldview that underlies liberal thought that is every bit as unified as the conservative worldview.

While Lakoff's representation of single issue 'politics' as 'superficial localised issues' is open to challenge, what he highlights is the need to a promote an *overarching* progressive frame. This is encapsulated within an already existing Nurturant Parent conceptual metaphor discussed further in chapter seven. However, it is the conservative world view that is reflected in the framing of morality and its implications for agency under conservative politics, including the more conservative politics under 'Howardism' (Greenfield & Williams 2003). As Lakoff (1995, p. 6) points out, for conservatives:

> People are not simply born strong. Moral strength must be built. Just as in building physical strength, where self-discipline and self-denial ("no pain, no gain") are crucial, so moral strength is also built through self-discipline and self-denial, in two ways: through sufficient self-discipline to meet one's responsibilities and face existing hardships; and actively through self-denial and further self-discipline.

Lakoff (2003, p. 3) argues that conservative frames of morality are powerful because 'well-funded conservative think tanks have done their job' in promoting them. This is an issue discussed further from an Australian perspective and its own conservative 'think tanks' in the following chapter; as Australia adopted the 'frame' of the American political right under the Howard Coalition Government. Lakoff notes that political progressives have an overarching moral system which can guide the way ahead for more enabling policy. However, this 'Nurturant Parent' metaphor needs to become ascendant to change the political landscape by engaging in 'reframing' for social change. 'Framing' and its influence on the policy terrain will be examined as part of the policy and document analysis in chapter seven.

Bessant et al. (2006, p. 2) argue that the terms 'social policy' and 'welfare state' are charged with a moral quality. This becomes a point of debate for framing different conceptions of the 'good', as well as for justifying conditional welfare. In the classic liberal tradition different conceptions of the good lie in the distinct differences between 'left' and 'right' views of the role of the state and of human agency. In the policy agenda in Western nation states following the Second World War a consensus was reached on the need for state welfare provision, while still maintaining divergent views on the normative role of the state. The traditional focus of the left has been on the collective; or the solidarity of individuals forged within strong and supportive societal institutions and workplaces, as well as the union movement that will be part of the analysis of retrenched workers' accounts of job loss. The focus of the right has

instead been on individuals acting in self-interest as rational actors, if freed from government constraints or 'meddling'. The term 'meddling' has currency in contemporary political debates and will also be discussed further in the thematic analysis on welfare conditionality.

Traditionally, the left has been concerned with financial redistribution and alleviating the inequality resulting from the mechanisms and limitations of the so-called 'free market', noted in chapter two. The right has instead been concerned with utilising social policy to engineer the social conditions necessary to support and legitimate the free market. Calls for more stringent welfare conditionality faced by welfare recipients are justified under market liberalism, 'new paternalism' and communitarianism. These three concepts are briefly outlined below to provide the theoretical background for theorising the views and values of policy actors and the consequences for retrenched workers' agency.

Market liberalism

Liberal free marketeers are influenced by classic liberal doctrines, including those of eighteenth century philosopher and economist Adam Smith, Austrian theorist Friedrich von Hayek, and American economist Milton Friedman. Their doctrines together underpin neoliberalism, economic rationalism, and neoconservatism (Mendes 2008). The New Right position is recognised as a conjunction of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, or meeting the demands of the free market within an authoritarian state (Dean 2003a). This marriage of neoliberalism and neoconservatism was a distinctive feature of the Howard Coalition Government at the time of the Mitsubishi restructure. In contrast to 'social' or 'welfare' liberals who promote positive liberty and state intervention in the interests of enabling the agency of those unable to compete in the market economy, market liberals promote negative liberty confined to ensuring freedom from state constraints, including financial constraints (Mendes 2008).

Neoliberal economic theory presupposes a level of welfare conditionality based on the view that certain groups in society adopt particular behavioural patterns or forms of agency that lead to welfare dependency. Rather than being addressed by, these become entrenched within an over-burdened welfare state (Murray 1984). Williams (1999, p. 670) notes that under the influence of the New Right the welfare state has

been ideologically reconfigured from being a protector against risks to being a generator of risks, including the risks of welfare dependency and 'motivational disincentives'. The functions of the welfare state have therefore shifted from meeting needs to managing risks (Dean 2003a; Giddens 1994). The New Right challenges the ethos of the classic welfare state founded on a solidaristic ethic or collective agency, as it is in conflict with the New Right's Hobbesian or dark view of reality. Dean (2003a, p. 696) explains that in 'third way' theorising, the problem is that the welfare state is 'passive' rather than 'active'; 'offering a handout, not a hand up'. While the term 'third way' has been used many times in the history of social democracy, more recently it has been concerned with social democratic renewal and the politics of New Labour in Britain under former Prime Minister Blair (Giddens 1998).

The market liberal perspective is based on contractualism, or the implied contract between the citizen and the state. Provision of state support demands reciprocity, especially the responsibility to undertake paid work; the ethos underpinning Mutual Obligations or the social policy paradigm of the Howard Coalition Government. Structural problems of poverty and disadvantage are recast as the outcomes of individual attributes and behaviours, with ideological assumptions concerning human agency influencing policy direction. American libertarian Murray (1984, 1988) argues that the disbursements of the welfare state result in the unintended consequences of an 'underclass' of unproductive people whose own views and values, buttressed by welfare provision, result in a life of dependency. In his book *Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government* (1988, pp. 267-268) Murray argues:

> 'Taking the trouble out of things' is the theme song of modernity … in every instance in which 'taking the trouble out of things' works, there is a corresponding diminution in the potential satisfaction that might be obtained from the activity that has been effected … To be employed is not quite as satisfying if being unemployed doesn't cause hardship … To soften the tangible penalties for being unemployed over a period of time, diminishes the status associated with holding a job.

Murray's contention fits Lakoff's conservative 'Strict Father' metaphor and model of society in which good citizens become disciplined and self-reliant by eschewing social programs that soften the 'tangible penalties' of unemployment. Lakoff (2004, p. 41) explains that under this view social programs 'spoil' people by 'giving them things they haven't earned and keeping them dependent'. A second justification for tightened welfare conditionality is based on new paternalism, an issue that will be theorised further within the context of retrenched workers' subjective accounts.

New paternalism

Neoliberals, including Mead, argue that welfare state 'permissiveness' underpins unemployment and welfare dependency (Mendes 2008, p. 58). For Mead (1999, p. 16), 'the chief problem for today's seriously poor is no longer social injustice but the disorders of private life … the way forward is no longer liberation but obligation'. A paternalistic stance holds that conditions imposed on welfare recipients are in their own best interest, as previous policies have created 'passive poverty' (Mead 1997, p. 117). Mead (1986) argues for a stance of new paternalism in social policy to acknowledge not only needs and rights but contractual duties and obligations.

Under neoliberalism paternalist policies are promoted as the best basis for welfare provision. Deacon (2004) notes that paternalism does not warrant or imply any corresponding or reciprocal state obligations for, as promoters of paternalism argue, participation is its own reward due to the way it improves lives. Under new paternalism welfare recipients are assumed to lack both capacity and motivation, with social policy the vehicle by which to instil these through persuasion and / or compulsion (Deacon 2004). Paternalism asserts the authority to determine a person's best interests even against their own stated preferences. It presumes a 'harmony of interests' between society and the disadvantaged person (Ziguras et al. 2003, p. 5). The third justification for welfare conditionality is based on the tenets of communitarianism.

Communitarianism

The third, or 'mutualist', justification for welfare conditionality is inherent in communitarian writings on individual responsibility, what it means to be a good member of society, and the appropriate role of reciprocal obligations (Nevile & Nevile 2003). Communitarianism is an ideology emphasising the responsibility of the individual to the community and the social importance of the family unit (Oxford Dictionary 2009). Using Lakoff's (2004) theoretical perspective, chapter seven will explore the metaphorical family unit governed by a 'strict father' and the way this conceptual metaphor influences the underpinning of public policy when extrapolated to the public sphere. Communitarian roots lie in religious culture and values, based upon notions of what people in a society owe each other (Deacon 2004). A moral sense of 'the good', including appropriate levels of welfare provision, is understood

within the context of people as designated members of a community rather than through the legal enforcement of individual rights. People are perceived to feel less moral shame associated with law-breaking than with violating attachments or obligations to 'kith and kin' (Ziguras et al. 2003, p. 7).

Views from the right are powerful in public policy and are an important aspect of this thesis as they draw attention to the interaction between structure and agency and to differing assumptions concerning human agency. Martin (2006, p. 38) notes the way in which welfare recipients' agency is often cast negatively; either in terms of 'active' agents who abuse the welfare system, or 'passive' victims of a pervading 'dependency culture'. Martin (2006) states that the policy solutions promoted under neoliberal policies involve limiting state intervention, lowering financial costs and punishing and coercing the poor through enforced behavioural modification. This is in order to mediate structural constraints recast as individual attributes. Deacon (2004) contends that although generally used as a rationing device, conditional welfare now links welfare support to socially desirable behaviour; imposing burdens on poor or vulnerable people that are not imposed on others. Welfare conditionality is a form of disciplinary or coercive power (Nevile 2008), with structural factors including deprivation and inequality blamed on the personal attributes of more disadvantaged members of society (Mendes 2008).

The link between negative ascriptions of welfare recipients' agency and the call for tighter welfare conditionality reveals the dominant view of welfare under neoliberalism. It is stance that has been challenged in recent years by a reappraisal of human agency in social theory and welfare research discussed above, with implications for social policy. The reappraisal of agency is a key focus of this thesis and will be theorised in chapter eight within workers' subjective experiences of job loss, including the ways in which they exercised their agency in dealing with its consequences. This was often through engaging with human service organisations.

Agency and human service organisations

As the Australian Public Service Commission (2007, p. 32) recognises:

> How people behave is determined by many factors and is deeply embedded in social situations, institutional contexts and cultural norms. Nearly all public policy rests on assumptions about human behaviour; however, these are rarely made explicit or tested against the available evidence.

Job loss often results in retrenched workers needing to engage with the policy terrain. Many retrenched workers called on the services of the Job Network for transitioning out of Mitsubishi. Different aspects of this outsourced employment agency network will be explored in more detail in later chapters. In reappraising the agent in social policy a further level of agency complexity arises from the interplay between welfare recipients' and service providers' agency. Arguably, both parties are constrained by contemporary regimes of privatisation and contractualism within a neoliberal policy environment. From a co-deterministic perspective this complexity may also be theorised from a structural standpoint as representing the tensions between a neoliberal policy environment and the enduring normative role and responsibility of human service organisations.

Values and normative roles of human service organisations

As Marston and McDonald (2006) contend, what happens at the point of policy implementation is directly related to outcomes. Employment services, especially case management, are human services fitting the definition of human service work developed by the organisational theorist Hasenfeld (1983). As Hoggett (2006a, p. 192) explains, workers in the public sphere are employed within a 'dilemmatic space'. They need to draw upon an understanding of both tragic and heroic models of agency when working with people and their range of complex needs. Human service work is distinctive in that its primary focus is on the individual human agent (Marston & McDonald n.d., p. 3). Employment agencies, including Job Network in Australia at the time of the Howard Government, (renamed Job Services Australia in 2009), require a management model that also focuses on employee-level objectives in working life, including commitment to client well-being. This reflects a very different concept to New Public Management theory and practice. Irrespective of the particular form of human service provision, human service organisations are committed to supporting both individual service users and the broader community, while making decisions involving complex value judgements. Therefore, as Marston and McDonald (n.d., p. 4, citing Hasenfeld 1992, p.76) argue, 'Every action taken on behalf of clients represents not only some form of concrete services ... but also a moral judgement and statement about their social worth'.

Even within what Baldock (2003, p. 68) terms the 'declining publicness of public services', human service organisations retain a normative role. According to Jones

and May (1992, p. 76), the role of public organisations involves a guiding principle of social justice and a belief that:

> the attempt to pursue the social justice agenda of access, equity, equality, rights and participation of all citizens in and through human service organizations is possible, worthwhile and of fundamental importance.

In concert with this view Hoggett et al. (2009, pp. 23- 24) argue that 'government is as much about soulcraft as it is about statecraft'. Although the definition of what constitutes the public realm is open to contest under neoliberalism, these theorists argue that it is one that must remain transparent and accountable: an issue that has implications for welfare recipients, and will be brought out in the context of retrenched workers' subjective experiences. Maintaining a focus on the relative efficacy and efficiency of different forms of public and private welfare provision, while an important area for analysis, may divert the focus away from the dual nature of the public sector and public entities. As Hoggett (2006, p. 177) maintains:

> Government, and the public sphere which supports it, is a much a site for the enactment of particular kinds of social relations as it is a site for the delivery of goods and services. To reduce it to only the latter is to commodify such relationships, to strip them of their moral and ethical meaning which is inherent in the very concept of 'citizen' but marginal to the concept of 'consumer'.

The construction of the citizen-as-consumer is theorised in following chapters within the context of outsourced human service provision. The devolution of responsibility from the state to the individual welfare recipient reflects the concept of the 'enabling' state, a term which gained currency in the 1990s in the UK. As Taylor (2008) explains, it is an alternative concept to the 'providing', or welfare state. The enabling state focuses instead on risk management devolved to the service-delivery level, rather than remaining a state embodying public responsibility (Yeatman 2009). As Lister (2010, p. 49) puts it, the enabling state reframes a social 'safety net' as a 'trampoline', or the means by which people bounce back from adversity. The historical 'safety net' metaphor will be theorised further in chapter seven, when examining policy actors' values and intentions.

Governing in pluralist societies is complex, with the need to manage 'social anxieties and other collective sentiments' which, as Hoggett et al. (2006, p. 176) explain, are partly conscious and partly un-conscious. This highlights particular challenges for human service workers and their own agency when working to support their clients' agency. This encompasses the need to manage the range of social anxieties expressed

through their clients' differing levels of reflexivity and their agency responses. Frontline human service agencies, including Job Network, are part of what Lipsky (1980) describes as a 'street-level' bureaucracy, involving specific roles and responsibilities which hold implications for the agency of both welfare providers and welfare recipients.

'Street-level' bureaucracy

'Street-level' bureaucracy or bureaucrat is a term imbuing the tension between client needs and policy implementation which comes to light in this study. The role of frontline human service workers is to enact policy actors' policy intentions (Lipsky 1980). People approach street-level bureaucracies as unique individuals with wide-ranging life experiences, personalities and personal circumstances. Through their interaction with human service workers they are transformed into 'clients' or 'customers'.

Lipsky (1980, p. 57) maintains that an important aspect of this transformation process is for the individual to identify with the ascribed categorical entity as a welfare recipient. However, even with the assumed certainties associated with this identification, clients still project onto governments or their agents their own unique particularities, including what they cannot contain within themselves. This may include a person's projections of hatred, grief or suffering, with the potential for the agency worker to be affected by these emotions (Hoggett 2006). Such interactions may have negative impacts on frontline workers' own agency and as Hoggett (2006, p. 185) recognises, and the discussion of Job Network in the following chapter will acknowledge:

> the hapless public official becomes the whipping horse, the one that can be blamed for things that neither citizens nor governments will properly address … and this becomes the emotional labour of health workers, teachers, probation officers and other street-level bureaucrats.

Frontline workers are therefore a critical part of the broader policy environment shaping the experience of job loss. They need to deal with their clients' reactions to particular bureaucratic decisions which may potentially be expressed through a range of subjective positions and non-unitary forms of agency. As Lipsky (1980, p. 9) explains, clients may:

respond angrily to real or perceived injustices, develop strategies to ingratiate themselves with workers, act grateful and elated or sullen and passive in reaction to street level bureaucrats' decisions.

Frontline workers also require the level of personal and material resources that allow them to respond appropriately to client needs, behaviours and emotional responses; an issue that will be contextualised through workers' own accounts. To balance the competing demands of those in need, in the face of different structural or policy limitations, also means that street level bureaucrats may be prone to error. What is critical for social policy is recognising that lived experience of welfare also requires attending to emotional dimensions and dispositions (Stenner & Taylor 2008).

Hoggett's theoretical contribution on agency and reflexivity helps to illuminate different and even challenging dispositions and behaviours and the ways in which these may be lived out. For Hoggett (2000, p. 23) the ultimate challenge for critical social policy is acknowledging that:

> A truly radical politics is one which would recognize such dispositions in one of us but which would also be able to imagine the kind of social arrangements which could inhibit the worst and bring out the best in us.

This involves accepting the reality of human nature and steering people in more constructive directions through more enabling policies.

Chapter summary

This chapter took an agency focus within this thesis which adopts a structure and agency approach. It began with an overview of the agency and structure debate and a range of theoretical perspectives which underpin this case study. These include Mills' concept of the 'sociological imagination' and Giddens' structuration theory. The chapter then gave an overview of Lakoff's theoretical perspectives on the power of conceptual metaphors and 'framing' which influence institutions and policy direction in ways discussed throughout this thesis. It then turned to more nuanced insights on human agency and social policy provided in Lister's and Hoggett's theoretical perspectives and models of agency. These perspectives mediate Giddens' structuration theory and will be utilised to theorise workers' subjective accounts of job loss and the ways in which they engaged their agency in dealing with its consequences.

The concept of *social suffering* was explored, as this acknowledges both the inner worlds of psychic suffering and outer world of oppressive structures that impact on human agency. In a section on agency and conditional welfare the chapter outlined both rights-based and obligations-based approaches to welfare provision, noting that it is the latter which underpins neoliberal economic theory. The implications for welfare conditionality will be explored in later chapters. Finally, the discussion moved to the relationship between human agency and human service work, arguing that human service organisations are a critical part of the broader policy environment shaping the experience of job loss.

While this chapter focused primarily on human agency, this in turn assumes an understanding of social structure. To contextualise a structurally-focused policy analysis in chapter seven, the next chapter provides the theoretical background on social structure from an historical or evolving Australian policy context. Structure and agency will then be integrated within the two thematic analyses presented in chapters seven and eight, and in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 6:

Australian policy in historical context

> The individual can understand his [sic] own experience and fate only by locating himself in his period … History is the shank of social study… A social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has not completed its intellectual journey (Mills 1959, pp. 5, 143, 6).

Introduction

The previous chapter theorised human agency in interaction with social structures. The main focus of this chapter shifts to social structure by presenting an overview of Australian policy in an historical context. This provides the relevant background material on policy structures for theorising the following two chapters. It begins by discussing the Australian federal policy realm and provides an overview of the Australian industry, industrial relations and social policies that mesh in ways to influence job loss experiences. The policy realm under the Howard Coalition Government is placed within an appropriate context, including a shift to the conjunction between neoliberalism and neoconservatism as part of an ongoing neoliberal trajectory.

This conjunction had policy implications, and policy will be theorised in the next chapter in a thematic analysis of the Howard Coalition Government's values and intentions underpinning the conditional welfare applying at the time of the Mitsubishi restructure. When enacted as policy, policy actors' values and intentions become structures interacting with welfare recipients' agency in ways that will be drawn out in theorising workers' job loss experiences. As Bullock et al. (1977, p. 673) explain, policy actors' more dominant agency inheres in their authority which is vested in the legitimacy of the state. This authority is therefore distinct from raw power, or the ability to demand compliance through the force of will.

Social structure

While human agency refers to individual actions, behaviours and motivations, social structure generally refers to 'the discernable framework, form, shape, or pattern of the inter-relationships of men [sic] in a society' (Bullock et al. 1977, p. 789). Social structures cannot be directly observed as they are 'abstract formulations' (Abercrombie et al. 1988, p. 228), including social institutions and norms which become entrenched in social systems and influence individual behaviour or agency. A key assumption is that structure refers to what is beneath the 'surface ebb and flow of social life, shaping everyday circumstances and actions' (Williams 2003, p. 132).

Social structure encompasses the evolution of historical, legal, political, economic and cultural systems, including family, religion(s), class or social stratification, the law and public policies. From a co-deterministic perspective these both shape, and are shaped by, human agency. The many enabling and / or constraining structures in interaction with retrenched workers' agency will be identified as part of examining their personal accounts of job loss. Understanding Australian policy structures helps to address the second research question on the scope and nature of the broader policy environment influencing the experience of job loss. It is from a greater understanding of the interplay between agency and structure that implications for future social policy may be better theorised and understood: addressing the third research question in the final chapter.

The Australian policy realm

It is accepted wisdom in social policy that historical, social, cultural and critical sensibilities are crucial for gaining the insights needed for any social analysis, as historical factors influence the present (Bessant et al. 2006). Over five decades ago in his book *The Sociological Imagination,* Mills (1959, p. 135) highlighted the importance of engaging an historical imagination to situate the contemporary policy realm and structure of social relations within a broader context. He noted that 'the nation-state is now the dominating form in world history and, as such, a major fact in the life of every man [sic]'. However, the scope and pace of change over the fifty years since Mills' theoretical contribution reflects the impact on the nation state of changes to capitalism. As discussed in chapter two, more recent analyses reveal the ways in which the nation state, or the historic sovereign legitimate state uniting its

citizens, is a distinct form of modernity but rapidly changing. A more globalised structure is revealed through the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness' (Held et al. 1999, p. 14).

Giddens (1982, pp. 13-14) argues that the first effort of the sociological imagination is to recover the 'lost world' of the immediate past. It is only from an awareness of history that individuals can begin to fathom how differently people live in contemporary, compared with earlier societies, or begin to theorise alternate futures. He notes that the welfare state itself is grounded in the 'tiny sliver' of recent history, dominated by the rise of capitalism as a mode of production and the rise of nation states that are now changing in ways identified in chapter two.

In Australia the policy realm is influenced by international organisations including the World Bank, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which all generate a global discourse shaping national policies. Federalism is another key structure within the broader Australian policy environment, with national, state and local tiers of government. The focus of this thesis is at the national level, as the welfare-to-work policy with which retrenched workers engaged when transitioning out of Mitsubishi, is a national policy delivered at each state level by privatised and outsourced for-profit and not-for-profit Job Network service providers.

The Australian federal structure

To put the Australian policy realm into perspective, O'Connor et al. (1998) note that it is grounded in a federal system of government beginning with the British Crown's 1788 settlement on Australia's eastern seaboard. Six self-governing colonies federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia in January 1901, under an Australian Constitution drafted in the 1890s. Together with two territories they comprise the Australian Federation. An important aspiration of Australian Federalism was to gain from internal trade while imposing a common external tariff to support Australian manufacturing industries, including automotive industries, as discussed in chapter two. Pusey (1991, p. 1) notes that at the time of Federation in 1901, Australia was held up as a 'social lighthouse' to the world. This was due to the extension of women's suffrage beginning in South Australia in 1894, a powerful trade union movement, extensive capital investment and notions of state socialism.

Bessant et al. (2006) explain that this highlighted Australia's commitment to nation building, public health and social welfare, including the introduction of old age and invalid pensions. As Lewis (2003) notes, public health typified growing Australian state interventions, including education, social services and regulation of industry and labour relations which are all social determinants of health (Baum 2008). These enabling structures were mediated in different ways throughout the following century.

A major change within Commonwealth and State relations was the Commonwealth appropriation of powers over income tax revenue under Section 96 of the Australian Constitution. Ostensibly this was to provide for the contingencies of the Second World War, but was maintained by the High Court's pro-Commonwealth judgements (McLean 2004). This has led to the growing centralisation of constitutional power. The implications for policy are encapsulated in the words of Prime Minister Howard to be expanded on in the next chapter, 'We will replace traditional state-centred welfare'. The Australian Labor Party has traditionally sought to lessen individual states' power, with Liberal and other opposition parties being more sympathetic to protecting the federal system. However, this tradition has recently been challenged by bi-partisan championing of the extension of Commonwealth powers by both the Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) and the Howard Liberal Government (1996-2007).

Consequences include changes to policy arenas directly relevant to this study concerned with prevailing policies at the time of downsizing and partial closure of Mitsubishi in South Australia during 2004 and 2005. Key policies associated with industry restructuring, job loss, and their consequences include industry, industrial relations and social policies. These have all evolved under Australian Federation and mesh in ways that shape the personal experiences of job loss. The first of these three policy worlds, industry policy, is also responsible for allocation of state aid to industry. The relevance for this case study and thesis is that this holds implications for the level of available social welfare provision based on the ideological 'framing' of the normative role of state redistribution, and whether this prioritises or marginalises social policy within its scope. In turn this raises equity issues concerned with the eventual beneficiaries of state redistribution and the impact this has on the agency of social welfare recipients.

Forms of welfare and state redistribution

As discussed in the literature review in chapter three structural determinants of health and well-being, or welfare, encompass socio-economic and political contexts and include social and public policies, and cultural and societal values that all have an impact on health. These influence intermediary determinants of health including behaviour or agency, biological and psychological factors and employment and living conditions (Baum 2008). As structural determinants maintain their unequal distribution (CSDH 2007a), the levels and forms of state redistribution are therefore critical structural health determinants. As Bryson (1992, p. 121) notes, in respect of state financial distribution, attention is mainly focused on forms of welfare provided to the more disadvantaged and powerless members of society through social policy. The term 'social welfare' is used to distinguish between the 'social' and the 'non-social' policy realms, including foreign affairs and economic, industry and defence arenas. However, as Bryson (1992) also contends, all policies, all outlays, and even non-intervention decisions are critical to the welfare of all people. There are other less visible forms of state redistribution which include the largely unaccountable aid to charitable and religious institutions, more recently dubbed the 'Purple Economy' (Wallace 2007), as well as aid provided to industry.

While this thesis confines its focus to social welfare, its provision cannot be completely quarantined from the context of these other forms of welfare that have very different values attached to their provision. State redistribution may be 'framed' ideologically (Lakoff 2004) in ways to avoid problematic questions concerning structural inequality. As Heron (2008, p. 92) argues:

> Inequality or equality is highly dependent upon the amount [sic] of opportunities that are afforded to an individual or group of individuals to improve their lives. Exercising agency therefore, can either contribute to inequality or enhance equality. Where inequality exists, human agency is diminished. Where equality is promoted based on the design in social policy, human agency is also enhanced. Reducing inequality and enhancing human agency is entirely dependent on the policy environment and whether or not the state considers its population as central to development, however defined.

Acknowledging all forms of state welfare, including occupational, fiscal, and aid to industry, allows for a more contextualised understanding of the broader policy environment, including conditional welfare, and helps to answer the second research question.

'Framing' welfare

Olson and Champlin (1998, p. 763) provide insights concerning the historic cultural duality under which activities associated with the economy are often framed to afford greater status than those relating to the social arena; an entrenched dichotomy that frames social welfare negatively. For example, while welfare to industry is often framed positively as 'benefitting society', 'creating jobs', or 'generating income', social welfare is often framed as a 'drain' on society, or a tax 'burden' which must then be 'relieved'. As Lakoff (2003, p. 32) explains:

> Conservatives have worked for decades and spent billions on their think tanks to establish their frames, create the right language and get the language and frames they evoke accepted. It has taken them a while to get the metaphors of taxation as a burden, an affliction, an unfair punishment – all of which require 'relief'.

Framing taxation and social welfare as a 'burden' is also part of the policy analysis in chapter seven and will be illuminated in policy actors' discourses. In addressing the second study question the following section turns to industry policy, the first policy arena influencing the experience of job loss.

Australian industry policy

Setting the industry policy context

The Bureau of Industry Economics (1987, p. 1) states that the role of industry policy part of Australia's Federal policy mix, is to:

> interact and respond to the many structural pressures so as to encourage the emergence of an industrial structure most efficacious to the general welfare of the community at large.

Freedman and Stonecash (1997) note that in the early 20th century Australian industry policy aimed to protect evolving domestic industries by extensive use of tariffs targeted to automotive and other heavy manufacturing. Policies sought to bolster the more stable employment relations of the male wage earners' welfare state (Castles 1985). In the era of the protective state, with Australia second only to New Zealand in protection levels, tariffs doubled between 1910 and 1920 and re-doubled again by 1932 (Capling & Galligan 1992), before the move to more broadly-based assistance. This marks an important policy moment with implications for future industry restructuring and for the Australian workforce facing plant closures and job losses.

Since the 1980s focus has turned to supporting more broadly-based forms of 'structural adjustment' for struggling sectors, including steel, motor vehicles and textiles, clothing and footwear. Renaming the 1920s Tariff Board the Industries Assistance Commission in the 1960s was a signifier of this ideological shift (Freedman & Stonecash 1997). Richardson (1996-1997, p. 1) notes that in 1973 the Whitlam Labor Government 'planted the seeds of tariff reform' by cutting tariffs by 25%: a move that was met with 'universal hostility' (Capling & Galligan 1992, pp. 200-201). The discussion in chapter two of the decline in the Chrysler Corporation and the rise of Mitsubishi in South Australia reflects the increased competition from new Japanese producers from the 1960s. These automotive imports eroded the domestic market share of General Motors Holden, Ford, Chrysler and Leyland.

These corporations' combined local market share declined from 84% in 1966 to 68% in 1973. Escalating unemployment, high inflation, declining profits and high levels of imports all challenged the implementation of tariff cuts. In response the Whitlam Labor Government adopted an alternate assistance regime in the form of import quotas (Capling & Galligan 1992). Subsequent Hawke and Keating Labor Governments initiated microeconomic reform to encourage 'efficiency' in both the public and private sectors. This included deregulating key sectors of the economy through the removal of tariffs, and the encouragement of exports and research and development (Freedman & Stonecash 1997). The Howard Coalition Government adopted further industry policy changes following its election in 1996.

Industry policy under the Howard Government

Industry policy at the time of downsizing and partial closure of Mitsubishi began with the 1996 election of the Howard Government. The intention of this Government was to work under 'a partnership with industry' approach (Emmery 1999). As noted in chapter two, AUS$2 billion dollars were granted to the automotive sector from January 2001 in the forms of import duty relief, support for research and development, and investment in productive assets. Promoting 'relief' from import duty 'frames' the normative role of industry taxation under the Howard Coalition Government. Important welfare equity issues are linked to all forms of state provision, with industry policy one important part of the broader policy environment shaping the experience of job loss and its aftermath. Industrial relations policy is another, and is the focus of the next section.

Australian industrial relations policy

One way workers have historically gained employment protection is from being part of the collective agency of union membership. O'Neill (1993) explains that the Australian federal industrial relations system evolved at the close of the 19th century and was pivotal to the terms of employment and quality of working life. This is an important issue for this thesis as it provides the historical context for the industrial relations environment of the early 2000s and its impact on workers' welfare following retrenchment at Mitsubishi. As Hearn and Lansbury (2006) point out, from the late 19th century unions addressed workers' grievances and facilitated their participation as citizens who held both industrial and political rights. Union organisation was accepted as a legitimate role in nation building.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC), dubbed the industrial relations 'umpire', had powers vested in the *Industrial Relations* Act to intervene in industrial disputes, and for establishing fair wages. Centralised wage fixing had a flow-on effect from the stronger to weaker unions. As Lipsig-Mumme and McBride (2007) point out, arbitration helped to shape the union movement by determining the ways in which it engaged with capital. Of particular relevance for this study are changes to industrial relations and organised labour that occurred under the Howard Coalition Government and changed that relationship.

The rise of precarious employment

The term *precarious* is defined as 'uncertain' or 'dependent on chance' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). Although there is no agreed upon or fixed definition, precarious employment commonly refers to low levels of pay (mediated in the Australian policy context by casual wage adjustments or wage 'loading') and high levels of labour insecurity. It includes casual employment, marginal forms of self-employment, some government-sponsored employment schemes, and 'life-of-project' fixed-term employment (Campbell 1997, p. 12). Lipsig-Mumme and McBride (2007) note that Australia has one of the highest proportions of precarious employment in the OECD countries, affecting one third of its workers. The term 'precariat' has been coined to acknowledge the situation of workers engaged in precarious forms of work under 'flexible' forms of employment Lipsig-Mumme (2005, p. 25).

The Commission on the Social Determinants of Health Employment Conditions Knowledge Network (CSDH 2007b, p. 22, citing Hadden et al. 2007) provides a broad interpretation of precarious employment as 'employment forms that might reduce social security and stability for workers'. The Commission (CSDH 2007b) states that within the historical context of neoliberal policies, structural adjustment programs, and growing political conservatism, there has been a weakening of unions and labour market regulations in many countries. Precarious employment is linked to changes to organised labour, transformed labour regulations and trade unionism, and the world of work. There has been a dramatic decline in trade union membership rates across Australia. In 1986 46% of employees were members of trade unions, but by 2007 rates had dropped to 19% (ABS 2008).

In their review of research on the impact of globalisation on union power, Dreher and Gaston (2007) note that longer-term socio-economic changes resulting from deindustrialisation, the growth of a-typical workplaces and a growing orientation towards individualism all impact on the solidarity of the union movement. They cite the deterioration of labour market outcomes for unskilled labour in Western economies during the 1980s and 1990s. McKenna (2001) argues that a significant loss for the trade union movement in Australia has been the abandoning of full employment as the industrial relations policy aim and model. This model had endured for several decades following the Second World War, but was later reconfigured or reframed as a 'commitment to jobs' or to 'job creation'. Lambert et al. (2005) note that legislative changes during the 1990s sought to marginalise the role and power of unions vested in collective bargaining. Labor Prime Minister Keating's amendments to the 1988 *Industrial Relations* Act gave the first formal recognition to direct employer / employee bargaining. Keating era industrial relations changes were then augmented by the Howard Government's 1996 *Workplace Relations* Act which cemented managerial prerogative when restructuring the industrial relations environment, including by bringing in individual bargaining.

Industrial relations policy under the Howard Government

These bi-partisan changes flagged the later more radical changes to be implemented under Prime Minister Howard's long-held aspiration to create a unitary industrial relations system. Work Choices industrial relations legislation enacted in 2005 had key provisions discussed later in this chapter that were to impact on the union

movement, and on worker security. The latter was recast in terms such as 'flexibility' and 'enterprise' as part of an ongoing neoliberal policy trajectory. McKenna (2001, p. 88) makes the point that the Howard Government linked the terms 'enterprise' and 'flexibility' to promote the concept of 'enterprise flexibility'. This was to benefit capital ahead of labour and led to a rise in forms of precarious employment. Key changes to industrial relations policy under the Howard Government had implications for those Mitsubishi workers facing job loss during 2004-2005. These changes are discussed below to contextualise policy actors' views, values and policy intentions, and workers' subjective accounts that will be presented in chapters seven and eight respectively.

Work Choices industrial relations policy

Key industrial relations changes under the Howard Coalition Government were instigated by introducing Work Choices, a single national industrial relations system replacing the dual state and federal systems. These changes were met negatively by the electorate, with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the peak association for trade unions, launching the highly successful community campaign 'Your Rights at Work'. This became active in 2005 and included mass rallies, television advertisements and national days of protest. Prince and John (2005) maintain that while traditional Australian labour law allowed, or even required, a central role for trade unions under Section 51 (35) of the Constitution, this was challenged by the Howard Government's constitutional grounding of new federal industrial relations legislation under the Corporations powers.

The *Workplace Relations (Work Choices) Amendment* Act introduced Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) or individual employment contracts, with industrial awards rationalised to 20 allowable matters (O'Neill et al. 2007).The Objects of the Act to were to ensure that responsibility for determining matters rested with direct negotiations between employers and employees at the workplace or enterprise level, even though for many it would be on a 'take it or leave it' basis (MacDermott 1997, pp. 53, 55). Specific changes would shape future workplace agreements undertaken by retrenched workers. Prime Minister Howard had outlined the new industrial relations scheme in a report to Parliament on 26th May 2005 (Commonwealth of Australia 2005).

Under these changes Australian Workplace Agreements would be lodged with the Employment Advocate and no longer be referred to the Industrial Relations Commission as the 'independent 'umpire'. The Australian Fair Pay Commission became the body vested with setting minimum wages and other award classifications (O'Neill et al. 2007). Free-market economist Professor Ian Harper was appointed the first Fair Pay Commissioner. Unfair dismissal laws were extended to include workplaces with up to 100 workers, while previously confined to workplaces with up to 20 workers. As discussed in context in the following chapter Prime Minister Howard (2005, p. 6) stated that legislation was 'based upon the capacity of firms to pay and on the productivity of individual workplaces'.

Hall (2006, p. 292) claims that the passing of Work Choices legislation, hailed as the 'most fundamental revolution in industrial relations since Federation', expressed Prime Minister Howard's enduring ambition for workplace flexibility, deregulation of the labour market and restrictions to unfair dismissal laws. The scrapping of the No Disadvantage Test further downgraded employees' status (Hartmann & Darab 2006). This test weighed the benefits of workers' original collective or individual workplace awards against those proposed, to ensure that workers were not disadvantaged overall under the changes. Only five basic entitlements were enshrined, including a minimum pay rate, casual loading defaulting at 20%, a 38 hour working week with reasonable additional hours, four weeks paid leave, 10 days personal leave, and 52 weeks unpaid parental leave. The enactment of Work Choices legislation not only defined new regulations, but according to Stewart and Maley (2007), also allowed Prime Minister Howard to instigate a new institutional structure. This relied on the Commonwealth Corporations powers, rather than arbitration and conciliation. Work Choices reconfigured industrial relations institutions as well as policy networks which included individuals who were more sympathetic to the employer position (Stewart & Maley 2007).

The third of the policy arenas influencing retrenched Mitsubishi workers' job loss experiences is social policy, which is the focus of the following section. Industrial relations and social policies converged when a person left a job or was made redundant.

Australian social policy

Social policy is a vehicle for allocating society's resources according to particular objectives and dominant social values (Jamrozik 2005). These values underpin the level of welfare conditionality or the stringency of conditions imposed as eligibility requirements for obtaining social welfare. Welfare conditionality, the focus of a thematic analysis to be presented in the following chapter, was outlined conceptually in the previous chapter. Social policy and welfare services are fundamental to guaranteeing individuals the means by which they live out their rights to personhood (Yeatman 2009). Social or welfare policy is contested in respect of resource allocation, citizenship rights, and debates concerning what it means to live together in communities.

While there are assumptions of political partisanship in policy-making throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, social policy has involved a high level of political consensus in Western nation states. Bessant et al. (2006, p. 144) refer to this consensus as an 'identifiably liberal tradition of ideas' informing economic and social policies, with its historical trajectory examined throughout this chapter. Social policy reflects the fact that all modern societies have adopted some version of capitalism, leading to a range of enduring social problems that need to be ameliorated. These include inequality in wealth distribution, the existence of a labour 'market' or the commodification of human labour, unequal decision-making and power relationships, and a sexual division of labour (Bessant et al. 2006).

During the tenure of the Howard Coalition Government, work-first employment policies helped to shape the experience of job loss and its aftermath. A work-first approach deems that the best approach to employment policy is for income support recipients to find any job as quickly as possible, irrespective of pay, conditions or other factors (Peck & Theodore 2000). Work-first policy underpins Australian welfare 'reforms' in recent years, designed to expand the pool of available workers and reduce the level of welfare dependency. It prioritises economic over social policy and promotes a focus on, and demands upon, individual agency above structural issues and collective responsibility. Behavioural rather than economic explanations of unemployment prevail, while demands for work participation become a form of 'welfare-as-work', replacing an historic policy stance of 'welfare-to-work' (Ziguras

et al. 2003). It was into this policy paradigm that Mitsubishi workers emerged following retrenchment.

Industrial relations changes forged under the Howard Government were instigated in tandem with changes to social policy and the welfare state. According to Marston and Watts (2004, p. 34) the welfare state is 'a disputed idea and never a settled accomplishment'. It is a construct reflecting a wide range of perspectives, with exhaustive descriptions in the literature revealing its contested nature. The welfare state is pivotal to the ways in which the impacts of job loss are both experienced and ameliorated. Conceptualised broadly by O'Connor et al. (1998, p. 19), the welfare state is 'concerned with the way people live'. Other conceptions range from positive through to ambivalent and even negative perspectives discussed briefly below to highlight its contested nature.

