

from the popular press and academic articles suggest that these traditional models do not represent the careers of most workers and that new conceptualisations of careers are needed.

We argue that although some individuals will still follow traditional career paths, most individuals will follow career paths that are non-linear, less predictable, and inadequately explained by current models of career development.” (pp.165-166, most reference markers have been deleted and emphases added.)

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Defence Manpower Data Center (Lehnus & Lancaster, 1997) investigated youth attitude towards military service. The study included approximately 10,000 16-24 year old men and women and showed that the main reasons for increased interest in military service, (in order from the biggest response), were: money for college; training; talk with military, employment, and change in life/time to change. The 1996 Royal Australian Navy Employee Attitude Survey (Timmins & Twomey, 1997) found both sailors and officers showed high levels of belief in the importance of civilian recognition of their training.

Implication: Organisations must come to terms with the boundaryless career and its implications. Young people will likely stay as long as they feel an organisation is developing them and leave when they feel it is not. (This intersects with other factors—so if the sense that ‘there is no new training’ links with poor work/family balance, there may be a crisis for some groups.)

8 Social change is impacting on the way people commit to and/or leave organisations

Summary: There has been a period of globalisation of the economy, downsizing of organisations and a stress upon doing away with old types of 'career'. In the past, it is said, *people exchanged loyalty for security* provided by long term (even life long) employment. Now *people exchange performance for training* provided by the employer. This latter strategy is called the 'boundaryless career' and leads to a 'portfolio self'.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Rousseau (1998) argues that despite radical upheavals in the global workforce, identification mechanisms continue to be evident in firms along with the pervasive human drive to identify with the social system of which humans are a part. It is suggested that differentiating the levels of identification which occur in organisations promotes better understanding of identification issues in the contemporary workforce. Situated identification offers potential for more effectively organising new forms of work by signalling a collective sense of common interest across workers with different employee status. It is also suggested that deep structure identification is characteristic of high involvement work systems, and for workers of full-time, permanent, or core roles who access a broader array of organisational rewards. The author suggests that although deep structure identification can be expected to promote employee retention and flexibility in response to change, it is not appropriate for all forms of employment relations. *While workers still identify with organisations in many settings, the meaning of that identification has and is likely to continue to change.*

Ingersoll (1997) examined teacher shortages in the U.S. through an analysis of late-1980s data from the Schools and Staffing Survey. Findings revealed that schools do not lack a pool of willing teaching candidates, but *face severe staffing inadequacies because teachers are leaving in substantial numbers* and teaching candidates are often asked to teach outside their field of training. *Low salaries, student discipline problems and lack of faculty input into school decision making contribute to teacher turnover. Programs aimed at increasing the number of teaching candidates are considered misguided.* Instead, emphasis should be given to upgrading the low standing of the occupation in the US.

Sullivan et al (1998) argue that:

"Traditionally, careers were viewed as upward, linear progression in one or two firms or as stable employment within a profession. However, advances in technology, increased workforce diversity, evolving organisational structures and increased global competition have changed the fundamental nature of careers.

The psychological employment contract between organisations and workers has changed. Under the old contract, employees exchanged loyalty for job security. Under the new contract, employees exchange performance for training so they may remain marketable. This change in the psychological contract has resulted in decreased employee commitment, decreased job security and increased cynicism.

Despite these changes, there has been relatively little change in our models of careers. Until recently, the depiction of careers as linear upward movement within a limited number of organisations has dominated the literature. In a review of five journals from 1990-1994, Arthur and Rousseau (1996) found that 74% of the articles on careers assumed environmental stability, 76% an intrafirm focus, and 81% had hierarchical assumptions. *Both anecdotal evidence*

soldier's decision to remain in TPU's: economic, psychological and sociological. It identified five sets of favourable unit conditions that influence unit retention via those decision processes; timely pay/benefits administration, satisfying training, unit cohesion, trust in leaders and support from employer and spouse. *The study highlights that trust in leaders has been underestimated as an influence on attrition. Specifically it focuses on the role of a company commander since most units are of company size.*

Implication: An organisation can increase retention by aiming to create a lower turnover culture. This needs to be linked to management responsibility and performance.

7 There are factors that act at the macro/group level independent of the characteristics of people in the group

Summary: Some organisations generate experiences and cultures that lead to high turnover, others to low turnover. These profiles are not dependent upon individual characteristics nor can they be explained by aggregating such characteristics.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Rosin and Korabik (1995) examined sex differences in managers' workplace experiences and in responses to their jobs and the contribution of these to their propensity to leave organisations. 303 women and 238 men responded to a survey measuring personal, organisational, and positional attributes; met expectations; reasons for leaving; job satisfaction; organisational commitment; reasons for leaving; and intention to leave. There were sex differences in marital status, number of children, income, perceptions of job demands, and met expectations. Position characteristics, commitment, and satisfaction were important predictors of turnover intentions for both men and women. *Results support situation-centred rather than person-centred explanations for apparent sex differences.*

Sheridan (1992) investigated the retention rates of 904 college graduates hired in 6 public accounting firms over a 6 year period. Organisational culture values varied significantly among the firms. The variation in cultural values had a significant effect on the rates at which the newly hired employees voluntarily terminated employment. *Subjects voluntarily stayed 14 months longer in the culture emphasising interpersonal relationship values than in the culture emphasising work task values.* The relationship between the employees' job performance and their retention also varied significantly with organisational culture values. *The cultural effects were stronger than the combined exogenous influences of the labour market and the new employees' demographic characteristics.*

McFadden and Demetriou (1993) described how the results of research into the determinants of employee turnover can be used to reduce turnover. Survey data from 288 employees at 20 branches of a major bank in Melbourne, were used to identify the immediate work environment factors related to turnover: work pressure, physical comfort, supervisor support, and innovation discriminated significantly between high and low turnover branches. Results for autonomy and clarity, while not significant, were in the expected direction. *A clinical model based on the systemic model of family therapy was adopted for the intervention program, with the group - the bank branch - rather than the employee considered dysfunctional in terms of turnover behaviour. The intervention program was successful in reducing significantly the turnover rate in the high turnover group.*

Huselid (1995) evaluated the links between systems of high performance work practices (hpwp) and firm performance. Hpwp includes comprehensive employee recruitment and selection procedures, incentive compensation and performance management systems, and extensive employee involvement and training. Human resources professionals at 968 firms completed questionnaires on hpwp, internal and external fit, turnover, productivity, and financial performance. Control variables included size, growth in sales, and levels of profitability. *Huselid's results indicated that high performance work practices had an economically and statistically significant impact on both employee outcomes (turnover and productivity) measures of corporate financial performance.*

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Leadership and retention in Troop Program Units (TPU's) was examined by Thomas (1995). The report describes three qualitatively different decision processes involved in

demography directly affect turnover and are not moderated by social integration. The findings suggest a process by which group demography affects outcomes, and support the usefulness of organisational demography for understanding group and individual functioning.

