

**Building a Career:**  
**Gender and Employment in a Male-Dominated**  
**Profession**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

Models of employment have become gendered with the 'standard' or masculine model following an unbroken, linear career path whilst the feminine model comprises periods of both full-time and part-time employment as well as intervals of non-participation in the labour market. Commitment to work is defined against these norms with those women who follow the masculine career pattern being said to display greater commitment to work than those who follow an alternative path. It is considered that career progression within an organisational hierarchy is dependent upon following the 'standard' type of career path, which disadvantages women as historically they have been less likely than men to follow such a path.

This thesis argues that there has been an over reliance on such explanations to illustrate and justify women's employment. Such studies patronise women by imposing these explanations on them without work being done to investigate women's own evaluations of their employment. The aim of this research is to examine the working arrangements of a group of highly qualified professional women architects who 'fit' the profile of high commitment to their career by their investment in qualifications. They work in an established 'traditional' profession in what is still very much a 'man's world'. The research aims to go deeper than just to confirm or disconfirm the stereotypes or profile. Within the structural and cultural components that form the profile, it examines the paths the women have taken, how they have progressed through their working and family lives, the choices and sacrifices they have made. In short, it explores not 'what' they have done but 'how' and 'why' they have done it.

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **Introducing the Research**

Historically, women's participation in paid employment has been restricted as a result of patriarchy and various legal exclusions (such as the marriage bar preventing married women from working and other exclusionary means preventing them from taking certain jobs) as well as 'social' pressure (as a result of masculine government policies) to remain in the home as primary caregiver to children and other elderly relatives. Given such conditions, it proves difficult to construct a meaningful career path in the same way as a man, who is able to work without legal, social or occupational restrictions. In itself, the term career can also be problematic as not all occupations followed by men would constitute a career. As a result of such segregation and despite government policies to facilitate greater flexibility in the labour market, there remains a tendency to regard careers in terms of an upward, unbroken progression within an occupation or organisation. This disadvantages women as historically they have been less likely than men to have followed such a path.

This emphasis upon full-time work and an unbroken career path is described by Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) as incompatible with domestic responsibilities with the result that career paths have become defined as 'masculine'. In order to progress up the career ladder, women have had to adopt 'masculine' working arrangements (Hakim 1991, 1995; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996), which has led to women being categorised according to their commitment to either work

or the family. The (modernist) feminist emphasis on equal treatment within employment serves principally to highlight women's 'otherness' if anything other than the standard model of employment is followed and fails to recognise contemporary employment trends towards increased flexibility in working hours or the adoption of non-standard forms of working.

Women's working lives are considered in terms of the extent to which they deviate from this 'norm' (Acker 1983, 1987; Evetts 1994a; Tanton 1994) but any divergence from it results in women being highlighted as somewhat different. Accordingly, models of employment have become gendered with the masculine (or productive) model following an unbroken, linear career path whilst the feminine (or reproductive) model comprises periods of both full-time and part-time employment as well as intervals of non-participation in the labour market (Hakim 1995; Dex 1987).

Commitment to work has become defined against this norm with those women who follow an unbroken, linear career pattern being said to display greater commitment to work than those who follow an alternative path. Hakim (1995, 1996) makes a distinction between these two groups of women in polar terms: women are either committed to their careers or committed to their families and participate in the labour market accordingly. She holds that those women who have invested in their human capital by gaining training and qualifications, for

example professional women, are more committed to their work than those who have not.

Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) are more specific about defining commitment in terms of time among professional women. They identify women as being more committed to their work if they work full-time whilst those who work part-time are considered to be less committed, thereby identifying different levels of commitment among women with the same levels of training and qualifications. Time, in the form of hours spent working, is the most tangible measure of commitment which is why it has become used as the definitive characteristic of the degree of commitment. However, it possesses inherent flaws when used as the sole indicator, in that it is easy to falsify and does not serve as a measure of actual output.

The overriding feminist assumption is that women want to compete with men on equal terms regarding working hours, pay and conditions. However, many women choose to work less hours or not at all, not because of the lack of adequate childcare facilities, which again is a prevalent feminist argument, but because they want to spend time with their children. In short they want to be mothers (Hakim 1995, 1996; Meiksins and Whalley 1998). However, they are penalised for this because if they do not want to be caught within the rigid confines of the 'masculine' career path their commitment to work is doubted (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996).

Previous studies of women's professional employment have overgeneralised in that they are based on an assumption that women who work in professions are somehow more committed than those women who work in occupations requiring a lower level of academic qualifications. These women are also labelled 'high flyers' (White, Cox and Cooper 1992) with the attendant supposition that because they have chosen to work in a profession that they are also more committed to their career and will, as a result, make certain sacrifices within their domestic lives and relationships (Hellwig 1985; Powell 1988; Davidson and Cooper 1984; Marshall 1984). Studies also assume that women who work full-time are also more committed than those who work fewer hours (Crompton and le Feuvre 1996).

Combined these studies provide a profile of the 'typical' career woman. She is employed in a demanding job having attended university to attain her qualifications. Her career takes priority over her domestic life and she juggles her domestic arrangements around it (Parasuraman and Greenhaus 1993). She works long hours and consequently suffers a great deal of stress (Marshall 1984; Davidson and Cooper 1987). She may forgo or delay motherhood in order to concentrate on her career (FPSC 1998). If she has children, it is she, not her husband or partner, who assumes responsibility for organising childcare and who must take time off from work if the children are ill (Brannon and Moss 1991). In the workplace she must act as a 'quasi man' as to be seen as displaying any feminine attributes reduces her credibility (Gilligan 1979). In

spite of this she is still discriminated against, she has to wait longer for promotion, she is paid less than her male colleagues and her commitment is continually doubted (Hakim 1996; Crompton and Sanderson 1990a, 1990b; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996).

The career of her husband takes priority and she must be prepared to relocate to accommodate the demands of his work (Marshall and Cooper 1976). She is responsible for organising the childcare as well as carrying out the housework. The term 'superwoman' was coined to describe this woman (Newell 1993) but those women who have attained professional qualifications and then leave the workplace or who adopt an alternative career path are accused of perpetuating gender stereotypes (Coward 1993).

There has been an over reliance on structural explanations to illustrate and justify women's employment (Martin and Wallace 1984). Such studies patronise women by imposing these explanations on them without work being done to investigate women's own evaluations of their employment. The aim of this research is to examine a group of highly qualified professional women architects who 'fit' this profile. They have initially demonstrated their commitment to the profession by spending seven years gaining their professional qualification, they work in an established 'traditional' profession in what is still very much a 'man's world'. The research aims to go deeper than just to confirm or disconfirm the stereotypes or profile. Within the structural and cultural components that form

the profile, it examines the paths the women have taken, how they have progressed through their working and family lives, the choices and sacrifices they have made. In short, it attempts to explore not 'what' they have done but 'how' and 'why' they have done it.

The aim of this research is not just to provide an insight into the working lives and career patterns of female architects (eg. Fogarty *et al* 1981). Nor is it another investigation into the working lives of women in male dominated professions (eg. Carter and Kirkup 1990) or how women operate in what is essentially a man's world (Kanter 1977; Marshall 1984). Furthermore, although a significant amount of historical analysis is given, the intention is not to provide a history of women in the architecture profession (eg. Walker 1989)

Instead the aim is to provide a qualitative study of women's orientation to work and career commitment to a profession which is dominated by men and masculine 'norms'. It examines why the demands of a male dominated profession conflict with the traditional expectations of women and how this 'double bind' (Epstein 1983) illustrates the incongruity between women's personal identity and their membership of a 'male' profession. This research also attempts to examine *how* and *why* these women remain in the profession in the face of the many barriers and obstacles presented to them. It is intended to illustrate that commitment to a career can take many different forms not all of which can be measured and quantified. The women's experiences are told in

their own words, using an interpretive method, through the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviewing with the researcher as the research tool.

## **Introducing the Researcher**

Marshall (1992) describes research as a personal process and this research is essentially very personal. I come to this research after eleven years as a quantity surveyor and I am also married to an architect. This combination has influenced the topic of research and has had a significant impact on the methods by which it has been carried out (this is discussed further in Chapter four). My background is discussed in some depth in order to illustrate some of the difficulties that women face in their lives.

I originate from a conservative farming family in an equally conservative region of North Yorkshire. Throughout my formative years, my mother tried her hardest to prepare me for the role of homemaker. Her goal for me was to get a 'nice, steady job in a bank because you can work part-time after you're married' and, most important of all, to marry a farmer. My choice of career was more along the lines of I knew what I did not want to do rather than having any idea about what I might like to do. The idea of working in a bank did not appeal nor, at that time, did marriage and children. School careers advice was minimal and I visited the local Careers Office. They suggested surveying and arranged a visit to a firm of surveyors, who turned out to be quantity surveyors, for work experience. I was offered a job with professional training to start after

completing my A levels. I stayed with the practice for over five years and studied for the RICS professional examinations.

Various job changes brought me to Nottingham where I spent three years in the design and construction department of a large retailing organisation followed by two years with a large national practice. While with the retailing organisation, I had my son and prior to this I had not experienced any negative effects of being a woman in a male-dominated environment. In the past, I had worked on many different kinds of projects, including extensive periods of time on RAF and Army bases where the low numbers of women make them extremely visible.

However, following the birth of my son and within three weeks of returning to work, I was given responsibility for a project which involved frequent overnight stays away from home for a period of six months. I was aware that my commitment to work was being 'tested' but felt unable to refuse to take the project on. There were other female surveyors within the organisation but none had children. Likewise, when I moved to the large national practice, there were other female surveyors but again none had children. This practice had 'prided' itself on not employing any 'women (as surveyors), gays or coloureds' over the years but had relented in the case of women during the building boom of the late 1980's when they were desperate for staff.

I became very aware of a change in attitudes towards me compared to my early career, suddenly my gender was a problem. Perhaps, more precisely, the fact I was a mother may have been the problem. I was deeply unhappy with the organisation and went for a series for other quantity surveying posts but felt instead that I wanted to leave the profession. However, as I was earning a relatively high salary, had a company car and other benefits, it was not a decision that could be made easily. It culminated with me becoming redundant during the recession which devastated the construction industry at the start of the 1990's, but at least I had a financial payoff and could sign on as unemployed.

My background provides the source of my interest in this research and has a significant distinctive influence on both the topic of research and the means by which it has been carried out. This is deliberate in that it provides a subjective depth to the context and the data by being part of the world inhabited by the subjects of the research – the women architects.

The “double consciousness” (du Bois 1983) that my background brings to this work, I hope, enhances the meaning gained from the data. For me, it has offered a means and justification for exploring and understanding the problems I encountered with my former career and, I hope, will contribute to the eventual acceptance of working arrangements which accommodate the needs of women to a much greater extent.

## **The Structure of the Thesis**

The focus within the thesis is on women's careers as opposed to women's jobs because the concept of career implies a degree of continuity in the labour market. A career is distinguished from a job on the basis of identity with and commitment to the work role, over and above that of a job. However, consideration of general issues regarding women's employment is necessary, as they are relevant whether the focus is job or career. These are discussed in Chapter two, beginning with a brief history of women's employment leading on to the development of occupational segregation, the gendering of jobs and patriarchy, which provide obstacles to women's employment at every level. The career as a model of employment and its effects on women are then outlined. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of unemployment and redundancy, which is an inherent feature of contemporary employment. The theme of reporting on current trends in employment trends is reflected by the consideration of non-standard forms of employment and the issues surrounding family and career are outlined. The debates surrounding women's career commitment and orientations to work are detailed and critically evaluated.

Chapter three is concerned firstly with professional employment and secondly, the architecture profession. It provides an overview of the introduction of women in to the professions generally and then architecture in particular, from both a historical and conceptual perspective. The nature of the profession today

and the position of women within it are discussed in detail, and an overview of the construction industry is given in order to provide a contextual setting for the profession.

The research process is discussed in Chapter four. Data collection has been by in-depth semi-structured interviews carried out with women architects in the East Midlands region of the UK. The researcher has a significant role in the research process as a former quantity surveyor, an allied profession. With in-depth interviewing the interviewer is the research tool and so the issues of reflexivity and the creation of mutual trust and rapport in the interview situation, arising from a woman researching the experiences of women, are detailed. An interpretive approach has been adopted to provide the means of analysis and the concept of 'habitus' as defined by Bourdieu (1977) is used to describe the relationship between the individual and their surroundings.

Chapters five to seven cover the analysis of the interview data, allowing the women to 'tell' their own stories by using their words. Chapter five provides a contextual background to the following chapters by examining why architecture was chosen as a profession and the process of becoming qualified. Chapter six considers the types of working arrangements that are being followed showing that a large proportion of the women is following a non-standard career path. It examines the working arrangements of the women in relation to the polarity and commitment debates outlined in chapter two. Chapter seven investigates the

issues surrounding women who are in male-dominated careers and attempts to explain how and why they remain committed to their profession in terms other than hours worked or form of working pattern followed. The findings are summarised and conclusions provided in Chapter eight and indicate that previous studies of women's career commitment fall short by failing to recognise the interaction of structural constraints and individual preferences and choices made within these confines.

The central theme of the thesis and thus contribution to knowledge, is that there is more to commitment than hours worked or whether the masculine career path or homemaker career is followed. The working arrangements of the women interviewed show that commitment is demonstrated by achieving the professional qualification, identity with the profession, by remaining in the profession in spite of structural, economic and cultural obstacles and by gaining some inherent reward by being a member of the architectural profession.

## **Chapter 2: Issues Concerning Women's Employment**

### **Introduction**

There are many issues concerning women's employment and a multitude of perspectives from which to consider them. It is generally accepted that women play a marginal, subordinate role in the workplace occupying lower grade, lower paid positions without potential for advancement. Much literature has deliberated this situation, its causes and effects. For example, feminist debate argues for equality with men in terms of work undertaken, pay and conditions, whilst in the neo-classical economic view equality is based on the level of investment in their personal human capital by an individual. This chapter aims to examine the principal issues arising from the narratives of women's employment from both contemporary and historical viewpoints. The work of Hakim (1991, 1995, 1996) and Crompton (Crompton and Sanderson 1986, 1990a, 1990b; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Crompton and Harris 1997) is used extensively as a basis for highlighting the various debates concerning, in particular, women's commitment to work.

The first section outlines women's employment from a historical perspective, examining how women's involvement in the labour market has fluctuated in response to economic, social and political demands. Following this the gendering of jobs, where certain occupations became to be regarded as more appropriate

for men *or* women is considered. This forms the basis for a discussion of the concepts of occupational segregation and patriarchy as barriers to women's employment. The section concludes with a discussion of the contemporary debate concerning heterogeneity within women's employment.

The following section introduces the career as a model of employment and the problems faced by women because of its association with unilinear progression.

In turn, the process of career development and the concept of career commitment are outlined, again with the difficulties faced by women being considered. Finally, the combination of parenthood and career is evaluated, a discourse which seldom, if ever, features in literature concerning masculine careers.

## **Women's Employment**

### **A Brief History of Women's Employment**

Prior to the Industrial Revolution work was carried out in the home, mainly on a craft type basis and was done by both men and women. Following industrialisation the gender composition varied between areas of employment and gradually resulted in a decline in the employment opportunities open to women and assisted the development of occupational segregation (Barron and Norris 1976; Walby 1986). The role of women evolved to become more supportive, to

care for the working men by maintaining the home and to replenish the workforce through their reproductive role.

In many areas of the labour market, women were prevented from working after they married. This was jointly enforced by both employers and trade unions and prevented women from undertaking paid employment for almost a century (Walby 1986). As a result of long campaigns by women's organisations it was abolished during the period from 1946 to 1963. Hakim (1991) reports that many women simply concealed their marriage until their first pregnancy became obvious, in order to continue working. However, during this period when the marriage bar was being erased, further obstacles were being introduced to exclude women from the workplace.

During both the first and second world wars, women's employment increased to replace the men who were called into military service. The idea of jobs being gendered and the 'suitability' of women for particular roles was (conveniently) overlooked with women still being involved in heavy manufacturing and agriculture. However, occupational segregation still took place to some extent but it was based on class rather than gender, with working class women taking the heavier and dirtier (manual) jobs. Workplace nurseries were provided in order to make it possible for mothers to work.

Milkman (1976) found that married women's employment rates in the US increased between 1930 and 1940 in spite of government, union and employer action to remove married women from the labour force. Sex stereo-typing of occupations, such as clerical work, led to them being protected, the same phenomena was observed in the UK from 1970-1980 (Martin and Wallace 1984).

After the wars women were 'encouraged' by successive government campaigns to return to the home and remain in the role of wife and mother, primarily in order to provide employment for men returning home. During the decades following, especially during the 1950's, women were constantly made aware of the importance of their role as mothers. Popular handbooks of childrearing provided social pressure by emphasising the importance of the full-time mother and anything other than a brief separation was considered to be potentially damaging (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a). This provided a sharp contrast to earlier in the century when it was the norm in middle and upper class families to employ nannies and governesses, to send children to boarding school at early ages and generally having little more than a minimal role in parenting.

In the post second world war decades the British economy was booming and so women were once again invited back in to the workplace. Nevertheless, their role was usually restricted to part-time work and their entry to the workforce was after their families were raised (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a). In Britain in the second half of the century, among working and lower middle class families there has been a strong emphasis on the role of the natural mother in the upbringing of children in contrast to France, for example, where the state provided quality childcare, or in the Israeli kibbutz system and Soviet economies where childcare was provided centrally. This has, in turn, contributed to the structure of employment in that there was, for many years, a greater incidence of part-time working in Britain than in any other European country (Joshi *et al* 1985). Hakim goes so far as to say that “*all* the increase in employment in Britain in the post-War period, from 22 million jobs in 1951 to 25 million in 1995, consisted of growth in female part-time jobs” (Hakim 1996:63) which illustrates the importance of the female role in the workplace. However, it can also be used to affirm the idea that women comprise a ‘reserve army’ of labour to be called upon whenever necessary (Bruegal 1979; Beechey and Perkins 1987), to provide labour in a war situation (Milkman 1987) or in response to fluctuations in the economic cycle (Hakim 1996).

The movement of women in and out of the workforce has indicated that this has been the case at various periods of time but Hakim disputes this idea by arguing that “the very size, stability and separateness of the part-time workforce in Britain ensures it cannot all be a reserve army of labour” (Hakim 1996:66). Martin and Wallace (1984) also criticise the notion of a ‘reserve army’ of labour on the grounds that empirical evidence is limited and restricted mainly to wartime.

The acceleration in growth of the feminist movement during the 1960's led the way for women to be considered on equal terms with men regarding the labour market and a succession of legislation followed. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and Equal Pay Act (1970) meant that it became illegal to directly or indirectly discriminate against a woman on the grounds of her gender and that the principle of equal pay for equal work was introduced. The Employment Protection Act of 1975 meant that a woman could not be dismissed from employment on the grounds of pregnancy and introduced the concept of maternity leave. At the same time contraception became more reliable and more easily available and, for the first time, women in relationships could have a reasonable amount of control over their fertility and, as a result, their working lives.

In spite of legislation removing structural barriers, social and cultural obstacles still remain. It has taken considerably longer for attitudes to change towards married women and mothers working. During the 1960's whilst it was only considered acceptable for unmarried women and childless wives to work (Hunt 1968), the reality was that many, in particular working class, women with children worked. By 1980, it was still thought difficult to combine a career and children (Martin and Roberts 1984), although the majority of working women disagreed with the statement, married men and non-working wives supported it. However by 1987, attitudes had changed and two thirds of the population agreed that it was possible to combine a career with children (Jowell *et al* 1988). The majority of working mothers still shoulder the burden of running the home and organising childcare (Arber and Ginn 1995; Gowler and Legge 1982). Whatever opportunities are provided through legislation, they cannot alone change firmly entrenched attitudes.

During the 1980's the pervasive image confronting women in the UK was that they could 'have it all', pursue a rewarding career and look after a family (Coward 1993). This was projected by women's magazines, contemporary fiction and the election of a female Prime Minister. It was considered that all barriers to women's careers had been removed and that it was merely down to the women themselves. However, a decade later whilst women in the UK comprise the

highest proportion of any workforce within the European Union except Denmark, they are still under-represented in many senior positions and the earnings gap is significantly wider than any other EU country (Hakim 1996). Women are still subjected to occupational sex segregation (Hakim 1979, 1992), provide the largest proportion of part-time workers (Beechey and Perkins 1987), have the lowest levels of job security and promotion prospects (Huws *et al* 1989), and are the lowest skilled and lowest paid workers (Hakim 1987).

### **The Gendering of Jobs**

The exclusion of women from many types of paid employment led to the development of the organisation on male terms, in terms of skills, attitudes, behavioural patterns and education. These have tended to mirror the gender roles within society and combined to produce a structure which effectively served to further exclude women and reinforce their subordinate position within society. Milkman (1987) describes how when a gendered role is established 'cultural inertia' means that it is not questioned. Thus, once a job becomes 'male' or 'female', the demand for labour to fill it tends to expand or contract as a sex-specific demand unless there is a fundamental restructuring or radical upheaval of the labour supply, such as wartime when women took on many occupations formerly carried out by men exclusively (Milkman 1987).

The 'feminisation' of clerical labour contributed to the gendering of jobs. During the nineteenth century clerical work was carried out as part of the manager's work, but towards the end of the century there was a massive expansion in the number of clerical jobs which coincided with an increase of the numbers of (unmarried) women in the workplace. With the creation of a clerical role separate from the managerial position it was seen as natural for women to fill these new jobs. Softley (1985) suggests two reasons why this was the case. Firstly, women provided cheap labour, as relatively new entrants to the workforce they were not in a position to demand parity of earnings nor sufficiently skilled to compete directly with men. Secondly, after the introduction of typewriters in the 1870's, a whole new area of work opened up.

This type of work was, at first, free from any gender stereotyping but women were considered to have greater manual dexterity than men which may have led to them being considered suitable for such work. At the time this type of work for women was preferable to the alternatives of domestic service, factory work and dress-making (Davy 1986) but it still was a means of women servicing men. The numbers of women employed in clerical work grew and its relative status fell, women were considered 'natural' office workers while men were left to develop the role of manager. As a result another section of employment became known as women's work.

This reflects the notion of subordination within the organisation, where men hold the positions of power and women exist in a lesser position, to organise the running of the office and to look after the manager in order that he is free to carry out the important task of decision making. Effectively, women in such positions take on the role of 'office wife' (Kanter 1977; Softley 1985). However, office work was attractive to women because it was considered more glamorous, and was portrayed as such (Pringle 1989), and had higher social status than other occupations (Lockwood 1958). The skills were, and are, easily transferable between different organisations enabling women to spend time away from the labour market and to be able to re-enter relatively easily. An additional element is that women do not have to compete directly with men for these jobs (Cassell 1993), meaning that it is easier to re-enter this type of employment after a break.

The feminisation of clerical work succeeded in trapping women in jobs with low prospects of promotion. Employers believed that women were not ambitious. Indeed, it was very difficult for any woman to be ambitious, as women possessed few rights regarding their education or employment. On marriage a woman was deemed to have become the property of her husband and any property she owned or wealth she possessed became her husband's. A marriage bar existed in many occupations and meant that a husband and family had to be sacrificed in

order to be able to establish a career. Prior to the introduction of safe and reliable forms of contraception, women had little control over their fertility and consequently the risk of pregnancy was high. Marriage and motherhood became equated to lack of ambition. Men were thus able to dominate the workplace, as they could virtually guarantee an uninterrupted career and so perpetuated the patriarchal nature of the workplace.

In more recent times the instability of the labour market coupled with demographic changes, such as a reduction in the number of school leavers at the end of the 1980's, has created a 'feminisation' of the labour force (Jenson *et al* 1988). These structural changes, combined with a significant growth in employment within the service sector, have created conditions which have led to an increase in part-time employment, compounding the feminisation process. These part-time jobs were filled by women who were considered as ideal for the unstable labour market because of women's "less continuous relationship with the labour market" (Jenson *et al* 1988:10). Women have, historically, shown greater fluctuation in labour market participation with movements in and out of jobs. They have also shown greater inclination than men for taking part-time and other jobs which have not had the benefit of full social protection. The situation was further compounded because these jobs and workers have tended not to have trade union representation.

## **Forms of Occupational Segregation**

Barron and Norris (1976) contend that a dual labour market has emerged, with primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector comprises relatively well paid jobs with security, training and promotion whilst secondary sector jobs are low paid, tenure is insecure and there are little or no prospects of training or promotion. Women are more likely to be found in the marginal labour market (Bruegal 1979; Hakim 1979, 1991, 1992), with reduced job security and lower wages than their male counterparts. This also strengthens Walby's (1986) contention that the core and peripheral regions of the organisation are gendered with the core being a masculine region and the periphery being a feminine area.

Martin and Wallace (1984), however, criticise the dual labour market model. They argue that it has inherent weaknesses especially in analysing the role of public sector employment and that many jobs possess characteristics of both labour markets. Furthermore, they also explain that re-entry into the primary labour market is difficult following redundancy, especially for older women with the result that workers may move between the primary and secondary sectors because of economic conditions.

Horizontal and vertical occupational segregation by sex is a further form of segregation. Horizontal sex segregation is said to occur when men and women follow different occupations while vertical segregation is where men are working in higher level occupations than women. Women are generally found in clerical or service work or the 'lower' professions and as a result are segregated horizontally by their sex because the power of gender roles, as they have developed, have led certain forms of employment to be regarded as women's work. The gendering of occupations and the segregation which results is persistent, with 70% of male employees and 54% of female employees being employed in occupations with domination by workers of the same sex (Beno 1988).

Women are also more likely to be found at the lower levels of professions or in routine non-manual occupations, illustrating vertical segregation. As a result men occupy the higher levels of the professions and, therefore, control entry by acting as 'gatekeepers'. The segregation has become institutionalised by a variety of discriminatory work practices including management procedures (Beno 1988), job classification schemes (Milkman 1983a, 1983b), gendered perceptions of ability (Kessler-Harris 1981), and job design (Kanter 1980).

A further distinction can also be made between primary and secondary earners, each may exist in both the primary and secondary sectors of the labour market. Primary earners must earn enough to cover basic necessities such as housing, fuel and food whilst secondary earners are dependent upon another person or the state to provide these (Hakim 1996). A primary earner, therefore, needs to work full-time and continuously but a secondary earner may only work periodically and/or part-time although they can also work full-time. The basic inherent difference is, possibly that a secondary earner has an element of choice in whether or not to work, as well as the amount of time to devote to work. To some extent, they will be able to effect a time/effort trade-off.

Hakim (1996) describes how even though a secondary earner may make a valuable contribution to the household budget, the important issue is that they have more choice in the matter of whether to work or not, as well as the amount of work they do. This is not to say that they have total freedom over their work commitment but as the secondary labour market is much more dynamic than the primary labour market, secondary earners are able to find the employment which best serves their needs. It is important, however, to emphasise that not all secondary earners are in the secondary labour market, they also operate within the primary labour market as part of dual-career households. Historically, women have tended to be classified as secondary earners in the secondary labour force

(Barron and Norris 1976; Siltanen 1994), a grouping which is perhaps compounded by studies such as Goldthorpe *et al*'s (1969) *Affluent Worker* study which showed choices outside work tended to influence the type and amount of work carried out. If a family can earn enough to support what they consider a satisfactory lifestyle, there is less pressure on members to offer more labour.

A further dimension is thus added, once there is a distinction made between primary and secondary earners, there must also be a differentiation concerning firstly the motivation to seek, and secondly to remain in, employment. Primary earners do not have the extent of choice regarding whether to seek or remain in employment that secondary earners possess. Secondary earners may choose between domestic and market work. This is seen as 'rational' decision making within 'new home economics', it refers to where a woman (usually) takes responsibility for the domestic work, thus sacrificing investment in human capital (Becker 1981). This, Becker argues, makes economic sense because starting from the assumption that both husband and wife are in all ways equal, it improves economic efficiency if one specialises in paid employment while the other assumes responsibility for the domestic work. This has been interpreted as reinforcing occupational segregation to prevent women from playing an equal part in the work place because wives who do work will seek less demanding jobs (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a; Hakim 1996).

This theory of rational choices within families is an extension of neo-classical economics which defines occupational segregation as a direct consequence of the different contributions made by men and women in the labour market. Chiplin and Sloane (1982) explain that women are concentrated in certain areas of the labour market by their lack of investment in human capital, their failure to build unbroken career paths, and by their failure to gain work related qualifications. This helps to explain occupational segregation to a limited extent by offering a rational economic argument by acknowledging that women are disadvantaged in the workplace. However, it fails to identify how segregation can be avoided or reduced. It also falls short of addressing the productive versus reproductive question which women face.

### **The Effects of Patriarchy**

Men's control over women both in the home and the workplace is referred to as patriarchy and "the material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labour power" (Hartmann 1979:11). Hartmann argues that job segregation and the family wage indicate how patriarchy and capitalism have become inextricably linked. Job segregation is organised to ensure that women are restricted from occupying positions dominated by men, which means that wages will be lower in the jobs that are

open to women and ultimately leads to continued female dependence upon men (Walby 1986, 1990). The family wage earned by men means that there is not the financial necessity for women to work. The key element of patriarchy is that men organise collectively to maintain the exclusion of women through the law, political organisation, labour market, culture and ideology (Hakim 1996).

Hakim (1996) also refers to Goldberg's physiological theory of patriarchy. Goldberg (1993) asserts that organisations are patriarchal because of physiological reasons, in that the presence of testosterone creates sex differences in behaviour, ambition and motivation. He argues that these physiological characteristics lead to men being more competitive, assertive, aggressive and dominant resulting in men displaying competitive behaviour seeking positions of power, authority and high status. He further develops this to explain how combined with the socialisation process there is an expectation of male dominance in personal, heterosexual relationships. These roles then create a norm for roles within the workplace which "creates an invisible barrier to establishing egalitarian and relaxed work roles and relationships that are not 'coloured' by patterns in the sexual arena. At the worst, sex roles and styles of behaviour established in heterosexual relationships carry over into role expectations and behaviour patterns in the workplace, consciously or subconsciously" (Hakim 1996:6).

Work is more than a source of income it is also a source of social identity for individuals (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a) and coupled with the social construction of many occupations it becomes almost impossible to separate issues of public and private life. If this is the norm for human behaviour then it becomes difficult to isolate the work persona from the human interaction that exists within personal relationships. A difficulty then arises if men and women are required to adopt varying behaviour when at work to how they react in their personal relationships away from work. As Hakim points out, in societies where gender identity has been suppressed, for example the Israeli *kibbutzim* or in socialist economies, vertical job segregation has not been eliminated or even reduced to any great extent (Hakim 1996).

The workplace is still male-dominated, both by numbers and methods. Management styles still favour male values and characteristics (Collinson, Knights and Collinson 1990; Northcraft and Gutek 1993) and the standard model of employment is still male and full-time (Hearn *et al* 1989).

### **Production versus Reproduction: Feminist Theory**

A major element of both marxist and radical feminism is the 'social' versus the 'biological' account of sexual inequality. Since Wollstonecraft (1759-97), the

early feminists had believed that the subordinate position of women was socially constructed and not, as was commonly believed the result of the dominant religious teaching, that woman was created as secondary and inferior from Adam's rib. Darwin's theory of evolution and Engels' use of ethnographic and historical evidence combined to show that women had not always occupied a socially inferior position (Engels 1884 in Watkins *et al* 1992). Engels linked the subordination of women to the origins of private property and provided an insight into the economic structure of a society and the family forms within that society. He described the productive/reproductive problem faced by women as:

If she fulfills her duties in the private service of her family, she is excluded from production and cannot earn anything; and if she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfill her family duties. What applies to women in the factory applies to her in all branches of business, right up to medicine and law. The modern domestic family is based on the overt and covert domestic slavery of women (Engels 1884, quoted in Watkins *et al* 1992:85).

In describing the productive/reproductive dilemma, Engels indicates that women were able to make choices regarding their lives, which was not the case at that time. A woman became her husband's property on marriage along with her possessions, wealth and property.

Contemporary marxist feminism argues that gender equality could be obtained by the abolition of private ownership, as the means of production are designed in

order to exploit men as workers and women in their role at home servicing male needs. However, this is too simplistic an explanation as it is highly unlikely that the rise of capitalism and the subordination of women could occur simultaneously and that one could be the product of the other.

Radical feminism takes patriarchy as its explanation of female subordination. This is the domination of women through male violence and suppression with the result that social structures have emerged to maintain this. There is no advantage to men in changing this situation, society is dominated by men and masculinity, and historically women's roles have existed in order to 'service' men. Women possess greater 'value' to men and masculine society, by remaining in these roles. It is estimated that the cost of replacing the domestic services provided by a housewife is estimated at between £15,000 and £20,000 per year. Nationally, the value of unpaid work by women is worth £739 billion to the UK economy (Odih 1998). The solution to this is the separation of men and women and the creation of separate structures away from those created by men, which amounts to a fundamental refocusing which attempts to reflect women's lives in a feminine context.

Liberal feminism takes a less polemic perspective. It does not attempt to apportion the subordination and exploitation of women to one single factor but

instead tries to explain the situation in terms of events and circumstances which prevent women from taking advantage of the opportunities available to them. Examples of these are that discriminatory practices within organisations are the root cause of horizontal segregation and that the organisation of society 'encourages' women into making certain 'choices' about their careers. Legislation has been introduced in an attempt to create greater gender equality, with the intention that if attitudes can be gradually changed and discriminatory practices prevented then equality will result. However, liberal feminism does not explain how women's position within society became established as such in the first instance.

Greed (1991) introduces 'bourgeois feminism' which approaches the debate in an entirely different manner. This she defines as a non-radical feminist or in simple terms, a business woman. Greed argues that this type of feminism arose during the 1980's as a result of "wider political changes" (Greed 1991:10) and that it is more appropriate for women employed in the more conservative professions<sup>1</sup>.

She explains that bourgeois feminists:

... seem quite alienated from feminism and may never have read any feminist literature. Yet they possess some measure of feminist consciousness of their own, but are unlikely to express themselves in feminist jargon. They may not identify 'patriarchy' as the cause of their problems, or even think in terms of macro-sociological first causes (but undoubtedly experience their effects). They are more likely to see their

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<sup>1</sup> Greed defines these as the 'landed' professions such as surveying and architecture.

problems as being personal, and either their own fault or that of those who work with them. They may be put off by the false media image of feminism and 'the way feminists dress and carry on'. (Greed 1991:11).

Where this form of feminism differs from its more politically motivated counterparts is that it does not lay the blame solely on men or society. Instead it internalises the difficulties that women face but it nevertheless reflects how some women feel. One of the major problems faced by feminism is that it assumes a female consensus on relationships with men, employment and belief systems. As Greed highlights, such professions as architecture and surveying are traditional and conservative with the result that they are unlikely to attract recruits of a more radical or nonconformist nature. However, in the sense that bourgeois feminists are business women (Greed 1991), they can be said to have more of a sense of feminist individuality than collectivity.

The gains for women, as a result of the feminist struggle from whatever perspective, have been in such areas as equal access to education, votes for women, property rights for married women and so on. Legislation is in place to prevent discrimination against women in the workplace and requires employers to consider women on the same terms as men. These gains go some way towards appeasing liberal feminists. However, women are still ghettoised into jobs which reflect their caring roles, duplicating their work in the family. As described in

earlier sections, women remain concentrated in the secondary labour market, they carry out the majority of the caring for children and other dependent relatives and their roles generally remain secondary to those of men.

## **The Career as a Model of Employment**

### **The Concept of the Career**

The career has become the “dominant model for contemporary employment” and is the “concept which charts how individuals pass through a socially recognised and meaningful sequence of related events” (Hassard 1989:85-86). This sequence of related events is known as a career path and highlights the linearity of career development, it includes past, present and future events. Success is demonstrated by a continual upward progression with increased status and rewards, which means that careers are more usually associated with skilled and non-manual occupations.

The term career implies permanence, qualifications, progression and status. Whilst a job is seen more in terms of physical skill or ability, less permanent with fewer opportunities for promotion, as well as lower status. The definition here is narrow and limited to work events, Spilerman (1977) and Haveman and Cohen (1994) examine careers in a wider context taking into account other factors

which are present in a person's life cycle. Evetts (1994a), too, argues that the definition of the term career, in relation to women, needs redefining

Dex (1987) characterises the pattern of women's employment as M-shaped, falling as a result of and rising in between the births of children with periods of part-time employment incorporated throughout. The position and size of the peaks and troughs of the M-shape will vary among women but the pattern provides a useful comparison with the standard model of male employment which can be standardised as a linear progression or as a ladder implying continuous upward progression (Pascall 1994). This has become the accepted norm for career and promotion opportunities and "has involved an assumption that careers will follow certain rather specific routes and paths, will be work-centred, have no unpaid caring responsibilities, and involve continuous work experience and orderly development and promotion up through an organisational and occupational hierarchy" (Evetts 1994a:9). However, Evetts (1994a) then states that this pattern, whilst generally accepted as representative, does not characterise the employment patterns of many women or men. Whilst Acker (1983, 1987) has argued that researchers have examined the working patterns of some men and have labelled this a career and if women follow a similar path, then they too have a career.

It is becoming increasingly accepted that men may follow a different career pattern to what has been considered the norm. In dual career families responsibility for childcare may be shared between both parents with men either taking career breaks or adopting more flexible types of employment (Handy 1993; New Ways To Work 1995). This makes it possible for women, in particular mothers, to be able to follow a career path. Women are increasingly reluctant to sacrifice the considerable investment in human capital that is the result of pursuing a profession as opposed to being employed in a relatively unskilled occupation but, at the same time, the desire to create a family forms an innate part of human nature. If, as will be discussed later, professional women tend to marry men who have equal or greater academic and occupational achievement, then many women will be earning comparable salaries to their partners and will have a more balanced bargaining position when considering whose career enjoys priority at a particular time. Career patterns are emerging which take this into account (New Ways To Work 1995).

The unbroken linearity of the 'standard' career path with its emphasis on continued upward progression has been questioned by writers such as Handy (1993) who introduces the concept of portfolio careers. Whilst this may appear to be 'visionary' there are substantial grounds on which to give the idea due consideration. New technology exists, and is being constantly introduced, which

will further decrease the time it takes to carry out many of the work functions. Cochrane (1995) observes that ‘My father’s generation had a working life of 100,000 hours. With the technology to hand I can do all of the work that he completed in a mere 10,000 hours. With the technology that’s coming my children will be able to do all the work that I can do in less than 1,000 hours’. This emphasises a major change in the composition of work and of working time which is bound to have implications upon the model of employment which has become considered as ‘standard’.

Overall it is the emphasis upon the linearity of career progression which identifies the male career path as the norm, any other pattern of working is set against this and becomes highlighted as ‘different’. Acker (1983, 1987) argues that what are regarded as the standard models of employment have only arisen because researchers have looked at what some men have done and have labelled this as a career, so if women do the same things then they are considered as having a career and if they do not then they have jobs. However, it could be considered that the distinction between a career and a job is more of a class-based than gender issue based on educational achievement and the extent of opportunities available (Banks *et al* 1992).

## **Career Choice**

There has been a great deal of debate over career choice covering, for example such issues as whether career choices are static or if they change through time; whether choices are the result of some inherent process or subject to external influences (White, Cox and Cooper 1992). The explanation offered by Sonnenfelt and Kotter (1982) is perhaps the most useful as it attempts to link the two dimensions of external influences and individual preferences and whether the concepts contained within each are inert or active. Their four-stage approach charts the development of a theory of career choice through the social-structure approach which relied upon external criteria such as social class; the personality-trait approach of matching internal factors to a suitable occupation; the career-stages approach which concedes that there are different stages but assumed that adult life remained static; and, more recently, the life-cycle approach which accepts there is constant change. In an objective sense the choice of career is an alliance between ‘matching’ people with occupations and the ‘process’ by which they arrive at an occupational choice (Hall 1976). However, Evetts takes a more subjective stance and argues that multiple factors affect the decision and choice of career can quite often arise from a combination of ‘happenstance, procrastination and serendipity’ (Evetts 1996:50) as much as any form of rational planning.

Part of the process through which a choice is made is during the first stage of career planning, between the ages of 15 and 25 (Hall 1976). Careers advice is usually given in schools but, in many cases it is limited by time, teachers' knowledge and personal influences. Bennett and Carter (1981) found that careers advice given in schools was of little value, especially in helping girls to identify a suitable career. They found that few suggestions were offered, little information was provided and non-traditional occupations were discouraged. The girls were encouraged to follow 'gender-suitable' occupations and where separate lessons were provided for girls and boys, it led to greater gender stereotyping of the occupations discussed. The outcome was that most of the girls studied sought information by themselves from other avenues.

The family background and social identity has been shown to be one of the strongest influences upon the future working life of a young person (Banks *et al* 1992; Astin 1984). In many cases the occupation or profession of the father has a significant influence (Allen 1988) but Fogarty *et al* (1981) state that this is not generally the case in the construction industry where, in their sample, only 15% of respondents' fathers were employed in the construction industry.

Martin and Wallace (1984) highlight the random nature of career choice in their work which shows that 40% of their sample found themselves in an occupation through default. This covers such scenarios as being offered a job without having actively pursued it, or through nothing else being available, friends working in the same firm, the result of a temporary job being made permanent, or through convenience or not knowing what else to do. Family and peer influences accounted for why 24% chose their occupations whilst intrinsic reasons, such as wanting to enter that particular field of employment accounted for 23%. The more objective reasons of good pay, good working conditions and prior training together only explain 11% of choices.

Crompton and Sanderson (1990b), in their research in to professional women's careers, found that women chose pharmacy as a career because they were aware of the flexible working options that were available after they had children and they describe the presence of 'non-career niches' that had appeared within the profession. If then, women are able to participate in the labour market to a much greater extent, they should be able to exercise much more choice over their occupation than basing their choice upon the presence of flexibility and niches. They also spend a much greater part of their life employed outside the home than previous generations and are better educated with higher

levels of formal qualifications (Crompton and Sanderson 1986). As a result they are presented with different options when considering a career or perhaps a major difference is that they can consider a career rather than just a job which is done until marriage or the birth of the first child.

### **Career Development**

The notion of career development is a relatively recent phenomenon (Gutek and Larwood 1989). However it is now a concept which extends across the entire adult life of a person. Conceptual frameworks have considered the environment and the individual (Sonnenfelt and Kotter 1982), needs and capabilities combined with societal rewards and demands (Erikson 1968), as well as work motivation, sex-role socialisation, structure of opportunity and expectations (Astin 1984). The result of this is that there is now a difference between what is termed a career and what would be referred to as a job.

There is, however, also confusion as to the 'ownership' of a career, whether it belongs to the organisation or the individual. Employers often claim to manage employees' career development within their organisation although this tends to be done within strictly defined parameters. The reason for this is usually to foster increased levels of commitment to the organisation by the individual. However, the changing nature of work, with reduced job security and lower likelihood of a

career within a single organisation, is rendering the concept of career management by the organisation obsolete.

Career development possesses both tangible and intangible components. An upward progression through the organisation or within another organisation along with a related salary increase are visible indicators of progression and are highly valued as signs of increased status and authority. Less tangible are such components as more freedom to select one's own projects or to be able to follow one's own interest but at the same time they constitute what is seen as increased autonomy. The more that a career develops in these ways, the more successful the individual is judged to be.

The life cycle of a (male) working life can be seen as comprising three phases: education and exploration (from age 15 to 25); identification and establishment (age 25 to 40); and, maintenance and stagnation (age 40 - 60) (Larwood and Gutek 1989). The most dynamic phase is that which occurs between the ages of 25 and 40, where the career has been identified and the employee is actively seeking progression by promotion within the original organisation or by finding employment within another organisation. Whilst the career life cycle for men can continue relatively unhindered, a key issue which affects the career life cycle of a woman is that the most likely time for pregnancy occurs during the identification

and establishment phase causing interruption(s) during a key period. As very few employees reach the highest level of an organisation, competition is intensified at the earlier stages and any career breaks tend to hamper career progression.

Super (1984) suggests that the masculine career pattern is applicable to women, if marriage and childbearing are taken into account. His explanation for this is that because career choice is affected by self-concept which he hypothesised was the same in both men and women, they both make decisions based on self-concept and their image of the environment in which they live. However, it is argued that this fails to take into account the experiences of women and once again attempts to modify women into 'quasi men' (Gilligan 1979).

Gutek and Larwood (1989) consider that women's career development is different to that of men, and have identified four areas in which the variance exists. Firstly, there are different beliefs exist about the appropriateness of jobs for men and women, as illustrated by sex segregation of jobs. Secondly, within couples, there are different levels of accommodation concerning each other's careers with the man's career usually taking precedence over that of the woman. Thirdly, parental roles are different, as parenthood for a man does not automatically imply a break from work in the same way as it does for a woman.

Finally, there are greater constraints on women in the form of gender stereotypes as well as covert and overt discrimination.

Rothwell describes how it is the systems "designed and administered by and for men - taking men's careers and attitudes as the norm and never questioning that this is in the interests of the organisation" (Rothwell; 1982:19). Tanton (1994) outlines how men and women have different starting points regarding their careers but how it is women who develop men's presence within the family, society and, as a result, the workplace. She argues that this reinforces the image of women appearing as 'other' to what is the norm of male employment. The image becomes further compounded if the women existing as a minority group, have to spend time thinking about being the minority, are they confirming their 'otherness'?

### **Career Commitment**

Career commitment is a seldom-defined concept, most commentators preferring instead to concentrate on indicators of organisational commitment or on gender differences relating primarily to orientations to work (discussed later in this chapter). Commitment to a career would involve spending time carrying out the work which constitutes the occupation and a personal pledge to undertake the work of this nature. This can be demonstrated by the gaining of occupational and

professional training and qualifications and the undertaking of professional work. Organisational commitment reflects the need by organisations to cultivate the loyalty of their employees in order to sustain satisfactory levels of output and, as such, is a deceptive concept in that output levels could also be maintained by coercion.

