An examination of the experiences of organisational restructuring on the working lives of older women

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Abstract

Restructuring has emerged as a contemporary business practice utilised by organisations to remain competitive in increasingly globalised, neo-liberal free markets, and has contributed to the transformation of work in the 21st century. The impacts of restructure on workers are considerable. Research suggests that restructure is a stressor for workers, resulting in reduced organisational commitment, performance, engagement, satisfaction, and health.

Women are disproportionately affected by organisational restructuring, and this appears to hold true regardless of work level. Furthermore, workers aged 55 years and older are more likely than any other age cohort to be made redundant as a result of restructuring, are less likely to find re-employment, and are at greater risk of financial disadvantage due to loss of employment.

Little qualitative research exists on the restructure experiences of women aged 55 years and older, despite this intersectional identity being identified as at greater risk than other cohorts of negative outcomes of restructure. As a result, this research aims to examine the experiences of organisational restructure on the working lives of older women. Using a qualitative approach framed by an interpretive paradigm, this research used thematic analysis of interviews with 12 participants from New Zealand. The findings of the research indicate that restructure is a significant and often traumatic life event that changes participants' relationship to work and to organisations, and had broad impacts on the trajectory of their careers. Aligned with evidence from life course research, the experience of restructure orients participants to reconsider what is meaningful to them and contributes to their workforce exit intentions. This research contributes to theory by exploring experiences in a cohort of participants that has to date received little attention.

In contrast with other research on restructure experiences, this research identified five distinct stages of the restructure experience, suggesting a more fine grained approach to stages of restructure than has previously been proposed. Given the exploratory nature of this study, this finding requires further investigation using a theory building methodology. The present research has implications for practitioners considering undertaking a restructure. Practitioners should consider the short and long term impacts of restructure on individuals, work teams, and

organisations prior to launching an organisational restructuring effort, and carefully consider whether the ostensible benefits are worth the human cost.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Restructuring is a modern business practice that is increasingly used by organisations with the intention of creating more streamline and profitable businesses (Lee & Teo, 2005). In the 21st century, restructuring has emerged as a practice that has transformed the nature of work (Hedge, Bornman, & Lammlein, 2006). The impacts of restructure on workers are considerable, resulting in reduced organisational performance, organisational commitment, poor mental and physical health outcomes, and job loss (De Witte, 2005; Kivimaki, Vahtera, Elovainio, Pentii, & Virtanen, 2005). Women are disproportionately affected by organisational restructuring, and this appears to hold true regardless of work level (Liu, 2007; Edwards, Woodall, & Welchman, 1996). Furthermore, workers aged 55 years and older are more likely than any other age cohort to be made redundant as a result of restructuring, are less likely to find reemployment, and are at greater risk of financial disadvantage due to loss of employment (Equal Employment Opportunities Trust. 2014; Mountford, 2011). Little qualitative research exists on the restructure experiences of women aged 55 years and older, despite this group being quantitatively identified as at greater risk of negative outcomes of restructure than other cohorts, such as men aged 55 years and older. As a result, this research aims to examine the experiences of organisational restructure on the working lives of older women.

My interest in this topic developed from a longstanding interest in organisational dynamics and the ways in which organisational change impacts people. Prior to commencing the Masters of Business degree, the organisation in which I worked underwent a restructure without job loss, that was considered traumatic by many of the staff whom it impacted. While not directly affected by the restructure, I was emotionally impacted by the toll the restructure took on colleagues, and this sparked an interest in exploring restructure more specifically. While exploring restructure literature for an elective paper, it became evident that much of the restructure literature was quantitative in nature, and that little was concerned with the experiences of older women workers, many of whom had been impacted via the restructure I had experienced. As a result, I wanted to explore and give voice to the experiences of women aged 55 years and older, whose restructure experiences had not been substantially explored in the extant literature.

Chapter Two provides a literature review incorporating existing academic research across several fields relevant to the research question. At the outset is a discussion of the meaning of work, situated within a broader exploration of the age and gender literature. This thesis is influenced by intersectionality and feminist scholars and draws a distinction between work and employment (Acker, 2006; Everingham, Warner-Smith, & Byles, 2007; Richardson, 1999). Consequently, work is defined as "purposeful activity directed at producing a valued good or service (Kelloway, Gallagher, & Barling, 2004, p.109); while employment is considered to be "work that is performed under contractual arrangements and that involves material reward (Kelloway et al., 2004, p.109).

The current research is concerned with the experiences of 'older women workers' and as a result the research on 'older workers' is reviewed. The concept of the 'older worker' is subjective, with much variation in its operational definition across the literature (Hedge, Bornman, & Lammlein, 2006; Thomas, Hardy, Cutcher, & Ainsworth, 2014). Although age can be defined in several ways, chronological age is the most utilised measure (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015). This research draws on the OECD (2014) definition of 'older worker' as those who are aged 55 years and older.

One aspect of the broader research question considers the impact of restructure on careers, and as a result an examination of the careers literature is presented. This thesis draws on the body of research on women's careers to define career as an individuals' employment, work, educational, and other relevant experiences, which form a unique pattern over the individuals life span (Sullivan & Baruch, 2010; Parry & Taylor, 2007; Duberley, Carmichael, & Szmigin, 2014; Myers, 2017).