In 1995 Alexander, Nuchols, Bloom & Lee advanced research into organisational demography and turnover. In a sample of 398 U.S community hospitals, voluntary nursing turnover was examined in relation to three demographic dimensions – educational preparation, tenure and employment status. (Previous research provided support for the proposition that greater demographic heterogeneity is associated with high rates of turnover in organisation or organisational groups.) Their results support the importance of multiform heterogeneity in the informal social structure of organisations, specifically in explaining organisational turnover. Two attributes of multiform heterogeneity were demonstrated in their results. Firstly, that multiple dimensions of organisational demography exercise independent effects on voluntary turnover in organisation. The three indicators of demographic heterogeneity (educational preparation, tenure and employment status) were significantly related to voluntary nursing turnover. However, heterogeneity on these dimensions did not operate in a similar direction on voluntary turnover. Whereas, heterogeneity of educational preparation and tenure showed a significant, positive relationship with voluntary turnover, heterogeneity of employment status exhibited a significant, negative association with voluntary turnover. One explanation for these unexpected findings is that the hypothesised positive relationship of demographic heterogeneity and turnover obtains only when the distribution of demographic attributes involves hierarchical differentiation of membership status. The distinction between part-time and full-time employment is not hierarchical and reflects mainly the amount of time spent on the job. Tenure and educational preparation, by contrast, are important factors that determine not only the status that a person has achieved and/or can achieve within the organisation or occupation. Alexander et al suggest that greater diversity in employment status among hospital nurses lowers the level of turnover among this group. Unlike heterogeneity of tenure and educational status, a heterogeneous mix of full- and part-time staff does not appear to impede integration, cohesion, and organisational identity.

Implication: In any organisation that is moderately heterogeneous—which itself will increase turnover to a degree—this heterogeneity and gender difference must be recognised. Otherwise, the marginal status of some groups will exacerbate tendencies to leave . In particular, as long as women tend to be held in marginal network statuses, they will be more likely to leave, and this will be contagious to other women (same category, same status) causing waves of turnover which organisations cannot afford.

6 Position in a network and network contacts can be as important as personal characteristics

Summary: Those in central positions in networks are less likely to leave than those who are peripheral; leaving is, however, contagious and when those similar to an individual leave, s/he is likely to leave too. Heterogeneous organisations have higher turnover than homogenous organisations.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Feeley and Barnett (1997) investigated three social network models of employee turnover: *structural equivalence*, *social influence* and *erosion*. It was predicted that *structurally equivalent* individuals would be more likely to behave similarly (i.e., Leave or stay at their position). The *social influence* model predicted that employees with a greater percent of direct communication links with leavers would be more likely to leave their job. The *erosion* model posited that individuals located on the periphery of a social network would be more likely to leave their job or fall off the edges of the social network. Employees (n = 170) of a large supermarket completed a questionnaire asking them to identify the people with whom they communicate at work. *Results provide support for all three models of turnover, with the erosion model explaining more of the variance than the others.*

In a similar vein, Kervin in a paper to the American sociological association 1997, argued that the study of employee behaviours and attitudes has largely made use of an individualistic view of workers, in part because of the use of survey methodology. As a result, employee behaviours and attitudes are generally seen as arising from and affected by characteristics of individuals and their work context. *Socially mediated processes and influences have been largely ignored.* In his study, a two-phase panel survey of 274 nurses in a major metropolitan hospital examined the role of work group social processes in determining employees' turnover intentions. Results provided strong support for the hypothesis that *an employee's turnover intentions are positively related to those of workplace friends.* A second hypothesis - that the impact of friends' attitudes on the employee's own turnover intentions will be greater the less influential the individual - received weak support. *A final hypotheses - that this impact will be greater the more the individual socialises with workplace friends - received strong support.* Overall, results suggested that *work group subculture is an important factor in determining employee turnover intentions. No other single factor, including work and pay satisfaction and organisational commitment, appear to affect turnover intentions as much as an employee's perceptions of friends' attitudes.*

The psychological influences of leavers on stayers was included in Sheehan's (1991) research into the effects of employee turnover on those who remain on the job, drawing on questionnaire data obtained from 250 randomly selected employees from 2 organisations in the western us. Results indicated that employees do compare themselves to their former colleagues. *Co-workers who quit for reasons that reflect negatively on the stayer's job result in the stayer experiencing job dissatisfaction.*

O'Reilly, Caldwell and Barnett (1989) used mail questionnaire data from 79 field representatives who worked in 20 district groups for a retail chain to explore the relationships among group demography, social integration of the group, and individual turnover. *Results suggested that heterogeneity in group tenure is associated with lower levels of group social integration, which, in turn, is negatively associated with individual turnover.* Models of these effects using individual-level integration measures are not significant. Further, *the results suggest that the more distant group members are more likely to leave.* Both individual-level and group-level age

Gill and Haurin (1998) studied the relationship between the military career choices of married, male officers in the U.S. armed forces and the employment status and employment attachment of their wives.

Two findings were of considerable interest. First, they noted that most officers have an opportunity to end their career within 8 years of commencement and that, examining a group with 1-8 years service, the proportion intending a long term career rose steadily with years served. For example, at the 2 year mark only 53% said that they would stay 20 years whereas at the 8 year mark this rose to 71%. That is, officers who were not happy with a military career were leaving in the first 8 years, so that a slow 'winnowing' process occurred whereby those who were left at the end of 8 years tended to be mainly people who were attached to the idea of a military career.

Second, the decision to stay was connected to economic variables, specifically, the economic value of the career to the officer. This economic value was, however, connected to the potential earnings of wives and the attachment of wives to active labour force participation. In broad terms, Gill and Haurin argued that there seemed to be two groups of officers, one of which they termed 'traditional men', the others (not labelled by the authors) being, in contrast 'modern men'.

Among traditional men, the career was highly valued, especially since these men (and their wives) attached little value to their wives working, so that income foregone by wives when the husband was posted was minimal.

On the other hand, among the more modern men, where they and their wives expected that she would be employed, the impact of posting was greater and men were more reluctant to commit to a long term career.

The implication of this study is that 'traditional men' are more likely to wish to stay, other things being equal. Barring a major reversal of female labour force participation and attitudes of women, such a trend would gradually stack the upper levels of armed services with men whose attitudes would be increasingly at odds with the majority of couples. This would tend to make it increasingly difficult to deal with the aspirations of more 'modern' men.