Professional commitment is described as ‘the extent of the individual’s dedication to and involvement in his work’ (Gerstl and Hutton 1966:118). Gerstl and Hutton ask what does working (in engineering) mean to an individual taking into consideration sources of pleasure and discontent; how much the occupation means to the individual in relation to other facets of his/her daily life; and, whether there is a fusion or segregation of work and life outside work. They explain commitment to a career in terms of the intrinsic as well as the extrinsic rewards, satisfaction against dissatisfaction, and whether the individual would choose the same career again. Membership of a professional body is also included as a measure of involvement, as well as the attitudes towards the membership and extent of participation. Friendship patterns are also used to gauge commitment if colleagues feature among close friends and socialise outside of work.

Thus, the meaning of work to the individual and the extent of his or her involvement with both the work and the informal and formal professional obligations are indicators of the level of commitment. However, these are difficult, even impossible, to quantify which has led to other, more easily quantifiable measures being used. The most commonly used and accepted measure of commitment, albeit in an arbitrary sense, is time (Kanter 1968, 1972; Fink 1992). It is also used as a means of ensuring organisational commitment and, as a result, has become an important component of the process of 'organisational socialisation' (Coffey 1994).

Time spent working is seen as a measure of some extent of commitment. However it does not automatically follow that this can be the only measure and that more time spent actually in the process of working means that there is a greater level of commitment (Epstein *et al* 1999). On the other hand, men's commitment to their career is taken as given and not subjected to the same scrutiny by employers, organisations or colleagues in the same way as it is for a woman. Men are also more likely to spend more time actually at work so if commitment is measured in temporal terms by an organisation, they can give the impression of being more committed. Women are more likely to work 'compressed' working hours or work part-time or carry out a job-share due to family reasons, so because they spend fewer hours present in the organisation.

their commitment is doubted (Hakim 1996; Crompton and Sanderson 1990a, 1990b).

The use of time as a measure of commitment has become entrenched because it is a measurable factor and because it is convenient to assume that the more hours an individual spends at work, they are automatically more committed to their work and/or organisation. Because of the different demands on masculine and feminine time, men are able to spend more time at work than women (Hewitt 1993) and can be considered to have greater commitment to their work (Noon and Blyton 1997). This gendered difference in time in relation to paid work translates as “the time men spend in paid employment determines how much time they have for their families: the time women spend caring for their families determines how much time they have for employment” (Hewitt 1993:2).

However, it does not take in to account any measure of output or other less tangible factors. Time, if used as a measure of commitment, is easy to falsify if used without any other indicators. Apter (1993) has described ‘presenteeism’ whereby the physical presence of an individual in the workplace is used to signify their commitment, whether output levels or other forms of commitment in real terms are sufficient.

It could be suggested that women are attempting to create a better balance between home and work, preferring to be able to enjoy both rather than complying with the culture of long hours which is used to imply greater commitment in men's work. Apter warns of the dangers of this 'presenteeism' where "being seen at work seems to count for something over and above simply being there ..... time becomes a proxy for performance based (on) ... the more the better (Apter 1993:35). Longer hours then become self perpetuating and overtime or taking work home becomes an integral part of the job without really being necessary (Kanter 1977).

In contrast to presenteeism there is the situation where networking, as a job requirement, or deadlines for completion of a task demand that the length of working day becomes 'fluid and permeable' (Seron and Ferris 1995:23). In many professional organisations paid overtime does not exist and Seron and Ferris describe how, in contrast to blue collar organisations which have clearly defined working time, the concept described as the 'greedy organisation' can result (Coser 1974:2). As Noon and Blyton (1997) describe

in [many white collar, managerial and professional occupations] there is a widespread expectation that additional hours (paid or unpaid) should be worked to complete tasks which are outstanding. In such situations, working long hours is often taken by management as a sign of commitment, whilst an unwillingness to work extra hours may be viewed as an indication of a lack of commitment. This may raise particular difficulties for those with outside commitments, in particular those women

employees carrying substantial domestic responsibilities, whose situation prevents them from working additional hours (Noon and Blyton 1997:67).

There is also a strong belief that within professional careers that full-time hours are necessary and part-time work has not generally been regarded as applicable (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a). Because much professional employment is outside the scope of trade unions, with many members of professional bodies being prohibited from union membership, there has not been any collective organised pressure to encourage the adoption of 'non-standard' forms of working. There is also reluctance on the part of the professional bodies to adapt to changing labour markets. Recruits to professions are motivated to join by a strong vocational sense and tend to be prepared to accept the working conditions as part of the job. The long hours and culture of presenteeism as an indicator of commitment have become entrenched and are proving difficult to shift in favour of more flexible policies.

Many professionals are employed in the private sector, often in small practices which are outside the scope of much employment legislation and, as such, employees can be required to work whatever hours are deemed necessary. Because of the length of time required to achieve professional status, employment levels within professions can not respond quickly to a rise in

demand for qualified practitioners. The result is, that in times of high workload, existing staff are required to work longer hours.

### **Family and the Career**

Kanter (1977) describes the culture of long working hours and taking work home as being necessary to display consistency and loyalty to the company. The distinction between home and work becomes increasingly blurred with wives, who were not employed by the company, being expected to undertake certain duties on behalf of their husband as if to ensure his continued success within the company (Kanter 1977; Finch 1983). To involve wives in this way makes it very difficult for the women to pursue their own careers. At the same time Kanter reports that "married women employed by the company were also reminded by their managers of their responsibilities as wives and mothers - or managers expressed concerns that these responsibilities would deflect energy or lower commitment" (Kanter; 1977:107). The same does not apply for men, wives and families exist in a positive sense for men by emphasising the qualities of commitment and responsibility as well as sharpening ambition and increasing their determination to reach the top (Fogarty and Rapoport 1971).

There exist differences in types of marriage partners according to occupational and educational backgrounds. Women in professions or at managerial level tend

to marry men who have equal or higher educational and occupational achievements than themselves whereas men at higher levels marry either non-working women or women who are less well educated or who pursue lower level occupations (Kanter 1977; Howard and Bray 1988). Regarding professional women who marry equally successful men, there is then the creation of a dual-career household and the possibility of 'role overload' experienced by women (Falkenberg and Monachello 1989). On the other hand, where professional men marry their intellectual and professional subordinates, the patriarchy described by Goldberg (1993) and Hartmann (1976) becomes further entrenched.

A further consideration regarding dual-career households, is that the standard of living enjoyed by the household comes to be dependent upon there being two salaries. Society has become more consumption-orientated and the social identity of an individual is partly based on possession of consumer goods. This relates to the idea that work provides a social identity, as the individual identifies a lifestyle to which they would aspire and offers his/her labour in return for pay in order to achieve it. At professional levels, it is necessary for the individual to forego rewards at an early stage in their career in order to receive a higher level at a later stage. This deferred compensation is usually higher to reflect the opportunity cost of gaining professional qualifications and investment in human capital.

Fogarty and Rapoport argue that it is more difficult for professional women to maintain a balance between work and homelife. Even though the salaries are higher, professional women are more likely to work because they are interested in the job and not just for the money. Their career requires a greater level of time commitment as well as continuity and cumulation in order to progress (Fogarty and Rapoport 1972). This is only one of the dilemmas facing women who decide to pursue a career, women at managerial level or above are also less likely to be married than their male counterparts (Davidson and Cooper 1984) whilst Hellwig (1985) and Powell (1988) show that a larger proportion of executive women are single, divorced, separated or widowed than executive men. This implies that there is an element of sacrifice present, in that in order to be successful it may be necessary for a woman to relinquish or postpone a stable home and family life (Marshall 1984) whilst men are able to enjoy both (Kanter 1977).

Whatever the status of women in the workplace, there is still much evidence that women occupy dual roles. They have responsibility for the home and the welfare of children and husband. Brannon and Moss (1991) found that women were responsible for either providing childcare themselves or for finding regular, reliable childcare, which “for many women with young children, the lack of facilities for the care and education of their young

children and their assumed domestic responsibilities leave them with little choice but to opt for part-time working ... employers have not been slow to recognise the financial advantages of tapping in to such a cheap, well-educated and flexible labour reserve....” (Elias 1988:102).

Employment conditions and particular types of jobs are designed to specifically appeal to women, in particular mothers. The creation of these employment conditions and particular types of jobs, for example part-time and flexible working, is further demonstration of how patriarchal society has adapted to take on the demands of women in response to the growth of feminism since the 1960's, whilst not requiring any structural change on the part of men.

There is a close relationship between family responsibilities, part-time work and downward occupational mobility (Elias 1988). British women with children are most likely to work part-time in lower grade jobs than they occupied prior to the birth of their children. For professional women this means that they will not be able to benefit from their qualifications as part-time jobs tend to be concentrated within a narrow range of activities, such as low skill personal service work, or at the lowest hierarchical level. Once women have adopted such work patterns, the material consequences (loss of

status, pay and employment conditions) tend to remain in place for the rest of their working lives (Joshi 1987).

The bimodal pattern of employment shows that women leave employment prior to the birth of first child and return when youngest child is of suitable age (Hakim 1979). Dex (1987) found that women were returning to work between the births of their children as well as spending less time out of employment, this led to the development of M-shaped career patterns. There is a societal assumption that the major carer of children is the mother. This has had the result that debates about women's employment have focused on problems concerning childcare and alternatives to maternal childcare which tend to detract from other themes present such as working arrangements, work content and career progression (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a).

Motherhood is not regarded as a positive attribute in employment. The acceptance of male career patterns based on unbroken service, continuous development and promotion has taken precedence, and as Evetts argues "the *positive* implications of a break in paid employment and subsequent return to an occupation or entry to a new occupation, necessitated by the pursuit of motherhood goals have not been explored" (Evetts 1994a:8-9). Any unpaid activities carried out by a woman, while taking a break from paid employment,

tend not to be regarded in a positive sense by employers. For example, Finch (1981) describes the situation regarding pre-school care which in many cases is carried out on a voluntary basis by mothers. Organising and running a pre-school playgroup can be likened to running a small business but because it is carried out on either a voluntary or low-paid basis is not considered to be relevant to a career. Also because the emphasis is on care rather than business an activity such as this is further devalued.

Because of the length of time required prior to qualification in a profession, it is very difficult for a woman to contemplate planned motherhood before qualification (Allen 1988). Immediately after qualification, there is pressure to become established within a career which again may serve to postpone motherhood. All the time, women are aware that time is not on their side. By the time they are eventually in a position to consider starting a family, they may be well in to their 30's and past the age where they could be considered for fertility treatment or as adoptive parents if they are unable for whatever reason to have children. If they start a family earlier, they are at risk of being 'overtaken' by their male counterparts who do not need extended time out of work when they become a parent. These pressures are more pertinent within professional employment where the emphasis has been on full-time employment and masculine-type career paths. Career structures tend to assume continual

employment and this is reflected in law, where maternity leave must be considered as not being a break in employment. However, a legal requirement will not serve to change attitudes which still tend to see maternity leave as a period of unemployment.

However, in spite of the constraints upon women's careers, Allen found that among female doctors, once qualified, they almost always stayed in the profession but were much more likely than men to be in less than full-time work and in jobs which were "neither career posts nor training posts" (Allen 1988:34). She also found that many women doctors had created combinations of part-time jobs to suit their family commitments, emphasising that they were not willing to forsake their qualifications but there was an implicit view that part-time working was, in some way, a second best option. There is a greater societal pressure on professional women to return to work after childbirth because of the investment made by society (and themselves) in their human capital. Brannon (1992) found that mothers who returned to work were more likely to have had a history of full-time employment prior to motherhood. In many cases they were older which is due in part to the length of time it takes to become qualified and then established in a career, as they also tended to have higher qualifications ('A' level and above) than their counterparts. Correspondingly, they held higher status professions (Registrar General Social Classes 1 and 2) and earned more than

other groups but were less likely to have a second child within three years. This is most likely due to pressure to regain their career and to 'make up' for the time spent away from work.

Quality formal day-care provision for children is scarce in Britain as well as being expensive. Until quite recently the operating hours of nurseries have been the same as office hours with no provision for shift workers or for those who need to work overtime or have some other form of flexibility regarding starting and finishing times for work. Informal day-care carried out by relatives provides the greatest flexibility where working hours are variable. It is also the cheapest option.

Blatchford *et al* (1982) found that most parents considered day-care in terms of the social and educational development of their child(ren) rather than as a means of allowing mothers to work. The role of the mother and emphasis on the maternal role has also expanded in spite of the growth in technology and consumerism (Chodorow 1978), with a proliferation of childcare manuals, magazines and media images portraying 'professional' mothers. Brannon (1992) argues that employed mothers are more vulnerable to "official discourses on how to be proper mothers since these discourses proscribe the leaving of children" (Brannon 1992:59). However, Bowlby (1951) described how a full-time mother

was necessary for a child's normal development. At the time of Bowlby's writing, there was a strong emphasis on the importance of mothering role with the blame for crime, delinquency, alcoholism being placed on 'bad mothering' (Watkins *et al* 1992). However, the reality was (and in some cases still is) that many children with a full-time mother effectively raised themselves.

The cultural norm of the mother taking on the responsibility for childcare is firmly entrenched within society and in spite of a shift towards fathers having greater involvement in parenting, work patterns still have to reflect this. Working fathers are not subjected to the same levels of scrutiny and pressure regarding their commitment as are working mothers. The social role of parenting carries with it a great number of expectations and these are resolutely gendered. While Coser (1974) describes organisations as 'greedy' regarding time, he also argues that the family is a greedy institution but only with regard to women's roles in it.

## **Redundancy and Unemployment**

A key feature of contemporary employment but one which is seldom considered by literature relating to careers, is unemployment and yet, it is increasingly commonplace. Berthoud (1979) estimates that a professional or executive could experience one and a half periods of unemployment in a

forty year career but that professional unemployment is less common than in other occupations. He also found that whilst older people find it harder to obtain new employment, it tends to be younger people who are more likely to experience unemployment, usually as a result of their having left their job voluntarily. The main reasons for unemployment were found to be resignation of own accord (38%), redundancy (37%), end of contract (8%), dismissal (7%), retirement (4%), end of period of self-employment (3%) and ill health (2%).

The study was instigated as result of concern about increasing numbers of professional and executives becoming unemployed. In 1977 the number of unemployed professionals and executives was 300% greater than it had been four years earlier. In the period between April 1977 and March 1978 over 140,000 professionals and executives became unemployed, whilst in September 1977 a total of 74,000 were registered as unemployed. The survey does question as to whether those who were made redundant were “asked to leave simply because there was no task to perform” (Berthoud 1979:81) as redundancy may be used by employers as a strategy through which to ‘lose’ staff. The evidence for this comes from the high number of those citing redundancy as to why they became unemployed but who were the only member of staff to be made redundant.

The average length of time taken to find a new job was five and a half months, compared to three and a half months which was the national average at the time. Nine months was the average period of time taken to find the equivalent of the old job consequently many took temporary jobs to fill in time. It appears, then, that while professionals and executives take longer to find new employment, but they are significantly less likely to be still unemployed 23 months after redundancy took place (Moore and O'Neill 1996). Age appeared to be the strongest variable determining the success rate of finding new employment but no link was found relating to previous career performance/pattern, nor to level of income while unemployed, nor attitude (measured by importance to the individual of finding a job quickly, willingness to move home and number of sources of information tried) or personal characteristics (Berthoud 1979).

Berthoud (1979) found press advertisements, direct enquiries and specialised recruitment agencies to be the most effective ways of finding new employment. However, he also suggests that the rigidity of the career structure may add to difficulties of finding employment for older people and also employers' perceptions of them as being less flexible with lower levels

of training and fewer educational qualifications but having earned higher salaries in their previous jobs.

A more recent survey carried out by Moore and O'Neill<sup>2</sup> (1996) followed destinations of various cohorts of workers following large-scale redundancies. Immediate destinations were unemployment (34%), training (16%), employment (19%), self-employment (3%), outplacement (13%) and inactive (15%).

The relatively low figure going into self-employment may reflect that many of the redundancies were in types of employment where self-employment may not have been a viable option (eg. British Aerospace and British Coal, ICI and British Steel). The survey also shows that 90% of those who became self-employed had re-entered employment within 2-3 years of becoming self-employed. However, at the time of the survey which was carried out on average 23 months after redundancy 7% were by then self-employed. The immediate post-redundancy destination is shown to be affected by personal factors (age, gender), household factors (marital status, dependants etc), human capital factors, wealth, policy factors (assistance received post-redundancy) and the external local labour market. Women and younger

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<sup>2</sup> Moore and O'Neill's fieldwork took place between July 1994 and June 1995 and so reflects conditions in the 1990's more accurately than Berthoud's.

people were more likely to be reabsorbed into the workforce. Gender was not taken into account as a separate factor but mention was made of the fact that there were very few women involved.

Martin and Wallace (1984) contend that their project was the first to concentrate on women's experience of redundancy. Previous studies include Daniel (1972) and Wood (1981) but both these surveys were carried out in periods of low unemployment so their findings are not so relevant in current economic conditions. Martin and Wallace (1984) found that women's attitudes towards redundancy depend upon socialisation especially at work, attitudes and behaviour of management and their position in the labour market, but also that employment for women is much more likely to be in economic terms not as a moral obligation as in the case of men.

Unemployment and redundancy are almost always regarded in terms of the negative effects resulting from loss of income and loss of identity associated with membership of a professional group or work organisation. Martin and Wallace (1984) assert that there are also positive aspects to which little attention has been paid. They argue that redundancy and unemployment may provide "the opportunity for breaking a habit of performing a job that had

few, if any, real rewards” (Martin and Wallace 1984:10). Secondly, they can lead to introduction of more flexible work patterns.

Wood (1981) argues that women are more passive towards redundancy and therefore more susceptible to it. Coyle (1984) questions whether it is because employers are aware of this passivity or whether women enjoy a lower degree of protection in their jobs than men and so, “are easier and cheaper to dispose of” (Coyle 1984:33). In spite of this, she found that redundancy for women was not taken “as an opportunity to ‘retreat’ back into the family” (1984:44), even during extended periods of unemployment. It was regarded as an ‘interruption’ to the women’s working lives.

Professionals have a stronger sense of identity with their work than those following other occupations, they derive greater satisfaction from it and it is more central to their lives than non-professionals. Consequently, the intrinsic effects of redundancy and unemployment are more serious in terms of lower self-esteem, incidence of depression etc (Kaufman 1982).

## **Non-Standard Forms of Employment**

### **The Rise of Non-Standard Forms of Employment**

Contemporary trends in employment indicate a move towards more non-standard forms of working but there remains the assumption that professional careers “will follow certain rather specific routes and paths, will be work-centred, have no unpaid caring responsibilities, and involve continuous work experience and orderly development and promotion up through an organisational and occupational hierarchy” (Evetts 1994a:9). Career development is signified by an upward progression through the organisation or within another organisation along with a related salary increase and are highly valued as signs of increased status and authority. Less tangible are such components as more freedom to select one’s own projects or to be able to follow one’s own interest but at the same time they constitute what is seen as increased autonomy. The more that a career develops in these ways, the more successful the individual is judged to be.

However, while there is this notion of increased freedom in selecting one’s own projects and to enjoy greater autonomy, these are very much within the confines of the organisational rigidity regarding working time and career structures. Raabe (1996) questions whether these fundamental conclusions about what constitutes ‘standard’ work are relevant today and Evetts (1994a) states that this pattern,

whilst generally accepted as representative, does not characterise the employment patterns of many women or men.

Research in to employment patterns almost invariably focuses on those who are employed within organisations whilst over the past decade there has been a move away from this form of employment. Contemporary working arrangements have shown an increase in non-standard forms. This is usually taken to mean part-time and temporary work and self-employment although it has come to encompass any work which is neither full-time nor permanent with a formal contract of employment for an indefinite period, such as subcontracting, flexi-time, fixed term contracts and the like (Yeandle 1999; Felstead and Jewson 1999).

The assumption that alternative working arrangements adopted by women exist only as a response to family responsibilities serves to devalue women's contributions to work in a way that does not exist for men, thus acting as a constraint on their careers. This assumption will continue to dominate discussions of non-standard employment among women unless challenged. On the other hand, contemporary employment trends indicate an increase among non-standard forms of working with autonomy and the pursuit of personal goals, becoming increasingly important.

## **Self-employment**

In the case of women's employment the increase in non-standard forms of working is illustrated predominantly by an increase in self-employment (Allen and Truman 1993). In the case of women, self-employment is often seen as a response to either the need to combine home responsibilities with work or as a result of unsatisfactory experiences whilst being employed (Goffee and Scase 1985) and not as a means of career advancement. There are also connotations with the dual labour market and occupational segregation (Wigfall 1980).

The majority of employment within professions, such as accountancy, law, engineering and the like, is practice based with small to medium-sized practices being dominant. The majority of practising architects are sole practitioners and principals of practices (RIBA Employment and Earnings survey 1998), a pattern which is indicative of those employed in the 'traditional' professions. In spite of these working arrangements being followed by both men and women, those of women are considered marginal in that the dominant assumption is that they exist as a response to the need to combine home responsibilities with work. This is challenged by Allen and Truman who argue that 'for women, managing a business and managing household responsibilities are integrated in such a way that one is intrinsic to the other.

It cannot be assumed, however, that their decisions about business activity are always subordinate to family and household responsibilities” (Allen and Truman 1993:9).

There has been a sustained growth in the number of businesses owned and run by women since the beginning of the 1980’s. The number of self-employed men rose by 30% between 1981 and 1987, but the number of self-employed women increased by 70% (Carter and Cannon 1988b). However, Richardson and Hartshorn (1993) report a much larger increase – in their study they found that self-employment by women rose 137% between 1979 and 1988 compared to 66% for men. Women now comprise a quarter of the self-employed in Britain (Johnson and Storey 1993). Clutterbuck and Devine (1987) found that the rate of business start ups by women was six times that of men and, more significantly, that their survival rate equalled that of men. The majority of the businesses are small - over 60% of self-employed do not employ anybody else. Self-employed women are slightly less likely than men to employ anyone else and they also work shorter hours (Creigh *et al* 1986).

Johnson and Storey (1993) found that women were likely to be between 30 and 50 years old and less likely to have high level qualifications. Although this is disputed by Carter and Cannon (1988b), who found that the

educational background of self-employed women was generally higher with the majority possessing some form of further or higher education. Carter and Cannon also found that the women were strongly motivated towards having a career.

Johnson and Storey (1993) and Carter and Cannon (1988b) are in agreement in that they found that self-employed women were more likely to have been unemployed prior to starting their own business. In many cases redundancy or some other change in personal circumstances is used as the trigger for becoming self-employed. It “was the result of reassessing their lives after a specific event” (Carter and Cannon 1988b) and is generally seen as a positive reaction to a negative experience.

Carter and Cannon (1988a) found that high achieving women chose self-employment as a means of accommodating ‘gender related career blocks’ or wanted greater flexibility to enable them to spend time with their families which was not possible within employment. Hymounts (1986) offers a similar explanation by suggesting that women become self-employed in order to circumvent the glass ceiling whilst Vokins (1993) found that women set up their own businesses for the following reasons: as survival after personal crisis or change of situation; dissatisfaction with the way that men were

running business (feeling they could do better); identifying a gap in the market; the satisfaction of running their own business and challenge (this was the main motivator in Vokins's study).

Hisrich and Brush (1983) also identify job satisfaction, independence and achievement as the main motivators behind business start ups for women. They are less likely to be in business purely for financial reasons and "regard success in terms of how well the business met individual needs rather than in conventional terms of profitability and income. After individual financial needs were met, continuing or excess profitability was seen by most women as an external measure of success rather than as a primary goal" (Carter and Cannon 1988b:50).

Kaufman (1982) found that 5% of unemployed professionals became self-employed and identified a strong professional commitment as a significant variable. This, to Kaufman, is signified by possession of a postgraduate qualification, membership of a professional body and possession of professional registration. Self-employment provides a means of being able to continue as a professional but Kaufman (1982) found that in many cases the work was more likely to be on a part-time basis and with a lower income. He explains that perhaps unemployed professionals choose self employment as a

way of “being able to return rapidly to professional-level work without a need to relocate [and] was sufficient compensation for any initial loss in income ... [and therefore ensuring] the stability and continuity of their family life as well as their own career.” (Kaufman 1982:179).

Males are more likely than females to enter self-employment “which is to be expected given the traditional lack of female entrepreneurs in general” (Moore and O’Neill 1996:75). However, Schreirer’s (1973) study indicates that women who start their own businesses possess similar personal characteristics to male entrepreneurs but that the main difference is the type of business that they start (Schreirer 1973). Women are more likely to start a business in a traditional female role or service (Schreirer 1973; Schwartz 1976) and tend not to have had related work experience (Watkins and Watkins 1984). Watkins and Watkins (1984) explain this as being the result of more female role models although sectors with the least obstacles in the way of low technical and financial barriers tend to be most common. Lack of finance is seen as one of the greatest obstacles to the survival and success of the business as is the lack of business knowledge and training, although these tend to be common problems irrespective of gender or business sector (Hisrich and Brush 1983).

The self-employed are likely to be aged between 40 and 49 due to possession of finance and skills and are also more likely to be either managers or professionals, especially those qualified to degree level (Kaufman 1982). They are also more likely to have a partner who is in some form of employment, which can be explained by benefit rules which take the income of a partner into account. Moore and O'Neill contend that "no apparent pattern between self employment and economic conditions emerges" (1996:79), and the authors feel there is a stronger relationship between personal characteristics of the individual to become self employed as opposed to external factors. Although, Carter and Cannon report that male entrepreneurs are more likely to have support from their wives than female entrepreneurs are likely to receive from their husbands, "women cannot rely on their spouses for the same support and consequently they have to carry the full burden of business and domestic commitments" (Carter and Cannon 1988b:49).

Goffee and Scase (1985) suggest a typology of female entrepreneurs:

**Conventional:** highly committed to both entrepreneurial activities and to conventional gender roles

**Innovative:** highly committed to the entrepreneurial activity but low consideration given to conventional gender roles

**Domestic:** business life is organised around the family, entrepreneurial activity is secondary

**Radical:** low meaning given to both, business may be organised as a collective or on a political basis

Whilst defining these typologies does emphasise the heterogeneity of female business owners, Carter and Cannon (1988b) argue that they overlook the turbulence associated with small firms and the diversity which occurs as a result as well as the change that ownership of a business has upon the owner. They suggest that an owner may change 'type', for example from domestic to conventional, through time. Many small businesses start out as a result of needing to combine childcare with work but once the children are no longer dependent the nature and aim of the business can change. Also many small businesses are operated from the owner's home, in the first instance, before expanding and relocating to specific business premises.

### **Part-Time Working**

Much of the debate regarding part-time employment has been covered earlier under the various guises of the primary and secondary labour market, and also within the discussion of women's commitment to their work. In summary, part-time workers are regarded as part of the secondary labour market with attendant

lower wages, reduced job security and a lack of work-related benefits. In turn these lead to constrained work opportunities and a lack of career development (Raabe 1996). Part-time work in professional employment is not common and there is an inherent assumption that “part-time work is for typists, not professionals” (Greed 1991:196). Fagan and O’Reilly describe the features of part-time work as: “it is performed primarily by women; it is associated with marginal employment; its expansion has coincided with a period of industrial restructuring and a growing presence of women in the labour market. From this vantage point, part-time work appears to be emerging as a universal modification to the existing sexual division of labour” (Fagan and O’Reilly 1998:1).

In the UK, part-time employment has been growing continually over the last four or five decades (Robinson 1999). However, there is a strong gender divide with the majority of part-time work being carried out by women. In 1995, over 44% of employed women were working part-time (Yeandle 1999). The majority of these women were aged 25-49, reflecting the need to combine work with home responsibilities. Peitchinis (1989) contends that women do not want to work part-time but are compelled to do it because of their other responsibilities which prevent them from taking full-time employment or because only part-time work is available to them. However, this is refuted by Tilly (1996) who argues that a significant number of full-time employees would prefer to work part-time if it

were possible. She has identified two types of part-time working which help to explain this; firstly there are 'retention' part-time jobs offered to key personnel, such as professionals, in order to retain their services. These jobs offer good pay and benefits and are considered rewarding. In contrast there are the 'secondary' part-time jobs which reflect the secondary labour market with poor pay and reduced prospects.

Meiksins and Whalley (1998) found that professionals who work part-time are strongly committed to both their work and their families. They are able to continue with interesting work without the time obligation that accompanies full-time work. Equally importantly, they do not want to rely upon institutional childcare preferring to care for their own children which they find equally as rewarding as their career. These findings contradict those presented earlier in this chapter that part-time work is associated with the secondary labour market with poor pay and lower prospects and the contention is continued in the following section which provides a discussion of women's orientations towards their work.

### **Women's Orientations and Commitment to Work**

There is great debate as to whether men and women display different characteristics in employment. Historically, men are considered to be more achievement-oriented, aggressive, assertive, controlling, domineering, image

conscious and unemotional, which are all 'hard' attributes. By contrast women are regarded in a softer context, and are said to display nurturing, intuitive, responsive, caring features. These assumptions have developed into commonly accepted stereotypes which are used to explain certain forms of behaviour and reactions. Once such a stereotype has developed, it becomes the dominant 'opinion' and it becomes very difficult to shift attitudes away from this form of 'groupthink'.

The topic of women's orientations and commitment to their work has generated an abundance of literature throughout the 1990's, principally by Hakim (1991, 1995, 1996, 1998) but with additional contributions and responses by a variety of others (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Crompton and Harris 1998; Ginn *et al* 1996; Bruegel 1996; Walsh 1999; Procter and Padfield 1999). However, there is an element of confusion over terminology with career commitment and orientation to work being used interchangeably thus clouding the issues. Hakim (1996) examines commitment in the context of whether people would continue to work if the financial imperative was removed and describes it as "a simple measure of paid work as a key life interest without exploring exactly what it is about a job that makes it worth having" (Hakim 1996:103). She assesses that individuals are committed to their work if they would continue working if the financial necessity were

removed. However, this neglects the fact that many people work for social reasons or because of their identification with an occupation or an organisation and thus this definition reflects orientations to work rather than commitment. In contrast Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) use time spent working as an indicator of commitment but, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, this measure is easy to falsify and can lead to 'presenteeism'. On the other hand, working fewer hours is said to indicate reduced commitment "limiting the number of hours devoted to work is thought to signal a lack of devotion to the organisation's goals ... part-time status thus may become a proxy for low commitment" (Epstein *et al* 1999:82).

In this context women's commitment to their work is doubted as many work part-time for a variety of reasons not just because of family responsibilities. Men tend to display greater homogeneity in their working lives, their ability to work full-time and uninterrupted is unaffected by their part in the reproduction process whereas women comprise a more heterogeneous group. Hakim (1995) has identified two distinct and, as she says, equal sectors regarding commitment to paid employment:

The first group of women are committed to careers in the labour market and therefore invest in training and qualifications, and generally achieve higher grade occupations and higher paid jobs which they pursue full-time for the most part. The second group of women give priority to the marriage career, do not invest in what economists term 'human capital', transfer quickly and permanently to part-time work as soon as a breadwinner husband permits it, choose undemanding jobs 'with no

worries or responsibilities' when they do work, and are hence found concentrated in lower grade and lower paid jobs which offer convenient working hours with which they are perfectly happy (Hakim 1995:434).

The identification of these two sectors is perfectly legitimate in that it does reinforce the existence of heterogeneity within women. However, there do exist some inherent weaknesses, which can reduce its validity. Hakim finds it convenient to identify them as two distinct groups but, in reality, there must be an element of overlap and some blurring of the parameters of distinctiveness. She does allow for women to transfer from one group to the other over the course of their working lives but it would be unlikely to find that this transfer was not incremental.

Neither does she take into account whether women in either sector have children. It would be easy to assume that those occupying the first sector would be most likely to be childless through choice, whilst those in the second sector would have children. Although Hakim does not identify this specifically, the implication is that to have children *and* membership of the first sector would be incompatible. It is reasonable to assume that many women who are childless by choice and who want to pursue a career would belong to this sector, but it would be unreasonable to exclude those who also have children yet have made considerable investment in human capital and want to recoup the rewards.

Within these definitions, the committed worker is effectively a 'surrogate' man, whilst the uncommitted worker has no or few qualifications so is unable to obtain satisfactory employment, staying at home because it is their husband's preference (Hakim 1991) or their own choice to follow the homemaker career (Hakim 1995). The main weakness of the above is that the position is considered static with the explanation relying solely on preferences at the expense of structural explanations (Bruegel 1996; Ginn *et al* 1996).

This heterogeneity displayed by women regarding their careers has been used to reinforce stereotypical images that women are not as committed to their careers, because the commitment of the first group, as identified by Hakim, is questioned because of the characteristics displayed by the second group. The stereotype then can become self-fulfilling, in that with the constant presumption that women are less committed, many women may feel uncomfortable within the organisation and leave for a better working environment, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

However, Bruegal refutes the claim that women display differing levels of commitment, arguing that "higher turnover amongst women workers is not inherent, but the result of an interaction between occupation and gender (Bruegel: 1996:176). Ginn *et al* (1996) suggest that it is possible to be equally

committed to both family and work, with Dex *et al* (1995) stating that most women want to enjoy both work and home life to their fullest extent.

To attempt to explain women's orientations to work simply on the basis of *either career or family* is too simplistic especially as the majority of those surveyed do not conform to either of the polar groups. Hakim (1996, 1998) later identifies them as 'drifters' or 'adaptives' and disregarded as "defying explanation" (Hakim 1996:213). This category is dismissed as:

... a great many women [who] 'hang loose' and refuse to choose fixed objectives, drifting with events and opportunities as they arise, pretending they can keep all their options open by refusing to close the door on any of them. This itself is an important choice, one men do not have, even if it is a poor one, leading to chaotically unplanned careers (Hakim 1996:208).

Hakim uses Becker's rational choice theory to explain why women stay at home and human capital theory for the committed career women but does not offer a theoretical explanation for the 'drifters' or 'adaptives'. She is very critical of women in this category but does not really examine those in it carefully. It appears as more of an afterthought in between the polar options of committed and uncommitted yet it represents 47% of her sample, covering those women who want both family and career which was a dimension overlooked in Hakim's (1995) polarity work. The emphasis on polarity is criticised as too rigid as it does not recognise that all combinations in

between poles are possible as in a continuum. Furthermore, it omits the interaction between women's choices and the options available to them or constraints imposed upon them, neither does it deal with where and how orientations arise or how they are shaped (Procter and Padfield 1999).

The notion that women make choices as to their orientations or commitment to work is countered by Crompton and Harris (1998) who argue that careers are constructed within constraints and opportunities available. Whilst Hakim tends to be dismissive of structural factors, Crompton and Harris overemphasise them. Their view is that employment commitment is reduced by lack of childcare facilities and consider motherhood in a negative light (Crompton and Harris 1998) when many women actually do want to look after their own children and not rely upon institutionalised childcare (Meiksins and Whalley 1998). Crompton and Harris (1998) see the fluidity of women's employment arrangements in response to domestic and external factors and explain preferences as 'shaping' choices regarding the level of involvement in the labour market but not as determining them.

The main weakness of Hakim's (1995, 1996, 1998) work on women's work orientations is her constant refusal to acknowledge that women with children can be equally committed to work than those without. Instead she continues

to focus on the “large and stable majority of women [who] have no taste at all for motherhood and will devote their time instead to other activities, paid or unpaid, such as employment careers, politics or sport” (Hakim 1998:139). Her basis for this lies with the statistic that 20% of women are childless through choice (Hakim 1996). However whilst she says this is the case for women born after 1955 as a result of reliable and safe contraception allowing women to make the choice, the same proportion of women born in 1920 were also childless (Hakim 1996) reflecting little or no change. There is doubt as to how Hakim can say that these women are childless by choice as there are many other factors which also require consideration.

The critics of Hakim’s work focus on institutional and structural disadvantages experienced by women as explaining women’s orientations towards their careers (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Crompton and Harris 1998; Ginn *et al* 1996; Bruegel 1996). Crompton and Harris (1998) suggest that women do make choices about their level of involvement in the labour market but that “women’s employment behaviour is a reflection of the way in which women actively construct their work-life biographies in terms of their historically available opportunities and constraints” (Crompton and Harris 1998:119). Because historically women’s working lives have been constrained by structural and cultural barriers, Crompton and Harris (1998)

argue that any 'choices' made by women will also be limited. Whilst this may be the case, it can then be said that all choices are made subject to constraints and restrictions and that no choice can ever be considered as freely made. In fact, as Hakim points out, women do enjoy a greater freedom of choice in their working lives than men, she says:

It is notable that there is in practice only one 'choice' of work history for men, compared to three for women. Feminists who emphasise that women's choices are constrained and not 'completely free' overlook the fact that women have *more* choices than men (Hakim 1996:134, emphasis in original).

A further point is that many women actually want to look after their own children and not rely upon institutional childcare (Meiksins and Whalley 1998). They do this by adopting work patterns which allow them to maximise both their employment careers and family life (Walsh 1999; Meiksins and Whalley 1998; Tilly 1996). Hakim's critics have largely overlooked this fact preferring instead to focus on lack of institutional childcare as a major constraint upon women's employment (Crompton and Harris 1998; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Ginn *et al* 1996; Bruegel 1996). This ultimately means that children are seen as a barrier to a career whilst the reality is that many women want to pursue both a career and motherhood, expecting both to be equally rewarding (Meiksins and Whalley 1998; Procter and Padfield 1999; Walsh 1999).

The assumption that preferences regarding work orientation remain relatively static is largely unfounded with work by Rubery, Horrell and Burchell (1994) indicating that there is movement between full-time and part-time work throughout women's working lives. The life cycle effect is held to be significant as over time priorities and preferences change (Walsh 1999; Procter and Padfield 1999; Crompton and Harris 1998). What is apparent is that whilst women do make choices regarding their level of labour market involvement, these choices are subject to institutional and structural constraints. Likewise, they are influenced by both the positions within the labour market and life cycle stage. As changes occur and different opportunities occur or circumstances change then preferences also subject to transformation.

Possibly a more realistic account of lifestyle choices is that offered by Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1993). They provide three categories, two of which generally comply with Hakim's polar options but introduce a third classification which offers a compromise between Hakim's extreme cases and as an alternative to the category of 'drifter' or 'adaptive'. The first case is of career-primary orientation which corresponds to Hakim's 'committed' sector. Women included here are strongly committed to their careers, sometimes at the expense

of their personal and social lives. Secondly, there is the family-primary orientation which concurs with Hakim's homemaker choice. This is where the family takes precedence and whilst the woman may be involved in a career she pursues it within the constraints imposed by the family. The third lifestyle option is described by Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1993) as career *and* family and allows equal importance to both thus contrasting with Hakim's (1996, 1998) description of these women as 'drifters' or 'adaptives'. This offers, perhaps, a more realistic depiction of how the majority of women conduct their working and home lives but can also be the most difficult and stressful option (Marshall 1984; Davidson and Cooper 1987).

To judge commitment to a career purely on the basis of hours worked disregards the effort invested by an individual and makes a value judgement without a sound basis. As Epstein *et al* (1999) report, colleagues' perceptions of commitment depend upon their *knowing* the person. This suggests that there is more to commitment than a measurable element based on hours worked. Commitment must be regarded in terms of the individual's identity with their career or profession (Gerstl and Hutton 1966) and the reciprocity between them and their organisation (Epstein *et al* 1999).

## **Conclusion: the Context of Women's Employment**

This chapter has attempted to outline many of the issues concerning women and their working lives. It has shown how they choose and develop a career, as well as describing the obstacles which they face in the form of patriarchy, class and capitalism together with structural and cultural barriers and how these serve to make the professional career a difficult environment in which to work. These issues coupled with motherhood, and the particular problems associated with this, are used against women to malign their commitment to a career.

The dichotomous views suggested by Hakim (1995) offer two alternative forms of work organisation, which Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) refer to as 'committed' and 'uncommitted' to work. Those who are considered to be 'committed' have adopted the 'masculine' model of employment whilst those referred to as 'uncommitted' work part-time or not at all. Hakim (1996, 1998) later introduces a third category known as 'drifters' or 'adaptives', which accounts for the majority of respondents in her survey. These women attempt to balance both career and family but Hakim is dismissive of them, accusing them of poor career planning and consequently undermining the notion that they may be equally committed to both their career and family. Conversely, Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1993) describe how women

allocate equal importance to both career and family in their discussion of lifestyle options.

Whilst Hakim (1991, 1995, 1996, 1998) focuses on choice as the primary determinant of the level of involvement in employment her conclusions are drawn from the use of survey data, for example Population Census 1991; Labour Force Surveys (1979-1991). There is a heavy reliance on the use of statistics with which to formulate hypotheses and from which to draw conclusions. What is absent from Hakim's work is dialogue with the women themselves which could be used to establish actual choices and preferences. Martin and Wallace (1984) also criticise the fact that structural explanations are used to justify trends in women's employment without research into how women evaluate their employment. In contrast, the work of Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) and Crompton and Harris (1997, 1998) uses qualitative in-depth interviews with professional women giving a greater degree of subjective rationalisation. However, they focus on women's employment opportunities being constrained by patriarchal gender relations. As will be shown in later chapters these explanations, though valid to some extent, do not fully explain women's commitment to their careers. They are too narrow in their individual approaches and fail to recognise the extent of the

interaction between constraints, whether structural or cultural, and personal preferences.

This chapter has attempted to outline the debates which have taken place regarding women's employment as well as their commitment and orientations to work. Legislation has been passed in attempts to strengthen the position of women in relation to work. Women are now represented in significant numbers in the workplace but are still ghettoised in lower grade and lower paid occupations with reduced prospects for advancement. Reasons suggested tend to concentrate on motherhood and how it affects women's commitment to work, as well as other structural explanations such as that of patriarchy and sex segregation. These have led to some occupations becoming gender stereotyped as masculine or feminine occupations, and labels such as these are difficult to shift.

Contemporary employment trends towards greater flexibility, part-time and self-employment also reflect the interaction of structural explanations of women's employment and individual preferences. These trends can be seen both as an outcome of the difficult economic conditions which have prevailed throughout recent years and as a result of lifestyle choices towards attempting to create a better balance between work and home life. While we have accepted the view

that the standard model of employment is male and full-time, we must also consider that it is only like this because that is the way it has evolved, and not that it is indicative of what the individual employees would prefer. The widespread introduction and acceptance of flexible working times for both men and women indicate that men are not such a homogeneous group as the model would have us believe and many are also trying to achieve a better balance between work and homelife (New Ways to Work 1995). However, what is apparent is that women's work orientations and commitment are still doubted and compared to those of men.

## **Chapter 3: Professional Employment and the Architecture Profession**

### **Introduction**

A profession is generally defined in terms of being a non-manual occupation requiring a knowledge base gained through the acquisition of vocational qualifications, which may be general, academic and job-related. There is a formal or informal career structure, depending on the actual profession, allowing promotion through accumulated experience, skill or further academic qualifications. Progression tends to be seen in linear terms as the practitioner moves upwards through the practice or organisation but there is an overwhelming emphasis on the full-time commitment to the work. It is this emphasis on the linearity of progression which has been used to explain why the majority of women, who are employed in a professional capacity, remain concentrated at the lower levels (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a).

Professional employment must be considered in a different context to occupations requiring a lower level of qualifications and skills. There are considerable barriers to entry to a profession, academic and professional qualifications require considerable time and effort. In the same vein professional qualifications can also act as a barrier to exit. Some skills may be transferable but the existence of functional specialisation means that it may be difficult to change occupations.

This chapter outlines the different theoretical backgrounds to professional employment: beginning with the structural-functional approaches (Parsons 1954; Goode 1957); later the Weberian analyses (Hall 1983; Freidson 1970a, 1983; Hughes 1958); and, power and monopoly control aspects (Johnson 1972). Following this, the architecture profession is introduced providing both a historical background and an overview of the nature of the profession today and the position of women within it. An outline of the construction industry is then given in order to provide a contextual setting for the architecture profession.

## **Professional Employment**

### **An Overview of the Different Theoretical Approaches to Professional Employment**

The central characteristic of a profession is the authority to possess an element of control over the work which serves as the dominant distinction between an occupation and a profession. There are two further requirements which differentiate between an occupation and a profession: firstly, members have had some form of higher education and are identified more for their educational status than for their specific occupational skills. Secondly, there are a limited number of occupations which have particular institutional and ideological characteristics in common. This definition explains a profession as being more than a status as it defines particular identities of occupations and how they achieve their monopoly status which differentiates them from other occupations.(Freidson 1983)

Professions, themselves, have been subjected to a variety of explanations which try to account for their peculiar characteristics beginning with the structural-functional approaches such as that of Parsons, (1954) and Goode (1957); and Weberian analyses of class, status and power (Hall, 1983; Freidson 1970a, 1983; Hughes, 1958). Later the focus shifted on to the monopoly control of markets and power aspects of professions (Johnson 1972).

Within a functional perspective, professions are said to possess four essential attributes. Firstly, there is a body of systematic and generalised knowledge exclusive to that particular profession. Secondly, professionalism is concerned with the interests of the community rather than self-interest; and, public service rather than private gain. Thirdly, the conduct of professionals is controlled by a code of ethics, established and maintained by professional associations. Finally, high rewards reflect the prestige of the professional and the value of their achievement to society. (Barber 1965)

Barber (1965) goes on to argue that the possession of skills and knowledge endows professionals with considerable power which is used to benefit the whole of society and, as a result, they deserve their high rewards and social status. The four attributes outlined above have also served as a basis for criticism of the functionalist approach.

Larson, using a Weberian approach, defines professionalisation as “an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources - special knowledge and skills - into another -

social and economic rewards (Larson 1977:xvii). The result of which is to create a monopoly of knowledge and control of that knowledge and its use. With this comes market control and social prestige. However, the notion of market control implies that there is a market or potential market for the services as well as a body of knowledge which is capable of being controlled (Macdonald 1995). Those who possess this knowledge can then form a professional body by forming a bargain with the state (Freidson 1970b), which controls the knowledge base and set standards, thus leading to market domination. The formation of the professional body allows the creation of barriers to entry to the profession, a degree of standardisation of the work function, market control and the supervision of members. In addition, professional bodies may serve to influence social policy and its administration by initiating changes or reforms in policy, or resist, modify or oppose policy changes that the state may wish to enforce upon it.