Perspectives on the welfare state

The Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH 2007a, p. 41, citing Castel 2005) describes the welfare state as a 'systematic defence against social insecurity, which is understood as individuals', groups' or communities' vulnerability to diverse environmental threats'. Policies of modern welfare states contribute in many ways to present-day high overall standards of health in developed countries (Bartley et al. 1997). As Mendes (2008, p. 2) contends, the welfare state provides 'state-protected minimum standards of income, health, housing, education and personal social services based on a notion of rights and entitlements, rather than charity'.

More ambivalent representations of the welfare state refer to its provision of competitive advantage to private capital (Gough 2000), or as an 'unequivocal attempt to patch up capitalism' (Whynes 1985, p. 99). Other representations include the welfare state as 'an agent of conflict resolution and management' (Beilharz et al. 1992, p. 57), as well as a 'contradictory unity', exhibiting both positive and negative features for both capital and labour (Pierson 1998, p. 54). Titmuss (1963, p. 3) notes that the welfare state has often been portrayed as a 'term of abuse', while a strident critic of social provision refers to it as 'the road to serfdom' and economic ruin (Hayek 1944). Lakoff (2003, p. 34) argues that framing welfare in terms such as Hayek's is to argue that social programs 'give people things they haven't earned,

promoting dependency and lack of discipline, and are therefore immoral'. Mullaly (2007) highlights the dual humanitarian and oppressive function of the welfare state that provides social protection but is also the means by which powerful groups placate antagonisms and regulate the poor.

Of particular importance for this thesis is that the welfare state incorporates Australia's 'mixed economy' of welfare, or the means by which social policy is enacted through the interface between welfare recipients and human service agents. Retrenched Mitsubishi workers' accounts in chapter eight will reveal the ways in which this policy interface was a key issue for many.

Australia's mixed economy of welfare

The contemporary Australian welfare economy is necessarily complex due to its federal structure (Alessandrini 2002). As noted earlier this includes Commonwealth, State, and Local Governments. However, there is a 'fourth sector', or entrepreneurial civic service sector, which although not driven solely by altruism, is still concerned with social benefit. It is often referred to as a 'non-government state' due to its network of not-for-profit (NFP) organisations (Shaver 1982). The Australian NFP sector is both large and diverse, incorporating approximately 600,000 organisations, with 59,000 'economically significant' NFPs contributing $43 billion to GDP and providing 8% of employment in 2006-2007 (Productivity Commission 2010).

As Bryson and Verity (2009) explain, all sectors of the Australian mixed economy are supported by a large informal sector, mainly comprising family members who take high levels of responsibility for care. Welfare recipients who receive benefits through the vehicle of the mixed economy meet stipulated conditions through a range of government-sanctioned activities including voluntary work and the 'work for the dole' programmes; forms of participation that will be discussed further in retrenched Mitsubishi workers' accounts. Bryson and Verity (2009) note that welfare programs involve ongoing assessment and clear consequences for failure to comply. This is based on a negative 'framing' of social welfare as a 'drain on society' in distinction to other forms of state welfare that may be framed more positively: for example, as a 'benefit to society' or 'investment' (Olson & Champlin 1998, p. 763).

The level and nature of state provision reflects the dominant ideas on what constitutes the 'good society' at any given moment in the evolution of the Australian

welfare system. The range of historical policy or structural supports underpinning this system promoted relative wage stability, a compressed wage structure, a targeted welfare 'safety net', strong public enterprises, and protective tariffs. These endured until neoliberal economic reforms were initiated under the Fraser (Liberal) and Hawke (Labor) governments during the 1980s. Bessant et al. (2006) note that a further defining feature in Australia was the rejection of contributory insurance schemes, with funding provided from general revenue. Social protection was afforded under a male 'breadwinner' model, rather than through a social wage (Beilharz et al. 1992; Kerr & Savelsberg 1999).

This employment paradigm was originally bolstered by a selective immigration system under the White Australia Policy, adopted as a defence against wage-undermining. Residual social security was provided to those outside the workforce, but an important consequence of social protection tied to male employment has been the corresponding reduction of focus on income support (Ramia & Carney 2001). Murphy (2006) argues that this has underpinned the shift from Australia being originally conceptualised as a 'social lighthouse' (Pusey 1991) to instead being seen a welfare 'laggard' by the end of the 20th century, as part of the evolution of Australian 'welfare rationalities'.

Australian welfare rationalities

Harris (2001) coins the term 'welfare rationalities' for a specific sub-group of broader political rationalities and as a guide to understanding the major policy trajectories over the 20th century. These cover the areas of unemployment, child protection, subsidised health facilities and other means by which the state intervenes to improve people's well-being. Harris (2001) states that welfare reforms include economic, social, and moral-behavioural dimensions, with the social dimension focusing on social security, social justice, and addressing socio-economic inequality. The moral-behavioural dimension includes assumptions concerning human agency and welfare recipients' motivation. These assumptions will be theorised in the following chapter as part of a thematic analysis of welfare conditionality.

The economic dimension of welfare reform focuses on the notions of free enterprise and economic development as discussed in chapter two, and will also be theorised broadly in an analysis of private enterprise values in the following chapter. As the

Liberal Party policy platform (Liberal Party of Australia 2006, p. 4) states, 'an emphasis on the individual and enterprise [is] … best able to meet the demands and challenges of the 21st century'. Harris (2001) argues that this range of evolving welfare rationalities belies the claim that there can be no alternatives to neoliberal policies. Policy changes are reflected in the three distinct welfare iterations occurring throughout the evolution of Australian public policy, including relief from poverty, or minimal social protection, followed by full employment as a more enabling policy aim after the Second World War, through to Mutual Obligations as neoliberal social policy under the Howard Government (Harris 2001).

Cook (2004, p. 123) identifies the trajectory of Australian income support since 1975 as 'an almost seamless process of [welfare state] retrenchment, and integral component of the neoliberal policies pursued by both Labor and Coalition Governments'. This included devolution of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security to Centrelink, an 'arms-length' public agency responsible for social security payments, and installation of the privatised Job Network as the employment service regime, after winding back the Commonwealth Employment Service.

The rise of 'active' welfare policies and contractualism

Mitsubishi workers transitioned into re-employment or alternatives to paid employment through engaging with 'active' welfare policies. A key social policy moment triggering a further shift in welfare rationalities was one replacing the 'work test', based on an individual's ability to work, with an 'activity test' linked to government-sanctioned activities. This historic shift introduced notions of 'activity' and 'active participation', with the Active Employment Strategy (AES) beginning in 1992 (Harris 2001). This strategy placed the onus on unemployed people to search for work actively and to take all reasonable job offers. The Howard Government's definition of what was deemed 'suitable' work is discussed in the following chapter. The social security system was redesigned to encourage workforce participation in place of supporting income maintenance provision (McDonald & Marston 2006). Chapter seven will explore the values underlying active welfare policies, including for example, the views of Minister Abbott (2001, p. 40) who argued that [mandated] 'structured activity may be the only way to ensure that activity-tested welfare recipients really are active'.

Cass (1988) maintains that the period promoting active welfare policies saw the genesis of heightened welfare conditionality, with government programmes re-named in order to emphasise their active purposes and objectives. Changes were undertaken in tandem with the ideological conversion of unemployed people into 'job seekers' and citizens into 'customers'. Cultural change within the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) reduced the level of discretionary decision-making by frontline workers. It also shifted the focus away from structural constraints to issues of agency, including perceived personal inadequacies (Cook 2004), and reflected a growing focus on contractualism in public policy.

One consequence of employing neoliberal economic policy and New Public Management techniques in Australian policy settings is that case management of unemployed people became what McDonald and Marston (2005) refer to as 'a radical localisation of governance'. The relationship between an unemployed person and the state was to be negotiated through the relationship between the individual and a case manager. Public servants who previously assisted those in need had to target a more narrowly defined client base. Government relinquished direct control over policy implementation by selling off public sector enterprises and forming strategic partnerships with church and other non-government sectors (Bessant et al. 2006).

Kerr and Savelsberg (1999, p. 247) theorise the relationship between citizen and state under contractualism as one in which 'the [now] "customer" is in effect the product processed by the agency for its client – the government'. The term 'citizen' assumes concerns for wider social goals, while a 'consumer' focuses on his or her needs alone (Baum 2008). Patterson (1998, p. 228) highlights the ideological slippage within this relationship, pointing out that:

> Customer language urges citizens and bureaucrats alike not to notice, or to ignore, the relationship of individual citizens to government structures, and not to conceive of voice and resistance as possibilities.

Patterson supports a view by Sypnowich (2001, p. 3) that:

> Ideology is not necessarily completely true or false; rather its power lies in its manipulative capacity to obfuscate flawed social conditions, giving an illusory account of their rationale or function, in order to justify and win acceptance of them without protest or resistance in some form.

Further, as Garland and Darcy (2009) argue, this way of constructing the relationship between the citizen and the state leaves little room for concepts such as the public interest or public good. Construction of the citizen as a consumer also assumes that the consumer is fully informed and can assess rational choices. As noted in chapter two this is part of applying market logic to non-market activities, turning public services into products, focusing only on short-term measurable outcomes, and effacing broader social goals (Baum 2008).

While the development of a robust public realm was a defining feature of western capitalist democracies following the Second World War the subsequent decline in public services occurred in tandem with the declining geopolitical role of the nation state (Clarke 2004). Rifkin (1995) adds that this included its retreat from the role of employer of last resort for supporting the well-being of citizens. Carney and Ramia (1999, p. 138) note that managerialism also marks the transition from an 'unemployment benefits system' to an 'employment services regime' with an onus on personal responsibility for securing employment. Aspects of this legacy will be drawn out within Mitsubishi workers' accounts of the consequences of job loss. The ideological shift was reflected in the design of policy in which the obligation of welfare recipients to 'give something back' was a condition of welfare provision under the Howard Coalition Government (Ziguras et al. 2003, p. 9).

Social policy under the Howard Government

While signifying continuity with the evolving bi-partisan neoliberal policy agendas of the Fraser, Hawke and Keating Governments, Mutual Obligations policy imbued the distinctive characteristics of the Howard Coalition Government following its electoral success in 1996. Kerr and Savelsberg (1999, p. 249) contend that while 'dole work' discourse goes back to the Hawke Government and media coverage of 'dole-bludgers', what is significant about the Howard era was 'turning dialogue into action'. The rhetoric associated with Mutual Obligations policy recasts the individual as 'deficient attitudinally, behaviourally, or in their responsibility to taxpayers', while ignoring the need to remedy skills deficits through state provision (Ferguson (1999, p. 15). The following chapter will draw out the ways in which key policy actors' underlying values informed Mutual Obligations policy. The aim was to make welfare more conditional in order to address the perceived aberrant behaviour of some welfare recipients. In Lakoff's (2003) terms, underlying values that eschew

reliance on welfare reflect a 'Strict Father' rather than 'Nurturant Parent' policy model; conceptual metaphors that will be examined in the next chapter.

In promoting a narrow view of economic efficiency Mutual Obligations policy discounts the consequences of structural constraints, including labour market transformation, economic cycles, and demographic changes; all creating the need for welfare (Henman 2002). As discussed in chapter five Mutual Obligations policy is justified politically by an argument based on new paternalism, and articulated by Mead in his ideological 'framing' of freedom and obligation. Mead (1997, p. 32), a policy architect of welfare-to-work policy in the US, claims that:

> To live effectively people need personal restraint to achieve their long-run goals. In this sense obligation is the precondition of freedom. Those who would be free must first be bound. And if people have not been effectively bound by functioning families and neighbourhoods in their formative years, government must attempt to provide the limits later.

The decade from 1996 saw successive Howard Governments focus on addressing welfare dependency through changes made under the *Social Security Legislation Amendment (Work for the Dole)* Act 1997. This flagged reforms under the unambiguously named 'Work for the Dole' program. It was at this point that the policy of Mutual Obligations was activated, with a normative view of welfare provision implied in the title of the Act (Stewart & Maley 2007). Dole is defined as a 'claimable benefit from the state', a 'charitable distribution', and a 'charitable (esp. sparing, niggardly) gift of food, clothes, or money'. Its definition encompasses the notion of a dole bludger as 'a person who allegedly prefers the dole to work' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003).

In 1999 Senator Jocelyn Newman, the then Minister for Family and Community Services, released a discussion paper on planned reforms of Australia's welfare system, entitled *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century* (Newman 1999). The Government-commissioned report by the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* (McClure 2000b), established the principles for design and management of welfare programs. However, the report noted that the narrow Terms of Reference precluded the Reference Group from examining a range of structural issues, stating:

> Some of the factors that will be important in helping Australia achieve these outcomes fall outside our Terms of Reference. These include policies designed to support economic and employment growth and to avoid recessions (McClure 2000b, p. 4).

The Government's response to the McClure Report entitled *Australians Working Together* (Vanstone & Abbott 2001) was released in the 2001-2002 Federal Budget. The report on the outcome of the community consultation process entitled *Listening to the Community* (Vanstone & Abbott 2002) revealed the policy changes that were to be implemented between 2002 and 2004 under 'the Government's first big step in modernising Australia's welfare system' (Vanstone & Abbott 2002, p. iii) . The policy shift was partly enacted by clearly stated ministerial priorities, bringing in the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), and shifting service provision from the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) to the Job Network.

Social policy and the Job Network

The Job Network was formed in 1998 as a federal network of privatised employment agencies that took over the role of the CES and played a central role in the Howard Coalition Government's welfare-to-work policy. In Australia it is the Commonwealth Government that assumes the main responsibility for labour market transition and the national welfare-to-work programme for unemployed recipients of Newstart Allowance, Disability Support Pensions and Parenting Payments that are all forms of conditional welfare. These programs represent the program options that were available to eligible Mitsubishi workers following retrenchment. An audit report on the administration of the Job Seeker Account (Australian National Audit Office 2006-2007) noted that 113 Job Network organisations were located in 1154 sites across Australia. In 2005-2006 the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) paid $1250 million to these organisations; through Employment Service Contracts under a competitive tendering process and for varying contract terms.

Both Australian and international commentators identify the Australian Job Network as a radical system (Considine 2001). In distinction to the years of the Keating Labor Government (1991-1996) most labour market programmes were abolished. Yeatman (2009) explains that Centrelink CEO Susan Vardon envisioned a responsive customer service organisation, but by the time of her departure in 2004 this aspiration had been undermined by the Government's welfare-to-work policy

approach. While jobseekers may nominate a preferred Job Network provider, once a job seeker starts intensive assistance provisions, such as that provided to Mitsubishi workers in circumstances discussed in chapter two, it is difficult to change providers (Webster & Harding 2000). As McDonald and Marston (2008, p. 107) contend, in respect of choosing service providers:

> The users – unemployed people – lack sufficient information to make choices (to the limited extent they can) about which provider they wish to join, a characteristic known technically as "quasi market failure by preference error" (Lowery 1998). Providers' knowledge about the market is constrained by organisational behaviour which promotes secretiveness, particularly in the periods of contract negotiations, bolstered by commercial-in-confidence provisions built into the Job Network. The overall lack of transparency has been consistently noted by third parties.

The retreat from the public face of employment services is noted by Gilbert (2002) in his book *Silent Surrender of Public Responsibility*. The role of Job Network in facilitating labour market transition for Mitsubishi workers will be discussed further within the context of policy actors' values and intentions in the next chapter, and workers' subjective experiences of job loss in chapter eight.

Mutual Obligations and the enterprising individual

In furthering the shift in focus from structural issues to human agency Mutual Obligations policy recast traditional categories of 'poverty' or 'the poor' as a contemporary problem of welfare dependency (Marston & Watts 2004). Dean (1995) explains that the policy objectives were to replace dependency, free-loading, 'dole-bludging', passivity and demoralisation with activity, purpose, responsibility and enterprise. Although negative assumptions on human agency and welfare dependency underpin a bi-partisan policy consensus, where the Howard Government signalled a break from earlier policy prescriptions was in markedly increasing its managerialist and contractualist push and promoting the 'enterprising' individual. Promoting an 'enterprising' individual reflects a normative shift from dependency to enterprise.

One interpretation of the term *enterprise* is that it supports positive aspirations of the active, creative, agent who refuses to succumb to welfare dependency, or if so, quickly reassumes independence. Alternatively, the term may exemplify the enterprising but potentially self-interested or even fraudulent claimer of welfare services whose agency must be redirected under a work-first policy approach

entrenching more conditional welfare. Hall (2006) argues that Prime Minister Howard linked the notion of an emergent enterprise-based economy to the rise of the 'enterprise worker'. This is an ambiguous term allowing not only for the conception of an enterprising, self-reliant worker, or rational actor seeking their own best interests, but also a worker who recognises that their own fortunes are inevitably tied to, dependent upon, or subsumed within the fortunes of the employing enterprise. In doing so it frames the normative role of state redistribution in ways that potentially impact on the agency of social welfare recipients. As Hall (2006) argues, it promotes bolstering the enterprise ahead of protecting the individual worker. It also de-politicises the strategy, setting the 'frame' for welfare reforms.

While normative values and policy shifts outlined above occurred through a bipartisan neoliberal trajectory as part of the evolution of Australia's welfare rationalities, a neoconservative turn in social policy under the Howard Government was to become an additional and distinguishing feature, with implications that will be highlighted in the next chapter.

A neoconservative shift in social policy

Prime Minister Howard drew heavily upon the legacy of the former Australian Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, whose values maintained a strong personal influence throughout his tenure. Sawer (2003) notes that while a traditionalist, Menzies was also a social liberal in a tradition of supporting social justice, the welfare state, and the priority of citizens' welfare ahead of property rights. Brett (2003, p. 184) argues that Howard was Menzies successor, but:

> not because he has gone back to him to mine his words and images to oversee a return to 50s Australia, but because like him he has been able to adapt the language of his political present.

The language of Howard's political present was strongly influenced by a shift from traditional conservatism to neoconservatism, mirroring the American political right. According to McKnight (2005) Howard made a departure from acting in the liberal tradition as a keeper of classical conservatism. This tradition seeks to preserve common heritage, institutional integrity, and notions of responsibility to others from a standpoint of *noblesse oblige,* or that privilege entails responsibility to others. In distinction, neoconservatism is an American variant of conservatism and a reaction against the turbulent years of radical change of the 1960s. At its heart is a sense of

siege (Aly 2010). Its aim is to maintain social stability and entrenched cultural values while defending capitalism as a system understood to promote democracy and affluence (McKnight 2005). Aly (2010, p. 65) refers to it as a project of 'vanquishing ideological foes' through a 'right' orthodoxy in respect of history and culture. Neoconservatism also asserts the need for a shared set of conservative or 'family' values, possibly drawn from fundamentalist religion, even though as McKnight (2005) points out, these values remain unhitched from the economic policies necessary to support them. These values underpin Lakoff's (1995) conceptual metaphor of a 'Strict Father' policy model.

As Lister (2010) explains sometimes the two strands of economic liberalism and social conservatism support each other, while at other times they clash, especially where economic liberalism undermines families by reducing opportunities for paid work. One important facet of the rise of neoconservatism during the term of the Howard Government was a concurrent, deeply conservative Christian evangelical revivalist tradition which provided a support base for the 2004 rise of the Family First Party in Australia (Bessant et al. 2006). By 2004 publications by the free market 'think tank', the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), included religion-based articles in which economic liberalism was supported by theological justifications for linking poverty to individual failure of responsibility (Maddox 2005). The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) states that their organisation is:

> the leading independent public policy "think tank" within Australasia. The CIS is actively engaged in supporting a free enterprise economy and a free society under limited government, where individuals can prosper and fully develop their talents. (http://www.cis.org.au/about-cis)

The policy advocacy of the CIS was influenced by neoconservative policies in the USA, also seeking stringent welfare reforms. The call for stronger welfare conditionality is based on a view that the welfare state is now an anachronism (Marston & Watts 2004). This further endorses the shift away from a policy focus on the structural basis of welfare realities to the implied negative agency of individual welfare recipients.

The values promoted by Prime Minister Howard have been widely noted (Brett 2003; Stewart and Maley 2007) and reflect overarching policy aspirations grounded in a much greater neoconservative project of social and economic transformation. Under this, as Maddox (2005, p. 197) contends:

> [Howard's] social and economic transformations of Australia have usually been considered independently of one another. Commentators either analyse his race, gender, sexuality and border protection policies, or they discuss his economic, industrial relations and financial reforms. The two halves of the prime ministerial personality – interventionist social policy and deregulationist economics- can often seem so disparate that they are analysed independently, as if they belonged to two different people. When his marriage of these two strands- social conservatism and economic rationalism- is raised, it is usually an indication of Howard's uniqueness. Admirers and critics alike see the blend as his distinctive contribution to Australian politics.

McKnight (2005, p. 146) notes the Howard Government's backlash against the cultural values of the preceding Keating Labor Government with its 'big picture' issues, including environmental policy, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and republicanism. Vulnerabilities triggered by the pace and scope of change during the Keating years were targeted by Prime Minister Howard when articulating his own values for shaping future policy. Greenfield and Williams (2003, p. 280) term this value-system 'Howardism', a 'particularly Australian version of wider neoliberalism'. It undergirds a policy world encompassing 'a blend of economic fundamentalism, neo-assimilationist social agendas, privatisation of infrastructure and of risk, and nostalgic politics'. This represents the policy world in train during 2004-2005, grounded in a range of values underpinning the policy intentions of its key policy actors.

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the historical context of the evolving Australian federal policy realm. It explored the Australian industry, industrial relations, and social policy arenas that mesh in ways that influence the experience of job loss and its aftermath. The historical policy trajectory was discussed within the context of the growing shift from welfare rights to Mutual Obligations as policy, with service provision through the national Job Network. This is the public face of welfare-to-work policy that will be theorised further in the next two chapters.

This chapter also flagged the more radical policy shift to the right under the Howard Coalition Government, incorporating a break in the liberal tradition through a marriage between economic liberalism and neoconservatism. It provides the background to the following chapter that will highlight the values and policy intentions of policy actors in the Howard Government in respect of welfare conditionality. In turn it contextualises the subjective experiences of job loss that will follow in chapter eight.

Chapter 7:

Policy actors' values and intentions

> Because so much of our social and political reasoning makes use of [a] system of metaphorical concepts, any adequate appreciation of even the most mundane social and political thought requires an understanding of this system. But unless one knows that the system exists, one may miss it altogether and be mystified by its effects (Lakoff 1995, p. 13).

Introduction

This chapter extends the study focus on the complex interplay between human agency and social structure theorised in chapters five and six respectively. It reveals the way in which policy actors' more powerful agency becomes another structure mediating welfare recipients' agency. This chapter explores the views, values and policy intentions of key political actors in the social and industrial relations policy arenas of the Howard Coalition Government. Policy actors' more powerful agency is employed as part of the legitimate authority of the state. Heron (2008, p. 95) argues:

> Policies are directed by thought and followed through by action/agency. No action or idea is fixed unless one wants it that way and makes a decision about it.

As elected party members political actors' ideas and decisions set the policy discourse and agenda, even if as part of a wider range of policy communities and circles of influence, including the media. This chapter contextualises the views of retrenched Mitsubishi workers presented in the next chapter by discussing policy actors' views on conditional welfare, including its provision through the Job Network. A thematic analysis of conditional welfare covers three key themes: policy actors' views on Mutual Obligations and the Job Network as social policy, their assumptions concerning the nexus between human agency and welfare dependency, and the values underpinning their intentions.

This discussion is illuminated by drawing upon Lakoff's (1995, 2003, 2004) insights on the power of conceptual metaphors and 'framing' introduced in previous chapters. Of four main perspectives on power: pluralist, elite, structural and post-structural (Ife

1995), it is the latter two perspectives that are drawn out in this thesis. Firstly, a structuralist perspective acknowledges the power exercised by dominant groups through structures of oppression that is challenged by implementing fundamental structural change. Secondly, post-structuralism recognises that power is also exercised through controlling discourse and the construction of knowledge. Challenging this form of power is through changing discourses, or 'reframing' them to achieve social change (Lakoff 2004).

Policy actors' perspectives provide further insights for addressing the second study question on the nature of the broader policy environment shaping the experience of job loss. Public policy is shaped by the values underpinning policy actors' agency and policy intentions, and as Lakoff (1995) points out, language is a powerful tool in this shaping. The way in which politicians and bureaucrats choose to 'speak' about issues largely determines their wider community evaluation and understanding (Engels 2006, p. 5). Bryson (1992) argues that the way in which issues are conceptualised and discussed is also critical for determining the eventual beneficiaries of social policy. Although it may be assumed that policy-making language is objective, in reality it 'actively constructs the truths [or realities] it claims to describe' (Bessant 2002, p. 14; Fraser and Gordon 1994). The power of political rhetoric lies in the use of words and phrases that elicit core value-systems. Lakoff (2004, p. 4) explains that this is achieved through 'framing', or adopting language that fits a particular world view or frame.

In the next chapter Mitsubishi workers' accounts of their interaction with the broader policy environment will highlight the ways in which prevailing social and industrial relations policies were structures mediating their agency. For example, when speaking of the industrial relations policy environment workers tell of their emergence into a different employment landscape than experienced at Mitsubishi. In respect of the conditions attached to social welfare under Mutual Obligations policy, workers speak of welfare provision through the privatised Job Network as part of welfare-to-work policy. Job loss and employment transition experiences are shaped by the level of welfare conditionality, with the following section beginning the discussion of conditional welfare under the Howard Coalition Government.

Conditional welfare under the Howard Coalition Government

The structural constraint of conditional welfare and its relationship to human agency was discussed in chapter five. As Deacon (1994) explains, the principle of conditionality is that social welfare provision is contingent upon first meeting compulsory duties and / or patterns of behaviour imposed by government: a principle justified under the tenets of market liberalism, new paternalism and communitarianism. The broad ambit of proposed welfare reforms under the Howard Government was revealed in correspondence from the then Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Peter Reith, to Prime Minister Howard on the 3rd December 1998. Minister Reith, a major Government figure in the industrial relations arena, was one of several key political and policy actors presiding over portfolios directly related to the industrial relations and social policy arenas. The minister's letter outlined options for an employment strategy based on job creation.

This correspondence highlights values and assumptions behind proposed policy changes that encompassed both industrial relations and social policy arenas which were to become twin pillars of welfare reform. In his letter Minister Reith (1998) stated:

> There has been much discussion of late about the fact that there are inadequate returns from working for those currently on the dole, with the result that we are seeing pockets of permanent dependence on the public purse. This is highly undesirable from both an economic and a social point of view. We need to have as large a pool of skilled and job ready labour as possible to drive the economy forward. There is plenty of evidence that permanent marginalisation of particular social groups will generate high social costs down the track and can have inter-generational costs as well.

The minister's statement embodies a view in which concerns about welfare recipients' well-being are subsumed within wider concerns on labour force rigidity. Minister Reith's statement that unemployed people give 'inadequate returns' to society through the existing mandated work-first programme implies a deficit in their motivation and agency. It reveals an assessment based on a limited conception of 'returns' and fails to acknowledge structural constraints to individuals' agency, their responsibilities to others, or other personal circumstances. The logical conclusion from such an assessment is to remedy the problem of unemployment through a social policy focus on individual behavioural modification and stricter welfare

conditionality. This would bolster entrepreneurialism and agency, while at the same time fast-track industrial relations policy changes needed to ensure a 'large pool of skilled and job-ready labour'.

For example, in a tightening of welfare conditionality in the May 2005 Federal Budget the Australian Government announced a main change to welfare-to-work arrangements affecting retrenched workers moving on to Disability Support Pensions. Only individuals assessed as incapable of working 15 hours a week would remain eligible, with other applicants funded under Newstart benefits with the added obligation to find paid work. Changed arrangements meant that workers, potentially including a number of the retrenched Mitsubishi employees, received approximately $40 a week less income support (Beer et al. 2006). This decline in financial support had the potential to impact on workers' resilience and perceived control over their circumstances when making the transition out of Mitsubishi. Work Choices industrial relations legislation and Mutual Obligations social policy converged when a person left a job or was made redundant. If unable to find 'suitable' work income support was provided through Centrelink, the social security agency.

Work was deemed 'suitable' unless it failed to meet set minimum terms and conditions under the Australian Fair Pay Conditions Standard (Hartman & Darab 2006). Refusal to accept any suitable job resulted in income suspension for eight weeks. The Howard Government's policy of Mutual Obligations marked a significant shift in welfare conditionality in Australia and is examined as part of the following thematic analysis broadly informed by issues that had been raised by retrenched Mitsubishi workers. While the often more precarious nature of subsequent employment was arguably entrenched under the wider changes to capitalism, as discussed in chapter two, it was mediated by prevailing Work Choices industrial relations policy and Mutual Obligations social policy.

Policy actors' values, views and intentions are largely articulated in their own words in the analysis, revealing that discourse creates reality by 'naming and giving it meaning' (Yeatman 1990, p. 155). While the three themes are explored separately, their interconnections are discussed throughout this thesis. Identifying discrete themes or areas of analysis helps to clearly identify the range of relevant issues for addressing the second study question. Mitsubishi workers left the company as a consequence of structural factors beyond their control, and their personal reflections

on changes to perceived control over their lives will be discussed in the following chapter. These workers transitioned into a space shaped by policy actors' values and intentions. Mutual Obligations policy was imposed by the service provision arm, Job Network, which is the subject of the first theme. This neoliberal policy prescription was based on policy actors' underlying assumptions concerning human agency and welfare dependency which is the focus of the second theme. These assumptions are shaped by a range of underlying values explored in the third theme.

Theme 1: Mutual Obligations policy and the Job Network

Introduction

This first theme discusses Mutual Obligations as social policy. It includes policy actors' interpretations of the policy, welfare conceptualised in terms of a 'safety-net', the language of Mutual Obligations policy, and Job Network, the welfare-to-work service arm which was framed positively as both a 'moral' and a 'social' market. The next chapter will discuss Mitsubishi workers' personal experiences of dealing with the Job Network. The principle of Mutual Obligations policy was first implemented under the Howard Government's Work for the Dole program launched in 1997 as a solution to welfare dependency. Saunders (2007) notes that research showed that the principle had widespread community support at the time, although with some concerns for its potential impact on certain groups. According to Goodin (2002, p. 579) the general concept of mutual obligation:

> evokes deep-seated intuitions about 'fair reciprocity' and the duty of fair play. It seems an easy slide from those intuitions to 'mutual obligation' policies demanding work for the dole. That slide is illegitimate.

Policy actors in successive Australian governments had increasingly employed contracts, activation agreements and compacts to cement the commitment of welfare recipients to work-first policies. This is in concert with communitarian Etzioni's (1993, p. 1) view that 'strong rights presume strong responsibilities', or a 'mirror-image' of rights and duties (Goodin 2002, p. 580). Means-testing of beneficiaries presupposed that claimants neither had any real alternative for meeting their basic needs nor to accepting the terms and conditions. Goodin (2002, p. 589) argues that Mutual Obligations policy is therefore a 'contract concluded under duress'.

Fair reciprocity does not demand forms of reciprocation or obligation structured under work-first or workfare policies as there are alternatives. A strong commitment to fundamental principles of fair reciprocity still allows for different policy models based on reciprocity, temporality and currency (see Goodin 2002, pp. 584-90 for models). Forms of mutualism imply coming to another's aid in times of need, or the strong helping the weak under arrangements of fair reciprocity. In contrast, Goodin (2002, p. 592) argues, the Government's Mutual Obligations policy demanded 'repayment from the weak when they are weak'.

The Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society,* known as the McClure Report, outlined key recommendations for implementing the Howard Government's policy of Mutual Obligations, including the potential extension of its reach. The report (McClure 2000b, p. 32) stated that balancing rights with responsibilities should also apply to the business sector, and that there was:

> a growing public discussion of the responsibilities of businesses to look beyond the interests of their shareholders or profit margins … Fulfilling social obligations means that individuals and corporate entities ensure they behave in ways that are not purely self-centred, but reflect broader considerations.

The McClure Report also applied a wide interpretation of the term 'mutual', encompassing the mutual responsibilities of Government, business, communities and individuals. It supported the requirement that people who were 'work ready' should engage in workforce participation, albeit with the caveat that this was subject to 'having regard to their personal circumstances'. The report (McClure 2000b, pp. 4, 32) stated:

> We believe that it is critical that a broader mutual obligation framework recognises supports and validates voluntary work and caring, without prescribing any particular form of social participation … The Reference Group believes that voluntary fulfilment of mutual obligations will lead to the best outcomes. Nevertheless, compulsion will be required for a minority of income support recipients and to ensure that governments, businesses and communities meet minimum standards in ensuring access to economic participation opportunities.

In distinction, the then Minister for Family and Community Services, Amanda Vanstone, and the then Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Tony Abbott (Vanstone & Abbott 2002a) asserted that a voluntary approach is insufficient for maximising self-reliance, and that assistance must be conditional on expectations of greater personal responsibility. A key feature of the

McClure Report (2000b, p. 34) was acknowledging the wide mutuality of societal obligations as an appropriate blueprint for welfare change. It stated:

> The mutual obligations of governments, business and community are of no less importance than the obligations of individuals. In our view, the whole social support system, with its various components, is a very tangible expression of the mutual obligations of the community as a whole towards its more vulnerable members. Thus, the whole of this report should be seen as addressing the respective responsibilities of all sectors of society.

However, mutuality was a term open to alternative interpretations by policy actors.

Mutual Obligations policy: policy actors' interpretations

To reiterate from the review of literature presented in chapter three, a critical theoretical perspective questions who it is that benefits or loses as a result of policy action, whose knowledge base underpins this action, and then critiques resulting inequities (Baum 2008). This section highlights the power dynamics that influence whose knowledge base underpins policy action and who benefits and loses as a result. The Howard Government's response to the recommendations of the McClure Report was *Listening to the Community* (Vanstone & Abbott 2002), which reported on the outcomes of the community consultation process in respect of proposed welfare changes. Among community concerns was the perceived need to entrench stronger business obligations to balance those of welfare recipients. However, the Government's response was to further strengthen the social coalition. *Listening to the Community* outlined the policy intentions of Ministers Vanstone and Abbott (2002, p. 33) who explained:

> We will be talking to business, peak organisations and enterprises at the local level to **encourage** them to increase economic and social participation opportunities for all Australians. (emphasis added)

Prime Minister Howard had already flagged that, in distinction to the mandatory obligations of social welfare recipients, adopting a voluntary or philanthropic stance was a suitable means by which the corporate sector could meet its mutual obligations to society. In his Federation Address Howard (2000, p. 8) explained:

> Our society will be strengthened in the next decade if there is a greater corporate and individual philanthropy. This is another dimension of the principle of mutual obligation: this time emphasising that those who have done well in our society, and those who have benefitted from its opportunity and stability, **should** assist those in need. (emphasis added)

While the Reference Group on Welfare Reform emphasised broadly-based mutual obligations, the Government's response was to focus on the obligations of welfare recipients who faced strict penalties for compliance failure. As Moss (2001) notes, compulsion did not extend to businesses, the wider community, or the Government itself under a broad framework of equivalent obligations. In her Second Reading Speech on the *Work for the Dole* Bill, Senator Newman (1997), the then Minister for Social Security, argued:

> Compulsion has been criticised. We believe that compulsion is fair. One of the reasons we believe that is that there are some young people who have become so isolated in their long-term unemployment that they are most unlikely to come out of that isolation without more than just an offer of a voluntary work for the dole program.

Minister Abbott (1999) was unequivocal in his policy intentions, stating:

> We're trying to replace an ethic of entitlement with an ethic of responsibility, and I have got to say for Newstart beneficiaries the era of unconditional welfare is over. It's over.

In respect of the Government's own obligations Vanstone and Abbott (2002, p. 34) explained:

> Governments do not have all the answers and they cannot solve every social problem alone. The strategy is about increasing the personal and collective resources of individuals and communities to develop skills and capacities they need to respond to challenges and opportunities that come their way.

Limits to creative agency, or the individual's ability to 'translate potential threats into rewarding challenges' (Giddens 1994, p. 192), are not acknowledged in this statement. Instead, Vanstone and Abbott (2002, p. 34) reiterate their views promoting individual responsibility, arguing that 'the most effective solutions always come from the ground up'. In her Second Reading Speech on the *Family and Community Services Amendment* Bill, the legislative response to the McClure Report, Minister Vanstone (2002, p. 6502) stressed her support for a compliance focus based upon positioning 'them' (welfare recipients) against 'taxpayers'. Vanstone argued that welfare recipients 'put their hands out', appropriating funds meant for those in 'real' need. The minister offered assurance to the wider electorate that she would adopt a strong policy stance. In language pitched to those constituents dubbed the 'Howard battlers' (Dyrenfurth 2005), including employed and self-employed individuals 'struggling to make ends meet' (Brett 2003, p. 189), Vanstone stated:

> I do not walk away from welfare compliance. This portfolio spends one-third of
> government outlays and, I tell you what, the lady cutting tomato sandwiches for a
> job and the guy pushing a spanner for a job who have their taxes taken from them do
> not want the government to say: `Don't worry that one-third of expenditure goes on
> welfare. I'm sure everybody will do the right thing. We don't want to get nasty with
> them, do we? That would be dreadful.' The lady cutting tomato sandwiches and the
> fellow pushing a spanner do not want you to be nasty, but they do want you to make
> sure that welfare goes to the needy and not to the greedy. They do want us to make
> sure that people live up to their requirements if they are going to put their hands out
> and take money from other taxpayers. That is the case. That is what we will pursue.
> We will give the money to the needy. We want this bill to pass so more can be
> invested in them. But we will not go soft on compliance in order to get it.

Adopting Mutual Obligations policy for welfare reform was designed to restore the
social contract under forms of new contractualism. Minister Abbott (1999)
maintained that this acted as a foil against the 'culture' of intergenerational welfare
dependency, a term with connotations of lifestyle choice rather than enduring
structural constraints. Abbott claimed:

> I see Work for the Dole as restoring the social contract. I see Work for the Dole as
> saying to the Australian people that if you have the misfortune to lose your job and
> need welfare benefits we are never going to let you get lost in the system to emerge
> years later as part of the culture of intergenerational welfare dependency.

Welfare dependency was to be addressed through maintaining a policy position
based upon the metaphorical welfare 'safety-net'.

Welfare as a 'safety-net'

Chapter five noted Lister's (2010, p. 49) contention that the enabling state reframes a
social 'safety net' as a 'trampoline', or the means by which people bounce back from
adversity. As Lakoff (1995, p. 21) notes, the 'Safety-Net' metaphor has been 'a
mainstay of political rhetoric, presupposing an upright citizen on a straight and
narrow tight-rope'. Under this conceptual metaphor:

> If walking the tightrope is working, falling off is losing your job. The safety-net is a
> means of support … temporary support till you can pull yourself up again and get
> back on the tightrope. The physical support of the net is the financial support of
> social programs designed to help moral, dedicated and hardworking citizens who
> may not survive without it.

Senator Newman (1999, p. 7) endorsed a welfare safety-net as part of her 'modern
conservative approach to welfare'. She explained:

> The modern conservative approach to welfare emphasises three main objectives. The
> first is to assist people appropriately when they are in genuine need, to provide an

adequate safety net. The second is to stop people becoming dependent, to the extent possible. The third is to help people move to independence as soon as possible.

In an article written for the conservative 'think tank' the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), discussed in the previous chapter, Minister Abbott (2001, p. 39) explained his ambivalence towards a welfare system which he believed enervated welfare recipients and was in need of reform. Welfare dependency was a cause rather than a symptom of social malaise, and in linking welfare and passivity he stated:

> Successive governments have tried to preserve a generous welfare safety net for the unemployed and, at the same time, tried to boost the total number of jobs in the economy, generally by restraining wages. Both the left and the right have struggled to come to terms with the realities of the new economy and the way an undemanding welfare system can sap the work ethic of decent Australians.

Prime Minister Howard (2001) also emphasised that the values underpinning Australia's liberal welfare regime were based upon residual welfare and 'a modern safety net which encourages responsibility and embraces prevention as much as it embraces cure'. The Government's industrial relations reforms were also conceptualised metaphorically as a safety-net by Minister Reith (1999a) who referred to these as an 'industrial safety-net' through their design for supporting strong productivity and employment performance.