Implication: Continued efforts to make any organisation more congenial to both sexes and less 'masculinist' is clearly required to reduce female turnover. There are, however, relatively few issues to do with family and work/balance that affect only women. Increasingly, these affect men too, and men and women increasingly define good jobs the same way and value effective work/family balance. It is also important to cope with the family demands of the modern epoch so that an organisation does not end up staffed, at senior levels, only by more traditional men with values and aspirations at odds with many subordinates.

Bender, Tanner and Tseng (1994a) analysed the impact of current and future reductions on the participation of female officers in the Canadian Forces. Analysis was undertaken in three parts: demographics of Canadian Forces from 1984-1994 examined to provide trend analysis against which impact of current and future reductions can be measured; examination of the force reduction program of 1994 (redundancy program) to determine gender differences in volunteer rates and impact on participation of female officers; initial examination of future military reductions on participation of female officers in Canadian Forces. Analysis revealed that female officers were increasing as a proportion of officers and were tending to stay longer. Female officers had increased as a percentage in the higher ranks. Female officers had a higher attrition rate than male officers at the junior ranks (attributed to family responsibilities) but a similar rate at the senior ranks. The Canadian Forces had drastically reduced its recruitment of officers by approximately 2/3 over ten years. Analysis showed that female officers were in higher proportions in the occupation targeted for redundancy but male officers had a higher take-up rate. Female representation in the officer corps was expected to decrease from 9.4% in 1994 to 8.9% in 1996/97. Female officers were more heavily concentrated in the occupations targeted for reduction, hence it was anticipated that female representation would level off and perhaps decrease slightly.

Similarly, Bender, Tanner and Tseng's (1994b) analysis of the impact of downsizing on the overall participation of female non-commissioned members in the Canadian Forces concluded that: numbers of both male and female non-commissioned members had decreased due to reduction in manning levels; male senior and junior ranks experienced similar trends whereas female senior and junior ranks exhibited different patterns. Female numbers in senior ranks had increased steadily but female numbers in junior ranks had levelled off. Furthermore, while women had higher attrition rates than men in the junior ranks, men had higher attrition rates than women in the senior ranks. The first two rounds of redundancies had similar take up rates for men and women. The third round in 1994 showed a higher take up rate for women while targeting the genders equally. Support occupations (which had the highest proportion of women) were expected to be reduced by 12% in 1996/97. It was anticipated that overall female representation would continue to decrease slightly. Impact would be dependent on the severity of reductions and occupations targeted.

Baldwin (1997) analysed the outcome of over 75,000 promotion decisions affecting United States middle-grade Naval officers between 1984 and 1993. Comparisons of officers considered for promotion with officers promoted at the previous rank indicate, after achieving lieutenant commander and commander, women leave the Navy at substantially higher rates than men. For example, the number of women considered for promotion to captain reflects a 59.5 percent decrease in the number of women promoted to commander; whereas the number of men considered for promotion to captain indicates only a 1.7 percent decrease from the number of men promoted to commander. Baldwin cites research that suggests promotion may reflect a couple of phenomena. Without sea duty, women may possess the human capital for promotions to lieutenant and lieutenant commander but not commander or captain. Without sea duty, they may consequently be crowded into career lines ending at lieutenant commander. As rank increases, Navy personnel may also become increasingly uncomfortable with female officers. While female lieutenant commanders may be acceptable, female commanders may be less so. Although this mentality may not pervade promotion boards, it may occur during critical career defining selections – initial job placements, work assignments, and service school selections – prior to promotions. Baldwin acknowledges research that indicates attrition and reenlistment rates of military women are affected by parental and pregnancy responsibilities, job satisfaction, trust in leadership and challenging work.

From a theoretical standpoint, gender differences in the values placed on job characteristics matter because they are often used to explain differences in economic attainments. Human capital theorists suggest that women frequently choose to trade off income for other job attributes, such as having shorter or more flexible work hours. Such arguments provide explanation for both the clustering of women in certain jobs (which are presumably characterized by attributes commonly desired by women) and the lower earnings levels associated with female-dominated jobs. There are a number of problems with these arguments, however. First, there is little direct evidence of gender differences in preferences for the particular job attributes (short hours, high incomes) postulated in such economic arguments; our analysis suggests no gender differences along these lines.

More important, the links between the gender differences in job attribute preferences that do exist and the processes of occupational choice and actual job assignment are unclear, because little is known about *how* preferences for particular job characteristics directly or indirectly influence occupational outcomes. For example, why women's preferences for work that provides them with a sense of accomplishment might lead them into such occupations as teaching or nursing, rather than into traditionally male-dominated occupations, such as law and medicine, is by no means obvious. Thus, the processes through which general preferences for certain job attributes become translated into specific decisions to pursue a given occupation, or to seek and accept a specific job, remains a question deserving of further research. Better knowledge of the mechanisms through which relatively small differences in men's and women's preferences may contribute to the extensive degree of occupational and job segregation could make an important general theoretical contribution to our understanding of the connection between rational choice processes of individuals and the structural pattern of behavioral outcomes.

We suspect that any behavioral outcomes of differences in men's and women's job preferences are mediated by common social expectations and interpretations, which serve to magnify and channel these differences. Academic research, unfortunately, also seems to be affected by such a tendency to magnify differences. As Rowe and Snizek point out, much of the research on job attribute preferences has been preoccupied with relatively small differences and has tended to deemphasize (or ignore altogether) the high degree of similarity in men's and women's preferences. It may well be that the contradictory findings of previous research on gender-based preferences are a function of such limited gender differences: Small, albeit significant differences in one study may easily become nonsignificant with only a marginal change in the sample, and hence, in the variances of the variables. The propensity to overemphasize relatively small differences may reflect what Tukey once termed *the bias against the null hypothesis*, or the common inclination to discount research with findings of "no difference" as uninteresting and/or unimportant. Alternatively, the mutual overemphasis on gender differences and underemphasis on gender similarities may reflect the outcomes of gender-role socialization, which primes both scholars and the general public to perceive differences.

By not only mirroring but reinforcing empirically problematic conventional assumptions about gender differences, academic preoccupation with and explanations of gender-based inequality may serve to justify behavioral biases. Unfortunately, such biases are not simply an academic problem. They contribute, at least indirectly, to the perpetuation of inequitable organizational hiring and personnel allocation policies. In this light, research that allows us to understand how assumptions about the significance of gender differences in job preferences are linked to behavioral outcomes, as well as the growing accumulation of research that can call these assumptions into question, may serve to promote personnel practices that encourage a more efficient use of employees, as well as greater workplace equity.

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

In 1994 the Department of National Defence Canada was concerned that infrastructure reduction and enhancement of the "sharp end" was decreasing the number of women in the Canadian Force when it should have been increasing. As a consequence,

women's advancement; "who managers are like, counts", women are more likely to advance when the managerial hierarchy is less proportionately male; impression management, ingratiation and supervisor influence affect career advancement; and overall, informal social factors are more important than formal opportunity structures. Discrimination by gender and ethnicity results in under representation of women and minorities.