Within the Marxist context the professions are considered as an outcome of a society operating within a capitalist system. There is also the issue of proletarianisation of the professional occupations and the labour process debate. Subthemes include bureaucratisation meaning that many professionals are being drawn into non-professional organisations (Macdonald 1995) and the extent of the market power of the knowledge base.

## **Professions in the Late 20th Century**

Professional employment has seen a rapid increase throughout the course of this century from 4% of the employed population in 1911 to 20% in 1997 (Labour Market Trends March 1997). This has been caused by a number of reasons: trade has become increasingly complex requiring greater numbers of financial and legal professionals; increased scientific and technical knowledge has led to a growth in the number of science and engineering professionals; whilst, more professionals are employed in local and national government mainly in education and welfare.

Not only has there been an increase in professional employment, but there has also been an expansion in the number of professions, with higher and lower professions as well as organisational and occupational professions being identified. Higher professionals comprise those employed in the legal profession, doctors, architects, engineers, and the like, whilst lower professionals include nurses, school teachers and social workers. Occupational professions possess a degree-level qualification and members are recognised as 'professionals' by the Registrar General and the general public. Recognised flexible employment patterns exist both in and out of the labour market as well as between employers (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a). Organisational professions also have degree-equivalent professional qualifications but are invariably linked with careers in organisations (e.g., banking) where frequent job changes and non-standard working are not considered normal.

Traditionally, the occupations which were recognised as professions were those higher, occupational professions such as medicine, law and architecture whose professional status was protected by Royal Charter. It is only relatively recently that lower and organisational professions have been described as having professional status and reflects the fact that certain groups have been more successful than others in their ability to organise themselves into a professional entity. Parry and Parry (1976) cite the cases of teachers and doctors. Doctors were organised into a professional body, controlling entry and conduct of its members, as well as having formed a monopoly for the service, long before the state became their major employer through the introduction of the National Health Service. Teachers, on the other hand, were largely a creation of the state, which controls entry to the profession as well as the supply of new teachers. As a result they are in a much weaker position than doctors and have little control over their market position.

The difference between the two groups, regarding degree entry qualifications, means that for medicine there are additional barriers to entry imposed by virtue of the high school grades required, whereas those for teaching are significantly lower. The imposition of these types of barriers restricts the numbers of applicants and the supply of qualified practitioners. Maintaining a differential between supply and demand (where demand exceeds supply) helps create and maintain higher salaries. However, it is debatable whether this is the case in the majority of professions in the mid to late 1990's. Among white collar employees, including higher level

professional, unemployment rose during the recession of the early 1990's and in some cases employment levels have not returned to pre-recession levels.

### **Women's Professional Employment**

The sociology of work is generally not reflective of women (Tancred 1995), least of all of women in the professions, and even though the literature concerning the sociology of the professions is particularly male-dominated, it is still not plentiful and many areas remain uncovered. Early references contain no, or at most a few, references to women (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933; Millerson 1964; Kaye 1960), except when referring to nursing or midwifery.

Witz (1992) makes a link between the lack of mention of women in the professions and the concepts of ideology and closure in terms of patriarchy. Hakim (1995), in particular sees a requirement for more information on professional and managerial women. Where women in professions have been researched it has tended to concentrate on particular professions, such as medicine (Allen 1988), accountancy and pharmacy (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996); engineering (Evetts 1994b; Carter and Kirkup 1989); and, surveyors (Greed 1990, 1991). Women in architecture have been studied by Franz (1965) and Walker (1989), although they concentrate more on the history of women in the profession.

Patriarchy and class have combined to play the greater parts in perpetuating the exclusion of women in the professions particularly through the concept of social

closure. Professional bodies sought to attain social closure as a means of creating a monopoly for that profession by protecting professional knowledge and linking this to power. At the time of formation of many of the professional bodies the majority of women were prevented from gaining an education which then obstructed them from gaining professional knowledge.

Women were prevented from becoming members of professional bodies even if they had achieved the necessary educational requirements. Lehman cites the case of accountancy where “it was argued that as only the British upper classes entered the professions, and upper class British women never had to work, only women from the lower classes would enter the profession ... the entry of women from the poorer class would do two things: lower the status of the profession, and increase competition, thus lowering the remuneration for all” (Lehman 1992:266). This is as much a gender issue as it is a class issue and reflects attempts by professions to gain market control and collective social mobility and, as a result, improve their position within society. Professions do this by attempting to restrict entry to a small group of eligible persons.

Eligibility is on the basis of credentials, the affirmation of which is controlled by the profession itself. French and Meredith (1994) argue that it is this, not gender, which forms the basis for the exclusion of women from professions as historically women were excluded from attaining academic qualifications. Crompton (1987) affirms this by suggesting that it is patriarchy rather than class which restricts women. She uses,

as evidence, the lack of equality gained by women within professions in spite of their having made substantial gains in terms of professional and academic qualifications.

Whilst patriarchy and class have both played a part in excluding women from professional employment, capitalism has also contributed. Within capitalist society professions must constantly strive to consolidate and maintain their position and as a result will be sensitive to any factors which may impede this (Roberts and Coutts 1992). The fact that professions create and rely upon a market monopoly which, in turn, is dependent on the link between knowledge and power for its survival emanates from capitalist tenets of inequality and social closure. The assimilation of women into professions is regarded as a threat by men because there has traditionally been an emphasis on homogeneity within professions created by standardised skills and knowledge and, by implication, gender.

In a historical context, capitalism has restricted women's involvement in professional employment as it "made the capitalists richer and placed them in a position where they could not only afford an idle wife but would positively want one as a sign of their rise in the world" (Earle 1989:163). Also capitalism took work away from the home and created the split between domestic and paid employment. The division of labour as a result of the factory system, and later of scientific management, contributed to the marginalisation of women's work.

Another effect of capitalism is that it opened up the possibility of entrepreneurship founded on knowledge (Macdonald 1995). This knowledge was based on scientific rather than social origins and meant that men were able to exploit their already superior position within society; secondly, what were traditionally regarded as female skills and tasks became market-based, removed from their traditional locations. This combination meant that women were left with residual roles which were downgraded in status and importance.

As outlined above the professions have been identified as discriminatory environments for women (Bourne and Wikler 1978). They are regarded as work environments in which women's careers are affected directly as a result of their gender. The male dominance of the professions leads to the marginalisation of women in a number of ways (Spencer and Podmore 1987), whilst it is also argued that women are even excluded from access to professional career ladders (Kanter, 1977; Collinson and Knights, 1986; Crompton and Sanderson 1990b). Men and women are considered differently for promotion with Walters (1987) arguing that men are assumed to be competent unless they prove themselves otherwise whilst women are considered incompetent and need to positively prove their competence.

These barriers are both structural and cultural (Evetts 1994b) and have become firmly entrenched so as to be 'accepted'. As the professions developed women were barred from entry by being precluded from undertaking any form of professional training. Under common law women were prevented from making contracts or

being sued in their own right, thereby effectively preventing them from practising. These tangible barriers have been dismantled by legislation but attitudes about the all-male environment had already become fixated and, as a result, very hard to shift.

The structural barriers may have partly sown the seeds for the cultural barriers, in that the professions developed as an all male environment but other cultural barriers have also arisen independently. Stereotypes also exist about supposed 'feminine' characteristics and the nature of a woman's commitment to her career. Women are perceived to be less committed to a career, to put their home responsibilities before work, to be less likely to pursue training and promotion prospects, to have higher rates of absenteeism and to have a higher labour turnover rate as well as having a short-term perspective to their work (Hunt 1975). All this is measured against the norm of full-time, male employment. Women who have made considerable investment in their human capital are still regarded under the traditional stereotypes irrespective of the levels of individual commitment they may have shown. Greed comments on the fact that the role of women within elite professional groups is not clearly delineated and that women tend to be seen as a quasi-wife in a supporting role or that they are considered to be the same as men "but twice as guilty" (Greed 1991:32). She also notes that even if women are equal in terms of family and class, they still tend to remain within a 'sub-proletariat' of the professional group.

Apart from being required to implement equal opportunity policies, in order to comply with legislation, men have not been required to change their methods of

operating in any way. It was assumed that if women were given equal opportunities by law, then they would make the changes themselves by entering male-dominated areas of work and that equality would result (Northcraft and Gutek 1993). Fogarty *et al* (1981) claim that management, unions and professional bodies have failed to address the issues of career and family, or if they do think about them, they are not accorded any level of importance.

This failure to consider and address the issue of how to combine family and career has perpetuated the 'masculine' career model with women being forced to choose between career and family. Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) examined the working lives of professional women employed in the pharmacy and finance sectors in both Britain and France, and found that in spite of structural differences between the two labour markets some characteristics were similar within the two professions examined. They found that in both countries women pharmacists displayed "a clear familial orientation in combining their work and family lives" and were concentrated at the lower end of the career ladder, a fact "not resented by women in the profession" (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996:435). Also in both countries women employed in the financial sector who wanted to progress "felt constrained to behave as surrogate men" (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996:436).

The pharmacists were more able than those employed in finance to work flexibly with part-time work being adopted on a fairly widespread basis. In comparison

most of those employed in finance worked full-time with most having unbroken, linear (masculine-type) careers. Crompton and Le Feuvre suggest that women may be constrained by flexible employment arrangements in that it is women who are most likely to adopt them and whilst the norm remains a full-time, linear model of employment, women who wish to progress within a career must mimic the 'masculine' career

The career patterns adopted by professional women in Hakim's terms, would suggest that there is likely to be a greater level of participation in paid employment by these women because of their level of investment in human capital. At the same time the evidence presented by Crompton and Le Feuvre shows that different levels of participation exist at professional level. This suggests that other factors may exist to explain the differences in levels of participation in the labour market by professional women.

Crompton and Sanderson (1990b), having identified occupational and organisational professional careers, use pharmacy as an example of an occupational profession. It requires a degree level qualification but practitioners are recognised as professionals even when in non-standard employment. They then compared this to an 'organisational' qualification, which they define as a degree-equivalent professional qualification but invariably linked with careers in organisations (e.g. banking) where frequent job changes and non-standard working

are not considered normal. Crompton and Sanderson found that women pharmacists had some form of flexible working since the 1960's.

The women pharmacists had worked around childcare or during school term times, they also found jobs relatively easily and did not really experience discrimination but occupied least prestigious and most poorly paid areas of pharmacy but "the fact that such jobs were nevertheless of professional status was of some importance, and, in addition, unbroken professional contact has no doubt made it easier for some of them to build full-time linear careers once their children became less dependent" (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b:19). But they suggest that the ease with which the women pharmacists combined motherhood and a career reinforces conventional perceptions of gender roles instead of undermining them.

Crompton and Sanderson (1990b) suggest that women have made greater inroads in to occupational professions than in to organisational, as they have created non-career niches in such occupational professions as pharmacy with the consequent 'feminisation' of the profession. However, these women did appear to have the benefit of retaining the professional element of their job content even when they were working reduced hours or taking a career break which was not the case for those following organisational professions. They conclude that, even with part-time working, those with an occupational career were able to keep up to date with the

profession meaning that there was potential ‘to construct a delayed linear career’ (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b:26).

Carrier (1995), in a study of female engineers, accountants, physicians and barristers in Canada where membership of these professions was greater than 65% male, found that the majority of professional women who worked full-time were committed to continuity in their career irrespective of their family status and that family status was no indicator of career attainment. Also significant in this study was the fact that professional women with children had career patterns which were similar to those women without children. The four professions examined by Carrier represent a mixture of both occupational and organisational careers as she includes a variable for the practice arrangements of private practice, small private organisations, large private organisations and public service.

In contrast to Crompton and Sanderson (1990b) who argue that career development is dependent upon whether an occupational or organisational career is chosen, Carrier (1995) maintains that it is the number of hours worked that is the contingent factor. A significant majority of her sample worked between 35 and 50 hours a week whether they had children or not. Her results also showed that childless women were more likely to regularly work more than 50 hours a week whilst those with children were more likely to work less than 35 hours each week. However, as she points out, if 24.9% of women with children worked part-time, it remains the case that 75.1% worked full-time representing a significant proportion.

As a cautionary note, Carrier adds that the women who have both children and a full-time career may represent a select group of 'survivors' possessing "unusually high levels of ambition and career orientation" (Carrier 1995:355) with women not displaying these characteristics having left the profession or having opted for part-time work. Women are highly visible when they are present in small numbers (Kanter 1977; Carter and Kirkup 1990), their actions and reactions are more noticeable and are perceived to be indicators representing all other women (Carter and Kirkup 1990). Organisations need to employ much larger numbers of women in management positions in order to provide a 'critical mass' of women to begin to make headway (Carter and Kirkup 1990).

However, horizontal and vertical sex segregation remain present in professional employment. Professions tend to be male dominated with women present in higher numbers in the 'female' semi-professional roles with the associated lesser status and lower pay. There has long been an assumption that women are more suited to these types of caring occupations (Abbott and Wallace 1995), because of certain qualities that women are presumed to possess (Gilligan 1982). Crompton (1987) observed that the male domination of the professions is so deeply ingrained that it has become regarded as 'natural'. It has become institutionalised in the form of the "all-male Club ... the old-boy network ... (resulting in) the systematic exclusion of women from much of the organisational knowledge necessary for developing in the firm" (Crompton 1987:108).

In professions where the proportion of women entering the profession is approximately equivalent to male entrants, such as medicine and law, substantial differences emerge between the sexes at higher levels. Women take much longer to reach partnership level than men and they are more inclined to leave the profession or to work part-time (Allen 1990; Law Society Report on the Working Party on Women's Careers 1988). The phenomenon of the 'glass ceiling' has been used to describe this vertical segregation and to explain why women find it difficult to advance upwards.

Medicine, law and accountancy are professions which attract the highest numbers of new female recruits. However, even though greater numbers of women are entering these professions, they tend to remain concentrated in certain areas, either those specialisms which cause the least conflict between home and work (Abbott and Wallace 1995) or at the lower end of the career structure with reduced prospects for advancement (Allen 1988). Crompton and Sanderson (1990a) have identified the concept of 'feminisation' within professions, in that certain aspects of the profession have become adapted to accommodate the different needs of women. These adaptations tended to take the form of shorter working hours and part-time opportunities.

However, while flexible working practices are useful in allowing women to cope with a family and maintaining some form of a professional career, they also have the

disadvantage of 'trapping' women within the lower echelons. In addition, they appear unattractive to men, promoting and perpetuating the 'feminisation' process. The emphasis within employment is on the unbroken, linear career path, but because of the difficulties in combining this with a family means within a dual-career family priority must be given to one career over the other. Because of the biological aspect which means that women cannot produce a family without, at the very least, a minimal break from work, priority tends to be given to the male career.

However, in spite of the many negative attitudes many women still choose to enter a profession and develop a career throughout their working lives. Some professions, notably medicine and law, have achieved parity in numbers of female entrants compared to the number of men but others, particularly those in the construction industry, remain intensely male dominated. The following section outlines the position of women in an intensely male-dominated profession: that of architecture.

## **The Architecture Profession**

### **An Introduction to the Architecture Profession**

This section records the professionalisation of architecture from its opposing twin origins of art and craft. It outlines the development of the profession over the last century to its present day situation. The position of women is examined, both historically and in their present context. Much background evidence is presented which will assist the explanation of the themes arising from the

interviews with women architects. Overall, the section aims to outline the factors which attempt to explain the pervasive masculinity which surrounds construction industry occupations and is said to deter women from considering careers within it. Willis, George and Willis (1970) provide a comprehensive outline of what the duties and responsibilities of the architect traditionally comprised:

Architecture is undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable professions. It offers a wealth of interest in a variety of fields which few other professions can match, and provides an emotional satisfaction which only the other arts can stimulate. It exacts a high price for this enjoyment, however, and in order to derive the fullest pleasure from it, the architect must devote himself completely to its study and practice. The more proficient he can become and the greater the mastery that he can acquire the more complete will be his enjoyment. At the same time he has a very real responsibility towards his fellow men, for the buildings and environments which he creates may well have a profound effect on their lives and those of their children.

As the name implies<sup>3</sup>, the architect should be the master builder – the leader of the team which constitutes the Building Industry. He is qualified to design and supervise the erection of buildings, and must possess both theoretical and practical knowledge. His work is a science as well as an art, for he must produce a structure as well as create form, and must combine aesthetic effect with practical considerations. He must visualise the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and must ensure that the accommodation is properly related to the requirements of owners or occupiers, and that the form and construction are appropriate to the function of the building and its setting.

Like the playwright, he is dependent on other people to interpret his designs, and his supervision during the erection of a building is as important to its ultimate success as are the directions given by the producer and stage manager for a play.

He must have a good and practical knowledge of the building and allied trades, and must have at least a working knowledge of the more specialised aspects of building, such as the mechanical and electrical

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<sup>3</sup> The word 'architect' is derived from the Greek "arch-" meaning "chief" and the word "tecto" meaning "carpenter" or "builder".

services, &c. finally, he must always endeavour to be creative, and cannot ever afford to rest on his laurels! (Willis, George and Willis 1970:1).

### **The Architecture Profession: A Historical Perspective**

Architecture as a profession has developed in two different ways. One route was through individuals working principally as artists but with an interest in buildings. The other route was through involvement with the building trade. The formation of a professional body was strongly resisted, especially by the artists, "preferring the establishment of learned societies or academies in which the finer points of their art could be debated" (Symes, Eley and Seidel 1995). The first recorded society of architects, the Architects Club, was founded in 1791 followed in 1806 by the London Architectural Society and in 1831 by the Architectural Society. The Institute of British Architecture was established in 1834, with the intention of setting standards for the architectural profession as a whole and "for facilitating the acquirement of architectural knowledge, for the promotion of the different branches of science connected with it and for establishing an uniformity and respectability of practice in the profession" (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933:178) although Kaye (1960) refers to it as being little more than a dining club. Its principle objectives were to cultivate friendly relationships between architects, to provide technical information and to encourage reform in building accommodation.

Originally surveyors were allowed to be members but in 1835, the Institute decided to discontinue the association, and set about creating closure of the profession. After

the Institute was granted a Royal Charter in 1837, it set about creating a professional image for itself and incorporated the numerous other societies. However, recognition as a profession was hindered by architecture having its roots within patronage as well as difficulty in distinguishing between those who had their architectural origins as an artist or a craftsman.

However, younger architects felt alienated from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and formed the Architectural Association (AA) in 1847, which existed for some time as a rival to the RIBA. As time passed the AA developed a more educational role and a reasonable peaceful co-existence evolved. Further disputes erupted over the point of state registration and led to the breakaway of a number of architects who formed the Society of Architects in 1884. Throughout the remainder of the 1880's and the 1890's the Society attempted to have legislation for state registration passed by Parliament only to have it repeatedly blocked by the RIBA (in 1886, 1889 and 1891). The main point of contention was the view held by many RIBA members that architecture was an art, not a profession. At the start of the present century architecture became more professionalised and training was formalised firstly through apprenticeships and later by the founding of schools awarding diplomas and degrees (Symes, Eley and Seidel 1995).

Further registration bills were introduced in 1892, 1900 and 1903, and failed. In 1904 a committee was formed to reconsider the issue and presented a bill to reform the Institute and another concerning registration were rejected by Parliament in

1906. As a result of the change of policy by the RIBA it was decided to merge the two bodies, this took until 1925 due to constitutional difficulties. A registration bill was introduced again in 1927, 1928, 1930 and, eventually was passed in 1931. The final version, however, made registration only voluntary which led to confusion among the public as to whether an architect was registered or not, and what the difference was between the two anyway (Macdonald 1995). This led to the formation of the Architect's Registration Council (ARCUK) in 1938 which prevents anyone from registering as an architect without first passing RIBA examinations and being bound by its Code of Conduct. ARCUK became the Architects' Registration Board (ARB) in 1997 in an attempt to improve efficiency. Registration, itself, comprises a Parliamentary Act creating a register of qualified members of a profession.

The result of the 1938 Architects' Registration Act was to ensure that the term 'architect' can only be used to describe those who are suitably qualified. It does not preclude anyone without the relevant qualifications from designing and supervising the construction of buildings as long as they do not refer to themselves as an architect. This creates a barrier to entry to the profession which initially was considered to be in the interests of those in the profession but at the start of this century was presented as protecting the public from unscrupulous competitors (Kaye 1960). However, attempts to close the profession in this manner have been more concerned with protecting the term 'architect' rather than actually creating a monopoly of service.

The main perspectives governing the theory of the professions does not reflect, in any way, the difficulties and conflicts experienced during the professionalisation process. The structuralist belief that professions exist for the benefit of society is not upheld because of challenges from other perspectives. In particular, the Weberian view that collectively conscious groups form to attempt to legitimise their own interests by formation of a monopoly is, perhaps, more closely reflected, as well as the notion of social closure, by the issues regarding the registration of architects. In architecture there was a peculiar situation concerning its development as a profession. The process was partly the result of the class struggle between the losing aristocracy, who were patrons of architects/artists, and the bourgeoisie, who saw architecture as a craft. The outcome was that “professionalism aided the cause of bourgeois emancipation, but institutionalised the invidious position of women” (Melvin 1997:51).

Professional status is achieved by acknowledgement of the three conditions of special knowledge, protection of the public interest and legal sanction, which serve to legitimise its existence (Symes, Eley and Seidel 1995). The special knowledge is achieved by the formal training which it is necessary to undertake prior to qualification. Society in general and architect’s clients must be aware that this special knowledge exists; that they need this special knowledge; and, that this knowledge is not available from other sources outside the profession. Protection of the public interest includes public health, safety and welfare and represents the

responsibility of architects towards society. Finally, the legal sanction is achieved by the requirement that architects must be registered with the ARB in order to call themselves architects, RIBA membership, although voluntary, also indicates to society that a certain standard of knowledge has been attained.

These conditions are supported by the RIBA's requirements of a registered Practice which states that at least 80% of architectural staff employed must be full RIBA members (in order to attempt closure of the profession), the Practice must have Professional Indemnity (PI) Insurance and the Practice undertakes a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to maintain the specialist knowledge.

The reinforcement of the conditions is by the first two requirements of the definition of a practice. The fact that at least 80% of architects employed by the practice must be RIBA members fulfils the requirements of special knowledge and legal sanction, whilst the public's interest is protected by PI insurance.

### **Definition of the Term 'Architect'**

The term architect is used to define a person whose name appears on the register of the Architects Registration Board (ARB) of the United Kingdom. To be entered on to the register requires passing a three-part examination and undergoing a period of approved training. The educational qualifications are usually obtained by a period of full-time study at a university school of architecture and involves a three year

undergraduate course, which leads to a degree and exemption from the RIBA Part I examination. This is followed by a two year period of postgraduate study leading to the RIBA Part II.

A minimum of a two-year period of professional practice is also necessary before qualification (RIBA Part III). This period of professional practice can be divided in to two one year intervals: one year can be spent in practice before returning to carry out the postgraduate study and one year following it. Membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS), or the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) enables use of the term 'Chartered Architect'. Although membership of the RIBA is not compulsory, approximately 80% of architects belong to the professional body.

Fogarty *et al* (1981) note that there were three environments where architects were likely to be employed: private practice, local government, and the Civil Service and other areas of central government. However, since their survey was carried out in 1978-79 it is likely that the numbers employed in both the Civil Service and central government will have dropped due to decentralisation and Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). Although CCT is also applicable in local government, many local authority architects departments have remained intact, albeit in many cases with fewer architects, but are required to tender competitively along with private practices for projects.

### **Women in the Architecture Profession: a Brief History or ‘Herstory’<sup>3</sup>**

In architecture, women were originally involved in an amateur philanthropic role (Walker 1989). Designing social housing for estate workers was seen as a suitable past-time for an upper class lady but as the construction process moved away from its craft origins and became industrialised, it was considered to have developed into a ‘masculine’ profession. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the most a woman was allowed to do was to trace plans and write specifications. This did at least allow some form of personal and financial independence but the work was of very low prestige and mundane. At the time it was seen as making use of women's natural skills in that it was demanding and required high attention to detail (Walker 1989). At the time there was a further structural barrier of the marriage bar to employment which meant that only unmarried women could undertake this form of employment, having to give up paid employment upon marriage.

The relevance of class as a means of social closure was reinforced in architecture by the fact that working class women were already involved in the building industry in making nails and bricks. As Walker reports “the class bias of the nineteenth century debates ignored the plight of working-class women in the building industry and produced a myopic view of women’s capabilities and their potential as architects, blocking women from full participation in the profession, limiting them to decorative or auxiliary tasks” (Walker 1989:95). As well as using class as a means of exclusion, patriarchy was also very much in evidence. The women who worked in architecture

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<sup>3</sup> Term borrowed from Lehman (1992)

practices were frequently restricted to drawing board work because of supposed difficulties they would encounter in the inspection of buildings on site. Even within the office environment there existed what Walker refers to as 'a system of architectural apartheid' with men and women being located in separate rooms. This was carried out in the name of chivalry but restricted women to the lower positions in the profession.

However, women continued to practise architecture in spite of the exclusionary tactics adopted by the profession, the 1891 census shows that there were nineteen women architects in England and Wales and a further five in Scotland (Walker 1989) even though they had not yet gained RIBA membership. It was 1898 before the first woman applied for RIBA membership, which was initially refused on the grounds that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the Institute.

Further women were admitted in 1900, 1911 and three more entered in 1922. There are no records of any designs by these women but the first female member won an RIBA essay prize in 1905. Another woman, Elizabeth Scott, won an anonymous competition in 1928 to rebuild the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford upon Avon, providing conclusive proof that women could design as well as men (Matrix 1984).

Before the start of the Second World War some architecture schools restricted the number of places offered to women. After the War the restriction was lifted but 'if.

however, there were a substantial increase in the number of women applying for places, individual schools might well decide to impose a limit” (RIBA 1958). Many women who were in architecture at the start of this century were quite wellknown (Franz 1965), if only because their low numbers made them highly visible. Melvin (1997) reports that the formation of the RIBA did nothing to help the position of women architects because it reinforced and entrenched the inequalities which were present. Women experienced particular difficulties in the post-war period, in spite of the fact that during war-time they had been actively invited to take up architecture. Afterwards they were 'encouraged' to return to the home in their role as wives and carers in order to make way for the large numbers of soldiers returning home and requiring employment. The women who were already established within the profession, for example Elizabeth Scott and Jane Drew, had gained the acceptance of the male establishment but appeared reluctant to promote the endorsement of women within the profession. There have, as with most other professions, been very few role models for women.

### **The Architecture Profession today**

There are just over 30,000 architects registered with ARB (Architects Registration Board), of which 25,200 are employed (Source: ARB Register and Annual RIBA Survey of Registered Architects 1998). The remainder are unemployed or are not working for other reasons, such as women on maternity leave. Approximately 11% of the overall total are women and 9% are working part-time, but this does not mean to say that the majority of women are working part-time because there is a

fairly strong tradition within the profession that as an architect nears retirement age, they are retained on a part-time consultancy basis. The figure may also include male architects working for local authorities where flexible working schemes such as job-sharing are offered. A further 13% of the profession is classed as fully retired but many members retain membership of the RIBA and remain registered with the ARB.

The function of the architect is to "determine a proper arrangement of space within the building; its shape, form, type of construction and materials to be used, environmental requirements and aesthetic considerations" (Harvey and Ashworth 1996:175). The architect was also traditionally the first point of contact on projects so became leader of the construction team. Though, due in part to a failure by the profession to secure a monopoly for the service, this position has now been eroded. Consequently, different procurement methods have been introduced which have undermined the role of the architect (Sinden 1998). Also the abolition of fee scales which occurred in 1982, following a Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report, has meant that the profession has become subject to more competitive charging systems (Sinden 1998). Previously, architects received a fee based upon a fixed percentage of the contract sum. The abolition of the fee scales has resulted in the introduction of lump sum fees sometimes tendered for on a competitive basis. Some practices, particularly the larger ones, are inclined to adopt anti-competitive pricing strategies such as 'nil-fee' bids or loss making bids in order to attempt to undercut the smaller practices or sole practitioners (Sinden 1998).

Over the last three years the number of students entering architectural schools has held steady at 2,300 with 32% being female in 1997 (compared to 31% in 1996 and 26% in 1995). The number of women entering schools of architecture has only increased by 6% over the last decade. The structure of the profession is such that small practices or sole practitioners predominate, the majority of registered architects operate as sole principals (24%) or as principals in partnership (30%) (RIBA 1997). The number of architects practising as sole practitioners has increased from 23% in 1996, but the number of principals in practice has fallen by 2%.

Only 13% are employed in practices employing 17 or more architects (The Architects' Journal 1996). Only four practices in the UK employ more than 100 qualified architects (The Architects' Journal 1996), the largest practice being RMJM with 268 qualified architects - an increase of 96 from the previous year. There do tend to be considerable fluctuations in staff numbers, especially among the larger practices, because of fluctuations in workload. This has been the case with RMJM and represents a 36% increase in the number of qualified architects employed by them from the year before. The following table shows the number of architects and their average salaries on a regional basis:

<b>Region</b>	<b>% Prof (1997)</b>	<b>Average Salary (1997) £</b>	<b>% Prof (1998)</b>	<b>Average Salary (1998 £</b>
Scotland	13	25,000	12	23,000
North	3	26,000	4	27,000
Yorks and Humbs	6	26,000	6	26,000
North West	7	26,000	7	26,000
East Midlands	4	25,000	5	25,000
West Midlands	6	25,000	5	25,000
East Anglia	3	25,000	3	25,000
Wales	3	26,000	4	26,000
Ulster	3	30,000	3	27,500
South West	7	26,000	7	25,000
South East	18	25,000	16	28,000
Greater London	27	29,000	28	30,000

**Table 3.1: Percentage of profession and earnings by region**

(Source: RIBA Employment and Earnings Survey 1997 and 1998)

The greatest concentration of architects is in London, where 28% of all full-time architects are based. A further 16% are located in the South East and 13% in Scotland. The remainder is scattered relatively evenly throughout the remaining regions. Most of the larger practices are primarily based in large cities, most notably London, with branch offices throughout the country.

Their average earnings rose by 4% from 1997 to 1998, with the average salary being £27,700 per annum. However, not all sectors had an increase as in-house architects (those employed in the private sector but not in a practice) suffered a 3% pay cut but those employed in central government received the largest pay increase of 10% after suffering an 11% reduction in 1997. These figures reflect the current trends within the industry and profession, in that central government resources are being eroded whilst there is a boom in certain areas of the private sector. Fringe benefits for architects are relatively poor compared to many other professions with 60% having their ARB and RIBA fees paid but only 34% have a pension scheme (contributory, with 10% having a non-contributory scheme); 36% have a company car (a 3% reduction from 1997) whilst 33% receive a mileage allowance for business travel.

The best paid architects are those who are principals of practices and those employed in central government where the existence of pay scales means that architects salaries do not reflect market forces to the same extent as the private sector. There is little difference between the earnings of sole practitioners and

those who are salaried in practice which may account to some extent why so many architects become sole practitioners. The additional rewards that being a sole practitioner brings, such as autonomy, flexibility and opportunity to specialise may outweigh the insecurity and variability of the workload (RIBA 1998). The average earnings for each sector are shown in Table 2:

<b>Field of Employment</b>	<b>Average Earnings</b>
	<b>£</b>
Sole practitioners	23,100
Principals	33,000
Salaried in practice	22,000
Private in-house	29,000
Local authorities	27,100
Central government	31,100
All architects	27,550

**Table 3.2: Field of employment and average earnings**

(Source: RIBA Employment and Earnings Survey 1998)

### **Women in the Architecture Profession Today**

Private practice remains the dominant environment where the majority of (women) architects are employed, both in 1978 at the time of Fogarty *et al*'s survey and in the late 1990's. Fogarty *et al* describe private practice as possessing many of the same

characteristics as small businesses, in that they operate in highly competitive markets, many are family firms and their terms of employment are more flexible. The reason for so many women being employed in private practice is given as “it is favourable, in fact by far the most favourable of any of the employment environments covered in these studies (referring to their 1978 survey), from the point of view of a woman who wants simply to work in her profession at a moderately responsible level, combined with easy opportunities to vary her workload to allow for family responsibilities” (Fogarty *et al* 1981:226).

Fogarty *et al* then go on to describe how, in many cases, women architects are employed in private practices “as an extra pair of hands to meet temporary surges in demand “but that for those who want to develop an upward sloping career path “it is not very difficult to build up at least a modest practice, either part-or-full-time” (Fogarty *et al* 1981:226). Whilst there is the potential to combine a professional career with a family, there is the ‘knock-on’ effect of restricted professional development. Of all the three work environments surveyed, Fogarty *et al* found that private practice was the area in which most discrimination against women was most likely to be found. In view of the significantly higher proportions of women employed in this area, it maybe expected that there would be a higher incidence of cases.

However, this must also be considered in the light of the fact that local and central government as well as the Civil Service are, and were at the time of Fogarty *et al*'s

work, more likely to have formalised equal opportunities and sex discrimination policies in place. A further consideration would be trade union membership within the public sector which would mean that action could be taken on behalf of someone who is being discriminated against. This would not generally be the case within the private sector, especially as the majority of firms employing architects are very small and not unionised.

The stereotypical image of much professional work is that it is physically demanding, combative and, therefore, unsuitable for women (Spencer and Podmore 1987). Construction, especially, is perceived to be dirty, heavy and as the majority of the work is outdoors, affected to a large extent by the elements. This cultural image has proved very hard to shift. Modern machinery and construction methods have removed a large part of the heavy and dirty elements but it is still not thought a reasonable career choice for a woman and in many cases it is not even considered as an option. Perceptions about difficulties in professional careers generally may serve to discourage women from even considering those careers which are perceived as being even more masculine than many other more office based professions. Masculine ideology continues to exclude women by emphasising their physical unsuitability for the demands of professions (Lehman 1992; Spencer and Podmore 1987) as well as beliefs about women's attachment with the home and their 'different commitments' (Lehman 1989).

Whilst architecture and the construction industry are considered masculine environments in Britain, this is not the case elsewhere. In southern European countries and the Middle East the converse is the case and architecture is considered to be a feminine occupation. This indicates that the structural and cultural processes of the professionalisation process may be responsible for the underlying and imperious masculinity of the profession. Wilson (1996) argues that this is the result of male ideology within organisation theory accepting the status quo but that in other parts of the world there are other concepts of what constitutes men's work and women's work.

### **Architectural Education**

There are 39 Schools of Architecture in the UK (in 1998), representing both 'old' and 'new' universities with one school, the Architectural Association, being independent. It is recognised by the RIBA and ARB but is independently funded and not subject to HEFCE assessment. Generally, the route taken to become a qualified practitioner involves studying for a first degree (BA in Architecture) which leads to exemption of the RIBA Part One examination. The aim is to provide a broad knowledge of architecture. This is then followed by a one year period of work experience in an architectural practice.

The pathway to qualification differs after this point with progression via a BArch degree or a Graduate Diploma leading to exemption from the RIBA examination. Various Masters level courses are also on offer but these tend to be aimed at

students who do not wish to pursue the professional practitioner option. The RIBA Part Two, or its equivalent, aims to provide the student with the knowledge and skills required for practising architecture. Following this qualification is a further period of work experience before entering for the RIBA Part Three examination. Attendance at a series of lectures and seminars is necessary before entering for the examination which confers eligibility to apply to the ARB for registration as an architect and the right to practice.

In 1998, 31% of Part One candidates were female (Lewis 1998), although there is a high drop out rate as the course progresses. Figures show that an average of 2,300 women entered Part 1 for years 1995 – 1997. However by the time these women had progressed on to Part Two, numbers were less than half of those who started Part One, with an average of 1,100. There is still a significant drop out rate from Part Two to Part Three but not quite so dramatic with almost 700 women, on average, achieving their Part Three qualification (RIBA Employment and Earnings Survey 1998). Figures for 1980 showed that fewer women entered Part One (1,600) but that 1,000 achieved their Part Three. This suggests that there is an issue which requires addressing by the Schools of Architecture as to why, in spite of more women indicating an intention to enter the profession, more are leaving before achieving their professional qualification.

A suggestion offered by Lewis (1998) is that economic conditions have led to women either not being able to get the necessary professional experience in order to

progress or finding employment and deciding to stay employed rather than returning to complete their studies because of the risk of not finding future employment. Funding for both periods of study is via a five year local authority grant but after a period in employment earning, on average, £9,250 for a Part One qualified architect and £17,250 for a Part Two qualified architect, may mean that a return to surviving on a student grant loses its appeal (Rogers 1998). Also, the length of time taken to achieve the qualifications may serve as a deterrent as many women take time out of the profession to have a family before they qualify (Lewis 1998).

### **Practice Type and Size**

A practice may operate as a sole principal, who works alone or in charge of a small practice, 23% of all architects are working as sole principals in 1998 (ARCUK register/RIBA annual survey; 1998) showing a decrease of 2% from 1995 but an increase from 20% in 1994. Alternatively, there is principals in partnership, which is the most common form of employment for architects with 27% (ARCUK register/RIBA annual survey 1998). Traditionally practices have been organised as partnerships with the position of senior partner being the highest point of the career ladder. Both small and large practices may operate in this way.

Aside from practice principals, architects may be salaried in practice - this accounts for 26% of employed architects, (ARCUK register/RIBA survey; 1998) but the number has been falling from its 1990 peak of 28% - or private in-house: representing 8% of the total (ARCUK register/RIBA survey; 1998). In-house

architects may be employed by a variety of large companies and organisations. In-house architects may be preferred when there is a strong emphasis on a particular corporate style of design or practice

Because of the varied nature of employment areas in which architects work, it is difficult to apply a strict definition of firm or practice size. Architects are employed not only in designated architectural practices but in a wide variety of other areas. For example in local authorities; large companies or organisations as part of an in-house team; in multi-disciplinary practices combining engineers, surveyors and project managers, for example. The RIBA (1962) survey applied both a three-way (<10 architects; 11-30 architects; >30 architects) and a five-way (<5 architects; 6-10 architects; 11-30 architects; 31-50 architects; >50 architects) split in defining firm size. These definitions, especially the three-way split, whilst not taking the overall size of multi-disciplinary practices or the total number of employees where architects are part of an in-house team, proves to be the most useful criteria by which practice size can be determined.

### **General Characteristics of the Construction Industry**

The construction industry is in many ways unique. In 1990 construction accounted for 6% of Gross Domestic Product and the British construction industry is the 4th largest in Europe, after Germany, France and Italy (Harvey and Ashworth 1996), but the industry is characterised by the boom and bust nature of the business cycle (Sinden 1998). Employment in all areas of the industry is, as a result, subject to

significant fluctuations and the traditional job security enjoyed by professionals tends not to be present. In 1992, it was estimated that 30% of architects were either unemployed or underemployed as a result of the recession (Financial Times 1992).

The products are of an investment nature, for the goods and services that they help create or facilitate the production of, 60% of the output is new work while alterations and refurbishment work account for the remaining 40%. Building projects are of limited duration, contract periods vary from days to years, but a characteristic common to all projects is that they last a finite period of time. Most large projects are the subject of an architectural competition, a two stage process where applications are invited from all interested practices and a small number are invited to design schemes for consideration by the client. Further distinguishing features include the fact that the product is manufactured on the client's premises, that is, the building site. Most are one-off designs with no prototype being developed first. Also the design and construction phases are separate whereas in manufacturing there is a much closer link between product design and manufacture.

There is a role for design team professionals at all stages of the life cycle of a building. The initial phase or inception is where the client's brief is analysed with regard to its viability and feasibility on the grounds of cost, end user suitability and the like. This is followed by the design stage in which outline proposals and sketch designs are translated into detail designs, contract documentation and procurement. The next stage is the actual construction of the building which includes project

planning, installation and commissioning. These three stages may be linked if a project proceeds in an orderly manner but it is not necessarily the case. The inception phase may be complete but the funding required to translate this into a 'live' project may not be forthcoming. This may also occur after the design phase. Much inception and design stage work is done without becoming a project on site. Time scales for all three phases vary considerably, there is no 'set' time for each phase and increasingly many projects are on extremely tight timescales. Competition between practices is intense and, as a result, design teams must meet tight deadlines.

The fourth phase of the building life cycle is that of use. The involvement of the design team is most minimal at this stage but will be required for alterations and modifications. Finally, there is demolition of the building which may involve replacement, but because of the usual long lifespan of buildings, it may not take place for a considerable length of time. This phase may not apply to all buildings as with many life is prolonged indefinitely, which tends to increase the design team's involvement to a greater extent during the use phase.

### **Drawing Together: Constructing the Issues**

Architecture is a male-dominated profession with rigid professional structures which have through time served to promote the exclusion of women. From its artistic and philanthropic origins where women were once actively involved, the exclusion has arisen as a result of the professionalisation process. This process has promoted the concept of the full-time, linear career and the development of

working practices which are defined as 'masculine'. Working practices which have evolved as a result of more women entering a profession are said to result in the 'feminisation' of the profession but are not regarded in favourable terms as they further undermine the position of women within the profession (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b).

The aim of this chapter has been to outline the discipline of architecture as a profession. It has described how it has developed from its art and craft-based origins which included women to how as a result of the professionalisation process, it actively excluded women. The combination of what has been discussed in this chapter and the issues that were raised in chapter two provide a conceptual framework against which an in-depth study of women's lives and experiences in a male-dominated profession can be studied. The contrasts between women's personal identity and their membership of a 'male' profession are examined using an interpretive methodology in order to establish what attracts women to the profession and how they exist within it.

## **Chapter Four: Methodology**

### **The Foundations of Inquiry**

Research must fulfil certain intellectual, philosophical, technical, practical and ethical criteria in order for it to be considered a true contribution to the creation of knowledge. The researcher must, therefore, identify a particular approach to her inquiry. In other words the researcher must make known the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research. The basis of this research is the 37 semi-structured in-depth interviews that I carried out with women architects during the period April 1996 – October 1997. The sample interviewed was not selected on a random basis and, as such, cannot be considered to be representative of a broader population. However, this is intentional and reflects a fundamental aspect of this research which is to get closer to the subjects, the interviewees themselves, to examine ‘how’ and ‘why’ they have followed a particular career path.

These ontological and epistemological explanations of the social world are developmental in attempting to trace and account for the development of a social phenomena, namely (in this project): how women architects develop and remain committed to a career in a male-dominated environment combined with many factors which combine to influence their lives. There is

a blend of comparative theorising with the issues that concern both women's employment and women in professional employment. These empirical observations may be explained by underlying mechanisms which are not directly observable, or where interpretations of experiences, accounts, actions and events can be developed into explanations and understandings. This constitutes an interpretive perspective and forms the basis of the epistemology here.

This approach appreciates the different constructions and meanings that people place on their experiences. It attempts to understand and explain why individuals have different experiences as opposed to searching for external causes and fundamental laws with which to explain behaviour. It accepts that the world and 'reality' are not objective and external to the social actors from which it is constructed but that meaning is created by its components. This is strengthened by Habermas (1970) who argues that the way individuals think and their structures of authority are influenced by human interests which also condition our means of enquiry and construction of knowledge in our world.

The interpretive approach has been used extensively in research concerning careers (in particular careers in teaching, for example Jones 1983; Ball and

Goodson 1985; Sikes *et al* 1985) and, since the 1970's has moved the focus of research on to the immediate issues concerning the day to day involvement within a career. Since then there has also been a re-emergence in certain types of research methods including participant observation and ethnography (Burgess 1985a, 1985b, 1985c), oral and life history (Jones 1983; Vansina 1985, Faraday and Plummer 1979), and particularly in relation to working lives, in-depth interviewing (Marshall 1984; Pollert 1981). These are wholly subjective approaches relying on the meanings that individuals give their lives and how they articulate these to the researcher who then also provides a further interpretation of what it means in relation to the research. It is with working life and the career that this research is concerned with, and to some extent, career and working life history. Beynon (1985) has argued that life history is especially appropriate for the purposes of examining what is, effectively, a subjective career.

The distinction between the subjective and objective dimensions of the career were suggested by Hughes (1958). The subjective area comprises the individual's own perspective of the career, what it actually means to them and how they approach it whilst the objective area refers to the formal structure of the organisations, hierarchy and employment from which the career is constructed. A key point within the subjective career is that there is

no set pattern for promotion and advancement which, as Evetts (1990) points out, is particularly relevant for women's careers as it does not rely entirely on developments within employment. She states

In the subjective career, a career is an individual experience. This results in diverse perceptions of career and work itself. Such individual perceptions might define career commitment as good [practice] rather than occupational mobility and might perceive career success as achieving a balance between work and family life rather than the achievement of promotion. The subjective career is not necessarily a smooth unilinear development involving promotion and increased responsibilities (Evetts 1990:14).

Whilst the career can be considered in both subjective and objective terms, it is not possible or appropriate to regard them as entirely separate entities. there are interlinkages between both dimensions which cannot (and should not) be deconstructed.

This research project takes an holistic view of the women's careers. It does not focus on any single element of the career. Instead the overall picture is described along with the women's lives complementary to their career in order to develop a complete view of the individual, to assess the importance of their career to them, to ask what they demand of their career in return for their input, to examine the location of their career within their lives and families and, to develop, within these contexts, a sense of what constitutes commitment in a qualitative sense. To this end, the main method of

examination is by in-depth, semi-structured interviewing to allow the 'stories' to be told by the women. The sample size is small but allows each case to be examined in great detail and, in any case, the amount of data generated by in-depth interviewing tends to be considerable.

The ontological position described earlier accepts that the women architects' knowledge, views, interpretations, experiences and understandings are meaningful in establishing the social reality which the research question is to explore. It then follows that the epistemological position with which to generate data, given these ontological properties, is to interact with women architects by talking and listening to them.