In explaining the power of conceptual metaphors in the political realm Lakoff cites USA Republican Senator Gramm's 'framing' of the Safety-Net metaphor in welfare discourse. This was through a rhetorical shift executed by reframing the concept of a 'net', to one of a 'hammock'; implying laziness and elements of luxury, with an underlying message that 'governments should not provide hammocks to lazy people' (Lakoff 1995, p. 23). While promoting a wide interpretation of Mutual Obligations policy, the McClure Report (McClure 2000a, p. 35) still fell short of promoting a universal welfare model. Instead it too endorsed the traditional, limited 'safety-net' policy paradigm and supported 'poverty alleviation' as the focus of welfare reform.

Use of the Safety-Net metaphor also evokes the much stronger metaphor of Moral Strength which, Lakoff (1995, pp. 6-7) argues, is of the highest priority in conservative frames of morality, with the important consequence that it 'rules out any explanations in terms of social forces or social class'. The conservative interpretation of moral strength under the Moral Strength conceptual metaphor reflected in policy actors' accounts includes the courage to stand up to both external evils such as

hardship, as well as internal evils associated with lack of individual will and self-control. Lakoff (2003) contends that while conceptual systems of morality are employed by both political liberals and political conservatives, they assign very different priorities. Under political conservatism the metaphor of Moral Strength is adopted to support a view that enabling structures, including affirmative action and welfare, undermine self-reliance (Lakoff 1995), rather than promote resilience and personal control. The use of 'political' language and 'framing' has implications for social policy, revealed in the inherent tensions in the language of Mutual Obligations policy.

The language of Mutual Obligations policy

The legitimacy of Mutual Obligations as social policy is undermined by the tension between its rhetorical aims and its outcomes. The term 'mutual' is defined as 'standing in (a specified) relation to each other' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). It suggests that mutuality is based on equanimity, presupposing a relationship grounded in equal power relations. This is a position challenged by Mutual Obligations as social policy. Under this policy regime welfare recipients were obliged to undertake activities which, in theory, were likely to lead to a job. If the underlying rationale was to support successful labour market transition without punitive intent, this would potentially achieve mutually positive outcomes for both the welfare recipient and the state.

That this does not always happen is demonstrated in the following chapter. As research by Ziguras et al. (2003) reveals, there are negative outcomes for the agency of welfare recipients' when they are forced to comply with imposed obligations even if the activities are unlikely to ever lead to proper employment. Obligations imposed merely to qualify for, or maintain minimum income support, may result in the damaging experience of repeated failure, with the potential for experiencing shame and stigma. It is at this point that the purported integral connection between government-mandated activities and successful re-employment becomes 'at best tenuous and for many, nonexistent' (Ziguras et al. 2003, p. 38).

Goodin (2002, p. 591) argues that negative outcomes for welfare recipients' agency and self-esteem lie in the tensions between the rhetoric of Mutual Obligations policy as 'helping' and outcomes which Goodin states may instead be 'humbling'. The

practical expression of Mutual Obligations policy is exercised through the mode of welfare provision, or policy-in-action. Under the Howard Government responsibility for service provision was vested in Centrelink, with clients, deemed customers, assisted through the service provision arm, Job Network.

Job Network: Mutual Obligations service provision

The Howard Government's policy stance was values-driven to the extent that it assigned management of all welfare-to-work transition programs to non-government organisations, as earlier programs were considered to be 'soft' on welfare recipients. Carney and Ramia (2002) note the way the Job Network was based on competition between local providers, performance-based funding, flexibility, and the logic of free-market contestability: all mainstays of managerialism. Performance outcomes for service provision under Job Network cover four main dimensions: the quantity, speed, sustainability and equity in provision, and expectations of service quality and acting ethically in assisting job seekers (Catholic Social Services Australia 2006).

However, a report by Catholic Social Services Australia (2006, p. 5) on the appropriateness of services, provider incentives, and Government administration of Job Network, states that the only reward for Job Network providers is for outcome *quantity,* because:

> Potential rewards from financial incentives for outcome *quality* (*speed, sustainability* and *equity* of outcomes) perversely cancel each other out … The implication for the Job Network as a whole is very serious. Both Financial and Star Ratings incentive systems do not provide maximum support for the Government's stated objectives for assisting job seekers. Providers are not being encouraged to achieve the best outcomes for job seekers, even though these outcomes would result in higher savings for taxpayers.

More specifically, Catholic Social Services Australia stresses that the incentives lead to delayed service provision and placement; shorter term placements that have higher provider rewards but lead to clients' earlier return to welfare dependency; poorer quality placements that are sometimes supported by excessive wage subsidies to employers; and fewer placements for more disadvantaged clients. Cowling and Mitchell (2003, p. 216) explain that these incentives lead to practices of 'creaming' or cherry picking clients, and the converse 'parking', or overlooking clients; with a high proportion of intensive assistance or hard to place clients being 'parked'.

An audit of Job Network (Australian National Audit Office 2006-2007, pp. 122-123) noted that in 2005 5.6% of job seekers received 48% of the Job Seeker Account. It revealed that:

> The decision on how much to spend was influenced by whether expenditure will make it more likely that the job seeker will get a job and the likelihood that the job will result in an outcome payment for the provider… For many Job Network members the link to a job needs to be very strong before they will spend JKSA funds. In some cases this can mean that a job must be lined up or promised before JKSA funds are spent. For some providers this means a greater focus on providing assistance for their most job ready clients.

Cowling and Mitchell (2003, p. 215) also explain the overall difficulty underpinning such practices:

> We would argue that there is policy schizophrenia in expecting an outcome-based funding model for employment services to deliver 'better and more sustainable employment outcomes' in the absence of concomitant policies to alleviate the macroeconomic constraint and create real employment opportunities. In a highly demand constrained labour market, characterised by persistent unemployment and marked regional disparities, it is unclear how the supply-side focus of the Job Network can be effective.

While detailed Job Network operational factors are outside the scope of this thesis, Marston and McDonald (n.d., pp. 7-11) reveal from their research with Job Network case managers:

> the administrative requirements were such that the *core target* of activity is government requirements not unemployed people … In summary, the case manager respondents to this survey displayed quite negative attitudes towards the Job Network system and towards their daily work. There are perceptions of too much administrative work associated with contract compliance, the outcomes focus on 'numbers' and the general bureaucratic operations of the system.

This highlights a paradox: the more outsourced and contractual the relationship is with the Government, the more the apparent oversight and monitoring. The Productivity Commission (2002a, 12.5) reported:

> Contract monitoring is conducted by DEWR [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations] and has become increasingly prescriptive since the inception of the Job Network. It includes a range of management techniques including contract reviews, milestone reviews, compliance monitory and quality audits.

As one Job Network case manager, cited in research by Marston and McDonald (2008, p. 11) explains:

> I feel this system at the moment is an absolute disaster and is burning out many staff. You will lose a lot of the long term staff. The system is causing irreversible damage

> to the minds of people working in it. It creates too much paper work and not enough personal help to clients. It has become a process line job. Job satisfaction in helping people is out the window now and as soon as I can get out I will. I personally know of the same attitude in others.

Policy actors' views on Job Network

However, policy actors' views on the normative role of the Job Network were based on the presumed need to transform out-dated state-based provision by adopting a market model. Minister Abbott (1999a) stated that setting up the Job Network was a statement of trust in:

> organisations including the Salvation Army, Mission Australia, Centacare and Brotherhood of St Laurence … They are not clock watchers, they are not people who follow pettifogging rules, they are not people who knock off at five o'clock whether or not there is a problem to be solved.

As Minister Abbott (2000b) later explained:

> This was no implementation of textbook theory but an expression of the government's faith in the ability of [these] organisations … and many other community based and private sector bodies to deliver better services to job seekers at better value to taxpayers than an overstressed bureaucracy whose time had passed.

According to Abbott (2003, p. 199) the modern Job Network replaced a '50 year old bureaucratic monolith'. He had earlier explained that under a market model:

> The government is a virtual silent partner in the Job Network, staking capital and reviewing performance but otherwise leaving community agencies alone to run themselves … The government's aim is to work constantly with job seekers, preferably to put them back to work but, in any event, to give them something useful to do (Abbott 2000).

The latter comment again implies a dichotomy between the claimed integral connection between government-mandated activities, vital for skills enhancement and job attainment, and the demands of Mutual Obligations policy for its own sake: for giving the idle 'something useful to do'. Through its role in reconfiguring the welfare subject as active job seeker, Job Network was vested with a moral quality and promoted positively as both a moral and social market.

Job Network: a 'moral' and 'social' market

Contractually-based employment services commodify workers' welfare within a job 'market', as highlighted in the 1996 Federal Government's Budget Statement which noted:

> There are much stronger incentives to place the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged job seekers into jobs, with these job seekers attracting the highest payments for Job Network organisations (Department of Employment, Education, Training & Youth Affairs 1996).

In the next chapter Mitsubishi workers' accounts will bring to light their perceptions on the commodification of welfare. However, for Minister Abbott (2000a) the Job Network took on the moral qualities of a market in which the Government was both the consumer, and the vehicle by which passive welfare recipients were recast as active citizens through the efforts of outsourced employment providers. It was:

> a moral market in which the ultimate purchaser/consumer is a government with the fundamental objective of moving people from welfare into work. While others have talked about a `third way', the Howard government has created new structures to empower community organisations rather than central bureaucracy and turn service recipients into active citizens.

Job Network was also understood a social market because:

> The employment service market is not like the market for cleaning services or legal services, in which the government might decide to purchase services rather than provide them to itself. The Job Network is a market that the government has substantially created to deliver services which could not otherwise be delivered by market means. It is a social market because the government summoned the market into being and because the government largely pays for the services being delivered. Job Network members are social businesses because they can make a profit only by providing services with outcomes ordained by government, and they generate social capital because the market's end result is happier, more fulfilled individuals living in stronger, more dynamic communities (Abbott 2000a).

Workers' accounts in the following chapter will include personal perspectives on whether the claim that their job 'market' experiences made them 'happier, more fulfilled individuals living in stronger, more dynamic communities'. The Job Network represents what Le Grand (2003) terms a 'quasi market'. Although competitively based it differs from markets as generally understood under neoliberal ideology. It is funded by the state and executed through competitive tendering by both private and not-for-profit organisations. Garland and Darcy (2009) explain that while the former CES was disbanded as an out-dated monopoly provider, the Job Network replaced it as a monopsonistic quasi-market with the government as the sole purchaser.

Service provision under Mutual Obligations and Job Network was based on a work-first-approach underpinned by sanctions. In the above quotation Minister Abbott (2000a) promoted it instead as a generator of social capital and creator of dynamic

communities, even though as Carney (2007, p. 3) argues work-first policies transform social security provision into 'individual responsibility gateways' to labour market exposure. As Carney argues further, under this policy regime social security becomes the 'handmaiden' of labour-forcing policies. This suggests an obvious tension between reduced personal security and claims of augmented social capital and enhanced agency. Mitsubishi workers' accounts in the following chapter will contextualise this tension by reference to issues of their personal security and any perceived changes to control over their lives.

To reiterate his framing of Job Network as both a moral and social market Minister Abbott equates the work of street level bureaucrats with the ministrations of the local priest and family doctor. As the minister (Abbott 2003, p. 201) contends:

> It's a mistake to see the Job Network merely in terms of a 'product' or a 'service'. For both employers and job seekers, the Job Network provides social support akin to that provided by the local priest or family doctor… Successful Job Network members give out their home telephone numbers; insist on frequent personal contact with job seekers; and keep knocking on employers' doors until both sides understand each other.

In distinction to Minister Abbott's framing of Job Network as enhancing welfare recipients' agency, the then Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews (2005), promoted a much harder line on the role of Job Network. In his Second Reading Speech on the Work Choices Bill Andrews focused on the more stringent conditions for welfare recipients, explaining that 'Rapid Connect', a work-first approach, was indicative of a policy stance under which:

> Job seekers who do not connect with their Job Network member may experience an impact on their income support. This 'work first' approach is at the cornerstone of the government's welfare-to-work measures.

An underlying and difficult to reconcile tension is revealed between Minister Abbott's framing of policy as empowering welfare recipients, through framing Job Network service providers' roles as akin to those of a doctor or cleric, and Minister Andrews' framing in terms of a work-first approach. Minister Andrew's views stand in opposition to the McClure Report (2000a) which states that with appropriate strategies in place sanctions will rarely need to be imposed. However, neither stance throws light on how the 'accurate and expert assessment of capacity to participate that can create trust and partnerships between service providers and income support recipients' (McClure 2000a, p. 40) would be enshrined in policy.

The capacity to participate is rooted in human agency and its constraints, with the second theme of the policy analysis exploring policy actors' assumptions on the nexus between human agency and welfare dependency which help to gauge this capacity.

Theme 2: Human agency and welfare dependency

Explaining welfare dependency

Welfare dependency is a key issue in Australian policy debates. Dean (2003a) explains that the central claim is a causal connection: that welfare causes dependency, and that it is fuelled by a 'dependency culture' that results in poverty and unemployment (O'Connor 2001, p. 221). The concept of welfare dependency has its roots in the USA at the time of the Great Depression of the 1930s. This was a scarifying structure which was the impetus for expanding social rights through improved welfare provision. Later, under the growing neoliberal ascendancy, the writings of Gilder, Murray and others signalled a challenge to social provision through a conservative renewal strongly influencing both the Reagan and Thatcher political regimes. Gilder's book *Wealth and Poverty* (Gilder 1981), and Murray's book *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980* (Murray 1984), both promoted the values of the 'free market', with foundational tenets discussed in chapter two. Murray's book discussed the radical reforms necessary for ending, not merely modifying the welfare state (O'Connor 2001).

In the USA deep-seated concerns over dependency and welfare provision have been enduring. Even President Roosevelt, the so-called father of the American welfare system, who was in office at the time of the Great Depression, revealed his own hesitation in his 1935 Budget Address arguing:

> Continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fibre. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit (cited in O'Connor 2001, p. 223).

The metaphor of welfare 'addiction' has currency in contemporary Australian debates on welfare dependency, and is also used to argue for dismantling the Australian welfare state. In his book *Australia's Welfare Habit and How to Kick It*, Saunders (2004), a spokesperson for the CIS, uses the addiction metaphor to

underscore his view of an underlying pathology of addiction in respect of welfare dependency; with Australian commentary on welfare dependency heavily influenced by publications from the CIS. Prime Minister Howard (2001) shared these views on dismantling the welfare state, arguing:

> We will replace traditional state-centred welfare which has often failed to prevent social problems and has perpetuated dependency rather than re-engagement with work and with the community.

While there is an assumed negative nexus between human agency and welfare dependency based on conservative policy actors' values and policy intentions, Henman and Perry (2002) explain that there is no formal Australian Government definition of *welfare* dependency, nor is there are there any framework for understanding the ways in which an individual becomes welfare dependent. Put simply, welfare dependency reflects the personal need for state assistance as a result of a wide range of contingencies. However, the Howard Government's solution to welfare dependency was to be found in what Peck and Theodore (2000, p. 119) refer to as a 'one-way transition into low paid work'. Henman and Perry (2002) explain that the term *welfare dependency* is often interpreted as involving passivity, laziness and lack of self-help, and is imbued with notions of both exploitative and passive expressions of agency.

'Exploitative' and 'passive' expressions of agency

Exploitative forms of agency are ascribed to welfare recipients who display an ethic of entitlement, or usurp the 'decency' of the community. In her speech *The Future of Welfare in the 21st Century*, Senator Newman (1999a) the then Minister for Family and Community Services explained that there are:

> examples around Australia where job opportunities are available and our entrenched culture of welfare dependency has meant that certain members of our community are not only prepared, but feel entitled to exploit the social safety net instead … In doing so, they abuse the essential decency of the Australian community and undermine public confidence in the integrity of the social security system. … Where there are jobs available, even though they may fall short of the initial expectations of the jobseeker, it is neither fair nor moral to expect the hard working men and women of this country to underwrite what can only be described as a destructive and self-indulgent welfare mentality.

In referring to a 'culture of welfare dependency' Senator Newman conflates two discrete meanings of dependency. One is dependence upon another person or institution for basic subsistence in the form of social security. The second is

dependence as a 'moral and psychological state of excessive neediness and lack of will' (Fraser & Gordon 1994, p. 6). In turn, Minister Abbott (2001, p. 40) identified what may be described as an expression of exploitative agency found in the:

> lead times between passing the Mutual Obligation time line, Centrelink call-in and referral to an activity, plus 'escape routes' such as dubious medical certificates and benefit-switching mean that the enforcement of Mutual Obligation is still a task half-done.

Therefore, in Minister Abbott's estimation, passive welfare recipients are work-shy. In a speech to the Young Liberals Minister Abbott (2004, p. 5) explained that passive agency also prevails when the work-shy find work 'more trouble than it is worth'. He argued:

> Lack of jobs is not always the key problem either, because new jobs are mostly filled by people who are already employed. Unemployment becomes intractable when, for all sorts of reasons (among them, the cost of getting to work, anti-social hours, interference with other commitments and comparatively low returns), working can seem more trouble than it's worth.

As Sennett (1998, p. 139) argues, more stringent conditionality is often justified for 'freeing the political economy to behave more flexibly, as if the parasites were dragging down the more dynamic members of society'. For Minister Abbott (2001, p. 38) passive expressions of agency are also attributes potentially shared by all Australians, and he asks:

> Why do some people not work? Because they don't have to … We know from experience what Australians can do when we have to, but our tendency is to take it easy if we can get away with it.

The Minister implies that by trying to 'get away with it' individuals display a lack of Moral Strength, a conceptual metaphor which Lakoff (1995, p. 8) explains from a conservative perspective:

> imposes a form of asceticism. To be morally strong you must be self-disciplined and self-denying. Otherwise you are self-indulgent, and such moral flabbiness ultimately helps the forces of evil.

Both Senator Newman and Minister Abbott allude to the *conservative* metaphor of Moral Strength in which the opposite of self-control is the 'vice of self-indulgence' (Lakoff 1995, p. 7). In distinction, political liberals have their own metaphor of Moral Strength; one that instead promotes empathy and nurturance. For Lakoff (1995, p. 18) 'The point of moral strength for [political] liberals is to fight intolerance and inhumanity to others and to stand up for social responsibility'.

Mead's (1992, p. 133) description of welfare recipients as the 'dutiful but defeated' also resonates within Australian policy actors' stated assumptions concerning their agency. This passivity is understood to mirror existing passive social policy structures warranting reform. However, as Senator Newman (2000) assured the electorate 'the new welfare system will see a shift from a largely passive, rigid structure to one based on involving people in active social and economic participation'. In challenging passivity Minister Abbott utilised a rhetorical device to emphasise his call for more punitive welfare policies; conflating the economic and social circumstances of the majority of welfare recipients with those of the more marginalised Australian Indigenous population living under even greater structural constraints and lack of personal control. Minister Abbott (2000) stated:

> Work for the dole schemes have a long and honourable history in Australia. As Noel Pearson has repeatedly pointed out, passive welfare is the poison that destroys communities. It is the kindness that kills.

By co-opting the term welfare 'poison' (presumably an allusion to historical incidents of white Australians poisoning Aborigines' waterholes or flour rations), which is the language of lawyer and Aboriginal activist Noel Pearson, Minister Abbott as the then Minister for Employment Services generalised the context of Pearson's contention to the wider community. However, as Mendes (2010) maintains, Pearson has stated on numerous occasions that his recommendations are confined to Indigenous Australians, arguing that the welfare state provides many positive outcomes for the majority of non-Indigenous Australians.

Imposing 'tough love' as policy

What Minister Abbott's language reveals is the call for 'tough love' in the face of the 'kindness that kills'. 'Tough Love' is a key metaphor underlying the values of Mutual Obligations as social policy, as well as the means by which welfare dependency is to be confronted and overcome. 'Tough Love' is also a conceptual metaphor for the conservative idealisation of traditional or strict 'family values' extrapolated to the political realm, and a feature of the term of the Howard Coalition Government. This marriage between economic liberalism and social conservatism was outlined in the previous chapter. Lakoff (2004) explains that conceptual metaphors or models of an idealised family span the political spectrum. According to Lohrey (2006) the 'Strict Father' model is one under which punishment is

understood to teach right from wrong as well as inculcating self-reliance and self-discipline. Under this model welfare is deemed immoral to the extent that it provides people with things they have not earned and promotes so-called 'dole-bludgers'.

The following chapter will draw out the extent to which retrenched Mitsubishi workers met a policy paradigm grounded in an ethos of 'tough love' in their day to day negotiations with Job Network. This ethos underpins the stronger demands made of individuals in their slide from 'citizens' to 'consumers', and in the design of Mutual Obligations policy in ways that ensure that they 'give something back' in exchange for welfare. For example, Kerr et al. (2002, p. 95) note the practice of 'breaching' as part of a compliance control strategy. In 1998 there were 56 listed circumstances under which breaching could be imposed, with these circumstances increasing (Moses & Sharples 2000, p. 6). The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS 2001, pp. 3-11) note that a third time activity breach resulted in a loss of benefit of $3,384, a higher 'punishment' than applied in many criminal offences. They also note that expanding Mutual Obligations activity tests and requirements led to a trebling of breach penalties in recent years, peaking at 383,946 in 2000 / 2001.

The values system underpinning Mutual Obligations policy arguably leads to forms of engagement under which retrenched workers needed to 'tough it out'. Without identifying specific incidences of breaching Mitsubishi workers, this policy environment will be highlighted in different ways in their subjective accounts in the next chapter. Marston and McDonald (2006) note the inherent tension in Job Network providers' dual role and responsibilities. While they are contracted to the Government to advise of instances of client non-compliance they also have a pastoral role as agents of the state; a dual and ambivalent role that, according to these researchers, is often resented by clients.

A consequence of imposing strong paternalism and adopting the conservative expression of the conceptual metaphor of Moral Strength is endorsing the harsh punishment by the 'strict father' meted out under the well-known homily of 'spare the rod and spoil the child' in policy design, including by breaching welfare recipients under stricter policy requirements outlined above. As Lakoff (2003, p. 7) explains, if morality is strength then moral weakness is immoral, or involves a 'nascent immorality'. Dependency must therefore be countered by the discipline of a 'strict father' who:

> provides nurturance and expresses his devotion to his family by supporting and protecting them, but just as importantly by setting and enforcing strict moral bounds and by inculcating self-discipline and self-reliance through hard work and self-denial. This builds character. For the strict father, strictness is a form of nurturance and love - tough love (Lakoff 1995, p. 11).

The alternative 'Nurturant Parent' model adopts a left / liberal political perspective; a paradigm under which this conceptual metaphor reflects a model of dependency contextualised as a:

> nurturant parent [who] is responsible for basic needs and protection from threats including from the threats arising from the consequence of assigning the primacy of the market with [its] attendant pollution, disease, unsafe products, unscrupulous business men [sic] and workplace hazards (Lakoff 2003, p. 17).

Under a 'Nurturant Parent' metaphor and model:

> people are realized in and through their secure attachments: through their positive relationships to others, through their contribution to their community, and through the ways in which they develop their potential and find joy in life (Lakoff 1995, p. 14).

Under this model citizens-as-children become reliant and self-disciplined through human interdependency, by:

> being cared for and cared about, having ones desires for loving interactions met, living as happily as possible, and deriving meaning from ones community and from caring for and about others (Lakoff 1995, p. 14).

In distinction, as Lakoff (2003, p. 2) explains, under the 'Strict Father' model citizens-as-children are of two very different kinds. These are 'the mature, disciplined, self-reliant ones who should not be meddled with and the whining undisciplined dependent ones that should never be coddled'. The call for social policy to prioritise a 'Strict Father' over a 'Nurturant Parent' model is based on the contention that an individual's moral strength takes primacy in shaping life's circumstances. Structures constraining welfare recipients' agency and control are therefore discounted.

As Lakoff (2003, p. 8) states, individual agency and intention is used to eclipse the explanatory power of class-based structural arrangements through conservative conceptual metaphors. In adopting a 'tough love' policy ethos, policy actors' views on human agency and welfare dependency point to a range of appropriate responses by which welfare recipients meet their obligations and overcome dependency. For example, according to Minister Abbott (2004, p. 5):

> The only way to tackle structural unemployment is to make work more attractive than the alternative … Even the 'victims' of a market economy retain significant capacity to help themselves.

For Minister Abbott (2001, pp. 38-42) 'making work more attractive than the alternative' means being 'firm to be fair' and questioning:

> which type of structure is most likely to produce real engagement with people in need, and how can we motivate people to act in their own long-term best interests? This Government is quite capable of being firm to be fair but will never willingly abandon people to the cruelties of cheque book welfare.

The Minister understands that:

> Just looking for work can be extremely dispiriting, especially after dozens of knockbacks. In these circumstances, structured activity may be the only way to ensure that activity-tested welfare recipients really are active.

Ultimately, Minister Abbott argues 'You have to give job seekers more help than you used to and you also have to be more directive. You have to be what I call paternalistic'. The issue of paternalism will be drawn out further in Mitsubishi workers' accounts to contextualise this underlying assumption in social policy. Presumably this welfare-to-work strategy was based on a view of the need to spur workers' agency; a view that will be interrogated within retrenched workers' own accounts of their agency responses to job loss.

Abbott's view supports Mead's contention (cited in Abbott 2001, p. 39, un-referenced) that it is individual motivation rather than constraining structures that result in welfare dependency, with Mead arguing:

> In the US we find that the labour market is no longer the main constraint on moving people into work. Rather, it's the need to organise people's **own lives** so that they are ready and able to work (emphasis added).

Under Australian Mutual Obligations policy the focus was also on individuals' 'own lives' and their agency. However, as acknowledged by the Reference Group on Welfare Reform in their Interim Report to the Government, there is the need to balance welfare recipients' agency with structural explanations. The latter had been identified in the community's response to the report which showed that:

> Some community groups however objected to the implication that people used financial incentives to work, arguing that people were already highly motivated to work and that other issues were affecting people's ability to participate, such as lack of opportunities (McClure 2000a, p. 25).

The following chapter will contextualise issues of motivation and opportunity in retrenched Mitsubishi workers' accounts of their labour market transition.

In contrast to policy actors' negative views of dependency, by acknowledging human dependency and providing support in a time of need, there is a raised expectation of enhancing agency and facilitating independence and personal control. Rather than dependency being seen as a moral failure it may instead be understood as a social reality exacerbated by a wide range of structural constraints, including job loss. As Lister's (2004) model of agency in Chapter 5 highlights, individuals deal with these constraints in different ways: by engaging agency stances spanning '(just) getting by' at the personal level, through to the more radical conception of agency which encompasses second order agency or a change in life pattern through 'getting organised' at the political or collective level. The underlying values which forged policy actors' views on Mutual Obligations and their assumptions concerning human agency and welfare dependency are the focus of the third and final theme of this analysis.

Theme 3: Policy actors' values and policy intentions

Values are beliefs involving an emotional investment. They reflect principles, standards and judgements about what is valuable in life (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). Values which underpinned the policies of the Howard Liberal and National Party Coalition are expressed in the Liberal Party policy platforms which are the sources of its particular philosophical position, or what White (1978, pp. 5, 11) refers to as a 'systematic set of basic ideas for making sense of the human world'. These are largely abstract values stating ideas that link concepts of significance and meaning.

Liberal Party values and platform

The Liberal Party, the dominant arm of the Liberal and National Party Coalition, was formed in 1944 by Robert Menzies, the then Leader of the Opposition federally, and later a long-serving Australian Prime Minister who held office twice: between 1931-1941 and 1949-1966. Menzies maintained that the Liberal Party was one embracing 'progressive' policy which was opposed to socialism, bureaucratic administration, and restrictions on personal freedoms (White 1978, p. 25). Menzies has been labelled a 'free-enterprise Keynesian and committed anti-communist' who, along with other

post-war liberals with experience of the depression years, maintained that *laissez-faire* capitalism had not been successful and that Keynesian economics should be instilled to help create full employment (Manne 2001, p. 75). The 1946 Liberal Policy Platform stressed harmony, loyalty, respecting the rule of law, a priority on individualism, and on family responsibility for meeting family members' needs (White 1978, p. 44). The current platform, *The Liberal Way* (Liberal Party of Australia 2006, p. 3), restates that the family is the 'primary institution for fostering the values on which a cohesive policy is built', and a range of other values discussed throughout this chapter.

The values of the Howard Coalition Government

The Howard Coalition Government's underlying value system was encapsulated by the then Minister for Employment Services, Tony Abbott (2000a), in a radio interview discussing the principles behind the Government's employment and welfare policy. The minister reflected:

> I guess this is a government which believes in the dignity and the capacity of the individual, and supports the concept of stronger, happier, more fulfilled individuals living in more cohesive and dynamic communities. And generally speaking it's our view that institutions which spring from communities are better at dealing with problems than institutions which are imposed by government. We instinctively support grassroots institutions rather than top-down Canberra-knows-best institutions. Hence we would rather fund services delivered by community agencies than create bureaucracies to do these things. Hence we believe that workers and managers should do their own deals rather than have across-the-board agreements handed down from on high by Industrial Commissions and so on. That's our basic instinctive approach.

Key values underpinning the policy intentions of the Howard Coalition Government include the moral, Australian, private enterprise, and so-called 'religious' values that were co-opted to support the Government's distinctive welfare rationality. In 1996 newly-appointed Prime Minister Howard presented himself to the electorate as an economic liberal and social conservative. Brett (2005) argues that much of the task of promoting economic liberalism had already been championed by earlier political regimes, reflecting the timeline of neoliberal ascendance outlined in the previous chapter. This led to Prime Minister Howard's focus-shift towards a more conservative social policy agenda by showing support for traditional 'family values', the monarchy, military history and pioneers, and 'the skilful take-over of the symbols of the Australian legend for the Liberal Party' (Brett 2005, p. 62). In his Federation

Address to the Melbourne Club Prime Minister Howard (2000) claimed that the Liberal Party is the trustee of both the conservative and liberal traditions, with its duty to uphold a conservative social policy and liberal economic policy agenda. Brett (2003, p. 1) argues that this Liberal Government's moral values were distinct from those informing Menzies' more 'forward looking' liberalism.

Moral values

The Howard Government's focus on conservatism underpinned the moral values expressed in the Government's policy intentions. Language espousing moral values in public policy is 'code' for conservative social values that speak to a truth. Early in his political tenure as Prime Minister, Howard (1997) explained that his Government had:

> a solemn obligation to help those in our community who are deserving of help. Equally we have a right, as a responsible community, to ask of those who are receiving help, where it is reasonable to do so, that they do something in return for that assistance.

Sawer (2005) argues that themes concerned with the 'solemn obligations' to those deserving of help also imply that others are undeserving. This is bound up in the rhetorical association between the deserving and undeserving poor, or the moral foundation for welfare under the Poor Laws of the early 19th century (Bessant 2002). In discussing the Howard Government's moral values in a speech to the Menzies Research Centre, Prime Minister Howard (2005, p. 2) claimed these to be universal truths. These values were neither partisan nor subject to dissent. They informed 'a party both of courageous reform where the national interest demands it and also a party that values and preserves the traditions that **all** Australians cherish' (emphasis added). The grounding moral values of the Howard Government are identified with the distinctive and enduring 'Australian' values invoked in policy intentions.

'Australian' values

Australian national identity was emblematic for the Howard Government. In his Headland Speech as the then Leader of the Opposition, John Howard (1995) argued:

> The Australian identity is the possession of all Australians. It ought not to be the political plaything of one or other side of politics. We should not politicise the Australian character. It is not for governments, or indeed oppositions, to impose their stereotypes on the Australian identity.

Notwithstanding inherent contradictions between liberalism and equality, *The Liberal Way* (Liberal Party of Australian 2006, p. 6) enshrines equality as a moral and 'Australian' value. It states:

> One of the defining features of our nation has been its commitment to social equality. The distinctive egalitarianism of Australians is reflected in attitudes which have become part of the social fabric – the disdain for rigid class structures, the celebration of mateship [and] a belief in a 'fair go'.

As Brett (2003, p. 204) notes, Howard's speeches characteristically focused on 'Australian identity', 'Australian character', and the 'Australian legend'. Howard (2005, p. 4) stated that his personal values represented those of a self-proclaimed Australian constitutionalist, a position that had evolved over a life in politics, and declared:

> The dispersal of power that a federal system promotes, together with its potential to deliver services closer to peoples' needs, are threads of our political inheritance that I have always valued and respected.

However, in revealing his departure from a traditional Liberal Party stance on supporting states' rights Howard (2005, p. 3) also argued:

> When I think about this country and everything it can become, I have little time for state parochialism ... This Government's approach to our Federation is quite simple. Our ideal position is that the states should meet their responsibilities and we will meet ours. And our first impulse is to seek cooperation with states and territories on national challenges where there is overlapping responsibility … But I have never been one to genuflect uncritically at the altar of States' rights.

Such statements offer examples of the rhetorical scope for facilitating and legitimating the major legislative changes underpinning Work Choices industrial relations policy, discussed in the previous chapter. Where states' rights are challenged Howard (2005, p. 3) qualifies his position by claiming that his goal is to free the individual, not 'trample on the states'. In discussing radical changes to industrial relations policy, made possible through a favourable outcome in the make-up of the Senate, Howard (2005, p. 7) maintained:

> we are now in a position to drive the industrial relations reform process further in ways consistent with liberal philosophy … A single set of national laws on industrial relations is an idea whose time has come. It is the next logical step towards a workplace relations system that supports greater freedom, flexibility and individual choice … This is not about empowering Canberra. It is about liberating workplaces from Colac to Cooktown … Our preference is for a single system to be agreed between the Commonwealth and the States … But, in the absence of referrals from the States, the [Commonwealth] Government will do what it reasonably can to move towards a more streamlined, unified and efficient system.

In a speech to the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, entitled 'The Australian Way,' Prime Minister Howard (1999, p. 2) outlined his Government's priorities for 1999 and beyond stating:

> Our approach has had at its core commonsense Australian values – the responsibility to secure the nation's economic foundations, workplace reforms to allow employers and workers to get on with the job, education for our young people to equip them with skills, projects to empower voluntary organisations and work for the dole to inculcate a work ethic in the young … In conception and practice, our policies have mirrored the Australian character, Australian priorities, in short – the Australian way.

In presenting his 'Reflections on Australian Federalism' Howard (2005, p. 2) professed that his Government's values were synonymous with Australian values and linked to the ethos of the 'founding fathers and mothers' of the Liberal Party. Howard explained:

> A little over 60 years ago, Robert Menzies spoke of the 'magnificent journey' he and the other founding fathers and mothers of the Liberal Party were embarking on. Guiding this journey has been a philosophy of private enterprise and individual freedom, harnessed to building a strong, united, competitive and fair Australia.

As Lakoff (2004, p. 4) explains, 'founding' or authoritative figures expressed metaphorically as part of a family are an example of framing. Lakoff notes that all political traditions adopt a conceptual metaphor of the Nation-as-Family through use of such terms as 'daughters of the revolution' or sending 'our sons' to war. It is a natural metaphorical concept adopted to help clarify the complexities of a wider community through smaller conceptual groupings. The Nation-as-Family metaphor is therefore a non-partisan rhetorical device that explains the adoption of particular policy stances. In conservative politics it is by portraying the nation:

> as a family, the government as a parent and the citizens as children. This metaphor turns family-based morality into political morality, providing the link between conservative family values and conservative political policies. The 'Strict Father' model, which brings together the conservative metaphors for morality, is what unites the various conservative political positions into a coherent whole when it is imposed on political life by the Nation-as-Family metaphor (Lakoff 1995, p. 12).

The then Minister for Employment Services, Tony Abbott agreed with the Prime Minister that 'Australian' values and traditions underpinned the Government's policies. In a speech marking an extension of the Work for the Dole policy Minister Abbott (1999, p. 2) declared 'I see Work for the Dole as blending those two great Australian traditions of "fair go" and "have a go"'.

Prime Minister Howard (2005, p. 2) also maintained that Australian values are non-ideological, based instead upon common sense and a work ethic, because:

> Australians are a non-ideological, pragmatic and empirical people. They want governments to deliver outcomes, not make excuses. They want governments that take responsibility, not states of denial.

For Prime Minister Howard Australian values are also those representing society's 'mainstream'. According to Howard this Government was not 'held captive' to the values of sectional interests, non-government organisations (NGOs), or what a Melbourne right wing 'think tank', the Institute of Public Affairs, has dubbed a 'tyranny of the minority', the 'compassion industry', the 'dictatorship of the articulate' and other ascribed pejorative attributes (Hamilton & Maddison 2007, p. 83). Instead, as Howard (2005, p. 2) argues, the Liberal Party 'continues the vision that Menzies had of a party that stands above sectional interests to represent the great mainstream of Australian society'. Baird (2004, p. x, in Preface Lakoff) maintains that when one negates a frame one also evokes a frame. The negative framing of the non-government sector to evoke a positive frame of 'mainstream' Australian values is a strategy also adopted by other neoconservative political regimes. Similar terms were employed by the US Bush Administration with whom Prime Minister Howard had both a strong alliance and allegiance. The shared language and philosophical positions of these two political regimes mirrored their close ties and shared values. As Lakoff (2004, p. 88) explains of the Bush Administration:

> Through language they have branded liberals (whose policies are populist) as effete, elitist, unpatriotic spendthrifts – limousine liberals, latte liberals, tax-and-spend liberals, Hollywood liberals, East Coast liberals etc.

The social and economic value of the many Australian NGOs, strategically referred to in disparaging terms by the Institute of Public Affairs, was articulated in the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs (Parliament of Australia 1991) which stated that:

> an integral part of the lobbying role of these [non government] organisations is to disagree with government policy where this is necessary in order to represent the interests of their constituents.

A strong non-government sector is recognised as an integral part of democracy by acting as a feedback loop and 'reflecting a society back to itself through its social and

sporting clubs, its cultural organisations, [and] its social justice and environmental organisations' (Staples 2006, p. 4).

The most visible public attack on NGOs was instigated by the Institute of Public Affairs which was instrumental in promoting economic rationalism in the 1980s. Hamilton and Maddison (2007, p. 82) note that this organisation held close connections to the American Enterprise Institute which was a key source of the neoconservative views influencing the Bush Administration. In 1996 an independent review of peak NGOs by the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS 2000, pp. 2-3) provided an inventory of this sector's contribution to democracy, reporting that these groups:

- provide access to the views of disadvantaged or marginalised groups which help to improve design and development of policies

- have knowledge and expertise of specific needs of different groups

- promote public debate and dialogue

- assist in accountability of governments by providing feedback, and

- give balance to the views of other organised interests, including those of the business sector.

The Productivity Commission (2010) also recognised NGOs as an important part of wider Australian policy. These organisations have traditionally augmented welfare provision across all governments through what Beveridge referred to in the UK as a 'moving frontier' in the mixed economy of welfare, or mix of government and non-government agencies. However, as Maddox (2005, p. 233) points out, the Howard Government:

> consistently moved social welfare services out of the public sector and into a 'social coalition' of community organisations, supported by a mixture of government and philanthropic funding.

The Howard Government's 'framing' of Australian values, and the 'Australian way' as 'mainstream' was to have consequences for the role of NGOs, social policy, welfare conditionality, and the welfare of retrenched workers and other welfare recipients. Together with moral and Australian values, support for private enterprise was another key value reflected in the Howard Government's policy intentions and another plank underpinning the Government's social and industrial relations policies.

Private enterprise values

For the Howard Government, Australian or 'mainstream' values are those promoting private enterprise, and being enterprising was seen as a positive attribute for both welfare recipients and paid workers. Prime Minister Howard promoted the enterprising worker and an enterprise culture defined in terms of individuals being ready to engage in their own enterprises, as well as being resourceful, imaginative and energetic (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). Private enterprise is also a key tenet of *The Liberal Way* (Liberal Party of Australia 2006, p. 4) which promotes an 'emphasis on the individual, and enterprise as the political philosophy best able to meet the demands and challenges of the 21st century'. It underscores the hegemony of neoliberalism as 'economic doctrine, public policy agenda, descriptive framework, analytic paradigm, and social discourse' (Cerny 2008, p. 2), discussed in Chapter two.