In an important study of men, women and work, Tolbert and Moen (1998) note that:

By explicitly examining the effects of time, both in terms of age and historical period, we are better able to address the questions of whether gender differences in job attribute preferences exist today, whether such differences may have changed over time, and how they may vary over the life course. Focusing on married workers, where gender differences are expected to be greatest, we find significant differences among full-time workers in three out of five job attribute preferences examined: meaningful work, promotion opportunities, and job security. *Meaningful work is more likely to be ranked as a first preference by women, whereas promotion opportunities and security are more often ranked first by men.* Such findings are consistent with a number of previous studies that suggest *men are more oriented toward extrinsic rewards, whereas women set a higher value on intrinsic rewards.*

However, work showing significant gender differences has typically been based on younger respondents, often high school seniors or college freshmen. As hypothesized, *our research suggests that the gender gap in work values is likely to be widest among younger workers (and by logical extension, among "preworkers" such as students) and that it narrows markedly as individuals age. For both men and women, increasing age is associated with a propensity to assign less importance to extrinsic rewards, such as getting promoted, and greater importance to intrinsic rewards, such as meaningful content.*

Contrary to our third hypothesis, however, *there is little evidence of a progressive narrowing in the gender gap over time.* Instead, the data provide some indication that in recent years, younger men, in particular, have tended to attach greater importance to jobs that produce high incomes and less to jobs that provide a sense of accomplishment. These shifts are probably the result of changing economic conditions, such as the tightening of labor markets and declines in earnings, changes that have affected men more than women. As a consequence of changes in men's preferences, it appears that gender differences may actually have widened among younger workers. Consistent with the argument that preferences are shaped by work conditions and with our evidence of changes in preferences by age and over time, we interpret this gap as a reflection of the changing opportunity structure for men and women rather than one of fundamental gender differences in preferences. Whether observed changes in patterns of job preferences among men and women will persist as an enduring cohort effect is a matter of speculation. We suspect that a true cohort effect is likely to occur only if changes in preferences are accompanied by gender-based shifts in occupational choice, and most evidence to date does not indicate the occurrence of such shifts.

It is important to note, however, that *even among younger workers, gender differences in preferences for various job characteristics remain relatively small, even if significant.* Because our analyses focused on full-time, married workers, we cannot address the question of whether gender differences in work attitudes and values in the population as a whole have shifted, nor can we consider how much of the increase in the proportion of women in the labor force that has occurred over the past three decades can be attributed to general changes in women's work attitudes and values (versus changes in employers' attitudes and values). Our analyses are also limited by the measures contained in the GSS data, which tap only five dimensions of jobs. It may be that other differences would be found if a wider range of job attributes were considered. However, it is important to note that even in studies with much more fine-grained measures, *the differences in job attribute preferences that have been found have typically been quite small, even if statistically significant.* This is consistent with our findings that, among full-time, married workers, men's and women's work preferences have been characterized by a high degree of similarity over the past 20 years.

CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY

ex-members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Ex-members also indicated their reasons for leaving the force. Current members of the force rated the work more highly than did ex-members, but the differences were not great. However, *the morale of ex-members was extremely low at the time they left the force*. A larger proportion of ex-members than members did not feel that their expectations concerning police work had been realistic. Results also suggested that *relationships with peers and supervisors and departmental policies concerning promotion and transfer were more strongly related to attrition than factors related to the actual performance of police duties*. *The most common factor involved in resignation was transfer policy; other factors included feeling unsuited for the job and the effects of the job on personal and family life. Two reasons for resignation (discrimination or harassment and difficulty in arranging shifts compatible with those of a spouse) were noted by females only.*

Blair-Loy (1999) analysed the career patterns of fifty-six women in high-ranking, finance-related jobs. She found evidence that as women experienced more freedom in pursuing and succeeding in finance careers, their career pathways have become more rigid. It was extremely rare for currently senior women to have worked part time or to have spent time outside the labour force. Although some mothers of young children stated that they wished they could work part-time or take leave of absence, they believed their career advancement would never recover if they demonstrated less than total commitment to their careers. Furthermore, the youngest women may be on a track that demands specialisation in business school or finance-related work immediately after college. Blair-Loy suggested that executive women's careers may be growing more coercive as they more closely resemble the template of executive men's careers.

Milkie and Peltola (1999) investigated women's subjective sense of success in balancing paid work and family demands, especially compared with men. Using a sample of married, employed Americans from the 1996 General Social Survey, they examined feelings about work-family balance, and found, unexpectedly, that women and men report similar levels of success and kinds of work-family tradeoffs. However they found some gender differences. For men imbalance was predicted by longer work hours, wives who work fewer hours, perceived unfairness in sharing housework, marital unhappiness, and tradeoffs made at work for family and at home for work. For women, only marital unhappiness and sacrifices at home were imbalancing, and for women who were employed full-time, your children were.

Prenzler (1999) reports on a survey of gender equity in policing in the eight Australian policing jurisdictions, using data on recruitment, selection, academy graduation, deployment, promotion, separation and complaints of sexual harassment and discrimination and their resolution. Data on separations in four jurisdictions suggest that women are separating in numbers roughly proportional to their male colleagues. However, breakdown of data shows that male separations concentrated in the retirement area were offset by female separations by resignations. Where reasons for leaving were specified, 'family/domestic' was a major factor in the female resignation rate.

Tharenou (1997) examined explanations of managerial career advancement. She reports that: human capital (especially education and organisation tenure) may be the most significant factor in predicting managerial advancement: career mentoring increases managerial promotions, especially in early career; multiple roles (e.g. family duties) do not appear to impede women's managerial advancement directly, but may impede factors (such as training opportunities) that lead to it; higher standards for managerial advancement are applied to women than to comparable, similarly situated men (this discrimination may be based on stereotypes held about women as a group; social networks, homophily and politics appear to have the greatest influence on advancement to higher levels, especially from middle management onwards; informal social networks (the bigger the better) that provide career information, control of options and assist advancement, assist men's more than

family and spousal employment were argued to be important turnover predictors in dual-earning families.