### **The Construction of Theory**

Carrying out interviews alone does not generate theory. It creates a mass of transcripts which can be used for the development of theory if the researcher is able to explain the contents and assign sense and meaning to the subject areas discussed (Baker 1997). From these interviews, I wanted to find how the women architects managed their careers, what meanings they attached to their career and how they remained committed to it in relation to the rest of their lives. Therefore, an interpretive approach has been adopted, where the researcher attempts to provide an interpretation

and develop meaning from the data. The interview is not treated as just a narrative but as the construction of a social world and “the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman 1993:91). This approach provides sufficient flexibility to provide explanations and new insights from the data.

Furthermore, the interpretive approach allows for the consciousness of the subjects or actors in the world. These actors experience, see and interpret their words in terms of attaching meanings to social reality. These meanings do not exist independently of the actors nor do external forces such as society impose them. They are formed and reformed by actors as a result of their experiences throughout their lives. However, whilst this thesis attaches significance to subjective meanings, the approach adopted is not phenomenological in that causal relationships are an integral part of examining the interview data. In addition, to adopt a phenomenological approach would have required a much longer period of time to have been spent with the interviewees in order to understand how their interpretations were arrived at.

The interpretive approach has been criticised for its lack of clarity and ‘standardisation’ of methods but this opprobrium has originated from the

positivist perspective which emphasises the importance of finding the truth (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 1991). However, as Jones (1983) argues, such an approach and the subject matter under consideration require a form of analysis where meaning is elucidated instead of causality determined, thus the most appropriate epistemological position is interpretive rather than normative.

While the interpretive approach relies upon the 'subjective experience' the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977) further clarifies the approach that this thesis adopts in attaching meanings to social settings within the interpretive approach. Habitus is "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted" (Bourdieu 1977:95). This is further explained as "the habitus only exists in, through and because of the practices of actors and their interaction with the rest of their environment: ways of talking, ways of moving, ways of making things, or whatever" (Jenkins 1992:75). These 'practices of actors' are constantly renegotiated according to cultural goals and values (Pickering 1991) and represent the internalisation of the objective structure but in the sense that whilst habitus is produced by structure so is structure produced by habitus.

Individuals, thus, “respond to social imperatives, not mechanistically, but more on the order of an experienced jazz musician or athletic player. These artists have a feel for their craft such that in the moment of action, they will improvise a compelling melody or make the right moves ... The central role of habitus is in defining and limiting what is seen by an actor and how it is interpreted” (McDonough and Tobolowsky 1998:1). Furthermore, the concept introduces the notion that a community, such as the architecture profession, shares a habitus but that there are differences in practices originating from the different backgrounds of the individuals present (Fowler 1997). In this sense, habitus assists in explaining how differences arise and exist between individuals who, in order to gain membership of a profession, have attained an element of ‘standardisation’ through possessing similar qualifications for entry and qualification as well as adopting, and being socialised by, the cultural ‘norms’ and conventions imposed by their choice of career.

Habitus is valuable as a concept as it attempts to bridge the gap between structure and action, however it is used predominantly in an abstract sense without reference to specific situations and experiences. Within this research the concept of habitus assists the interpretive process in the conceptualisation of practice in that within the explanations given by the

interviewees it avoids the dichotomy of choice or requirement. It accepts that both are likely in response to or as a result of situations and events. The discussion in the following chapters will illustrate how the women architects interviewed describe and explain their careers and lives in terms of the constraints imposed and choices made by themselves.

### **Data Collection by In-Depth Interviewing**

When analysing the subjective career Beynon (1985) argues that an interpretive method of data collection has subjective, contextual and evaluative advantages. In a subjective sense, it helps to understand the individual's subjective reality by emphasising the interpretations that people make given their life experiences on their actions. In a contextual sense, the individual life is placed in context within its own environment as well as within the wider societal system whilst the evaluative advantage arises from emphasising the individuality of each experience rather than simplifying and generalising them (Evetts 1990). Jones reinforces this by stating that "validity is established by demonstrating that sociological explanation is congruent with the meanings through which members construct their realities and accomplish their everyday practical activities" (Jones 1983:152).

An important consideration when designing the outline of the project was to be able to use my previous career experiences, contacts and knowledge in some way. After considering other professions involved with the construction industry, architecture became an obvious choice. I was familiar with procedures and conventions within the profession and I also had a number of contacts within the profession from my time as a quantity surveyor and felt comfortable contacting them to discuss my project. Equally importantly, I spoke their “private language” (Symes, Eley and Seidel 1995:3) through my time as a quantity surveyor and also by the fact that my husband is an architect. As a result I was familiar with both the public and private worlds of architects, and as Evetts (1990) noted when talking to women about the subjective career, the mix of public and private is closely intertwined and interrelated.

The geographical focus of the research was the East Midlands region of the UK as it provides an area where boundaries could be clearly defined. I made contact with the East Midlands branch office of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in Nottingham, which was willing to provide me with a list of names and addresses. The region encompasses the counties of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire which were within easy travelling distance of Nottingham

with the most outlying areas being, at most, an hour and a half away. The region also has a mixture of cities, towns and rural areas, giving a broader overview than, perhaps, would have been possible with a sample area concentrating on purely urban areas. Architecture was also practised in a variety of ways ranging from offices of large national practices to small offices operating within a limited local area, including local authorities, and limited companies. The region provided a complete group of all the various ways in which architecture is carried out.

The list of female Corporate RIBA members comprised 49 names and 37 interviews were carried out providing a representative group. Some of the addresses given were business addresses, which was likely where the employer paid the RIBA membership fees, others were home addresses. It was not possible to ascertain what position was held by the members, except in isolated cases where the name also appeared in the business name. The interviewees were contacted by post in the first instance, the introductory letter gave details of myself and the research project. Several of the addresses provided by the RIBA were business addresses and whilst the letters were specifically addressed to the potential interviewee by name, there was a high likelihood that all mail would be opened and read by a managing partner or another high ranking manager within the organisation.

On this basis it was essential that the introductory letter should not serve to deter a positive response.

Out of the 49 letters which were sent out, several recipients responded immediately either by phone or return of post to express an interest in taking part; the majority were willing to be interviewed after a follow up telephone call was made; others were willing to take part but work and family commitments made it impossible to arrange a suitable time to visit; only two declined to take part at all without giving an explanation; and, a further two, in spite of several telephone calls, proved impossible to contact. It may be of some relevance that these two both worked for two of the largest practices in the region and were contacted through their business addresses. With the high likelihood of mail being opened centrally, there may have been some form of organisational resistance against participation. The difficulties which can arise regarding access to organisations and the individuals within them are widely discussed in the literature (Brown *et al* 1976; Blau 1964).

Luck and opportunism can play an important part in gaining access (Buchanan *et al* 1988), and the sample list was extended in a number of opportunistic ways. Several interviewees were keen to provide names of friends or colleagues, who they felt would be interested in participating in

the project. Because the original sample was selected from the RIBA membership list, only those women who held corporate membership were included. As membership is not mandatory there are several women who are qualified architects, and registered with the Architects Registration Board, but who are not RIBA members. In all, a total of 37 interviews were carried out.

A week or so after the initial letter was sent, follow up telephone calls were made to ascertain whether or not the women were interested in taking part in the project. An appointment was made to interview those interested at a place of their choice and at a time to suit them. As all except four of the women were working, it was important to be able to fit in with (what I took for granted to be) their busy lifestyles. In the majority of cases the interviews took place in their homes. Interviews were also carried out in cafés, on site, and in offices<sup>4</sup>. All except two of the interviews were tape-recorded, after having asked permission to do so. Anonymity was assured but many of the interviewees said they were not concerned about it, although those who were in a more high profile position tended to request confidentiality.

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<sup>4</sup> Further details regarding the location and duration of the interviews is contained in the biographical details in the Appendix.

The interviews were based on discussion around seven subject areas. They were not intended to be formal question and answer sessions although I generally started with the question “why did you become an architect?” or what brought you into architecture?” as an ice-breaker. This was a direct question rather than a subject area to be talked around but helped assist the interviewees to talk about themselves in a way which was not too personal at the outset. It also provided a starting point to discuss their career history providing contextual data. Following this, although not necessarily in order, the discussions covered subject areas relating to factors which have helped and hindered their careers, the pressures and satisfactions of an architectural career, life outside work, the effects of being a woman in a masculine environment and future career plans.

The subject areas were not designed to be specifically question and answer type topics but areas for discussion. The lives and careers of the women interviewed showed so much diversity that it was not possible to construct a inflexible series of questions that all would be asked. The following chapters will illustrate the extent of the diversity but as an example, as mentioned earlier, the first question almost invariably asked why they had chosen architecture. The replies showed distinct differences ranging from it being

an inherent desire lasting from childhood, a decision based on either enjoying or excelling at appropriate subjects while at school, being influenced by other architects or arising as a job requirement. The approach adopted allows the interviewees the opportunity to explain their lives and careers as they see and interpret them instead of being constrained by a series of predetermined questions.

The length of the interviews varied, seemingly in relation to the type of employment followed by the interviewee. Those who were employed in practices were more limited for time, so these interviews generally took place at lunchtime and were limited to an hour at the most. Those who followed more non-standard forms of work organisation either were not so pressured time-wise or were more willing to talk for longer. I found, after carrying out several interviews with women in their homes that, in some cases it proved difficult to leave. The interviews, although following a fairly loose and fluid structure, covered the main points detailed above and on reaching the end I would say that all the main points had been covered, that I felt their contribution had been valuable and I was grateful for their time. However, in many cases there would be more offers of tea or coffee as well as tours of their homes, gardens or building projects.

Finch (1993) mentions that several of the women she interviewed at home appeared to be lonely. This may account for some of the difficulties I experienced in leaving. One woman mentioned the feelings of loneliness that she had experienced when she was at home with her baby (she had just returned to work after the birth of her second child when the interview took place) and, unknowingly, she may have identified the main cause of difficulties in ending some of these interviews carried out at home. The office environment contributes towards fulfilling the need for sociability through interaction with colleagues in a way that is not necessarily satisfied when working from home. An interviewer making an appointment to visit a woman to talk to her about her life, is implicitly displaying her interest in that woman as well as providing an opportunity for her to feel that her opinions and experiences are relevant and do matter. People, generally tend to be flattered when asked to talk about themselves and their experiences, especially when they feel it is to be of some academic value (Buchanan *et al* 1988).

However, as well as loneliness as a contributory factor to prolonging the length of interviews carried out in the home as opposed to an office or other public environment, there is also the absent pressure of work to take in to account. Interviewing away from the workplace out of office time may have

the result that the interviewees felt less constrained time-wise. In an office environment, there is the possibility of having to justify time spent away from work to colleagues and employers. In one interview, that of Sarah, which took place in the meeting room at her office, she was called away after 45 minutes. It appeared deliberate and arranged prior to my visit as her secretary had rescheduled the interview a number of times and also asked for very precise details about the questions to be asked and the length of time that I required. In comparison, interviews carried out in the home tended to be subject to interruptions from family members but this could be used to prompt further discussion about the conflicting roles of the women.

Finch (1993) makes much of being overwhelmed by the women's openness and willingness to share personal experiences with her but does not mention about how to draw the interview to a close. Buchanan *et al* (1988), although referring to interviewing as a means of data collection within an organisation, advise that a deadline should be set and kept to. In the introductory letter that I sent to prospective interviewees, I mentioned that the interview would last approximately one hour. When interviewing women in their lunch breaks or after work, it was relatively easy to draw the interview to a close because there were real constraints on their time. However, in many cases when the interview was carried out at the woman's

home, I became a 'hostage'. It is difficult to rush away unless there is a proper reason because you have expressed an interest in these people and found that what they have to say has been valuable.

The apparent frankness with which the women talked was remarkable. In spite of being a total stranger and having made contact only by letter and telephone, in most cases I was welcomed in to their lives without hesitation. Oakley (1981) stresses the benefits of less-structured research methods which avoid a hierarchical relationship with the subject on the grounds that a structured approach objectifies the women being interviewed which is inappropriate within feminist research. Finch reinforces the Oakley methods by stating:

Women are almost always enthusiastic about talking to a woman researcher ... their intentions are apparent, simply from the hospitality which one characteristically receives ... One is, therefore, being welcomed in to the interviewee's home as a guest, not merely tolerated as an inquisitor (Finch 1993:167).

The telephone call made to follow up the introductory letter appeared to be an important aspect of the creation of the rapport. Several of the interviewees talked at length about themselves and their experiences in relation to the research at this point. One interviewee who was employed in

practice, told of how she had been left to run the office on her own for two months because her boss had taken extended leave. At the time I phoned her two children were taking A levels and GCSE exams and she was having to meet urgent project deadlines while providing emotional support to her family. She described how the conflicting demands were causing enormous stress on her private and public lives and explained how she would not be able to see me but was remarkably frank and open about herself.

The interviews themselves appeared to be open and frank in almost all cases. One interview, that of Heather, which I felt began in an extremely stilted and awkward fashion proved to be one of the most candid discussions of the first round of interviews. She also offered to take part in any future discussions and supplied me with the name of a female technician working within the practice who was also willing to take part, although I later decided to restrict the interviews to qualified architects. Like Finch (1993) I was surprised at how easily the women talked in the interview situation, even the presence of the tape recorder failed to daunt them. In fact in some cases the interviewee spoke directly to the tape recorder when they were trying to stress a point (for example when I interviewed Pam she picked up the tape recorder and spoke directly in to it "I've never worn a trouser suit I would like you to add!" when we discussed working on site).

The issue of creating the rapport was something I expected to have to consider carefully (Finch 1993; Oakley 1981) but the reality was that the creation of understanding appeared to occur without any special effort. Possibly in the first few interviews I was trying too hard to be liked. After some time I realised that this was not necessary and that rapport could be developed because of a common interest in the subject. Also the fact that I am married to an architect gave me increased credibility in their worlds, they knew that I was aware of the problems associated with their careers both in the public and private sense and this rapport and interlinkage helped create rich data in the majority of cases.

On a number of occasions the interviewees would ask “Am I giving you the right answers?” or “Am I telling you what you want to hear?”, as if they felt that there were right or wrong answers to the questions which led me at times to question whether I was being given the answers that the interviewees felt I wanted to hear. Bourdieu (1977) argues that this would be the case: that interviewees would only ever give the ‘official account’. I rationalised this by questioning what they stood to gain by not giving me their true opinions apart from perhaps presenting themselves to me in a better light. Also, my background which gave me the position of an ‘insider’

to their world and therefore knowing and understanding it would certainly to some extent overcome this (Bourdieu 1977). There were many instances where such frank and contentious details, names and events were discussed that overall I had little reason to doubt that I was being given anything other than the truth.

Following this is the issue of trust, I had to trust that I was getting the truth but the interviewees also had to trust me to represent them truthfully. They also had to trust me when I promised confidentiality and like rapport this trust had to be created at the outset because of the interview situation. I did not have the opportunity of arranging a series of meetings in which trust could be developed over a period of time.

Finch (1993) suggest three reasons why women interviewing women may have special characteristics; firstly she indicates that women are more used to answering questions about their lives and themselves. Indeed, as she says, once a woman has become a mother they are subject to almost constant questioning from doctors, health visitors, teachers and so on, this combined by physical examinations means that women are likely to become a great deal less self-conscious when talking about themselves.

Secondly, her interviews were carried out in the subjects own homes which she felt make the interviewee feel more comfortable with the interviewer taking on the role of 'friendly guest' rather than as an 'official inquisitor'. The interviews for this project were carried out in a variety of locations, with just over half being carried out in the interviewee's home and the rest being either in offices or cafés. The location was entirely the choice of the interviewee, with the result that they are highly likely to choose somewhere where they would feel at ease.

The third point that Finch identifies, relates to the structural position of women. She identified a great deal of loneliness among her sample which comprised mothers of young children and minister's wives. Both groups experienced a sense of isolation because of their position and as she says: "The friendly female interviewer, walking into this situation with time to listen and guarantees of confidentiality, not surprisingly finds it easy to get women to talk" (Finch 1993:169).

The majority of the women in my sample, except one who was on a career break, two who were retired and one who was unemployed, were working and may not experience the same sense of isolation described here but Finch later adds that:

Almost all the women in my two studies seemed to lack opportunities to engage collectively with other women in ways they would find supportive, and therefore they welcomed the opportunity to try to make sense of some of the contradictions in their lives in the presence of a sympathetic listener. There seems no reason to doubt that most women who similarly lack such opportunities will also find such an interview a welcome experience. (Finch 1993:169).

One interviewee mentioned the loneliness she experienced while she was on maternity leave but also spoke of the difficulty she felt she had in relating to other women. She felt she had nothing in common with women who were making motherhood a career:

I was lonely as well, I tried playgroups but it's not my scene at all. I think it's because I've mixed in a male environment for such a long time so I found it quite difficult to mix with other women and to talk about things ... I know they're important [domestic chores] because I have all that to do ...

This interviewee was confused about her change of role caused by her recently having become a mother. She was accustomed to a professional office environment and felt uncomfortable being with those who were in their own familiar established roles. This demonstrates what Finch means when she describes the lack of opportunities for women to be able to understand the inconsistencies within their lives. Finch also considers that it was her identity as a woman which made the women feel at ease with her and able to talk freely rather than her skills as an interviewer or a sociologist. It is not that men could never interview women

satisfactorily but more a case of a “shared structural position and personal identification” (Finch 1993:172).

To assist in the interpretive process, as well as having the transcripts of the interviews, I also made notes. Firstly, in some cases I made notes if I received an immediate response by mail or phone to my introductory letter or after the phone call to arrange the interview if there had been a significant reaction to me or to the research. In a number of cases I had received a phone call or letter on receipt of my introductory letter, expressing their interest in taking part in the research. Immediately after the interview I recorded where we met, how the interview had gone and any other relevant comment, and during transcription I noted interruptions by family or colleagues as well as non-verbal reactions to questions or subjects that were being discussed. These notes help in the development of the interviews from a mass of transcripts into the construction of meanings as well as providing an aide-memoire to myself of the context of the interview. They also assisted with the development of a coding system as ideas that arose from interviews were noted and could be explored later.

## **The Role of the Interviewer**

Marshall believes that much research is essentially a personal process “that people study topics that are relevant to them and do so through inquiry methods which are significant in some way” (Marshall 1992:281). She sees the personal involvement not as a drawback or as a means where unwelcome distortion of the reality could occur but as a positive association with the benefits of providing the impetus and motivation for carrying out the research as well helping to make sense of the inquiry. In fact Morgan defines research as a human process through which researchers *make* knowledge (Morgan 1983), which emphasises the personal involvement of the individual and their influence upon the process of research. The research topic has arisen from my asking questions of the world I inhabit. The process of collecting data by interviewing is also a very personal act so, by definition, there must be a large part of the researcher present within this research. Also through the amount of time spent with the interviewees, not only during the interviews but also arranging the interviews and transcribing the tapes afterwards, I felt I had come to know my subjects well.

When research is being carried out within the researcher’s own world, thought must be given to the fact that the researcher will continue to inhabit that world. It would be unwise to adopt ‘hit and run’ strategies afforded by

detachment (Greed 1990) as this is likely to create unpleasantness and, as the interviews take some time to complete, word could get around about an offensive interviewer. The strength of the social or professional network is not to be underestimated.

Finch (1993) was also anxious about how much of herself to reveal to her interviewees, at the time she was married to a clergyman and was researching clergyman's wives. A similar situation arises here in that I was formerly a quantity surveyor (generally considered to be the bane of an architect's life!) but also married to an architect. Here were two elements of fundamental significance within the researcher's life but which may serve to cloud the relationship with the interviewees. Based on Finch's decision to 'come clean' at the start of each interview, I decided to adopt the same policy. Before the interview started properly or in some cases during the phone call to arrange the interview, there tended to be informal discussions about the project and why I should be so interested in researching architects in particular. It appeared to be the most straightforward policy to explain myself in terms of having been involved in the construction industry personally for eleven years and also that I was still indirectly involved through marriage. Another factor which meant I felt I had to come clean is that my husband has his own practice and our surname is in the practice

name. As it is quite an unusual surname and I was researching in the same geographical region in which my husband practises, I felt the name may be recognised and decided that in order not to jeopardise the research relationship it would be better to identify myself.

For both these reasons this proved to be a positive step. The fact that I had once been a quantity surveyor served to identify the interviewee and I as having something in common. Several of the interviewees had worked with female quantity surveyors and the interviews proceeded as a discussion between two professionals. It also formed a basis for humour with me becoming the butt of a few friendly jibes, for example:

It [architecture] doesn't compare financially with other professions, but on the other hand who'd want to be an accountant or a lawyer! Even being a quantity surveyor would be better than that!

The fact that my husband is an architect did not cause any uneasiness with several of the interviewees being interested in the types of project he was involved with and how he managed the peaks and troughs in workload. One interviewee, whilst insisting that I did not use any details that would make it possible to identify her in my thesis, said "I'm sure that nothing I've got to say here would be confidential to other architects". The disclosure of my

dual involvement appeared to identify me as one of them and, like Finch, “found this a much simpler strategy than attempts to explain how intellectually fascinating I found their situation” (Finch 1993:172).

It seemed that the only way in which being married to an architect caused problems was from my position. In two cases my husband knew the interviewees well. Whilst this did not seem to constrain the discussion from their point of view (indeed in both interviews there was a great deal of very personal information), it undoubtedly had an inhibiting effect on my part. I felt very uneasy probing for details especially when the conversation involved quite intimate details. During the course of the interviews I repeatedly reiterated the confidential nature of the interviews and emphasised that my husband did not know who I was seeing or what was being discussed. Afterwards, one phoned my husband to say that I had been to see her and that “I seemed rather nervous”. The other has from time to time asked him for a progress report on this thesis.

### **A Feminist Approach?**

A question which was frequently asked while carrying out this research was whether I was a feminist. If the question was not posed there tended to be an implicit assumption made on the grounds that I was a woman researching

women. There was also a 'coded warning' from a (female) colleague to "leave women's studies alone" because it was seen as a bad career move within a Business School. I had always believed in equality for women in all areas of life but would have been reluctant to label myself as researching 'women's issues'. I decided it was, therefore, necessary to examine feminism in more detail in order to provide a location for this research when the question was next asked.

I found that there were no specific sets of techniques that can be labelled a feminist methodology but that all forms of analysis were acceptable 'for investigating the condition of women in sexist society' (Stanley 1990). It appeared that the role of feminism was more a way of seeing, a way of knowing and a way of being in the world (Stanley 1990). It existed in a conceptual sense but manifested itself within the research process. Whilst there are no prescribed techniques which comprise a feminist methodology, there are certain criteria which include the experiences of real people as used as the basis for generating knowledge and that there is an aim for change in some way. These are supported by the use of non-abusive research methods within which there is reflexivity between the researcher and research.

Perhaps, then, the most obvious observation to become apparent is the importance of the researcher in the creation of theory and the emphasis on shared experiences. Because of this, ethnographic and other phenomenological forms of investigation are the most relevant forms of undertaking the research process. It is qualitative methods which fulfil most of the above criteria rather than quantitative methods being a necessary part. As these forms are inter-related to reality they are fluid and not prescriptive which, as Greed (1990) asserts, many men find difficult to comprehend. She states:

Doing qualitative research from a feminist perspective within a predominantly male professional area, on a topic of which I am part and which has the word 'women' in it, means I am scrutinised twice as much by the men around me. They see it as their business and responsibility to judge on behalf of society as to whether my research is biased or not. Indeed, I get the distinct impression that they feel threatened by me (Greed 1990:151).

I also got the impression that some men felt threatened by me as on a number of occasions when I arrived at an office to carry out an interview I would be greeted with comments along the lines of "X wants to speak to you, he's got plenty to say about women architects!". In one case, after interviewing a woman in a practice where my husband knew several people, he received a phone call asking him what I had been doing there.

The fluidity and lack of prescription of the methods of data collection contribute to their non-abusive nature. Oakley (1981) describes her concerns for the hierarchical and exploitative nature of interviewing which was prescribed by 'traditional' texts on interviewing (for example: Goode and Hatt 1952; Selltiz *et al* 1965; Moser 1958). In these texts reflexivity was not to be encouraged, neither was questioning of the interviewer by the interviewee which Oakley found frequently in her study of pregnancy and birth experiences of women. From this she developed her own interpretation of a methodology for interviewing women which has come to be regarded as a tenet of feminist methodology.

The degree of change caused by the emancipation and empowerment of women is considered to be an important component of feminist research. Consequently, as Marshall suggests "much gender-associated research has an overt or covert interest in change" (Marshall 1995:4). In feminist analysis this concept of change arises in different ways, to move away from 'masculine' career paths and management styles, a change in the power relations both in the organisation and in the home, as well as changes in the formulation of what constitutes a career.

## **Data Analysis and the Use of NUD.IST**

NUD.IST qualitative research software<sup>5</sup> was being used to assist in the storage and interpretation of the interview transcripts and the notes. Whilst it does not replace the role of the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of the data, it facilitates the generation of theory by providing the ability to code the transcripts, to search for words and phrases quickly and enables the retrieval of coded text segments, related memos and reports (Richards and Richards 1994).

The interview transcripts provided such a rich source of material that my ideas, thoughts, hunches and interpretations were forming so quickly and with such significance that at times I felt I was becoming overwhelmed. NUD.IST helped prevent this from happening as it enabled me to link the sources of my ideas and to include memos of my thoughts and hunches to follow up at a later stage. It proved invaluable as an ordered means of storage and retrieval of data. Passages of text can be assigned to a node (the term used for the location of stored text) dealing with that particular subject area but the context of the data can be examined by returning to the source of the text within the original interview transcript. This meant that I could

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<sup>5</sup> For a full discussion of the use of qualitative data analysis software see Barry 1998, Mason 1996, Weitzman and Miles 1995.

remain close to the subjects of the interviews but, at the same time, examine the topics of discussion in relation to each other.

The first coding to be carried out was to create a branch of the tree for Base Data. This covers biographical and personal data about the interviewees such as their ages (in age groups of 20's, 30's 40's and so on) and the type of employment that each interviewee followed. Interviews are coded in their entirety under base data and not as sections. The following nodes were created as a combination of the subject areas discussed and themes and issues arising from the interviews. Where the question asked in the interview was of a direct nature (for example, 'why did you become an architect?') the node created was titled 'why architecture?' and the children of this node were created according to the varying responses to the question. Nodes for the qualification process and career development were also created in responses to the questions asked in the interviews.

Nodes which arose from themes and issues discussed included those for 'images', 'doing the job' and 'cultural values'. These represent a more conceptual approach as opposed to the more descriptive nodes which arose from the more direct questions asked. Both the descriptive and conceptual nodes had further 'child' nodes attached to them as the index tree

developed. This is where the real value of NUD.IST becomes apparent. The creation of nodes and process of coding text is so simple and quick that themes and hunches can be speedily followed up either by the creation of further nodes or by the use of memos which are attached to individual nodes. Memos contain notes and ideas generated as the coding takes place or as the researcher is attempting to identify patterns or themes within the data.

The ease and flexibility of the coding process allows greater freedom to experiment with the data. For example, I coded for where the interviewees mentioned their husband or partner. As several had been divorced I also coded for ex-husband. Likewise I coded for the occupation of the husband and partner as well as for ex-husbands as their careers appeared to have significant influence over that of the interviewees. There arose a point, which although not directly relevant to this thesis, which reflects how NUD.IST can assist in the development of the unexpected. This point was that out of the five interviewees that had been divorced, four had been married to fellow architects. Of those interviewees who had not been divorced, only one was married to an architect. Similarly, when I asked about the rewards attached to the profession I had not expected non-monetary rewards to feature as significantly as they did. An intersection of

the two nodes revealed that where monetary and non-monetary rewards were mentioned together, it was in respect of the non-monetary rewards providing a degree of compensation for the relatively low salaries.

The string and pattern searches were tremendously useful in identifying themes where a word search would have proved time consuming. These search mechanisms allow a series of words, phrases or variations of both to be located very quickly and the results of the search are provided as a separate node. In my haste to transcribe the interviews I had used three different spellings of part-time (part time, parttime and part-time) so when doing a search I could type in all three spellings and the various occurrences of the term were all recorded.

Whilst above I have identified the ways in which NUD.IST proved to be a useful tool in carrying out the text searches and in the creation of coding categories, it is not to say that none of this would have been possible without NUD.IST. What is provided by NUD.IST is greater speed and sophistication in much the same way as using a tape recorder can assist the process of carrying out interviews. Ideas can be tested and nodes created in attempts to establish whether there is any significance in preliminary themes and hunches. If subsequent examination finds them to be of no relevance

then little time has been lost. Alternatively, because such ideas can be contained within the index tree as 'free nodes' they can be saved and perhaps referred to at a later date. The coding system is emergent and can be created and changed throughout.

The researcher also remains very close to the data as the possibility of the context of passages of text being lost by becoming isolated from their source is removed by the 'jump to source' function which takes the researcher to the actual text within the original interview. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that using software such as NUD.IST does not supplant the input of the researcher, nor does it 'think' on behalf of the researcher. The true value of NUD.IST is in the speed and ease of its use which, in turn, can give the researcher greater freedom and flexibility in developing theory.

### **Developing Theory/Creating Knowledge**

The development of the theory is dependent upon a number of key features. There is the literature regarding women's professional employment (which constitutes the 'what?' element of the inquiry), the data generated from the semi-structured in-depth interviews (which contributes to the 'how?'), the interpretations provided by the epistemological and ontological perspectives of the researcher (the 'why?'), all of which combine to generate theory. What

is immediately apparent is the degree of interpretive variance present. The literature can be taken as given to a large extent but the data collected and its interpretation possess extensive variability compared to another study using the same methods but in a different profession or a different researcher, for example. This reinforces the value of a qualitative study. A survey based approach could involve a much greater number of respondents and could be subjected to a more scientific approach but the depth of the study would be lost as well as much of the 'richness' and individuality of the data.

What is important in this research is the stories of the women themselves, the context in which they are placed and the language used. This research assumes there are multiple realities with no absolute truth. There is subjectivity on the part of the researcher in order to understand and reconstruct the meanings and experiences of the individuals interviewed. The sense that the women make of their situation, experiences and how it is told to and analysed by the researcher aims to indicate how the meaning is produced by the respondents. The following chapters tell the stories of the women architects, as far as possible using their own words to convey their experiences. The role of the researcher here is to provide the medium

through which the stories can be told and to supply the framework within which understanding can take place.

## **Chapter Five: Starting Out Career Choice and the Process of Qualification**

### **Introduction**

The following analysis presents findings by themes identified by the women themselves as important influences on and explanations for their experiences. Hence, it makes sense to start at the beginning by examining the factors that have influenced career choice, which in the majority of cases occurred in childhood, prior to age 11. Following this, there is a discussion of the experiences of studying and qualification. These sections are relevant because they reflect the ‘shaping’ process from which the architect is ‘produced’ as well as providing a contextual background from which meanings for analysis in later chapters can be derived.

Previous research into women’s careers has tended to concentrate on a ‘snapshot’ of where the woman is at when the research is carried out without taking in to account the factors that may have influenced the route she has taken. Given that, in the majority of cases here, the career choice was made in relatively early childhood provides the justification for starting at this point. From this we can then see which influences have played the major roles and the extent that they have contributed to the relative position, in life and career, of the women interviewed.

## **Why Choose Architecture as a Profession?**

The questions “why did you become an architect?” or “what brought you into architecture?” were used at the start of the interviews as means of breaking the ice as well as for introducing the subject and its context. Because they were straightforward questions rather than a subject area to be talked around, they gave the women an opportunity to describe their lives to whatever extent they chose, enabled me to attempt an assessment of how the interview was going to proceed (if the question was answered with a single sentence, the interview was likely to continue that way throughout) and served as a useful means of encouraging the women to start talking about themselves.

The commitment required prior to qualification in terms of time spent studying would suggest that the choice of architecture as a career would be made following a thorough examination of individual self-concept and the environment in which that individual lives (Super 1984) or by the ‘matching’ of the individual and occupation (Hall 1976). It would suggest that a certain amount of research would be carried out and careers advice sought. However, the reality indicated that career choice was resolved along more subjective lines (Evetts 1996) determined to a large extent by social factors (Banks *et al* 1992).

The most common response to being asked why architecture was chosen was that it was a ‘basic instinct’ developing in childhood. Certainly, childhood and family background plays an important part in career choice (Banks *et al* 1992).

As this section will go on to show, there are varying reasons for becoming an architect which develop from childhood. Firstly, there is the 'it was just something I always wanted to do' type of explanation where an interest in architecture develops in early childhood without, it seems, any specific reason for making this choice. Secondly, there is also evidence of both parents' interests and parents' professions playing a significant role in influencing career choice. This is twofold: there are those whose parents were architects or involved in the construction industry in some other way as well as those whose parents took them to visit old buildings, from which an early interest in construction and/or conservation developed.

Thirdly, there is the influence of education, which is mentioned in two separate contexts: several women mentioned that they chose architecture because they were good at the necessary subjects or conversely they felt architecture was the only career they could choose because of the subjects they had chosen - they had chosen the subjects that they were good at rather than having some sort of predetermined action plan. The influence of school upon career choice also exists in the form of resistance, in that the schools and teachers attempted to discourage them from becoming an architect because of its supposed unsuitability for women (Benett and Carter 1981). On the other hand though, some schools saw it as a good career choice, in that it was a 'respectable' profession and reflected well upon the school.

Other influences included meeting other architects and finding out about the profession from them. This tended to happen during the teenage years when there was pressure to choose a career. In other cases the qualification became a job requirement arising from an existing position. More objective criteria for career choice, such as salary or considering various options before settling upon architecture, did not feature strongly, whilst possibilities of promotion and career structure were not mentioned at all. The various reasons given for choosing a career in architecture are now discussed in more detail.

### **‘Basic Instinct’**

The most frequent response to the question “why did you become an architect?” was that it was something they had wanted to do right from being a child. A major influence appears to have occurred almost in a subliminal sense from childhood homes, either moving into a new home and watching it being built or from building work that was done at their parents’ homes:

I think it goes back to being a small child on a building site. My parents moved into a house that was newly built ... they were building houses all around it and apparently I used to watch them building the houses out of the window when I was 18 months old. I thoroughly believe it goes back that far. (*Catherine*)

I think the real interest comes from ... we built the house that my parents still live in now when I was about five or six years old and I spent a lot of time in the builder’s hut in the garden and it grew up around me, I suppose that’s how I started really. (*Hayley*)

I actually grew up in Southern Ireland in the part of the world where the large estates were being developed and my parents had to build their own house because they were English and people weren't allowed to buy old houses in those days and I have vivid memory. from the age of about six.

of these beautiful coloured drawings and I just found it the most exciting thing of all. *(Alex)*.

Older family homes also proved to be an influence:

My parents, especially my father, always were very interested - they were farmers - but the farmhouse was listed so they always had an interest in working on the conservation of that house so that was probably the first introduction to it ... so I decided that was what I wanted to do ... I got my A levels and I was going straight for it ... *(Geraldine)*

This theme of an early interest in older buildings and conservation was also described by Sandra and Sarah who describe visiting old buildings as children:

My father used to do up old cottages, renovate them, he was always interested in country houses and I can remember at quite a young age, stopping at the top of a drive, looking at what looked quite a derelict house or even an occupied house. My father would say 'Well let's just go and have a look' and all of us in the car would say 'Oh, no, no' but we had to go. If we got to a derelict house and there was a small window to get through ... anyway I remember going round a lot ... *(Sandra)*

... as a young kid I was dragged around old buildings so initially it's that more than anything, and was something I guess when I was about 13 or 14 and started thinking about architecture and realised there was a lot more to it than just the old stuff and got more interested in the new stuff *(Sarah)*

Other women could not define the specific reason for wanting to become an architect from an early age, but it was something which they had grown up with from playing with architectural models as a child to always subconsciously having drawn buildings or having built structures:

Both my parents are architects so I was born in to an architects' family and I used to play with the models when I was a kid. *(Zena)*

It's a very basic instinct - it goes back to age about seven when I built a wigwam in the garden with sticks and string and leaves. I only wanted to do architecture because I wanted to know how the buildings around me worked in the same way as it helps to know how a car works if you're going to drive it. It's a natural curiosity and this feeling that it's fun *(Jennifer)*

It's something I felt drawn to, really. I didn't know anybody who was an architect, I always liked trying to draw things, I designed a doll's house when I was a child. It was just something I was drawn towards *(Amanda)*

In other cases there was just an interest in buildings and architecture without there being any specific reason:

When I was a very little girl I wanted to do it but I don't know why. *(Pam)*

I suppose I've always been interested in construction and buildings, historic buildings and conservation and things like that *(Michelle)*

I don't know really, it was something I'd always wanted to do from fairly early on at school, probably from about 12 or 13 it was what I wanted to do and it was the only thing I ever wanted to do, but what exactly made me pick that, I've no idea. *(Lindsey)*

In total, 12 of the 37 interviewed cited no specific reason as to why they became an architect providing strong support for Martin and Wallace's (1984) conclusion that intrinsic reasons these account for 23% of reasons why a particular career is chosen. Overall, their research shows that relatively vague justifications for choosing a career such as those outlined above are much more

frequent than more objective and rational explanations such as good pay and working conditions or as the result of prior training.

### **Influenced by Others**

This response is influenced by having parents who were architects, schoolfriends who wanted to become architects or through speaking to other architects. Five of the interviewees had a father who was an architect whilst for another both her parents were architects. This follows Allen's (1988) observation that choice of career is heavily influenced by the occupation of (primarily) the father, although Fogarty and Allen (1981) counter this by saying it happens in only 15% of cases in the construction industry. Martin and Wallace (1984) also found that the influence of parents affected career choice to a significant extent. An interesting point is that only two of the women who wanted to be an architect from a very early age, had a parent in the profession or construction industry.

Of those who were influenced by other architects not surprisingly, having a parent in the profession is the reason most frequently offered for the choice of career. It is likely that this is because it enabled the women to see at first hand what architecture entailed:

My father was an architect ... so it was something that I knew, what I understood ... I would have liked to have done art but I felt I wasn't flamboyant enough ... or I never had the confidence to do it so that's why  
*(Rachel)*

Here, Rachel speaks of ‘understanding’ what was involved in architecture as a career which was obviously important to her at the time as she also mentions lacking self-confidence to become an artist. Time spent at the parent’s workplace helps remove some of the ‘mystery’ surrounding a profession. Likewise, family conversation about work increases familiarity with technical terminology and professional procedures helping create cultural capital and building familiarity about the job.

Paula and Hayley, who both had fathers who were architects, resisted becoming an architect at first. In Hayley’s case she deliberately avoided architecture, opting to study another subject, but changed her mind at the last minute:

My father’s an architect but I did resist it for a lot of years. In fact I was due to go to university to do chemistry and I said ‘No’ and I had to apply to the Poly’s at the last minute, literally three weeks before I went. So I decided I wanted to do architecture. *(Hayley)*

Paula did not avoid architecture consciously but chose to work elsewhere although it was at a Housing Association which involves a form of contact with the construction industry:

I’m a bit confused as to what my reason was. I didn’t start until I was 30 and I’d been working in housing before that. My father was an architect ... and I worked with a lot of them while I was at the housing association, I can’t really see beyond that. I suppose I saw it as a slightly more interesting combination *(Paula)*

Whilst in Helen's case, although her father was an architect and had his own practice her family discouraged her from following him in to the profession:

I've got an architect for a father so the natural assumption is that I did it for that reason but consciously I decided at 15-ish and [my parents] said "You'll never be an architect" and I went "Yes I will" and they were so determined that I wasn't going to be an architect that they sent me to career analysis advice and they said join the Army ... so from that point it was never really discussed at all. I think secretly he was pleased that somebody in the family was going to be an architect ... but probably sub-consciously I would never have thought of it if it wasn't for the fact I had a father who was an architect. Consciously it was my decision and he never said "Why don't you try it?" and I thought how completely stupid [he] never talked to me about it. *(Helen)*

In spite of being actively discouraged by her family from entering the profession, Helen now has taken over from her father as senior partner in the family practice. It was not her original intention to do this as she had established her own practice in London but her family pressurised her in to returning to the Midlands to take over her father's practice. She is the only interviewee who was involved in a family firm.

Six interviewees spoke to other architects who were not family members when they were choosing their career. This was arranged either by their parents or their school. Generally, when school careers advice was mentioned it was in a negative sense and only Cindy mentions finding it useful as a way of getting experience of working in the profession before going to university.

Family and peer influences account for a notable number of career choices (Martin and Wallace 1984) with six having close family members or friends in the profession and a further six spending time with other architects. Having a parent in the profession enables them to see at first hand what is involved and maybe to help out in school or university holidays. In the way that Evetts (1996) describes career choice as a result of ‘happenstance, procrastination and serendipity and from chance encounters’, the choice of career can result from knowing someone within the profession and seeing at first hand what it entails.

Well, my best friend at school, her mother was an architect and I got on with her really well ... I thought she was great. And what a nice job for a lady to have, I thought. (*Rita*)

It is somewhat incongruous that Rita should think that architecture was ‘a nice job for a lady’ when the inherent structural masculinity of the profession and the construction industry is considered. It suggests a disregard for considering occupations in terms of their ‘gender suitability’ (Gutek and Larwood 1989).

There were also several whose parents knew architects and approved of the profession as a career choice. Parental approval, although not explicitly mentioned either by the interviewees or in the literature regarding career choice, is an important consideration as in the majority of cases students of any subject require support, predominantly financial, from parents. Architecture possesses an element of respectability as a profession. It is one of the ‘traditional’ professions with a professional body to uphold standards and maintain its

integrity and, thus, holds an element of appeal for parents as a potential career for their offspring. Only Helen reported that her parents actively opposed her decision and attempted to persuade her to follow another career but she went in to architecture regardless and now has taken over from her father as principal of the family practice. In other cases the main resistance to architecture as a career came from teachers, who are blamed for having their own motives for influencing career choice (Benett and Carter 1981) and was fairly widespread:

I guess when I was about 13 or 14 and started thinking about architecture and realised there was a lot more to it than just the old stuff and got more interested in the new stuff. It was only from about 14 or 15 that I realised that [architecture] was what I wanted to do so when I was doing O levels, I didn't do chemistry because if you did you couldn't take art and I knew I needed art and even though it was quite an academic school that I went to and that was frowned upon because I was seen as being capable of doing chemistry as an O level but I took that choice then so it's been from quite an early age and I took a long time getting there (*Sarah*)

One point which really clarified it for me was when I went to see the careers master at school and I was doing my A levels. I went to see the careers master and he asked me what I wanted to do, I said I wanted to be an architect and he said 'Are you sure, that's a man's job, why don't you go in to the caring professions? Why don't you be a nurse or something like that?' That was it then, that was what made me decide (*Heather*)

The school were absolutely no help at all about careers, physiotherapy was what they suggested (*Stephanie*)

Both Heather and Stephanie were 'encouraged' to follow more traditional occupations possessing a high degree of gender suitability (Gutek and Larwood 1989; Benett and Carter 1981) without there being any consideration of whether it was appropriate or desirable.

Other architects provided an influence through careers talk in schools or through visits to architect's offices through school.

We actually had very good people who came in for various careers and we had an architect come to see us and I thought 'Oh I quite want to do that' and followed it up by spending some time with them so it was really by chance as much as anything else, actually meeting somebody who did it, not particularly through careers advice at school, we didn't do those tests that suggested what you should be or anything like that, it was just really from meeting somebody. It was a man architect and I actually worked at his practice as it was near school which was why they'd asked him to come in. so that was it really and once I'd spent the time there ... I don't remember much about anybody suggesting it as an actual profession. *(Cindy)*

I didn't ever think about it particularly until I was doing my 'A' Levels, and we did a General Studies course, and as one of my options I picked architecture and I just thought it all sounded really interesting. I'd always liked drawing and that side of it and I seemed to enjoy the subjects that I required to go on to study it, I'd always enjoyed Maths. I just looked into it. Initially I was thinking of doing a technicians course so that I could work and not actually go away, but having spoken to people I spoke to a local authority's office the technicians, and they were really saying that they wished they'd done the architecture themselves, a lot of them. So I decided to go for it. *(Gillian)*

Following on from those who had relatives or friends in the architecture profession, were those whose relatives worked in the construction industry in other areas. Two interviewees had fathers who were quantity surveyors and a third's father was a labourer. Their fathers had been a strong influence on their choice of career:

Well, I think most people have a relative in the construction industry and my dad is a quantity surveyor and that influenced me because I used to work for him when I was at school and at weekends. I was interested in design but I also liked science and maths and you can combine the two with architecture because it's quite maths orientated, so I decided to go for that. *(Heather)*.

My father was a quantity surveyor and he felt we had to have a purpose for higher education for us two daughters. He was a very strong influence  
(*Olivia*)

I wanted to work in the building industry. I didn't know there were such things as architects actually. I come from a working class background, I haven't met any other women actually who come from ... my dad was a navvy on a building site and he kept talking about site, he was constantly changing jobs mainly because he kept jacking 'em in but ... but I thought I'd quite like to work in the building industry so I looked through ... I knew I wanted to go to university as well and I just looked through and came across architecture 'cos I was interested in design and I also wanted to work in the building industry, that's my reason (*Marlene*)

These reasons for choosing architecture reflect three very different attitudes towards architecture, Heather had helped out in her father's office, thereby seeing and experiencing the industry firsthand. In contrast Olivia's father wanted a purpose for her education whilst Marlene had been influenced by her father talking about working on site. Class must be considered as an issue here, as Marlene is the only interviewee who comes from a strong working class background. Social class is considered by Banks *et al* (1992) as one of the strongest determinants of career choice and trajectory but as social class is also determined by parents, it is difficult to separate social factors from more personal ones.