Prime Minister Howard's support for a political philosophy prioritising private enterprise was highlighted in his Headland Speech as the then Leader of the Opposition (Howard 1995). In this he announced that as alternative prime minister he would 'commit a Coalition Government to a major assault on the regulations and other disincentives which are suffocating small businesses'. Howard (2000, p. 2) further endorsed this position in his Federation Address five years later as Prime Minister when committing to maintaining:

> clear, practical and sensible outcomes in micro-economic reform, particularly in reforming workplace relations to free enterprises of unnecessary and inflexible centralised controls. It means continuing the development of Australia as a great share-owning democracy.

Supporting the values of private enterprise and small business was the rationale behind policy changes adopted under Work Choices industrial relations policy outlined in the previous chapter. Prime Minister Howard (2005a) explained that these changes were to craft a 'unique set of labour laws for the future of the Australian nation'. He argued:

> They are not in ideological slavery to either an American or a European model. What we are fashioning is an Australian model for an Australia of 2005. What that requires is recognition of the enormous contribution that the small and medium business sector of our economy is making to our current prosperity and what it will do to our future prosperity and our future employment.

As discussed in the previous chapter the Howard Government (Liberal Party of Australia 2004, pp. 13, 7) scrapped unfair dismissal laws for workplaces employing less than 100 workers. The Government maintained that this hampered the aspirations of private enterprise, and that:

> small business has consistently indicated a need for reform to unfair dismissal laws in order to achieve further employment growth in its sector. A re-elected Coalition will continue to pursue changes to take the unfair dismissal laws **burden** off the back of small business and protect small business from redundancy payments. (emphasis added).

This policy stance highlights the clear implications for workers employed in smaller industries and points to inequity in the provision of redundancy packages. This disparity is an issue that will be raised in some retrenched Mitsubishi workers' accounts in the following chapter.

The term *burden,* as framed in the above quotation, resonates across a range of policy contexts and is commonly utilised for political purposes. For example, to use an ideological frame such as 'tax burden', or the need for 'tax relief' is to use terms already containing an argument concerning the normative role, focus, and extent of state redistribution. As Poole (2006, p. 3) explains, terms [such as 'tax relief' or 'tax burden'] 'smuggle in a political opinion' through partisan arguments captured in a 'sound bite'. They are a form of language which attempts to 'unspeak' by silencing or negating alternative claims. For example, an alternative claim may well be that taxation is understood in positive terms as a contribution to society. Lakoff (2004, p. 25) explains that to reframe the role of taxation is to make a counter-argument that taxes are 'the price of civilisation', or that:

> Taxation is paying your dues, paying your membership to [a nation]. It is patriotic to be a taxpayer. It is traitorous to desert our country and not pay your dues.

The 'tax-as-burden' frame correlates with a traditional private enterprise perspective which seeks to avoid high levels of state redistribution for meeting welfare needs; instead supporting social coalitions. Prime Minister Howard (2001, p. 2) stressed:

> My government has consistently championed the concept of social coalitions, of replacing the authority of distant and dispassionate bureaucracies with the empowerment of communities.

Under neoliberal economic theory, by evoking a 'tax-as-burden' ideological frame and promoting individual responsibility, advanced liberal states claim to enable human agency by becoming 'enabling states', by governing at a distance and:

> acting on the choices and self-steering properties of individuals, families, communities, organisations. This entails a twin process of autonomization plus responsibilization – opening the space for the choices of individual actors whilst enwrapping these autonomous actors within new forms of control (Rose 1999, p. xxiii).

To support private enterprise values and the business sector the Howard Government perceived the need for policies facilitating greater management freedom. Years before the Government introduced Work Choices legislation, the then Minister for Industrial Relations Peter Reith, introduced the *Workplace Relations and Other Legislation Amendment* Bill to implement the Government's 'Better Pay for Better Work' election manifesto reflecting:

> a growing realisation that efficient, productive and competitive enterprises require a vision shared by both the workforce and management. This means breaking down the barriers between management and employees and building a relationship of mutual trust. Coalition policies will give management both greater incentive and a greater capacity to develop and improve its employee relations (Reith1996, p. 3).

Reith reveals that management was to be vested with the unilateral power to determine the best way to achieve 'mutually beneficial' workplace relations with their employees. Nearly a decade later, as Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews reinforced Minister Reith's presumption that employers and employees can achieve shared vision and interests: that historic employer / employee tensions are either unproblematic or bound to be 'reconciled' legislatively. Minister Andrews (2005) conveyed this view within the context of the Work Choices Bill debate when arguing:

> The Work Choices Bill will modernise Australia's workplace relations system by encouraging Australians to negotiate their own working arrangements at the workplace level. We on this side of the parliament believe that Australians should be trusted to have the maturity to reach their own mutually beneficial working arrangements.

In stating this presumption Minister Andrews adopts elements of a 'Strict Father' metaphor by both attributing to and demanding of workers those qualities that make them 'trusted to be mature'. Under conservative political values moral strength is not a 'given', but must be built through maturity, self-discipline and self-denial, and

inculcated by the 'strict father' through a strategy of 'tough love'. To ensure that his children are 'trusted to be mature', the strict father acknowledges that:

> Once his children are grown- once they have become self-disciplined and self-reliant- they are on their own and must succeed or fail by themselves; he does not meddle in their lives, just as he doesn't want any external authority meddling in his life (Lakoff 1995, p. 11).

To support private enterprise values Prime Minister Howard (2005, p. 6) accommodated the business sector by enacting Work Choices legislation; advising his intentions in his speech 'Reflections on Australian Federalism' in which he stated:

> Soon, my Government will unveil a new round of industrial relations reforms to bring Australia's workplace relations system finally into the 21st century. Reform is vital if Australia is to further consolidate the transformation of its economy to one where wages are based on the capacity of firms to pay and on the productivity of individual workplaces.

These industrial relations reforms would inevitably impact on the well-being of retrenched workers and other welfare recipients, especially when acting in tandem with Mutual Obligations as social policy. Private enterprise values, along with moral and Australian values were to the fore in Howard Government policy discourse, as were co-opted so-called 'religious' values. These values were strategically 'smuggled in' (Poole 2006, p. 3) and employed as a 'frame' for entrenching the Government's distinctive neoconservative social policy agenda. This would have implications for welfare recipients through outsourced welfare, delivered by both church-based and secular Job Network service providers.

'Religious' values

The Howard Government co-opted selective 'religious' values as part of what Maddox (2005, p. 199) describes as 'an obvious contradiction between repressive social conservatism and permissive economic liberalism'. This policy mix was outlined in the Prime Minister's (Howard 2000, p. 5) Federation Address in which he argued that Government policy:

> needs to reflect a mix in public policy which combines what I have previously described as liberalisation in economic policy, and modern conservatism in social policy.

As part of this policy mix Prime Minister Howard supported extending the role of religious organisations within the public sector. He admired church-based

organisations including the Salvation Army which were, according to Stewart and Maley (2007, p. 283):

> a policy community based on a different set of policy values, in the sense that participants were not wedded to the social democratic ideology of social protection or its preference for the delivery of policy by public servants. In this environment it was possible for the government to engineer its values-shift away from the Hawke-era emphasis on giving incentives to the unemployed to find work, to sanctioning them when they did not.

Mendes (2009, p. 105) states that both Prime Minister Howard and the then Treasurer, Peter Costello, approved of certain charities' emphases on moral and personal underpinnings of social progress, their ability to provide cheap welfare, and their capacity to promote behavioural change. Treasurer Costello (2002) reinforced the Australian value of 'mateship' within the context of promoting the charity sector. At a launch of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal he argued:

> Australians, I think, deep down, are very generous people. They are the kind of people that when they see somebody, a Digger or a cobber or a mate, somebody in trouble, they want to reach out.

As will become evident in the accounts of retrenched Mitsubishi workers in the next chapter, 'mateship' is a powerful Australian cultural concept. It is a concept concerned with being a 'mate', and refers to the friendly egalitarian values of male workmates (Australian Oxford Paperback Dictionary 1989). As leader of the then opposition party John Howard (1995) had stated that 'Australian identity ... ought not to be the political plaything of one or other side of politics'. However, Minister Costello co-opted Australian values of mateship as a policy paradigm for prioritising charity and self-help above increased state provision for those in need. Never-the-less, under the Howard Government, large-scale charities including church-based institutions and the Benevolent Society, 'reinvented' themselves by also moving away from these paternalistic and charitable welfare models. Instead, according to Melville and McDonald (2006), they embraced the social entrepreneurialism required of a neoliberal policy environment in which it was necessary to acquire higher levels of non-state funding.

Invoking 'religious' values in policy intentions has important implications for social policy and welfare conditionality, as social welfare provision is of interest to, as well as a target of, both the theological and economic 'right'. As Lakoff points out (2004, p. 81-82):

> Many conservatives start with a view of God that makes conservative ideology seem both natural and good … God is the original 'Strict Father'.

As part of devolving all employment service provision to the non-government sector, 'mainline' church-based agencies were canvassed to deliver cheaper welfare services than available under state-based provision. Maddox (2005) reveals that this was partly due to church-based employees often being paid lower than market wages, together with their low rate of unionisation. The 2010 Productivity Commission Report (2010) revealed the substantial wage gaps in the sector as a whole. Maddox (2005, p. 248) points out that this form of welfare provision also allows for blurring the line between paid and unpaid work. This is by offering what has been referred to as 'a career without a salary', with Salvation Army officers encouraged to see income as a 'living allowance'.

The Industry Commission, later the Productivity Commission (Commonwealth of Australia 1995), had earlier noted the relatively low expansion of award coverage in community service welfare organisations (CSWOs) which is attributed to widespread part-time employment and the use of volunteers. In referring to the role of church-based NGOs including the Wesley Mission, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul, and the Salvation Army, which all provide welfare assistance to disadvantaged people, Prime Minister Howard (2004) declared his support for promoting the role of the charity sector. In a sideways glance to more conservative political and religious constituents Howard stated:

> the best way that we can help those underprivileged and marginalised people as a Government is to help those organisations that fuse practical experience with a sense of mission, a sense of commitment born in the main, but not exclusively of course, by the great Judaeo-Christian ethics that instruct and continue to influence our community.

In keeping with the co-option of selective 'religious' values for a political agenda Minister Abbott (2004a, p. 4) concurred with this view, using purple prose to opine that 'there is something extra about people with faith in their hearts and God on their lips that gives them that extra commitment to job seekers'. Such statements embody the Howard Government's strategy of 'playing the religion card' while staying 'just outside the frame' (Maddox 2005, pp. 230-232). However, tensions arose from courting the religious values of the American Christian Right while at the same time challenging the religious values reflecting the perceived 'leftism' of some mainline churches. These were the same church-based organisations the Government had

charged with responsibility for social welfare provision. Prime Minister Howard denounced their ecclesiastical 'meddling' (Maddox 2005, p. 231) on issues of social justice, while at the same praising their role in providing low cost social welfare (Staples 2006).

Lakoff (1995, p. 10) explains that the term 'meddling' has particular inferences in conservative social policy. By using a Nation-as-Family metaphor:

> Conservatives speak of the government meddling in people's lives with the resentment normally reserved for meddling parents. The very term 'meddling' is carried over metaphorically from family life to government.

Lakoff (2004) also contends that in conservative politics the realms of religion, business and everyday social life are all characterised by 'Strict Father' morality through 'framing', in order to extend 'Strict Father' values into both domestic and international domains. While the Howard Government encouraged church and charity organisations to tender as Job Network service providers, some organisations raised their concerns on their ability to still maintain their traditional social justice and advocacy role through critiquing policy or offering advice to government (Maddox 2005). As major welfare providers drawn from within a tradition of campaigning against the causes of poverty, some Christian churches had criticised the Government's welfare 'reforms'. In response, according to Maddox (2005, p. 231), the 'trick' for Government:

> was to silence, or at least circumvent, the churches' actual messages about unemployment and welfare – which tended to emphasise such awkward values as love, compassion and a bias towards those most in need.

Hamilton and Maddison (2007, pp. 2, 89) argue that implications for social policy arose out of the churches' fear of losing future Government contracts and that this contributed to a general 'silencing of dissent', as organisations critical of the Government were 'frozen out of debates and positions of influence'. According to public choice theory such groups are deemed to be self-interested and seek to manipulate state redistribution to their own advantage rather than support disadvantaged people (Ostrom & Ostrom 1971). As Lister (2010, p. 45) explains, public choice theory denies the conception of a 'public good' in which people sacrifice their own self-interest to support the interests of others. Mendes (2009) notes that the Howard Government also ceased funding several welfare advocacy

groups and sought to stymie the influence of the peak welfare lobby group, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS).

The investment in time, money and energy required of organisations that assume the role of Job Network service providers, together with their responsibility for employees' job security, led to the co-option of church agencies into wider Government structures. These structures incorporate confidentiality clauses to insure against political damage arising from criticising Government policy (Staples 2006). In the words of Cleary (1999), then chief executive officer of the Melbourne City Mission, this:

> eats at the very heart of the mission and value base of church-based agencies, which are there to demonstrate God's preferential or special interest for the marginalised and those at risk.

Melville and McDonald (2006) state that an ongoing area of research interest concerns the level to which church-based organisations seek to incorporate religious beliefs and practices into welfare delivery. As this was an issue directly affecting service providers more than welfare recipients it was not one identified by retrenched Mitsubishi workers as clients of Job Network. However it was an issue raised by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) which criticised some Christian job agencies for their discriminatory values and hiring practices. In 2000 several religious organisations including Mission Australia and the Salvation Army hired additional staff to meet their expanding role in the Job Network. Some prospective employees complained to HREOC about being questioned in relation to their religious beliefs, having been advised that employment was conditional on subscribing to the religious values of the employing agency (Mulgan 2005).

This poses an obvious challenge to maintaining the integrity, normative role and ethos of human service organisations discussed in chapter five. As Mulgan (2005, p. 18) argues, 'the line between public and private is likely to become even more blurred, and the distinctiveness of public service values even less clear-cut'.

It also becomes clear that tensions and conflicts arose in the Howard years due to churches assuming the dual role of major Government agencies, such as Job Network providers, while at the same time seeking to remain advocates for improved welfare provision. It reflects a similar tension faced by individual Job Network service providers who are charged with ensuring client compliance, through formal

monitoring, but also have a pastoral role. Arguably these tensions were unlikely to be resolved in welfare recipients' favour, including retrenched workers negotiating their labour market transition. Service providers' ambiguous role arguably undermined promoting the interest of welfare recipients' when they were faced with structural constraints.

Notwithstanding obvious conflicts that arise from manipulating religious values for political purposes, another 'religious' strategy was deployed through a policy discourse usurping the values of federalism and 'framing' the subsidiarity principle.

Framing the subsidiarity principle

The Australian system of government, executed as co-operative federalism, invokes the principle of subsidiarity. This is the view that localised decision-making is best for 'common sense' management and for increasing individuals' decision-making 'power and purchase' (Wilkins 2004, p. 99). Mander (2009, p. 37) notes that the term also refers to an important aspect of the anti-globalisation movement which promotes deploying political and economic power at the most 'feasible' local level. The term subsidiarity, with its roots in Catholic social teaching, is defined as:

> the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more intermediate or local level (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003).

Wallace (2007) argues that the Howard Government effectively put a gloss on the principle of subsidiarity as expressed by Pope Pius X1 in 1931. This promoted the view that governments should focus on high matters of state, including defence and foreign affairs policies, while assigning NGOs the responsibility for social welfare provision. It is an argument that also allows for the extrapolation of the subsidiarity principle as a 'bulwark of limited government and personal freedom and tenet of liberal individualism'. This is by opposing the centralisation and bureaucracy associated with the welfare state (Bosnich 1996); focusing instead on the local. The principle of subsidiarity was adopted in Howard Government discourse concerning welfare reforms under the Work for the Dole policy. The term was used strategically by Minister Abbott (2001, p. 42), the then Minister for Employment Services, a practising Catholic, who drew upon Catholic teaching in *Centesimus Annus* (John Paul 1991) to make an argument that:

> Work for the Dole (as well as the wider Job Network) is an organisational application of Edmund Burke's 'little platoons' principle, or what the Catholic Church has called 'subsidiarity'. In his encyclical Centesimus Annus, Pope John Paul II said that 'by intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, (the welfare state) leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase in public agencies … accompanied by an enormous increase in spending.

In promoting the subsidiarity principle in his policy intentions Minister Abbott also drew upon the views of Edmund Burke, a conservative figure in 18th century British politics. Burke endorsed what he referred to as the 'little platoons', the equivalent of the contemporary voluntary sector, and the promotion of values informing 'third way' politics (Lloyd 2000). In flagging the values he sought to instil in social policy, Minister Abbott (2001, p. 40) stated:

> In one of the most important documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church declared that 'care must be taken to prevent the citizenry falling into a kind of passivity 'vis a vis' society or of irresponsibility in their duty or of a refusal to do their fair share'.

Claims to moral authority bolstered by the co-option of papal authority were further devices for interpreting the 'truths' designed to shape social policy and welfare conditionality. In a radio interview which aired the concerns of one church agency in respect of the Howard Government's unemployment policy Minister Abbott (2000a) responded:

> I very much admire the practical work that the Society of St Vincent de Paul does, but I respectfully disagree with their analysis of government policy. The second point I'd make is that this government's devolution of service delivery away from central bureaucracies and towards community-based organisations, including charities such as St Vincent de Paul, is fully in accordance, as it happens, with the Catholic social teaching, and the principle of subsidiarity. The third point I'd make is that policies and principles such as mutual obligation again accord with traditional Christian teaching that for every right there's got to be a corresponding responsibility.

However, as the theologian Murray (1995, p. 164) contends, the subsidiarity principle is grounded in particular 19th century historical conditions associated with *laissez-faire* economic policies, with the Church's response being to:

> support the right and responsibility of government to intervene in the economic and social affairs of its citizens. The purpose of this had been and remains to ensure the protection and dignity of rights of individual persons … In summary, the principle states that a government should intervene in the affairs of citizens when help is necessary for the individual and common good but insists that all functions that can be done by individuals or by lower level organisations be left to them. The government, therefore, has a subsidiary or helping role in relation to lower organisations or individuals.

The principle of subsidiarity acknowledges the welfare of the individual as primary (Murray 1995). Hochschild (2003, p. 56) also sounds a cautionary note against appropriating the subsidiarity principle in ways that distort its foundational principles, arguing:

> The appropriation of the principle of subsidiarity by classical liberals and defenders of free markets is seen to be at the very least incomplete … insofar as [it] implies an uncritical attitude towards the power of market forces and technological advance it is not only incomplete but seriously misleading.

As this last theme reveals, policy actors' values underpin their policy intentions concerning welfare conditionality. These values ultimately shape policy and therefore the experience of job loss and its aftermath for workers engaging with welfare-to-work policy post-retrenchment. Policy actors' values are espoused by deploying language and political rhetoric which privileges a particular world view through 'framing'. The Howard Government's expressed values underpinning policy intentions included the 'moral', 'Australian', 'private enterprise' and so-called 'religious' values that were entrenched within policy.

Chapter summary

This chapter explored conditional welfare under the Howard Coalition Government through a thematic analysis covering three themes. These were policy actors' views on Mutual Obligations and the Job Network as social policy, assumptions concerning human agency and welfare dependency, and the views and values informing policy intentions. Using Lakoff's insights on conceptual metaphors and framing, the analysis revealed underlying punitive and paternalistic or 'Strict Father' values, underpinning neoliberal policies. These are distinct from what may be understood as enabling, or 'Nurturant Parent' values underpinning policy under more politically liberal regimes.

The analysis reveals policy actors' assumptions concerning welfare recipients' agency. Part of the policy analysis explored a distinctive feature of the welfare rationality of the Howard Government which, in theologian Dorothy Mc Rae-Mc Mahon's words, involved 'the co-option of "God" for a political agenda' (Maddox 2005, Preface). In a tradition of evolving bi-partisan neoliberal welfare rationalities outlined in chapter six, this was one feature that distinguishes this political regime from earlier neoliberal iterations. On the one hand, by invoking 'religious' values it

caused tensions and conflicts in the relationship between the non-government and church sectors and the state, leading to what Hamilton and Maddison (2007) term the 'silencing of dissent', with negative outcomes. On the other hand, this regime strategically 'smuggled in', in Poole's (2006) terms, so called 'religious' values into the policy arena in ways to support an agenda of reduced state responsibility for welfare.

Arguably, the silencing of dissent was an even more critical issue for church-based agencies which needed to reconcile what might be construed as their blurred roles and compromised values. These agencies were an arm of the Howard Government, imposing a neoliberal policy agenda in the Job Network service delivery arena, while also part of a long tradition of critiquing and attempting to remediate the negative consequences of Government policies. Without claiming any direct causal relationship, welfare conditionality cannot be quarantined from policy actors' underlying values expressed in their policy intentions and enacted as policy.

The following chapter will compare and contrast the discourses of policy actors with those of retrenched Mitsubishi workers' through their subjective experiences job loss. Their experiences included welfare conditionality as one aspect of the much wider health and welfare outcomes of job loss and of dealing with its consequences.

Chapter 8:

Subjective experiences of job loss

> In so far as an economy is so arranged that slumps occur, the problem of unemployment becomes incapable of personal solution (Mills 1959, p. 10).
>
> How people feel is not an elusive or abstract concept, but a significant public health indicator; as significant as rates of smoking, obesity and physical activity (UK Department of Health 2001).

Introduction

Globalisation, industry restructuring, plant downsizing and plant closure are pragmatic business decisions often made in response to the vagaries of changes within capitalism. The human dimension of these decisions is the experience of mass job loss and its consequences for retrenched workers' health and well-being. These experiences are either exacerbated or ameliorated according to the prevailing policy context into which workers emerge after losing their jobs. For retrenched Mitsubishi workers, this was the Howard Coalition Government's welfare-to-work policy. The previous chapter identified the views, values and policy intentions underpinning this Government's policies in order to address the second study question on the nature of the industrial and welfare policy environment shaping workers' job loss experiences.

This chapter addresses the first study question concerning the consequences for the health and well-being of retrenched Mitsubishi workers from job loss due to industry restructuring. It presents a thematic analysis of workers' subjective accounts of working life at Mitsubishi that was contextualised in chapter two, and of experiencing job loss and dealing with its consequences. It presents findings from the two waves of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 33 of the more than 1000 workers who became redundant at Mitsubishi Motors in South Australia during 2004 and 2005, outlined in chapter four.

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Case study respondents' backgrounds

Appendix 3 provides a demographic profile of the 33 respondents in the case study who were also part of the longitudinal study. This cohort of workers comprised 27 men and six women. Their median age was 47.4 years with an age range between 29 and 63 years. Their median employment term at Mitsubishi was 19 years, with terms spanning one to 39 years. Twenty three workers were married or partnered, six were single, and four were divorced or separated. Australia was the country of birth for 24, with nine workers born overseas: six in the United Kingdom, and one each in Vietnam, Greece and Malaysia. These workers held diverse positions within the corporation, ranging from managerial to process or production work. One respondent earned more than $130,000, three earned between $78,000 and $130,000, nine between $52,000 and $78,000, ten between $41,000 and $52,000 and ten below $41,000. Most workers were earning above-average wages for the Adelaide metropolitan area which was approximately $37,000 in 2004 (ABS 2009). This chapter provides one window into their many worlds.

Overview of first semi-structured interviews

The methodology chapter discussed the study aims and rationale, with questions devised to link workers' subjective experiences and policy issues. The framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer 1994) provided the basis for writing up the first research stage under themes that together captured the nature of job loss experienced within a policy context. In the first wave of interviews these themes were:

1. Working life at Mitsubishi

2. Formal support structures including the Job Network

3. Subsequent employment

4. Consequences for workers' health and well-being

5. Job loss and subjectivities

Giddens (1991, p. 113) states that 'fateful moments' occur when 'events come together in such a way that an individual stands at a crossroads in his [sic] existence, with fateful consequences'. Some workers' accounts suggest that job loss was indeed a fateful moment in their lives. Workers' experiences and subjectivities are

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articulated in their own words where possible, using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. They sometimes reflect aspects of what Hoggett (2006a, p. 192) and Ezzy (2000, p. 121) term 'heroic' and 'tragic' narratives.

First worker interviews

Theme 1: Working life at Mitsubishi

In the first theme respondents reveal both negative and positive aspects of their working life at Mitsubishi, including the often pivotal and broader role the corporation played in their lives. This allows for a better understanding of the likely level of loss to be experienced by this particular cohort of workers when retrenchment became a reality. As noted in chapter two there was a major distinction between Chrysler's western authoritarian management style and that of Mitsubishi which had generally fostered co-operative industrial relations. The pictures workers present of working life at Mitsubishi reflect the vestige of the 'wage earners' welfare state', or the historic Australian employment model based upon job and wage stability and social protection provided from a male and labour bias, as discussed in chapter six. It illustrates a working world increasingly lost to the forces of globalisation and changes within capitalism (Castles, n.d.) noted in chapter two. Workers' accounts of negative and positive aspects of working life at Mitsubishi reveal that there were less negative than positive aspects.

Negative aspects

Negative aspects of working life related to employment or 'shop-floor' conditions and a range of management issues. Difficult working conditions included the 'monotonous', 'hot', 'boring', 'dirty', 'dusty' work in some of the plant settings and the rigours of rotating shifts. Garth, a leader trainer (aged 37), claimed 'There was a common saying that we were all robots. It was true to a lesser extent I suppose'. For Tyson, a toolsetter (aged 46):

> Some of the conditions were a bit prehistoric at times. And the working environment, and there were some quite dirty areas and some of the things you were exposed to. They were backward.

Negative management issues included constraints due to globalised decision-making, as the operations of Mitsubishi in South Australia were largely dictated by the head

office in Tokyo. For example, workers spoke of globalisation and changes to capitalism outlined in chapter two in terms of Australia 'no longer having control', or 'everything cleared through Japan'. Decisions were seen to be made in a 'global sense', it was a 'global not a local thing', with South Australia being 'a small cog in a big wheel'. One worker blamed job loss on 'Japan's stuff up', while others maintained that 'with a stroke of a pen they can wipe you out', as there are 'lots of global turnovers'.

A negative aspect of working life for one worker was the perception that unions made it hard to sack 'under-performing' workers. Another interpretation of this perception is arguably a reflection of the historic strength of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), discussed in chapter three. Another worker claimed demoralisation due to workplace 'bureaucracy'. A manager, Douglas (aged 58), spoke of the uncertainty generated by on-going media speculation about rumoured downsizing and closure, stating:

> I suppose the uncertainty over the years of rumours, discussion about whether or not we were going to succeed, because every time that came up our sales would drop and so a track of that over the years shows any uncertainty cost us sales. That wasn't pleasant and although we may have had faith in the company we felt disappointed by decisions that were being made outside of our control and sometimes it's difficult too with overseas management making decisions in a global sense that affect us.

Doreen, a canteen worker (aged 59), expressed her concern over one manager's attitude to female employees. Tensions arose from the gendered nature of the Mitsubishi workplace. This was highlighted by Morris, a process worker (aged 45) who made it clear that:

> Mitsubishi was lads you know, it was a man's factory, you'd get someone who wouldn't mind getting their hands dirty. That's what it was.

Not surprisingly there was a surfacing of these tensions and, in speaking of her relationship with a male supervisor, Doreen explained:

> [I] became, I suppose, quite involved in fighting for my rights, and other people's rights, because he thought women were sort of barefoot and pregnant, and did what they were told, and I had quite a tussle with him.

The need to 'tussle' in a largely male workplace illustrates Pocock's contention (2003) that the Australian workforce gender order is more male-oriented than many other western industrialised countries. Men's resistance to the decline of the male 'breadwinner' employment model has been particularly strong within Australia. It is

a model central to the construction of both social welfare and the workplace, and has been 'at the heart of the definition of masculinity itself' (Pocock 2003, p. 241). It is an issue drawn out in workers' accounts throughout this chapter.

As Connell (1995) contends, the role of a man as a breadwinner in the family is a central aspect of hegemonic masculinity and is grounded in institutions that assume the primary focus of the male as a provider. The term 'gender order' refers to gendered institutions and structures, while 'gender culture' reflects the 'uniform assumptions [which] exist about the desirable, 'correct' form of gender relations and the division of labour between women and men' (Blaxland 2008, p. 106). Rosslyn, a personal assistant (45 years), discussed the gendered staffing arrangements at the Lonsdale engine plant, noting:

> I mean there weren't many ladies at the Lonsdale plant. There was the canteen ladies ... there was the sister [nurse], and a few ladies out on the assembly line and all that sort of stuff. But mainly all the guys, you know.

Sylvia, a sewing machinist (55 years), speaking of the lead-up to redundancy, explained:

> There were a lot of meetings and squabbling with management, the girls wouldn't go and get any information, so they'd have another meeting. They were just getting lied to all the time, so it was really getting people really quite sad and depressed and the atmosphere was gone.

However, this range of negative aspects or constraints of working life, including gender constraints, was eclipsed by the number of positive accounts, encompassing both material conditions and management issues.

Positive aspects

In addition to high levels of material provision and many positive aspects of workplace management, both male and female workers spoke of their solidarity, their strong social relationships, and the overarching role that Mitsubishi played in many of their lives. Widely-recognised favourable employment conditions included comparatively high wages, long service leave (a legislated period of paid leave awarded to employees in Australia who have accrued 10 years of service with an employer, with pro-rata entitlements after seven years), and annual leave. Others were overtime opportunities, job stability, in-house facilities and a wide variety of

work and vocational development opportunities and forms of occupational welfare. A maintenance manager, Maxwell (aged 35), declared:

> I was one of the ones that realised. Tried to get it across to some of these guys that were there, you're actually on a bloody good wicket, you don't have to work hard, you just have to do your time and when you are asked to do something please do it. They had it so easy.

These enabling structures are understood within an historical context. Workers with a long employment history compared current working conditions with the earlier Chrysler management regime, within the context of Mitsubishi take-over from Chrysler discussed in chapter two. Alexi (aged 59), a production worker for over three decades, recalled:

> Well, I started with Chrysler and the thing with me was that I knew I had a job. I was going with my husband; I was coming home with my husband. I knew what I was doing and that I was comfortable because I was sewing. And the girls got along fine, you know? It wasn't as hard as I thought, the conditions were good. And then when Mitsubishi took over things got even better; we got a lot more things … the conditions were great. And being so close to home, and then my two boys started there as well as apprentices. And to me it was my life, my bread, my butter. Everything I have is because of Mitsubishi.

Wally an auditor (aged 63) had been employed at the same plant for almost forty years; working for both the Chrysler and Mitsubishi corporations. Wally recalled a much starker dichotomy between the two management styles, stating:

> The Americans were very hard. They had what they call a bonus system back then in those days and if you done [sic] anything wrong the threat was that they would take the bonus off you. So they were very hard task masters.

Values are the key to formulating a corporate philosophy, and play an ideological role influencing worker and management relations. Beardwell and Holden (1994) note Japanese corporations including Mitsubishi are exemplars in supporting employees' participation and practice. Chrysler Corporation's western authoritarian approach stood in stark contrast to the Japanese approach aimed at ensuring stable employment and cooperative working relations. Picken (1987, pp. 140-141) notes that Mitsubishi held Confucian values promoting the 'well-rounded' worker.

Management practices resulted in workplace relations facilitating a more cooperative working environment, allowing for a 'just in time' delivery system. This was in contrast to industrial relations practices involving stockpiling of parts as a foil against potential strike action triggered by unresolved worker grievances (Kriegler &

Wooden 1985, p. 3). The contrast between the Chrysler and Mitsubishi corporations'
management styles was also recounted by a former Chrysler manager who told of the
company's authoritarian approach. In his words, this operated on 'blood and guts and
threats', with fear instilled to improve productivity (Kriegler & Wooden 1985, p. 3).

Working life at Mitsubishi was also supported by strong social relationships,
recounted by workers in terms of a 'great social network', a 'great bunch of guys',
'mates', being 'a family', and in the 'spirit' of the place. For one production worker,
Kevin (aged 41), it was:

> probably not so much the job, probably the people, probably the environment and
> probably the stability just from the job point of view, the stability of having your pay
> in the bank every week and when times are good and overtime's good and that's
> positive. We went through some ups and downs at Mitsubishi but probably the
> highlight and the thing I miss most are the people.

Workers spoke of enabling practices in terms of management 'flexibility',
'progressive and approachable management', and the chance for 'skills and
communication development'. Maintenance manager Maxwell (aged 35) claimed:

> The jobs are very good, they looked after me immensely, from 'wo to go', from the
> day I walked in to the day I left, they looked after me very well.

Understandably, these positive aspects of working life had a wider impact on many
workers' lives.

Mitsubishi's wider influence in workers' lives

Mitsubishi played an overarching role in the lives of many of its workers due to good
wages, conditions and workplace relations. Reg, a manager (aged 40) made the
claim:

> it's turned me from a boy into a man. I started off down there at 20 and I am now 40.
> It's just encouraged me to use my brain I suppose. Twenty one years is a long time
> to spend at one place, so like I said I was only a kid when I started there and I've
> built a family up around it. I suppose it's made me into a better person.

For personal assistant Rosslyn (aged 45), it was an anchor in life, as well as helping
in:

> getting up each day and having a purpose in life. I mean I enjoyed all the jobs that
> I've been in. I've enjoyed what I did, enjoyed the people that I've worked with. And
> the money was good, and that allowed us to have the house that we lived in and the
> food on our table. And our little holidays. Things like that.

Raymond, a maintenance fitter, (aged 51) articulated the range of opportunities enabling his personal and professional development over many years. He explained:

> Well because I was there for nearly nineteen years or so it had a very big role in my life. Like while I was there I did a lot more certificates. I did a lot more training, got more licences and so it had a very big impact on the skills I've got and the sort of jobs I did.

Many workers' sentiments are captured in the reflections of another maintenance fitter, Dudley (aged 53), who declared:

> [it has] given me steady employment and stable employment and a happy family, a happy life, it's given me a lot of positives with my life, not too many negatives. So, yeah, there's been so much that Mitsubishi has directly given me as a person, so yeah, look, I'm very thankful for that.

What becomes obvious from this landscape of working life is the likely level of loss to be experienced when this working world was dismantled due to industry restructuring. In the following theme workers articulate their experiences of job loss within the context of drawing upon formal support structures, including welfare-to-work policy service provision through the Job Network.

Theme 2: Formal supports: Mitsubishi, the union and Job Network

In the second theme respondents discuss the three formal support structures that mediated the redundancy process and beyond. When job loss finally became a reality workers used their agency, their resourcefulness, and utilised available supports to secure new employment or find alternatives to waged work. Assistance was provided by Mitsubishi, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), and Job Network employment service providers. Workers discussed the efficacy of these three different avenues of formal support.

The role of Mitsubishi

Workers were asked about the services provided by Mitsubishi for assisting in the retrenchment process. While the question posed most often sought an evaluative response, sometimes it only focused on whether or not respondents accessed specific services. Respondents gave positive and negative as well as mixed responses to this question. In respect of positive statements workers stated that Mitsubishi was 'informative at all stages' or that 'people were not dumped'. Tool-setter Tyson (aged 46) was 'bowled over' by the level of support which he felt could not have been

better. Maintenance electrician Donald (aged 54) maintained that Mitsubishi 'bent over backwards to help everybody'.

Personal assistant Rosslyn (aged 45) stated that she was able to talk openly to managers and that the in-house support program 'Are You Alright Mate?' provided good emotional support. Foundry worker Roger (aged 49) mentioned that Mitsubishi found him a work experience placement, while Warren, a manager (aged 50), stated:

> As far as Mitsubishi as an organisation I think they've done their best to look after their employees … If the American culture had prevailed earlier in the phase and continued then many more people would've been sacked without as much consultation or thought as has happened in this case. So I think yes they've done a good job.

Senior trainer Garth (aged 37) agreed, stating that:

> It was good. Very, you know, very informative, of all the steps all the way through it. It was probably such a scary period of everyone's time there you know. I think they done it the best they could, probably not perfect, but it was never going to be. It was a pretty traumatic thing for everyone involved I suppose. I mean a lot of the upper management had a lot of difficulties dealing with it as well because you know it was hard for them to do it and they were losing their jobs as well.

In his book *White Collar* (1951)*,* Mills discusses a world in which middle level managers find themselves in a 'contradictory class location,' with ambivalence about where their true solidarities lie. They must decide whether it is with the owners of the means of production or with the workers whom they manage but also closely resemble. Burawoy (1979, in Krinsky 2007, p. 354) states that managers tend to hold on to professionalism even with threats to their agency, personal control, job security and remuneration. This entrenches a dichotomy between professional and non-professional co-workers which undermines solidarity between all workers facing job loss due to industry restructuring.

In respect of negative comments concerning Mitsubishi's support, canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) stated:

> Because we were in the canteen we didn't get the full assistance the men did … they sort of overlooked us … There was a lot of Centrelink [Social Security agency] stuff that went on. They had seminars and things, and the canteen staff was just not invited to it, or told it was on.

A negative aspect for leader trainer Ralph (aged 39) was that Mitsubishi did not make a post-redundancy follow-up telephone call to workers to check on their welfare. Perceived limitations to Mitsubishi's assistance also included concerns over

the way they handled the media and the timeliness of some responses. Maintenance fitter, Raymond (aged 51) spoke of the impact of media speculation on workers' morale, stating:

> Well I wish the media hadn't have blown it up so much particularly before because they were putting rumours saying we were closing down even before [named company spokesperson] had a chance to publicly tell everyone, and I think that hurt because a lot of people were scared and then all of a sudden when he did announce it, it hit a lot of people very emotionally.

Media speculation had gained the attention of South Australian Premier, Mike Rann, (2004) who responded with the claim:

> My heart goes out to those workers who, once again, are facing more speculation about their future when these are the same workers who have done everything they can to turn around Mitsubishi locally.

The manager Warren (aged 50) perceived a shortfall in assistance which, in hindsight, may have been a fortuitous strategy for easing the transition period and for bolstering workers' morale. He recalled:

> I wasn't aware of it at the time but I think, the more I think about it, the social aspect is very important and almost needs to be like a weaning process away from the group where you come back and see them a couple of times … I think people who move on from their families in a supportive environment where they know they can come back every now and then are much better adjusted than people who have just been told 'hey you are out on Friday, good bye'.

Warren acknowledged the reality of human interdependence and its facilitative role for agency and emotional well-being, reflecting the Nurturant Parent conceptual metaphor discussed in the previous chapter. As Lakoff (1995, p. 14) explains in respect of attachments in working life:

> People are realized in and through their "secure attachments": through their positive relationships to others, through their contribution to their community, and through the ways in which they develop their potential and find joy in life. Work is a means toward these ends, and it is through work that these forms of meaning are realized.

Similar views to Warren's were woven throughout workers' accounts in a range of different contexts. Leader trainer Garth (aged 37) suggested that there was a need for greater acknowledgement of the now-threatened close bonding of workers and their families which had been forged over many years. Perhaps Garth was reminiscing on the major Mitsubishi-sponsored Christmas events when maintaining:

> quite a few of us suggested that maybe they should before they close the gates put on some show rides and have a big family day where everybody comes back and do a

final closedown. This is the last day of shutting the gates, this is it, and they didn't want to know about it. It would have been the nice thing to do.

Vehicle auditor, Wally (aged 63), shared these sentiments, declaring:

> I just hope that with a workforce so large and because of so many people going off within the last 12 months maybe the state government or something can have like an Anzac [Day] and that's what the people are saying, it's more like an Anzac Day because it's something that you need that reunion virtually to come to grips with what is going on.

Wally highlights the role of the state in acknowledging and facilitating human interdependency. Wally's allusion to Anzac Day reveals the workers' solidarity, as well as what Anderson (1991) refers to as a common 'imaginary', with nations as imagined communities. As discussed in the previous chapter the 'Nation-as-Family' metaphor (Lakoff 1995) is understood as a non-partisan rhetorical device for clarifying the complexities of the broader community through smaller conceptual groupings. For Wally, this common imaginary now represents a broken link, while also evoking the valorisation of loss and defeat in war within the Australian consciousness and Australian identity.