Weisberg and Kirschenbaum (1993) investigated the impact of gender on the intent to change jobs and actual job turnover via analysis of questionnaire data from 516 full-time workers from 15 worksites within Israel's textile industry. Though males and females perceived their work environments similarly and had similar intentions to change jobs, females had greater rates of actual turnover than males. Multivariate analysis reveals that perceived promotion prospects and repetitiveness of job tasks were primary factors associated with males' intent to leave a job. For females, the primary factor was Asian or African ethnic origin. *Regarding actual job turnover, for males, the primary factor was wage level. For females, the primary factors were length of service at present worksite and perception of coworker intent to leave.*

Sicherman (1996) used personnel data from a large company for the years 1971-1980 aggregated across all reasons for quitting to explore the idea that although women have higher initial quit rates than men, the quit rates converge as time on the job lengthens. This was confirmed in this study. Disaggregation of the data by reason for quitting, however, reveals marked, *systematic differences between men and women*: a higher proportion of women than men left their jobs for non-market-related reasons (e.g., Household duties and illness in the family); women were much more likely than men to name higher wages, and not better opportunities, as a reason for switching jobs; and the effects of tenure and education on quit rates differed significantly across both gender and reasons for departure.

Hakim (1996) drew on national survey data for great Britain and other industrial societies to evaluate claims that sex differentials in labour mobility and employment stability have disappeared with rising female labour-force participation. Results for great Britain show a continuing sex differential of 50% in the standard measures of labour turnover and job tenure; these being typical of the European community and other industrial societies. Further, such sex differentials are dramatically increased when the focus changes to movement in and out of the labour force instead of attachment to a particular employer: females are 2-4 times more likely than men to enter and exit the workforce in a given period. *Work histories display even more fundamental sex differences and show that discontinuous employment has been replacing continuous employment and the homemaker career among females.* The methodological implications for the analyses of cross-sectional and longitudinal data, and the substantive and theoretical implications for understanding female employment, are addressed. It is concluded that qualitative divisions within the female workforce can no longer be ignored, as they impact on occupational grade, earnings, and life chances, and can distort cross-national comparisons.

Kaplan and Granrose (1993) examined the factors influencing college-educated women's decision to leave an organisation following childbirth and not return. Results from 228 college educated women participating in a longitudinal study of intention to work following childbirth indicate that *factors that influenced the quality of their child's life were the most important reasons for leaving an organisation after childbirth. An unsatisfying work life and limited spouse support were also factors.*

Aryee, Luk and Stone (1998) examined the influence of family-responsive variables and the moderating influence of gender on the retention-relevant outcomes of organisational commitment and turnover intentions, using structured questionnaire data from 228 employed parents in a human service authority in Hong Kong. Regression analysis revealed that satisfaction with work schedule flexibility and supervisor work-family support were related to both retention-relevant outcomes. *Contrary to the prediction, gender did not moderate the influence of any of the family-responsive variables on the retention-relevant outcomes.*

Linden (1985) conducted a survey of job satisfaction and attitudes toward departmental policies of 40 male and 34 female serving members and 34 male and 42 female

Summary: Men and women have different turnover patterns, with some evidence that women have higher rates of turnover even when other factors are controlled for. The underlying factor here may well be that most organisations are arranged 'by men, for men' and are thus less attractive to women. Women also are differently affected by work factors and subject to different pressures to men. The simple assumption that women are more affected by 'family' than men is, however, decreasingly true, and both genders respond well to organisations that manage work/nonwork balances well.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Stroh, Brett and Reilly (1996) examined the differential factors contributing to turnover for male and female managers. This was assessed through a longitudinal survey of 615 managers of 20 fortune 500 companies who participated in both a 1989 and 1991 survey of career experiences and attitudes. Turnover and intent were dependent variables, with family structure, glass ceiling, traditional turnover predictors, and sex considered independent variables. Results of regression analysis were *found to contradict assumptions that attributed the higher turnover rate for women to family obligations, and confirm the findings of a 1995 U.S. dept of labour study revealing a glass ceiling, whereby women were more likely to leave a company when they perceived limited opportunity for career advancement.*

Ferdousi (1995) in a paper to the American Sociological Association examined the relative impacts of individual and structural variables on the labour market experience of males and females, using data derived from the employment histories of all personnel in the New York state civil service system. The major individual level variables investigated were sex, age, tenure, and number of previous moves; the structural variables investigated were: agency size, gender composition of the agencies, grade level, status, educational requirements, skill requirements, supervisory responsibility, working conditions, % female in the job title, and % minority in the job title. Event-history analysis reveals that: (1) *primary labour market characteristics are not equally beneficial for men and women, because they retain women in the organisation at a lower rate; moreover, they are heterogeneous in their impacts on different demographic and occupational groups.* (2) turnover is partially a life-cycle phenomenon; however, age interacts with other demographic and structural variables. (3) secondary labour market characteristics can be grouped into two clusters - job-content and demographic composition of the job; the two clusters differ substantially as to their impacts on men and women. (4) an extensive stratification exists among the agencies in the New York state civil service, with men continually moving out of female-dominated and low-opportunity agencies.

Mano-Negrin and Kirschenbaum examined gender-related factors that affected work decisions made by spouses in dual-earning families, focusing on turnover. A multivariate model of theoretically relevant explanatory variables (e.g., Demographic, objective and subjective work conditions and family constraints) was developed and regressed on the actual turnover behaviour of two gender subsamples, *revealing separate sets of turnover antecedents for males and females.* Further, it was suggested that the economic interdependence of male and female spouses' employment characteristics affects actual turnover decisions. Findings supported the notion that an interdependence, rather than the traditional family-work mode, could be more accurate in predicting work outcomes. *Male and female reactions to*

should be addressed, it is a family that copes with disruption caused by ADF mobility, separations and rigorous day to day work requirements. The study found the most likely length of time selected ADF members expected to remain in the ADF was twenty years. There is a gender difference in retention intention with one half of female members against only thirteen percent of males intending to leave the ADF before the completion of 20 years service. Predominant among the reasons for those planning to leave with less than 20 years service were that members wished to start a new career, that they were dissatisfied with the ADF and that they were dissatisfied with their jobs .

Implication: Other things being equal, systematic action to improve job satisfaction, organisational commitment and balance between work and nonwork lives will improve retention. It will also be important to consider supervision and voice issues.

Spencer (1986) investigated the relationship between the extent to which employees have opportunities to voice dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover in 111 short-term, general care hospitals by surveying hospital administrators in study 1. Nonsupervisory nurses' perceptions of their organisation's voice mechanisms were studied for 4 hospitals in a 2nd study by administering a questionnaire samples of the nurses. *Results showed that, whether or not a union is present, high numbers of mechanisms for employee voice were associated with high retention rates.*

Turnover among correctional institution staff were using data on 3,918 federal bureau of prisons (bop) workers, drawn from the 1991 prison social climate survey, supplemented by personnel and payroll data on bop employees. Per event-history analysis, organisational commitment to both the overall bop organisation and the bop employee's specific institution was found to be inversely related to turnover. Findings do not support the hypothesis that commitment to the bop would have a stronger effect on turnover than commitment to the specific correctional institution. Also, job satisfaction was not significantly related to turnover, as hypothesised. Demographic factors increasing turnover included income, gender, region, age, and prison security. *Results suggest that staffing continuity may be bolstered by strengthening organisational strategies that promote commitment.*

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Due to the number of recruits that leave the British Army during Phase 1 training Hampson (1997) examined predicting voluntary training wastage. About 52% of those who leave, do so voluntarily. From her research she identified three main reasons for voluntary withdrawal: family (external to army); unmet expectations (partly a function of recruitment and selection); and dislike of various aspects of training (a function of the training and training environment). The research found no gender differences between stayers and leavers (the proportion of females leaving was the same as the proportion of males leaving, though this was contrary to the perceptions of both training staff and recruits).