### **Being Good at Subjects**

This follows in a chronological sense to having wanted to be an architect from early childhood. It follows most closely the idea of matching personal traits and

strengths to a career (Super 1984) but the responses given do not appear to indicate that there has been a great deal of thought about the 'matching' process of needs and capabilities (Sonnenfelt and Kotter 1982). However, the concept of carrying out assessments of personal characteristics and aligning them to a career is relatively recent. Architecture is a mix of art and science-based subjects (Willis, George and Willis 1970). There is an informal distinction made within the profession between design architects, who are artists and who provide the sketches and conceptual drawings for a scheme, and detail architects, who are more concerned with structural and technical details and the actual construction process. The mixture of arts and sciences is reflected in the subjects that the interviewees reported they were good at when at school:

I was good in mathematics and physics (*Carla*)

I didn't want to give up arts yet I was interested in sciences as well. So I wanted to do something which used both of them (*Denise*)

I'd always liked drawing and that side of it and I seemed to enjoy the subjects that I required to go on to study it [architecture], I'd always enjoyed maths ... (*Gillian*)

I was interested in design but I also liked science and maths and you can combine the two with architecture because it's quite maths orientated (*Heather*)

The only things that I was good at school were art and maths and there's not a lot you can do with art and maths (*Rachel*)

I think it was because I was doing maths and physics at A level but I always enjoyed art and somebody suggested it might be a good choice (*Stephanie*)

What I was good at was useful for architecture. I was good at art and I was also a good mathematician as well and I was quite science biased but I was also good at art (*Rita*)

It appears that the choice of architecture was more of a response to the subjects being taken at school than as a conscious choice of subjects to suit an early career choice. It is in the previous section, of architecture being an early childhood career choice where there was a deliberate strategy to ensure that the correct academic background was obtained.

By definition architecture is a creative career in the sense of the creation and construction of buildings. It involves transferring clients needs and ideas into a built environment which then fulfils its use as an enclosed space for the purpose for which it was built. There are two areas of creativity and architects tend to specialise in one only. Design architects are involved at a conceptual level at the feasibility stages of projects, they are responsible for interpreting the client's needs into a design. Detail architects are more concerned with transforming the design into a workable scheme, they provide floor plans, elevations and the technical construction details.

By the nature of the task, design architects are the more artistic and reflect the profession's origins in art whereas the detail architects have emerged from the craft and construction side. The creativity provided an innate appeal to several of the interviewees and they felt that architecture provided a way in which they could combine art and science:

I suppose because I'd done science A levels ... and I wanted to do something creative so it was an obvious choice. (Cindy)

I suppose I wanted to do something that was arts based and creative but led to a bit more interesting career path, a bit more involved than doing a fine arts course or graphics or something like that. (Loren)

I think because it offered an amalgam of different disciplines ... I didn't want to give up arts yet I was interested in sciences as well. So I wanted to do something which used both of them ... I think when I chose to do the A levels, languages were my weak spot so I did art, maths and physics so consequently what do you do with those? (Denise)

### **The 'Accidental Career' or 'Late Starters'**

Then, of course, there is the accidental or 'quite by chance' career (Greed 1991), where women ended up as architects without it being a reasoned, objective choice as a result of experiencing the profession through family, friends or other contacts. Martin and Wallace (1984) contend that this accounts for the greater part of all career choice. In this research this option has dual origins, firstly the interviewees had chosen to do another subject at university and changed their minds before or after they started their course or secondly, an architecture qualification became a necessity for the job they were doing. These women tended to go into architecture later and invariably had worked in the construction industry before it was decided, either by themselves or their employers, that they should gain an architecture qualification.

### **Changing course:**

It's a mistake actually [becoming an architect]. It wasn't what I set out to do in the first instance ... when I was at school I didn't have a clue about what I wanted to do ... the careers guidance was pretty poor and in the

end I thought I'll do teaching and I applied for teacher training colleges and then during the summer holiday I thought 'Crikey what have I done?', you know and the only other thing I'd applied for was while I'd been interviewed for teacher training they asked me if there were any other courses I wished to be considered for and I thought architecture sounds interesting so while I'd been there getting interviewed for teacher training I'd gone over to have a look at the architecture department and unbeknown to me I was being interviewed and I got the portfolio out and had a chat with the lady that was there and a couple of weeks later I got offered the place. So, anyway I was on the summer holidays thinking 'Oh God what have I done, I don't want to be a teacher' and 'Oh God what am I doing' and the only other thing I'd applied for was... you know ... and, consequently I started this architecture course and never looked back. I enjoyed it 100% (*Isabel*)

I started at university doing Maths and realised after a term that I hated it. I'd never even thought about architecture because at school it wasn't even considered. The careers advice was very poor, you just went into standard areas and just went into subjects at university. I discovered there was an Architecture Department there. I was thinking of switching to engineering, in fact but I thought I had to check out the Architecture Department and got more and more interested and they accepted me to change. That's how I got into architecture. (*Melissa*)

Both mention that the careers advice given at their respective schools was poor and that both had applied for courses that they were unsuited for, and changed to architecture as a result.

**Job requirement:** three interviewees had started out working in the construction industry in some respect and later trained as an architect, in two cases because it was suggested by their employers:

I didn't start until I was 30 and I'd been working in housing for a housing association before that ... I worked with a lot of [architects] while I was at the housing association ... and I went to art school. I suppose I saw it like you as a slightly more interesting combination ... I started working for

[architecture co-operative] when I was 30 and they offered me the job on the basis that I was to start doing architecture part-time so I suppose maybe I just didn't decide maybe they decided for me. I applied for the job with a development kind of angle on it (*Paula*)

I went to work for an architect straight from school. I started off as a tracer, but it interested me so much. He said "Why don't you go to college and take a course?" so I did, part time. (*Phyllis*)

In the third case it was her own decision based on an early interest in construction and conservation, having had a technician's training in the first instance:

I suppose I've always been interested in construction and buildings, historic buildings and conservation and things like that ... I went to a school of architecture in my 30's ... but one of my early jobs was working in the architect's department at [major contractor] in their Head Office and I [was] a draughtswoman so I had the background of drawing and I was an architectural technician so I didn't have any qualifications. It was that time when women just didn't, I went to Secondary Modern school, I didn't go to Grammar School so I didn't have the educational background anyway, I enjoyed it I liked the work (*Michelle*)

After leaving the contractor's and trying several other jobs, she decided to train as an architect on the basis of her earlier experience and interest in conservation.

By the time she started the architecture degree she had two children. She and Paula were the only two architects to have studied as mature students.

### **Earning a Living**

Professional careers with their long periods of training and study prior to qualification are associated with higher (financial) rewards as a means of

deferred compensation. It is somewhat surprising then to note that salary did not appear to be a significant factor in career choice. Only two respondents mentioned salary in the context of career choice but it was, in both cases, referred to only in terms of ‘making a living’.

I always saw it as a way of making a reasonable living for myself as well.  
*(Amanda)*

I was told you’ve got to earn your own living in no uncertain terms and this was one of the ways it seemed to be possible *(Ella)*

No one mentioned that they knew what architects earned before they entered the profession or that the (relatively) low salaries or the long period of study prior to qualification had deterred them, making them give extra consideration before choosing it as a career.

## **The Qualification Process**

### **Studying**

The process of becoming a qualified architect follows a different path to that of the other professions and there are various options within this route. Generally, the process involves studying for an undergraduate degree at a university (RIBA Part One), a one year period of work experience, followed by a one year post-graduate diploma course (RIBA Part Two) and a further one year period of work experience before the Professional Practice examination (RIBA Part Three) can be taken. In all the minimum period for qualification is seven years.

Of the 39 Schools of Architecture which exist in the UK (in 1998), 22 are represented among the women interviewed. The majority completed both their undergraduate and postgraduate education within the same institution but there were six who changed to a different school to complete their postgraduate study. Of these, the main reason for changing was to follow a partner who had moved on to pursue a career elsewhere. However, of those who completed their studies at another School there was only one who transferred between a university and a polytechnic with those who started their studies in a university school of architecture completing the postgraduate course also in a university school of architecture. Likewise if the undergraduate course was started in a polytechnic, the postgraduate course was also completed in a polytechnic.

Three of the 37 interviewees are from countries other than the UK (two from Southern Europe and one from the Middle East), two had studied in their home countries but the third studied overseas as she had applied too late to be accepted on a course in her own country and did not want to wait until the following year to start her studies. Also, at the time, there was a military dictatorship in her country:

... things were not very good for students, control, suppression and I'm really glad I went [to Italy] (*Carla*)

The majority chose a School of Architecture because it was relatively close to their family home. Banks *et al* (1992) cite locality as being influential in choice

of occupation so it would not be unrealistic to assume that it would also apply to the choice of university. Where a reason was given for choosing a particular course it was because of its reputation, as the various Schools have different ideologies and design preferences (Building Design 1998):

[I studied at] Bristol ... the course at the time, it had quite a good name, so I didn't think about going anywhere else. (*Gillian*)

Manchester had a reputation for producing good, solid architects. When you left you weren't going to go off and be sort of silly student, you were reasonable reliable.... (*Geraldine*)

Apart from where there was a specific reason for studying at a particular university, the choice of course appears to be governed by where the family home was, with the chosen School of Architecture not necessarily being the nearest but one that was within reasonable travelling distance. This would account to some extent for the fact that the majority studied at either Nottingham University or at what was Leicester Polytechnic, now De Montfort University. Of the 37 interviewed, five had studied at Nottingham University with a further one carrying out her postgraduate diploma there after studying at Sheffield University. Another five studied at Leicester Polytechnic with another one completing her diploma there after studying at the Polytechnic of Central London.

Two of the interviewees had been mature students, one studied full-time whilst the other studied part-time. Both had at some stage in their prior career worked

in the construction industry, one with a Housing Association and the other as a draughtswoman with a large contracting organisation before deciding to become an architect:

I had no qualifications I went along to see the School [of Architecture] and took a few drawings and chatted a lot and they took me on ... I remember this I sat in his office, I mean I just didn't know the system. I went to see him, it was an open day or something and I went to talk to him and I thought he would say at the end of the chat whether or not I was going to be accepted on this course and I wasn't going to move from his office until he'd told me ... *(Michelle)*

I started working for [architecture co-operative] when I was 30 and they offered me the job on the basis that I was to start doing architecture part-time so I suppose maybe I just didn't decide maybe they decided for me. I applied for a job and they were a bunch of architects, I applied for the job with a development kind of angle on it .... so I suppose I was really using my experience from the housing association and they said 'You've got to train' ... I think it took me 8 years to qualify because of being part-time *(Paula)*

As both had worked in a construction environment, going on to qualify as an architect could perhaps be considered as a natural progression of their work. However, for Michelle it represented a more major career change and as she was a mature student on a full-time course, was quite unusual. Mature students are rare in architecture, perhaps because of the length of time it takes to qualify and because of the demands the course makes upon students. Several interviewees mentioned having to work through the night in order to complete project work:

You won't see many mature students coming in to architecture or mothers returning to work - it's just so time consuming and so long. It's the practicalities, if you're going to do architecture, go in at the beginning.

The idea of sitting up all night finishing a project, I couldn't do it now ...  
(*Geraldine*)

I remember staying up several nights on the trot ... you get through it and it's all part of the fun when you look back on it but towards the end when your dissertation is due you have to work very long hours (*Sandra*)

The part-time route to qualification takes only a year or so longer than the full-time route as practical experience is being gained throughout the study period instead of being in blocks of time in between the undergraduate and postgraduate study. The different schools of architecture have varying arrangements for organising the practical experience with some students taking the postgraduate qualification immediately after completing the undergraduate study. For example, during the 1970's recession:

They [Bristol University] ran us through, we didn't take a year off in the middle because of the 1970's recession. The year above us hadn't been able to find work so they ran us straight through. I did the BA and then it was two years for the Diploma (*Denise*)

At other schools there were also different arrangements:

We had a very good training at Birmingham, it was very practical ... although it was part of an art college ... we were sent one day a week to the technical college and we did bricklaying, plastering, all that sort of thing so we knew what actually went on site and I think that is very good. In the third year we spent a term on a building site - girls, men the lot - we were used as labourers basically, obviously we didn't have the skills - but we learned everything that went on on site so we knew what was happening all the time and that really was very, very good for when you started going on site as an architect because I knew what they were doing (*Amy*)

At the Heriot-Watt school of Architecture there was a different system in operation, although this has since changed. Instead of separate periods of undergraduate and postgraduate study with a year or so of practical experience in between, students did a five year BArch degree:

It was a BArch that you got at the end of 5 years, it has since changed because there were people that dropped out after 3 years and had done what was like a full degree course and had no qualifications whatsoever, well Part 1. So I don't hold a postgrad qualification as such (*Stephanie*)

### **Dropping Out**

Above, Stephanie mentions how the students who dropped out after three years did not qualify for a degree. They would have the Part 1 qualification but no degree as such. Many of the participants spoke of the high dropout rate (Lewis 1998) as if to signify and emphasise their own commitment to having completed the course. The reasons commonly cited for dropping out tended to be related to the length of the course and not knowing what was expected at the outset. This second reason is likely to be applicable to a great deal of degree courses in that students tend to be unaware what is required of them prior to starting a course or find that the course does not match their expectations once they have started (Building Design 1998):

Architecture tends to be a bit of an unknown quantity and a lot of students seem to come on to it without a real knowledge about what it is going to be about and either find it's too technical or find that they don't like the design, or they find it too stressful because design is actually highly stressful and it exposes students ... I think there is still a high dropout rate among female students, there is small numbers coming in and

there are more dropping out and I think that's partly because of maybe the feeling before they came that it wasn't really going to be for them. *(Alex)*

I think a lot of them don't realise what it's all about, they probably think 'It's not for me' *(Ellen)*

Alex, who is a course leader at a school of architecture, suggests that the dropout rate for female students is higher than for men which could be partly explained by the low numbers of women starting the course (Lewis 1998). She attributes this, in part, to the way in which the female students are treated by the (predominantly) male lecturers. She describes how the male lecturers appear to be afraid of giving criticism to the female students in case they upset them, the result of this is that the female students produce a weaker portfolio of work and they then do less well when their work is assessed by the external assessors<sup>6</sup>.

The women who fail tend to do so because they haven't finished something because their work is not good, there tends to be a breakdown of communication between the female students and staff more often than between male students and staff, in the sense that many male staff are terrified of students breaking down [and] they will not lead a conversation in the direction which will result in [that happening] ... I don't think one should hold back from giving people the same level of feedback. *(Alex)*

This indicates that there is a gendered subtext in the way that work is assessed or the way that guidance is provided to female students. They are not being offered the full level of support that their male counterparts receive. They are

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<sup>6</sup> The mode of assessment includes the 'crit' process where a panel of both academics and practitioners question the students about their work. The student is expected to defend his/her work against rigorous criticism which is supposed to emulate the work context.

then failing not because of their own shortcomings but because the masculine structures in place are serving to perpetuate their exclusion. As in the rest of the profession, the number of female staff in the schools of architecture is small, and “the tutors are similar to the groups that dominate the architectural profession in general: the majority are white, middle-class men. Talk over the drawing boards includes a hidden curriculum on how to behave as an architect ...” (Matrix 1984:13). This provides an alien world for many female students for whom being in such a minority creates its own difficulties, as prior to this women are unlikely to have found themselves in such a male-dominated environment.

Again as if to affirm their own commitment to the profession, others mention that the dropout rate for men is high as well:

There were three that finished, that got graduate diplomas. Six out of 50 were girls in year one and at graduate level about three out of 15 were girls so it wasn't bad but it wasn't good (*Hayley*)

I think because the course is very long ... the first 3 years when you take your degree, the highest dropout is at that point, that's when a lot of the girls did drop out but so did a lot of lads (*Heather*)

[There was] a pretty high drop out rate, but it was high among men and women ... (*Alison*)

When I started it was actually 50:50 [men and women] but by the time I finished, there were 15 girls so quite a few people dropped out, more females dropped out than males. Some of them went elsewhere, they didn't drop out completely and then there was only me that did the Part Three, so it went from 30 down to one. (*Sarah*)

Sarah mentions here about not knowing whether people truly dropped out. There is also the fact to consider that several may have found employment and decided not to continue with the qualification (Lewis 1998) or may have done their Part 3 examination elsewhere, a point also considered by Ellen:

You don't know of course when they went on their year out that they go back to finish their thing at a different college, you know, you didn't really find out if anybody truly dropped out or whether they decided to go somewhere else (*Ellen*)

Sarah then speaks of the versatility of the first degree and how it can lead to a career other than as an architect:

It's a long course [but] if you're stuck at the first degree then you can go on and do something else because it's actually brilliant training for an awful lot of things but people think because it's a vocational degree then you can't do anything else (*Sarah*)

Tancred (1998), in her work on women architects who leave the profession, found that many continued in a new career where their degree and professional experience were relevant and useful but that they no longer worked within the profession or held membership of the professional body. This is likely to be the case for many of those who dropout. They may have started their year out within a practice but have remained there once the year was completed (Lewis 1998).

I also know many of them who stopped after three years, who went off into practice [and] continued working as assistants and never got qualified (*Alex*)

The prospect of returning to study and surviving on what remains of the student grant after a period of time earning will almost certainly be daunting. The average salary for a year out student is £9,250, which is low in comparison with the starting salary for an architect qualified to Part 2 who could expect on average £17,250 (Roger 1998). A number of the interviewees mentioned that, during and since the last recession, they know of students who have been prepared to work for no salary at all, in order to try to get some work experience as many practices were making staff redundant and could not consider making a financial commitment of this type. Of course, there were the practices which took advantage of this fact and offered students the opportunity to work for no money.

The length of the course is used to partially explain the high dropout rate (Lewis 1998). Some courses were a five-year BArch degree, such as used to be the case at Heriot-Watt, or dropout may occur following the period of practical experience:

There was 60 on the intake year and there were three women so it wasn't a lot and by the end of the third year there was 40 and two women ... and then when we came back from the year out there was about 28 of us and just me so there's ... there was less than half of us finished what started but it's such a long course (*Ellen*)

As well as the length of course and not knowing what is involved with architecture or the degree course, interviewees also spoke about the difficulty of

the workload. Earlier in this section, Geraldine and Sandra mentioned about working through the night in order to get work finished and Geraldine cited this as a reason why it is unlikely that many mature students study architecture. Here Heather considers why women drop out:

But there is a high proportion of women who drop out. I wouldn't like to say why particularly, I wouldn't like to say it was anything to do with having children or getting married or anything like that, it's not really like that. It's more the pressure of keeping up *(Heather)*

It was pretty hard going the first three years ... *(Isabel)*

Heather suggests that women are not deterred by the thought of the long period of study prior to qualification or by the associated problems in the future of balancing a home and children with working but that they find the actual studying difficult. Architecture requires a variety of different academic competencies although it is seen primarily as a design-based artistic occupation. For example, knowledge of physics is essential in order to be able to design structures which will support the weight of the building as well as the different forces exerted upon it from occupancy or the weather. The difficulty of the course was again mentioned by Rachel:

We had a very high failure rate in the first year and a lot of them went then, it [architecture] is not something you can do just for the sake of getting a degree, you've got to want to do it, it's hard work, you just have to slog, you just have to do it *(Rachel)*

Alex suggests that it is perhaps easier for women than men to admit that they may have made a mistake in their choice of degree. As discussed earlier, there is a gendered subtext within architecture schools, of male tutors not giving women a fair chance because of their own personal failings being projected on to the female student. The result is that the female student decides to give up and is supported in this decision rather than being encouraged to continue:

I think the women also are more inclined if they don't finally decide to give up, they find it much easier to say 'Well maybe I was wrong about architecture, maybe it's not for me', you know, whatever that's about I think that they don't feel they've lost face by doing that, whereas men do  
*(Alex)*

### **Time Taken to Qualify**

A theme following on from studying is the length of time taken to qualify by each of the women interviewed. Several had not qualified in the minimum time and it is necessary to investigate this further to fully examine the reasons for and the impact this may have had on their careers. Of the 37 interviewed, there were eleven who took longer than the seven year minimum to qualify. On the face of it, it would be reasonable to expect that students would want to qualify as soon as possible in order to maximise their earning potential after studying for so long. However, as it will be shown, there are a number of reasons why this may not be the case. Of the eleven who took longer to qualify, two studied part-time for the entire qualification and a further one studied part-time for the Part Three examination.

The most frequently given reason for taking longer to qualify was not being able to get the experience necessary to continue. The student must keep a diary of projects worked on and in what capacity. Certain amounts of time must be spent in specific areas of architectural practice and on a variety of projects in order to demonstrate the required experience. The biggest factor affecting this is leaving the school of architecture during a recession or economic downturn which affected four of the women. They found it difficult to get a placement in an architectural practice and took a variety of other jobs until they were able to find employment within a practice. Some of the occupations were indirectly related to architecture (Building Inspector, Local Authority Planning Department) but in one case, clerical work was undertaken.

In contrast to those who found it difficult to find initial employment, there were two who took extra time gaining practice experience because they were working during the boom time of the late 1980's and felt they wanted to continue:

I took an extra year out, they [the practice] were very busy and were working on some quite good things and they wanted me to stay and they were trying to say 'You'd get really good experience, we think you should stay on'. It was a good move because if we'd gone straight back [I] would have had a bit of a job finding a position (*Gillian*)

I did my first degree, took two years out 'cos I was sick of it, went back and then didn't do the RIBA Part Three until I'd been working for two years again so I basically took nine years to get Part Three instead of seven. I mean at the time it was the '80's and the boom and everything went out. I was working on the Docklands Light Railway extension ... and I didn't justify the entry requirements for Part Three because I'd just done railway stations for 18 months and not been on site in that time as well

because it was from feasibility to tender so I then left there and went to work for [another practice] so that I could get out on site (*Helen*)

Whilst Helen mentions here about being tired of studying and looking forward to spending some time working Gillian, on the other hand, looked forward to going back to university:

After a year working, you were really looking forward to going back and seeing all your friends again and just having a good time ... well, it's hard work but not being 9-5 and just doing your own designs again, because during your year out you don't tend to get a big influence [on projects] at all, it's all a lot of drudgery (*Gillian*)

Other reasons for taking longer than the minimum to qualify included one woman who had intended to finish her studies after the first degree as she had found employment and was happy but she:

... found that those who had done the Part Three were getting twice the salary but didn't seem to be able to do very much more than I did and being a student was quite nice so I carried on (*Jennifer*)

Another one of the interviewees is a semi-professional sportswoman, having represented Great Britain in the 1992 Olympics and has been trying to balance the demands of this with her work:

I've been not only trying to get my qualifications in my profession, but I'm trying to excel at sport, so I took a year out before I went to University to concentrate on sport. Then I did my three years and took a year out and then I went back for two years I started to work part time initially. It's taken me a bit longer to qualify than most people, but I did it eventually after eleven years, which is quite a haul (*Alison*)

She is a salaried architect in a small practice and the partners allow her to work part-time when necessary to fit in around the demands of her sport. She missed the 1996 Olympics due to injury but, at the time of being interviewed, was hoping to qualify for the 2000 Olympics which would mean an extended period of time away from work.

The time spent working in practices prior to qualification was almost universally referred to as constructive and enjoyable. Year out students are given varying degrees of responsibility for projects in a wide variety of environments including contractors, the public sector as well as private practice:

It [Bartlett Institute] also had a very odd year out in that we actually went through five years and we did sort of more or less eight months out right through the summer vacation so we did really only take five years but we had to work for a builder which was a terrific form of experience (*Alex*)

... at the Coal Board, saw lots of pit head baths and big miners, my year out was the best year of my life! (*Isabel*)

I had a good year out, it was a busy time, it was the '80's [and] I went down to London, there was lots going on ... you had to have responsibility because there just weren't enough architects to go round, I had to run jobs on site (*Cindy*)

I worked for a firm of architects that specialised in hospital design which was very interesting work ... it was quite good experience because they did things properly, which I didn't realise at the time until I went to work for other practices which did more commercial work, where they do it very quickly and just want it done, with the hospital work there was time to think about the details (*Amanda*)

I spent [it] in a practice near Oxford which was a good year out, it focused what I was doing a bit more. The degree was, I think coming to

terms with what it was all about I think it was quite complex, so much to take in initially. So it was quite good to get out there (*Loren*)

My first year out, I worked for local government because people are always knocking local government, and I felt that it's not really fair to knock something unless you've had some sort of experience of it, added to which, at that particular time they paid rather more than the private sector and I knew that if I went, for instance, in my second year out, I would then have to make a move which would effectively make a drop in salary ... I knew I never wanted to work for local government again because the red tape just drove me absolutely bananas, even at that age (*Lisa*)

As mentioned earlier, not everyone found it easy to find a placement for the year out:

My year out, I had terrible difficulty getting a job at all, my husband at that time was also an architect, he said if you want a job you've just got to put your portfolio in the car and go and knock on all the doors which again takes a bit of courage (*Sandra*)

## **Conclusions: Beginning an Architectural Career**

This chapter has considered the issues surrounding career choice and the process of becoming qualified as an architect. The discussion of career choice shows that many of the women interviewed had an early desire to become an architect, something that was intangible and that they could not attribute a cause or an explanation to it. This early choice to become an architect meant that they were reasonably well focused on their goal and could choose the relevant subjects to study at school to help them to achieve their aim.

Secondly, there were those who attributed their choice of career directly to the influence of someone, usually involved with the construction industry in some way. It is difficult to say here whether it was the direct appeal of the architecture profession or the construction industry or whether the influence of the person and the level of influence they possessed over the potential architect that resulted in the choice of career.

Some had no early ambition to enter the architecture profession but found that it 'matched' their strengths and so decided as a result of this matching process. This represents a more considered choice of career, in line with the models of career choice discussed in chapter two. In direct contrast with this, is the 'accidental career' where architecture was the result of circumstances rather than as part of any formal career choice. It may have arisen as a job requirement or as the result of it sounding interesting. This option along with the inherent wish to become an architect are not well covered in the literature concerning choice. There is a tendency in previous research on career choice to develop models in which the subjects 'fit' the models (Sonnenfelt and Kotter 1982; Hall 1976). The idiosyncrasy and unpredictability of human nature are largely ignored in the search to find patterns to explain cause and effect.

What is apparent is that career choice is made on the basis of what was relevant at a given point in time. There was no thought or consideration of the future or career development once in the profession. The choice was made on the basis of

something which ‘appealed’ at the time rather than as an objective and rational process. Nobody mentions career structure, possibilities for advancement, being able to work part-time, or having their own practice as contributory factors towards a reason for becoming an architect. Little thought appears to have been given to the actual career structure or the working arrangements within the profession. This is in direct contrast to the pharmacists researched by Crompton and Sanderson (1990b), who had identified flexible employment structures and non-career niches prior to entering the profession. It also differs from Hakim’s (1991, 1995, 1996, 1998) explanation of women ‘choosing’ to commit to either a career or family.

The structural and cultural barriers to women’s employment are also largely ignored. None of the interviewees spoke of being aware that they were entering a masculine environment or whether they had considered other careers in a similar setting such as quantity surveying. Where resistance was encountered it was from schools on the basis that architecture was not a suitable occupation for a woman. However, this appeared to add to the appeal and acted as a positive influence on the career choice. It raises many questions as to the quality and relevance of the careers guidance offered by schools as many said they were not aware of what they were going in to and attributed this as a cause of the high drop out rate.

The period of time spent studying is highlighted as being long and arduous, the high dropout rate being mentioned a considerable number of times. This demonstrates that a significant degree of commitment to the profession even before actual employment commences. The fact that many students drop out is explained by many of the interviewees as being the result of the length of time it takes to qualify as well as a lack of awareness about what is involved. However, the difficulties experienced by women because of the inherent masculinity of the studying process are also significant (Matrix 1984).

## **Chapter Six: Employment, Unemployment and Self-Employment**

### **Introduction**

This chapter comprises three sections: employment, unemployment and self-employment. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the processes involved in gaining and retaining employment (self-employment is also included within the definition of employment at this point) and given that redundancy and unemployment have become a much more frequent occurrence within professional employment, these are also considered in some depth. As Coyle (1984) states, any study of unemployment and redundancy is not complete without first understanding the working lives of those who were made redundant. Given this reasoning, it follows that a study of working lives needs also to be considered in the context of periods of unemployment.

### **Employment**

#### **Introduction**

This section will chart the career paths of the women architects from leaving the schools of architecture until their present positions. It will attempt to define any patterns, which have arisen as well as provide a deeper understanding of the processes of becoming and remaining employed. Previous studies have tended to concentrate on providing a 'snapshot' of women's careers. The difference here is that the intention is to look deeper than these studies in order to provide

a more extensive narrative of why and how women remain in a male-dominated career structure and environment.

### **Initial Destination**

Following completion of the RIBA Part Two examination, the most likely destination of students is in to an architectural practice in order to gain the necessary breadth of experience for the Part Three and final examination leading to qualification. This option was followed by 31 of the 37 women; of the remainder, one became employed within the architects department of a commercial organisation; three went in to local authority architects departments and two went in to national government.

Not suprisingly, given the significance of the impact of economic conditions on employment within architecture, a number did not find their first job easy to obtain. The reason given in each case was that it was due to the various recessions, which have severely affected the profession (Sinden 1998; Financial Times 1992). Of the 37, seven reported difficulties in gaining their first post. Four who left their schools of architecture during the recessions of the mid-1970's and early 1980's chose to enter alternative employment until they could get an architectural post. Generally, this was outside the construction industry, although it was related in some way. Only Lindsey was unable to find construction-related employment and worked for the Inland Revenue for six months. Stephanie worked as a planner for a National Park authority. Rita had a

variety of posts including civil engineering technician and clothes designer whilst Denise worked as a building inspector for over two years until she was able to get architectural employment. She was more fortunate than the others in that her experience counted as relevant towards her Professional Practice exam although it was only worth six months. She left university in the mid-70's when:

It wasn't particularly easy to get jobs in those days, the majority of the lads on the course went to the Middle East ... most of us took about six months to get a job ... but I didn't actually get a job in an architect's office for some time, I started off being a building inspector (*Denise*)

Carla, who qualified overseas, found herself working for no money in order to gain experience:

I went to work at an office and I was not happy there, ... I was not going to get paid ... and we were working very hard there, very long hours 'til ten o'clock at night and the money was nothing ... So I went to another office for a few months, again without payment ... They were not willing to pay women because there was unemployment at the time so there were people available (*Carla*)

Her experience reflects not only the difficulties of becoming established in a career but also the added dimension of living in a society with a strong masculine culture where women's contributions were not valued as highly as those of men.

The remaining two, who left their schools of architecture during the 1990's, managed to acquire a collection of part-time architectural posts in order to

survive until they got a full-time position. On the one hand this reflects changes generally in the types of employment which had taken place during the 1980's, where the number of part-time jobs created, rose dramatically (Hakim 1996). However, it also reflects the more widespread introduction and acceptance of non-standard employment that has become a feature since the 1980's (Felstead and Jewson 1999).

[I] finished in 1991 and of course there were no jobs in 1991 for anybody anywhere so I stayed in Nottingham thinking well at least I know I can survive in Nottingham and if I was going to be earning low then it was better to stay here. I got a job in the end after a year of doing part-time. I worked for lots of different people part-time until eventually I'd hounded enough people and they said 'Actually we *do* want somebody full-time' (Cindy)

I came straight here ... first of all on a part-time basis because the practice was very new at the time and it was completely different from the one it is now. There were only four of us, very small jobs compared to now, domestic stuff basically. So there wasn't an awful lot to keep me going full-time [but] I was fairly keen to stick with it because I knew it was going places ... so I did part-time here and part-time secretarial work for a firm of engineers we used to share the office with, to make up the hours (Sarah)

There is no way of establishing within this research whether Cindy and Sarah were able to find part-time work more easily because of their gender and the fact that it is generally women who are more willing to work part-time than their male counterparts (Hakim 1991, 1995). Nevertheless, it is highly likely that Sarah's gender made her more readily employable as a part-time secretary in spite of both male and female architecture graduates gaining similar keyboard skills from their degree courses.

Michelle had perhaps the most favourable start to her architectural career in that when she finished studying she bought her own practice from an architect who wished to retire. He remained as a consultant to the practice for a time until she became established. She went into architecture as a mature student after having worked in a number of other occupations and having owned two businesses prior to studying, giving her the advantage of having accumulated the capital necessary to buy the practice.

For eight of the 37, where they looked for their first job was influenced by their husband or boyfriend at the time. Denise, Catherine, Gillian and Lisa met their future husbands whilst at university and their careers, particularly in the early stages, were very much a joint decision with Denise, Catherine and Lisa following their husbands to wherever they got jobs (Marshall and Cooper 1976), effectively putting the male career first (Gutek and Larwood 1989). Gillian and her husband (also an architect), perhaps reflecting a change in attitudes as they both qualified in the 1990's, decided:

The first one to get a job, any job, would get it and take that job and then the other would concentrate on trying to get bits of architectural work just so that we did have some money at the time. I just got a job and he managed to get in with a [local] practice (*Gillian*)

She was offered a job first and he followed her managing to also get employment in the area. For Denise, Catherine and Lisa the emphasis was on

creating a structured career path for their husbands. Their own career was going to be secondary, in spite of them having qualified in a high status and demanding profession, reflecting the different levels of accommodation of male and female careers (Gutek and Larwood 1989) and the role of the wife in supporting the husband's career (Kanter 1977; Marshall and Cooper 1976). Catherine has actually moved four times to different regions to follow her husband's career, each time disrupting and finally abandoning her own career to do so. For Denise and Lisa, it was just the initial move that they made to follow their husbands.

For others, it was a later move which enabled them to move to where their husbands and boyfriends were living, having initially started out elsewhere. Jennifer was working in a practice in London after her Part Two exam but transferred to do her diploma at Oxford Polytechnic because her boyfriend was working in Oxford at that time. Heather, too, was working in London after qualifying "because that's where a lot of students went but I just about burned myself out!" and returned to the East Midlands because that was where her boyfriend was working. Loren, who also worked in London, again cited quality of life as influencing her move back to the East Midlands to be with her boyfriend:

[It was] quality of life and all those things. I wanted to buy somewhere and move in with my boyfriend ... I think it was a very good career move initially to work in London because it was seen as, when I was looking for jobs up here it was 'Oh you've worked in London'. It was quite positive and I actually got about four job offers when I came back up here (*Loren*)

Apart from Gillian, there is no other incidence of the female career taking priority. The men involved all had careers at least the equivalent of their wife's or girlfriend's and it was their career which took priority in deciding where the family was to be located (Gutek and Larwood 1989). The issue of women in professions or at managerial level tending to marry men who have equal or higher educational and occupational achievements has been recorded (Kanter 1977; Howard and Bray 1988) as has the effect of the male career taking priority in deciding the location of the family (Kanter 1977).

This offers support for the idea that women's career development is considered different to that of men, that there are different beliefs about the appropriateness of jobs for men and women with different levels of accommodation concerning each other's careers with the man's career usually taking precedence over that of the woman thus resulting in greater constraints on women in the form of perpetuating these gender stereotypes (Gutek and Larwood 1989). Furthermore, it provides evidence to support Tanton (1994) who contends that men and women have different starting points regarding their careers.

Indeed, for such highly qualified and highly motivated women, there is a surprisingly high level of accommodation of their husband/partner's career at the expense of their own. Rothwell explains this as the systems "designed and administered by and for men - taking men's careers and attitudes as the norm and never questioning that this is in the interests of the organisation" (Rothwell 1982:19). These systems and

their refusal to consider female ideologies serve to coerce women to conform to rigid gender stereotyping within their relationships. It conflicts with the stronger sense of identity with their work that professionals are said to enjoy and the centrality of their profession to their lives (Kaufman 1982).

## **Career Development**

Given that architecture involves such a long period of study prior to qualification, it would be expected that once someone had made a decision to enter the profession that they would have a reasonably clear idea of how they expected their career to develop from thereon. Career paths within professions are to some extent dictated by tradition and convention (Parry and Parry 1976), but allow promotion through accumulated experience, skill or further academic qualifications (Evetts 1994a). The historical context surrounding the development of the professions has largely determined the extent of, as well as eligibility for, progression (Spencer and Podmore 1987; Kanter 1977; Collinson and Knights 1986; Crompton and Sanderson 1990b; Evetts 1994b). Progression is viewed in pyramidal terms as the practitioner moves upwards within the practice with a partnership or directorship being the ultimate position to aim for. However, the timescale for achieving this career development disadvantages women (Larwood and Gutek 1989) because it coincides with women's childbearing years.

Very few of the women interviewed had much of a career plan, at least not in anything other than vague terms, which again emphasises the secondary role of

women in professional employment (Greed 1991). Helen and Carla had the strongest career plan in that they both knew from the outset that they wanted their own practices. Carla was unable to fulfil this ambition for over fifteen years, as she had to be the family breadwinner:

... I want[ed] to have my own practice but I got married and I had a child and my husband at the time was going to his military service. So one of the two of us had to have a permanent income in order for us to survive so the chance appeared for me to go and work for the state which I hated but I did it. I had it in mind to change as soon as he finished his military service and started working ... I was going to have my own practice but this never happened at that time because we separated after five or six years ... again being on my own I needed a permanent income I couldn't experiment waiting for clients to come (*Carla*)

Helen achieved her ambition sooner but spent much time in the interim working in a variety of different practices to get a broad range of experience:

I always knew I wanted to work for myself so I flitted around practices that did different types of things, different types of buildings and different types of practices, for professional reasons was my excuse but I used to get bored quite quickly, I used to get itchy feet after about 18 months and had got used to the office and got round most of the projects that I hadn't worked on before and then I was sort of 'OK where now?' but at the same time I always knew that I wanted to work for myself so the idea was not to stick with one practice as a career move because I didn't want to work through somebody else's practice so I flitted around doing different types of projects in different firms really (*Helen*)

Cindy also displayed evidence of having had a vague sort of career plan from before she left university as she now tutors part-time on an undergraduate degree module:

I'd expressed an interest when I finished university that it would be quite nice to come back if they ever needed any tutors or anything and the Prof actually rang up and said 'We do need someone for the first year, would you be interested?' so it's just part-time and it works really well. It's good to do something different apart from go to work (*Cindy*)

She combines this with her work at the Local Authority and uses the flexi-time system in operation there to enable her to tutor one day a week during university term time. It represents a form of diversification from what would otherwise be a 'standard' career pattern. After leaving university she found it difficult to find work and survived by taking short-term, part-time employment so she is aware of the value of maintaining contacts.

What was more apparent among the interviewees was the fluidity of the career plan. It seemed to be more a case of 'wait and see' and to consider options as and when they arose rather than there being a definitive plan of action. Career planning is a relatively new concept and again, one which is based on the male career (Larwood and Gutek 1989). Super (1984) argues that the masculine career pattern is suitable for women if marriage and childbearing are taken in to account but this is yet another incidence of the accommodation by women of the masculine career. This is a uni-linear notion, one which is not considered from the reverse viewpoint of men's accommodation of the female career or the impact of marriage and family upon the male career. Marriage and family are looked upon favourably for a man (Kanter 1977) but are an unappealing distraction for the female career. However, it is the lack of planning in the

female career that Hakim (1996, 1998) uses as evidence for her categorisation of women as 'drifters' or 'adaptives' and for doubting their commitment to work.

Indeed for some of the interviewees, relationships and marriage were deemed more important, which probably goes some way to explain why some women accommodated their husband's or partner's career moves to different geographic regions. Alex demonstrates the lack of planning quite clearly:

... round about the time I left college it was very important to me to get married because my parents were dead and actually I just wanted my family unit and that was the most important motivation at that moment. It sounds terrible, it is terrible to me now but I didn't really think about what kind of work do I want to do [or] where am I going to go to get it sorted out (*Alex*)

She married an American and went to work in the United States for a time and, after returning to the UK, worked in London and had her first child:

... at which point I decided to leave London, again without any sort of career plan ... I mean the career plan at that stage was my husband's (*Alex*)

Michelle and Jennifer also had no firm idea of how they wanted their careers to develop:

I mean a career has actually got to have some sort of game plan, a strategy. I haven't got that, I ought to have it (*Michelle*)

...[I] stopped [architecture] completely, had two sons and ... then for ten years I was chief joinery designer for a small business making furniture and

builder's joinery ... that sort of started entirely by accident in that we'd never had any great serious intention about setting up our own business, it seemed an interesting thing to do ... I very much stumbled [back] in [to architecture] by default ... *(Jennifer)*

Jennifer returned to architecture during a boom period during the 1980's when a local practice needed staff and a friend of the senior partner who knew her, remembered that she had been an architect and suggested that she go to work there. After finishing her first degree she did not intend to go to qualify and went to work in a practice. However, she found that those who had gone on to qualify were earning nearly twice as much as she was for the same work so she completed her qualification. Her career has been a series of unplanned moves. She does feel that she's never been particularly career-minded and that she's experienced several lucky breaks:

Life was made very easy for me ... I didn't have to fight my way in at all ... I just sort of felt that everyone was holding open doors and all I had to do was walk through them ... it was an absolute doddle *(Jennifer)*

It is interesting to note that both Alex and Jennifer wanted to be architects from a very early age but still had no idea of how they wanted to develop a career within the profession. Michelle, on the other hand, did not become an architect until during her 30's after having tried a number of other careers, including draughting and organic farming beforehand.

These changes of direction, whether to a lesser or greater extent, were a frequent occurrence among the women interviewed. Some, like Michelle, had

fairly major changes in their lives and careers whilst for others it was more of a change of direction whilst remaining within the profession. This could be anything from moving to a different practice in order to gain a wider range of experience, to a different sector or in a different direction. The lack of clearcut ambition and well defined career paths reflects those described by Crompton and Sanderson (1990b) for the women pharmacists that they researched. There are similarities in that both require a degree level qualification but that practitioners are also recognised as professionals even when they follow non-standard forms of employment or do not progress up the 'standard' career ladder. However, the area of contrast is in the fact that Crompton and Sanderson report that the pharmacists had entered their profession because of the flexible working arrangements offered and non-career niches, whereas the interviewees did not display any prior awareness of the working arrangements of the architecture profession.

It also serves to reject the rigidity of Hakim's (1995, 1996, 1998) contention that women show a preference for following either a work-based or home-based career. Women do not want to feel that they have to choose one option over the other. She does not take in to account the fact that preferences may (and do) change according to different stages in the life cycle nor does she explain how preferences are reached in the first instance.

## Diversity in the Architectural Career<sup>7</sup>

### Areas of Employment

At the time of being interviewed, the women were employed in a variety of sectors which are listed below in Table 6.1:

Sector of Employment	No (n = 37)
Employee in practice	13
Employed in Public Sector	3
Sole Practitioner	9
Principal of Practice	6
Labour Only Self-employed	2
Retired	2
Career Break	1
Unemployed	1

**Table 6.1: Sectors of Employment**

Those who are employed in a practice represent the 'standard' model of full-time employment (see Chapter two) within an organisation and, leaving aside those who are retired, unemployed or taking a career break, there are 20 who are following some form of non-standard employment (nine sole practitioners; six principals; two labour only self-employed; three public sector employees).

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<sup>7</sup> This section has been informed primarily by 'Flexibility in Professional Employment: Gendered Choice and Constraint' paper presented at the Work, Employment and Society Conference, Cambridge, September 1998 and 'We're not just doing this to fill in time ...': Women Architects, Career Commitment and Flexibility paper presented at British Academy of Management Conference, London Business School, September 1997.

The working arrangements of the twenty cases who have adopted varying degrees of heterogeneity in their employment display wide variations in flexibility with those following the more standard type of career path working the greatest number of hours whilst having the least amount of flexibility. At the other end of the scale those following more non-standard career paths work hours ranging from virtually full-time to a few hours, with significant variations in the amount of flexibility

Referring back to the employment models (discussed in Chapter two), these women would be categorised in the first sector identified by Hakim (1995, 1996). They have invested in training and qualifications and have the potential to achieve high grade and high paid jobs. Because of this, they would be grouped in what equates to the male model of employment.

However, from the interviews, a variety of scenarios have become apparent, which can not be explained solely in terms of productive or reproductive work. They range from each of the polar views as described by Hakim (1995, 1996), but there was a strong inclination towards a point located on an area of middle ground not offered as an option within her discussion of heterogeneity but dismissed as 'drifters' or 'adaptives' (Hakim 1996, 1998). Nor does these women fit within Crompton and Le Feuvre's (1996) suggestion that women are 'committed' or 'uncommitted' to their career in temporal terms only. It seems

that once these women have made their investment in their career, they are reluctant not to maximise their potential.

Professional employment has barriers to entry and exit because of the length and type of training required (Parry and Parry 1976). It is also difficult to utilise career-specific skills in a different context, with the result that once the investment has been made in a professional career many women are keen to continue to practice albeit not necessarily in a 'standard' context.

We're not just doing this [architecture] to fill in time ... we need something more ... our profession has to realise we do things a bit differently but that doesn't mean we do them wrong or that we're not going to be contributing. (Geraldine).

Geraldine felt that maybe women who had adopted different patterns of work were at an advantage because of the way in which the nature of work and employment is changing. Design teams for construction projects, comprising architects, surveyors, engineers, contractors, etc. are formed for the duration of a project and then are disbanded on completion. Traditional career paths for professionals have existed within the organisations in which they are employed but the job security traditionally enjoyed by professional employees has been eroded as a result of the severe recessions that have hit the construction industry during the 1980's and 1990's (Sinden 1998). The stop-start nature of construction may have contributed to the increased adoption of more fluid working arrangements (Nisbet 1997).

Because women's career paths do not tend to follow an unbroken progression up the ladder, they may display greater flexibility due to the necessity to be able to 'juggle' several commitments. Perhaps also, women are not constrained by the convention of continued, permanent employment and are more prepared to adopt something that is considered 'non-standard'.

Our profession is changing and in many ways we're perhaps ahead of it, in that we're changing to adapt to it before it has happened ... the more versatile we are the better chance we stand. We have to exploit the multi-faceted role, and perhaps women going off in slightly different ways are showing the way. Women have had to realise that we have lots of different skills and we have to use different skills at different stages in our career, as our careers change...  
*(Geraldine)*.