Subsequently, the literature review then turns to an exploration of research on organisational restructure, with a particular focus on the impacts of restructuring. Organisational restructure is defined in the current research as "a broad term encompassing many different organisational events ranging from downsizing, mergers, and acquisitions to other forms of workforce reorganisations with or without layoffs" (Probst, 2003, p.418).

Finally a review of the literature of retirement, particularly women's retirement and involuntary retirement is presented. This thesis draws on the life course perspective in conceiving of retirement as one of a series of discontinuities experienced by women across a gendered life course, influenced by relationships and situated within broader meso and macro-contexts (Harrington Meyer, 2014; Kim & Moen, 2002; Price, 2000; Richardson, 1999). In doing so, it is distinct from more traditional definitions of retirement drawn from men's experiences, which view retirement as a unitary event – a cliff-edge at the end of a linear and continuous career.

Chapter Three outlines the choices made regarding the epistemology, methodology, and method used in the research. This research is situated in an interpretive paradigm, positioned within a constructivist epistemology. This paradigm is concerned with the "meanings people attach to the events of their lives" (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p.16) and is appropriate to address this research question. Moreover, this paradigm is aligned with the narrative inquiry approach which is concerned with the lived experience of people through their told stories.

The research methods used in this research are discussed, and their application to this research is justified. The purposive sampling and snowball recruitment approach are outlined, followed by a discussion of data collection which involved semi-structured interviews with 12 participants. Half of the participants stayed in their organisations after restructure, while the other half of the participants left their organisation after restructure. Finally, a discussion of the 'analysis of narrative' approach (Polkinghorne, 1995) and a detailed account of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) thematic analysis methodology is provided.

The fourth chapter presents the research findings. The findings are organised into five distinct periods of time: before restructure; during restructure phase one; during restructure phase two; after restructure; and post restructure. Themes within each of the time periods are discussed and supported with rich extracts that capture the essence of the theme.

Each of the five distinct periods of time are delineated by a restructure event. Events are (typically) organisationally determined actions such as the 'formal notice of restructure' over which the participant has little to no control. Importantly, restructure events initiate the next period of time. Each of the events and their impacts are described in the findings, and embedded chronologically throughout the chapter.

Chapter Five presents a synthesis of the findings from across the entire experience of restructure, situated within the context of the research question and the literature previously presented. Six key findings from the research are discussed.

The final chapter considers the implications of the research findings in respect to extant theory and practical implications for organisations embarking on organisational restructure. The limitations of the research methodology and recommendations for future research are expounded.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This thesis aims to explore experiences of restructure and the impact those experiences have on the careers of older women workers. As a result this literature review incorporates existing academic research across several fields including careers, restructure, and retirement, and situates this within broader intersectional research on age and gender. First, a review of the literature on work is presented, which serves to make clear the distinction between work and employment as used in this thesis. Second, intersections of age and gender are explored including an examination of the challenges associated with 'gendered ageism'. Third, the literature on older workers is reviewed with a particular focus on the New Zealand context, and a definition of 'older worker' proffered. Fourth, the term career is defined, and traditional career models are compared with emerging models of career that reflect women's careers. Fifth, the literature on restructure and its impacts on workers is investigated. Sixth, the concept of retirement and its applicability to women is discussed, and evidence from the New Zealand context presented.

2.1 What constitutes work?

Work has been defined by authors in a myriad of ways (Edgell, 2006). The traditional economic definition of work which draws on Smith's (1776) conception of the economic man, views labour as a commodity and emphasises the economic function of work (Kelloway, Gallagher, & Barling, 2004). This definition views work and non-work as a dichotomy and assumes a typical male work history – linear and uninterrupted (Everingham, Warner-Smith & Byles, 2007, p.513). In doing so, traditional definitions neglect the contribution of domestic 'production' and reproduction to society (Ginn & Arber, 1991; Moore, 2009). Feminist researchers have warned against the application of male models of work to women, and have argued for a broader understanding of work to include unpaid, community, and caring work (Duberley, Carmichael, & Szmigin, 2014, p.73; Everingham, Warner-Smith & Byles, 2007). In her seminal piece, Acker (2006) describes economic activity as the interdependent processes of provisioning. This definition broadens the capitalist notion of economic activity to include activities that are required to maintain life and to support individual and community survival (Acker, 2006). This broader definition incorporates activities that are devalued and often ignored in a capitalist system because they do not accumulate capital, namely the unpaid activities of social reproduction including caring, educating, and raising others (Acker, 2006). Kelloway, Gallagher, and Barling (2004) make a useful distinction between work and employment. They define work as "purposeful activity directed at producing a valued good or service" (Kelloway et al, 2004, p.109); and employment as "work that is performed under contractual arrangements and that involves material reward" (Kelloway et al, 2004, p.109). This thesis draws on the distinction between work and employment proposed by Kelloway et al. (2004); and within this distinction conceptualises work broadly to include social reproduction and caring roles, in an attempt to make visible the totality of women's work (August, 2011; Duberley, Carmichael, & Szmigin, 2014; Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015).

The Gendered Nature of Work

Gender is the "socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality" (Acker, 2006, p.444). In her seminal work, Acker (1990) argues that work is organised according to masculine hegemonic assumptions that serve to produce and reproduce sites of disadvantage for women workers. Reproduction of disadvantage is created and recreated through inequality regimes, which Acker (2006) defines as "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organization" (p.443). These typically include policies and practices such as hiring, firing, and promotion that are embedded in organisational structure (Brumley, 2014).