The Royal Australian Navy Exit Survey Report (Timmins, 1999) found the five strongest influences on the decision to leave are: dissatisfaction with Navy management; lack of control over life; desire to live in one location; lack of job satisfaction; and better carer prospects in civilian life. Though pay-related issues were not generally major influences, improvements to pay and allowances were often cited as potential encouragement for people to stay. The report acknowledged that: no factor stood out especially above others, suggesting that the decision to leave may be a result of a combination of factors rather than one overriding factor or event; and that the response rates were disappointingly low, especially by officers and somewhat by women.

Elshaw and Abraham (1997) analysed personality, expectations and prediction of voluntary wastage among officer cadets and found that expectations play a significant role in successful adjustment and fitting into service life. Those with unrealistic expectations are more likely to express thoughts of leaving and have greater difficulties adjusting to the organisation. Trainees who are more withdrawn and less conscientious tend to have greater problems with coping, to view training as unfair and expect more from the service in terms of a "psychological contract", i.e. to display signs of a poorer person-environment fit. Those with high extroversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness, and low neuroticism are less likely to harbour thoughts of leaving, more likely to feel that they fit in and are coping, be happy with the training feedback they have received, more likely to have realistic expectations, more positive about future careers, and more likely to feel satisfied about their career choice.

The Australian Defence Force Families Mobility and Dislocation Study – Stage Two (Snider, 1993) indicated that the typical Australian Defence Force family is satisfied with Service life. Data showed while the conditions of service life impose real hardships that

Summary: Low job satisfaction, weak organisational commitment and poor balance between work and nonwork lives are likely to increase thoughts of leaving. The more people think about leaving, the more likely they are to leave. This can be exacerbated by poor supervisory styles and a lack of mechanisms to 'voice' complaints.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Hellman (1997) carried out a meta-analysis of 50 studies (total n = 18,239 subjects) in order to determine the generalisability of the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave. The analysis revealed that *this relationship was significantly different from zero and consistently negative*. Further, across levels of job satisfaction, employees from a large U.S. federal agency were less likely than employees in the private sector to leave the organisation. *Subsequent analyses on the 12 federal agency studies showed that career-stage indicators (age and tenure) moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave.*

Stedham and Mitchell (1996) investigated the factors related to employee turnover in the U.S. gaming industry. Workers (aged 19-73 yrs) of 6 casinos in Nevada were surveyed concerning their work attitudes and turnover intentions, resulting in a sample of 492 observations. The sample represented all nonsupervisory job types typically found in casinos. Multivariate analyses were employed to investigate the relationships among turnover intentions and job satisfaction, specific satisfaction dimensions, organisational commitment, worker perceptions, pay and labour market conditions. Results showed that *job satisfaction and organisational commitment were most strongly correlated to turnover. Among the most important factors that emerged were perceived lack of job security, satisfaction with supervision, and perceived employer concern with employee well-being. On the other hand, labour market conditions and pay played only a minor role in an employee's decision to quit*

Somers (1995) examined organisational commitment in relation to job withdrawal intentions, turnover, and absenteeism among 422 staff nurses. Three types of commitment were identified--affective, continuance, and normative commitments. Somers measured employee retention and absenteeism, focusing on (1) relationships between each facet of commitment, and employee retention and employee absenteeism and (2) possible interaction effects among components of commitment. A 3-component model of was developed in which *affective commitment emerged as the sole predictor of turnover and absenteeism and, in conjunction with normative commitment, was positively related to intent to remain. Normative commitment was related only to withdrawal intentions. Continuance commitment interacted with affective commitment in predicting (annexed) absences and intent to remain.* In both cases, high levels of continuance commitment tempered relationships between affective commitment and intent to remain and affective commitment and annexed absences.

O'Driscoll and Beehr (1994) collected survey data from 226 employees of comparable organisations in the U.S. and New Zealand. Their study revealed that role stressors (ambiguity and conflict), along with effort-to-performance uncertainty, performance-to-outcome uncertainty, and doubt about acceptance by one's supervisor, generally predicted job satisfaction, psychological strain, and turnover intentions. Path analyses of 3 alternative theoretical models highlighted the importance of job satisfaction as a mediator of the effects of role stressors and uncertainty on strain and turnover intentions. Role stressors contributed separately and via uncertainty to all 3 outcome measures, but subordinate perceptions of supervisor behaviours added little independent predictive power, once the role stressors and uncertainty were accounted for. *Their results indicated that supervisors can influence the degree of role stress and uncertainty that their subordinates experience, which in turn may affect levels of satisfaction, strain, and turnover intentions.*

3 Retention in any specific area or employment—and the Armed Forces are a special case—is strongly connected to outside economic conditions

Summary: Research into the factors that predict turnover and retention shows that the exit rates can be modelled by the single factor of external economic conditions. The rate rises when the external conditions improve, suggesting that to some degree there is an reservoir of dissatisfied members who will leave as soon as conditions are favourable.

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Payne (1995) carried out extensive modelling on the voluntary separations from the RAF for the British Defence Analytical Services Agency. In this study, analyses of separations for Officers and Ground Airmen were undertaken, plotting the rates against factors in the external economy such as the overall unemployment rate, measure of employment opportunity and so forth. There were also analyses that included gaps in income between service and civilian jobs. The economic indicators were lagged—that is, a time gap was created so that unemployment rates in a given quarterly period were compared with separations slightly later, in order to allow for information to have reached personnel, for that to have affected their decision and for the actual separation to take place.

Payne found that the external economic indicators accounted for the large bulk of variation in separation rates, at a level of correlation well above that usually reported in economic and social science research, thus strongly accounting for the rate. Other factors, such as pay differences had little perceptible impact upon separation. In short, *external economic indicators were the single factor predicting separation, the prediction being highly accurate and accounting for the bulk of variation.*

Another report from the same agency, examining training wastage and through life retention in the British armed services (Defence Analytical Services Agency, 1998) echoes this theme for all three services. In particular, the report notes that:

“The rate of voluntary outflow is cyclical and research has demonstrated that the key ‘pull’ factor is the rate of change of UK unemployment. Unemployment is falling and voluntary outflow is reasonably high at the moment, but most independent observers predict that unemployment will level off in the next year or two. The key ‘push’ factors are thought to include the level of job satisfaction, family stability, career prospects and pay” p. 3, emphases added.