A significant proportion of the interviewees was self-employed. In some cases it was seen as the means to combine home responsibilities with a career. In one case, the interviewee formed her own practice because following her divorce she needed to earn a living and look after her children. At the time she was involved in two sets of litigation: one was fighting for the custody of her children, the other was to decide the finances of the divorce. Prior to this she had been working part-time for a local authority, she said:

... in the custody hearings it was 'You can't work because you've got to look after the kids' and because I was working part-time, on the financial side it was 'You are working therefore you don't need money' so I was left in a situation where I couldn't fight them both *(Rachel)*

Other reasons for self-employment where children were not an issue included Isabel, who worked for a practice and decided to go it alone when she received several offers of projects:

My private work was building by the minute. I was teaching as well, I was teaching construction at the prison and also at [a college of Further Education] and it was just getting too much and I thought well, if it doesn't work ... if it's not brilliant I can always use my teaching but as it turned out I had to drop the teaching! It got too much! (*Isabel*)

Also the fact that architecture requires such a long time commitment prior to qualification means that the women are reluctant to give up entirely if they have children (Allen 1988). One explanation was:

I want to succeed as an architect, I enjoy architecture and I feel I ought to be able to work on it the hours that I want to. It [self-employment] has been very good for me architecturally and from the point of view of being able to organise my time, to be able to take time off to go to speech days or sports days (*Sandra*).

She describes herself as working full-time but this is a combination of working during the day while her daughter is at school and then again in the evenings after her daughter has gone to bed. She takes most of the school holidays off and arranges her work to allow this. Others had offices within their homes which allowed them to supervise their children whilst working.

It could be that the tradition of operating as a sole practitioner or within a small practice serves to aid the development of 'non-standard' methods of practising (Felstead and Jewson 1999) but as a form of working, it was something that only

two of the women had considered in advance. Nor was self-employment seen as an easy option, those who chose it, in this instance, did so in order to be able to combine childcare with their career rather than as a form of career advancement (Goffee and Scase 1985). However, as a form of work organisation it can possess its own problems through its connotations with the dual labour market and occupational segregation (Wigfall 1980).

Further evidence of flexibility was apparent from those who are not self-employed, even during the 1950's when one of the older interviewees began in practice. She married soon after qualifying and went on to produce six children but continued to work on a part-time basis.

I was lucky to find one [part-time job] which really suited me. I could do as many hours as I liked or as many hours as they wanted. I don't think it was so easy in those days to get part time jobs. I found definitely if you were doing say three days a week you couldn't do working drawings because you couldn't get it finished quick enough so that's why I only did planning drawings and things like that which only required two or three drawings and you get them done in reasonable time. So it limited what you could do. I didn't mind that because I wasn't ambitious (*Evelyn*)

The notion of part-time work within a profession at this time was, in a theoretical sense, non-existent but was operated here in more of an informal context. Two others also worked part-time at some stage in their careers, one during the 1970's and the other during the 1980's displaying an 'M' shaped career pattern by moving back to full-time employment once their children were older (Dex 1987). This illustrates the use of part-time employment as a means

of combining work and family either by it providing the best solution (Tilly 1996) or because family responsibilities prevent full-time working (Peitchinis 1989).

### **The Attraction of Non-Standard Working Arrangements**

There is an implicit assumption that self-employment, in the form of sole practitioner, principal in practice or on a labour-only basis, exists primarily as a solution to the problems of juggling family and career (Goffee and Scase 1985; Hakim 1995, 1996; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996). This was found in four of the twenty cases. The rationale and outcomes differ in each case, reflecting these forms of working as a choice in some cases but a constraint in others. For example:

I really wanted to be at home with the children [but] I did need the stimulus of a job ... so it just seemed right that if people asked me to do a job, I could do it around the children so it just gradually built up and about two years ago I had no work until Easter and I started looking for a full-time job and suddenly six jobs came in and by the end of the Easter holiday, I'd got ten jobs and it's just gone on since then. *(Stephanie)*

This sole practitioner wants to be at home with her children, and with having three children she feels the costs of childcare would be prohibitive if she were to seek employment. In her opinion it represents the most feasible option open to her. However, it contrasts with Geraldine who feels that it is the only way she can keep in touch with the profession and work part-time while her child is young.

However, meeting family responsibilities was not the only reason for becoming a sole practitioner as four of the nine sole practitioners were childless and the other two formed their practices after their children were grown up. Their reasons for becoming self-employed are varied and include needing to be able to work part-time and flexibly because of ill health, two became self-employed after working in the public sector and encountering resistance from male managers.

It is the sole practitioners who had formed their own practices in order to combine childcare with work who have the greatest amount of flexibility in their working lives. In all but one of the cases here they were the secondary earner and their partners were relatively well-paid which perhaps means that there is not the same degree of financial necessity attached to their work. However, the majority of sole practitioners are childless or no longer have dependent children which means then, that this form of working arrangement is not entirely due to needing to combine work and childcare (Vokins 1993; Hymounts 1986; Hisrich and Brush 1981). Other factors must come into play in order to attempt to explain the rationale for this type of working arrangement. For this sole practitioner it is important for her to feel in control of her career:

[My career has] been better since I became self-employed ... I've enjoyed being self-employed, basically nobody can bug you ... I think for women to be self-employed you are in control of your own career and I find it much more pleasant. (*Rita*)

## Diversity and Working Time

Flexibility in terms of working time, not surprisingly, is more evident among those who are self-employed, sole practitioner or principals than those who are employed by practices (Carter and Cannon 1988a). Although flexible hours are not mentioned explicitly as a justification for non-standard working, they are considered to be an additional benefit:

I want to succeed as an architect, I enjoy architecture and I feel I ought to be able to work on it the hours that I want to. It [self-employment] has been very good for me architecturally and from the point of view of being able to organise my time, to be able to take time off to go to speech days or sports days (*Sandra*)

Another principal echoes this:

It's not as if someone's expecting me to be here at 9 o'clock in the morning, if I choose to do something at home I can come in half past nine. You work when the work is there and do it to suit yourself. It's very flexible being in the position that we're in. If I worked for a company it would be more restrictive ... I'm probably a bit more in charge of my own destiny being in this position (*Ellen*)

Even when long hours were mentioned, they were not seen as a bind:

[I work] 75 hours [a week] but that's mainly because it's partly my business now, I'm a director of the company so it's not just that I'm working for somebody else I'm working for my future and my company's future (*Sarah*)

Those who are employed in the public sector also stressed the benefits of flexibility in working hours. They have previously worked in a private practice and mention the benefits of flexibility in working time:

Some days you're not very productive and you'd rather be at home doing other things. That's where the flexi-time is rather nice. if I know I'm not having a busy day then I can go [in] a bit later and come home a bit earlier but my mentality is still a bit like that's skiving although that's not the way it is ... basically as long as you do the number of hours in a month and so long as you're there at core times you can make up the hours anytime before and after that ... and that to me is such a relief compared to private practice ... if you're in the buildings after half past six then you're thrown out, you're not allowed to stay later which is fantastic *(Cindy)*

If you're in a local authority, it's a much better and easier environment to cope with children, I'm now on flexi-time, I can get there any time I like up to 10 o'clock in the morning, so I can take the children to school and still get to work. I work late in the evenings sometimes, but I can then take flexi days off. *(Kim)*

Time flexibility is made possible in local authority work because the majority of the work tends to be local and carried out within the local authority boundaries. These employees do not usually have projects or meetings which are held at considerable distances, as can be the case in private practice, with the result that it is easier to have predetermined starting and finishing times and to be able to operate flexible working hours. The same applies in many cases with those who are sole practitioners or principals in practice and who have more discretion over whether to accept projects or not.

In sharp contrast many of those employed in practices reported that even small degrees of time flexibility is frowned upon, even by colleagues:

I'm always ten minutes late in the morning but always half an hour late in leaving in the evenings! I make damn sure the practice gets more than their money's worth if I'm going to be a bit lax with my own time keeping ... there are those who walk in on the dot of half past eight and out on the dot of five. I tend not to work it like that ... I had a bit of criticism at one stage because I wasn't here on the dot of half past eight and it took all the people who walked out at five a long time to realise just because they'd walked out I hadn't necessarily been right behind them! (*Jennifer*)

Long hours and projects which are not based locally are also a feature of architecture. A practice may have clients who operate nationally and projects can be located a considerable distance from where the project architect is based. Several interviewees mentioned having to travel considerable distances in order to attend a 9am meeting, for example:

When I came back from maternity leave the first time I had a job up in Wigan which I found quite difficult because I was doing a lot of travelling and I was getting very tired so I didn't particularly enjoy it, having to go there once or twice a week. It was getting a bit much (*Heather*)

Long hours have become an accepted part of the culture of being employed as a salaried architect as well as in many other professions in order to demonstrate greater commitment (Noon and Blyton 1997; Kanter 1977; Fink 1992). The periods of economic and employment uncertainty, which have prevailed in the architecture profession and construction industry, have created a climate where it is necessary to demonstrate high commitment. The most easily measurable and visible way to do this is through 'presenteeism' (Apter 1993). As a result, it becomes easier for men to display this 'high' level of commitment as they are able to remain in the workplace longer than women (Noon and Blyton 1997; Hewitt 1993) which further

leads to women's commitment being doubted (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a, 1990b; Hakim 1996). Many employers now expect unpaid overtime to be carried out as a matter of course:

I've been having appalling morning sickness and get very tired ... I've just had to say it's 5.30 and I can't do anything else because I'm shattered and I've got a 40 mile drive home so I've been perhaps a bit more 'Sorry that's it ...' and had to work in that. If I've had a major deadline then I've had to stay and I still have to get up at six in the morning to go on site or whatever. When the time comes I'll still be there to do my job wholeheartedly but at the same time you can't jeopardise your pregnancy (*Loren*)

Before I went on holiday I was nearly losing my mind, I'd worked 18 days on the trot, we worked two whole weekends and three whole weeks before I collapsed with a bad neck and since then I've realised it's just not worth it ... before I'd be there 'til nine at night ... we'd not even get a proper lunchbreak ... I worked it out 'cos I had a dispute with the partner and last year I worked out I did 300 hours overtime, unpaid... I made myself ill as well but that was very much because they wouldn't appreciate we were overworked, they just thought we'll just get on with it and they didn't seem to appreciate [it], there was just no reprieve (*Marlene*)

You're always expected to do overtime, always ... unpaid but expected, it's general for everybody, it's not whether you're male or female ... you just do it. (*Lindsey*)

Yes, I take stuff home ... after my holiday I made this conscious decision that I would try not to work at the weekends, but that means that I get Friday evening off and all day Saturday. Sunday evening, I always do paperwork ready for the next week, and Monday to Thursday, I do something ... you feel better the next day if you've done it (*Lisa*)

I arrive at eight thirty and I leave at quarter to six which is a very good discipline but I work on the train on the way in and the way back ... and then sometimes I work in the morning before I start out and I work probably on average half a day on a weekend, something like that ... once a week we try to have a proper lunchbreak, you know. go to the pub ... we might go the shops or something (*Paula*)

A principal of a practice reflected on the time she was employed by a private practice where time flexibility was not permitted:

... when I worked for [a private practice] I never got to work before nine thirty based on the principle that I was hopeless in the morning but commuting in, if I wanted to be there for nine I would have to leave at eight but to get there for nine thirty I would leave at nine and I thought that was better management of my time but I would be there 'til six thirty-seven at night and this message got sent to me about it and I sent a message back saying 'Then fine I'll leave at five thirty and then the work won't get done' and it was this annoying thing of a) they hadn't come to speak to me directly and b) that I wasn't given that respect that I was putting in my all for them and that was probably very naive because most people did turn up at nine and left at five thirty and there was no reason for them to believe that I wasn't doing the same but turning up half an hour later in the morning (*Helen*)

She then goes on to talk about how as a principal in a practice she is able to manage her own time in a way that suits her style of working:

The positive side is that working for yourself, I'm quite happy to work 14 hours a day and through the weekend, which I can do because I don't have a family, and then I'll just bog off for four days. I've never been very good at nine to five, I'm terrible at getting up in the morning and I much prefer managing my own time (*Helen*)

Other reasons for choosing to work as a sole practitioner or as a principal within a practice relate to enjoying being able to have a greater degree of control over their working life as well as having the freedom to choose their own project which reflect the findings of Hisrich and Brush (1981) and Vokins (1993). Creigh *et al* (1986) found that self-employed women were likely to work shorter hours than men which links with Hisrich and Brush (1981) who state that women were less likely to be in business for financial reasons:

I always feel it's a silly way to organise your life to have to work so hard and not do anything else (*Rachel*)

... I have in the past worked very long hours but I've recently cut them down to about six or seven hours a day. The reason being everything was getting too much and there's more to life than work and I'm in a position where I don't have to work so hard and I can try and do what is enjoyable rather than slog my heart out. Sometimes I have to work at the weekend or do extra to get the job out but that's not the norm now. It used to be, I used to work very long hours ... (*Rita*)

## **Unemployment, Redundancy and Career Breaks**

### **The Economic Vulnerability of the Construction Industry**

The construction industry is one of the most vulnerable sectors in relation to changes in the economy. The industry is dependent upon the economic health and strength of other sectors for its own wellbeing (Sinden 1998). If a sector is experiencing difficulties then the expansion and maintenance plans are immediately downgraded or put on hold with knock-on effects for the construction industry. Conversely, in periods of economic boom the industrial sector will be planning expansion of production requiring new or larger premises. At the same time, there is a higher degree of confidence in the housebuilding sector as people are more optimistic about their future earnings and want to invest this in their home. As such the architecture profession experiences periods of boom and bust unlike most (or even any) other professions.

## **Redundancy and Unemployment**

The impact of the boom and bust nature of the profession have already been demonstrated to some extent earlier in this chapter where the experiences of the interviewees in getting their first jobs was discussed. Many had experienced difficulties in getting employment after leaving university which led to some taking up other employment in the meantime or to setting up their own practice or working for no salary in order to gain valuable experience.

As a result a large proportion of those interviewed have experienced unemployment or redundancy, as well as those who had difficulty in getting their first jobs at the outset. The high incidence of unemployment within the profession during the recession in the early 1990's was highlighted by a report in the Financial Times, which reported that 30% of architects were unemployed or underemployed in 1992 (Financial Times 1992). In all, nine of the 37 have been made redundant at some stage in their career, reflecting Wood's (1981) argument that women are more susceptible to redundancy because of their passivity and Coyle's (1984) observation that perhaps employers deliberately make women redundant because of this. Three of the nine have actually been made redundant twice, at the time of the interviews the youngest was in her thirties and had been made redundant twice in the recession of the early 1990's. The other two were in their fifties and they both lost their jobs first in the recession of the early 1980's and then again in the early 1990's.

A further two worked for local authorities and were offered early retirement as an alternative to redundancy as they were both in their fifties and it coincided with the reduction of in-house architects within local authorities. This then makes a total of eleven who have lost their employment as a direct result of economic conditions but does not include the number who had difficulty in finding their first position. Overall, it appears that architects whose employment remains unaffected by economic conditions are very much in a minority:

I'm lucky because we've kept going and a lot of my colleagues from college were made redundant, once, twice or three times while I've kept the same job (*Hayley*)

The meaning and impact of the redundancies varied among the interviewees. At the time of the interviews, however, only one was still unemployed after a period of two years. She had occupied a senior position within a local authority but had been offered voluntary redundancy when the authority was required to reduce the number of in-house architects. At the time of the redundancy she was recovering from major surgery:

I suppose I used that as an excuse probably because I wasn't coping with the work. [The authority] was under a lot of pressure to cut costs and made a very good offer so I took it. (*Amy*)

She is very keen to get back to some form of work and is considering working from home on small-scale projects as much for something to do as providing an income.

As in many of the cases her husband earned considerably more than she did but she had a very strong desire to be involved with work but:

It's not easy when you're in your 50's to get a job, as I've found - generally I've been told I'm too experienced ... probably too old really ... too expensive. I've even applied for technician's jobs, obviously I'm not trying to make a name for myself at this stage but I would quite like to work. Architects really don't want to know if you're an architect applying for a technician's job, I think they find it difficult ... they don't know how to deal with it (*Amy*)

This situation illustrates a significant problem for professionals who have climbed the career ladder and have reached senior positions in organisations, in that other organisations are reluctant to consider them for employment. Age was found by Berthoud (1979) to be the strongest variable in determining whether new employment could be found. This can be on the grounds of being perceived as too experienced or too expensive as well as inflexible with lower levels of training and qualifications.

The other former local authority architect, who had taken voluntary redundancy, was working from home on small-scale projects. Unlike Amy, she had not applied for any jobs, instead she had decided to opt for semi-retirement but worked on projects for some local small building firms as well as establishing her own garden design business. Again, her husband was a high earner and there was not a financial imperative, as such, to provide a significant income but a more inherent need to feel that she was contributing in some way as a result of her professional commitment (Kaufman 1982). A further factor

was that her husband had spent a great deal of time working overseas but had returned to the UK and was contemplating semi-retirement. They wanted to ensure that their arrangements left them adequate time to pursue their leisure activities.

The others, who were made redundant, had all been employed within practices prior to their redundancy and it was the recession of the early 1990's that affected them all (two of the three who were made redundant twice having been affected both in the 1980's and 1990's). Practices are more vulnerable because they are dependent upon their clients for providing them with work and if conditions are difficult for the client then practices also suffer:

I'd already been looking for another job anyway 'cos it was obvious what was happening ... you know when your boss is walking round the office sort of gloomy faced, he showed all the signs of it ... I think there were a couple of months between leaving my job and getting another one ... it wasn't too bad. I know I applied for a lot of jobs in the meantime and it made me realise how many architects were out there looking for a job  
*(Isabel)*

... and then the situation ... you know with architecture practices, today there's lots of work and then it's gone ... so I've been made redundant last year and I stayed two months trying to find a job ... I was really lucky to find another job within two months and I started with another practice  
*(Irina)*

... we decided we'd go out and live out in the country so we both got jobs in Salisbury and moved there. I was involved with housing projects, small jobs, barn conversions. I quite enjoyed it. Unfortunately it coincided with the start of the recession and the firm's main client was a housing developer which went bust and that really did it for us as a practice and practically everybody was made redundant. I was quite lucky that I was taken back on again shortly afterwards and I was paid an hourly rate, which was about £17,000 a year. I've never earned as much since then and

that was about five or six years ago now but then again I was made redundant (*Amanda*)

Paradoxically, following Amanda's first redundancy was best paid period of her career but this did not last as she was made redundant again. In the case of Geraldine, she was pregnant with her first child and working for a practice but became redundant by default whilst on maternity leave, again due to the recession of the early 1990's:

I left [work] a month or so before my daughter was born. They were suffering in the recession, I don't know whether I would have had a job to go back to anyway ... things were getting very hard, they did tell me that before the seventh month, he said 'We'll see how it goes but things are not looking too good' and to play it by ear (*Geraldine*)

Catherine was not made redundant but resigned of her own accord using relocation of her husband's work as the reason. She left after a series of disagreements with her employer which is said to be the most common reason for unemployment (Berthoud 1979). She felt she would have been made redundant anyway because work was in short supply and within six months of her leaving the firm had made substantial redundancies:

I didn't like the way they managed their staff. There was a bit of favouritism, a bit of nepotism ... the chap in charge, I wasn't impressed with him at all, and in the end I had to resign on the basis that my husband's job moved to Leeds and I was going to move with him because I didn't want to depart with [bad feeling] ... but as it happened, that firm, which was about 30 people when I left, it went to about six and now has ceased to exist. That was 1989-90 when the big recession hit (*Catherine*)

She then remained unemployed until becoming pregnant, motherhood becoming the alternative to unemployment. However, she describes herself as “ending up pregnant after about six months” after she and her husband had decided that she would look for a job if she didn’t become pregnant. It is difficult to assess whether becoming unemployed acted as the catalyst for starting her family or whether motherhood became the justification for not looking for a job, as she goes on to say:

Every architect I knew was either out of work, working half time on half pay, or had gone abroad. And I thought ‘How am I, with small children, going to get a nice part-time job that fits in with my lifestyle when there are all these people unemployed out there desperate for work?’ So, I didn't want to go back to work. We took the decision when I had the children that I felt, and my husband agreed fortunately, that it was more important to spend their first five years with them full time. So it was just fortunate, really, that the recession happened at that time (*Catherine*)

There was not, at that time and at the time of the interview, a financial imperative for her to work as her husband earns a high salary and has had no threat of redundancy throughout or following the recession. At first, it appears that she may have felt guilt at the thought that she may have got a job when there were more unfortunate people who needed employment far more than she did. Since having her children she decided not to return to work, and has not worked for eight years. She has become a strong advocate of the need for mothers to remain at home to provide full time care for their children. Whether this would have been the case had she not been unemployed prior to her pregnancy and a concurrent recession is impossible to judge but it is conceivable

that being unemployed has contributed to a loss of self-confidence which has prevented her from seeking employment since.

Research (for example Kaufman 1979) has been carried out which has shown the psychological problems, such as loss of confidence, caused by unemployment and redundancy. Whilst these are no less damaging for women than they are for men, for many women there is the possibility of a retreat into the home and the recreation of the family role. This may be the case especially if their husband or partner earns a salary large enough to maintain their standard of living, as employment for women is much more likely to be for economic gain and not as moral obligation as it is for men (Martin and Wallace 1984). However, this is disputed by Coyle (1984) who argues that redundancy is merely an interruption to women's working lives.

### **Employment Patterns Following Redundancy**

Motherhood represented the solution to difficult employment conditions for Catherine and existed as a temporary solution for Geraldine, who felt that her enforced career break had some benefits:

As it turned out, probably in the long run, it's maybe worked out for the best, I have spent some time with the little one, which I wanted to. I thought there's no point in having kids if you want to shove them off somewhere (*Geraldine*)

At the same time, she became acutely aware of the changes imposed upon her from two opposing directions. On the one hand, she had lost her sense of identity with a profession that she enjoyed being involved with and on the other hand she had gained a different identity through having become a mother:

... it was quite a shock to the system, I have to be honest. Suddenly I was [a child's] mother, I wasn't a person in my own right anymore ... suddenly you're doing something which is incredibly responsible when you think about it but it's not treated like that and you suddenly feel you're left at a bit of a loose end. You don't really begrudge the time with your child but at the same time you don't like the way it changes people's perspective of you (*Geraldine*)

During this time she has been practising as a sole practitioner as a means of keeping in touch with the profession (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b). For her, it is not the ideal solution but represents a means of being able to work to contribute something towards family expenses and as a means of sustaining her skills:

... but it just suddenly makes you think the traditional career course isn't really for if you've got kids, you've got to juggle it a little bit and it's finally sunk in that my career will progress under my own steam. I don't particularly want to work as a self-employed architect. I like the work environment because I enjoy the company of other people, I enjoyed that part of the office whereas on my own sitting at my drawing board in my study. I keep looking for excuses to be doing something else [but] if I'm going to work from home it's going to be something that my skills can be used for (*Geraldine*)

Self-employment was the most common outcome for those who were made redundant. Whilst Irina and Isabel both found employment within practices within two months of becoming unemployed, those who were unemployed for

longer periods, self-employment became a more viable solution. The numbers of self-employed women have risen sharply in the UK since the beginning of the 1980's (Carter and Cannon 1988b; Richardson and Hartshorn 1993). More significantly, the survival rate of those who start their own businesses equals that of men (Clutterbuck and Devine 1987). Whilst those considered here can be said to represent survivors in that they have remained in the profession, there are bound to be those who took the self-employment option but for whom, it did not represent a solution and who have left the profession. For those included here, those who became self-employed following redundancy have so far remained self-employed, apart from Paula who has since returned to employment within a practice after only three months as a sole practitioner. In this sense, it represents a successful solution in that they have remained in the profession. Although, Geraldine and Sandra state that it is not their ideal outcome but one that they are prepared to continue with in the meantime:

It [self-employment] was never an ultimate aim. I enjoyed being employed as an architect, somebody else goes out and finds the work, somebody else battles about the fees, somebody else does your typing, somebody else supervises the job on site ... When I haven't had much work, I've often thought of taking up employment again but I can't see any employer putting up with the hours that I do (*Sandra*)

The forms of self-employment adopted by those made redundant, are either as a sole practitioner or as labour-only, providing numerical flexibility for practices.

[I] was made redundant in March 1991 ... and by the following Spring, I'd been doing bits and pieces, I thought I'd try and make a go of it myself. I was made redundant on the understanding that they'd take me

back on when work picked up but of course, it never did. So that's been it, so I've been on my own since 1992 (*Denise*)

The actual trigger for Denise becoming self-employed was the fact that she had been unemployed for over six months and she was coming under pressure from the Job Centre to take any alternative employment:

When I was made redundant the Job Centre asked me what my second choice was and I said I didn't know so they put me down as managerial. It was about the February in 1992 [when] I had a recall interview and I just knew that round here managerial was going to mean managing the hot dog stall at [the local theme park] for the Summer. I could just see it! Which was why I decided to go on my own! (*Denise*)

For Melissa the decision to become self-employed after redundancy was based on the fact that she is unable to work full-time and part-time work within a practice in architecture is virtually non-existent:

About five years ago I was made unemployed and I could only work part-time because of health problems and part-time work is almost non-existent. In all that time, looking at the advertisements, I think there've only been two that I've seen that have been part-time jobs or said job-share considered, the alternative was to work for myself (*Melissa*)

Many business start-ups result from redundancy in that it provides scope for reassessment, which is often otherwise overlooked (Carter and Cannon 1988b) and provides an opportunity to leave an unrewarding work situation (Martin and Wallace 1984). A significant factor, aside from these, which features strongly in decisions to become self-employed must be the fact that architecture is project-based and that, even in times of recession, small-scale projects can

contribute towards an income. Much work is based on word of mouth or gained through personal contacts and there is a relatively strong informal market for architectural services. A further advantage is that it can be done from home thus keeping overheads to a minimum.

I worked for myself at home for about two years, doing any sort of work, doing small jobs, extensions, barn conversions, conversions of farm buildings. I was working pretty hard but making very little money  
*(Amanda following her second redundancy)*

[I do] everything from tiny conservatories on the back of stone listed cottages  
*(Denise)*

Denise has more of a portfolio working life rather than just surviving purely on self-employed work. She teaches a Masters level Module on Conservation at a local School of Architecture which she got as a result of studying for the degree herself and also has a part-time draughting job for a local firm:

The three jobs I have are interconnected ... if I hadn't been working at [the draughting job] I wouldn't have done the MA, if I hadn't done the MA I wouldn't have got the teaching work, if I wasn't also in private practice I wouldn't have got the teaching work. If I had only been working at [the draughting job] I wouldn't have had the opportunity to make money. It's a good earner doing their work, it's easy work so all three really are interconnected. There's a standard amount coming in every month, I can depend on it and I can choose my time of working. I just tell them when I'm going in and the money covers the overheads of my own practice  
*(Denise)*

Women's attitudes towards redundancy depend upon socialisation especially at work, attitudes and behaviour of management and position in the labour market (Martin and Wallace 1984). However, re-entry into the primary labour market

can be difficult following redundancy, especially for older women (Martin and Wallace 1984) and this is confirmed by the fact that Amy has not found alternative employment. In contrast, Moore and O'Neill (1996) indicate that women tend to be reabsorbed into the workforce relatively quickly. This could be because they are more flexible and more prepared to take any employment rather something with the equivalent status and salary of their previous position. When Pam was made redundant the first time, she spent time out of work but her former employer offered her some part-time work:

He rang me and said 'Look, what are you up to?' and I said 'Not a lot really' so he said 'Would you like to come back part time?' because they were obviously not keen to employ somebody and commit themselves to taking on somebody because they didn't know how things were going to make out. So I started part time and gradually got my toe in the door and then we got the next recession in '91-92, so most of us were paid off so I went back to working from home again (*Pam*)

The same happened following her second redundancy:

My old practice have been very good in that when people ring up and say 'Have you got any staff we could borrow?' they say 'No, but we know somebody who could help you out'. I went to work for local authority for six months that turned in to 18 months and then I went back to not doing a lot. So then my old practice again said they were looking for a technician and they had said that they had no technicians but they knew someone who was qualified so I came here for six weeks last August and I'm still here... but very much self-employed (*Pam*)

She has been working as labour only self-employed for quite some time but has no employment security and no guarantee of further work once any particular project is finished. It appears to be with a sense of gratitude that she accepts work

from her former practice but does not have any further pressure on her to get a full-time job. This situation would probably not be acceptable to a man and is doubtless only acceptable to Pam because she does mention that she and her husband are financially secure:

I don't have to work if I don't want to but I prefer to, so I've got a certain security in that I don't have to panic when October looms and I can sit back and wait for another opportunity (*Pam*)

For Amanda, who also is now self-employed on a labour only basis, it also represented the only form of employment available to her following her second redundancy. This coincided with the break up of her marriage and subsequent emotional problems that left her unable to work for a considerable length of time:

I wasn't capable of work at the time I was in quite a state. So I was unemployed for a while, eventually I got a job in a factory just packing work and then a practice in Nottingham offered me about four to six weeks work. I was there two years but then things were very difficult [as] it was still the recession. I was actually self-employed on quite a low hourly rate ... I met Peter and came to work for this practice [still on a self-employed basis] (*Amanda*)

Amanda works more or less full-time for the same practice but Pam works on a series of short-term contracts essentially providing numerical flexibility. Neither have dependent children so are not looking for flexibility for childcare reasons. These two have the least amount of control over their working lives and, correspondingly have the lowest security of employment. They are dependent upon whether the practices that they work for have sufficient work for them. In

the event of a fall in the practice workload they would be unemployed with little or no notice and, because of being self-employed, would not be eligible for unemployment benefit. Working as labour-only self-employed has recently come under the scrutiny of the Inland Revenue who see it as a way for practices to avoid paying income tax and national insurance contributions for workers (Building Design 1999), like Amanda, who to all intents and purposes are employed by the practice on a full-time basis. Pam's situation is more a reflection of the secondary labour market as the short-term contracts that she works on equate to her providing numerical flexibility.

Possibly the strongest area of contrast between those who became sole practitioners and those who became labour-only self-employed is that the sole practitioners appear to have much more confidence about their work and their future. They seem to have a greater sense of control over their working lives whilst those who became labour-only self-employed give the impression of being grateful for the opportunity of providing numerical flexibility without any employment protection or guarantee of continuity of work.

### **Workloads Within Self-Employment**

The cases discussed above reflect those who chose self-employment after having been made redundant and who, perhaps would not have otherwise chosen it as a form of employment. There are those who regard self-employment as a positive form of career development. In contrast to those who

worked for practices and were made redundant during the various recessions. those who were already self-employed or principals of their own practices enjoyed much greater security of employment. Only Kim went from self-employment into employment as a direct result of lack of work. She and her husband were in partnership together but became very short of work and the result was that one of them had to get full-time employment:

... then last September we got to the point where we couldn't make enough money working from home both of us, one of us needed to get regular employment ... I took the job because we were desperate and [husband] hasn't been able to bring money in (*Kim*)

It is her intention to return to work with her husband as soon as they are able to generate enough architectural work to support them and their family. Other sole practitioners and principals of practices reported that they had not suffered as a result of the recession. Rachel started her practice in 1983 and has survived a number of troughs:

I've been busy all the time, I've never had a trough. We've always been busy, always had enough work. The problems have been when we've been stretched but we've always managed to get over that to a lesser or greater extent. I did employ somebody else, the end of the '80's beginning of the '90's, we had one or two really big wellpaying jobs and I could afford somebody then and not worry about the profits or whatever but that's not true now. There's just Jo [assistant] and I and it's a bit harder to make a decent living when you compare it with the nice fees that we got then (*Rachel*)

Her practice, and the majority of her work, is in a small town and so she is less dependent upon industrial and commercial clients who are more vulnerable

during recessions. Her work is predominantly for housing associations, private housing, and some local commercial and local authority work. She attributes the relative success of her practice to being well known in the area and to not being too outrageous in her approach to design:

I've always lived in this area I've got quite a bunch of clients who I've always had so they've been a core ... [I'm] really not particularly brilliant but just adequate and better at the sort of middle line that keeps the planners happy and the client happy and [I'm] quite conservative ... [I try to keep] everybody happy, you know what I mean. I think being able to do that has kept us going and always meant that we're busy because especially in a town like N\_\_\_\_, which is terribly conservative, and the housing association with cost constraints and so on means that you've got to be *(Rachel)*

While she has remained busy throughout the various recessions, she finds she has to work more now, as her income is now lower due to the abolishment of fee scales following a 1982 Monopolies and Mergers Commission report (Sinden 1998):

I work much longer hours now because you need to work longer hours to earn enough money and the fees are not nearly so easy now as they were then so we work long hours, especially at the moment just to get the work done *(Rachel)*

Rita started her practice in 1987 and is now in a position where she can choose whether or not she wants to take on projects:

I find that I get a tremendous amount of work coming my way and, by and large, I can say 'No, I don't want to do that'. I don't struggle to get work by any means ... [I'm] in a position where I don't have to work so hard and I can try and do what is enjoyable rather than slog my heart out. Sometimes I have to work at the weekend or do extra to get the job out but that's not the norm now *(Rita)*

Ellen formed her own practice following employment as an in-house architect in a senior position for a large manufacturing company with a retailing division which was undergoing restructuring in an attempt to remain competitive. Part of the restructuring involved the divestment of in-house activities, such as the architectural division which was involved with the fitting out of retail units throughout the UK. The interviewee and another architect were offered a number of retail projects if they were prepared to establish their own practice, which they did in the form of a limited company.

As mentioned earlier, those who were interviewed were effectively ‘survivors’ as they had remained in the profession. As only members of the RIBA were interviewed, those who had exited the profession or those who had started their own practices and failed would not appear here. Redundancy is by far the most common trigger for becoming self-employed but other factors such as wanting greater flexibility from work (Carter and Cannon 1988a), dissatisfaction with their employment, identifying a gap in the market (Vokins 1993), job satisfaction, independence and achievement (Hisrich and Brush 1981) are also significant. Rita experienced a great many problems in her early career before becoming self-employed but has since found her own niche in the market with many women clients:

... my husband drove me to it, he thought I'd do a lot better self-employed and enjoy it a lot more, he's right actually ... It's amazing how

many women clients there are and I quite often find myself working for them ... there's a whole market out there of women who want buildings  
*(Rita)*

## **Conclusion: Employment, Unemployment and Non-Standard Working**

The working arrangements of the women show a wide degree of heterogeneity with more than half differentiating from the so-called standard career path. The recurring theme from these interviews was the need to be able to follow a career but on certain terms. The time commitment required prior to qualification provides a strong motivation to continue working throughout their working lives. It is likely that the length of time spent studying would deter any women who were likely to make motherhood a priority over a career. These women were, in effect, the self-selecting committed worker in Hakim's (1995, 1996) terms but they still exhibited considerable diversity within their careers.

The polarity of the two 'standard' employment models (Hakim 1995, 1996) serves to reflect the productive versus reproductive debate and infers that the two are mutually exclusive. The creation of varying forms of employment shows how the two can be combined. The term 'alternative' is not applicable here as it only serves to emphasise how women's employment has been considered as differing from the norm. A more appropriate outcome would be to query the existence and continued acceptance of this so-called norm and offer instead a variety of options. However, there remains a strong tendency to measure results

against a norm combined with an inherent reluctance to accept a multiplicity of solutions as an alternative.

If women are to adapt their working lives in a temporal sense, perhaps for family reasons, they are then assumed to have opted out of a career and transferred in to the 'uncommitted' sector. It is the rigidity and polarity of the 'committed/productive' and 'uncommitted/reproductive' models which contributes to their lack of relevance in employment within professions, the result of which is to suggest that redefinition and refocusing of the 'standard' career is inevitable. The fact that multiple forms of work organisation exist serves to suggest that women's commitment to their career is, and remains, high, even when they have other responsibilities which may preclude them from following more 'standard' forms of work organisation.

Those women who do not conform to the 'committed/uncommitted' models are labelled 'drifters' or 'adaptives' (Hakim 1996, 1998) but this serves only to devalue the investment that they have made in their careers, the fact that they spent at least seven years obtaining a professional qualification and overcoming structural and cultural constraints in becoming established in their chosen profession. However, it may be that women are constrained to continue within the shackles of a full-time career in order to progress because of masculine inability to accept that commitment should not be measured solely in temporal terms. The multiplicity of patterns of employment which has been shown to

exist between the dichotomies of productive and reproductive employment displays high degrees of commitment without being at the expense of other important aspects of women's lives.

There exists an inherent reluctance to regard commitment to a career in anything other than temporal terms which merely serves to disguise or disregard any other options which may exist. This combined with a continued dependence upon a model of employment which remains 'masculine' serves to constrain women in terms of their career development. Equality in career terms could be achieved by increased acceptance of forms of work organisation which rely less upon a time commitment and more upon flexible and fluid employment structures applicable to both male and female employees.

It is evident that many women architects who have been made redundant become self-employed as a means of remaining in the profession, which in a sense can be taken to mean that they were to some extent forced into it as it remained the only option open to them other than leaving the profession. Tancred (1998) reports that there are many women who have left the architectural profession for one reason or another but who have continued to use their architectural qualifications in some way. What she is effectively saying, is that there are many more survivors than a 'cold' analysis of figures of professional membership would indicate. However, this is beyond the scope of

this work but serves as a reminder that not holding professional membership is no longer the barrier to practising that it once was (Sinden 1998).

There are also a significant number who have chosen self-employment as a means of practising without being made redundant or even threatened by the thought of redundancy. To a large extent, previous research has concentrated on the 'standard' career structures within professions (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b; Crompton and le Feuvre 1996; Greed 1991; Fogarty *et al* 1981; Carrier 1995) or more specifically on the architecture profession (Allen 1988; Fogarty *et al* 1981). However, the extent to which the women interviewed have rejected this traditional career path must be considered significant. The reasons and factors affecting and causing this decision must be taken in to account. It could be that the 'traditional' career in architecture does not allow the flexibility necessary to juggle the demands of pursuing a demanding professional occupation with the demands of a family and as such, these alternatives forms of work exist as a form of 'feminsation' (Crompton and Sanderson 1990b). Secondly, it could be because the architecture profession and more widely, the construction industry are so male-dominated that women are effectively excluded from the traditional career structures (Spencer and Podmore 1987; Kanter 1977; Collinson and Knights 1986; Crompton and Sanderson 1990b; Evetts 1994b).

If it is the fact that the traditional career structure within the profession serves to exclude women who require flexibility, then this could perhaps account for the women interviewed who have followed the self-employment route as a response to the need to juggle work and family commitments. Alternatively, if it is the inherent masculinity of the profession and the wider industry, this would then surely present obstacles to those women who have set up their own practices. The assumption that alternative working arrangements adopted by women exist only as a response to family responsibilities serves to devalue women's contributions to work in a way that does not exist for men, thus acting as a constraint on their careers.

## **Chapter Seven: Why Do It?**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapters have focused on why women choose to enter the architecture profession, how they become qualified and how they construct their careers within the profession. All these factors are considered within the contexts outlined in the discussion of previous research in to women's careers as examined in chapters two and three. This chapter aims to look deeper than simply comparing and contrasting women architects' experiences of work and their careers with previous work. The objective here is to examine why and how they have constructed their careers looking at motivation, commitment and work-home conflict. It aims to present a deep and meaningful interpretation and understanding of what is involved within a career such as architecture.

### **Rewards**

#### **Financial Rewards**

Financial rewards in a profession are reputed to be higher than in other occupations with shorter periods of training. This is effectively a form of deferred compensation to offset the time spent studying prior to qualification as well as to reflect the prestige of the professional and the value of their qualification (Barber 1965). Under a Weberian approach, the training undergone by a professional creates a monopoly of knowledge with attendant market control and associated price premium (Larsen 1977). However, as

illustrated in Chapter three, within architecture this is not necessarily the case. The average salary for an architect is £27,700 per annum (RIBA 1998) which is low compared to other professions. Of the women interviewed, it was those who are employed in practice who were asked about their salaries. The earnings of those who are self-employed or principals in practice will vary from year to year according to the amount of profit made by the practice and so is more difficult to assess than the salaries of those who are employed.

Of those interviewed, Phyllis had earned the highest salary prior to her early retirement from the local authority. She had been employed in a senior position but on retiring in 1996, her salary had been £24,000. The next highest salary is £22,500 for Lyndsey who is an associate director of a practice then there is Paula who earns £20,000 as practice/office manager of the subsidiary office of a larger practice. Marlene, who works in the same practice, earns £17,500. These salaries are comparable to the salaries outlined in the RIBA Survey of Employment and Earnings but are liable to annual fluctuations depending upon employment conditions within the profession. The degree of control over the market position of architects is much less than other higher professional groups incorporated by Royal Charter.

The disparity in salary between architecture and other professions is something that concerned most of the interviewees as they felt that they had gone through

comparable training in order to become qualified but that they were not adequately rewarded for having done so:

The remuneration is miserable and that does make a difference ... it's lousy that you don't earn very much and I really did earn half of what my lawyer and accountant friends earn. I'm seven years qualified and my salary is just under £20,000 so that's better than when I was in practice but it's still miserable compared to other professions but I don't feel so hard done by [now]. The actual employment is better than in private practice where you're just expected to do everything for no reward. At least at the [local authority] there's flexi-time (*Cindy*)

It doesn't compare financially with other professions, but on the other hand who'd want to be an accountant or a lawyer! Even being a quantity surveyor would be better than that! (*Jennifer*)

A friend of mine's only been teaching for six years and she hasn't got a degree and she's on the same grade as I am. Well I had to have ten years experience to get the job I've got. I was talking to an old boss of mine in Peterborough the other day, and he said his daughter had just finished university as a dentist. She'd found herself a job starting at £19,000 and within five years she'd expect to be up to £35,000 (*Kim*)

... the money we get is rubbish compared to everyone else. That young man there, who's job I'm doing [Construction Manager on site], bless him I'm very fond of him but he's on about £28-30k/year (*Pam*)

The status has been eroded compared to the law and medicine, we don't get paid anything like they do, our responsibilities are just as onerous ... it [the RIBA] doesn't do us any favours at all, it just keeps us ground down ... they don't see the knock-on effects, all of us get our salaries kept down and fees are kept down, it all downward spirals (*Hayley*)

Each of the comments above makes a comparison with another profession.

Architects are deemed to be on a par with doctors, lawyers and accountants in terms of professional structure (Larsen 1977; Freidson 1970b; Macdonald 1995) and the protection of status by Royal Charter but there are significant

differences in terms of salary. The salaries of architects are more comparable to the salaries of teachers which, according to Parry and Parry (1976) have been less successful as a professional group in gaining control over their market position. As with so many other aspects of architecture, the difficult economic conditions are the prime cause of the low salaries. During the recession of the early 1990's, many architects found they had to accept pay cuts in order to retain their jobs (Sinden 1998):

Things have been so bad, about two years ago we actually had a 20% reduction in salary across the board, the whole office. That lasted for about six months and then they reinstated 10% and we've been on 10% reduction until three or four months ago, something like that. I got upgraded from architect to associate director but my pay level was quite a lot below what the other associate directors and directors were earning. So at that stage I did have a salary increase but it still didn't bring me into line. It brought me basically above the senior technician because at the time I was only getting the same sort of money as them (*Lyndsey*)

Not only were salaries cut but the additional bonuses traditionally used to enhance salaries were also lost:

I also had thrown in BUPA, company car, company petrol so all my petrol was paid for, non-contributory pension. We had our own Access card as well but as well as the reduction we've also lost BUPA, pension, petrol we only get our mileage to and from site paid for now, whereas before all our petrol was paid and I've not had my car renewed so we've lost a hell of a lot ... (*Lyndsey*)

Even with the pay cut now reinstated, Lyndsey is still much worse off as a result of having lost the additional benefits of free petrol, healthcare and non-

contributory pension scheme. Generally, the salary is low throughout the profession unless the architect works for one of the top practices at a senior level. The responsibilities that come with the job are high and the role can change to bring in a variety of other disciplines:

I'm a bit cheesed off with [development corporation], I don't think they pay me enough money, because they asked for an architect with ten years' experience and they really aren't paying much money for it ... I'm actually only earning £19,500 at the moment. I come with an awful lot more than ten years experience. I really have a lot more talents than they give me credit for ... I'm the team leader for the Housing side. Part of what we're doing is trying to get training involved. Well, I've got the knowledge and the experience for training so I can actually build that in without relying on other people, so I'm actually quite a multifaceted architect, but I'm not being paid for it. *(Kim)*

The pay is low relative to the responsibility and everything that you're expected to take on. *(Catherine)*

As mentioned earlier (chapter six) the hours of work within a practice can be very long and overtime is not, as a rule, paid but usually expected. The concept of the 'greedy organisation' (Coser 1974) is certainly applicable to practices as they use unpaid overtime as a means of managing peaks in workload without incurring any additional labour costs. The difficult economic conditions which have prevailed for much of the last decade have put the balance of power firmly in favour of practices:

When I was working, I always had to sign contracts that said I'd work overtime as and when necessary for no extra pay, and I did used to find I worked until ten and twelve at night if there were rush jobs on, you had to do it. *(Catherine)*

Some of the technicians have had paid overtime but we were told that we get our benefits (*Lyndsey*)

One interviewee who had started her career in a large commercial organisation was aware of the financial pressures which affected those working in practices but felt somewhat protected from them by being in a large organisation:

... my salary rose very steeply, after about three years I got a car and BUPA and lots of perks. That was a bit of a cushion because there was a bit of a dip in that period in private practice but we never felt it in a big place. It's not the sort of profession that you will make a fortune in, some do but the majority make a reasonable living. There is a bit of uncertainty, certainly in private practice ... money wasn't my main motivation. I had a picture in my mind that it was a profession so there must be some money in it but no idea what it was and it wasn't the thing that made me decide to do it (*Ellen*)

The fact that she had no idea about salary levels before entering the profession highlights, once again, the shortcomings of careers guidance which is offered and available (Benett and Carter 1981). Although, it would be unlikely that any profession would promote the idea of insecurity in its careers advice literature.