Work is not gender neutral (Collins, 2005). The experience of, and participation in work is distinct between men and women, and there is general consensus that women as a group are disadvantaged in this sphere (Walker, Grant, Meadows, & Cook, 2007). Evidence from the New Zealand context indicates that gender inequality exists in organisations, impacting women's experiences of pay equity, progression, and retirement (Ministry for Women, 2017). In fact, the pay gap for women in New Zealand is 12.71% even taking into account job-related, education, industry, occupational, and personal characteristic variables (Pacheco, Li, &

Cochrane, 2017). Importantly, gendered differences have been shown to persist across the gendered life course (Duberley, Carmichael, Szmigin, 2014).

Although individual factors are often attributed to such differences in news media (ie. RNZ, 2016 "Young women told to think big"), Edwards, Woodall, and Welchman (1996) highlight that these factors are insufficient to account for the under-representation of women in management positions, and point to macro- (socio-political) and meso- (organisational) factors to account for such differences. Walker, Grant, Meadows, and Cook (2007) support this sentiment, highlighting that the interpretations and experiences of women in their research were "not static, nor isolated from wider historical, cultural, and societal contexts in which these women had grown up and grown older (p.45)". When considering the population of interest for this research – women over 55 years old – the historical, cultural, and societal contexts particular to New Zealand are likely to include the nuclear free movement, anti-apartheid movement, Maori land rights movement, and Rogernomics (King, 2012); events that are concerned with freedom and justice at a time of rising neo-liberal capitalism.

The Ideal Worker

The gendered nature of work gives rise to the model of the ideal worker – "an individual whose job is at the centre of his or her life and who is unencumbered by familial responsibilities" (Brumley, 2014, p.604). The advent of neo-liberal capitalism has seen work given increasing primacy and centrality in people's lives, with 'worker' constituting a central self-definition (Kira & Klehe, 2016).

In the context of female workers, Simmons and Betschild (2001) highlight the multiple role commitments that women are often expected to hold particularly with regard to caring for dependants at different stages of their lives (children, grandchildren, aging parents, partners). These gendered assumptions and expectations serve to position women as 'uncommitted' or 'unserious' workers and thus reduce opportunities for progression (Edwards et al., 1996). Collins (2005) supports this theory, arguing that visibility through working long hours and playing 'the presenteeism game' is critical to the middle management identity construct, impacting progression and restructure outcomes.

In the context of older workers, the persistence of negative stereotypes about older workers serves to position them as 'incapable' and therefore at the forefront of unemployment resulting from restructure (EEO Trust, 2014; Liu, 2007). Thomas et al. (2014) argue that age and ageism are so deeply embedded in organisational structures and processes that the positioning of individuals as privileged or disadvantaged based on age(ing) is often rendered invisible.

> "Images of age saturate organisational processes, working to privilege some organisational members while marginalising those who transgress age norms – those who are the 'wrong age', either too young or too old to correspond with the 'ideal worker' profile." (Thomas et al., 2014, p.1571).

2.2 Age(ing) and Intersections

Age is socially, historically, and culturally specific, bound by multiple meanings which are influenced by individuals' unique perceptions of age(ing) (Moen, 1996). As Hedge, Bornman, and Lammlein (2006) argue "conceptualisation of younger, middle-aged, and older workers may vary with individual differences such as respondent age, age bias, and perceived retirement norms" (p.30).

According to Moen (1996) age determines people's social roles regardless of their capabilities. Indeed, the beliefs we hold about ageing and what it means to grow older influence our assumptions and expectations about appropriate organisational and occupational roles for workers at various ages (Riach, 2009). Society expects that certain levels of success are accomplished by certain ages and as a result "age becomes associated with meanings of status and power that are based on the job an employee holds" (Hedge et al., 2006, p.32).

Age is culturally specific in that cultural norms ground assumptions and expectations of the 'right' time for life events, for instance retirement (Moen, 1996). Drawing on Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe's (1965) work, Macmillan (2005) argues that a pervasive system of social norms dictates a timetable for the ordering of significant life events, such that certain events (marriage, childbearing, career progression, retirement) are expected at specific times within a gender normative pattern.

Moreover, age is situated in specific historical context. According to Moen (1996) age is an indicator of birth-cohort membership which denotes shared experiences with other members of that cohort. In the context of the current population of interest for this research- those aged over 55, such shared experiences include the civil rights movement, sexual revolution, cold and Vietnam wars and associated anti-war movements, and rise of globalism, capitalism, and consumerism. Such experiences shape an individuals world view as well as the opportunities available to them (Douglas, 2013).

Age is a unique intersectional identity in several important ways. First, all persons progress unavoidably through age categories (ie. young, middle-aged, old) linearly and over time (Hedge et al., 2006). Second, ageing is experienced at the site of the body, yet “embodiment necessarily brings with it the social experience of ageing” (Hockey & James, 2003, p.214). Finally, while race and gender are largely fixed categories, age by definition is not (Moore, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that ageing is experienced uniquely between men and women (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). Certainly, the embodied experience of ageing is experienced in a gendered way, subject to gendered expectations and interpretations (Ryan, 2012)

Finally, age can be defined in multiple ways, through person-based measures (chronological, perceived, and biological age) and context-based measures (interpersonal, organisational, perceived relative age) (Hedge et al., 2006).