Implication: Independent of any efforts that an organisation may make with regard to improving recruiting and in making the job more attractive to incumbents, turnover will nonetheless rise and fall to some degree depending upon external conditions. This is especially pressing for the military.

are in its production. Because empowerment practices dilute managers' individualised supervision of work, they can also reduce managers' biased perception of work quality. Support for this argument was obtained in that (a) participants assigned higher quality to the identical work product as supervisory involvement increased, (b) they did so at elevated levels when they had more self-involvement in supervising the work, and (c) a team-based empowerment orientation curtailed both biases.

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Timmins (1997) examined the attitude and belief profiles in the Royal Australian Navy. Analysis of attitude profiles showed that:

- From a management perspective, the profiles closest to senior managers (Captains and above) belong to Commanders and Warrant Officers; Able Seamen and Leading Seamen are the most disparate from Captains and above (this gulf is very large on all management attitudes, except for Career Management);
- From an organisational socialisation perspective, the rank that appears to be closest to the Navy average is Petty Officer; Officers appear to socialise earlier, when they become Sub-Lieutenants or Acting Sub-Lieutenants. Thereafter Lieutenant-Commanders and Commanders hold very similar attitude and beliefs.

Implication: In many organisations, several sets of misperceptions regarding equity and retention are highly probable. In particular, males will misperceive females, older will misperceive younger and more senior people will misperceive more junior people. Most strikingly, senior male personnel are unlikely to have accurate perceptions of what all other categories think/say. Furthermore, supervisors are likely to overestimate their input to work, under-rewarding subordinates as a consequence.

2 People (mis)perceive things according to their status

Summary: Who you are affects what you see and believe, and issues such as perceived fairness and reasons for staying or leaving are no exception. People in different groups will offer different and incompatible answers. Furthermore, while those in less powerful groups understand accurately what the more powerful will think/say, the more powerful do not understand accurately what the less powerful think/say.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Taylor, Zimmerer and Thomas (1992) examined automation and corporate restructuring which have led to a serious decrease in the number of middle-level managers. While this may achieve increased organisational efficiency and productivity, *problems arise when cutbacks lead to the voluntary turnover of high-performing managers*. Here, results are presented of a survey of 2,200 lower, middle, and upper managers, revealing that perceived causes of such turnover vary across organisational levels. *Lower and middle managers placed greatest importance on lack of control and input on the job; upper-level respondents saw dissatisfaction with rewards and interpersonal conflict as being the most important causes of middle-manager turnover.*

Mor Barak, Cherin and Berkman, (1998) examined the way that different ethnic and gender groups within a diverse organisation perceived the climate of that organisation. The study was of nearly 2700 employees of a large U.S. electronics company. The analysis revealed that Caucasian men perceived the company as more fair and inclusive than did Caucasian women or racial/ethnic minority men and women; Caucasian women and racial/ethnic minority men and women saw more value in and felt more comfortable with, diversity than did Caucasian men.

"It has been previously noted that majority group members often are unaware of, or take for granted, the privileges associated with their status. *This combination of ignorance, denial or covert support of discriminatory policies creates and overall perception of more inclusiveness and fairness on the part of men*. Furthermore, some men may feel antagonistic towards women who have been making political and economic demands, resenting the special favours women receive." p.98.

A key implication that the authors drew was that on "... the organisational level, it seems that managers in the company need a new frame of reference. For some, that will mean simply recognising that there are problems in the way people are treated in the organisation. Many managers have been trained to avoid addressing differences among employees. In fact, in interviews we conducted with the company's managers following the survey, we often heard the expression 'we are colour and gender blind'. One of the biggest challenges may be to retrain managers to recognise and value differences rather than disregard and dismiss them." p. 101.

Organisational practices that empower employees by increasing their participation in decisions about the work process typically results in greater worker productivity, morale, and organisational commitment (Pfeffer, Cialdini, Hanna & Knopoff, 1998). *This study provided evidence for two psychological processes that may help explain manager's reluctance to use worker empowerment practices such as delegation or self-managing teams: (a) a faith in supervision effect, which reflects the tendency of observers to see work performed under the control of a supervisor as better than identical work done without as much supervision; and (b) a self-enhancement effect, which reflects the tendency of managers to evaluate a work product more highly the more self-involved they*

cannot be underestimated. For Navy as a whole, and sailors in particular, career satisfaction is a function of one's sense of worth to the organisation and one's enjoyment of it. Family support and job security are also important to a high proportion of Navy personnel. The study showed that members were more concerned with where their career is headed than they are with current workloads or relationships with their supervisors. They are also less concerned with the direction of the organisation than they are with their own place within the organisation.

Implication: Don't base changes purely on things like exit surveys.

1 Leaving and staying are not the reverse of each other

Summary: Research on why people leave may indicate dissatisfaction with certain factors (e.g.) pay or conditions. It may be inferred that those who stay are more satisfied with those factors and/or that improving those factors will decrease retention. In fact, asked why they stay, stayers point to different sets of factors. It may be that improving the latter would have more effect.

Evidence A: Research on civilian organisations

Manlove and Guzell (1997) examined job turnover at child care centres in rural and semi-rural areas of Pennsylvania, in relation to demographic, work related, and nonwork related factors. Subjects of the research were 169 child care workers (aged 19-83 yrs). Survey data on age and tenure, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, pay, work related well-being, choice of other jobs, intention to leave, and open-ended reasons for leaving/staying were examined. Results indicated that the perceived choice of other jobs and job tenure both had an impact on intention to leave, as well as on actual (12 month) turnover. Job satisfaction was frequently cited in open ended responses as a reason for staying on the job. Subjects open ended responses suggest that *the dynamics of staff turnover in child care are complex and that motivations for staying on the job may be both similar to and different than motivations for leaving*. Findings support previous research showing higher rates of turnover for those newer to the job, with other alternatives, and those who expect to leave.

Evidence B: Research on military organisations

Elliott (1997) investigated job attitudes and retention of RAAF air traffic controllers. In recent years a significant proportion of RAAF controllers has tended to leave the RAAF ATC category either 2-3 years or 5-8 years after graduating from basic ATC training. A survey found that about one third of respondents indicated that they would probably leave if the opportunity arose, another fifth was committed to leaving or actively pursuing alternative jobs, and the remainder (about a half) were either undecided or expected to leave if the right opportunity arose. For many, the "right opportunity" appeared to be the offer to work as a controller for Air Services Australia after a six month bridging course.