The situation is also varied when those who are principals of practices or self-employed are analysed. Until the mid-1980's the profession was subject to fee scales which determined the fee that could be charged for a project as a percentage of the contract value. This was to prevent competition between practices on the basis of cost and to promote competition on the basis of quality

instead. However, following a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report in 1982, the profession was forced to deregulate (Sinden 1998) and now practices must compete on cost:

A lot of [work] is at risk or very low fees. There's no guarantee that if they get the funding they'll come back to you ... everybody seems to want the jobs in the shortest possible time for a minimum amount of money and 'Gosh, do you really want fees?' I mean everybody I talk to says the same. Personally, I'm not drawing anymore from my practice now than when I first began. I haven't given myself a payrise in ten years which is a bit of a disaster really (*Michelle*)

I do it for the money because we actually need it. What [my husband] earns doesn't cover the day to day bills and with three kids ... But it's really pitiful. My National Insurance exemption has come up again and I wrote to the accountant thinking I must be earning enough to have to pay but he said not so that means I must earn less than £3,000 a year. When I add up how many hours I do, I don't work in the school holidays, sometimes I do just to keep jobs ticking over, but the only hours I work are between nine and three and quite a lot of that is taken up with just other things (*Stephanie*)

However, she counters this with the fact that it is important to her to be at home with her children after school and in the school holidays, which would not be possible if she worked in a practice:

It does suit because I'm always here for the children. I'm always here when they come in from school if there's something on [at school] I don't have problems taking time off work. If they're ill I'm here ... I sometimes think I'm really lucky but I just wish I earned a bit more that's all (*Stephanie*)

Stephanie portrays the 'domestic' within Goffee and Scase's (1985) typology of female entrepreneurs in that for her, the home and family come first and her business must fit in around these other commitments. Whilst Rachel, in comparison, depicts the innovative entrepreneur for whom the business takes priority over conventional gender role activities (Goffee and Scase 1985). She has never struggled to obtain work and has not had the same money pressures. She formed her practice at a time when fee incomes were governed by a scale of charges imposed by the RIBA which meant that fees were generous in comparison to today and had an amount included for overheads and profit (Sinden 1998):

We've never had money pressures because those early years with the fees, I've always kept good lot back so I don't have to worry about that ... the satisfying bit is not being told what to do by anybody! And meeting lots of people and doing what is pleasant, earning money that's your own and nobody else's, paying the bills, just earning a living on your own, being able to bring the kids up. I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to earn the sort of salary and to pay for the kids to have things [if I didn't work for myself] *(Rachel)*

This is also reflected by Isabel who has diversified by buying investment property and is benefiting from a good return on it:

I bought a lot of property I did sort of mortgage myself rather high but as an investment and I've got to the stage now where ... if I don't work then it doesn't matter ... I've got properties rented out that bring in an income ... it's just the know how of getting in [and] if you've got some money behind you, money earns money if you're clever. I've often thought all the people coming to me with plots of land to build houses on or whatever, I mean they earn pots of money by speculating, I think I ought to be doing that instead I'm giving them ideas to make them money. I think that's probably what I'd move into rather than going back to work drawing ...

there's more money to be earned doing something else, there's definitely no money in architecture. (*Isabel*)

Rachel also has invested in property:

We do this development work ... we had some spare capital that we invested a long time ago and it was a shambles because it was when the bottom fell out of the market but we paid very little for it and it's never owed us anything and over the years we've sold them off or whatever. We sold one off and bought some property in N\_\_\_\_\_ ... and that's been fun doing that. It's been nice not to have a client and to do something you want to do and it would be fun to do more of that but that depends on all sorts of things. If you've got to do it for a living it's slightly different than taking the opportunity when it arises (*Rachel*)

These two women are both principals of thriving practices and have obviously generated a reasonable fee income from their practices with which to finance their more speculative ventures. They are displaying characteristics which set them apart from the 'typical' female entrepreneur (Schreirer 1975; Schwartz 1976; Watkins and Watkins 1984), in that they are not operating in a particularly female environment and that they also have start up capital. Women are supposed to be less motivated by financial reasons (Hisrich and Brush 1983; Carter and Cannon 1988b) but these speculative ventures do support the need for independence which is also a motive for entrepreneurship (Vokins 1993; Hisrich and Brush 1983; Carter and Cannon 1988b). Although, the same kind of venture was not a success for Stephanie and her husband who also tried to make money from speculative property renovation but were hampered by the recession:

We did buy a derelict cottage and barn and renovated the cottage and let it out. We were going to renovate the barn and have it for my office but then the recession came and we couldn't manage to do it, we had to sell it  
*(Stephanie)*

Fee scales are no longer in existence in their original form (Sinden 1998) but guidelines exist about the level of fees appropriate for different projects<sup>8</sup>. Formerly practices were not allowed to compete with other practices by offering to work for a lower fee, competition was through quality and design. Professional integrity was rated more highly than competitiveness, as highlighted by Willis *et al*:

An architect must not attempt to supplant another architect nor compete with him by reducing his fee or offering any other inducement to the client, and if he is approached to proceed with any work on which another architect had previously been employed, he must notify the fact to that architect *(Willis, George and Willis 1970:3)*

Many of those interviewed, particularly the sole practitioners practising on a small scale usually from home, charge a low hourly rate:

I charge a low rate per hour but I charge the same rate for everything whether it's typing a letter or whether I'm being an architect. Relatively little of your time is spent being an architect, I seem to be charging the same as others but it doesn't actually make a living *(Denise)*

I was talking to an engineer yesterday about [fees], I said to him I'd got another really big job for him and he said 'Oh yes, is this a bottle of wine job or ...?' 'cos I quite often just ask his advice and when I ask him how much I owe him, he just says 'Oh how about a nice bottle of claret?' but I mean he charges £35 an hour whilst I only charge £15 but then he's got office overheads *(Stephanie)*

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<sup>8</sup> RIBA Scale of Indicative Fees: Guidance for Clients

I think the RIBA do have a point there, that there's a point at which, if you cut the fees too low, you're not going to get a proper job out of the architect, they'll be cutting corners (*Earle*)

## **Non-Monetary Rewards**

The association of professional work with a stronger sense of personal identity and its central role in the life of the practitioner carries with it an inherent connection with implicit rewards (Kaufman 1982; Gerstl and Hutton 1966). To the extent that architecture as a profession is not well rewarded in a financial sense, the non-monetary rewards of following such a profession need to be explored in an attempt to provide an explanation for why the profession recruits and retains its practitioners.

Professionals are said to have a strong sense of vocation and monetary rewards are of reduced importance when compared to the non-monetary compensations. In fact, the use of the RIBA fee scales was intended to avoid the 'distasteful' aspect of having to discuss and negotiate financial matters. Non-monetary rewards associated with professions generally and architecture specifically are explained in terms of the sources of pleasure and displeasure invoked by the profession, the fusion between work and everyday life, and the meaning the practitioner gains from membership of the profession (Gerstl and Hutton 1966). The ethos of professionalism focuses on public service over private gain and the interests of the community over self-interest (Barber 1965).

The job satisfaction element and the satisfying of creative and esteem needs came across as a very important aspect and represent the source of pleasure mentioned by Gerstl and Hutton (1966). It is also linked to meeting social needs and the fact that something pleasant has been created for the client or the building users which then creates a feeling of being involved with something of value for the creator, which then provides public service over private gain (Barber 1965).

These interviewees illustrate the very personal satisfaction gained by the interviewees in seeing their designs 'translated' in to buildings:

Architects must have the most enormous egos and quite rightly. When you build something decent ... you think it could last 200 years and to see a building go up which you've designed ... that's a high (*Denise*)

I think from a purely selfish point of view I absolutely love seeing something that I've drawn come to life (*Sarah*)

It's a satisfying feeling to design something and then to see it completed. (*Gillian*)

Well the satisfaction was really on the design side and seeing it built, particularly if it was a really interesting job and, I mean housing generally and particularly in local government is a little bit mundane (*Phyllis*)

In chapter five, where the reasons for choosing architecture as a career were discussed, the need to satisfy a creative instinct featured strongly. Here, the

interviewees also identify satisfying a creative need as one of the most rewarding aspects of a career in architecture:

There's some kind of ... something that's impossible to define that's to do with the creativity or something like that about architecture and buildings and being part of making that happen which is very satisfying (*Paula*)

The satisfaction is that it is a very creative occupation and it is very rewarding to actually design something and see it built, it is this creative side which is most rewarding for me (*Amanda*)

The satisfaction has got to be seeing the finished building at the end of the day. Yes, seeing things built (*Loren*)

I have to say I get quite a kick out of it (*Lisa*)

The common factor among all those interviewed was the sense of satisfaction which comes from seeing something being built which had been designed or supervised by themselves. Denise reflects upon this when she points out that a building could last 200 years.

The rewards mentioned above are all intrinsic rewards of the individual feeling good about their work and gaining satisfaction from their profession. A more extrinsic reward is that of public recognition for their designs. Three of the interviewees had won awards for their designs and this represents another satisfying aspect of the profession. It reflects a public recognition and appreciation of their work:

I've collected a couple of Civic Trust Awards along the way so somebody else reckons I haven't done too badly (*Jennifer*)

I like designing things and I like seeing things get built ... [and] I've got some design awards (*Rita*)

I have an RIBA Award, my first project, I got an RIBA award for it when I was a year out student (*Kim*)

Architects take a great deal of criticism generally for the impact that their designs make on the environment. Throughout history various architectural styles have earned repeated criticism, for example, Sir Christopher Wren was heavily criticised for the design of St Paul's Cathedral in London. The social housing experiments of the 1950's and 1960's with the 'streets in the sky' trend towards high rise development enjoyed high popularity at the time but has more recently been blamed as contributing towards high levels of social deprivation.

There is a high social awareness within architecture in that the design element aims to match the expectations and needs of the client as well as creating a pleasant environment for the building user (Matrix 1984; Greed 1991). Meeting these needs give a sense of satisfaction which is highly apparent from the interviewees:

Satisfactions are when I've done something to help someone (*Carla*)

I'm not motivated by money, whereas lots of people are, which, it may be one reason why I'm employed in a smaller practice rather than a very, very large practice. It's just trying to find your own little niche, really. It's just trying to fulfil myself and my goals ... Probably when you see something built that you've designed and you've seen the whole process, and been involved with people, the clients, and sticking it out on site, seeing it constructed successfully, and seeing people appreciate it and actually

living in it. It's as basic as that at the moment ... seeing people pleased with what you've done, just knowing that you're doing the best that you can in a certain set of circumstances. *(Alison)*

Alison specifically states here that she is not motivated by money and that her sense of reward comes from being involved with the design and construction of a building that the users are pleased with. Hayley also mentions that appreciation from the building users gives her a sense of achievement and satisfaction:

Getting a letter at the end of the project saying 'Thank you, we've got what we wanted and the staff are happy'. I've had a couple of those and it's nice. Government work is not glamorous in any way but if I can create a better environment for the staff and the general public when they go and make their claims then I'm happy, if we've achieved it at the end of the day. I just want people to be grateful for what I've done *(Hayley)*

Olivia and Stephanie find that domestic work is more rewarding to them in a personal sense. For many architects, particularly in the larger practices, domestic work is unpopular as it is time-consuming for low remuneration but here it is shown as possessing its own returns in respect of personal and professional fulfilment:

We help the small householder to bring a dream to fruition as well as work for a larger company say to help them move from an awful office situation to something more acceptable ... Private clients are the most rewarding, it is the fulfilment of a dream for them *(Olivia)*

I think I do have a talent for solving people's problems in the domestic situation because I understand and like to find out how they live as a family and I really enjoy solving those type of problems if I can. So I'm quite satisfied, I find it a satisfying job and I enjoy that side of it. I'm quite

happy I don't mind not being Patty Hopkins<sup>9</sup>. I suppose to begin with you always want to be the greatest and the best but as you get older you find a comfortable niche ... people come up to me and ... I had a client who phoned me and said as the conservatory was going up. 'It's wonderful, it's fabulous, I love it!' and my husband said 'My clients never phone me up and say that' (*Stephanie*)

Hayley mentioned earlier about government work not being glamorous in any way, a point which is reiterated by both Paula and Heather, who both enjoy being involved with social projects:

I did enjoy working at the council in that they were more social projects and you felt like you were achieving things for the public as opposed to just a developer who's just making money all the time. How many houses will fit on a site rather than how wonderful can we make this environment? (*Heather*)

I actually enjoy doing something I think is worthwhile. I like the idea that the work I do is quite creative and actually involved with creating new buildings. To a certain extent the work we do [here] is sort of social conscience, it's social housing ... I quite like the idea at the end of the day, it's a bit ... it's not very glamorous when you talk to your colleagues about what you do but then when you meet people who aren't architects, it feels quite worthwhile then (*Paula*)

The social contribution aspect and the feeling of 'doing something worthwhile' is interesting as it resembles the philanthropic origins of architecture among upper class women as discussed earlier. Upper class women frequently designed housing for the estate labourers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It was considered a suitable pastime for such women as well as fulfilling a social need (Walker

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<sup>9</sup> Wellknown female architect and winner of prestigious RIBA Gold Medal, also wife of Sir Michael Hopkins, one of the UK's leading architects.

1989). More recently, Matrix (1984) suggested that the gendered aspect of designing buildings is still in existence with women tending to be involved with social projects while men are associated with the more high profile (and more lucrative) commercial designs.

## **Identity**

### **Professional Identity**

Professional identity is another concept which can be considered in a sense along the lines of non-monetary rewards. It formed the basis for the process of 'professionalisation' during the last century and the closure of the profession by the existence of a system of knowledge and skills (Larsen 1977; Barber 1965; Johnson 1972). It is primarily concerned with how architects are regarded by others. The existence of a specialised knowledge and notion of market control legitimised through a professional body, such as the RIBA, implies prestige and status (Macdonald 1995; Freidson 1970a, 1970b; Hughes 1958; Hall 1983; Barber 1965).

The comments made by the interviewees relating to non-monetary rewards referred frequently to feeling appreciated by their clients and other building users for having created a pleasant environment in which to live or work. Professional identity considers this in a wider sense – how architects are regarded through the eyes of the general public, by the media and the like. It

relates to how the status of the profession is observed, whether practitioners are held in high regard and gain respect through what they do for a living. During the formation of the profession, there was a system of patronage whereby an architect undertook commissions for one particular patron. Social status was conferred as a direct result of the social standing of the patron. However, as Kaye (1960) reports, there existed problems with status even during the early formation period of the profession because of the dual origins<sup>10</sup> of the discipline.

Recently, the professional identity associated with architecture has suffered. Architects' professional status has been eroded to an extent which has not happened within other professions. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of occupations which carry out architectural functions but which do not require the use of a qualified architect. Modern building practices and techniques have changed to such an extent that the architect is no longer the construction team leader, as has been the case traditionally (Willis, George and Willis 1970; Sinden 1998). However, the architecture profession has recognised neither the threat from nor the impact of the growth in occupations such as project management and construction management. These terms have, to some extent, been adopted to circumvent the need for the holder of the position to have gained professional qualifications (Sinden 1998).

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<sup>10</sup> The dual origins of architecture are design and construction. Design architecture originated from artists whilst the design component arose from the master craftsman of the time.

The encroachment of other occupations upon architectural work and the failure of the professional body to maintain 'closure' of the profession in Weberian terms has reduced the status of the professional and has subsequent implications for professional identity:

There is a difference in the way we think and the way we're trained [compared to technicians, for example]. It's not always as obvious as it should be but there is a big difference ... you can see that in the work that's produced. People say 'Oh that house is architect designed' but you know from one look that it isn't ... but I think people should be honest and just say. There's no point in pretending to be something you're not. be respected for what you are (*Geraldine*)

Around here you get 'Oh God look at that dreadful building that's gone up, bloody awful architects, what're they up to?' [but] less than a third of the buildings that go through are done by architects - it's about 33:66%. 66% of all buildings done round here are done by non-architects. The public don't know that. We then get criticised for all the worst things that go on by the unqualified people ... but again nobody ever stands up and shouts about that (*Kim*)

The result of other professions or occupations taking on part of the role traditionally carried out by the architect has been the gradual erosion of the status of the profession (Sinden 1998). The profession has done little, if anything, to protect its own interests. The professional body, the RIBA, is not seen by any of those interviewed as doing anything of value to raise the profile or status of its members or even encouraging them to become involved. It appears to have remained firmly within its historical origins as a gentleman's dining club (Kaye 1960):

I'm guilty of not having supported the RIBA, never having darkened its doors. I just pay my money however much it is, it's a hell of a lot, but they shouldn't have allowed these quantity surveyors, with all due respect, to move in on the management of the contract because, quite honestly this one that's dealing with me [referring to colleague on site] doesn't even look at the drawings. How can you manage a contract without [doing that]? ... but they've turned it in to big business ... I think architecture will die out you know, you'll end up with the Richard Rogers, Norman Foster, real high flyers and the rest of us bread and butter chaps will disappear, because you'll be able to buy a CD-ROM and design your own hospital, school etc. I would advise anyone against going in to architecture now. I blame our professional body and I blame myself because I never bothered about attending lectures but you don't attend things that are boring! They [the RIBA] are living in the past, they imagine that they are the head of design team and that they are followed around with a little apprentice with the rolled up drawings and it's all to do with egos. When I was with [an architecture practice], they were resisting madly project management but business perceives [that] this is a good thing, the architect used to drive the project and do all the admin and things. *(Pam)*

I think we're losing it, architects aren't what they used to be. Architects used to be the be all and end all on a site but there are too many other people muscling in on the role and the CDM<sup>11</sup> regulations have taken a bit more away because architects were initially frightened to get involved or certainly our practice was. If someone else takes that role on they automatically get in on the design team. Architects have taken it lying down for too long, we're never going to get back to what architects were 15, 20, 30 years ago but they've [the RIBA] let it go that way. I think the RIBA is too wishy-washy. *(Hayley)*

I always think that the RIBA, it's all the stuffy, you know, the old boys!  
*(Isabel)*

The RIBA, as the professional body, is held responsible here for its lack of action in protecting professional status and the monopoly power of the profession. Its efforts in maintaining closure of the profession have largely

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<sup>11</sup> CDM (Construction Design and Management) Regulations were introduced in 1994 as a Health and Safety measure to reduce the number of accidents on construction sites. The Regulations cover the entire life cycle of the building from the design, construction methods and maintenance through to the eventual demolition.

centred on protecting the term 'architect' and issuing writs against anyone not registered with the ARB from using the term. However, many of the functions traditionally carried out by an architect have been taken on by other 'new' professions, such as project managers (Sinden 1998). The allusion by Isabel to the RIBA as 'the old boys' refers as much to its origins as a gentleman's dining club as it does to its present-day image. Professions and professional bodies have long been regarded as perpetuating the exclusion of women through structural and cultural barriers (Evetts 1994b; Melvin 1997), using patriarchy (Witz 1992; Crompton 1987; French and Meredith 1994), capitalism (Roberts and Coutts 1992; Earle 1989) and gender (Spencer and Podmore 1987; Walters 1987; Bourne and Wikler 1978) as the justification for their actions.

### **Personal Identity**

Personal identity and the individual within the profession also merit consideration. That is the extent to which the profession is interwoven with the practitioner's everyday life (Gerstl and Hutton 1966). Here the interviewees describe how they feel they are perceived in the eyes of their clients, their colleagues and in general. Identity here exists in two ways: there is the identity as an architect as a professional and also the identity as a person whether as an individual or as a mother, wife, colleague and so on. These then fuse together to create the identity of the person who is the architect.

The good thing about being an architect and this is what has kept me going, is that it's a skill that you have yourself, you know it's [me] who's an architect, and I can do that wherever I am. You don't depend on being in ICI if you're an ICI manager or you don't have to be in a big conglomerate to actually do your job and I like that *(Cindy)*

The professional side [appeals to me], being an architect is something nice. Always my mum used to say, "You can do anything but the profession is something else ... to make your identification in a profession. for your self image" *(Irina)*

For Cindy and Irina, their personal identity is fused with their professional identity, they speak about themselves as being architects as individuals irrespective of who they work for. Paula, Michelle and Catherine see architecture as a way of life more than an occupation. This emphasises the vocational aspect of the profession and the fusion between the individual and profession (Gerstl and Hutton 1966):

Well it's my whole life, that's the frightening thing really in a way, all those around me are architects and although my father died a long, long time ago way before I started doing architecture, my mother was his secretary. She sent me all the Daily Telegraph cuttings about architects, it's just it feels like it's part of my life really *(Paula)*

I can't see myself retiring or anything like that. I'll just keep going and going and going. I don't know what happens to old architects I think they just keep going. It's a life, isn't it? I think a lot of architects are like me, ... I think in a way it's the nature of the job it's a vocation. It is almost a 24 hour, seven day a week thing, your brain gets completely involved with it *(Michelle)*

I just feel that architecture has to be a vocation. It's more than job but it's more than a career, it's almost like a lifestyle. *(Catherine)*

It must be remembered that Catherine has not practised as an architect for over eight years since her resignation but she still sees herself through her professional identity. She told of a recent conversation she held where someone asked if she used to be an architect:

‘Well, I thought you were an architect.’ I said ‘I am an architect.’ ‘But you're not out at work then’ – ‘No’ – ‘So you used to be an architect?’ - I said ‘I am an architect!’ I just get very annoyed ... It's what [you] are, it's not what [you] earn money at ... I'm not going to stop being one just because I don't work and earn money at it (*Catherine*)

In comparison, Ella, the oldest interviewee at 72, still holds her membership of the RIBA despite not having practised for over 30 years:

[What's made you keep your RIBA membership?] ... to keep an interest going, it's not a thing ... once you've trained, you've done the practice yourself, you always feel at heart that that has been your main line and you would never really want to give up ... I always read with interest, you know, what's going on (*Ella*)

The inability to separate the private and professional aspects of their lives indicates a degree of commitment associated with professional employment to an extent which is not assumed in other occupations (Gerstl and Hutton 1966). This means that the concept of identity is also different. Banks *et al* (1992) mention that identity results from the individual's perception of themselves in various different scenarios and domains, implying that it will vary from situation to situation. Professional (or public) identity appears to have an effect upon the

personal identity, illustrated by the way that women interviewed have encompassed their profession into their lives to such an extent.

Women architects are more visible than their male counterparts because there are simply not the numbers in the profession for it to be generally accepted as a profession in which women work unlike law, medicine or accountancy (Carter and Kirkup 1990). In these professions the sheer numbers of women have resulted in there being an attitude shift and it is not considered unusual, in any way, for a woman to be there. The length of time spent training in these professions is comparable to architecture but, especially in medicine, there is shiftwork and anti-social hours (Allen 1988). In criminal law practices, there is an 'on-call' system which means anti-social hours have to be worked. However, the 'critical mass' of women is still lacking within architecture to such an extent that gender is still more obvious than the professional person (Carter and Kirkup 1990). The women interviewed were aware of their gender in such a way (and made to be aware) that would not be apparent in a profession where there were larger numbers of women. At the same time, they played down the effects of gender. It was as if they expected their gender to cause a reaction among the men they worked with and were either prepared for it or made some attempt to circumvent it.

The project-based nature of architectural work is such that each project will have different personnel working on it and the people involved will have exposure to a wide range of people in many different locations. It is not a 'protected' environment in that the people that an architect is required to meet in the course of his or her work are regulated other than through their involvement with the project. Much of the work is carried out away from the office environment in unfamiliar surroundings and, at the start of the project, often with unfamiliar people. The locations and circumstances of meeting others involved in the project are also varied - meetings can take place in any location from the client's offices to a greenfield site.

A woman's visibility is heightened at the start of the project when men, who may previously have never worked with a female architect, have to adapt to a new situation. This prominence has two strands – physical appearance and attitude – and exists in a way that they do not for men. All the interviewees acknowledged that they are more visible than their male colleagues but the effects of it upon their work and their strategies for coping with it vary:

It's one of those funny things but I think also size helps, because I'm tall. You just inevitably carry more authority (*Jennifer*)

I find, being a woman, you're levelled out for a lot of personal comments about your appearance, your hair, what you're wearing today which you can do without. I hate it, it's got nothing to do with anything, let's just get on with what we're doing (*Heather*)

To a certain extent the way I look and appear. I don't think people take me as seriously as they might do if I was more professional in my attire and manner (*Marlene*)

Comments made regarding dress showed an interesting variety of responses to the issue of visibility:

I definitely modify my clothes for site, I used to know an architect who went on site in short skirts and high-heeled shoes, she wouldn't change, she'd just walk round the site, she didn't care, she was great (*Heather*)

I've never worn a trouser suit I would like you to add! I've worn trousers occasionally and my mother keeps saying 'What you want is a nice trouser suit' but I say 'That is not what I want, ever!' because I think that is trying to be them, you've got to be yourself. I never wear anything but trousers at home but that is a statement I make and if I go up a ladder I make sure I go last (*Pam*)

I only modify my clothes to be practical, trousers for ladders, that's all there is to it but also shoes for safety. You can't go on in nice stilettos, not that I'd wear them anyway ... You get covered in dust but site meetings are different because you're supposed to look professional but you've still got to climb around in roof spaces whatever. It's still difficult for a man, they've got to wear a decent suit (*Hayley*)

I was always fairly careful not to try and be a man but I tended on the whole, unless I was actually climbing on the scaffolding, I went on site in a dress. I tried not to be a man, of course they didn't like that (*Amy*)

These comments indicate that it is important to these women to retain their own identity but they also show that men find it difficult to accept a woman who looks and behaves as a woman. Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) argue that women have to behave as 'quasi' men in order to be accepted as a professional and not to be judged as less committed. However, Geraldine feels that this is

not what men want. She feels that it is more beneficial to have clearly defined roles and to generate respect:

In architecture you'll never get on if you're one of the lads. They want us to be nice, little ladies but at the same time they want us to be a hard nosed business woman as well. They don't like to swear at you. People on site will treat you reasonably well, as long as you don't come across as an airhead, if you come across as a level headed sort of woman but you keep your distance, they'll treat you right. If the roles are known and respected then you'll have no problems but you do have to keep their respect, you need to keep the distance and that's what creates the respect. You're never one of them and there's no point in pretending to be. When you see some appalling brickwork you do have to tell them. Don't pretend to be a man, don't pretend to be one of the lads on site, don't pretend to be one of the lads at the pub with the rest of the office. There's no point, you're not going to be part of their 'lads together' conversation so don't worry about it. You know it's pretty stupid anyway. You do have to be a little bit of an outsider, you can't avoid it, it is aggravating at times but you will be integrated, you don't have to wear a twinset (*Geraldine*)

Geraldine says here that women will never be fully accepted if they attempt to behave as 'quasi' men which is how Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) and Gilligan (1982) argue that they have got to act as such in order to survive in a male dominated environment. Geraldine acknowledges that there are differences between the genders and that they can coexist if the differences are recognised and accepted. Whilst women are made aware of their minority status through the studying process and by working in a male-dominated environment, men do not have such an awareness. They are in a majority working in a professional structure that is masculine in origin and by consolidation through time which gives them an unspoken reciprocity, referred to here by Paula:

I think it's that sort of male bonding thing that's my problem. It's very much a personality thing, whether you're paranoid or not but I just have this sort of sense that there's a sort of male conspiracy between all of them. The way at the end of the site meetings the male client representative always, always, always starts talking about football. It may well be that he has always done that but it's immediately become a bonding thing (*Paula*)

Exclusionary techniques tend not to be overt as such but exist in such a way to prevent the acceptance of women, such as the conversation about football that Paula speaks of. This fact is not helped by the low numbers of women within the profession and a failure by organisations such as practices and companies to confront the issues:

I know here that there are a lot of golf invites from companies and the like but I don't get invited, Terry gets invited, David gets invited, but I don't. I think I've had one invite and that was from a company that we used for school furniture and Terry and I got an invite 'cos they were trying to get in with [a client] but I mean other than that I've never had an invite to a golf day. Although, I must admit I'm a better golfer in the firm than anyone else but it makes no difference. They just don't think of inviting a woman but they will invite a man (*Lyndsey*)

It was all construction industry people, a project breakfast and they had all these men sitting around the table, from Wimpey's, Barrett's, all men and they said 'Right, let's go round and everybody say who they are' and they just pointed to the man next to me and I was the first person and they just obviously assumed that I was there taking notes! (*Paula*)

These two examples highlight the extent of exclusion, 'membership' of the profession is on the basis of credentials (French and Meredith 1994), of which, it appears, that one must be gender. The fact that Paula was ignored when introductions were being made and that Lyndsey does not receive invitations to

corporate golf days emphasises how women can also become 'invisible' when in the company of a group of men. Michelle also experienced a form of invisibility in spite of her practice name being both her Christian name and surname:

When I started my own practice I used both my Christian name and surname as practice name because I knew people would assume I was male so when they're looking in Yellow Pages or whatever they wouldn't be put off. But even now I still get letters addressed to Mr. [name] but now we're ten years on ... At one time I used to employ this year out student - he came to me in his degree year out and again after his diploma - and we used to go to meetings and you'd get the situation where the men round the table would direct their questions or answers to him or I'd ask the question and they'd direct the answers to him *(Michelle)*

Greed (1991) reports on how women professionals are not seen as professionals in their own right but are regarded in more of a supporting role almost as a 'quasi wife'. It has been assumed that more women entering male dominated professions will introduce a different set of values and eventually will dilute the strong masculine image of the work (Northcraft and Gutek 1993). However, whilst policies and legislation can eventually alter the structural barriers in place, the cultural obstacles will prove harder to shift. As Geraldine says, change will take place very slowly, although she is hopeful that some form of incremental change is taking place:

I think the best way for us to get the recognition we need is to get more and more numbers in which I think is happening - not a fast rate ... to be honest it's just going to be numbers going in to the profession which is going to change it. Then we've got to start dealing with the whole construction industry which I don't see too many women in at all. It will take another century at least before we change anything! *(Geraldine)*

In fact, it is estimated that at present levels of growth in the numbers of women entering the profession, it will take two hundred years for parity to be reached (Lewis 1998). The problem remains for women currently employed in the profession in that they are not accepted if they act as 'quasi' men, neither can they adopt an overt use of femininity:

I worked for a woman architect before I even started the course at Newcastle and I was nearly put off at the start of being an architect because I was listening to her saying one day - they'd got a problem on site - and she started off trying to bully the contractor and when that didn't work she went on to 'I'm only a poor, weak woman' I thought 'You hypocrite if that's the only way you can get what you want this is not the job for me!' So, I think you've just got to try and stay fairly level and not play the weak woman but not overcompensate by not being over bossy either (*Jennifer*)

I never exploit my femininity, I could have done it hundreds of times, even sleeping with the boss, but it's an anathema to me to use it because I think everyone's the same. A lot of men think that you do use wily ways. When I'm successful with clients there's a lot of stupid remarks like 'He obviously liked you we'll get you to work with him again' I think 'Well that's because I did a good job for them' (*Heather*)

Within the building project, the position of the architect is one where it is important to maintain the respect and authority of others involved with the project. This is the case irrespective of gender, but it goes without saying that the balance of power is in favour of the men involved. Women have the double bind of having to prove that they are able to cope with the environment as well

as justifying themselves as a professional (Greed 1991). Any problems were played down to a surprising extent:

I think you've got to go in firm because if you go in wishy-washy it will be down to the woman sort of thing, generally it's been all right. I've been quite lucky I think. I'm always careful of not leaving ammunition. I think you've just got to be as good as if not better than your counterparts  
(Hayley)

If they said to me things like 'Why aren't you at home looking after the kids and doing the washing?' I would say 'The children are at school and I've got a washing machine' so I didn't find it too much of a problem  
(Amy)

Just so long as you don't get down by people looking at you or making comments to you then that's fine you just need to know how to deal with it but if you're 'Oh my God they're being really rude to me' and get upset about it you won't survive. It really makes me laugh when I was recently going round the Lambert House job there was ... I was walking in an area where all the builders were sitting having their lunch and they were all just swearing and I walked passed and suddenly there was just dead silence and one of them said 'There's the architect' and another said 'It can't be, it's a woman!' and I just looked and smiled and said 'Hi guys' and just walked on and I just thought it was a laugh but to someone who wasn't desperately confident it could have been confrontational, if you get het up by the fact that someone says you can't be then that makes their problem into your problem  
(Sarah)

As Greed (1991) says many women in professional employment have not read any feminist literature and, as a result, have not developed a raised consciousness which could account for why the women interviewed played down the comments which have been made to them. The architecture schools provides the first exposure of the pervasive masculinity of the construction industry and it is likely that this causes the exit of a significant number of

potential architects. The women interviewed are very aware of the male environment in which they work and accept that they have made concessions to this masculinity:

You get used to working in a male environment, you don't stop to think about it. Somebody once asked me, in fact it was the wife of my boss when I was doing my second year out, she was ever so nice, very earnest, she said "How do you reconcile your roles as a wife and mother with being an architect? I thought 'Roles - what are you talking about? I just do it!' (Jennifer)

I suppose the male domination can be off putting, it depends what you want but when you go in to it you don't think of these things. It didn't occur to me it was going to be quite so male dominated until I got out in to the workplace (Hayley)

It's a dog eat dog world, but the construction industry always has been a bit aggressive, but I've never found it too dreadful to work in. Everyone says 'How do you find it as a woman working on building sites?' but I haven't found it problematic. You are maybe aware of, perhaps, what people might be thinking but not saying but I have never really had a big problem with it and I think if you go round thinking there's a problem you're never going to do it so just don't worry about it ... I'm a bit wary of these women-only co-operative type things, I think that puts us in to the 'right on' sort of thing, you know that bunch, I'd rather be seen as part of the profession as a whole, as try to be something completely different. I think so long as the profession accepts that we are not going to necessarily follow the same career pattern as a man is going to, that's fine but I don't particularly want to be seen as something self reliant. I don't want to make tremendously big political statements (Geraldine)

A striking anomaly arises in that the majority of the gender-related problems appear to arise from fellow professionals. The building site is a much more male-dominated arena than the office environment but from the interviews there is not one single reported negative experience from site work:

The building site is still very much a male preserve really although saying that I've only ever had positive experiences. A lot of them are quite old fashioned where women are concerned and are quite gentlemanly ...  
*(Paula)*

I've never had a problem on site so far and I could go on site with a male colleague when I was working for somebody else and the guys would come up and say 'You're an architect!' and I would say 'Yes ...' and they would stand and chat and say 'It's quite unusual isn't it ..' and be quite interested and through this would come 'Well, I've got a bit of a problem over here and I didn't like to say anything to [male colleague]' ... So it would get to that I'd be going back to male colleagues who were actually my boss and saying that this needs sorting out, so that was quite nice. But the down side is sometimes they don't bother with you but the funny side is that they like you to come on site so they can see you first through the door which is a shame because it always makes me feel that they're not comfortable. The other thing is toilets, they're all male toilets and the men on site aren't bothered whether you sit on them or not ... *(Helen)*

Helen describes an interesting scenario when she says that craftsmen from site will mention a problem regarding the work to her but they would not remark on it to a male colleague. She also highlights a major complication for women on building sites – the lack of, or low standard of, amenities.

Yeah, I've had the problems on site where something's not quite right and I've had to tell them to take it down but I've never felt I've had any slagging off because I'm a woman *(Isabel)*

I've never had any problems at all. You get the odd comment from the men on site, perhaps when you turn up on site initially, before they realise who you are, you might get the odd comment being made. They soon hush up when they find out that you're the architect! *(Gillian)*

I think I've probably had an easier time on building sites than others because sometimes men on sites are more 'jumped up young male architect' whereas they actually don't do that with women. They're actually a bit more worried, and a bit more cautious themselves. 'Oh God, it's a woman, what the hell do we do now?' So in fact, we're in a stronger position than a male architect, I find. *(Kim)*

Several of the interviewees mention that the men they encounter through their work appear uncomfortable in the presence of women professionals. In the same sense that Greed (1991) says that many professional women have not had their 'consciousness raised regarding feminism', these men may also be lacking awareness of the challenge to traditional gender roles as there are so few women in the construction industry, the men have not yet had the opportunity to become used to working with women in an equal capacity. The problems reported by the women interviewed arose from fellow professionals who are far more likely to be used to working with women:

It tends to be the office environment where you get more stick. They always see how far they can push you, if someone tells a really sexist joke. it's always 'Go and tell [name] and see if she hits you!' It's always meant in the nicest possible way but you shouldn't really have to come across it. I don't know, I mean how much are you expected to put up with?  
*(Hayley)*

This is always the fallacy that people think 'How do women cope on site?' I've always found builders to be extremely pleasant [and] can't do enough for you. [It has been a] very enjoyable business working on site, never any problem. Other professionals I've had far more grief from *(Rita)*

In spite of there being a heightened awareness of gender and the visibility that accompanies being a woman in an extremely male-dominated environment, there is remarkably little comment about feminism from the women interviewed. When they did comment, it was usually along the lines of that reported by Greed (1991) by stating that they were not feminists in any way:

I'm not an architect because I'm trying to prove women can do it, I'm not remotely feminist or anything like that. I do it because I thought it would be the most interesting career when it came to choosing careers (*Cindy*)

I'm not a women's libber but I think we've got much more managerial type capability than men have. I think we're more proactive sometimes as well, if it's obvious that something needs to be done. I notice that with one of my colleagues here who is the support services manager and if you want anything done anywhere in this division you ask her and that happens to me a bit as well (*Pam*)

Sandra, who does admit to being a feminist, mentions it as if it were a problem:

The trouble is I end up being quite feminist because I think that women do have a tough role, they are expected to do a lot and time and time again you find that women have put themselves secondary to whatever the men's wishes are (*Sandra*)

Her feeling that women put themselves in second place to men and restrict their own careers is in line with Coward (1993), who accuses women of 'colluding' with men to perpetuate gender divisions. This is supported by Isabel who feels it would have a negative impact on her if she were to be seen as a feminist:

I'm not one for burning your bra anyway, I'm not that sort but quite honestly I think if you had that sort of attitude it would get up their noses anyway. I always thought it would go against me (*Isabel*)

During the interview, Isabel describes herself as 'one of the lads' and attributes her success and popularity to this:

I get away with murder, on site I always get my own way. I don't come away thinking 'Bugger, I wish I said ...' you know, I don't ever, I do get my own way. Most of 'em, to put it politely, want to take me out! Yeah they do. I'm one of the lads really (*Isabel*)

Isabel appears to thrive on being a woman in a man's world whereas Catherine takes this even further by saying she believes that it is women who actively prevent other women from succeeding:

Actually, I think women are their own worst enemies. I think you're probably worse off with a woman boss if you were trying to get promoted than a male boss, because I think women who've got on are more anti-women than men are ... It was always the boss's wife that was doing all right in a private practice, in my experience. And there were always those women who got on because of the way they looked, but that's life. It's a sad fact that the better looking you are, the better you do in anything  
*(Catherine)*

Paula once worked for a women-only architectural co-operative but has reacted against the ethos since leaving:

... I do try very hard not analyse everything in terms of feminist analysis because I think if you do you just can't carry on ... the women at [the co-operative], just because that organisation was set up very specifically about women in architecture, you couldn't help but address the problems all the time. They were coming to you with the issue all the time, they were expecting you to have a view. So in a way it's quite nice being able to say to myself there's no pressure on me to be the archetypal wonderful woman, the Shirley Conran of the architecture world!  
*(Paula)*

The architecture co-operative has a very strong feminist agenda as well as the objective of challenging the 'man-made' environment (Matrix 1984) and she found the constant emphasis on feminist issues somewhat demanding. It is apparent that there is a distinct lack of female solidarity among these women. Only Alex who is prepared to further the interests of women generally within

the profession. She has greater potential to do this than any of the others as she is course leader at a School of Architecture but even then she qualifies her statement by playing down her feminism:

My colleagues have got used to me reminding them, that when we think of a name we should be thinking of a woman not a man and I mean, it's taken me five years but they do now know me well enough to accept what I'm saying and to know that actually I'm not you know a strident sort of bouncing feminist. I just feel very strongly that you know we've got to give people equal chances (*Alex*)

It may be the case that surviving as a woman in a male-dominated environment involves so much energy and effort that there is no will left to fight for a cause such as feminism. However, discrimination and resistance are also played down to a surprising extent. This section has described and discussed how discrimination and resistance have occurred and been dealt with either by a perceived smart comment, conformity to stereotypical images, or by merely 'putting up with it'. In relation to sitework it is almost as if some form of resistance is to be expected because of being a female present in such a strongly masculine environment. The responses described are coping or survival strategies but none are going to change masculine attitudes. Indeed, there appears to be a marked reluctance to attempt to do this. Only one interviewee admitted to having taken formal action but asked that details be kept confidential. Perhaps, it represents too great a struggle as well as a great deal of unpleasantness.

There are twin difficulties in countering discrimination and resistance. Firstly, there are those intrinsic problems experienced by the woman herself in relation to the unpleasantness and in facing up the negative issues involved. Human nature is such that individuals seek to identify positive attributes in one another and ultimately want to believe in a just world. Furthermore, women are socialised to believe that achievement and competence are incompatible with femininity (Hyde 1985; Davey 1993).

Secondly, there are more extrinsic factors which may have an impact upon the woman's career. The architecture profession and building industry are incestuous, especially in a region like the East Midlands, with the existence of many formal and informal networks and social contacts. Word quickly spreads about an employee who causes 'problems'. Likewise, in the case of those who are self-employed or principals of practices, work and commissions are gained through reputation and so a professional image must be maintained.

Combined these intrinsic and extrinsic reasons attempt to explain why the gendered culture is perpetuated and not challenged. The slow increase in numbers of women entering the profession will not create the 'critical mass' (Carter and Kirkup 1990) of women necessary to instigate more rapid or significant change for many years.

## **The Work-Family Dilemma**

Of the 37 women, 22 had children and another one is currently pregnant. The two older women had the largest families with one having had five children and the other six. Two of the women in their fifties have four children. Of the younger women, the women in their 40's have a slightly greater number of children on average than those in the 30's age group but fewer were childless.

Some of those in their 30's mentioned that they wanted children but were waiting for the 'right time' but were unsure as to what they meant by this. The 30's appears to be the age range where the women begin to consider children which follows the general trend that professional women have their children later. However, no woman from any of the age groups mentioned that she had deliberately remained childless in order to concentrate on her career.

Women's roles as mothers must be the single most significant factor as to why their commitment to employment is doubted. It is a simple fact that it is the mother whose career is broken by the arrival of children purely because of it being the mother who gives birth. Even if she returns to work immediately, she is viewed differently in a way that is not applicable to men. In the majority of cases, the burden of childcare, either providing it or arranging it, falls upon the mother (Brannon and Moss 1991).

Women in high level careers, such as architecture, are often said to possess different attitudes towards motherhood, either delaying it or avoiding it altogether because the importance they place on their careers (Davidson and Cooper 1984; Marshall 1984). This is said to be because of the investment they have made in their careers (Hakim 1995, 1996). The age where consolidation of the career takes place coincides with a woman's childbearing years and if she does not want to be 'overtaken' by her male colleagues she must forgo or delay motherhood (Marshall 1984).