Intersectionality

“Intersectionality is an approach used to reconceptualise identities, deconstruct social categories and divisions, and explore multiple marginalisations” (Crenshaw, 1991 cited in Jyrkinen, 2014, p.177). At its core, intersectionality is concerned with the critical analysis of the unequal distribution of power within society, and the ways in which that power is produced and reproduced to disadvantage social groups (Acker, 2006; Collins, 1998; Jyrkinen, 2014). Multiple sociocultural identities (for instance class, gender, race, age, (dis)ability, and sexuality) are viewed as interacting dynamically rather than additively or hierarchically, and are understood as something that is ‘done’ by individuals in interaction (Acker, 2006; Collins, 1998). Furthermore, individuals are seen to belong to multiple social groupings which interact dynamically to simultaneously locate individuals in positions of advantage and disadvantage (Acker, 2006; Jyrkinen, 2014).

In explicitly focussing on two intersectional identities – gender and age, there is a risk of leaning toward a postmodern interpretation of intersectionality, with its focus on fragmentation and categorisation of identities (Yuval Davis, 2006). This approach can lead to a race to the bottom to determine which '-ism' (eg. ageism, sexism, racism) is at the greatest disadvantage (Riach, 2009). There is also the risk that older women are viewed through a 'double jeopardy' lens (Moore, 2009). As Calasanti and Slevin (2001) argue "the interplay between two marginalised positions is not just a question of additional oppression. Instead, the complex interplay between power relations can create qualitatively different experiences" (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001 cited in Krekula, 2007, p.162). Moreover, evidence from interviews with older women discussing their experiences of disadvantage in the UK labour market highlight that their lived experience of class, gender, race, and age is fluid and dynamic, and that "these identities are intertwined in the construction of their self-narrative" (Moore, 2009, p.662). Finally, a 'double jeopardy' focus can tend toward emphasising older women's disadvantage, instead of highlighting their comparative advantages (Krekula, 2007).

As Krekula (2007) highlights, the hegemonic conceptualisation of gender constructs women's experiences of old age in relation to men's, which are assumed as normative. As a result older women are positioned as 'other' – envisioned in contrast to a male norm, or a younger norm; and where measurement against these norms is not just seen as 'different' but often as 'less than' (Krekula, 2007; Riach, 2009).

Gendered Ageism

Women and men experience age and ageing in distinct ways, with women experiencing greater age discrimination than men over the life course (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Jyrkinen, 2014). Itzin and Phillipson (1995) identify the term 'gendered ageism' to describe the intersection and interaction of gender and age. They concluded that "age and ageism is in fact significantly gendered and that sexism operates always with a dimension of ageism" (Itzin & Phillipson, 1995, p.88). Research by Duncan & Loretto (2004) highlights that women are often perceived as 'too old' or 'too young' and that this perception can inhibit opportunities for promotion. That women are often perceived as ageing at an earlier chronological age than men highlights the challenges women face to fit the gendered ideal worker model and the pressure to overcome age stereotyping by trying to appear youthful (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Itzin & Phillipson, 1995). Idea(l)s of beauty are embedded in society's collective consciousness and act to sexualise women's value in youth (Ginn & Arber, 1991; Jyrkinen, 2014). The invisibility of older women in society and in mass media, despite their relative majority among older people, reinforces disadvantage in a way not experienced by older men (Clarke & Griffin, 2008).

2.3 The 'older worker'

'Older workers' are a heterogenous group with gender being but one intersectional identity (Acker, 2006; Hedge et al., 2006). As Vickerstaff (2010) astutely highlights: "gender, class, race, and health significantly differentiate experience, life chances, and motivations" (p.875) and the cumulative effect of such experiences, advantages, and disadvantages must be considered in the context of research about 'older workers' (Myers, Inkson, & Pringle, 2017).

The concept of the 'older worker' is subjective, with much variation in its operational definition across the literature (Hedge et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2014). Although age can be defined in multiple ways as outlined above, chronological age is the most utilized measure (Peeters & van Emmerik, 2008; Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015). The defined chronological age of the 'older worker' is varied, with examples from the literature ranging from 40 years and older to 60 years and older (Buyens, Van Dijk, Dewilde and De Vos, 2008; EEO Trust, 2014; Isaksson & Johansson, 2000; Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015; Mountford, 2011; Von Bonsdorff, Vanhala, Seitsamo, Janhonen, & Husman, 2010; Winklemann-Gleed, 2011). This research will use the OECD (2014) definition of 'older worker' as those who are 55 years and older.

Demographics

According to the OECD Older Workers Scoreboard (2016) the proportion of workers in the workforce aged 55 years and older has increased over the previous decade. While the proportion of workers aged 50-54 years has remained relatively stable (84.1 percent in 2006, 84 percent in 2016) the proportion of those aged 55 years and older has increased considerably (55-64 years old – 70 percent in 2006, 76.1 percent in 2016). Moreover, the proportion of workers in the workforce aged over 65 years has almost doubled (65-69 years old – 28.1 percent in 2006, 42.6 percent in 2016; and 70-74 years old – 11.0 percent in 2006, 22.2 percent in 2016). The accompanying increase in the age of women's effective labour force exit from 63.6 years in 2006 to 66.4 years in 2016 suggests that women are staying in the workforce longer (OECD, 2016).