In evaluating the assistance provided by Mitsubishi, Manager Reg (aged 40) stated that although he accessed a range of services, he also maintained that workers needed to engage creative agency to overcome the consequences of job loss. Reg argued:

> Well if you want help you've got to help yourself. You can't rely on somebody else helping you, but if that help is available, if you utilise it you should be right. I don't think there are many people out there that haven't found work since they left Mitsubishi. I don't think so anyway … I think there's work out there for them. It's probably not going to be as good.

As well as evaluating the supports provided by Mitsubishi, workers discussed the second avenue of formal supports provided by the union.

The role of the union

There was a diversity of views within workers' accounts of the ways in which the AMWU assisted in the retrenchment process. Workers gave positive, negative and mixed or ambivalent responses. Enabling responses were spoken of in terms of unions 'trying to do their best', getting 'the best package they could', that they tried to work with Mitsubishi, and that they communicated well with workers when securing the redundancy package. In 53 year old maintenance fitter Dudley's words:

> They were very good, they were very good, simply because they fought like hell to get the best return for workers, you know, so in regard to the final payout and what they were able to achieve for every worker, so that was good.

Owen (aged 56), argued that he:

> [did not] think it would've made any difference whether the union was involved anyway because it was out of the union's hands as far as that goes. The only thing probably the union went for was how much we were worth while we were getting our payouts. But what they started off to say they were going to try for, and what we got was a vast difference.

Owen's account highlights constraints to union power under globalisation and neoliberal hegemony, and also supports the claim by Lansbury et al. (2006) that automotive sector unions mainly focus on securing generous redundancy packages. A section manager Warren (aged 50), who was not a union member, claimed:

> I think they did their best under the circumstances for their members. And I think that's what they're there to do. There are very little protections for workers and I think there is a place for some sort of collective or bargaining power.

Work Choices legislation alluded to in Warren's account was discussed in chapter six and was contextualised through the views, values and policy intentions of policy actors in the previous chapter.

Perceived limitations to the union's role were expressed very candidly by some respondents. References were made to 'management lackeys', or the union being 'weak as piss' and 'bloody hopeless'. Other negative assessments included that they did 'jack shit', 'bugger all' and were 'all over the place'. Ralph, a leader trainer (aged 39) stated:

> They probably should have been more involved with seeing how all this money's been handed out to the Job Network mobs and whether they're using it for the workers or just using it to line their pockets, because that is what I reckon they're doing.

Sewing machinist Sylvia (aged 55) maintained that unions no longer have the same power as in the past. Tracy the production worker (aged 31) claimed she was not a union supporter, and argued that the union would have been unable to procure any further benefits because Mitsubishi was 'going down, down, every year'. Tracy also revealed her personal conflict between worker solidarity and self-interest in respect of union membership, explaining:

> I actually asked to pull out of being a union member and everyone, they kept trying to talk me out of it and in the end I just went along with it … 'cause I just think it's a

waste of time and money in the end, because in the end they have to pay you whatever they're paying the union person, so I just couldn't see the point, I mean it [membership fees] kept going up so much every year.

As well as positive and negative accounts, workers also gave mixed or ambivalent responses concerning the union's role. Canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) stated:

I think personally that the union built the guys' hopes up too much as far as the redundancy payment they got, and they said we were going to get this much, and they knew realistically they were not going to get that much. And a lot of guys, if they found out what they were actually going to get, were quite upset. But other than that, I think the unions did a fairly good job.

Process worker Morris (aged 45), who criticised the normative role of unions, still acknowledged greater constraints to workers' agency under loosened union ties. He argued:

then again we were lucky in a sense that we did get our [redundancy] payments because like Ansett [former airline company] and other things like that are still having trouble getting their money which I think that's just terrible, and the State Bank as well. What we got out of Mitsubishi was a fair call you know in the sense of other people who have worked for years, get laid off and get nothing.

Morris compared his redundancy experience to the plight of the 16,000 Ansett Airline workers who, in 2001, were involved in the largest single retrenchment in Australian history, as discussed in the literature on job loss in chapter three. Weller (2007, p. 13) notes the heightened sensitivity in the broader population following this particular closure because:

The Ansett story acts at the societal scale to assist firms to discipline their internal workforces through the implied threat of job loss. This shift in perception complements the changes in unfair dismissal laws that make it easier for firms to shed unwanted workers.

In 46 year old tool setter Tyson's view the normative role of unions is 'a necessary evil', but he still commended the union for negotiating equivalent pay when he transferred to an allied company. Tyson claimed that 'it was good to see a union working closely with management and not butting heads'. Vehicle auditor and shop steward Wally (aged 63) highlighted the difficulties faced by unions in meeting the needs of all members. Wally's views are articulated as a final reflection:

There were some sad cases … For instance is that this guy was 73, he'd worked there since he came out from Italy … He was going from there with nothing, no severance pay, nothing. So virtually we got on the sympathetic ear with the company and we got him something. So yeah, I think we did a good job; people disagree I

> suppose. There's always someone who would be going out of there with some sort of problem that we didn't address properly or whatever, but yeah I hope that we did.

Paradoxically, Morris and Tyson who were in roles traditionally associated with strong union support held negative views on the normative union role. Warren, a manager and non-union member, instead recognised the need for collectively based worker protection. A pervading theme was that the union's 'hands were tied'. There was the view that there was 'not a lot they could do', for in Morris' terms, 'in a global marketplace there are no guarantees'. Constraints to union power reflect changes underpinned by the hegemonic link between globalisation and neoliberalism. As discussed in chapter two, globalisation and industry restructuring are antecedents of plant closure and job loss. Work Choices industrial relations policy and Mutual Obligations social policy, including the service provision arm Job Network, is the policy context either ameliorating or exacerbating the workers' job loss experiences.

The role of the Job Network

In moving to the third formal post-redundancy support system for workers, the analysis turns to the Job Network, the range of private employment service providers contracted by the Federal Government to manage workers' labour market transition. Policy actors' positive views on the normative role and purported efficacy of Job Network as part of welfare-to-work policy were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Their views are contrasted and complemented by retrenched workers' accounts of their negotiations with this network. Firstly, a brief discussion of the role of Job Network in specific relation to the Mitsubishi restructure in 2004-2005 situates these accounts in context.

Beer et al. (2006) state, as part of an evaluation of the impact of retrenchment at Mitsubishi through undertaking the longitudinal study outlined in chapter four, that many interviewees were unaware of, and therefore did not receive all their entitlements available through the Job Network. Many respondents also reported that service providers were unable to assist workers in their situation. While being 'fast tracked' into Intensive Support Customised Assistance (ISCA) this assistance is generally limited to the long-term unemployed. While beneficial for some Mitsubishi workers, it was inappropriate for many respondents who were not long-term unemployed but instead skilled workers. Beer et al. (2006), p. vi) state:

> Many respondents reported that the Job Network providers did not know how to deal with them, as they were used to dealing with unemployed and relatively unskilled individuals. Staff working from the Job Network providers with redundant Mitsubishi workers needed more training in how to deal with this category of skilled workers, as opposed to the type of clients they usually engage with.

The 2004-2005 Budget Senate Estimates Hearing (Parliament of Australia 2004) itemised the Federal Government's $AUS10 million labour adjustment package provided to retrenched Mitsubishi workers that was outlined in chapter two. The package was to be delivered by Job Network members and customised to the needs of each worker. An additional $450 to the standard $900 was allocated to the Job Seeker Account for each worker, as well as $4000 to be paid as a wage subsidy to an employer who engaged an ex-Mitsubishi worker. Assistance with self-employment opportunities and relocation expenses was also provided. Industry-specific group training was to be provided for groups of workers who wished to retrain for employment with another employer.

The Job Network had access to the Job Seeker Account in order to purchase vocational training from training organisations, based on the individual service provider's own assessment of each worker's needs. Workers were offered the services of a Job Network member for as long as they remained looking for employment, including those registering for up to six months after leaving Mitsubishi. The $10 million labour adjustment package comprised $5.077 million allocated to retrenched workers in the above forms of assistance. The labour adjustment package also included $3.902 million in a range of service fees to Job Network agencies, including Interim Outcome, Final Outcome and Job Placement fees and industry specific training. The balance of funding ($0.421 million) was for touch screen installation and other departmental items.

In reporting on the role of Job Network in respect of the Mitsubishi downsizing and closure, the then Minister for Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews (2005a), stated in a media release that more than 520 former Mitsubishi workers had been helped into a new job through Job Network, assisted by the Howard Government's $10 million labour adjustment package. Of the 523 staff who had progressively left the Lonsdale engine plant, 482 (92%) had engaged the services of Job Network, with 291 being placed in work (61% of those engaging Job Network). At the Tonsley Park assembly plant 325 (72%) of the 450 staff engaged the services of Job Network, with

233 (72%) placed into work. These statistics highlight the high percentage of retrenched workers who turned to the Job Network in some capacity following retrenchment. While these statistics do not provide information on the nature or duration of subsequent employment, the level of take-up by workers reveals the extent to which Job Network is an integral part of the broader policy environment shaping the experiences of job loss in Australia.

Mitsubishi workers' positive and negative views on the role of Job Network also highlight the interaction between street level bureaucrats and their clients. These frontline workers implement policy actors' policy intentions, with a normative role that is arguably based on a grounding principle of social justice, as discussed in chapter five.

Positive accounts of Job Network

Positive accounts of Mitsubishi workers' engagement with the Job Network included that Job Network 'helped as much as they could', that they were 'more than lip service', and that the New Enterprise Incentive (NEIS) Scheme for small business development was a valuable option. Production worker, Kevin (aged 41), claimed:

> I think NEIS was good for sure because it's given us support for the first year, financial support while you build up, so that's definitely a great benefit.

As noted above, as part of the redundancy process Mitsubishi workers were officially deemed to be long-term unemployed, thereby becoming eligible for the level of support provided under intensive assistance arrangements. Personal assistant Rosslyn (aged 45) claimed:

> We got all the assistance. You [usually] have to be unemployed for a good 12 months before you get half the assistance that we got, so that was really good.

Keith, a machinist (aged 39), claimed to have received helpful and friendly service and had quickly found a job. However, workers gave many more negative than positive assessments of the role of Job Network, including 'hassling' by providers, fragmented and limited service, a perceived lack of transparency and equity in service provision, and experiencing paternalism.

'Hassling': meeting agency administrative requirements

In respect of 'hassling', three workers told of the frequent unhelpful telephone calls from Job Network providers. Sand plant operator Owen (aged 56) stated:

> They keep changing, they call them case managers. I think every time I go in there they've got someone new looking after me. And I keep getting phone calls or messages on the internet telling me I've got an appointment at such and such a time to talk about a job. I just get sick of ringing them up.

Draftsman Ronald (aged 62) relied on his own resourcefulness in response to 'hassling', and what he perceived to be the lack of assistance by service providers whom he described as:

> absolutely hopeless, absolutely hopeless. When I went to them they did provide a little bit of training and that's alright but since I left Mitsubishi all they do is hassle me. They ring me up every fortnight and ask me how many hours I have worked. . . I'm saying, 'Well, are there any leads for jobs or is there anything available or anything?' [There was] nothing, nothing. So it was like, yeah, you've got 10 minutes and you're out the door. So I just said 'well bugger this I'll just go and get me [sic] own job'.

While Ronald may be seen to be engaging what Lister (2004) refers to as strategic personal agency for 'getting out (of)' the constraints of job loss, he also alludes to being treated under a policy model of stricter welfare conditionality demanding greater self-reliance. Ronald stated:

> Well, the person that I had … she was too aggressive, might be a good word, you know … and without [wanting] sympathy, that's a weak word, what's the word I'm trying to think of? Help, oh well [being] more helpful.

Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) also assumed full responsibility for managing his labour market transition stating:

> So I joined [named employment agency] but when I walked into them and said 'Well this is my CV, there's my degree, that's my salary', even the girl that I was with [employment service provider] turned around and said 'Well basically we can't help you. I can get you a job as a furniture packer, I can get you a job as a fruit packer, I can get you a job, maybe as a team leader on night shift on something or other'. But none of it was geared up for salary positions. So all of my interviews and all of my own letter writing, and all of that, were done by myself.

Michael's comments raises questions concerning the extent to which the provider's response reflected the paucity of suitable jobs; the need for the employment agency to focus on meeting internal management requirements; adopting pragmatism in meeting performance outcomes; or all of these factors. The Productivity Commission (2002) notes that there is little public information about how providers generate performance outcomes, with the methods widely referred to as the 'black box', or in 53 year old maintenance fitter Dudley's terms, keeping things 'tight to their chests'.

Tracy the production worker (aged 31), who had gained employment as a personal care assistant, also told of being constantly 'hassled' or interrupted at work. 'Hassling' by providers was an intrinsic part of administrative requirements of outsourced service provision. As noted earlier, Catholic Social Services Australia (2006) report that the Star Ratings and Outcome Fee incentives influencing provider behaviour are biased towards specific outcomes and client groups, and are not necessarily compatible with achieving outcomes. Instead they lead to a mismatch between job seekers' goals and needs and Government expectations concerning assistance.

Mitsubishi workers' accounts include a mix of perceived 'hassling' and lack of attention by providers. Comments concerning the low level of service provision included being 'offered so much and provided with so little', or that 'you never hear from them'. Maintenance fitter Dudley (aged 53) stated:

> [In] my initial interview with them back in March of last year, one of the guys said to me, he said, 'Oh, if we can't find you a job well then 'I'll resign from my own position', because he was that confident of finding me a job. So, they've sort of spoken glowingly about how successful they are and everything else but they really, I think at the end of the day really it's been myself that has been actually pursuing the positions and not themselves.

Dudley's account of actively engaging his agency in transitioning into new employment highlights the 'active' welfare policies under neoliberalism discussed in chapter six, in which the support agency acts more as a facilitator rather than a provider. A related concern for Dudley was existing employment classifications that skew perceptions of what it means to be employed. As he explained:

> They still contact me every, probably two months and see how I am and that. And I suppose that their objective is that because I am employed they're not pursuing me as greatly as other people and although I'm only working one day a week at the moment on the weekends, they still believe that's, you know, you're still employed.

Fragmented and limited service provision

Catholic Social Services Australia (2006) report that it is the micro-management of processes rather than focusing on outcomes alone that leads to demands on providers to divert time spent with their clients towards administrative duties. This again highlights the paradox that the more outsourced the service provision, the greater the administrative oversight and monitoring. While providers' resources expended on administration are increasing, these are not met by compensating fee adjustments.

Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) spoke of his perception of fragmented or limited employment service provision under outsourced and privatised arrangements, arguing:

> It just highlighted as a person seeking employment that the Job Network providers are not even linked … at least when we had the CES everything was all with the CES. If there was a job advertised it was advertised with the CES. It was all connected; you didn't have these private little registries all running, all getting government grants and employing all sorts of more people to do wonderful things.

Michael's view as a Job Network client supports the view of a Job Network service provider, cited in research by Marston and McDonald (n.d., p. 9), who argued:

> The essential problem is that the Job Network is not a network, but rather a large number of separate organisations who regard one another as competitors, and therefore, have no incentive to work as a network. The end result of this is not that competition encourages good performance, but rather, encourages cynical shortcuts of the System which does nothing to encourage the maintenance of a strong network that both employers and job seekers can identify with, let alone have confidence in. Moving back towards a system which has more in common with the previous Commonwealth Employment Service would be more helpful.

Under neoliberal ideology Michael was now a 'customer', and as Patterson (1998) argues, this term frames the relationship of the individual and the state in a very specific way for both clients and service providers. 'Customer' language promotes the distancing of the citizen from the state in its traditional or normative role. According to Kerr et al. (2002, p. 91) contractualism involves the risk of the fragmentation, as claimed by Michael. This is because under a quasi-market model an organisation may lose the capacity to learn and adapt, or recognise problems that fall outside the scope of the 'boxes into which it has divided itself.' Lack of coordination is another factor, and in their submission into the Inquiry into Employment in the Automotive Component Manufacturing Sector, the Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (2005) noted that one of the reasons why redeployment of retrenched South Australian Mitsubishi workers into the repair, services, and retail sector in 2005 was unsuccessful was the lack of coordination between Job Network agencies.

Process engineer, Richard (aged 45) in speaking of his engagement with the Job Network stated:

> They just took our name and put us on their books and that was it. They got our money and that sort of thing so I was very, very disappointed in the whole employment thing.

As noted in chapter two, part of the policy response to the Mitsubishi job losses included the offer of business subsidies or incentives for hiring retrenched workers which was a potentially beneficial strategy for employers, employees and the state. However, manager Reg (aged 40) questioned the longer-term security provided by a 13 week employer subsidy scheme and the values-base underpinning it. He stated:

> I'm there for the thirteen weeks, because the government have offered a Work Skil incentive. I think it's the $4000 government grant for every employee that is used to help you in regards to certification and in regards to finding areas that you want to be in, and I got told that it only runs for 13 weeks and then after 13 weeks they drop you off the face of the earth.

Sylvia (aged 55), a sewing machinist who found her own job as a casual cleaner, commented on the low level of service provided to her partner who had also been retrenched from Mitsubishi, claiming:

> They're all young kids, a lot of the ones that he's been to are these young kids straight out of school and it's 'Oh yeah we'll get you a job' and that's it, [he] never hears anything from them.

Sylvia's further claim was:

> One of them wanted him to do trolley collecting. Now to me that's an insult, he's [over 50] years of age, why should he have to go out and collect trolleys? I feel sorry for the kids that you see doing it, it must nearly kill them … I said 'You're not doing that'.

Under Work Choices legislation refusal to accept what was deemed a 'suitable' job led to income suspension for eight weeks, and all work was 'suitable' unless it failed to meet minimum terms and conditions under the Australian Fair Pay Conditions Standard (Hartman & Darab 2006). The previous chapter noted increased welfare conditionality under the Howard Government, including in respect of the practice of 'breaching'. However, as also revealed in the previous chapter, there are negative outcomes for individuals who are forced to comply with imposed obligations if these are unlikely to lead to employment (Ziguras et al. 2003).

While it cannot be verified from the data, Sylvia's account of demands placed on her partner to undertake trolley collecting may be indicative of what Kerr et al. (2002, p. 94) term the 'tyranny of tangible employment outcomes'. In distinction to earlier welfare-to-work arrangements Job Network providers were not funded for placing individual job seekers into training or counselling, or into 'job ready' programs. While program design assumes funding by agencies to increase client

competitiveness in the labour market, there was no obligation for such provision. Arguably this situation constrains individual agency, but also has implications for ensuring transparency and equity in service provision; another issue raised by retrenched Mitsubishi workers.

Perceived lack of transparency and equity in service provision

As well as concerns over the level of service, some workers also perceived a lack of transparency and equity in its provision. This was in respect of financial provision and providers' personal engagement with workers. Process engineer Richard (aged 45) stated:

> I really had a go at them. I couldn't get hold of the person who was in charge of me and I wanted their assistance which I didn't get. Some people got assistance, some people didn't … I heard other people got laptops, it was really a selective system, a few that knew the system. Nearly all my friends were all managers, they got all that, where the workers didn't. I was an engineer but some engineers got it but some missed out because we weren't told we were entitled to it.

While the context of Richard's response cannot be validated from the data, his reaction to perceived inequity by 'really having a go at them' never-the-less illuminates the possibility for becoming his 'own worst enemy' (Hoggett 2001, p. 47) within the context of his relationship with service providers or 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky1980). Richard's comments support Hoggett's (2006, p. 185) contention that street level bureaucrats may become a 'whipping horse', with implications for their own agency from experiencing the tension between client needs and policy implementation (Lipsky 1980). Richard's account suggests that frontline agency staff must take the brunt of the projected emotions of retrenched workers when policies are played out at the administrative level. This may have negative impacts on clients' agency, which in turn has implications for human service workers' own agency and its constraints (Lipsky 1980, p. 41). Dealing appropriately with clients who 'have a go at them' is part of the role and context of those public organisations performing functions linked directly to ethical and emotional aspects of the lives of citizens; in distinction to the responsibilities of a private enterprise or market-based organisation (Hoggett 2006a). One difficulty for the street level bureaucrat is living with the projected feelings and emotions of citizens, even if now constructed as consumers, for sometimes:

> Things just don't fit together as we would like them to, values rub up against each other, the moral agent has to live with conflicts that cannot easily be resolved and

> simply have to be lived with. You have to end up disappointing someone (Hoggett 2006a, p. 187)

Another of Richard's concerns was the way he perceived Job Network providers utilised government funds for training, arguing:

> They did nothing and they still would have got training money allocated for me. They would have kept that and I got nothing. I didn't get to any of it. It's supposed to be for our benefit but I didn't see anything. I s'pose [named service provider] is not the only one. There are a few others that are just as bad. It really makes you wonder how the government can give them training money and not utilising it all.

Richard's account supports the claim by Kerr et al. (2002) that there is no requirement that training funds will be utilised, and as leader trainer Ralph (aged 39) maintained:

> What it has done is you learn never to trust anything to do with any of those Job Network mobs. It was a big scam. It's got to be … Went to one bloke's 40th [birthday] and that's all we discussed, how all the money's getting ripped off everyone and no-one is getting anything for it.

As discussed above a further limitation to service provision is that the competitive model underpinning Job Network undermines the traditional cooperative relations between different agencies working together in the best interests of clients. According to Eardley (2002), under this model it becomes necessary to guard intellectual capital jealously rather than work collaboratively. A competitive model reveals the tension between New Public Management rationality and normative human service employee objectives, including commitment to client well-being through the congruence of values and actions (Marston & McDonald n.d., p. 3).

Paternalism

Paternalism is another feature of service provision under active welfare policies, with welfare recipients deemed to lack the motivation which must be instilled by persuasion, compulsion or both: a combination of aid and structure or 'help and hassle' (Mead, 1997, p. 62). Some Mitsubishi workers felt they were treated as if requiring the services of contracted 'employment accelerators' or motivators, despite many having worked for over 30 years and being keen to find other positions. Again highlighting workers' contradictory experiences of 'hassling' on the one hand and lack of contact from service providers on the other, Rex, a leader trainer (aged 60) explained:

> They had this other thing, this motivation when outside people come in. They did quite a bit, like I think the week they were there I reckon they might have got four of the people out of twelve a job. They were called Employment Accelerators. They were purely motivational people. They did help you but they did get a bit pushy, push, push, which I suppose is good. I went to two inductions from that but I didn't hear anything back.

However, this paternalistic strategy was highly contentious for the trainer Ralph (aged 39) who complained 'They did nothing. They just sat there and said "you've got to be more motivated and all that"'.

The final reflection on the overall formal support provided by the Job Network to Mitsubishi workers in their labour market transition is from a submission to the Howard Government concerning employment in the automotive component manufacturing sector. The secretary of the South Australian Branch of the AMWU spoke of the aftermath of the Mitsubishi layoffs, and of the efficacy of the labour adjustment package, stating:

> The people I meet in the streets at 'Trash and Treasure' [street markets] who come up to me – said, 'Really, that did not work for me'. They did not find full-time employment after they left Lonsdale. They found casual jobs that were not meaningful jobs ... Our submission to you is that job creation should go back to the public sector. … Of some of the people I talk to, one guy delivers chickens and another person plucks turkeys. After working for 15 or 20 years at Lonsdale they have ended up getting these types of jobs (Camillo 2006, p. 35).

This second theme explored the experiential nature of job loss in respect of the formal support structures for dealing with redundancy. These supports included Mitsubishi, the union and the Job Network, and this theme highlighted the ways in which the Job Network was a particularly constraining policy structure for many workers. The next theme moves the focus of the analysis to the nature of subsequent employment following job loss, both in terms of wages and overall conditions.

Theme 3: Subsequent employment

In theme three workers compare the wages and working conditions at Mitsubishi with their subsequent employment, often identifying more constraining or precarious working arrangements under a neoliberal policy paradigm. Industrial relations policy shapes the experience of job loss by not only underpinning the ways in which workers experience the labour transition process, but also by setting the conditions attached to the uptake of subsequent employment. Nine of the 33 workers interviewed were no longer in paid employment by the time of their first interview.

Two had retired, two were on Disability Support Pensions, three were volunteering under Centrelink requirements, one was on Austudy (the financial assistance scheme for eligible students), and one was unable to work due to poor mental health. Workers who had gained subsequent paid employment by the time of the first interview compared their later income and working conditions with those at Mitsubishi.

Comparative income

No worker claimed to have received a higher income than at Mitsubishi. While six workers cited comparable wages, even if attached to more stringent conditions, most stated they were earning less than at Mitsubishi; with some earning significantly less. Trainer Garth (aged 37) was living on Austudy benefits, equivalent to one quarter of his previous wage, while undertaking full-time tertiary study. Two workers were earning half their previous wage: one specified a reduction of $30,000 per annum, with another citing $20,000 less per annum. Three other workers indicated that they were earning much less. Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) explained that although he chose the best available employment option he was resigned to accepting a level of pay that was 'very, very low'. Michael explained that on leaving Mitsubishi:

> I had to let go all my overtime, I had to let go of my shift allowance, I had to let go of my company car. So I lost, I was on round about $78,000 or $79,000 at Mitsubishi. I'm on $60,000 at [new employment] and haven't had a pay increase for 15 months.

The process engineer Richard (aged 45) claimed:

> We're getting a lot less than what we were at Mitsubishi. Mitsubishi had a structured payment for the number of years you're there and they recognise that and pay you a formula. Nowadays you just contract and it's a set wage and I've gone to monthly wage instead of fortnightly wage.

Workers' experiences associated with their subsequent employment relate not only to income level but also to comparative working conditions.

Comparative working conditions

Workers' accounts give insight into the ways in which subsequent working conditions were better or worse than at Mitsubishi. Improved working conditions included the ability to access the latest technology and work in a clean environment.

Leader trainer Ralph (aged 39) cited 'no toxins', 'no injuries', and 'being outdoors' as improvements on previous factory conditions. Other comments included finding 'easier' employment in a nursing home and as a hospital porter.

Workers whose subsequent working conditions were inferior to Mitsubishi spoke of facing a more precarious working life and environment. Lipsig-Mumme (2005, p. 25) explains that workers engaged in precarious forms of work under the 'flexible' employment demanded under neoliberalism are now referred to as the 'precariat'. The basic concept of precariousness is as a 'catch all' term for employment-based social conditions, especially insecurity. Lewchuk, de Wolff, & King (2003) speaking from a Canadian perspective link precarious employment with curtailed social benefits, job insecurity, low wages, poor statutory entitlements, and short tenure.

'Flexible' is a key term in respect of precarious employment. It is defined in three ways: as 'able to bend without breaking, pliable'; as 'easily led, manageable, docile'; and as 'adaptable, versatile and variable' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). In reflecting on the 'flexibility' called for in the shifting power dynamics from labour to capital and from the state to the market under neoliberalism Lipsig-Mumme (2005, p. 26) argues 'With the concept of flexibility, workers become the dependent variables, acted upon rather than actors'. Under these more flexible labour relations businesses and corporations organise working hours to suit levels of production. Mitsubishi workers' more precarious employment is understood within the context of the global imperative under which entrepreneurial risk is passed from corporations to workers in order to achieve workplace changes understood as necessary for corporate survival (Abbott & Kelly 2005). In critiquing the level of demands placed on workers under the changes to capitalism noted in chapter two, Sennett (1998, p. 46) argues that ideally, 'flexible' behaviour ought to mean being 'adaptable to changing circumstances yet not broken by them'. Negative changes to work structures under global economic competition, that lead to more insecure arrangements (Carney & Hanks 1994; Pocock, 2003), are then either compounded or improved for individual workers by the prevailing policy environment and welfare conditionality of the time.

Maintenance fitter Dudley (aged 53) spoke of more 'primitive' working conditions and lax security in a subsequent position. Richard the process engineer (aged 45) faced greater pressure due to travelling long distances and working in a less professional working environment. Although on contract work, Richard still faced a

combination of high pressure and high accountability. Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) was dissatisfied with his subsequent employment due to working in a company in which there were high rates of worker attrition, combined with his concerns around the salary and the hours. As Michael explained:

> The afternoon shift person, the maintenance manager he was gone, he was sacked just after I started. The engineer manager was gone so for six or seven months I ran the whole department … And then not long after that, okay they installed a couple of people in those positions but then the afternoon shift person in my role on afternoon shift, he left. And now the planner has left, so I'm doing the planner's role, the engineering role and doing my role. And then when I turn around and say 'well hold on how about some remuneration for the 50, 60, 70 hour weeks that I'm now doing?' 'Well we'll do that next February'.

Michael's account of his unsuccessful attempt at gaining remuneration for his many hours of unpaid work in subsequent employment illustrates the point made in chapter seven of the need to 'take it or leave it' under the industrial relations environment (MacDermott 1997, pp. 53, 55). Precarious employment and constrained agency were also outcomes for the draftsman Ronald (aged 62), who despite all efforts could not find what he termed 'continuous decent work'. He explained:

> The guy I'm working for is not in a very good financial position. I've drawn up a wages bill that's getting a little bit out of hand and he can't pay me. So all sorts of promises and I'm looking at going somewhere else. I have been to a couple of other places on contract but only for a week at a time and there's nowhere else to go so I may as well go back there, 'cause I don't feel like hanging around here [home] all the time.

Maintenance fitter Raymond (aged 51) was resigned to poorer subsequent employment, claiming:

> Well, basically there doesn't seem to be, particularly at my age like, there doesn't seem to be jobs around for people my age and particularly or almost definitely no permanent job. It seems to be casual. They'll take you on for maybe a couple of days. Like during this Christmas close-down I could get maybe a job offered to me maybe for a close-down at Hills Industries or somewhere just for the close-down.

Raymond's assumption was that his age (51 years) was a factor constraining his chances of future employment. As Kerr et al. (2002, p. 86) maintain, people over 45 years have greater difficulty than younger people in securing new employment due to a mismatch between their skills and the demands of the 21st century. Production worker Tracy (aged 31) experienced precarious employment in her role as a contracted personal care worker. She stated:

> I've got two agencies that I work for just to keep the work up because every now and then you might get 20 hours one week and then you'll get 50 hours the next week but I've been doing pretty much a steady 50-60 hours a week … you've got to take it while it's there because the next week it might not be. And you don't get holiday pay and sick pay. That was the good thing about Mitsi, it was very good that way.

As noted in the literature review underemployment is also an issue for many workers, with 27% of working Australians being employed on a part-time basis by 2005 (ABS 2006); albeit with some workers electing this option.

Research on precarious employment in Australia by Richardson et al. (2012) found that protections afforded Australian workers through unemployment and health benefits makes precarious work less harmful to the mental health of men or women who are employed on part-time or on fixed-term contracts. However, these researchers state that evidence exists that full-time casual work is detrimental to men's mental health, and to the extent that this is a growing trend it must be treated as a matter of concern. As noted in chapter three, research by Broom et al. (2006) found that paid work provides health benefits, but employment involving several psychosocial stressors may be worse than having no job. As this third theme shows, the transition from working within the security of the wage earners' welfare state to forms of employment based on neoliberal economic hegemony was largely negative for retrenched workers; both in relation to income and overall working conditions. The next theme explores the consequences of job loss for workers' health and well-being.

Theme 4: Consequences for workers' health and well-being

The fourth theme explores the consequences for workers' health and well-being from job loss; especially workers' mental health. It includes their accounts of suicidal ideation, financial and emotional stress and depression, experiencing a 'grieving process', changes to their self-perception, and consequences for family and broader social relations. These findings from the accounts of the 33 case study respondents follows a brief summary of findings from the longitudinal study relating to the consequences of job loss for the health and well-being of this larger cohort of 371 workers.

Summary of findings from the longitudinal study

The purpose and focus of the longitudinal study was outlined in the methodology in chapter four. Part of this study included questions from the SF-12 Health Survey which were used to measure the health status of respondents. The survey also used questions from the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) to measure respondents' self-reported health (Beer et al. 2006). In respect of mental health the major finding was the higher levels of mental health distress compared with a randomised sample of Adelaide men of voting age. Key findings were that 8% of Mitsubishi males experienced psychological distress and severe problems compared with 3% of metropolitan Adelaide men. Even though mental health data were unavailable prior to redundancy, the research suggested that the process was stressful (Beer et al. 2006). In the early surveys similar numbers reported experiencing either better or worse health. People citing better health stated they had less stress once the uncertainty at Mitsubishi was finally over. Some took the opportunity to change their lifestyle and, for some, new employment was better than working in a factory setting. Those who cited worse health were stressed or depressed from being unable to find employment, or from having insecure work. They also told of the trauma of job loss and missing the company of workmates.

In later surveys, approximately two-thirds of respondents believed that their health had been affected by the changes in their life since leaving Mitsubishi. About 20% stated that their mental health was worse since they had left. Depression and stress were linked to uncertainties about the future, lack of routine in daily life, less free time as a result of new work, and the stress involved in seeking new work. Approximately 10% reported better mental health, when no longer facing the stress of uncertainty at Mitsubishi. Those who were single, and found it difficult to manage financially, had the poorest mental health. In general, the findings suggest that mental and emotional health was improving again after an initial deterioration. Approximately 20% of respondents reported improved physical health, mainly due to less exposure to a factory environment; more physical activity; or less pain from musculo-skeletal injuries and repetitive work. Approximately 14% stated that their physical health had declined; mainly due to lack of fitness or being physically inactive in their new job or lifestyle.

In summary, workers had had mixed experiences following job loss. Almost all had some level of stress while in the transition period from first hearing the news of the closure, obtaining their leaving date, leaving the plant, and then seeking new work or readjusting their life. Some were pleased to leave; especially those who retired or took up new work opportunities. People who retired from the workforce or who were working part-time told of more time to spend with family and friends, and the chance to embark on new interests. However, these opportunities were sometimes limited by financial concerns. For others the change in work situation led to stress or depression. Some workers missed the structure that work gave to the day and their interaction with workmates. New employment helped some respondents to 'move on' following job loss, while for others life remained stressful due to less security, lower pay, or greater travel time for work. Overall and over time, the majority seemed to be adapting and coping with their new life.

Overview of case study respondents' health outcomes

As noted in the literature review the exercise of human agency is linked to the psychosocial environment, or the range of opportunities needed to meet positive self-regard and productivity (Marmot et al. 2006). This environment encompasses the interaction between individual behaviours, cognitions and emotions, as well as the material and social contexts of life. While the majority of workers in this case study claimed not to have experienced marked changes to their physical health as a direct result of redundancy, job loss had a profound impact on their mental health, with mainly negative outcomes. The literature review includes a definition of mental health as a 'state of well-being in which an individual realises their ambitions, deals with stresses and makes a fruitful contribution to their community' (Wilkinson & Marmot 2003, p. 7). According to Barry and Friedli (2008, p. 5), mental health reflects the complex interplay between biological, psychological, social, environmental and economic factors; or a bio-psychosocial model.

Hanisch (1999) states that although research has focused much more on negative than positive outcomes of unemployment, research undertaken by Latack and Dozier (1986) suggests that unemployment provides the opportunity for some workers to change both their careers and their life trajectories. Hanisch maintains that for some workers job loss may eventually be viewed positively, as it facilitates leaving unchallenging or unsatisfying employment, building upon competencies, and re-

evaluating career goals and priorities. Some positive changes cited by case study respondents included opportunities for greater relaxation and time to spend with children. However, it was mainly negative mental health outcomes that were reported. As the UK Commission on Social Justice (1994, p. 222) points out:

> Frightened people cannot welcome change; they can only resist it or be defeated by it. It takes secure people- secure in their abilities, their finances and their communities- to cope with change at the workplace or in the home.

Negative impacts included the sadness associated with losing a long-term cohort, seeing the manufacturing plant 'stripped out', as well as the strain of dealing with 'a steep learning curve' in subsequent employment.

Age and job loss consequences

Australian research by Borland and McDonald (2001) revealed that it is older workers that are at a greater risk of job loss. A common feature of many Mitsubishi workers' accounts is that they reflect the experiences of mature aged workers whom Kerr et al. (2002) claim may have quite specific training and job search needs. For example, while sewing machinist Sylvia (aged 55) had concerns for her own re-employment prospects, these were further compounded by worries over her partner's emotional well-being in the face of his concurrent redundancy. As Sylvia explained:

> He lost all his confidence. He feels very unsure of himself and because he doesn't have any trade skills he feels, not useless, but he can't find anything other than factory work because that's all he's known.

Loss of confidence is related to loss of self-esteem, or the positive self-regard that promotes a sense of approval and success and acts as a spur to agency (Bandura 1986). Canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) claimed in respect of her age:

> I think the Government and Mitsubishi and the union did as much as they could, basically. And the Job Network, obviously, they weren't interested in me because of my age.

Rex, a trainer aged 60 stated that with some job applications:

> you think "I might have a chance" but you don't hear back and [you] think they don't want you because you're too old… they know your age because you give them your date of birth.

While there is a danger in implying homogeneity, or generalising by referring to people as 'mature aged', Kerr et al. (2002) argue that older job seekers are likely to share similar earlier working experiences, including full-time life-time work as a

male 'breadwinner', together with home ownership and marriage as constants. These workers are therefore likely to experience very keenly the labour market changes and more precarious working environment discussed throughout this study. Problems facing mature age workers include discrimination and lack of self-esteem and the level of retraining that is often necessary due to redundant skills (Kerr et al. 2002). While not specifically age-based triggers, two workers over 50 years of age gave particularly disturbing accounts of the impact of job loss on their mental health in their experiences of suicidal ideation.

Suicidal ideation

Chapter three discussed the ways in which unemployment impacts on health, including self-damaging behaviours (Bartley et al. 2006). Two workers' experienced suicidal ideation that had been triggered by complex life issues but exacerbated by retrenchment. Their accounts support Durkheim's (1979 [1897]) linking of suicide to wider societal characteristics, and the need to address associated structural issues. While unemployment *per se* is not necessarily a suicide trigger, as Kessler et al. (1988) found, it increases the likelihood of other negative outcomes, and also influences the level of social and psychological resources or reserves that may be available as coping mechanisms.

In responding to a question on whether redundancy had affected his mental health maintenance fitter Raymond (aged 51), declared:

> Yeah, mentally it has - it was there from the start, but I sort of kept ignoring until it gradually got to the stage where it just blew up where I had to tell somebody. That's when I told my local doctor and that and that's when [s/he] sent me to a shrink and when the police came around to pick up the rifles that's when [my partner] - I hadn't let on to [my partner] either- but when the police came round to pick up the rifles and they told [her] why they were picking the rifles up, that's when we had to sit down and talk.

In partly attributing this situation to the impact of job loss Raymond claimed:

> I was suicidal because I was starting to get depressed with not earning as much as I used to and not being able to pay the bills and that and then I had this [medical emergency].

As noted in the literature review Price et al. (2002, p. 309) state that job loss may become part of a 'chain of adversity' with severe consequences. Raymond's account also illustrates the potential for self-harming behaviour and destructiveness towards the self or others. Hoggett (2000) and Cooper and Lousada (2005) argue that

definitions of agency that exclude such impulsive or non-rational forms of agency and its implications must be challenged, as policy must account for the reality of human behaviour. Also noted in the literature review was that a psychosocial health perspective acknowledges the individual's unconscious subjective dimension and, as Frost and Hoggett (2008) contend, a subject may have agency, but may not always be able to exercise it reflexively.

As Angas (aged 55) a welder who also experienced suicidal ideation explained:

> Since then I became - at some stage there, because of the circumstances, I did become suicidal and how can I put it? When I got the money [redundancy package] I mean I was sitting down twiddling my thumbs wondering what I was going to do with myself.

Angas' account of mental health consequences alluded to social suffering (Bourdieu et al. 1999), or suffering relating to more than material issues; especially given the financial buffer provided by his redundancy package. As Frost and Hoggett (2008) point out, social suffering reflecting the interior world of psychic suffering and external world of structural oppression may result in feelings of resentment, humiliation, anger and despair. Workers' accounts of the consequences of job loss for their mental health are further illuminated by their accounts of experiencing emotional and financial stress.