Factors influencing leaving (in order from the most important factor) were: not valued by RAAF; pay and promotional issues; outside employment opportunities; management issues; non-ATC duties; and RAAF not looking after controller and family welfare.

Factors that influenced people to stay (in order from the most important factor) were: ATC duties; and people and training.

Neutral factors were: rostering and work hours; and outside influences.

Timmins' 1998 study looked at career satisfaction and intention to leave the Royal Australian Navy. He found that for the majority of ranks among both sailors and officers, career satisfaction and the attractiveness of a civilian career were the main direct predictors of intention to leave. The attractiveness of future posting options was also important for the majority of officer ranks and just under half of the sailor ranks. Attitudes towards Navy life and career management were significant predictors of career satisfaction for the majority of sailor and officer ranks. For the majority of sailor ranks, career satisfaction was also predicted by the belief that their family strongly supports their naval career. For the majority of officer ranks, however, the other predictors of career satisfaction were pride in work and attitude toward job security. The study also suggests that the importance of belonging and well-being

It should also be noted that there are a few other blocks, which are examined first, which offer no explanation of the dynamics of turnover or retention as such, but which are important for clarifying how questions are posed or how rates are understood in relation to wider factors like the economy. These are covered in blocks 1, 2 and 3 below

The report now turns to developing the blocks of evidence that lie inside each cluster.

informal ways. To illustrate—person X may be female and a newcomer. Therefore, from the first set of research one can know something about her likely responses. But it is not possible to know whether she is typical or unusual in her organisation, nor can one know whether she is central or marginal in the social network.

If she is typical (all or mainly female group) and central to the network, she is much less likely to leave than if she is unusual (all or mainly male group) or marginal to the network.

Even more typical of this cluster, the characteristics of person X are really unrelated to the question of whether the organisation is homogenous or heterogeneous, or whether it has a culture that creates high or low turnover. If the organisation is homogenous and has a culture that emphasises interpersonal relations, then, other things being equal, turnover will be low. A heterogeneous organisation with an aggressively work oriented culture will likely have a high turnover.

These are attributes of organisations, not of people. This second cluster, then, sees organisational retention/turnover rates as a measure of collective action (much as temperature is a measure of the well-being of a body made up of many cells). This second cluster includes items in blocks 6 and 7 below.

The third cluster concerns 'big picture' factors. That is, things that have a larger scale either than individuals/categories or organisations as a whole, such as the way that economic factors, policies and ideas change over time. For example, in recent years there has been a belief (poorly supported by evidence) that organisations should be 'downsized'. At the same time and drawing upon related ideas, there has been a belief that recruiting workers for very long time spans or for a full working life, does neither them nor the organisation any good. Better, it is said, for people to move and create a 'portfolio self'—made up of a wide range of skills and experiences. In this fashion, organisations get fresh people and ideas and individuals become self-reliant and skilled. This belief too is not well supported by evidence, but it has become widespread. As a result, many young people now think about and plan careers and career moves in this fashion.

At the same time as these changes occur, so too there are changes in the demographic profile of people joining organisations—offering new challenges such as the management of diversity—and new relationships between organisations, groups and nation states, changing the way that organisations need to function.

Such broad considerations, which are covered in block 8 and 9 below, impact upon retention/turnover in several ways—directly by changing peoples ideas, indirectly by effects on job satisfaction commitment and so forth. They must be taken into consideration, however, in any comprehensive analysis of turnover.

All three clusters are important in understanding the complete picture where retention/turnover is concerned and to some extent, all three need to be drawn upon in creating any useful policy.

considerations about leaving (usually termed 'withdrawal cognitions') and actual turnover. This link might best be diagrammed as follows:

The material summarised in this diagram is very useful. It shows how job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation intersect, and how both flow on to influence 'withdrawal cognitions' (that is, thoughts of leaving). These are also affected by how well the work/non-work balance issue is managed in an organisation. If satisfaction and commitment are low, and the balance is not well handled, withdrawal cognitions increase. Other things being equal, this will lead to a point when people withdraw from the organisation.

This general model takes no particular account of where an individual fits into the organisation. It does not assume that this is irrelevant—indeed, many studies control for such things—but does assume that the underlying relation exists in spite of variations in position, etc.

This model views individuals as broadly similar and models general processes.

In similar vein, and still within the first cluster, some studies consider categories of people and asks whether certain categories have different properties to others. Some categories are fairly fixed, such as gender; others are temporary such as being a 'newcomer'.

Research of this type, also examines broad patterns showing (for example) that women have different turnover patterns compared with men, or that newcomers have different patterns to those who have been with an organisation for some time.

The research results in this first cluster, which are contained in blocks 4 and 5 below, are very useful guides to action, because they can both help to explain observed patterns of turnover/retention and also act as a guide to action. If job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work/non-work balance are key issues and turnover is too high, it follows that efforts to improve these factors will impact positively on turnover rates.

Nonetheless, this is far from the full story.

A second cluster of research considers the organisation as an entity in its own right, looking beyond individuals to ask questions about the organisation and its properties.

For example, once an organisation exists and people are distributed through it, it is possible to ask questions about the positions that people hold in both formal and

'LEAVING AND STAYING': LITERATURE ON RETENTION IN WORKPLACES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MILITARY

QSR, 2000.

In this report, research based material is reviewed that has a direct relationship to turnover/retention in workplaces. Following a brief, conceptual overview, the bulk of the material is presented in blocks. Each block begins with a short heading that indicates the topic, which is followed by a brief summary of the key points. The summary is followed, in a smaller font, with a more extended coverage of points. The block then ends with a brief statement of the implication of the issue.

With regard to the detailed material which forms the bulk of each section:

- In each case, the material is divided between Evidence A, which overviews research based upon civilian organisations and (where material has been found) Evidence B, which overviews research based upon military organisations;
- The material consists of a mix of items drawn from the searches carried out on various research abstract collections (e.g. PsychLit, Sociological Abstracts, etc) and more detailed accounts drawn from consulting sources in full. The latter sources were chosen by:
 - detailed follow up of core material located in the abstract searching phase;
 - a systematic search of original journals on display in a major University library; *or*
 - a search of a variety of Defence library databases and holdings.

For a reader who is mainly interested in an overview and a sense of what the applied consequences of the literature might be, *it is fully effective to read the heading, summary and implications only*, omitting the detailed material in-between.

In particular, by drawing upon the implication sections of the various blocks, it is possible to get a strong sense of the types of actions which do and do not have a strong positive impact upon improving retention outcomes.

Conceptual overview

It may be helpful to see that the literature which has been examined on retention and related issues can be divided into three broad clusters.

The first cluster deals with psychological mechanisms and attributes that are related to individuals or categories.

For example, there is a set of findings that links together job satisfaction, commitment to an organisation, balance between work and non-work factors,