There was certainly no impression of motherhood being avoided among the women architects interviewed, although there are cases of it being delayed. However, it is also apparent that several of the women had never considered whether they actually wanted children. They had not had any specific desire to become mothers and had little concept of what it may entail:

When you're 18 you don't really think that far ahead (*Ellen*)

It is difficult because you're encouraged to have a career, you want a career but why should you have to give up having children? (*Heather*)

This gives another indication of the 'maleness' of the career path, in that mothering is not regarded as a relevant issue in society that careers can be built around it. It is where the extent of productive versus reproductive dichotomy becomes apparent. For Heather, above, the enormity of the dichotomy did not

become evident until she had her children and then was faced with this dilemma of how to manage her career around her family. For Isabel, the situation is similar but slightly different in that she has realised the extent of the problem prior to having children:

I've plodded on putting children and all that garbage behind me and I think 'Oh there's plenty of time for that' and I think you get to a stage where it hits you and you think 'Crikey what am I doing here?' you know and ... time passes by and time does fly and I'm at that stage at the minute ... I wouldn't want to leave it that late and it is difficult, at the minute I'm looking for someone to take the practice on. I don't want to close it down because we get a lot of good work but it's finding somebody who wants the responsibility ... you have got to be realistic, I mean I don't believe in farming kids out when they're young, I mean I think people have to do it. I appreciate that but I don't think I could ... I might get a kid and think 'Shit, I don't want this'. You see it is a dilemma, ... I don't know what you do ... I thought this in the last few weeks that there must be plenty people that had this dilemma (*Isabel*)

What is significant here, is that she is principal of a very successful practice but she is considering handing it on in order to give priority to children but at the same time she is understandably reluctant to lose her involvement with her work. There is no straightforward solution to her situation. She does not believe in handing over the care of her children to someone else in their early years but she has a thriving business which provides her with an income which is adequate to pay for childcare if she was happy with that option. Allen (1988) found that once a professional woman became a mother, she was likely to remain in the profession although not necessarily working full-time. This is supported by Brannon (1992), who shows that women who return to work were more likely

to have worked full-time prior to the birth of their child(ren), which is likely to be the case with professional women. Another significant fact is the evidence of the 'biological clock', Isobel mentions that the thought of having children had just been in the back of her mind but at the time of the interview, she was in her early 30's and suddenly it was in the forefront. Ellen was in her late 30's before deciding to have a child:

I didn't have her until my late 30's, so I wasn't interested earlier on. I was too busy! I began to think 'I'm getting on a bit, I ought to think about having a family' *(Ellen)*

Others had always intended to have a family and were happy to delay or adapt their career to accommodate children:

I never tend to think things through to that extent but I did want kids then. The man I was married to was quite a bit older than me so I wanted kids when he was relatively young. I wasn't that keen on working anyway so I thought of it as a way out! *(Rachel)*

I always knew that I would have a family, and when I started my course I remember my family were saying, "It's such a long course and then you'll finish and then you'll want to have a family." ... I knew that I would take some time out to have them, but I am putting him [baby] first. I've worked several years and I do feel that I did all that studying and I don't want to stop. I was planning on going back, I don't want to pack it in until I've finished having a family and then go back *(Gillian)*

Gillian mentions the attitude of her family who found it difficult to understand why she would want to spend seven years studying and investing in her human capital if she was going to have children. To some extent they are questioning

the point of spending time and effort in gaining professional qualifications if she is going to become a mother. Among those who have not yet had children, there appears to be this vague consideration of a family at some stage in the future similar to how Isabel describes how she thought that she had plenty of time:

At the moment I hate children so that's a bit difficult. I haven't met a nice one yet but then my mum said she hated kids .... At the moment it's not something I'm planning but it's also not something that I've said I definitely won't do but how on earth it would work, certainly not with the hours I'm working at the moment ... if I do decide to have kids, I'm 27 now and I wouldn't have them before I was 30 (*Sarah*)

If I was going to have a family then I always realised it would be later on in my life rather than sooner. I don't feel pressurised at the moment (*Alison*)

Cindy seems to have given it more thought than most of the others:

I do want to have a family, I'm not married yet or anything but it's all in the plan and I have no idea how that would work ... but whether I could actually be a mother and do the job I do, I have no idea. I think the answer is not very easily. If you're running a job [an on-site project] you need to be there to answer queries ... you've got to be available. You can't say 'I'm sorry I'm not here for 3 days' so either your career suffers or you end up going back to work full-time. I don't know how that would work. I think if I had children I'd like to bring them up myself, that's just from the feeling that I would have things to offer children that it would be a shame if I didn't. I think I would probably like to go to work ... I'm much more cautious than if you'd asked me that about 2 years ago. Then I would have just assumed that I'd have a family and just go back to work but now having seen other people do it, I think 'Well I'd hate to send my child off to nursery'. I'd want to be involved (*Cindy*)

What is apparent is that working in a profession, like architecture, where a significant investment in human capital has been made and a representative level

of commitment to the profession is being made, does not preclude women from wanting to become mothers, in the way that Hakim (1995, 1996, 1998) argues. Nor does motherhood mean that they want to switch to a 'homemaker' career. What they are looking for is a balance between the two, as Ginn *et al* (1996) maintain that women can be equally committed to their career and their family. Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1993) suggest this as an alternative lifestyle option to the dichotomous views put forward by Hakim. They introduce a third option which allows equal importance to both career and family. However, this is the most stressful option (Marshall 1984; Davidson and Cooper 1987) but is more realistic than the polar alternatives of following either the productive or reproductive careers. Loren is having to deal with the various issues sooner than she intended as she has become pregnant soon after starting a new job:

I'm actually pregnant ... so I'll actually be stopping work for a bit in December ... that's quite a difficult thing because that wasn't my initial intention to move back from London and to get a job, become pregnant and settle down, it all happened rather quickly and ... I mean people have been very good about it ... I think their reaction is maybe 'Well this is one of the reasons we don't [employ many women]' 'cos I've not been here that long and I'm going to be leaving. I'll stop for a bit, for the statutory 18 weeks and go back to work again ... I'm going to leave my options open here but I'm actually moving house as well, that's going to be in Leicester so I might try and get a job there and then obviously you have to look into the issues of part-time work and things, maybe initially. I don't know how well that will be received but that's a thing to approach at a later date. The alternative is to do a bit more sort of contract work, which will probably be a good way of working around it (*Loren*)

Loren currently is a salaried architect within a practice where there is little scope for part-time or other more flexible forms of employment. She also

mentions that she feels that this is one of the reasons why her practice (a large national practice) does not employ many women. She is considering the possibility of contract work as a means of combining work with motherhood, in spite of its insecurity. However, as Joshi (1987) points out, once women have adopted such work patterns, the material consequences of loss of status, low pay and poor employment conditions, tend to remain in place for the rest of their working lives.

Those who have had children have varying experiences of the extent of the adjustment to their career. The impression gained is one of women having their children and 'waiting and seeing' what the impact of the children would be. Having children involves such major change that it is impossible to gauge one's reaction until the situation arises, as Heather discusses when she describes returning to work after the birth of her second child:

I found it easier to come back the second time than the first time because the first time, I suppose I thought you have this idea that you've had the baby and you want to look after the baby, but after you've had a taste of being at home for say two or three months then you're like thinking 'Well it's not everything to be at home' so that's one of the reasons that I've come back. The other is financial, I think on an architect's salary I can afford a nursery because obviously you have to earn above a certain amount to make it worthwhile ... Obviously our finances are structured to our income and you'd have to have quite a change to our lifestyle to do that ... I found that when I had two close together, the eldest was potty training at the same time as I had a new baby and things were just so harassed. I was so pleased to come back to work and they could go to nursery ... I must say before I had children I had quite an opposite view about taking them to nursery and carrying on working. My friend had two children and carried on working and they went to a childminder and I thought it was sad that she never took them for their injections. You do

have this preconceived idea but on the other hand when you're at home with a young child ... *(Heather)*

Hayley knew she wanted to return to work full-time after the birth of her daughter but is keeping her options open about her future work plans:

... family-wise we certainly want another one and that may be the time when I decide full-time is not what I want, I don't know. I thought I would come back full-time after [child] was born just to see how I went but to be honest it's working fine and I'll keep it like that for now. It depends when we have number two, we'll play it by ear *(Hayley)*

I had all sorts of plans in my head about working from home but when you've got a baby you can't do that, you've just got to look after the baby. You cannot sit the baby down and say 'Right you do that'. Life's not like that! I tried to take some work home when they'd got chicken pox but I just couldn't do it. They really have to be at nursery or somewhere *(Heather)*

There had been contrasting reactions from their employers:

They have stressed that they will be flexible to my requirements but by the same token I don't want to be singled out to be getting special treatment because we only have one other female member of the technical staff in the four offices and she's a technician, I'm the only architect they've got who's female and I almost went out of my way when I was pregnant just to prove it wasn't making any difference to my work ... some of it is just me being stubborn, trying to prove to them it doesn't have to be the end of the world to have a baby and it doesn't have to make you any less good at your work *(Hayley)*

Whilst her employers were being accommodating, she felt it difficult to enjoy as she was trying to prove that she did not need what may have been seen by colleagues as concessions. Effectively, she feels she is having to prove herself in

a way that was not required before she had her child even though her employers appear to be a great deal more enlightened:

Well, a lot of them have working wives and some of them are the second breadwinner, their wives are earning more so they're a little more open minded. *(Hayley)*

Heather experienced a different reaction from her employers:

I'd expect the people with children to be more understanding but they're not really, in fact they're probably much harder on me. I think people who do have children, whose wives have stayed at home, tend to take the attitude that you can't do it all ... It shouldn't make any difference but it does, to how your career progresses. If you read all the maternity jargon, it's supposed to be continuous employment but it's not seen like that. It's seen as a career break even if you take the minimum amount of time like I did. Having children does damage your career *(Heather)*

This indicates that it is the personal experiences of the (male) employers which serve to form their opinions about working mothers, with the outcome that not only must women confront male exclusionary practices in the workplace but also in the home. Even though Hayley's employers have been accommodating and flexible, she still feels that being a mother has impacted upon her career in that she has had a biological restriction placed upon her:

I would probably, though in hindsight, have moved on from here sometime ago [but] at the moment I don't feel I can because of having another child I don't want to start another job and not be able to get my extended maternity leave and all the rest of it, really until I finish having my family I'm stuck here. Not that I want to move but you just feel stuck, a bit sort of restricted in that respect but you've got to be practical about these things. It's a biological restriction and we can't do anything about it and while we don't have the opportunity for the husband to take the

extended paternity leave to let you go back to work, you don't have much choice really (*Hayley*)

Heather rationalises this further along the lines of a total attitude shift that occurs as a result of parenthood:

A few years ago I could have been very definite and said 'Oh I want this, this and this' but now I've got children it does put it in a whole different light. I think it does for men as well. I'm sure it's not just for women that your whole attitude changes, your outlook on life changes when you've got children (*Heather*)

The experiences that have been described so far have been those of two women employed within practices. The idea of some form of moral obligation to the practice comes across strongly and neither of these interviewees appears to feel particularly fulfilled with this combination of work and family.

It's very difficult once you get to having the children. Most architectural practices are very limited in the way they view working. You get there at nine, you stay there until five thirty, you have this rigid one hour lunch, you have very short holidays, and there is actually no scope for anything else ... the private practice, it's in the dark ages in terms of employment culture. It does not suit women at all. It's all right if you're a young woman, and you're no different from the young men, but once you start having a family it's impossible (*Kim*)

Alex also illustrates the difficulties in maintaining a balance between work and family:

What I probably ought to say about the whole of my career and probably other people have as well is that the battle to keep ... to be obsessive about work and keep a home and family going and happy is very very

difficult. It is partly because I'm pretty hopeless at keeping work within check, I mean I do recognise that but family is just as important and I think that if I was to say one thing about the shape of my working career it's been because it's always been possible for me to keep it going whatever stage my children were at (*Alex*)

The fact that she refers to trying to maintain this balance as 'a battle' is indicative of employment issues relating to women. It reflects the struggle to contribute fully in the work environment but, at the same time, maintain a full role as a mother in a way that does not apply to men (Parasuraman and Greenhaus 1993; Marshall 1984; Davidson and Cooper 1987). In spite of these women working in a high level profession, where it may be expected that traditional gender roles may not be quite so entrenched, there is little evidence to suggest that this may be the case. There is only Kim whose husband has more than a minimal role in the running of the home and care of the family. He works from home and is able to care for the younger children who are not yet at school but attend playgroup:

He works from home and sorts out the kids out too. He's actually got quite a hard job these days because two of them are still not at school yet, the other two start in September, so things will get slightly easier ...  
(*Kim*)

... and then of course, I can be flexible as well, I'm not going to sack me if I start late. So if she can't do it, I take the kids down to nursery and put the answer phone on, and I'm back in the office by twenty past nine or something like that. It's got to the point now where I have an understanding with clients and builders and people like that. people just don't phone me between sort of five to nine and twenty past nine (*Kim's husband – a sole practitioner working from home*)

In spite of her husband being able to provide some of the childcare, the family struggles financially:

... the way we actually work it at the moment, we have two kids at play school for half a day everyday, and the other half of the day they're at home with Alan ... and we're paying for that, because we don't have any free nurseries here. There's actually no money available then to pay for additional childcare on top of that. It's ridiculous that we're two very well qualified people, and potentially earning money, but we actually can't afford childcare (*Kim*)

Whilst Alex talks about the battle to maintain the home-work balance and Kim highlights the struggle to obtain childcare, there is the issue of time and being able to spend time with their family which provides yet another difficulty. The time aspect is two-dimensional in that there is the issue of having enough time to keep the home running smoothly and then also having enough time to spend with family members which provides the greater conflict. Paid help can, and is used, by the women who wanted and could afford it which provides a means of freeing up time to spend either on more work or with the family in what Hochschild (1997) refers to as 'women's uneasy love affair with capitalism'.

There are those women who choose not to use paid help to help reduce this problem with time but who struggle on trying to manage home and work. Lisa describes how, as a mother, her family depend on her own ability to cope and provide a balancing influence within the home:

I'm very aware of the amount of time I have to give to the office. I take work home every night, and I have to be very careful that I'm fit and

healthy and can cope with it. Because if you're grumpy at home, the world's grumpy. Anybody else is allowed to be grumpy, but you're not. It's just the way with females in the family, that's just the way it seems to be. So I find it very difficult sometimes *(Lisa)*

Her husband has, in the past, worked long hours and the burden of keeping the home going fell on her but more recently he is working less which coincides with her becoming senior partner in a practice. However, while he has begun to carry out more of the domestic activities, the responsibility for organising the family still lies with her:

I work longer hours than he does now, and yet the things at home that get done are more done by me than [him] ... it's a common sense sort of thing. If you ask him to do something he'll definitely do it, but I suppose I'm asking him to do more things as well. If home is not organised then work isn't organised as well *(Lisa)*

She talks of the need to have homelife organised in order to cope with work but as mentioned earlier, there are also the demands of just spending time with family members, of providing 'relationship' time which cannot be bought in the way that domestic help can:

It's very difficult trying to maintain the balance, and, of course, everybody has – I suppose the thing I find the most difficult is having four kids and a husband, they all want individual time with me. And when they're all at home, that's incredibly difficult, all five of them ... [the eldest two are at university and] might ring up and you'll be half an hour on the phone, and that's to the exclusion of all ... well, obviously, if they're on the end of the phone, you just talk to them, but sometimes you find that they're almost waiting for you ... it's like being here, somebody's waiting to speak with you, they just want time with you and you've got to get on, you've got to do things. And just to be patient and make yourself available, because obviously you've got to talk to them and be with them *(Lisa)*

This point is also reiterated by Irina and Stephanie:

I'm missing my children really, and [the baby] especially, is really active, I spend some time with [my daughter], I don't spend any time with [my baby]. I spent two months [with him] then I went back to work. Sometimes I'm really missing him ... I'm not worrying about him because I know he's in good hands, he's with his grandmother, so that's encouraging me ... it's tiring (*Irina*)

As soon as [the children] go to secondary school I'll do more. I can see that it will get easier but I sometimes feel guilty because sometimes in the evenings I go to see clients because that's convenient for them and convenient for me and I've been doing rather a lot of that recently. So I'm feeling that I'm not around so much for the kids in the evening. That's always the way when you've got children, you either go for it, for your career and get the childminder and run round like a maniac (*Stephanie*)

The high number of self-employed and principals of practices among the interviewees allows comparisons to be made with those who have more control over their working lives and those who are employed within practices and who are more restricted regarding flexibility. Geraldine is one of the sole practitioners who chose this option as a way of combining motherhood and children. She realises that she has sacrificed a mainstream career but is trying to adapt her present situation to accommodate both roles:

You don't really begrudge the time with your child but at the same time you don't like the way it changes people's perspective of you. It's not a question of feeling you're better than anyone else, just a feeling that you've tried hard to achieve things you want something out of life and suddenly because you've had a child everybody assumes that's it, you don't want anymore but what was the point of training you for that? Well I think this is what I'm going through at the moment ... I've still got 20 years in a working environment, but it just suddenly makes you think the traditional career course isn't really for if you've got kids. You've got to juggle it a

little bit and it's finally sunk in after four years that my career will progress under my own steam ... it [self-employment] fits in quite nicely with my role as mummy which I do consider to be extremely important but I like having other things to do ... the idea of the great career woman who has this fabulous career, you know, wonderful home, 2.2 children I don't know where it exists! I'm sure something must suffer! (*Geraldine*)

Sandra also became a sole practitioner in order to combine work and motherhood but it was not through choice. She had worked for a local authority prior to her child being born and wanted to work part-time following the birth but met with resistance from her boss:

I had a child and applied to, under NALGO's requirements, work part-time. My boss said 'We don't want any part-timers in this office' so I had to take them to a tribunal. It took a while to come about and in the meantime I didn't know whether I'd got a job or not so I was looking around. When the tribunal met, it was NALGO's representative and panel of councillors, the councillors said they felt I should be given a six month trial period. I was the only person in that office who won any design awards, I knew I could work a lot faster and harder than the other people there. I was very disappointed because some of my work colleagues, who I considered my friends, apparently went to my boss and said they didn't want me to work part-time because they'd have to answer my phone and to me quite a lot of them were out of the office anyway and I had to answer their phone. So they said they should give me a six month trial period so I felt I'd won or was at least justified (*Sandra*)

In spite of local authorities being found by Fogarty *et al* (1981) to have a lower incidence of discrimination against women as well as policies in place and recourse to unions, Sandra still found a negative reaction to her request for part-time working. Fogarty *et al*'s work (1981) shows that practice-based employment is the most accommodating for women who want to combine working with caring for a family but the evidence presented earlier suggests

otherwise. It appears to be those with their own practices, either as a principal or sole practitioner, who find it easiest to combine the two roles in a way that they have most control over. This is not to say that it is the best solution but it certainly represents a compromise situation. Ella was principal of her own practice while her five children were young. Her offices were part of the home and while she had full-time childcare, she arranged to spend time each day with her children:

I had a daily help who went home at five. I mean this sound like luxury that I was only working nine til five and I could manage but I know I burned the midnight oil afterwards ... but I was able to stop office work at five o'clock and deal with the family and cook an evening meal (*Ella*)

Ella was the sole earner in the family for a number of years while her husband was articled as a trainee surveyor<sup>12</sup>. When he was finally able to earn enough to support the family, she decided to 'retire' aged 41:

... the alternative would have been to have gone back to being a salaried architect but then I would have lost the contact with my family. I was really only able to do it because I was working from home and that fitted in with everything else (*Ella*)

She was in the fortunate position of being able to make a choice, without it being influenced to a great extent by financial constraints, in order to spend time with her family.

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<sup>12</sup> At the time (following the Second World War) it was customary for the trainee to have to pay for his/her own training and to support themselves.

One of the plus sides of operating as a sole practitioner or principal in order to accommodate childcare needs, is the opportunity to obtain projects through contacts made through having children. The scope is provided by having access to a different range of potential clients. Thus, the sole practitioner or principal is not in direct competition with others for industrial or commercial projects, which although have the benefit of being more lucrative are also much more demanding regarding time. Olivia, for example, talks of picking up jobs “at the school gates”. Stephanie also is asked to take on projects through her involvement with her children’s activities:

I meet people in the street and they feel comfortable talking to me about it, the women do whereas they would never feel comfortable walking across the threshold of an architect’s office because they would feel that’s going to cost them money. I always say the first consultation is free ... a lot of people are frightened of going to an architect thinking it’s going to be megabucks ... or they just want something small. So that has helped and I’m gradually building up a sort of reputation in the area (*Stephanie*)

These women, who have adapted their working arrangements in order to accommodate their children, are involved in the profession to a lesser extent than their contemporaries who are employed full-time in practices. There is the distinct impression of compromise and, what is referred to by economists as, satisficing behaviour. This is where there is more than one aim, it may not be possible to maximise both or all of them so some form of compromise must be reached. Satisficing behaviour is achieved when targets for individual aims are at a level where the aims can be achieved simultaneously but also at a point

where they are still applicable as aims (Sloman 1991). These women want to follow a career but on their own terms, at the same time they want to care for their families. A significant majority said it was important to them to care for their own children, that 'there is no point in having them if you weren't going to be there for them'. They are aiming for the twin objectives of being successful in their career and successful as mothers (Parasuraman and Greenhaus 1993).

This does not follow the 'standard' career pattern, which because of its 'maleness' denies the existence of children or, perhaps more accurately, the desire of a parent to care for their own children. Research is thus necessary to establish men's career aims and objectives and the extent to which they conflict with their roles as fathers. Traditional models of employment have so far ignored the existence of the parenting role from the point of view of the father.

Contemporary employment policies are starting to recognise that men do want to be more involved as fathers and that they are also willing to adapt their working lives to suit (New Ways to Work 1995). What is lacking, however, is respect for and acceptance of those who opt for alternative or non-standard arrangements. While this research is attempting to illustrate that alternative forms of working can and do operate successfully, it does not deny that there remain significant obstacles to the universal acceptance and understanding of the various different ways of combining work and family.

## **A 'Rewarding' Career?**

This chapter has examined a variety of issues relating to women's employment within the architecture profession. It has looked at the financial rewards and found that they do not compare favourably with other comparable professions. The salaries of the women interviewed do not even meet the national average for the profession of £27,700, with the highest paid only having received £24,000. It was also reported that pay cuts had taken place during the difficult years during the recession of the early 1990's and that salaries were only just reaching the pre-recession levels.

In spite of this, a number of those interviewed stated that they were not motivated by financial gain. The non-monetary rewards from seeing their designs being built and being involved with a project from inception to completion provided a level of satisfaction able to compensate for the low salaries. Denise mentions the feeling of having made an impact by designing a building which is likely to last for a considerable length of time. The satisfaction of meeting a client's needs is also recompense for the lack of financial reward. Several interviewees mention this especially in relation to their work for clients requiring architectural work on their homes. Olivia finds the domestic clients more rewarding to work for as she talks of bringing dreams to fruition while

Paula, who is involved with social housing, feels she is meeting altruistic and social conscience needs.

The emphasis that architecture, as a profession, has placed on social conscience has, in turn, affected its professional standing. Other less socially aware and more commercially-minded professions have entered the market and become established at performing many of the functions traditionally performed by the architect. In spite of all holding membership of the RIBA, the interviewees hold negative opinions of the professional body and are concerned at the way the profession and its status are being eroded. In turn this affects their personal identity as architects because of the interlinkages of the public and private lives associated with professional employment.

One aspect of identity which cannot be overlooked, and indeed forms a central tenet of this thesis, is that of gender. The women talked at great length about what it means to be a woman in a male-dominated environment, how it impacts in their lives, in the way they dress and act. However, feminism is played down and a feminist approach is not used as a strategy. Instead, there is more of an impression of conformity as a result of professional socialisation. As women, there is also greater consideration of the work-family link, in a way that would not appear in a similar study featuring men and their work. In spite of literature indicating that highly qualified women tend to delay motherhood or even choose

not to have children at all, none of the interviewees indicated that they would definitely not have children. Sarah, who admits to not liking children, has not ruled out completely the possibility of having a family later. Others had entered the profession always intending to have children and accept that their career is going to take second place for a time. However, they do mention that, throughout their early adult lives, they had been totally unaware that they were going to have to make a decision as to the extent that parenthood is going to affect their career.

What is apparent is that there is an acceptance of the fact that women have the 'double-bind' of work and home responsibilities. This is not challenged in an overt way. Perhaps by being in a male-dominated profession, they will act as role models to others but there is no evidence of any direct challenge to the structure and culture of the profession. The career patterns illustrated in Chapter six exist as the most appropriate strategy for combining family and work, and this area would benefit from further research in to male career patterns within professions to look for areas of comparison and contrast.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusions**

### **Women's Career Commitment**

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate women's commitment to a career within the architecture profession using a variety of perspectives pertaining to women's employment. It attempted not just to provide an overview of what it is like to work in a male-dominated profession but to establish why the women wanted to become architects, how they became architects, how their professional lives have developed and why they remain in the profession in spite of the obstacles they face in becoming qualified and constructing a career. Previous research into professional women's careers has focused on providing a 'snapshot' of a particular aspect of women's careers at the time of the research being carried out or using comparative studies between professions to identify similarities and points of contrast.

Where this research aims to go deeper is through examining the careers of a group of professional women architects, it looks at the fusion of personal and professional lives. By examining why these women entered the profession and the rewards that attract them, it provides a deeper meaning of the career. It gives a clearer account of what it means to be a woman in a high-commitment profession. This cannot be provided by consideration of factors analysed in isolation. It is, therefore, necessary to study the whole career in its individual context and within its position in the life of the individual.

A contextual background is provided in chapters two and three to outline the many barriers and obstacles that women face in order to follow such a career. In particular, debates such as those articulated by Crompton (Crompton and Sanderson 1986, 1990a, 1990b; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Crompton and Harris 1998) and Hakim (1995, 1996, 1998), provide a contemporary representation which focuses on women's commitment to their careers and their orientations to work. Women are said to be committed to their career if they have invested in qualifications and training (Hakim 1995,1996) and work full-time (Hakim 1995, 1996; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996). They are said to be uncommitted if they attempt to combine work and family (Hakim 1995, 1996, 1998) and if they work part-time (Hakim 1995, 1996; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996). The women interviewed for this research present a difficulty in that they have invested in professional qualifications and training and so could be classified as committed, however many of them have working arrangements other than full-time and several are trying to combine both work and family commitments.

Within Hakim's definitions these women would be grouped as 'drifters' or 'adaptives' (Hakim 1996, 1998) but this is a pejorative term in that it disregards the investment they have made in their careers and doubts their commitment to work or family. She argues that women have preferences for either family or work (Hakim 1998) and that any attempt to combine the two "defies explanation" (Hakim 1996:213) which serves to undermine the status of women

in denying them the preference of both work and family. Contemporary employment trends are towards reduced work commitments and greater family involvement by parents (Raabe 1998; New Ways to Work 1995) and this is supported by current government policy.

Historically, professional employment for women architects has presented a multiplicity of problems. During the early period of 'professionalisation' women were barred from taking up professional membership, in spite of their having already practised architecture in a philanthropic capacity. They did not have access to the education necessary to gain professional qualifications and were also prevented from working by the 'marriage bar'. In the cases where they were permitted to pursue employment, there existed a system of gender segregation within practices in order to 'preserve modesty'.

The class system prevented women from working in professions because only working class women worked and professional employment was essentially middle-class because of the educational requirements for qualification. Even following the Second World War, schools of architecture operated a quota system to prevent too many women from gaining architectural qualifications and, thus, occupying 'men's jobs'. The more general obstacles to women's work, not restricted specifically to architecture compounded these difficulties. Patriarchy, class and systems of occupational segregation have presented their own restrictions on women's employment and, despite legislation in place to

prevent overt discrimination, there are still deeply entrenched cultural barriers in place, most notably questioning women's commitment to their career.

Commitment to a career has become inextricably linked with the time spent working, with the assumption being 'the more, the better'. This association serves to create a division between those who can spend longer periods of time working and those who cannot, or do not wish to. The result is that those who spend more time working are considered to be more committed than those who do not. Women especially are affected by this arbitrary measure of commitment as men are generally more likely to be in a position to work more hours (Hewitt 1993; Noon and Blyton 1997), although whether this is through choice or because it has become an accepted 'norm' is unclear.

Architecture requires a seven-year period of study prior to qualification and, by definition, this must demonstrate significant commitment in itself. However, the same criteria apply with women's commitment being doubted. The gendered subtext present within the studying process presents a series of obstacles in the way of women. The inherent masculinity which governs the path to qualification produces an early insight in to potential future difficulties. Women are disadvantaged by the means of assessment of their design work, through the 'crit' process and by the fact that there are very few women involved in teaching within schools of architecture. This subtext to some extent accounts for by the high dropout rate during the studying process which was mentioned by many of

the interviewees. In part, they may have been seeking to reinforce and emphasise their own commitment by highlighting the negative aspects of the qualification process. As women are present in smaller numbers, they are more visible if they drop out and the assumption is that they cannot cope which is not necessarily the case as many continue to use their education and training in some way, either as architectural technicians or in some other way (Tancred 1998).

The time taken to qualify is, in part, determined by whether suitable employment can be found, providing the necessary experience. Economic conditions have presented a particular difficulty throughout the careers of the women interviewed. Reduced workloads have meant that practices have not been able to offer students placements for their year out or employment following completion of the postgraduate diploma.

The difficulties experienced in finding a first post are highlighted in Chapter Five, as is the idea of career development. An important feature identified here is the lack of forward planning which takes place within the career. Much of what results is a reaction to the circumstances that surround a particular situation rather than as a carefully thought out course of action, thus emphasising the weakness of Hakim's (1998) preference theory in which she argues that women develop their career according to a set of preferences. However, she does not allow for preferences changing, intervention by external

forces or offer an explanation for how preferences are reached at the outset. What is apparent here is the interaction between the individual and their environment making use of the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977). This is reflected throughout this research and a strong theme which emerges is that women's career commitment and orientations are determined by preferences but that these preferences are themselves determined by influences and conditions prevailing in the external environment.

The employment patterns seen within the profession are, to a large extent, attributed to the economic conditions which have prevailed across the construction industry and property sector in recent years. A rather paradoxical situation results, in that the nature of employment within the construction industry is appropriate for the adoption of flexible forms of working, with work being project-based, but the construction industry is traditionally male-dominated and evidence indicates that men are less oriented towards alternative forms of working (Hakim 1995). One of the interviewees does make the point that perhaps women are more suited to contemporary employment conditions than their male counterparts because they are more accepting of non-standard careers.

Within the confines of what are held to be the 'standard' models of employment if women are to adapt their working lives in a temporal sense, they are then assumed to have opted out of a career and transferred in to the 'uncommitted' sector (Hakim 1995, 1996; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996). However, this thesis argues that this is

not necessarily the case within the architecture profession. There is a strong indication that the two dominant employment models are too polar and greater attention should be paid to alternative forms of career structure. Because women's career paths do not tend to follow an unbroken progression up the ladder, they may display greater diversity due to the necessity to be able to 'juggle' several commitments. Perhaps also, women are not constrained by the convention of continued, permanent employment and are more prepared to adopt something that is considered 'non-standard'. Many of architects interviewed would correspond to Hakim's (1996, 1998) classification of 'drifters' or 'adaptives'. However, this serves to devalue the investment that they have made in their careers and undermines their professional commitment solely on the basis that they have adopted a non-standard form of working arrangement which allows them to devote time both to their work and their families.

Much of what is accounted for as women's lack of commitment to their work, shown by the adoption of non-standard working arrangements, can be explained as being the impact of external influences. Economic conditions have played a major role in determining the types of careers and trajectories of career paths for the women interviewed. Whilst, on the face of it, it would seem that many of the interviewees had opted for non-standard forms of employment with the related association with the secondary employment sector, they in fact arose as a direct result of the recessions which have impacted upon the industry. Within the contemporary debates on women's work patterns, Hakim (1995, 1996,

1998) focuses on women's preferences as explaining their orientation to work, while others emphasise structural factors (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Crompton and Harris 1998; Ginn *et al* 1996; Bruegel 1996) as acting as a constraint. However, little attention has been paid within these debates as to the influence of economic conditions as a structural constraint with the focus instead on gendered barriers such as patriarchy and exclusion.

The high incidence of non-standard working in the form of self-employment can also in part be attributed to the fact that it is very difficult for a woman to progress within an architectural practice as well as a response to the difficult economic conditions. Thus, it represents an alternative way in that women can succeed. There has been a huge growth in female-owned businesses and self-employment for both men and women indicates that this can no longer be considered 'non-standard' employment as it has been in the past (Felstead and Jewson 1999).

Self-employment allows women to work on their own terms. It allows them to be involved with life outside of work, which was frowned upon in the past, as it signalled lack of commitment. Quality of life is important to the women interviewed. They want to raise their own children but also want a rewarding career. The high incidence of self-employment may reflect a move away from the idea that career management means progression upwards through the organisation and towards the individual developing their own professional life in order to achieve

a wider range of objectives. The 'ownership' of the career belongs to the individual instead of the organisation. The interviewees spoke of feeling in control of their careers and of enjoying the flexibility that self-employment brought.

This theme is further examined in chapter seven where the meaning of the career to the individual women is discussed. The closeness of the relationship between personal and professional identity signifies the fusion between the individual and career and is further illustrated by the extent to which the rewards from the career are more in terms of personal satisfaction than they are monetary. In financial terms, architecture is poorly paid in comparison with careers in accountancy and law which have similar routes to qualification. Instead, the rewards are intrinsic arising from making a contribution to the built environment to achieving gratification from the building users. The lack of financial rewards may, in part, contribute to the existence of the multiplicity of work patterns in that there is not the same trade-off in terms of time and money as there is in other more highly paid professions. If monetary rewards are relatively low then there is the possibility that quality of life issues and life outside work become more important.

A further insight in to the life outside work is given through the discussion of the work-family dilemma. Again, the working arrangements of the sole practitioners are highlighted here in terms of being able to accommodate the needs of a family along with a career. Those who are employed in practices

describe a much bleaker situation regarding the conflicting demands of their family and career. These women talk of the long hours they have to work, the 'battle' to maintain the home-work balance and the difficulty in finding time to spend with their children.

In contrast, the sole practitioners and principals of practice report a better balance, being able to adapt their working lives in order to attend speech days, sports days and the like. This is not just the case for those women with children, several sole practitioners are either childless or have no dependent children and choose to work in a non-standard way to enable them to pursue activities away from architecture. The sole practitioner option was not necessarily the route they intended to pursue but represents a feasible way to manage their career and family or other commitments. A key feature which becomes apparent is that these women, in spite of having gained high level professional qualifications and who, according to the 'standard' models of employment display characteristics of the 'committed' worker, are not prepared to sacrifice any aspect of their family lives in contrast to Hakim's (1995, 1996, 1998) conclusions. The 'double-bind' of women's working lives is accepted as being an outcome of their gender.

The level of acceptance of gender-related barriers and difficulties by the women interviewed is a surprising outcome of the research. Given that these women are highly committed to their profession, they seem reluctant to challenge the

overwhelming masculinity in terms of both structure and culture of the profession. They are also keen not to be seen as projecting too strong a feminist image while strongly believing in their equal rights to opportunities. The pervasive masculinity surrounding the profession and the building industry does little to alleviate the situation with the lack of a 'critical mass' (Carter and Kirkup 1990) of women meaning that each individual woman is more visible. The issue of visibility is one which is mentioned frequently throughout the interviews with many of the women reporting that they have been subject to comments from colleagues within the workplace or on site about their clothing and personality.

Three interviewees reported the opposite scenario of invisibility where they have been deliberately overlooked because of their gender. This is by means of not being invited to corporate occasions such as golfing days, not being asked to introduce themselves at meetings because the assumption is that they are only there to take minutes and having questions directed to a male student who accompanied them to a meeting despite being the principal of the practice. The additional pressure and stress created by taking an overt feminist stance is perhaps too great in addition to the demands of the career itself. Furthermore, the existence of the strong formal and informal networks within the industry mean that career prospects and project opportunities can be damaged by negative reports on personal reputations.

## **The Contribution of this Research**

The contribution made by this research is that it challenges the polarity of the 'standard' models of employment and the notion that commitment to a career must be demonstrated in terms of time spent working or via progression within an organisation. The central issue arising from the research is that there is a need for greater acknowledgement and acceptance of non-standard and gender-free forms of working without the accompanying questioning of commitment.

This thesis indicates that these women are not making a choice between family and career, as the 'standard' models of employment indicate. They expect to have both and to adapt both working life and family life to accommodate each other. However, these women are dismissed as 'defying explanation' (Hakim 1996:213). The 'standard' models of employment are too polar when they consider commitment to either career *or* family. Attempting to combine the two is the most stressful option but there is a strong sense of satisfaction among those who feel they have achieved the best balance or compromise between career and family.

This research has shown that some women adopt non-standard working arrangements in order to accommodate the dual demands of career and family. However, this research also shows that there are those women who have adopted non-standard forms of employment for reasons other than family. Non-standard employment is a feature of the architectural profession, with 50% of

the practitioners operating as sole practitioner or principals of practice (RIBA 1998). If half the profession operates in this way, then can this form of practising continue to be referred to as non-standard? For women, the assumption of family commitments or lack of commitment to their career is given as the justification. However, as this work has shown, women can and do remain committed to their career even though they do not necessarily follow a standard career path.

The women interviewed for this research could almost all be categorised as 'drifters' or 'adaptives' (Hakim 1996, 1998). In spite of their having invested in their qualifications and careers, they are also committed to activities other than work whether it is family, sport or otherwise. Even Sarah who works the longest hours as a director of a practice and who states in her interview that she does not like children and who must, in principle, be seen as conforming to the idea of the 'committed' worker, has not ruled out the possibility that one day she may want children. This would cause her to move in to the 'adaptive' category but where Hakim's (1996, 1998) and Crompton and Le Feuvre's (1996) work falls short is that they do not explain how workers choose to be 'committed' or 'uncommitted' in the first instance. Life cycle events are not considered and the categories of 'committed', 'uncommitted' and 'drifter/adaptive' are seemingly static and unable to accommodate change.

Throughout the interviews the theme of adapting to accommodate change, whether planned or imposed, is highlighted. For example, Loren was expecting an unplanned baby at the time of the interview, prior to this she seemingly resembled a 'committed' worker but following her maternity leave intends to work either part-time or on short term contracts thus becoming an 'uncommitted' worker in spite of her remaining in the profession and continuing to use her qualifications and training. This contrasts with the work of Crompton and Sanderson (1990b) who argue that women choose a career which offers them the working options that they seek at the outset. This supposition assumes that women have a definitive life plan at an early stage which they then adhere to. Again the weakness of this is illustrated in this research, within the discussion of the career planning process.

A high number of the interviewees had experienced periods of unemployment and redundancy providing a further illustration of adapting their career to accommodate change. The majority of those interviewed had chosen self-employment as a response to unemployment however as the interviewees were selected from RIBA records the sample did not include those who had exited the profession and no longer held professional membership so effectively those interviewed were 'survivors'. Conversely, the cohort of interviewees did include three who were no longer practising but who had retained professional membership as they felt they had earned it and it contributed to their identity.

The concept of identity is an important feature when considering what is 'more' to the concept of commitment than hours worked or work orientations. While these provide more easily 'measurable' indicators of commitment, as discussed in chapter two, they possess inherent faults as they disregard the fusion between the individual and profession and whether or not the individual considers her/himself to be committed to her/his work. Gerstl and Hutton (1966) contend that there are a number of less easily measurable indicators of commitment including attitudes towards the profession, membership of a professional body and the meaning of the profession to the individual in her/his everyday life. As shown throughout this thesis the interviewees demonstrate a high level of engagement with the architecture profession by remaining within it despite significant barriers and obstacles to their career development and progression. These are used in conjunction with the existence of the multiplicity of forms of work organisation to argue that commitment to a career within a profession cannot be determined solely on the basis of the 'committed/uncommitted' polar views of employment.

This thesis argues that forms of work organisation exist on a continuum between the two poles and to attempt to ascribe the work patterns of women to either of the poles devalues the initial investment in training and qualifications as well as denying women who choose to have children the opportunity to be considered committed to a career. Commitment considered purely on the basis

of hours worked is a groundless value judgement which disregards the meaning of the work in terms of the fusion between the individual and profession.

Thus the contribution made by this thesis is that it argues that commitment to a career must be seen in broader terms than just working patterns. Personal and professional identity with the profession, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards gained from participation and continuance within the profession are all indicators of commitment which must also be taken in to account.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Where this thesis takes the 'committed/uncommitted' models of employment and argues that they are limited in the inferences that can be made about women's career commitment and orientation to work, it provides grounds for examining commitment in a wider context. This is an area which would benefit from further research in two ways.

Firstly, including men in a study would give a basis for comparison and contrast. Men's career commitment is not questioned in the same way as it is for women mainly on the basis that they tend to follow working arrangements considered 'standard' with full-time, linear career paths (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a, 1990b; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996). However, within architecture over half of all practitioners are either self-employed or principals of practices (RIBA 1998) and thus are following a non-standard form of employment. A

corresponding study would give a good basis for assessing whether any gender differences regarding commitment actually do exist or whether men's career commitment has been accepted as received wisdom without foundation.

Secondly, further research in to commitment within other professions would help give a clearer understanding of the meaning of the professional career to the individual. Again, the existence of varying forms of work organisation could be explored as could professional and personal identity within the profession. Professions which are more 'feminised' could also be compared with those which are still firmly entrenched in masculine values such as the architecture profession. Additional research into these areas would help further our understanding as to women's commitment and orientations to work by providing a greater insight into the meaning of their chosen career within their lives and the fusion between work and family or other non-work activities.

A more specific area which also warrents further investigation is that of the high drop out rate. Chapter five discusses the high numbers who fail to complete their studies and Tancred (1998) reports that, in a Canadian study, many drop outs from the architecture profession were in employment which made use of their professional training even though they no longer retained their professional membership. The issue of the high drop out rate is a significant feature within this research with many of the interviewees referring to it especially when describing the route to qualification and the fact that many potential entrants do

not complete the process. Coupled with those who leave the profession following qualification, it raises issues concerning the dissipation of human capital and the effectiveness of the process of studying and qualifying. Mention is made in the interviews of the studying process being difficult and the assessment system gendered which is said to account for a sizable number of those exiting prior to qualification.

Together these areas for future research will provide a basis for better understanding of the position of women within professional employment and their orientations to work. The actual contribution is of greater importance than the means by which it is made and, as such, a shift in focus is required from the current over-reliance on the 'standard', full-time, linear career path as the 'norm'. There is an inherent reluctance to regard commitment to a career in anything other than temporal terms which merely serves to disguise or disregard any other options which may exist. Equality in career terms for women could be achieved by increased understanding and acceptance of work arrangements which rely less upon a time commitment and more upon fluid and flexible employment structures applicable to both men and women.

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## **Appendix**

## **Biographical Details of the Interviewees**

**Sarah:** age 27; director of practice; single; interviewed in office (45 minutes); initially very reluctant to be interviewed but was quite talkative although the interview was cut short by her secretary.

**Isabel:** age 32; principal of practice; lives with partner; interviewed in pub (two hours); is contemplating having a baby and used the interview as an opportunity to deliberate this; was very friendly and helpful; she was very interested in how my husband managed his practice and workload.

**Cindy:** age 31; works for local authority, part-time university tutor; single; interviewed in my office (one and a half hours); very friendly.

**Melissa:** age 36; sole practitioner working from home; single; interviewed at home (two and a half hours); I felt she was very lonely as she prolonged the interview once the topics had been covered.

**Gillian:** age 30; salaried architect; married with a baby; husband is also an architect; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); was very talkative but presence of baby made progress difficult at times.

**Zena:** age 30; married; from southern Europe; studied and qualified outside UK; interviewed at office (one hour).

**Alison:** age 32; salaried architect; single; semi-professional sportswoman; works for same practice as Lisa and only agreed to be interviewed because Lisa had agreed; interviewed in office (30 minutes); reluctant to talk and would not answer questions about salary; it was difficult to create any rapport so interview became very formal.

**Hayley:** age 30; salaried architect; married with a baby; interviewed in pub (one hour determined by length of lunchbreak);

**Geraldine:** age 33; sole practitioner working from home; married with pre-school age child; interviewed at home (three hours); I felt she enjoyed having the company as she said she would not work from home through choice as she likes the social interaction of office work; she held very strong and useful opinions and her interview is the most quoted in this work.

**Heather:** age 35; salaried architect; married with two pre-school age children; interviewed in office (one hour); was initially reluctant but appeared shy, at first I felt that the interview had not produced much useful material but this proved not to be so.

Linda: age 30; salaried architect; married; interviewed in cafe (one hour); a difficult interview as she used to work with my husband and I felt she was reluctant to provide information although she was keen to be interviewed.

Amanda: age 35; labour-only self-employed; married with two step-children; interviewed in her husband's office (one and a half hours); initially her husband was present which appeared to make her nervous but after he left she became more open.

Loren: age 30; salaried architect; lives with partner; pregnant; interviewed in office (one hour determined by length of lunchbreak); interview started in a very formal manner but she provided a lot of very personal information.

Marlene: age 32; salaried architect; single; works for same practice as Paula; interviewed in pub jointly with Paula (one hour determined by length of lunchbreak); was very negative about her career but had recently experienced a number of problems with the amount of (unpaid) overtime required by her practice.

Irina: age 35; salaried architect; married with a school-age child and baby; from Middle East; studied and qualified outside UK; interviewed at home (two hours); very talkative and hospitable; meets Carla and Michelle regularly.

Carla: age 46; sole practitioner; married with teenage child; from southern Europe; studied and qualified outside UK; interviewed in office (one hour).

Denise: age 44; sole practitioner working from home/part-time university tutor/part-time drafting work for local company; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); provided much good material in interview; meets with Stephanie regularly.

Jennifer: age 48; salaried architect; married with two teenage children; interviewed in office (one hour).

Catherine: age 42; career break; married with two school-age children; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); very strong opinions especially about mothers working; interview terminated by the arrival of her parents.

Paula: age 42; salaried architect; lives with partner; works for same practice as Marlene; interviewed in pub with Marlene (one hour).

**Kim:** age 44; employed by Development Corporation; married with two pre-school children and one school-age child; husband is also an architect; interviewed at home (two hours); husband also contributed to interview; both very opinionated.

**Helen:** age 42; principal of practice; single; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); initially difficult to create rapport but she became more interested as the interview progressed; asked a lot about how my husband managed his workload.

**Rachel:** age 45; principal of practice; divorced with two teenage children; interviewed in office which is part of her home (two hours); appeared very shy at first but mentions in interview that she finds meeting people difficult; a very useful interview.

**Ellen:** age 45; director of practice; married with one school-age child; interviewed in office with co-director (one and a half hours).

**Stephanie:** age 45; sole practitioner working from home; married with three school-age children; interviewed at home (one hour); very welcoming providing tea and cakes at start of interview.

**Rita:** age 40; sole practitioner; married; interviewed in office (45 minutes); stressed at the outset that she could not spare much time; knows my husband and has asked for progress reports on research on a number of occasions.

**Michelle:** age 48; sole practitioner; divorced with two adult children; interviewed in office (50 minutes); knows my husband and mentioned to him afterwards that I seemed nervous during interview - I was somewhat reluctant to ask questions which may have appeared too probing but she volunteered a great deal of information and then asked for much of it not to be used within the thesis.

**Sandra:** age 45; sole practitioner working from home; married with one school-age child; interviewed at home (one hour); very friendly with Michelle; provided a lot of useful information.

**Lisa:** age 49; principal of practice; married with four teenage children; interviewed in office (one and a half hours); very friendly and hospitable and provided lunch.

**Lindsey:** age 41; associate director of practice; divorced with one teenage child; interviewed in office (45 minutes).

**Alex:** age 51; university lecturer; divorced with two teenage children; interviewed in office (one and a half hours but frequent interruptions).

Olivia: age 54; salaried architect; married with two adult children; interviewed in office (one hour); very shy and would not interview to be taped.

Pam: age 53; labour-only self-employed; married with two adult children; interviewed over lunch on site.

Amy: age 55; unemployed; married with four adult children; interviewed at home (two hours); found it hard to create rapport at first but she was very willing to talk about her life and work.

Phyllis: age 59; sole practitioner/semi-retired (formerly employed by local authority); married; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); is now interested in becoming a garden designer.

Evelyn: age 68; retired (formerly salaried architect); widowed with six adult children; interviewed at home (one hour)

Ella: age 72; retired (formerly principal of practice); widowed with five adult children; interviewed at home (one and a half hours); very talkative but lives alone so could possibly be lonely; it was difficult for me to interrupt to ask questions.