Stress

Another link between employment status and psychosocial health is stress. This is a state of mental, emotional or other strain that Bryson et al. (2007) argue is not often defined with precision. McEwen (1998) makes the distinction between allostasis, or the 'good' stress that allows for 'fight or flight' as a necessary response to danger and other triggers, and allostatic load or 'bad' stress, with its potential for adverse health effects. Stress was a key issue for retrenched Mitsubishi workers, and the Holmes and Rahe stress scale (1967) indicates that losing a job is high on the list of stressful life events. Hamilton et al. (1993, p. 234) explain that stress is something over which the individual has little real control.

Most respondents claimed to have experienced stress associated with losing their jobs, but of five who stated they did not, one maintained that it was the ongoing speculation of redundancy which led to a growing surety; blunting the likelihood of the ongoing stress of uncertainty. Two other workers gave similar responses,

including a worker who claimed he 'had 18 months to think about it', with another feeling a sense of ease from 'knowing it has finally happened'. A third worker also felt prepared for redundancy because he 'saw it coming'. All these responses are typical of findings in a study on job insecurity in Australia by Dekker and Schaufeli (1995), cited in chapter three, which showed that certainty of job status, even the certainty of redundancy, is less psychologically detrimental than prolonged insecurity.

For toolmaker and senior safety representative Elliott (aged 54), the stress from loss of assumed employment security brought back memories of earlier working days under a less flexible management regime. Elliott maintained that working at Mitsubishi was now:

> virtually going back to the Chrysler days where they put people on and off very regularly as the sort of up and downs. Mitsubishi was a culture of you got a job and it's a job for life.

Workers who claimed to have experienced stress spoke of different stress triggers, recounted in terms such as 'all the guys leaving', 'roller coaster emotions', 'leaving a comfort zone', and a 'draining and emotional' worker support role. Canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) experienced stress from bearing the brunt of a range of heightened emotions when workers took the opportunity to more openly express their feelings in this more informal workplace setting. Doreen explained that the most stressful thing was:

> saying goodbye to all the men. It was dreadful. The day I left there was only 100 people left and half of those were going the same day as me. It was pretty bad … There were some that were very happy to go. And then there were people, men my age … You knew they'd never work again. Some of them were crying. Some of them were really angry. You know, saying that they had lost the choice of working till they were 65. It had been taken away from them. How dare people do that to them? Then there were people going straight from there into another job, so they were ecstatic. It was just a whole range of different emotions. And that was, in my opinion, it was pretty horrible.

Factory closure studies have shown that people experience chronic insecurity from the knowledge of impending redundancy (Wilkinson 1999). Of significance is Beale and Nethercott's (1986, p. 266) research which noted the way men 'jettisoned unceremoniously' from their jobs rather than nominating their retirement time did not adapt as well as women, due to relinquishing their 'breadwinner' status. Doreen's account supports the contention that the workers' range of feelings arises from the

perception of 'being done to', of the self-as-object, and how at this historical juncture it has particular resonance with traditional, male working-class labour (Frost & Hoggett 2008). Doreen's account also highlights the range of heightened emotions including shame, anger, guilt and shock that are associated with becoming unemployed (Ritchie et al. 2005). It illustrates the potential diversity of agency responses to the same stress trigger, job loss, and that these may find expression through different levels of reflexive agency for different workers.

For David a welder and driver (aged 57), the consequences of job loss were mainly for his mental health. He stated:

> It's mental pressure, the actual pressure, you can see yourself going downhill through ill health and you're thinking that they're going to see that you're no good anymore.

As explained in the literature review the relationship between poor health and unemployment may run in both directions (UK Department of Health 2009). Poor health may lead to unemployment, and unemployment may lead to poor health. David's account of feeling shame that he is seen as 'no good anymore' also accords with the psychosocial perspective of Ritchie et al. (2005) who note that shame may be associated with becoming unemployed. Gilbert (1992, p. 224) explains that shame is an affect of the submissive end of a social deference spectrum with pride at the other end, and is associated with feelings of inferiority, or David's perception of being 'no good anymore'.

Certain roles at Mitsubishi exacerbated negative mental health outcomes. Personal assistant Rosslyn (aged 45), a worker facing her own redundancy while also supporting others through its implementation process as part of her employment role, stated:

> I must admit that I've been up and down and some days I've been quite teary … Because you know, on some days, it sounds awful, but some days, if anybody sort of yelled at me or I did something wrong, I'd have to go. Because I'd be in tears and you hate it, you really do. You feel that you're out of control. It didn't happen much, but when it did happen it was awful and I didn't like it at all.

It is unclear from the data whether Rosslyn had been provided training and other supports in order to undertake a stressful role in which she was both the target of, and responsible for containing, the grief and anger of others. Her account reveals the way that projected emotions of other workers had touched an aspect of her interior self

that made it all too much to bear. The stress of supporting others while also being concerned and anxious about her own future job prospects took a toll in ways Rosslyn claimed she did not fully understand. She stated:

> you find sometimes that you are sort of lashing out in a way, and you don't mean to, but you do. And being aware of that … Just different emotions and that. And you sort of wonder now, is this the job? Am I anxious? What am I worried about? … and sort of being conscious and aware of that.

Rosslyn explains that her own feelings and those of others could not always be thought about reflexively or properly understood but were instead enacted or projected in potentially negative ways (Hoggett 2001). Raymond the maintenance fitter (51 years), also charged with supporting retrenched employees throughout the redundancy process, claimed to have been affected 'emotionally and psychologically' as well. He too found himself 'lashing out' and having to 'hold it [his emotions] back', because:

> I couldn't be seen to be upset because I had to try and be there for other workers. … Well I tried not to show it at home either but I know occasionally I did lash out and yell at [my partner] and that.

Both Rosslyn's and Raymond's accounts reflect Hoggett's conception of non-reflexive agency. Raymond's account reveals the capacity for non-unitary agency and 'human capacities for destructiveness towards self and others' (Hoggett, 2001, p. 37). His response also supports the literature reviewed in chapter three linking job loss to higher levels of household conflict and stress within households (Kessler et al. 1987). Raymond's account of the perceived need to suppress his emotions also supports Smith's (1999) analysis which highlights the masculine imperative for maintaining control, ignoring pain and suppressing emotion; and the negative impact that this has on men's psychological health. To the extent that both Rosslyn and Raymond found themselves acting in non-reflexive ways, they arguably adopt a model of agency fitting Hoggett's (2001, p. 48) model (quadrant B), which accounts for agency expressed in impulsive or non-rational ways.

Although responding to an explicit question concerning stress, some workers' accounts revealed extreme distress, indicating the possibility of clinical depression. As discussed in the review of literature, depression is a major mental condition robbing life of pleasure, leading to cognitive, motivational and behavioural consequences, as well as neuro-chemical changes (Davis & Mantler 2003). Hamilton

et al. (1993) explored three measures of psychological distress in workers retrenched from General Motors Holden in the USA. Findings were finding that depression was linked to their unemployment more than somatisation or anxiety. As Stavropoulos (2008, pp. 8-9) argues from a critical health perspective, depression cannot be attributed to a single cause and that focussing on individual attributes alone ignores a wider socio-political context which exerts ongoing influence on emotional well-being.

The welder Angas (aged 55) who experienced suicidal ideation explained that his emotional state was so precarious that it even precluded him from accessing available material supports or getting access to counselling. Angas explained:

> I've been so stressed that the support services might be there, but because of my circumstances I'm just off the planet in the sense like I'm trying to deal with myself, sort of getting myself together kind of thing and I don't think people realise what this does. It's soul destroying and you've got to pick yourself up. I mean it's all right for these people to come around, "Actually oh yeah, we've got services for this and services for that." Hey, no, it doesn't work that way. When you are devastated you've, first of all, got to get yourself together, then maybe if the opportunity or the help is there then you may be able to say, "Okay, I may be able to do that", but first of all you've got to get your head together so you can handle the circumstances you're in at the time …You've got to pay your rent and stuff like that and people don't realise that it's not a small thing.

This account resonates with Hoggett's (2001, p. 50) agency perspective of the reflexive 'self-as-object'; a subject position situated at quadrant D of Hoggett's model. This represents a person who is acutely aware of their powerlessness, with increased potential for anger or despair due to their reflexivity. Angas explains why it is difficult to make positive choices, including accessing available services, as choices are bound up with internal conflicts as well as structural constraints (Hoggett 2001). His account also reflects Lister's model of (just) 'getting by' and the ways in which engaging agency to meet even basic needs is, in Angas' terms, 'not a small thing'. Angas' limited ability to be a creative and reflexive agent is supported by research by Murray and Lopez (1996) which associated elevated levels of depression with both impaired role and emotional functioning. As Angas recounted further:

> I mean I was stressed out myself, sending me here and everywhere and then trying to keep my family going as well, looking after my kids as well and, mate, I was absolutely depressed and I was suicidal. I planned it. The only reason I didn't do it is [family-related circumstance]. So I thought to myself, well, let's stay around, but that's how bad it gets because you feel like you're worthless.

Angas' response also supports research by Emslie et al. (2006) on men's accounts of depression which revealed that those men who experienced serious suicidal ideation explained that it was their thoughts of relatives' grief, or their responsibilities to their families that deterred them from acting out this ideation. In addition to their accounts of stress and distress, workers also spoke of the impact of financial stress on their mental health.

Financial stress

Stress associated with reduced financial resources, or financial stress, is defined by Davis and Mantler (2004, p. v) as 'the subjective, unpleasant feeling that one is unable to meet financial demands, afford the necessities of life, and have sufficient funds to make ends meet'. Financial stress is also associated with increasing pessimism, lowered self-esteem, reduced mental health, and increased hostility and depression (Davis & Mantler 2004, pp. v, 2). Economic hardship is a major stressor, expressed in behavioural, biological and cognitive changes. Stressors may be located in the external world, including from economic downturn or a receiving a redundancy notice, or may be internally based, such as the fear of failure. Financial stress is often chronic and perceived as uncontrollable. The instigating event, in this study job loss, is also understood as both unavoidable and unpredictable (Davis & Mantler 2004).

Mitsubishi workers' accounts of financial stress highlight constraints to their agency from a deteriorating financial position. This issue is also discussed further in the second wave of interviews. Factors leading to financial stress were recounted in terms such as 'losing a 20 year secure job', 'being 61 [years] and this was not in the plan', not sleeping 'due to worry about bills', and 'becoming frugal'. For welder Angas (aged 55), financial worries were:

> stress in itself because you don't get a good sleep, you're thinking to yourself heck I've got bills, I mean you still have to pay your bills, still got the electricity bill coming in, and gas bill. You've got to register your vehicles and stuff, still got to buy food and things like that, it just goes on and on and on and slowly the money that you have got is depleting.

Angas' account of financial distress again indicates how he is just 'getting by' or coping, revealing the very real challenges inherent in even small or everyday actions or agency responses. Raymond (aged 51) explained that he too was 'just getting by', stating:

then you start becoming frugal like for example using the least electric power as possible. I don't use my gas oven. Probably the only thing that's used is when I go and have a shower, that's the only time the gas is used. I get reasonably small bills but that's what I want, I have to be frugal because I've got to make the money last as long as possible because it's going to run out.

As Lister (2004) maintains, it is important to acknowledge the level of creative agency sometimes required of people to meet everyday challenges by drawing upon both their material and psychological resources. As Bryson et al. (2007, p. 1143) argue, without enabling policies people must deal with stress triggers as their own 'private troubles', or by finding their own solutions, rather than having these dealt with as 'public issues'. Workers' accounts of the impacts of job loss on their mental health, including stress, were augmented by revealing their experiences of a grieving process.

Experiencing a grieving process

Bruce (2007, p. 533) defines grief as 'a neuropsychobiological response to any kind of significant loss with elements both typical and unique to each individual or situation'. Respondents were asked if they had experienced a grieving process upon losing their jobs. Several claimed that they had not, as they were glad for other opportunities, relieved that redundancy had finally happened, felt that it was time for a change, or were excited after waiting for several years to take up other opportunities. For example, Roger the foundry worker (aged 49) stated 'I was glad to leave and have the opportunity to do something else, which was good'. Sand plant operator Owen (aged 56) explained that because speculation of closure had been ongoing for seven years, 'we just came to the stage where we think if it happens it happens and that's it. No-one was too worried about it'. Owen's response supports research on factory closure by Kasl et al. (1975) which showed that psychosomatic and psychological symptoms were strongest in the pre-redundancy period. By the time a worker leaves a job they may have already 'paid the price' in respect of declining psychological health.

Some workers gave mixed responses; for example, one worker's grief was tempered by the greater challenge of living with a serious physical illness. The majority of respondents stated they had experienced a grieving process, expressing it in a range of terms including 'nostalgia for the environment', 'another hit', a 'shock to the system', or from having 'no chance to say goodbye'. Lan (aged 58) stated 'I feel, I

don't know, I feel like you are a loser … I feel, uh, you hopeless': reflecting feelings of stigma and shame. For one worker grief was feeling 'a pinch in the heart', for another it was 'getting a bit tight in the throat', with one respondent claiming '[I] can't get it out of my system'.

Personal assistant Rosslyn (aged 45) associated her experience of a grieving process with the emotional demands of her role in assisting other workers. She explained:

> I was a contact officer too beforehand at Lonsdale [engine plant] for people just to come and talk to if they wanted to. And I found all they wanted was somebody to listen and somebody to vent. Get if off their chest [saying] 'Oh I feel much better now'. They didn't necessarily want you to do anything; they just wanted you to listen.

Rex, a leader trainer (aged 60), felt the loss of satisfaction of doing a good job and claimed:

> [It was] probably more disappointment but then again that's grief [grieving] isn't it I suppose? … it is probably the biggest thing … not going on to build the new engines of the new car, because in our minds we reckon we were better than the Japs … so yes that was probably the grief … to lose what we had.

Production worker Kevin (aged 41) reiterated a common thread in workers' responses of the need to 'just get on with it'. Kevin claimed:

> Emotionally you do [grieve] … after the initial announcement [it] was like a bit of a sad time and then when you actually leave it is a bit of a sad time, but starting a business you have no time to continue grieving. You have to get on with it, but it is always there. You never forget working with the people and being a part of it.

The maintenance manager Maxwell (aged 35) experienced a grieving process, but:

> Not since I left. I did initially when they made the announcement. I think it was the worst time, the first month was very hard, because it was unexpected, I honestly did not expect that we would all lose our jobs and that they would downsize the other plant, which means that there was no prospect for any of us to continue working there. Yeah my grieving was all done then. The only day that was probably a little hard was the actual day you walked away from the place, but other than that I got stuck into this. I didn't really sit back and reflect a lot.

Dudley the maintenance fitter (aged 53) spoke of the way his grieving process was mediated by a pressing need to make important decisions associated with a serious medical condition, stating:

> Oh, actually look, I suppose really no grief, I say that very lightly, because of the [condition] I had … [It] was pushed right behind … I didn't have time to grieve I just got on with what I had to do.

Sewing machinist Alexi (aged 59) claimed that she used to get sad and:

> I could look out [from my house] and see Mitsubishi and think oh they're having their cup of tea and that's the way it used to work, so yeah I did go through a [grieving] process. I knew the doors were open there I could go and see them but I didn't want to walk out and … I didn't belong there.

Alexi spoke of a particular incident in which:

> they had some glasses for the people that finished their 30th year, and they called me and said 'there's something for you at admin could you come and pick it up?', and I didn't know that I'd be that upset when I picked it up … I went in there and [then] got in the car and I cried my heart out. It was very sad. I didn't go down on the shop floor because I didn't think I could handle it.

Alexi's reflexive response resonates with Giddens' (1991, p. 113) conception of a 'fateful moment' in her understanding that job loss had been a marked event. Alexi revealed the intensity of her emotions which were heightened by her reflexivity: indicating a subject position of reflexive-object in Hoggett's model.

Forty six year old tool setter, Tyson, displayed heightened emotions and a grief reaction which he recounted in a stream of consciousness, stating:

> I was grieving because I nearly ended up just stepping away. I said to my wife it's really hard, I found it really hard, even to the point of getting a bit tight in the throat side of emotion because when you saw the equipment you just wanted to make an artificial wreath because it got you so frustrated to see all that, and it was like, it was final and it was like 'wow'.

Retrenched Mitsubishi workers used metaphors for expressing their feelings within a range of different contexts throughout their interviews. Tyson's account also alludes to the social suffering at the core of subjective experience, encompassing the feelings associated with social misery or despair (Frost & Hoggett 2008). Tyson felt the emotional impact of job loss from seeing the equipment decommissioned after ten years of his productive labour. Section manager Reg (aged 40) claimed:

> It's a sense of loss, you know and it's unhappy to see what people used to do and the skills they had at Mitsis [Mitsubishi] and then see what they've degraded to, you know, what job roles they've got and things like that. Yeah, you can sort of see that they're just all unhappy.

A greater understanding of the consequences of job loss for workers' health and well-being is illuminated by changes to workers' self-perception or sense of self.

Changes to workers' self-perception

Self-perception refers to level of awareness of attributes or characteristics that constitute the self, or self-concept. Self-perception theory (SPT) in social psychology accounts for these changing attitudes (Bem 1967, 1972). Thirty one workers responded to a question on whether their self-perception had changed as a result of losing their job and, if so, how. While respondents' interpretations of this question and therefore the true context of their answers cannot be verified, their responses are included in this analysis to augment other insights on the way in which job loss had emotional and psychological impacts.

Fourteen workers claimed to have experienced no change to their self-perception. Eight cited positive and three cited negative changes, while others gave mixed responses. Workers citing positive changes explained these in terms of being 'freer and less constricted', 'continuously striving and [being] older and wiser', being 'a different person' because no longer stressed, with one worker stating they had 'matured emotionally and were calm now at home'. Others claimed to be 'more confident', and 'more determined to achieve their goal'. The trainer Garth (aged 37), who had embarked on tertiary study, felt a more enabled sense of self, claiming:

> I'm continuously changing I suppose and [am] not just a shift worker and factory worker any more. You know, I'm somebody who is striving to better myself and not become someone different, but career-wise, I suppose I will be changing.

Garth's account also reveals the way in which he employed strategic personal agency for the longer-term benefit of himself and his family. This was by moving beyond merely 'getting by' to 'getting out (of)' of the negative consequences of job loss through undertaking tertiary study (Lister 2004).

The three workers citing negative changes regarding their self-perception spoke in terms of having a 'more demeaning job or baby sitter role', experiencing 'a dent in my confidence', and 'feeling a bit inferior'. The manager, Reg (aged 40) claimed:

> Like I said I've gone from a managerial role to more of a baby sitter's role, so it is probably more demeaning to myself at the moment. And like I said to you before, I'm not being able to offer the best to the company of what skills I've got. So that's probably changed me a bit.

The negative changes to Reg's self-perception indicate a subjective position of 'reflexive object' (Hoggett 2001). Reg's account also supports Sennett's (1998)

contention noted in chapter three, that feelings of failure leading to shame and stigma are no longer mainly the prospect of the more disadvantaged, as changes to capitalism now affect middle class as well as working class people. As Wilkinson (1999, p. 61) points out, material loss is experienced in tandem with the 'burden of stigma and threatened loss of status and respect'. Workers' accounts also highlight the way in which people become the objects of change rather than change-agents under deindustrialisation, with negative outcomes for the level of self-esteem necessary for maintaining health and well-being.

Several workers gave ambivalent or mixed responses concerning changes to their self-perception. For example, Kevin a production worker (aged 51), felt unsettled and a 'novice', but also understood he was gaining confidence in his new role. Process engineer Richard (aged 45), realised that he would work only on his own terms in the future, but conceded that this meant no longer necessarily being as loyal to his employers as in the past. Rex a trainer (aged 61), claimed to have gained personal insight from experiencing job loss, but in doing so realised for the first time that his age was against him. Tracy (aged 31), a production worker who became a personal care worker, had felt in the past that her support for others had not been reciprocated. However, by coming to realise how some other people were now worse off than she was, Tracy had adopted a more optimistic outlook on her own sense of self.

Raymond the maintenance fitter (aged 51) who had experienced suicidal ideation never-the-less felt that he had gained better negotiating skills and identified as 'a bit of a social worker' due to the demands of his difficult worker support role. However, his response in respect of changes to his self-perception was ambivalent, due to feelings associated with the loss of his 'breadwinner' status. Raymond maintained:

> I don't really feel – as I said, I was brought up as a breadwinner. I don't feel like I'm doing that now. So I feel a bit inferior and insufficient sort of thing.

Raymond's account supports Wilkinson's (1999) contention that people who are denied the status and respect linked to employment and income are vulnerable to feelings of inferiority and worthlessness.

What these diverse accounts clearly reveal is the complexity associated with changes to self-perception as a consequence of job loss. When recounting mental health

consequences workers also discussed these within a wider social context, including their families and broader social relationships.

Mental health and broader social relations

In respect of the wider impacts of job loss on families and broader social relations five workers claimed to have experienced no change. Ten spoke of positive changes, including time to see more of their families, no longer being on shift work, or just having more free time. Lan (aged 58) who had been a sewing machinist for many years returned to traditional home duties upon receiving a carer's pension. This was after previously working at Mitsubishi while at the same time caring for her ill and frail-aged mother. Lan explained that she had been depressed for a few months after she left Mitsubishi, but:

> my daughter said 'Mummy, you work so hard already and now you should retire and you enjoy your retirement', something like that. And my husband say, 'Don't worry, you don't have to worry now, only me who need to work, we can manage. We don't need you to work anymore, so in future, take it easy … [I'm] Happy [at] home, happy, so I accept that so now I enjoy it.

Job loss had led to Lan re-evaluating her work / life balance, with choices enabled by receipt of a carer's pension. Pocock, Skinner and Ichii (2009) maintain that what they refer to as 'work / life interference' is a policy issue likely to increase significantly in future years. As for Lan, this experience reaches beyond a focus on balancing work and family life normally focusing on the context of childcare.

Several workers gave ambivalent or mixed responses concerning the impact of job loss on their broader social relations, reflecting the fact that job loss may have mixed emotional outcomes for families. One worker spoke of the tension between the benefits of spending more time with their family and negative feelings associated with having less money to spend on them. Of three workers whose families were affected negatively, one spoke of the strain of establishing a business at the same time as awaiting the birth of another child. Toolmaker and senior safety representative Elliott (aged 54) spoke of the impact of job loss on wider family plans especially for his wife, due to the conditions associated with contract work:

> What really upset her is the fact that with nursing [her occupation] you have to plan holidays six to 12 months in advance. Being a contractor you can't, so we haven't really had a holiday since we left. We've had time off work but we haven't had a holiday because you've been trying to find work.

Workers who cited negative mental health outcomes in respect of families and broader social relations spoke of the loss of contacts, social life and hobbies curtailed due to lack of time and money, and the loss of common interests. For one worker gaining a new career was 'not worth losing [his] friends' at Mitsubishi. The manager, Warren (aged 50) claimed he missed the 'cut and thrust' of the automotive industry, while sewing machinist Alexi (aged 59) missed the solidarity of the company of other women, especially the 'female parties outside work'. As Alexi recalled:

We organised parties, some of the girls had postie parties [mail-order fashion] and Tupperware [homeware] parties, and we all got together. Or if somebody had a baby, there would be a group of us going to have a look at the baby.

A common theme for male workers was the loss of solidarity found in 'mateship', as recalled by maintenance fitter Dudley (aged 53), who explained:

> I had a lot of good mates and I'm still in contact with those mates but perhaps the mateship of everyday going down there and talking about the Crows winning or the Port winning [football teams] or, you know, different things. We all have a lot of common interests and everything else and so clearly you miss that, you miss the bonding, and people's lives are changing all the time and you're aware of all that and you see all that, whereas now you don't see any of that, you're in a different sort of ball game.

For trainer Garth (aged 37) the impact of job loss also included the loss of mateship, for:

> Being a shift worker, that was my social life basically, so the guys that I've worked with, were the guys that I've knocked about with, you know, the knock-about part was at lunchtimes and smokos. It wasn't a real lot outside of Mitsubishi type association, but basically our work time was our social time and we had some good strong friendships there, and it seems to have lost a lot of that. I don't see a lot of the guys too much anymore. Everyone's gone their own sort of separate ways, so that's a big bit of a loss.

These male workers' accounts are suggestive that men may not always be effective in developing and keeping their mates and why the workplace would therefore be so important. These accounts are also evocative of an enduring Australian culture of mateship which is open to political appropriation by policy actors, as noted in the previous chapter. This discussed the ways policy actors in the Howard Government framed their policy intentions in terms of 'Australian' values and of mateship in ways that promoted state retrenchment: linking mateship to a charity model of

welfare. McKnight (2005, p. 108) argues that the enduring 'Australian legend' in accounts of mateship is also:

> one of the most successful pieces of cultural politics in modern times. The ethos of the mateship of ordinary people is now used to project the world view of the Liberal-National government and to attack unions and the Labor party.

This fourth theme revealed the different ways in which job loss had consequences for workers' mental health, including suicidal ideation, emotional and financial stress and depression, experiencing a grieving process, changes to self-perception, and within the context of broader familial and wider social relations. The fifth and final theme of the first interview set discusses a range of subjectivities to further illuminate the experience of job loss from a mass layoff.

Theme 5: Job loss and subjectivities

Yeatman (2009, p. 45) refers to subjective experience as a 'complex and dynamic set of relationships between the individual's internal world and his or her external worlds'. As discussed in the literature review, and earlier in this chapter, a psychosocial health perspective acknowledges that material, behavioural and psychological factors all influence health (Marmot 2006). In questions covering a range of subjectivities workers discussed changes to their levels of trust; whether future employment had helped them to 'move on' with their lives; and what advice they would give to other workers facing redundancy, based on their own experiences.

Trust

Trust is defined as 'a firm belief in the reliability or truth or strength etc. of a person or thing, or a confident expectation'. It is also 'the state of being relied upon' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary 2003). As discussed in chapter three, Weller (2007) notes that findings from research into the collapse of Ansett Airlines included workers' diminished level of trust in management, unions and governments. Mitsubishi workers were also asked about any changes to their levels of trust of individuals, big business and institutions, as well as governments. Only two respondents in the case study indicated any decline in their level of trust of individuals. For one worker this was expressed as needing to 'take things a little bit more carefully when people tell you stuff', while a second worker claimed to be wary of those who might want to 'pilfer' his redundancy package.

In respect of trust in big business or institutions, no worker stated diminished trust in Mitsubishi in South Australia as a direct result of redundancy. This may be understood within the context of workers' highly positive enduring relationships with the corporation, discussed at the beginning of this chapter and within the historical context outlined in chapter two. It may also reflect the fact that the decision to restructure the corporation was based on global imperatives and was not a local initiative. In discussing his trust in big business or organisations, manager Warren (aged 50) stated that although he had diminished trust in big business he did not blame Mitsubishi, arguing:

> I wouldn't say that the Mitsubishi experience *per se* made me less trusting. I think it's just a fact of life that business hasn't been kind to them for whatever reason and if business had been kind then they wouldn't had to put people off.

Tool setter Tyson (aged 46) maintained 'It's probably more the international side of things than actually the guys here. I thought they were pretty good here to be honest with you'. Several workers spoke of holding pre-existing generalised distrust of large businesses and / or institutions. For one worker this was due to experiencing an earlier redundancy, while for another it was the enduring negative emotional outcomes of childhood church-based institutionalisation dating back to the 1950s. Another worker cited 'false promises' and 'favouring shareholders' as reasons for his existing mistrust of business.

Only five respondents claimed that their declining trust in business or institutions was specifically related to their redundancy. Keith, a machinist (aged 39), claimed that it was distrust of Japan because 'they're the ones that actually pulled the plug'. For toolmaker and safety representative Elliott (aged 54) the concern was:

> Even when you do score a permanent job there'll still be that niggling thing in the back of your mind, we're on a permanent job but how permanent is it?

Several workers claimed to have pre-existing and generalised mistrust of governments, while for others reduced trust was directly attributed to the retrenchments. The draftsman Ronald (aged 62) claimed a generalised distrust in government, stating:

> as far as governments go, well, oh, I've lost a lot of faith there too, you know, I see they make a lot of noise when bigger places close down but there are a lot of places that might employ 10, 50 people, close down all the time and there's no help or anything given to those people, and they're just as important as the bigger places, the

only reason that the government steps in where the bigger places are is because they get more time on radio and television and newspapers.

Angas the welder (aged 55) declared that:

> Governments [are] out of the books, mate. I would not trust governments as far as I could throw them, any government. I'm not talking about Liberal or Labor, all of them. I would not trust any of them because I look for human values. They abuse human values; that's it - end of story.

Vehicle auditor Wally (aged 63) took the opportunity to be candid in stating his concerns for the fate of low-skilled workers under the industrial relations policy of the Howard Government. This took priority over changes to trust based on experiencing redundancy, with Wally stating that his mistrust was:

> mainly for what [Prime Minister] Howard's trying to do with the workers now because even though we say the workers at Mitsubishi are highly skilled, they're not tradespeople and I believe that tradespeople and professional people would be all right under this legislation [Work Choices] but I don't think us type of workers will do so, yeah. I think if I was a violent person I think Mr Howard would be a nervous person because of what he's done. I think he's betrayed the working class people of Australia, to be quite honest.

Wally's account relates to the Federal Government's achievement of a Senate majority which, in July 2005, saw the introduction of its Work Choices industrial relations legislation which was described by Hall (2006, p. 292) as 'the most fundamental revolution in industrial relations since federation': legislation that was discussed in chapter six. Leader trainer Garth (aged 37), supporting a family while living on Austudy, claimed mistrust of the Government due to the negative financial consequences of incorrect information provision by Centrelink concerning waiting times for welfare benefits. Garth's view was that:

> you really can't trust someone who you think is trained and educated in a field that they are, do actually know 100% of what they are talking about, because I found out they don't. They only know as much as they're told and I was let down by that, so I suppose I lost a fair bit of trust in that field in that department.

As Pond et al. (2002, p. 82) found in their research on job loss at BHP, workers expressed a range of difficulties with Centrelink. The retrenched workers in their research sometimes found this agency 'unhelpful or threatening and that interacting with it lowered their self-esteem'. As well as reflecting on issues of trust, workers were also asked for their recollections on whether finding employment had helped them to 'move on' following job loss.

'Moving on' following job loss

Answers to a question on 'moving on' help to identify the ways in which workers utilised their agency in dealing with the structural constraints associated with job loss. Many workers maintained that they had 'moved on' as a result of finding another job, while others claimed to have 'just got on with it'. 'Just getting on with it' was a recurring thread throughout workers' interviews. As Smith (1999, p. 274) reported in his narrative account of depression, but is only partly substantiated in this study, 'Real men don't moan. They don't hurt. They just don't do emotions. They get on with life'. Workers' accounts revealed many instances in which they had 'just got on with it', but also the many instances in which they were forthcoming about the emotional consequences of job loss, as recounted in the previous theme.

Workers who 'moved on' by finding new employment spoke of work as an enabling structure. It was 'a boost to confidence', it 'helped with a hole in life', and 'it changed [my] focus immediately'. One worker claimed 'even a casual job helps, as there are people to talk to'. Tyson the toolmaker (aged 46) explained:

> Well you have to move on. I mean it's all very well for people to say you've got to move on. Sometimes it's hard to let go and I can see, I can understand that now and that's some of my concerns I had for the some of the guys that I'd worked with because they had been there a lot longer than me and it was hard for them to let go.

Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) explained that it was his prior experience of job loss that had prepared him for moving on by triggering his pro-active stance towards re-employment. Michael had used his creative agency to devise strategies in case of any future redundancy, and explained:

> I mean I'm young, I'm keen and this is the second time in my life I've been made redundant. So being made redundant didn't matter a stuff for me. I've got income tax insurance, I've got my mortgage insured so if I went on the dole well, I'm covered. But I actively engaged in my own employment so that doesn't happen to me. But a lot of these other people they didn't do it.

Michael's account resonates with the creative, reflexive agency exemplified at the core of Giddens' structuration theory. He projects the stance of an active shaper of personal destiny even if not under the circumstances of his own choosing. Using the benefit of hindsight, Michael adopts an agency perspective of creative self-as-agent Hoggett (2001), as well as that represented at Lister's (2004) nexus of personal / strategic agency. Michael was ready to 'get out (of)', or avoid the risks associated

with future redundancy by strategic personal investments for the longer-term. While Michael's personal account did not clearly indicate what specific life circumstances enabled his agency in ways that may not have been matched by all workers, he stated that he had a Bachelor of Business Degree and that he had paid several hundred dollars to have a professional CV drawn up to bolster future employment options. Arguably, investing in higher education may have been demanding of, reflective of, as well as a facilitator of Michael's agency.

While this question drew out workers' agency responses, the structures that had mainly worked against them 'moving on' were identified throughout the workers' interviews. Together with enabling structures including the Mitsubishi work environment and the redundancy package, numerous constraining structures were brought to light, including precarious employment, welfare-to-work policy, Job Network service provision, constraints to union power and what workers alluded to as 'global forces'. Theorising workers' agency in the face of structural constraints is augmented by exploring what advice Mitsubishi workers claim they would give to others facing redundancy, based on their own experiences; highlighting implicit agency assumptions.

Advice to others facing redundancy

Paradoxically, workers' responses to this particular question resonated with the types of injunctions made to welfare recipients and drawn out in policy actors' discourses in the previous chapter. Retrenched workers' advice to others is categorised as five sets of injunctions for the analysis. Respondents argued the need to 'be proactive', 'stay positive', 'show resilience', 'share the experience' and 'make wise choices'. A range of metaphors peppered workers' comments, including to be encouraged by the 'light at the end of the tunnel' and understanding that job loss is just part of 'a cycle of life'. Workers' responses often reflected Giddens' (1994, p. 192) contention that potential threats may be reframed as rewarding challenges.

For the respondents to 'be proactive' meant to 'look for other options', 'build up your support network', 'do something; anything', 'keep striving and get on with the task', and 'get financial advice and training'. Trainer Garth (aged 37) who engaged in tertiary study advised other workers to 'set your sights high and don't think that you can't do something because it seems too hard - because I have proven that you

can'. Advice on staying positive included 'not to blame' and to understand that redundancy requires a 'kick up the bum and a kick start'. This latter injunction resonates with Mead's (1997, p. 62) claim of the need for both 'help and hassle' in avoiding welfare dependency. Production worker Kevin (aged 41) maintained:

> There is still light at the end of the tunnel because there are people that have found jobs even though they haven't known what they wanted to do. A lot of people don't but human beings are pretty resilient. I would say to people if they had something that they really wanted to do in life and never had the opportunity to do it, now's their opportunity.

Advice on the need for resilience was expressed as 'don't drop your bundle', 'don't make it the end', and 'get on with life, but it is hard'. Assumptions of active agency and resilience are also implied in workers' comments on their advice to share their experiences. This was conveyed in terms of taking the initiative to 'talk to friends', 'use counselling', 'keep in touch with mates', and for a manager Maxwell 'Probably the most advice would be just don't bottle anything up and talk to people, but try and move on, there is a life after'.

Active agency was also implied when enjoining others to make wise choices including to 'pay off [your] house', or 'work out [your] finances'. Maintenance manager Michael stated:

> The main thing is accepting that it is going to happen. It will happen; it's going to happen, so make things happen so that you're not the victim.

As Popay et al. (2007) note, the wider literature on capability and resilience challenges the claim that individuals and communities are passive victims of changing circumstances. Instead they are recognised as utilising active agency, albeit in the face of powerful forces influencing their control. For Michael, retrenched workers could be resilient; an attribute defined by Bartley (2006, p. 4) as:

> a process of withstanding negative effects of risk exposure, demonstrating positive adjustment in the face of adversity or trauma, and beating the odds associated with risks.

Michael's account arguably exemplifies the active agency inherent in 'making things happen', reflecting the agency underlying Giddens' structuration theory that was assumed in most retrenched workers' responses to this question. However, Lister's and Hoggett's models of agency, explored in chapter five, are the tools for theorising

the scope of potential material and interior constraints to 'making things happen', that mediate Michael's contention.

This was revealed in Doreen's (aged 59) identified constraints to workers' agency shown in her more tentative response to the question on any advice she would give to others. Doreen had been situated in the more informal canteen setting where she ultimately witnessed many displays of heightened emotions based on both the material and psychological consequences of job loss recounted above. In distinction to the confident advice of many other workers, Doreen maintained:

> I don't know whether you can advise anyone. Everyone has their own individual experience, I think. I know … I said to people 'You can't change what's happening. You just have to go with the flow'. But some people can do that, and some can't. I don't know.

Doreen understood from her observations that not every co-worker would necessarily be active, creative and resilient. People are not only constrained by social forces and structures, but also have different emotional vulnerabilities to external threats due to their unique social, material and personal life circumstances (Williams et al. 1999). As Vickers and Parris (2007, p. 114) found from conducting in-depth interviews, becoming redundant is an alienating experience. Workers are not always as 'pliable' as assumed. Nor are they always able to easily 'bounce back' unscathed in ways promoted in the policy actors' discourses, and even many retrenched workers' own responses to this question.

While it may be argued that workers' injunctions also reflect Lakoff's metaphor of Moral Strength, they arguably diverge from the conservative interpretation by not being ideologically wedded to an underlying belief in the benefit of punishment for building individual moral strength. The paradox of retrenched workers adopting similar discourses to policy actors may be understood in the ideological differences underpinning these discourses. As the previous chapter revealed, policy actors' views are based on a moral assumption of welfare recipients' need for strong paternalism and a 'tough love' policy model. However, there is no indication in workers' responses that their views are based on the belief that other workers facing future job loss would likely exhibit the exploitative or passive agency demanding a 'tough love' policy stance.

While answers to this question may arguably reflect normative responses made within an interview setting, it is still of note that not one worker sanctioned another being defensive, self-interestedly exploitative, or cynical in response to job loss. This is at variance with New Right agency perspectives discussed in earlier chapters. Workers' responses may instead reflect the pervasive nature of neoliberal hegemony in promoting self-reliance. They may also mirror the call to 'just get on with it' in policy actors' discourses reflecting normative and positive male attributes of toughness, heroism, and finding solutions in personal strengths. As noted in the previous chapter these attributes are often promoted through co-opting 'Australian' values that are also part of an 'Australian legend', promoting the virtues of a practical man who decries affectation and supports his mates through adversity (Ward 1958).

This first wave of interviews revealed respondents' views on working life at Mitsubishi, job loss and formal support structures including the Job Network, workers' subsequent employment experiences, the consequences for their health and well-being, and a range of subjectivities highlighting the values underpinning workers' different agency responses. These accounts highlight the ways in which workers engaged their agency in dealing with the multifaceted consequences of job loss. Respondents' accounts support research by Weller on mass job loss at Ansett Airlines in 2001 which identified multidimensional consequences of job loss. To reiterate Weller's (2007, p. 2) contention noted in chapter three:

> the longer-term costs of redundancy for workers are not only a matter of 'recovering' emotionally, finding a new job, or returning to financial security. The costs are all these things.

Second worker interviews

Workers' responses to their job loss experiences canvassed in the first interviews were later augmented by a follow-up interview. By the time of their second interviews 21 of the 33 workers were in some form of paid employment. Three held full-time and two held part-time permanent positions, with the others engaged in a range of work spanning relatively secure to more precarious forms of casual or short-term contract work. Of the twelve workers who had exited the paid workforce, five were on Disability Support Pensions, two were volunteering under the requirements

of Mutual Obligations policy, two were receiving a carer's allowance, one was living off her partner's redundancy package, and one was living on Austudy.