Evidence from the New Zealand context points to an increase in the length of the working life (EEO Trust, 2014). Among OECD countries, New Zealand recorded the second highest rate of employment of people aged 55-64 years in 2017 (78.8 percent), with the proportion of the labour force aged 65 or older expected to rise to 13 percent by 2036 (EEO Trust, 2014; OECD, 2017). Several macro level factors are suggested to be influential in this trend, including improved health care, delayed childbearing, and New Zealand's superannuation scheme which starts at 65 years and allows workers to continue to work past this age (EEO Trust, 2014).

Characteristics of older workers

Research suggests that older workers are more likely to have higher job satisfaction, job involvement, organisational commitment, work attachment, and positive job attitudes than workers of other age groups (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009; Feldman, 2012; McNair, 2006 cited in Vickerstaff, 2010). Feldman (2012) argues this is because older workers are in more rewarding work situations due to their seniority. He asserts that power, security, and benefits cluster with seniority, and makes the case that older workers typically hold these senior positions (Feldman, 2012). Through a critical lens, it is argued that this assumption is grounded in masculine hegemony and that in fact, older *male* workers typically hold positions of seniority in organisations (Richardson, 1999).

Evidence from the literature also suggests that older workers tend to have lower levels of absenteeism than other age groups (Beehr & Bowling, 2002). There is some debate over whether this trend is a result of higher organisational commitment and job satisfaction as outlined above, or whether older workers with health problems are more likely to depart the workforce through early retirement (Feldman, 2012). As well as health problems associated with age(ing) that can result in workforce departure, older workers tend to experience decreases in auditory and visual acuity, fine motor skills and strength, working memory, and information processing speed (Beehr & Bowling, 2002). These decreases tend to be experienced after age 70 and are typically modest, although this may be mediated by work type (for instance manual vs office work) (Beehr & Bowling, 2002). Importantly, the perception of physical decline has an impact on whether workers are viewed as less (or more) likely to continue working (Vickerstaff, 2010).

Negative stereotypes and age discrimination

'Older workers' are likely to face negative stereotypes in the workplace that serve to marginalize this group (EEO Trust, 2014). Stereotypes are defined as "learned ways of perceiving and organising the world that provide us with information that guides out interactions with others" (Hedge et al., 2006, p.30). Negative stereotypes, and their concomitant set of negative characteristics, are applied to older workers solely on the basis of their being at or about retirement age (Ginn & Arber, 1991). Age based stereotypes are strongly influenced by wider socio-cultural perspectives on aging which give rise to what Hedge et al (2006) refer to as the 'myths of aging'.

> "Myths of aging are prevalent in our popular and professional literature, print and sound media, on web pages, in conversations, and in jokes, and they subtly shape social, health, and work experiences. Collectively, these aging myths create an image of aging and being old that is biased and damaging to the careers and well-being of older persons" (Hedge, Borman, & Lammlein, 2006, p.27).

Dominant stereotypes about 'older workers' include the belief that productivity decreases with age (Feldman, 2012), that older workers are resistant to or less adaptable to change (EEO Trust, 2014), and are disinterested in progression, training, and development (Mountford, 2013). These stereotypes can affect expectations about and evaluations of older workers' performance (Hedge et al., 2006). Concerningly, salient and persistent stereotypes can be internalised by older workers, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Internalisation can be established through assimilation of stereotypes into older workers' self-concepts (Hedge et al., 2006) or through a causal relationship between stereotypes and cognitive underperformance (Abrams et al., 2003 cited in Buyens et al., 2009).

In their survey of New Zealand workers, the EEO Trust (2014) found the most common negative stereotype of older workers was that they are less adaptable to change, both in a general context and in relation to specific changes, and particularly in relation to new technology. According to August (2011) this can result in older workers being overlooked for opportunities to learn adaptive technologies or engage in discussions about innovating for future proofing. Yet research indicates that older workers are able to perform and learn as well as workers in other age groups (Maurer, Barbeite, Weiss, & Lippstreu, 2008).

A significant area of age based discrimination is access to training and career development opportunities (Hedge et al., 2006; Feldman 2012; Mountford, 2013). ‘Older workers’ receive fewer training opportunities than their younger counterparts, despite little evidence of a lower intention to participate in training and development (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009; Bertolino, Truxillo, & Fraccaroli, 2011). The provision of training and development opportunities for ‘older workers’ has been shown to improve perceived organisational support, which mediated the relationship between training and retention (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009).

The perception that older workers are not interested in or suitable for progression can lead to age based discrimination in progression and promotion decisions (EEO Trust, 2014). Moore (2009) postulates that opportunities for older women workers in particular narrow over the course of their careers. This notion is supported by Duncan and Loretto (2004) who found that older women were more likely to experience unequal access to promotion opportunities than their male colleagues. Such discrimination has considerable impacts on the financial position of women as they approach the end of their working lives.

Financial disadvantage

Women are more likely than men to experience poverty when they are older (Krekula, 2007; Ministry for Women, 2017). Poverty among older women is caused by a confluence of factors related to pre-retirement experiences (Ginn & Arber, 1991). First, women typically live longer than men, which means their financial requirements are greater (Ministry for Women, 2017b). Second, life-long gender inequality through occupational and vertical segregation in the gendered labour market, equal pay discrimination, and progression hurdles position women with fewer financial means to accumulate (Everingham, Warner-Smith, & Byles, 2007; Richardson, 1999). Third, gender-bias in social policy and systematic inequalities in New Zealand's retirement (Kiwisaver) scheme means that women miss out on government tax credits and employer contributions during periods of unemployment and underemployment (Ginn & Arber, 1991; Groom, 2018). Fourth, during periods spent in caregiving roles women lose most (and sometimes all) of their income over that period due to New Zealand's parental leave laws and on their return to the workforce experience the "motherhood penalty" which results in a significantly lower income across their careers (Groom, 2018; Ministry for Women, 2017).

2.4 Women's Careers

As articulated in the previous section, evidence from the New Zealand context indicates that gender inequality exists in organisations, impacting women's experiences of pay equity, progression, and retirement (Ministry for Women, 2017). In the context of female careers, Loretto and Vickerstaff (2013) highlight the multiple role commitments that women are often expected to hold particularly with regard to caring for dependents across the gendered life course (children, grandchildren, aging parents, partners). This holds true for New Zealand women, who spend more time than men undertaking unpaid work, particularly household work and childcare (Ministry for Women, 2017). This gendered division of labour defines women's participation in the labour market and often harms women's careers (Ginn & Arber, 1991; Moore, 2009). In their research Jyrkinen and McKie (2012) found that gendered care responsibilities caused significant obstacles in women's careers at a range of ages and stages throughout the gendered life course. These gendered assumptions and expectations serve to position women as 'uncommitted' or 'unserious' workers in relation to the concept of the ideal worker (Brumley, 2014). Importantly, it is not only women with caring responsibilities who are at a disadvantage. Ginn and Arber (1991) highlight that the gendered division of labour coupled with occupational segregation serve to undermine the value of women's work, thereby reinforcing gender pay differences despite equal pay legislation. Taken together, the evidence points to a polarisation of employment experiences between women and men, a pattern that Walker, Grant, Meadows, and Cook (2007) argue broadens amongst older women and men.

What is a Career?

Careers have been traditionally defined as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989, p.8) where 'work' pertains to employment. As has been argued previously the neo-liberal capitalist focus on employment renders invisible the (often unpaid and informal) work that women undertake, and this is particularly problematic in light of the trajectories of older women's careers across the life course (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015). As a result this thesis will draw on the findings of Parry and Taylor (2007), Duberley, Carmichael, & Szmigin (2014), and Sullivan and Baruch (2010) to posit a more inclusive conceptualisation of career. For the purposes of this research, career is defined as an individual's employment, work, educational, and other relevant experiences, which form a unique pattern over the individual's life span (Myers, 2017).

Traditional Career Models

Traditional career theories typically focus on a linear career defined by full-time, continuous work and steady upward mobility (eg. Levinson, 1978; Super, 1957, 1990; Wilensky, 1961). In this model a career typically starts in one's early 20s after a period of education; involves intense commitment and continuous engagement in work; results in a series of progressions to more senior roles; and concludes with complete and permanent withdrawal from the workforce at retirement (Duberley et al., 2014; Valcour, Bailyn, & Quijada, 2012). Traditional career theories arose from the advent of industrialisation, which sharpened distinctions between paid and unpaid work and divided these activities along gendered lines (Moen & Roeling, 2005 cited in Valcour, Bailyn & Quijada, 2012). Women tend not to adhere to traditional models of career development, which are often derived from men's experiences and are typically linear and continuous (Myers, Inkson, & Pringle, 2017). Rather, women's careers tend to be punctuated by discontinuities shaped by the gendered social context of women's lives (Myers, 2017). In the context of older workers, many women in the 'baby boomer' generation have discontinuous work histories which have combined work, employment, education, and caring responsibilities partly influenced by the macro context for this generation (Vickerstaff, 2010). As a result older women workers are more likely than older male workers to be in part time employment, and less likely to be in highly paid roles with promotional opportunities (Vickerstaff, 2010; Walker et al., 2007). The prevalence of part time work alongside a national retirement (Kiwisaver) scheme which ceases employer and government contributions during parental leave, disadvantages women further and means that older women tend to have less money set aside for their retirement (Ginn & Arber, 1991). Importantly, traditional career theories have been "criticised for taking an implicit white male model of career and assuming its universal application" (Duberley et al., 2014, p.73). Indeed as August (2011) posits, "exploring women's late life careers in their own right, rather than in reference to men, seems particularly appropriate" (p.11).

Career Models for Women

Several models of career focussing on women's experiences have been proposed, and a number of these will be briefly outlined here. Following that, a detailed review of two models – the Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) and the Life Course Model (Elder, 1985) will also be undertaken.

Among the career models that appear to accommodate the unique patterns of womens' careers are the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and the protean career (Hall, 1996; Hall, 2002). These models emphasise individual agency and the role of self-defined values in determining an individuals' career choices (Valcour, Bailyn, & Quijada, 2012). However, both models have been criticised for failing to recognise individuals as acting within a broader life context where relational or organisational factors outside of an individuals' control can act to restrict or refashion careers (Lee, Kossek, Hall, & Litrico, 2011).