A review of time lapses between the two interviews for each worker shows that these were between four and 18 months. The much briefer discussion of the second interview set does not provide a comparative analysis, but instead augments the findings from the first interviews, with additional insights from some new lines of questioning. The five themes are:

1. Reviewing the role of the Job Network

2. Workers' financial status

3. Changes to workers' perceived control

4. The value of the redundancy package

5. The self in a social context

The first theme covers workers' later reflections on negotiating the welfare-to-work policy terrain, with the second theme discussing workers' financial status at the time of the second interviews. Theme three draws out further psychosocial health outcomes from changes to workers' perceived control over their lives following job loss. Theme four discusses the redundancy package as an enabling structure among others that were constraining. The final theme indicates ways in which workers experienced themselves within a social context or core social role; an experience that is lost upon retrenchment (Marmot et al. 2006).

Theme 1: Reviewing the role of Job Network

The second interviews again canvassed workers' reflections on the role of Job Network employment service providers. Production worker Kevin (aged 41) claimed he was happy with the funding provided for training associated with setting up his small business. Sewing machinist Alexi (aged 59) stated that she had 'no complaints' as she was now eligible to volunteer under Mutual Obligations policy. However, as in the first interviews, there were many more negative than positive responses, with workers reiterating a lack of service, especially at management level. Concerns were again raised about accountability, transparency and equity in service provision; the

efficacy of information provision; and the value of wage subsidies or incentives paid to employers for hiring retrenched Mitsubishi workers.

In reflecting back, workers' views had not been mediated by the passage of time, with statements including 'they [service providers] leave it up to you', and 'I thought they would be more helpful'. For one worker service provision was 'bloody hopeless to be honest', while others claimed that 'they try and make you do all the work', 'they weren't interested in helping me', and that they offered 'rubbishy things'. The focus at management level was on the lack of appropriate services, with the additional claim that Job Network providers failed to liaise with management recruiters or refer workers to business associations to facilitate the placement process. A claim was also made that service providers' inability to assist workers was due to a lack of understanding of the defining features of different trades; arguably essential information for Job Network providers. Draftsman Ronald (aged 62) reiterated the way in which he was 'hassled' and that:

> And as far as leads for jobs, that was just a dead loss. Absolute dead loss, there was just nothing. They gave me a number and pin number to get in to their site and look at things, but there was just nothing there. And I was very disappointed about that.

Several workers complained about the lack of reliable information provided by agencies. As recounted in the first interviews, incorrect information from Centrelink on waiting times for Austudy cost leader trainer Garth (aged 37) several weeks pay. At his second interview Garth explained:

> They were OK to start with but they let me down big time overall … This last semester they said my time and money had run out. Well my money hadn't, because I know I'd done my sums … So I'm on my own now. I've got to fund the last year of my studies on my own … I was guaranteed by them that they would look after me, but they didn't.

The Howard Government's commissioned report on welfare reform, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* (McClure 2000b), discussed in earlier chapters, stressed the importance of correct information provision, stating that 'the quality and knowledge of staff undertaking the assessment and brokerage processes are vital to the success of the new model' (McClure 2000b, p. 12).

Canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) told of her obligation to seek paid work while also volunteering under Mutual Obligations policy. While this obligation was later

overturned as it had been imposed in error, it was only after what Doreen referred to as 'a big battle'. She stated:

> They're not finding jobs for me at all. They [Job Network] may for other people. If I had a trade of some sort I'd probably be very easy to place but I haven't. They don't help you get a job, they try and make you do all the work. The comment was that if I get a job I have to tell them where I've got it so they can then say to Centrelink, or whoever, it is the payment for placing me.

Doreen also explained her perceived lack of respect from Job Network service providers, declaring:

> They [Job Network] treated me like I'm a dole bludger, if you understand what I mean? I've worked since I was 15 and I've got a pretty solid history of employment. They just treat everyone the same, like you're just really trying not to work. I'm not like that at all.

Doreen argued that service providers were:

> professional bullies because they just try and intimidate with words and they just try and make you feel as though you're not doing your job, looking for work properly and I know I was and they're not prepared to listen. They were just complete bullies. Like my person, I said I wanted to work locally because there was no public transport, she said 'Oh no you'll look south and now she's decided that I have to look right out to Kangaroo Island [185 kilometres from Adelaide CBD including a one hour ferry trip].

While Doreen's account expresses perceived disrespect, it is also a sign of powerlessness in a system with power over retrenched workers. It reflects a policy model based on neoliberal assumptions calling for paternalism, and neoliberal views of a deficit model of agency (Abbott 2001; Mead 1997). It also fits with a presumption of welfare recipients as self-interested and as potentially fraudulent (Murray 1984), with the need for 'tough love' policy.

Mitsubishi workers' responses on the role of Job Network were similar to those cited in research that included in-depth interviews with 70 unemployed people who had been clients of Job Network (Marston & McDonald 2006). Three dominant themes were identified in that research: that Job Network involved 'a waste of time', that clients were 'part of the machine', with clients arguing that 'all it takes is a little respect'. This highlights the importance to welfare recipients of recognition and respect as well as material provision in welfare-to-work policy; as identified in retrenched Mitsubishi workers' accounts. A conclusion from Marston's and McDonald's research was that the interface between case managers and clients was

impeded by the clash of rationalities between New Public Management techniques and the normative functions and goals of human service organisations.

The second interviews again raised the issue of a perceived lack of accountability and transparency in workers' relationships with service providers. Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) stated 'they're a business like any other business but I don't know how accountable they are'. In respect of equity in service provision, manager Maxwell (aged 35) maintained:

> They promised a fair bit of help initially but then because I was one of the last to leave towards the end then they started talking about, 'Oh, the dollars have all been used and this and that'… 'Not as much money left in the kitty, so I can't have as much as what some of the others got'.

Donald, an electrician (aged 54), was sceptical of gaining employment through Job Network because he presumed:

> They [Job Network] like you having your name on the list because they get more money from the government but, you know, there's no list- there's no work you know.

Speaking about perceived lack of transparency in service provision process engineer Richard (aged 45) argued:

> They were hopeless, totally hopeless. … The resume they gave me wasn't any good so I had to redo the resume . . . [There was] no training, no individual training, no exit training that I needed. No, none at all. [They] had money but I don't know where all that money went to. It didn't come to us.

Richard's account reflects the claim by Kerr et al. (2002) that Job Network program design assumes that agencies will invest financially in maximising job seekers' competitiveness in the labour market, but without any obligation to do so. Government funding to the agency for placement is the same, irrespective of agency expenditure.

Maintenance fitter Dudley (aged 53), speaking of limited available information from the Job Network concerning his welfare entitlements, assumed that financial support was predicated on a view that unemployed people seek to maximise their own self-interest through forms of exploitative agency (Mead 1997). He surmised:

> if they [Job Network providers] let out too much information everyone would want to get on the bandwagon and perhaps some- they were concerned about abuse of the system perhaps. So that's why they kept things tight to their chests.

This response alludes to the funding model that Kerr et al. (2002) claim leads to perverse incentives; with agencies keeping things 'tight to their chests', in Dudley's words. However, as Cowling and Mitchell (2003) also point out, the funding attached to employment outcomes through the Job Network does not properly reflect all unemployment costs. Citing Sen (1997, p. 169) Cowling and Mitchell (2003, p. 216) state that these costs are more than financial, and include:

> the deleterious effects on self- confidence, competence, social integration and harmony, and the appreciation and use of individual freedom and responsibility.

Another feature of active welfare policies identified in the first worker interviews is paternalism, reflecting the view that welfare recipients lack motivation. Some Mitsubishi workers felt they were treated as if requiring the services of contracted 'employment accelerators' or motivators. For Mead (1992, p. 19), welfare provision always involves an exercise of authority to 'spur people into seeking their own advantage'. The second interviews revealed again how this was a point of contention for workers, with the trainer Ralph (aged 39) reflecting back that:

> then I find out at the end when I signed off and got a full time job that they had taken $1500 out for that one day [motivational] course. I thought you've got to be joking me, this is pathetic. They didn't tell me that course was going to cost $1500 out of that payment, you know what I mean? ... I think all the money, the whole lot of the money that is set aside for getting a job should be given to the person, and like monitored by the government; not given to the Job Network or whatever, who really do nothing. I mean you can spend the money on courses that you want to do instead of being told 'Oh do you want to do this and that; and then getting charged $1500 for a one-day thing that you didn't even want to do. It is ridiculous.

As well as motivations for workers, businesses were offered incentives for hiring retrenched workers through wage subsidies, and in reiterating his earlier contention, section manager Reg (aged 40) again questioned the longer-term security provided by this 13 week employer subsidy scheme and the values-base underpinning it. He argued:

> To be honest with you I think it's all a big scam … the people that employ you take advantage of that too because they're being wage subsidised by the government to take me on, you know … They should be taking me on my merit, not for the simple fact that they're getting a hand out from the government to take me on … My biggest gripe would have to be the fact that people out there were able to take advantage of Mitsubishi employees in regards to wage subsidy and all that sort of stuff- cheap labour, cheap pay and just exploitation as far as I can see. Like some of these places were paying like $14, $15 an hour you know. That's crap for an adult employee. That's what a kid gets working at McDonalds. That's not an Australian- as far as I'm concerned, an Australian decent wage.

The second interviews reiterated workers' predominantly negative responses on the role of the Job Network conveyed in the first interviews. Cowling and Mitchell (2003, p. 208) contextualise workers' accounts of their experiences by illuminating the overarching but largely overlooked structural issue that must be addressed in dealing with implementation deficiencies in welfare-to-work policy. They argue that the goal of full employment is 'alien to the Job Network agenda' and to a society that is content not to pursue a goal of full employability. In their words the 'scissors has two blades', and the Job Network cannot be effective without the demand blade being active.

The second theme moves the analysis from reflecting back on the efficacy of Job Network as the service provision arm of welfare-to-work policy, to workers' financial status at the time of the second interviews.

Theme 2: Respondents' financial status

In the second interviews workers discussed how they were managing financially. Only two workers described themselves as financially better off than at Mitsubishi. Six stated they were worse off and five others much worse off. Some workers spoke in general terms as being 'fine', 'alright', or that there was 'no problem'. The machinist Keith (aged 39) stated that he was better off because he used his redundancy package to help pay off his mortgage. Maintenance manager Michael (aged 39) explained that he too was 'better off' because:

> We're earning less but my wife and I, it drove us into a strategy and since we left Mitsubishi it's been a far better position. I didn't get a payout. It's just the fact that we've - what's the word for it? We pulled everything together, made some decisions and went out in a set direction.

Michael's statement supports his earlier accounts of actively employing his agency in 'getting out of' job loss (Lister 2004). Here Michael reveals how he made another 'wise choice' for the future through employing strategic agency to implement his 'set direction' for the future. However, many workers claimed to be worse off, speaking in terms of having to 'tighten up the purse strings'; stating that they were 'managing but struggling more'; 'having less disposable income'; and feeling the need to 'be more careful'. Toolmaker and safety representative Elliott (aged 54) best summarises workers' overall financial position at the time of the second interview, stating 'I

would basically say that money is tighter and probably be struggling more than we were, but we are managing'.

Those workers who stated they were in a much worse financial position claimed they were 'trying to weather the storm' and were experiencing a 'major struggle'. Maintenance manager Maxwell (aged 35), who had set up his own business, declared he was 'on $30,000 less than what I was on before ... I don't want to do it for too long because it's just going to eat into the [redundancy] money that I'd just been given'. Findings on the financial consequences of job loss also suggest implications for workers' agency and for the level of perceived control they maintained over their lives at this stage in the job loss process.

Theme 3: Changes to perceived control over life

Perceived control is an important area of research in sociology and psychology, as well as a strong health predictor. As discussed in the literature review one definition of perceived control is by Pearlin and Schooler's (1978, p. 5) as 'the extent to which one regards one's life-chances as being under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled'. Wallston, et al. (1987) define perceived control instead as 'the belief that one can determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and / or bring about desired outcomes'. Research by Marmot (2004) highlights the fundamental importance of personal control and the opportunities for full social engagement. Control over life circumstances protects against chronic stress and has positive biological effects (Marmot 2006a), with a series of cross sectional studies showing the relationship between low perceived control and poor health (Bobak et al. 1998, 2000)

During the second interviews workers were asked about changes to their perceived control over their lives from losing their jobs. Only three respondents claimed greater perceived control, nine stated they experienced no change, but the majority of workers perceived less control. Those who felt they had greater control spoke in terms of 'no longer having to justify things and be reliable', or that circumstance led to them becoming 'more determined to be self-sufficient'. Others who claimed no change spoke in terms of being 'philosophical', that 'things always happen for a reason', or that 'there will always be something else'. One worker's view reflected his stated standpoint which was to 'work to live and not live to work'.

However, the majority of workers perceived less control over their lives, speaking in terms of 'pressure', 'no motivation to get up in the morning', loss of esteem from loss of authority, with one worker feeling 'not up to doing a new job'. Garth the trainer (aged 37), who chose to engage in tertiary study, reflected a subject position of reflexive-object when recounting the way in which he felt constrained by forces outside his personal control. Garth explained:

> I basically lost a lot of control because I had to just turn things upside down and go down a whole new road. Whereas before we just go along the same, do the same old stuff and get the same pay each week. There was a lot of security there at Mitsubishi. It was always the most secure job in the world. When I started there, not another place in Adelaide was as secure as Mitsubishi.

The importance of secure employment was identified in the literature review in Dekker and Schaufeli's (1995) research which found an association between job insecurity and declining psychological health. In speaking about perceived control over his life Ken (aged 36), a production worker living with a serious mental illness, explained that while at Mitsubishi he was able to keep to a routine. However, he claimed that '[now] not having the workplace hanging over my head I don't have that control to get up in the morning and be motivated'. As the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH 2007b) explains, employment confers routine and structure to the day, as well as addressing economic needs and ongoing contact and shared experiences with other workers. Ken reveals how this secure structure is lost following redundancy. Canteen worker Doreen (aged 59) also explained:

> With this employment thing I just felt out of control, I just felt like I have got no control over my life anymore … It's very frustrating looking for work and not getting anything. They [potential employers] don't even answer your letters. I don't know how people cope with it.

Accounts by workers experiencing less perceived control over their lives following job loss resonate with Hoggett's (2001, p. 50) conception of the self as reflexive-object, expressed through the 'passive voice' (Hoggett 2001, p. 44). This stance reflects feelings of abjection and a subject position of being 'done to'. Workers reflect acute awareness of the way in which a range of structures acts against them, but feel powerless to change them, with their accounts revealing why perceived control is so critical for well-being. These workers' accounts suggest that the redundancy package paid to many retrenched workers would facilitate greater perceived control, and is the focus of the fourth theme.

Theme 4: The value of the redundancy package

As part of the redundancy process many Mitsubishi workers received union-negotiated severance packages. In the second interviews workers were asked how helpful these were for ameliorating the negative consequences of job loss. Responses included that these packages were 'better than other companies', a 'big help', 'definitely a bonus', 'made life a lot better', 'better than not getting anything', and that 'it would have been a lot worse'. These responses reflect the fact that even with a general decline in union power, automotive unions still have high membership levels, with a focus on securing generous redundancy packages (Lansbury et al. 2006).Workers spoke of the ways in which this form of financial assistance was very enabling, with many workers paying off their home mortgages and making other strategic choices. The trainer Rex (aged 60) explained:

> It helped me when I couldn't get a job. It did help without work for seven months. It's a long time isn't it when you need so much a week to live on? That put a bit of a hole in it.

Ken (aged 36) living with a severe mental illness felt challenged by many constraining structures when seeking alternative employment. He explained that the redundancy package provided temporary respite from worry, as it:

> helped me by for six months. I was able to just hang out and do things that I wanted, go for my drives to [favourite location] and sit by the beach and think and decide what to do for the rest of my life.

Ken's reflection calls to mind Hoggett's (2000, p. 169) contention that at times:

> inside each one of us there is a drifter and a nomad, a failure, a non-survivor and all the other personas that the passive internal voice can assume. A good society would be one which could provide a place for such selves to be, without always seeking to empower them or thrust cures upon them … there is something seriously wrong with a society in which the bestowal of full citizenship is contingent upon fitness to join a labour market which increasingly has the feel of a jungle.

Ken's reflection also highlights that mental health is very closely related to many forms of inequality, as the social gradient of health is particularly pronounced for severe mental illness (WHO 2009).

Certain respondents, including maintenance fitter Dudley (aged 53), understood that many other workers who experience redundancy do not receive equivalent severance payments. Dudley stated:

> I have worked with other people that have been made redundant and have been working with a company. Some have got very little money out of it. Some have got monies out of it, but not as much [as at Mitsubishi].

The financial buffer granted by the redundancy package points to a mixed picture on the consequences of job loss. While workers' accounts stressed their need to deal with the limitations of a neoliberal policy environment, some Mitsubishi workers still benefitted from the vestige of the male wage earners' welfare state through this form of occupational welfare.

Theme 5: The self in a social context

To conclude the second interviews workers were asked what it was like to be a research participant in a long-term research project. Although indicative of a generalised closing question in research, the responses provided further important insights echoing Mills' conjunction of 'private troubles' and 'public issues'; through workers' projections of the self in a social context. As noted in chapter three Marmot et al. (2006) state that employment provides the 'experience of self in a core social role' which is lost following retrenchment, as workers' comments clearly reveal earlier in this chapter.

In responding to this question nine workers' focused on the self, 13 identified as being part of a wider social context and three took a dual focus. Comments focused exclusively on the self were that 'it was good to be able to talk about it', 'stressful', 'helpful to verbalise', and 'happy to be part of it'. The tool setter Tyson (aged 46) who took a dual focus claimed:

> I found it good. I guess it's also a bit of therapy and really, when you start talking to a different party like yourselves [researchers], you start to look at your achievements and how you've tackled things and I guess your maturity. It's good that you can get everyone's opinion and maybe develop a package or tool that people can use to get them through a situation.

Tyson's comment reinforces Lister's (2004) model of agency embedded in broader social relationships, with agency focused on both individual and collective levels. Tyson acknowledges the interview setting as a purposeful alliance for sharing his own experiences while also revealing his aspirations for a successful, collective outcome for future workers facing job loss.

Workers' comments focusing on the self as embedded in a broader social context included the value of 'putting something back', that it was good to 'help people out down the road', or that it was 'good to be a part of helping others'. One worker expressed the hope that 'government will read it and get something out of it', while the driver and welder David (aged 57) used the interview to convey his sense of the gravity of the situation for some retrenched workers. He explained:

> Well to be involved is to actually let you know the truth about Mitsubishi. The truth on what the work was like, the truth about how the actual workers felt about needing help. You can actually see it in their faces, they're pulling their hair out and saying 'what am I supposed to do' you know'? There was that much stress in the place it was just a joke.

Raymond the maintenance fitter (aged 51) put the case for government action, arguing 'I think if the government knows how this is affecting people and in what way they can help, hopefully, they'll achieve something in working out a strategy plan'. The trainer Ralph (aged 39) maintained that being a part of the project:

> was alright, nothing really out of your life is it ? It's just a few questions. Amazing to see [what] some people are even interested in; you think like the Job Network mobs would be doing stuff like it. They don't give a crack, I think they just wanted everyone's money and that was it.

A final prophetic response came from the process engineer Richard (aged 45), who stated:

> I don't know what the [worker] surveys will come up with, I don't know. I think, I believe, that the horse has bolted and gone. If it will help Tonsley Park [automotive assembly plant] I don't know.

The Tonsley Park vehicle assembly plant closed in February 2008. With the Lonsdale engine foundry already closed, this signalled the end of 25 years of Mitsubishi's operations in South Australia. The following day Premier Rann (2008) made a statement to the media that 'these workers have shown enormous loyalty with the sword of Damocles hanging over their head for more than a decade'.

In theorising retrenched workers' responses to job loss recounted across the two waves of interviews presented in this chapter, it is of note that no worker spoke of engaging forms of agency represented at the political end of Lister's personal / political continuum. No-one told of taking collective action designed to 'get back (at)' Mitsubishi. Nor did they tell of engaging in forms of action, including industrial action, by 'getting organised'. Responses were instead confined to 'getting by', or

'getting out of' the negative consequences of job loss represented at the personal end of Lister's continuum. In Mill's (1959) terms workers' responses were reflected as 'private pains' more than as 'public issues'.

The reasons why are open to speculation. It may be that the union negotiated redundancy packages were a powerful buffer for some workers against the need to take industrial action or collective action towards securing improved future policy. Also, as discussed in chapter two, the AMWU had been successful historically in its collective bargaining and taking the action necessary for securing good wages and other conditions in the automotive sector. Workers may have also been ambivalent about 'getting (back) at' the Mitsubishi 'family' that had generally treated them well over the corporation's 25 year operations in South Australia. In addition, the respondents had known, or at least anticipated, that plant closure was inevitable under ongoing globalisation and changes to capitalism. Despite the benefits and incentives from government largesse to Mitsubishi over many years, the corporation would ultimately rationalise its global operations. However, another reason why workers' accounts did not include 'getting back' at responses is their possible reluctance to broach such an issue within an interview setting.

The range of constraints to workers' agency from job loss occurring under these broader structural arrangements were further compounded by a more constraining industrial relations policy environment, and more conditional welfare under social policy. However, despite the limitations of welfare framed and delivered as a 'safety net' under neoliberal policies, Newman et al. (2009) point out that a crucial factor in dealing with the consequences of job loss at Mitsubishi is that even with the outcomes of major structural changes, Australia at least still has a 'safety net'. This provides state benefits to workers who experience job loss due to industry restructuring that mediate the more catastrophic consequences. Unlike some jurisdictions Australia also has a universal health system which is another enabling structure for dealing with potential health outcomes of job loss. From this perspective there is a paradox. Despite the raft of negative consequences of job loss recounted by workers, certain aspects of the Mitsubishi restructure stand as a testament to an enduring vestige of the male wage-earners' welfare state. These are a reminder of the earlier aspirations for more enabling policies in Western nation states.

The demographic profile of the 33 Mitsubishi workers in the case study reveals that, although diverse, many workers shared similar material circumstances and roles. In theorising why people with similar personal circumstances may have very different experiences and consequences arising from job loss Orton (2009, p. 436) argues:

> The various dimensions of agency, the very essence of our humanity, means that this is entirely predictable; people simply use the resources available to them, their skills and motivations etc, and the outcomes will inevitably differ. Demanding greater agency or moral judgementalism and apportionment of blame is consequently of limited analytic value.

As Heron (2008, p. 98) maintains, there is the need to recognise the complexity of human agency, and:

> We have to not only look at the outcomes of exercising human agency but also what produces the outcomes both internally and externally and the relationship between the two.

The available skills, motivations, and both interior and material resources available to each individual are linked to a range of socio-economic structures. These include educational opportunities and attainment, family supports, financial resources, employment status, and a range of personal subjectivities including gender, age, race, dis / ability and sexuality. These structures inevitably mediate both the material and emotional consequences of job loss and either pose limits to or facilitate creative agency. Further, individual subject positions encompass rational but also non-rational agency and its implications, as the accounts of workers who experienced suicidal ideation, and those who struggled with containing the feeling and emotions of other retrenched workers clearly reveal.

As canteen worker Doreen put it, when it comes to easily readjusting to changed life circumstances, for different reasons 'some people can do that, and some can't'. Doreen's account, highlighting the limits to creative agency, implies the need for a range of appropriate responses accommodating the potential range of subject positions held by retrenched workers, and that these be acknowledged and entrenched through more enabling social policy.

Chapter summary

This chapter explored key themes concerned with the consequences for retrenched workers of automotive job loss experienced within a policy context. A brief summary

of findings from the longitudinal study was presented to help contextualise the case study findings. Analysis of the first wave of interviews began with a discussion of the nature of working life at Mitsubishi and the corporation's critical and wider role in many workers' lives. The generally positive nature of this worker / employer relationship was a key indicator of the likely level of loss to be experienced by workers upon retrenchment.

The consequences of job loss were explored by discussing the efficacy of formal support structures provided by Mitsubishi, the union and Job Network service providers, highlighting that welfare-to-work policy was a major issue and constraining structure for many respondents. The analysis also compared subsequent employment with working life at Mitsubishi, often revealing a more precarious working environment. This chapter then explored the impact of job loss on workers' psychosocial health and well-being and discussed a range of subjectivities, including trust, 'moving on' and advice to others facing redundancy that helped to further illuminate the personal nature of job loss and dealing with its consequences.

Analysis of the second interviews reiterated the largely negative responses concerning the role of the Job Network; workers' current financial status; and changes to the level of perceived control they had over their lives. The redundancy package ameliorating the impact of retrenchment was found to be a very enabling structure, compared with others that were often constraining. In articulating the consequences of their lived experiences of job loss, workers' revealed the interaction of their agency with a range of structures; especially those associated with the hegemonic link between globalisation and neoliberal welfare-to-work policy theorised in chapter two.

Workers' agency accounts focused on their individual capacities and actions, illuminated by insights from Lister's and Hoggett's theoretical perspectives on agency, and augmented by the wider literature in this thesis, including Lakoff's insights on framing. These personal accounts lead to questioning the ways in which policy structures may better enable agency in the face of future job loss. The lessons gained from examining the issues raised in this and earlier chapters are the focus of the following and final chapter which addresses the third study question on the implications for Australian social policy in the early part of the 21st century.

Chapter 9:

Discussion and conclusion

> Many of us feel in the grip of forces over which we have no control. Can we re-impose our will upon them? I believe we can. The powerlessness we experience is not a sign of personal failings, but reflects the incapacities of our institutions. We need to reconstruct those we have, or create new ones, in ways appropriate to the global age (Giddens 1999).
>
> A secure sense of being is the basis for 'doing' and 'relating' or the foundation of interdependence (Hoggett 2000, p. 146).

Introduction

This chapter concludes this thesis's case study of job loss at Mitsubishi. It provides a brief overview of the key findings from the two thematic analyses relating to the first two research questions, before addressing the third research question which was: 'What lessons are there from this study for Australian social policy in the 21st century?' The first two questions were addressed by interrogating the interaction of social structure and human agency in chapters five and six, then applying the theoretical concepts across the two thematic analyses in chapters seven and eight. This illuminated a range of enabling values and concepts that are linked to the study findings to help theorise the implications for future policy. This chapter will consider the possibility of promoting the concept of an overarching and progressive policy frame for welfare reform, before briefly noting a shift in policy focus under the Labor Government that came to power in Australia in 2007. This will help to further contextualise the study findings linked specifically to the tenure of the Howard Coalition Government. Finally, the chapter then addresses the strengths and limitations of the thesis, makes suggestions for future research, and provides some concluding remarks.

The main aim of healthy public policy is to create a supportive environment that enables people to lead healthy lives (WHO 1988). As part of this aim, as Baum (2008, pp. 578, 583) attests, public health concentrates more and more on reforming the operation and practices of organisations, institutions and communities, with

effective public health practitioners being reflective in their practice by using theories from a variety of disciplines in an eclectic way. Healthy public policy is thus concerned not only with sound public policies but also with the environments in which these are enacted. This is often within government entities and human service organisations with a normative role based on a guiding principle of social justice (Jones & May 1992); a principle that has arguably been undermined under neoliberal policy in ways that have been drawn out in this thesis.

Overview of key findings

This section briefly reviews the key findings from the two thematic analyses, beginning with workers' subjective experiences of job loss.

Thematic analysis 1: Subjective experiences of job loss

The first study question, 'What are workers' health and well-being experiences following job loss occurring as a result of industry restructuring?', was addressed by undertaking a thematic analysis that explored retrenched Mitsubishi workers' personal accounts of job loss recounted across two waves of semi-structured interviews. Workers' reflections also illuminated the different ways in which they engaged their agency in dealing with job loss consequences. The first interviews highlighted that working life at Mitsubishi, and the wider role the corporation had played in the lives of many of its workers, reflected an employment landscape retaining vestiges of the historical and enabling male wage earners' welfare state, grounded in the more humanitarian values of welfare regimes developed following the Second World War and entrenched in many OECD states. The broadly positive experience of employment at Mitsubishi indicated the likely level of loss that would be experienced for these workers facing retrenchment.

The findings from the first interviews included the consequences for workers' mental health, reported in accounts of, emotional distress, financial stress, suicidal ideation, experiencing a grieving process, and the consequences for mental health in respect of families and broader social relations. Other findings were that the range of post-retrenchment formal supports provided by Mitsubishi, the union and Job Network employment service providers were enabled and constrained in different ways by neoliberal economic hegemony and a range of policy structures. These structures included the privatised Job Network employment agencies that commodified

workers' welfare; reduced union power; more precarious employment and heightened job insecurity; and stricter welfare conditionality.

The second round of interviews reinforced the largely negative findings from the first interviews in respect of the workers' interface with the policy terrain. They also showed that workers' financial status had generally declined, even though financial constraints were mediated for some workers by a relatively generous redundancy package. While respondents claimed that this package was a very enabling structure in the face of many structural constraints, job loss still had negative consequences for workers' financial status, and for their psychosocial health, as articulated in their accounts of changes to perceived control over their lives. In summary, the key findings from the two waves of interviews identified the consequences for workers' mental health, and the difficulties they faced in negotiating neoliberal welfare-to-work policy through their interaction with the outsourced Job Network service providers.

Thematic analysis 2: Policy actors' values and intentions

The second study question, 'What is the broader industrial and welfare policy environment shaping the experience of job loss in Australia?', was addressed by undertaking a policy and document analysis on welfare conditionality. This explored the values, views and policy intentions of several key policy actors in the industrial relations and social policy arenas of the Howard Coalition Government. These values and views underpinned the neoliberal policy design and implementation at the time of the Mitsubishi restructure. This analysis also helped to contextualise the policy context of workers' subjective experiences of job loss by examining policy actors' views on Mutual Obligations and the Job Network as social policy, Work Choices industrial relations policy, and by discussing policy actors' largely negative assumptions concerning welfare recipients' agency and welfare dependency that grounded more stringent welfare conditionality. Finally, the analysis explored policy actors' 'moral', 'Australian', 'private enterprise' and so-called 'religious' values informing policy. The focus on values provided more nuanced aspects of policy by illustrating the distinctive marriage of neoliberal and neoconservative social policy in interaction with welfare recipients' agency under the Howard Coalition Government.

The key findings from the policy analysis included identification of the dichotomy between the recommendations of the McClure Report (McClure 2000b) on welfare reform and the Government's own response. This report promoted a wide interpretation of mutual obligations; including the obligations of businesses, the broader community, individuals and the Government. Instead, the Government's main response was to entrench the obligations of individual welfare recipients through welfare-to-work policy, with service provision by the privatised Job Network. Another finding was a shift in policy focus from structural constraints to individual welfare recipients' motivation and agency. This highlighted a neoliberal ideological stance underpinning what Lakoff (2004) terms a 'Strict Father' policy model, discussed in earlier chapters.

Based on the findings of both thematic analyses, the third study question theorises their implications for Australian social policy in the 21st century. The following section briefly recaps the theory on the interaction of structure and agency that guided the case study as a precursor to this discussion.

Structure and agency perspectives in the case study

When analysing the experiences of job loss and the consequences for the health and well-being of retrenched Mitsubishi workers, a running thread throughout their personal accounts was the different agency responses that they employed in the face of enabling and constraining structures. This led to interrogating the co-deterministic relationship between structure and agency that underpins this case study. Mills' (1959) concept of the *sociological imagination* helped to situate each worker within a wider social context, with job loss understood as both a 'private trouble' and a 'public issue'. While Giddens' (1984) *structuration* theory helped theorise issues of enablement and constraint within this relationship, it was Lister's (2004) and Hoggett's (2001) more nuanced models of agency that facilitated a better understanding of workers' responses to both the material and emotional consequences of job loss.

The value of drawing upon these two models is that Lister's typology allows for an analysis that situates constraints to workers' agency and participation at either, or both, the individual and collective level, and within the context of existing power relations. Secondly, Hoggett's typology is valuable for identifying constraints to

agency that are rooted in individuals' unique interior selves and their non-unitary forms of agency. This model accounts for the reality that individuals sometimes lack insight into things they may say or do based on a range of emotional or life triggers, such as job loss, and the potential impact this has on the self or others. It therefore helps to understand the need for policy structures to deal sensitively with difficult challenging personal experiences such as retrenchment, onset of illness, or other personal issues that cannot be avoided, and which may involve negative or unintended consequences. As Wright (2012, p. 322) puts it, Hoggett's model achieves this by deconstructing:

> a fictional version of invincible humanity [that] makes no concession for influential or debilitating emotions (such as love, fear, denial, anger, hatred), or physical and psychological affects (pain and suffering, conflicts or complexity).

In turning to the application of these two typologies of agency in the case study, Lister's model showed that workers' agency was confined to expression at the individual level. This was mainly through actions reflecting '(just) getting by' or coping, and sometimes those actions that fostered 'getting out of' negative job loss consequences, such as undertaking higher education. 'Getting back at' and 'getting organised' politically or collectively were not strategies employed by this particular cohort, with the analysis speculating that the main reasons were that union negotiated redundancy packages may have mediated the harsher aspects of job loss, and that workers may have been ambivalent about 'getting back' at the Mitsubishi 'family'. In addition workers had been aware of the possibility of plant closure for several years. To reiterate, respondents may also have chosen not to openly discuss any instances of 'getting back' at Mitsubishi or any other party within the interview setting.

By using Hoggett's model in the analysis it could be shown from respondents' comments that most retrenched workers engaged reflexively when dealing with the consequences of job loss. However, some accounts told of very complex personal circumstances that found a minority of respondents situated at the lower end of a continuum between reflexivity and non-reflexivity, and at the lower end of a spectrum of empowerment. The latter spans a subject position of the self as an active agent and the self as a passive object. Hoggett's model acknowledges the potential for a 'collapse of agency' for some people under certain circumstances (Wright 2012, p. 317). Retrenched workers who were unable to engage their agency reflexively

explained that their emotions were instead projected or enacted in negative ways, and with unintended consequences. Even this small minority of respondents highlight the importance of accommodating non-unitary forms of agency within social policy.

In shifting the focus to social structure and the policy analysis, key policy actors' discourses gave testament as to why welfare-to-work policy could be such a negative and powerful constraint to workers' agency. These discourses highlighted policy actors' values and intentions underpinning neoliberal policy approaches. The views of policy actors were theorised by drawing upon Lakoff's insights which help to understand how mental structures shape the way individuals view the world, and the potential for conceptual metaphors to influence policy structures and institutions. Policy actors' discourses on welfare conditionality reflected underlying metaphors including 'Tough Love', a 'Strict Father' approach to policy, and a conservative version of 'Moral Strength' embedded within policy. These values prioritise a view that an individual's own moral strength and agency take primacy over social structure in explaining and shaping his or her life circumstances. If solutions are mainly to be found in individual strengths, structural constraints may therefore be ignored, and enabling state policy responses minimised.

Lakoff's conceptual metaphors illuminating the policy analysis helped to theorise the type of *demands* placed on individual agency in the face of job loss under neoliberal and neoconservative policy structures. These insights complemented Lister's and Hoggett's theoretical contribution for identifying the *scope* of agency constraints, including the material and interior constraints that were identified in retrenched workers' accounts. Theorising agency and structure perspectives within the two thematic analyses showed the need for more enabling policy structures, but also identified a range of enabling concepts and values that may help inform the way ahead for policy. These are linked to study findings that address the third research question in the following section.

Study findings: implications for future policy

This section addresses the third study question: 'What lessons are there from this study for Australian social policy in the 21st century?' Based on the integrated findings of the workers' interviews and the policy analysis, this study highlights the need for more holistic policy approaches, such as those theorised in recent

reappraisals of agency in social policy presented in chapter five. These approaches call for respecting and not only making demands upon welfare recipients' agency. This case study confirms the importance of the complex interplay between structure and agency as a way of identifying the need for change and, as Carpenter et al. (2007) point out, this interplay also underpins remedies or alternative policy paradigms.

At the broadest conceptual level implications for social policy are that the consequences of job loss need to be addressed by policy more effectively. Understanding the need for policy structures to support agency to a greater degree firstly requires bringing to light the underlying values informing policy intentions.

Identifying values informing policy intentions

As part of theorising the way ahead for social policy this case study and thesis reinforces the claim that academic enquiry may help uncover policy actors' beliefs underpinning social policy and the welfare state. As Burchardt (2007) argues, this is critical for making policies work. The study highlighted the way in which neoliberal policies lead to more stringent welfare conditionality, a growing focus on individual-based approaches within policy responses, and forms of case management incorporating what Carpenter et al. (2007) refer to as 'a contradictory mix of surveillance and sanctions'. Findings from workers' accounts of dealings with the Job Network confirm that the constraints of the welfare-to-work policy included perceptions of 'hassling' (due to excessive surveillance), fragmented and limited service provision, a perceived lack of transparency and equity in its provision, and instances of paternalism.

These findings indicate that prevailing policy was perceived as insufficient to assist workers in dealing with their job loss and in some cases was even damaging. Respondents' accounts point to the need for retrenched workers to be treated humanely as people and not as work force commodities. The findings on workers' experiences suggest that successful reintegration into the work force requires having more time devoted to more service-oriented approaches in place of imposed 'independent' problem-solving by individuals. The analysis showed that there is little advantage in telling already motivated people that they need to be more motivated. As some retrenched workers' accounts revealed, in respect of their material and

psychological welfare, there is the need to mediate policy calls for the hyper-agency attributes demanded of the active, creative, reflexive, agent. This is because these demands underplay the power of structural forces.

Understanding social and structural determinants of health

This thesis and case study also reinforce the extent to which employment status is a major health determinant. By reflecting upon the consequences for workers' psychosocial health and well-being as a result of losing their jobs, this case study is also a reminder of how employment is a key influence in healthy lives. It supports the literature explaining the ways in which health is the outcome of complex social influences (Brunner & Marmot 1999; Graham 2004; Wilkinson & Pickett 2009). As drawn out in the case study, this thesis has identified that overarching structures have consequences for health, including socio-economic and political structures, and the industry, social, and industrial relations policies that together shape individual workers' job loss experiences.

As part of their typology of key policies and interventions needed to reduce health inequalities, the CSDH (2007, p. 111) recommends the development of policies promoting full employment, with more emphasis on full-time and secure employment. Respondents' accounts of subsequent employment to that at Mitsubishi often told of a lack of job security. The lack of commitment to full employment in Australia under neoliberalism was identified in the discussion on the different historic welfare rationalities in Australia in chapter six. It was also noted in chapter seven in the contention by Cowling and Mitchell (2003) that limitations of neoliberal welfare to work policy and privatised service provision are compounded by an absence of policies to alleviate macroeconomic constraint and create real employment opportunities in Australia.

The study findings also showed the need for a broader conception of health in social policy, and an understanding of the importance of psychosocial health perspectives linking subjective experience and mental health. The CSDH (2007, p. 15) provides insights on the links between employment conditions and health inequalities through psychosocial, behavioural and physiological pathways. Material deprivation and economic inequality are closely linked to employment conditions, and may also have an important effect on chronic diseases and mental health via these pathways. The

study's findings related to mental health, including emotional distress, financial stress, changes to perceived control and even suicidal ideation, and the effect on broader social relations, bear testament to the link between employment conditions and health, and the corresponding need to treat workers who lose their jobs more holistically.

The findings from workers' accounts also support Wilkinson's (1999) contention that unemployment is often so traumatic due to the conjunction of both the material and psychological consequences. Respondents spoke not only of financial constraints but also of the psychological and emotional consequences, including experiencing a grieving process, upon losing their jobs. The CSDH (2007) states that there is a largely false dichotomy between theories on psychosocial or material factors, as most material phenomena also have social meanings.

Acknowledging complex human subjectivity

This case study has highlighted the need for social policy to validate the complexity of human subjectivity, especially given the differing levels of reflexivity and the non-unitary agency accounted for under Hoggett's model of agency. This recognises that each social actor has the potential for multiple selves, and that under certain circumstances an 'unfamiliar self' can act non-reflexively (Wright 2012, p. 316). Workers' accounts showed how complex human subjectivity involves subject positions that may shift between being a 'victim', a 'creative agent' and an 'own worst enemy' to self and others based on a range of emotional life-triggers; with job loss seen as one trigger. The case study showed that workers were situated across a range of these subject positions.