Building on models of individual agency is the 'customised career' model proposed by Valcour, Bailyn, and Quijada (2007). This model focuses on career patterns purposively selected by individuals that deviate from traditional careers in one of three ways – time, timing, or employment relationship. Time typically involves reduced load (ie. reduced hours) employment, whereas timing involves breaks and discontinuities in employment. Customisation of traditional employment patterns (ie. full time permanent employment) typically involves temporary, contracting, or agency work. Valcour, Bailyn, & Quijada (2012) highlight that women are more likely than men to customise their careers periodically in order to accommodate personal preferences for the integration of employment and other life domains, and to meet demand and resource requirements for caring responsibilities. The customised career model has been criticised for its focus on professional and managerial workers, who may have the financial luxury of customisation. As the authors themselves point out, “designing a career path that is more influenced by personal values and preferences than by financial exigencies [is an] option that many workers cannot afford” (Valcour, Bailyn, & Quijada, 2012, p.189).

Other models have drawn attention to the fundamental linearity inherent in career models and suggested alternatives. Sabelis and Schilling’s (2003) frayed careers model draws attention to the linear assumptions of many career models, which are predicated on the accumulation of experience, growth (in salary or seniority), and status. They position career as consisting of phases of production and reproduction within the broader temporality of the life cycle (Sabelis & Schilling, 2003). Others include August’s (2011) exploration of the interrupted ‘zig-zag’ patterns of women’s careers; and Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003) who proposed a heuristic model of women’s careers with four components linked to major life activities (Myers, 2017).

Two dominant models of women’s careers have emerged in the literature – the Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) and the Life Course Model (Elder, 1994; Kim & Moen, 1992); and these will be outlined here.

The Kaleidoscope Career Model proposed by Maniero & Sullivan (2005) describes three primary parameters of career development – challenge, balance, and authenticity; with which women make career decisions. The three parameters are alternately given primacy based on what is happening in the context of women’s lives (Sullivan & Carraher, 2018). Challenge is the desire to engage in activities that provide autonomy, responsibility, learning, and growth (Sullivan & Carraher, 2018). Balance refers to the desire to manage the various aspects of one’s life into a coherent whole, to achieve a sense of equilibrium (Sullivan & Carraher, 2018).

Authenticity describes giving primacy to one's own needs and of being "genuine and true to oneself" (Maniero & Sullivan, 2006, p.115).

The authors suggest that while not deterministic, there is an element of predictability in the progression of the parameters, such that women in their early careers tend to focus on challenge, while women in their later career tend to focus on authenticity (Maniero & Sullivan, 2006). However, in research focusing on the career experiences of women aged 55 and older, August (2011) found that participants were variably focussed on authenticity, balance, and challenge, suggesting that primacy is given based on stage rather than age per se.

Aligned with Maniero and Sullivan's (2005) supposition, August (2011) found that some women aged 55 years and older were focussed on authenticity. This was demonstrated in three ways; 1) as participants wanting to do work that was meaningful to them and connected to communities, 2) as participants focussing on their own mental and physical health; and 3) as participants considering end of life decisions and what was meaningful to them at this stage in their lives. Contrary to Maniero and Sullivan's prediction (2005) many women in August's (2011) study were concerned with balance and challenge. Women were particularly likely to seek balance if they had caring responsibilities, and reported seeking balance between work, caring, health, and personal interests (August, 2011). Furthermore, many participants were interested in doing challenging and stimulating work, and were focussed on growth and achieving goals at this stage of their lives (August, 2011). As August (2011) notes "challenge was an ongoing and potent career concern, well beyond the traditional retirement age"(p.230).

Several authors in the careers research field have called for adoption of the life course perspective to considering and understanding work, employment, and careers (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015). The life course perspective- initially proposed in Elder's (1974) seminal text and expounded in subsequent work (Elder, 1994, 1995); involves a holistic understanding of career across the lifetime and across life domains (Mayer, 2005). There are four central themes to the life course perspective. The first theme is the way individual lives are situated in socio-historical time (Elder, 1994). As a result the events that unfold in the macro-context of a given historical time impact on the sociohistorical constraints and opportunities available to individuals (Macmillan, 2005). The life course perspective therefore positions women aged 55 years and older within the context of "expanding socioeconomic opportunity in the post World War II era, […] large-scale movement of women into the paid labour force, […] and expansion of higher education" (Macmillan, 2005, p.8). The second theme is the interdependence of individual lives (Elder, 1994). This emerges from the nature of humans as social beings, the ways in which individuals have relationships across the life span, and the synchronisation of those relationships (Hartzell & Dixon, 2019). The third theme involves the timing of lives (Elder, 1994). This refers to societal expectations for the chronological ages at which certain developmental stages and roles are achieved, for instance entering the workforce, getting married, starting a family (Hartzell & Dixon, 2019). The fourth theme invokes the concept of human agency in decision making (Elder, 1994). This means that within the contexts and constraints of their lives individuals are able to make decisions from the options available to them, and these decisions shape the trajectories of their lives (Elder, 1994).

The life course is characterised by trajectories and transitions (Elder, 1995). Trajectories are life course dynamics that occur over time, typically involving distinctive social roles like school, work, marriage, and parenthood (Macmillan, 2005). Transitions are typically shorter in duration, marking the start and end of trajectories (Macmillan, 2005). As Macmillan (2005) explains:

> "the life course is not found in trajectories and transitions themselves, but in the dynamic, interconnected unfolding of trajectories and transitions over time… Life courses are structured by virtue of the order *and* timing of multiple social roles over the life span" (p.6).