Non-unitary forms of agency were highlighted, particularly within workers' accounts of suicidal ideation, and the accounts of those whose difficult role was to contain the affects of others, at the same time as dealing with their own retrenchments. As all individuals may at times identify with the spectrum of subject positions acknowledged in Hoggett's agency model, this indicates that policy must account for the reality of such human strengths and weaknesses. As Wright (2012, p. 324) points out, rather than continuing to base policies on an oversimplification of how individuals act, and notions of 'bad' agency, there is scope for policy to be grounded

in the lived experience and perspectives of service users. This thesis therefore supports Wright's (2012, p324) contention that policy could:

> engage with the soft edges of the self and recognise connections to intersubjective context by legitimising the multitude of non-individual causes of being out of work

This study also endorses growing calls for what Hoggett (2000, p. 145) refers to as the 'parallel transformation of social relations' that satisfies emotional as well as material needs, with retrenched workers' accounts clearly highlighting the need to attend to both. Workers' comments were equally animated when articulating the emotional aspects of job loss as they were when describing the material or financial outcomes. Without acknowledging the importance of complex human subjectivity and the reality of non-unitary agency, there is no comprehensive explanation for addictions, depression, or self-harming behaviours, as identified in the case study; unless these are attributed to genetic or physiological factors. To reiterate a point made in chapter five, human agency must be understood within the context of an individual's whole of life circumstances, as well as her or his interaction with a wide range of constraining and enabling structures. This is an important issue for health promotion linked to lifestyle, which is not always a choice for individuals, but is instead an adaptation to the structures around them. Health promotion needs to be based on more than crude behaviourism: situated instead in a social context, and adopting strategies that take account of limitations to agency.

Embedding recognition and respect in social policy

As Lister (2004) points out, redistribution and recognition and respect do not relate to separate economic and cultural realms, but are a dual dimension and perspective on social justice across intermeshed domains. The thesis findings also support Lister's call for greater recognition and respect to be afforded individuals who employ a range of different agency responses to deal with difficult or complex life circumstances. The case study showed how difficult it was for some retrenched workers to engage their agency for even just 'getting by', or for adopting a more strategic or longer-term focus through responses for 'getting out' of the structural constraints of unemployment. To reiterate a point made by respondent Angas (aged 55) who had experienced suicidal ideation, people do not always realise that for some individuals overcoming job loss 'is not a small thing'.

The findings show the ways some retrenched workers perceived they were treated by service providers with varying levels of disrespect, rather than the understanding they expected. These included workers who felt they were objectified as part of a caseload, 'hassled', provided with limited or fragmented services, or without sufficient attention being given to their broader social and structural circumstances. While a more extreme example of disrespect included one worker (Doreen aged 59) claiming she was made to feel like a 'dole-bludger', most responses reflected the less overt lack of respect embedded within the values and intentions underpinning neoliberal / neoconservative policies. One example from the policy analysis was Senator Newman's (1999a) argument that the state should not underwrite 'what can only be described as a destructive and self-indulgent welfare mentality'.

Workers' accounts of the need to deal with front line workers within the Job Networks shed light on the extent to which they too are likely to also be 'hassled' under neoliberal policies, with performance evaluations leading to perverse incentives, and other negative aspects of their role, as discussed in chapter seven. These show the potential for frontline workers to become a 'whipping horse' and to be 'blamed for things that neither citizens nor governments will properly address' (Hoggett 2006, p. 185). Negative consequences identified by the thesis included a compromised level of service for clients, and 'burnout' for agency workers: a point also noted in chapter seven. The inherent lack of respect for both service users and service providers entrenched within neoliberal policy design underscores the need for sound grounding principles for welfare reform.

Adopting 'good enough' principles for welfare

The study findings show how the mental health consequences of job loss may also be compounded by the difficulties retrenched workers faced when negotiating the policy terrain; including being sent by Job Network staff to multiple job interviews at the same time as trying to maintain stability in family life . One example was the reflection by respondent Angas (aged 55), who stated that although he was 'stressed out', he was sent 'here, there and everywhere' [while] 'trying to keep [his] family going as well'. Identifying such high demands that may be imposed on an individual in such a vulnerable state indicates the value of adopting sound guiding principles for reforming policy. In light of these findings, what appears very relevant to the thesis findings is Winnicott's (1965, p. 65) theorisation of 'good enough' principles for the

socialisation of young children, with its links to ontological security, attainment of autonomy, self-respect and self-esteem. This also informs the range of 'good enough' principles developed by Williams (1999). Her framework of seven 'good enough' principles for welfare policy reform includes interdependence, care, intimacy, bodily integrity, identity, transnational welfare and voice; recognising the equal moral worth of all people.

Further analysis undertaken as part of the thesis case study found a link between the study findings and each of William's seven principles. However, interdependence was the most critical for this study. In respect of welfare provision, Williams (1999) argues the need to acknowledge the reality of human interdependence rather than attempting to reconcile a dependence / independence dichotomy. However, the study found that policy actors did not validate human interdependence but instead sought to enforce forms of independence underpinning a conservative version of Lakoff's 'Moral Strength' conceptual metaphor. Chapter seven presented the discourses of a range of policy actors supporting such a stance, including Prime Minister Howard's (2000, p. 5) contention that he would promote the mix of liberalisation in economic policy, and 'modern conservatism' in social policy to strengthen welfare recipients' independence. Minister Andrews (2005) endorsed a 'work-first' policy approach including greater scope for welfare recipients to 'experience an impact on their income support' as a strategy to discourage welfare dependency. These two examples from within the policy actors' discourses illuminate the underlying 'Strict Father' approach to policy, rather than a policy approach with more enabling attributes to facilitate greater individual capability and responsibility. The latter is an approach represented by Lakoff's 'Nurturant Parent' conceptual metaphor.

Promoting capability and responsibility

The findings in this thesis suggest the need to consider a range of alternative social policy paradigms. A range of alternatives have been identified in the wider literature as part of theorising future social policy. These include promoting the 'social investment state', a term coined by Giddens (1998) in his articulation of 'third way' politics. Giddens maintains that lifelong education and a greater role for government in the social economy are two important social investment strategies (Perkins et al. 2004). Promoting the social investment state is also an argument that expenditure on human capital enables a view of citizens as pro-active and creative agents; ready and

willing to take on risks (Giddens 1998). Midgley and Sherraden (2000) also emphasise investment in social and human capital, employment, building community and individual assets, and removing barriers to economic participation as consistent with a social investment approach. Carney (2008) notes other potential policy approaches for Australia, including capability frameworks, and focusing on questions of social exclusion. Dean (2003) promotes 'life-first' rather than 'work-first' approaches to welfare.

The thesis findings suggest a need to specifically focus on individuals' capabilities in the face of the structural constraints of job loss. Indeed, more visionary alternatives to neoliberal 'work-first' policy prescriptions have been theorised from a human rights and capability framework devised by Sen (1999). This framework adopts the standpoint that welfare and human needs should be the main objectives of all public policy, with economic growth subordinate (Carpenter, Freda & Speeden 2007). As reinforced by this study, a capability approach would also acknowledge that policy must be concerned with more than distributional issues, with retrenched Mitsubishi workers' welfare concerns encompassing issues of respectful treatment as well as financial outcomes. A capability approach would also help to resolve a difficult issue for welfare policy. As Clayton (2010) maintains, a focus on [paid] employment may not be the universally best option for welfare, even though imposed through work-first policies. For example, the policy analysis revealed that Minister Abbott (2004, p. 5) promoted a work-first policy approach expressed in terms of 'making work more attractive than the alternative', and arguing that 'even "victims" of a market economy retain significant capacity to help themselves'.

A difficult issue for social policy remains the need to provide 'incentives' for some welfare recipients in meeting their obligations, without penalising those in more 'genuine' need of assistance. The findings from this thesis show that this ideological and practical struggle was constantly played out in the tensions between the views of retrenched workers and those of policy actors. For example, while Minister Abbott (2004, p. 5) focused on the need to deal with welfare recipients who 'find work more trouble than it is worth', retrenched workers explained that limited service provision under welfare to work policy led to a focus on their individual responsibility. Sixty two year old Ronald's candid response when explaining that he would 'just get his own job', rather than bother to go through the Job Networks, also reflects a level of

resignation concerning the underlying tension within this ideological struggle. Burchardt (2007) contends that this tension may resolved through promoting and investing in human capability, as this investment expands human capacity for responsibility. The link between expanding individuals' capabilities, and their capacity for creative agency and responsibility, is a key insight when devising future social policy. As Carney (2008) argues, social protection, incentives and capacity-building all go hand in hand.

Promoting a progressive policy frame

The thesis findings contextualised above by identified enabling values and concepts suggest the potential for a more progressive policy frame. The thesis has highlighted the ways in which terms including 'dependence', 'independence', 'free', and 'flexible', were framed according to policy actors' underlying neoliberal and neoconservative views and values. Human dependence is thereby framed negatively as inherently infantile, while independence is framed positively from a market perspective. This pitches 'dependence' against 'independence' in order to project the latter in a positive and normative light. This study also identifies the ways in which the term 'market' is framed as 'free' rather than constraining of agency, and the term 'flexible' is framed in ways that puts the onus on individual workers to be flexible or 'pliable' in respect of finding employment.

The findings from the case study theorised in the previous section support Lakoff's (2003) promotion of a more progressive approach, rather than maintaining policy approaches confined to adopting ever more stringent forms of welfare conditionality. Workers' subjective accounts and policy actors' discourses both illustrated the ways in which constraints to agency were imposed and justified by an underlying argument that more cost effective ways of achieving labour market transition are necessary, and that these are best achieved under a neoliberal welfare-to-work policy approach. Given the hegemony of conservative framing within neoliberal discourse and policy prescriptions, as highlighted by the policy analysis, it seems sensible to support Lakoff's argument that it is necessary to 'capture the territory of the mind' for devising more enabling future policy, and that in doing so:

> The language must fit the conceptual reframing, a reframing from the perspective of progressive values. It is not just a matter of words, though the right ones are needed to evoke progressive frames (Lakoff 2004, p. 115).

While the case study findings are confined to job loss experienced within the context of Howard Coalition Government policy, these may be situated in greater context by briefly reflecting on the conceptual reframing of policy under the current Australian political regime.

Welfare to work policy under an alternative Australian political regime

In 2007, soon after the Mitsubishi restructure which was the focus of this thesis, the Howard Coalition Government was defeated at the polls by the Australian Labor Party led by Rudd; in an election turning on the issue of the Howard Government's Work Choices industrial relations policy. Chapter six noted the successful 'Your Rights at Work' campaign spearheaded by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) that was a strong impetus for a change in government. Reforming the employment services system was a major plank of the incoming Labor Government's policy agenda. The Government's aims were to soften the compliance framework and provide greater funding to disadvantaged job seekers. In distinction to Work Choices industrial relations policy, the *Fair Work* Act 2009 created Fair Work Australia as the organisational vehicle to perform the functions previously undertaken by the Fair Pay Commission (outlined in chapter six). New regulations supported enterprise bargaining in place of Australian Workplace Agreements. Section 171 of the *Fair Work* Act 2009 states that the Objects of the Act are to provide a 'simple, flexible, and fair framework that allows for collective bargaining', and enables Fair Work Australia to facilitate 'good faith' bargaining by a range of measures.

In differentiating between the Job Network and the Rudd Government's employment services successor (named Job Services Australia), Ramia and Carney (2010) note that the Labor Government committed an additional AUS$880 million to fund 238,000 training places, as well as establishing the national Social Inclusion Board. However, where there are elements of continuity between the two regimes is in maintaining a market based approach with reliance on commercial contracts for service provision. Only time will tell the extent to which welfare-to-work policy under the Australian Labor Government may prove to be more enabling for welfare recipients than that delivered under the Howard Coalition Government, and whether workers retrenched under these conditions will fare any better than the Mitsubishi workers.

However, Ramia and Carney (2010) maintain that changes to the compliance and sanctions program in welfare-to-work policy invoke notions of 'social citizenship' (Marshall 1963), or services 'as of right'; moving on from the previous 'duties discourse' (Roche 1992) under the Howard Government. In response to this change of policy focus, a spokesperson for the right-wing think tank the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), Saunders (2008), has criticised rolling back the Work for the Dole program and the increased provisions for training: calling for the retention of a work-first policy approach. To restate Yeatman's (1990, p. 155) contention, discourse creates reality by 'naming and giving it meaning'. In another gesture to differentiate the Labor Party's policy stance from the Howard Government, Senator Kim Carr, the current Minister for Human Services has used his first speech as Minister for Human Services to criticise some of the bureaucratic language used to describe people seeking benefits. Carr (2012) states that some bureaucracies need to scrap terms like 'customers' and 'clients' when describing people who have no choice but to deal with the agencies.

To adopt the more progressive policy frame, which the findings in chapter seven of this thesis suggest is needed, also suggests the need to move beyond what Hamilton and Maddison (2007) name the 'silencing of dissent': an issue discussed in the policy analysis. Maddison (2009) states that in its first year in office the Rudd Labor Government announced the removal of 'gag clauses' that had been a feature of the Howard Government's contractual arrangements with government-funded organizations discussed in chapter seven. In reframing the relationship between the Government and NGO sector the then Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, stated:

> You only get the best possible public policy if you have the debate. The former government took the view that silence was better. We take the view that debate and hearing everybody's voices is much better (quoted in Franklin & Lunn 2008).

This brief reflection on ways in which policy is being reframed under an alternative government throws light on the potential for creating alternative policy discourses and policy structures which would be more enabling for retrenched workers and other welfare recipients. Reframing arguably begins with terms such as 'welfare dependency', 'mutual obligations', and 'free and flexible' labour markets in ways that have been interrogated in this thesis. Ultimately, the thesis findings suggest that this involves what Williams (1999) calls reframing the 'customer' as the 'citizen', and the state as a protector against risks instead of a generator of risks. This would

enable a policy environment that is more protective of the health and well-being of future workers facing retrenchment. There is the potential for ongoing research to uncover the extent to which the current Labor Government adopts a 'Nurturant Parent', or more enabling welfare-to-work policy approach, in distinction to the 'Strict Father' policy approach of the Howard Government analysed in the case study.

Thesis strengths and limitations

This thesis adds to the literature on the health and well-being consequences of job loss experienced within a policy context. Silverman (2005, p. 49) argues that all research projects are just 'one way of slicing the cake'; acknowledging the limitations to the scope and findings of any research project. While specific methodological limitations associated with the interview data were addressed in detail in chapter four, the following section reflects on the *overall* strengths and weaknesses of this case study and thesis.

Thesis strengths

One of the strengths of this thesis is augmenting the job loss literature from a South Australian perspective. This is an important aspect, not only due to the limited South Australian literature, but also given this state's historical reliance on automotive manufacturing that is now in decline. A further strength is in highlighting the critical mental health as well as material consequences of job loss, with the case study giving retrenched workers voice in bringing these issues to light. Although there is wide-ranging research on job loss there is more limited Australian qualitative research linking the human face of job loss from industry restructuring to the policy arena. By adopting an agency and structure perspective this thesis has illuminated the dichotomy between the needs and views of welfare recipients, including retrenched workers, and the policy limitations imposed as a consequence of policy actors' neoliberal policy intentions. The study integrated this dichotomy conceptually in order to identify implications for future social policy. This case study also highlighted a distinct and important feature of neoliberalism under the Howard Coalition Government, which is the conjunction with neoconservatism; identifying negative consequences for welfare recipients.

While much job loss research adopts a quantitative methodology and economic focus, this case study reinforces the reality that the multifaceted consequences of job loss are much more than economic; encompassing both material and psychosocial dimensions. This thesis therefore also adds to the literature by stressing the importance of adopting a broader perspective on the nature and scope of the policy environment helping to shape the experience of job loss. In building a picture of job loss within a policy context this thesis has provided in-depth stories, and a broad landscape spanning the hegemonic link between globalisation and neoliberalism and individual subjectivity. It has done this by using debates from the frontiers of social policy and welfare research. By drawing on these more recent debates this thesis also augments the wider literature by applying the combined insights of Hoggett's and Lister's theoretical models of human agency to empirical data in Australian research. This was aided by the use of Lakoff's insights on the power of conceptual metaphors and 'framing' to shape and influence institutions and policy direction.

Thesis limitations

One limitation of this thesis is the relatively small number of only thirty-three respondents in the case study, which included only six females. This study cohort represented a small percentage of the 371 respondents canvassed for the longitudinal study which explored the impacts of retrenchment when over 1000 workers lost their jobs in 2004 and 2005 (as outlined in the research methodology in chapter four). A further potential limitation of the thesis lies in the scope of the analysis of policy actors' values and intentions as this was confined, albeit intentionally, to a limited number of key political players from one Australian political party, even though policy is enacted at many different levels by a wide range of policy actors. While key actors in public policy formulation are politicians, they also include bureaucrats, interest groups, the media and others, with policy formulation involving struggles for power and influence by policy networks and policy communities (Baum 2008, p. 549). Nevertheless, these limitations also reveal possibilities for further research.

Further research

A better understanding of agency and reflexivity is important for research involving wide ranging human service organisations that encompass health, including mental health, education, employment, correctional, and family and children's services.

These are domains all operating within a 'dilemmatic space' (Hoggett 2006a, p. 192; Hoggett et al. 2009), or a public space that cannot abdicate dealing with clients' complex material and psychosocial needs and their complex subjectivities. Therefore, the thesis findings suggest that interdisciplinary research between the health, social and psychological arenas may yield insights into ways in which policies and services may better account for the concept of a non-unitary self or complex subjectivity which often involves unintended and negative consequences. This thesis stressed the importance and inseparability of material and emotional needs, and future research could also explore the different ways in which these needs are curtailed under neoliberal policies and offer recommendations or solutions.

As findings from this thesis are confined to job loss experienced in the automotive sector, further research could focus on the impact of welfare and industrial relations policies in other manufacturing sectors, or even the specific experiences of women workers.

Chapter summary and concluding reflections

This chapter addressed the third study question on the implications for social policy based on the findings from the two thematic analyses in the case study. By utilising insights from key theorists drawn upon throughout this thesis it was argued that ways must be found to learn the lessons from existing policy failings. This concluding chapter linked the study findings to a range of enabling concepts and values discussed throughout the case study and thesis, and in the wider literature. This led to the argument that there is a need to move beyond neoliberal hegemony in social policy. This chapter also reviewed the interplay between structure and agency that underpinned the thesis and endorsed the promotion of a more progressive policy frame for future policy. It also contextualised the findings to contemporary Australia by noting the ways that the incoming Labor Government adopted a greater focus on welfare as a right, in a reframing of policy intentions.

While there may be limitations or even a clash of principles in the way ahead for policy reform, this does not mean that nothing works in social policy. 'Good enough' principles to guide reform still acknowledge the reality of financial constraints, policy complexity, and of the need for 'muddling through' (Lindblom 1959) in seeking solutions. As Travers (2005) also argues, policy choices are not necessarily

between good and bad, but often between good things unable to be achieved all at once. In envisaging a more enabling policy future, the term 'good enough' may suggest compromise and an unreflective acceptance of limitations. However, on the basis of the thesis findings, this is arguably also an aspirational and enabling concept.

This is because 'good enough' principles recognise that perfect public policy may never be achievable, but that a sound framework of guiding principles may help to promote the policies necessary for meeting material and psychosocial needs of welfare recipients, including retrenched workers, as well as the needs of the street level bureaucrats charged with working in their best interests. Acknowledging limitations does not foreclose on improving current realities, nor does it impede a more utopian vision. 'Good enough' involves doing the best that is possible while aspiring to overcome the more enduring imperfections in social, health, and all policy arenas.

Finally, this thesis illustrates how the complex interplay between structure and agency throws light on enabling concepts and values. These may be interrogated to inform Australian social policy that is more protective of the health and well-being of those who will be affected by policy design and implementation in the early part of the 21st century.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: First worker interviews

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAGE 1 MITSUBISHI QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Note: All questions are to be further probed where necessary

1. Could we start by briefly discussing your work experiences prior to you being employed at Mitsubishi? *(probe for their employment history prior to Mitsubishi"*

2. What were the best things about your job at Mitsubishi?

3. What were the worst things about your job at Mitsubishi?

4. Could you now tell me about your activities since leaving Mitsubishi". What are you doing currently? Have your circumstances changed since we last spoke to you? **Have you had any paid work since leaving Mitsubishi?** *(If no, skip to Q. 17)*

Employment Section

If they have been able to secure any employment

5. In what occupation/s have you been able to secure employment?
   (Probe: Full or part time / contract etc)

6. How long did it take to find employment once you had left Mitsubishi?

7. How did you find this/ these jobs?

8. Did you find yourself using the same skills in this job/these jobs or have you had to learn new skills?
   (Probe: If new skills, how were these acquired, eg. by self or by employer?)

9. How does the pay compare with that of your job at Mitsubishi?
   (Probe: Is the current level of pay sufficient to maintain financial commitments)

10. Has this been your 'work of choice', or was it all that was available?
    (Probe: If job of choice, did you see your exit from Mitsubishi as an opportunity to change your career?)

If they are currently employed:

11. How long do you intend to stay in your current job?

12. Are you satisfied with your current job?

(Probe: If no, 1 Are you actively seeking other employment?

2 Are you seeking any form of training so as to get a job you

would be happier with?

13. What is the best thing about your current job?

14. What are the worst things about your current job?

15. How does your current job compare to your previous job at Mitsubishi?

(Probe: duties, hours, pay, social aspects, training etc)

16. Is this the only job have had since leaving Mitsubishi?

If not currently employed

17. Are you actively seeking employment?

If yes: Through what means are you seeking employment?

What do you think your chances are of finding a job in six months?

What makes you say that?

18. *If not seeking employment:*

Could you tell us what has led you to not seek employment?

19. Are you currently receiving a government provided/or other benefit?

(Probe: If yes, what sort of benefit?)

20. How do you pass your time now? Would you prefer to work or are you happy doing what you are doing? *(IF yes, in what type of job'' What factors do you see as inhibiting you from securing employment?)*

21. Do you spend more time in your home neighbourhood? What are the good and bad things about this?

Assistance Section

For all respondents

Thinking back to the time when you finished work at Mitsubishi

22. How do you feel about the assistance you received from Mitsubishi? Was it helpful? Do you think that more could have been done to help those leaving Mitsubishi?

23. Were you a member of a union while at Mitsubishi?

24. How did you feel about the union involvement in the Mitsubishi closure? Did you find the union involvement helpful in the transition from working at Mitsubishi to your life after Mitsubishi? What was most useful? What could the union have done better?

25. Did you use any job network providers? If so, how did you find out about the services? What assistance did they provide you? What was most useful? How do you feel that these services could be improved?

26. Do you think any other services of assistance could have been provided to you from the Government, Mitsubishi, the union, or Job Network providers that would have helped you in the transition fro leaving Mitsubishi?

Housing Section

We appreciate that the changes at Mitsubishi may have affected some people in their home lives as well as in their working lives. We would like to understand how you and your family have felt about your home and your housing since the announcement of the job losses at Mitsubishi in order to assess the impact on people's lives.

27. Can you please tell us something about the housing you have lived in since you became an adult? Where did you first live and where and when did you move on?

28. Do you think of this place as home? If so, what does home mean to you?

29. Does home mean financial security for you?

30. Did you use your Mitsubishi payout to pay off all or part of your mortgage? How do you feel about that? Are you happy with your decision? Why did you take that decision? Do you think it was a good way to invest your payout?

31. Do you value your home because of the memories attached to it- perhaps in raising children or spending time with families and friends?

32. Are your neighbours important to you? If so, why, if not, why not? Have your neighbours become more or less important for you since you left Mitsubishi?

33. If you had to move house in order to find a job, would that be difficult for you? If it would be difficult to move elsewhere, why is that?

    (Use the list below as prompts)

    - is it the kids and their networks of friends?

    - is it that friends and relatives are close by?

    - is it the lifestyle?

    - is it the cost of moving?

    - is it something special about the dwelling itself?

    - is it that you (and maybe your partner) currently have jobs in the area?

34. Would you turn down a job if it meant that you would have to move?

35. If you had to move in order to get a job, where would you be willing to move to?

    - How would you feel about moving to the northern suburbs of Adelaide?

    - How would you feel about moving to country South Australia – eg. Mt Gambier or Whyalla?

    - How would you feel about moving out of the state, say to Queensland or Western Australia?

36. What are the best aspects of living here?

37. What are the worst aspects of living here?

38. What do you think people mean when they say 'the Great Australian Dream'? Does this phrase mean anything to you at a personal level?

If they own their own home:

39. Has it been a struggle to buy your own home? Has it been a struggle to buy your own home? Has home purchase given you a sense of achievement?

40. Do you work around the house or garden much? Do you find that sort of work satisfying?

41. Do you think you will ever leave this house? If so, where do you expect to move to and why?

If they are renting privately:

42. Do you feel that the redundancy process for you- as a tenant – has been different when compared with others you know who are home purchasers or home buyers?

43. Has renting given you greater flexibility in your decisions" Eg: has it given you more options in terms of moving to jobs?

44. Do you think you are more vulnerable? EG: you still need to meet weekly rental payments?

Health and social capital section

45. What differences, if any have you noted in your health since you stopped working at Mitsubishi?

46. To what extent do you think the situation at Mitsubishi has had any affect on your health in either a positive or negative way *(probe for mental / physical)?*

47. Have your smoking and drinking habits changed since you left Mitsubishi? *(If yes, prompt for in what ways)*

48. Has your diet changed in any way since leaving Mitsubishi?

49. Do you think you do more or less exercise since leaving Mitsubishi?

50. Have you noticed any effect on the health of your partner or children"
    If respondent has attributed health changes to events at Mitsubishi ask following:

51. Do you think anything could have been done differently during the job losses at Mitsubishi that would have made the situation have less impact on your health?

52. Can you tell me about any health or support services you have used since you heard about the job losses at Mitsubishi and whether any of these were related to the Mitsubishi situation? *Prompt: for example GP, hospital-in-patient, self-help or support group, Community Health Centre (eg: Noarlunga Health Service), Government Family and Youth Services, non-government social support services (eg: Anglicare), private counsellor.*

53. What impact do you think the changes at Mitsubishi have had on the southern area of Adelaide? *(probe as much as possible for specific examples)*

54. Could you tell us about the role that working at Mitsubishi has played in your life?

55. What do you miss most about your work at Mitsubishi?

56. Did you have much of a social life with fellow workers from Mitsubishi?
(probe for details and type of activities)

57. **IF they did** – Do you miss that contact?

58. Have you kept up contact with any of your former work colleagues from Mitsubishi"
(If so probe for the details of the type of contact)

59. Do you feel you went through a process of grieving once you left Mitsubishi? If not, why not? If so, where are you now? What helped you get through that process of grieving? What do you think could get you through that process of grieving?

60. Do you think losing your job at Mitsubishi has had any affect, either positive or negative, on the extent to which you trust other **people**?

61. Do you think losing your job at Mitsubishi has had any affect, either positive or negative, on the extent to which you trust **institutions** in our society? *(Probe further to see attitudes to Government and big business).*

62. To what extent have your relatives, friends and neighbours been supportive about your job loss? *(Prompt for examples)*

63. Has your family life changed in any way since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details and try and establish the extent to which respondent attributes any changes to job loss)*

64. Have your social/sporting activities changed in any way since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details)*

65. Have you taken up or continued any voluntary work since you stopped working at Mitsubishi"

66. Have you joined or left any clubs or societies since you stopped working at Mitsubishi?

If they have children:

67. Do you spend more or less time with your children since you left Mitsubishi?
(Probe for details on changes and effect on quality of relationship with children)

If they have grand children:

68. Do you spend more or less time with your grand children since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details on changes and effect on quality of relationship with grand children)*

Final Questions

69. If you have had employment since leaving Mitsubishi did that help you move on with your life?

70. Do you think your life has become more stressful since leaving Mitsubishi? What was the most stressful thing about leaving Mitsubishi?

71. Has you perception of yourself changed since leaving Mitsubishi? If so, how?

72. Based on your experiences since you left Mitsubishi, what advice would you give to someone else facing redundancy?

Appendix 2: Second worker interviews

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAGE 2 MITSUBISHI QUALITATIVE
INTERVIEWS

Note: All questions are to be further probed where necessary

1. Could you tell me about your activities in the last 12 months? What are you doing currently? Have your employment circumstances changed since we last spoke to you?

If no paid work in the last 12 months skip to Q. 17

Employment Section

If they have been able to secure any employment in the last 12 months:

2. In what occupation/s have you been able to secure employment? *(Probe: full or part time/ contract etc)*
3. Is this the only job you have had in the last 12 months? **IF they have had other jobs ask them what they were and why they left.**
4. Is your current job the same job you had when we spoke to you 12 months ago?
5. How long did it take to find employment once you had left Mitsubishi"
6. How did you find this/these jobs?
7. Did you find yourself using the same skills in this job/these jobs or have you had to learn new skills? Were you provided with any training for this job? *(Probe: If new skills, how were these acquired, eg by self or employer?)*
8. How does the pay compare with that of your job at Mitsubishi? *(Probe: If job of choice, did you see your exit from Mitsubishi as an opportunity to change your career?)*

9. Has this been your 'work of choice', or was it all that was available? *(Probe: If job of choice, did you see your exit from Mitsubishi as an opportunity to change your career?)*

If they are currently employed:

10. How long do you intend to stay in your current job?
11. Are you satisfied with your current job? *(Probe: If no,*
    1 Are you actively seeking other employment?
    2 Are you seeking any form of training so as to get a job you would be happier with?
12. What are the best things about your current job?
13. What are the worst things about your current job?
14. How does your current job compare with your previous job at Mitsubishi? *(Probe: duties, hours, pay, social aspects, training etc)*
15. How secure do you feel in your current job?
16. Has being made redundant from Mitsubishi made you feel less secure in your employment since then? If so, why?

If not currently employed:

17. Are you actively seeking employment?
    ### *If yes:*
    Through what means are you seeking employment?
    What do you think your chances are of finding a job in the next 6 months? What makes you say that?
    Are there any barriers you believe have made it difficult for you to find work? *(Probe for age, skills not valued, jobs all out in the north)*
18. ***If not seeking employment:***
    Could you tell us why you are not seeking employment? What has led you to not seek employment?
19. Are you currently receiving a government/provided or other benefit? *(Probe: If yes, what sort of benefit?)*

20. How do you pass your time now" Would you prefer work or are you happy doing what you are doing? *(If yes, in what type of job" What factors do you see as inhibiting you from securing paid employment?)*

21. Do you spend more time in your home neighbourhood? What are the good and bad things about this?

Assistance Section

For all respondents

22. Did you use any job network providers? If so, how did you find out about the services? What assistance did they provide you? What was most useful? How do you feel these services could have been improved?

23. At the time of leaving Mitsubishi, did you want to undertake further training? If yes, why? If no, why not? Have you undertaken any employment related training since leaving Mitsubishi?

24. Do you think you received appropriate training after leaving Mitsubishi? If not, why not? What would you have wanted?

25. If government had provided the opportunity for you to undertake some sort of vocational education training (eg: TAFE Certificate 4) at no cost, would you have taken up the opportunity? What sort of training would you have done?

Housing Section

26. Has your attitude to your housing or home changed since you left Mitsubishi? If so, why, and in what way?

27. Did you use your Mitsubishi payout to pay off all or part of your mortgage? How do you feel about that? Are you happy with your decision? Why did you take that decision? Do you think it was a good way to invest your payout?

28. Do you value your home because of the memories attached to it- perhaps in raising children or spending time with family and friends"

29. Are your neighbours important to you? If so, why, if not, why not?

30. If you had to move house in order to find a job, would that be difficult for you? If it would be difficult to move elsewhere, why is that?

(Use the list below as prompts)

- is it the kids and their networks of friends?

- is it that friends and relatives are close by?

- is it the lifestyle?

- is it the cost of moving?

- is it something special about the dwelling itself?

- is it that you (and maybe your partner) currently have jobs in the area?

31. Would you turn down a job if it meant that you would have to move?

32. If you had to move in order to get a job, where would you be willing to move to?

    - How would you feel about moving to the northern suburbs of Adelaide?

    - How would you feel about moving to country South Australia – eg. Mt Gambier or Whyalla?

    - How would you feel about moving out of the state, say to Queensland or Western Australia?

33. What are the best aspects of living here?

34. What are the worst aspects of living here?

If they own their own home:

35. Has it been a struggle to buy your own home? Has home purchase given you a sense of achievement?

36. Do you work around the house or garden much? Have you done any home improvements since leaving Mitsubishi? Would you have done this anyway? Or, do you find yourself having more time or money to do these things now?

37. Do you think you will ever leave this house? If so, where do you expect to move and why?

If they are renting privately:

38. Do you feel that the redundancy process for you- as a tenant- has been different when compared with others you know who are home purchasers or home buyers?

39. Has renting given you greater flexibility in your decisions? Eg: has it given you more options in terms of moving to jobs?

40. Do you think you are more vulnerable? EG: you still need to meet weekly rental payments?

Health and social capital section

41. If you think back to when you were at Mitsubishi, compared to now, have you noticed any differences in your physical or mental health since you stopped working at Mitsubishi?

42. To what extent do you think the situation at Mitsubishi has had any affect on your health in either a positive or negative way *(probe for mental / physical)?*

43. Have your smoking and drinking habits changed since you left Mitsubishi? *(If yes, prompt for in what ways)*

44. Has your diet changed in any way since leaving Mitsubishi?

45. Do you think you do more or less exercise since leaving Mitsubishi?

46. We have heard from some partners and children that the redundancy package led to changes in their family life, have you noticed any effect on the health of your partner and/or children?
    If respondent has attributed health changes to events at Mitsubishi ask following:

47. Do you think anything could have been done differently during the job losses at Mitsubishi that would have made the situation have less impact on your health?

48. Can you tell me about any health or support services you have used since you heard about the job losses at Mitsubishi and whether any of these were related to the Mitsubishi situation? *Prompt: for example GP, hospital-in-patient, self-help or support group, Community Health Centre (eg: Noarlunga Health Service), Government Family and Youth Services, non-government social support services (eg: Anglicare), private counsellor.*

49. What impact do you think the changes at Mitsubishi have had on the southern area of Adelaide? *(probe as much as possible for specific examples)*

50. Have you kept up contact with any of your former work colleagues from Mitsubishi?

    (If so probe for the details and the type of contact)

51. Have you made new friends since leaving Mitsubishi?

52. Can you give us three words to describe how you felt about losing your job at Mitsubishi *(then probe for details)*

53. Did losing your job affect the amount of control you felt you had over your life?

54. Do you feel you went through a process of grieving once you left Mitsubishi? If not, why not? If so, where are you now? What helped you get through that process of grieving? What do you think could get you through that process of grieving?

55. Do you think losing your job at Mitsubishi has had any affect, either positive or negative, on the extent to which you trust other **people**?

56. Do you think losing your job at Mitsubishi has had any affect, either positive or negative, on the extent to which you trust **institutions** in our society? *(Probe further to see attitudes to Government and big business).*

57. Do you think losing your job at Mitsubishi has had any affect, either positive or negative, on your sense of confidence and security regarding the world today and our future and that of your family?

58. To what extent have your relatives, friends and neighbours been supportive about your job loss? *(Prompt for examples)*

59. Has your family life changed in any way since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details and try and establish the extent to which respondent attributes any changes to job loss)*

60. Have your social/sporting activities changed in any way since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details)*

61. Have you taken up or continued any voluntary work since you stopped working at Mitsubishi?

62. Have you joined or left any clubs or societies since you stopped working at Mitsubishi?

63. ***If they have children:***

64. Do you spend more or less time with your children since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details on changes and effect on quality of relationship with children)*

If they have grand children:

65. Do you spend more or less time with your grand children since you left Mitsubishi? *(Probe for details on changes and effect on quality of relationship with grand children)*

Final Questions

66. How have you been managing financially since leaving Mitsubishi? Have finances become more of a struggle? Or, are you doing better financially since leaving Mitsubishi?

67. Has your wife/partner had to take up work or increase the hours they work as a result of the changes in your life since leaving Mitsubishi?

68. What affect did the redundancy payout have? *(Probe: did the money help alleviate some of the stress associated with the redundancy?)*

69. Looking back, is there anything you miss about your work at Mitsubishi? What do you miss most?

70. What do you think you would be doing now if the redundancy hadn't come along? *(prompt in terms of career, housing, recreation, etc)*

71. If you have had employment since leaving Mitsubishi did that help you move on with your life? If you haven't had employment do you think it would help you move on with your life?

72. Do you think your life has become more stressful since leaving Mitsubishi? What was the most stressful thing about leaving Mitsubishi?

73. Has you perception of yourself changed since leaving Mitsubishi? If so, how?

74. This will be the last time that we speak to you in detail as part of this study. What has it been like for you to be part of this study?

75. What are your hopes for the future?

Appendix 3: Demographic profile of workers

Name	M/F	Birth date	Income range $Aus	Years at Mitsubishi	Country of birth	Relation-ship status	Job title
Alexi	F	1947	36-42	30	Greece	Married	Sewing machinist
Angas	M	1951	52-78	8	UK	Single	Welder
David	M	1949	31-36	14	UK	Divorced	Driver/welder
Donald	M	1952	52-78	16	Australia	Married	Maintenance electrician
Doreen	M	1947	15	18	Australia	Married	Canteen worker
Douglas	M	1948	130+	39	Australia	Married	General manager
Dudley	M	1953	41-42	24	Australia	Married	Maintenance fitter
Elliott	M	1952	52-78	15	Australia	Married	Toolmaker and senior safety rep.
Garth	M	1969	41-52	17	Australia	Divorced	Senior leader trainer
Greg	M	1971	36-42	17	Australia	Married	Material handler
John	M	1950	78-104	25	Australia	Married	Manager
Keith	M	1967	41-52	17	Australia	Single	Machinist
Ken	M	1969	31-36	4	Australia	Single	Production worker
Kevin	M	1965	41-52	21	Australia	Married	Production worker
Lan	F	1948	36-42	16	Vietnam	Married	Sewing machinist

Maxwell	M	1971	78-104	16	Australia	Married	Maintenance manager
Michael	M	1967	52-78	1	Australia	Married	Maintenance manager
Morris	M	1961	41-52	25	Scotland	Single	Process worker
Owen	M	1950	41-52	20	Australia	Married	Sand plant operator
Ralph	M	1967	52-78	15	Australia	Married	Leader trainer
Raymond	M	1955	52-78	18	Australia	Married	Maintenance fitter
Reg	M	1965	52-78	20	Australia	Married	Manager
Rex	M	1946	41-52	16	Australia	Married	Leader trainer
Richard	M	1961	52-78	14	Malaysia	Divorced	Process engineer
Roger	M	1957	41-52	20	Scotland	Married	Foundry worker
Ronald	M	1944	52-78	35	Australia	Single	Draftsman
Rosslyn	F	1961	41-52	25	Australia	Single	Personal assistant
Sylvia	F	1951	36-42	8	Australia	Married	Sewing machinist
Ted	M	1944	41-52	25	UK	Divorced	Mechanic
Tracy	F	1975	26-32	9	Australia	Married	Production worker
Tyson	M	1960	36-42	10	England	Married	Tool setter
Wally	M	1943	31-36	38	Australia	Married	Vehicle auditor
Warren	M	1956	78-104	24	Australia	Married	Manager

Appendix 4: Key policy actors in welfare reform

Minister	Portfolio	Dates
John Howard	Prime Minister	11 March 1996 to 3 December 2007
Peter Costello	Treasurer	11 March 1996 to 3 December 2007
Jocelyn Newman	Minister for Social Security, Minister for Family and Community Services	11 March 1996 to 30 January 2001
Amanda Vanstone	Minister for Family and Community Services	30 January 2001 to 7 October 2003
Tony Abbott	Minister for Employment Services Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business	21 October 1998 to 30 January 2001 30 January 2001 to 7 October 2003
Kevin Andrews	Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.	7 October 2003 to 30 January 2007