Importantly, transitions index change; change as people move between roles, as they experience certain states or roles, and as they cease to do so (Macmillan, 2005). To this end, the life course perspective is a useful model for understanding the experience of restructure within the broad conceptualisation of career as has been outlined here.

2.5 Restructure

The process of workforce reorganisation is referred to in a number of ways in the literature and in corporate vernacular- as organisational change, downsizing, delayering, streamlining, merging, consolidating, reorganising, realigning, and restructuring. These words all refer to the process through which organisations alter the structure of the workforce. For the purpose of this thesis, the term ‘restructure’ is used. Restructure is defined in herein as “a broad term encompassing many different organisational events ranging from downsizing, mergers, and acquisitions to other forms of workforce reorganisations with or without layoffs” (Probst, 2003, p.418).

Models of Restructure

A three stage model has been used in organisational change research exploring experiences of, and reactions to restructuring (Paulsen, Callan, Grice, Rooney, Gallois, Jones, Jimmieson, & Bordia, 2005; Smollan & Morrison, 2019; Fugate Kinicki, & Scheck, 2002). The three stages focus on time bound periods – before restructure, during restructure, and after restructure; labelled anticipation, implementation, and aftermath respectively (Paulsen et al., 2005; Smollan & Morrison, 2019).

During the anticipation stage, employees are aware of the impending restructure but are unsure of the outcomes of the restructure and their impacts (Paulsen et al., 2005). Employees in the anticipation stage are generally found to have increased levels of uncertainty and stress, and lower perceived control and job security (Fugate et al., 2002; Paulsen et al., 2005; Smollen & Pio, 2018). During the implementation stage employees receive notice about the outcomes of the restructure (Fugate et al., 2002). The implementation stage is typically marked by ambiguity about employment obligations, including challenges to the psychological contract, and this can be particularly salient for employees who are made redundant and asked to work until their contract ends (Paulsen et al., 2005). During the aftermath stage the outcomes of the restructure have been actioned and remaining employees adjust to new ways of working (Paulsen et al., 2005). Baruch and Hind (2000) suggest that employees who continue working in the aftermath of restructure experience reduced organisational commitment and job satisfaction, and refer to this experience as ‘survivor syndrome’.

Gendered Experiences of Restructure

Women are disproportionately affected by organisational restructuring and this appears to hold true regardless of the work level (managers vs employees) (Liu, 2007; Edwards et al., 1996). In her research on Chinese workers Liu (2007) found that the perpetuation of gendered working practices was evidenced in the vertical (work level) and horizontal (work type) segregation of work which served to reinforce cultural assumptions about work value and capability. These assumptions ultimately positioned women at greater risk of redundancy during restructure as women's work was considered less valuable (Liu, 2007). Collins (2005) argues that women are more likely to be in flexible, non-core positions (for instance services and administration) that are susceptible to outsourcing. Even when women are in core positions they are not distributed evenly across the organisation, tending to cluster in 'soft skills' areas or in middle management, which Collins (2005) argues are at greater risk of restructure. Such risk can also be faced by women during experiences of promotion arising from organisational change and restructure (Edwards et al., 1996). In their case study of a public sector organisation Edwards et al. (1996) found that the expansion of managerial roles happened in areas of the organisation in which women tended not to be situated. As a result, women did not tend to benefit from an increase in available management roles (Edwards et al., 1996). Brumley (2014) further highlights the unevenness of workplace restructuring by suggesting that those who are able to adhere to an 'ideal worker' model are more likely to benefit from workplace restructuring (ie. men and early-career women).

The experience and interpretation of restructure is likely to be different between women and men (Probst, 2003). During and after organisational restructuring there is an increased need for worker flexibility, commitment, and presenteeism (Collins, 2005). This acts as a gendered organising process which serves to disadvantage women who have family and other commitments outside of work, and who may find it difficult to be flexible at this crucial time (Acker, 2006; Collins, 2005). That being said, both women and men typically experience a decrease in job satisfaction, psycho-social wellbeing, physical wellbeing, organisational commitment, job security, and managerial trust as a result of organisational restructure (Brumley, 2014; Howard & Frink, 1996; Lee & Teo, 2005; Probst, 2003). This review will now turn to a brief examination of the main effects of restructure.

Restructure, Stress and Wellbeing

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that restructure is a major life stressor and tends to be an unpleasant experience for workers (Collins, 2005). Kivimaki et al., (2003) highlight that employees experiencing restructure are likely to feel increased stress as a consequence of "demand for higher levels of productivity, lower tolerance for error, and loss of autonomy due to closer supervision by management" (p.64) which typically accompany restructure. Other sources of stress during restructure include fraying of social relationships and the stress of others (Smollan & Morrison, 2019).

Loss of a job as a result of restructure has been shown to have a negative and sustained impact on health outcomes (Kivimaki et al., 2003). Effects on wellbeing are further likely to be compounded by inadequate or inconsiderate communication, lack of involvement in decision-making processes, and other organisational actions which serve to undermine workers' perceived value (Smollan & Pio, 2018, p.64). Importantly, in a review of longitudinal literature, de Jong, Weizer, de Weerd, Nielsen, Mattila-Holappa, and Mockallo (2016) found that organisational restructuring has a negative impact on worker wellbeing, with or without job loss.

Restructure and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as positive feelings about one's job resulting from an appraisal of its characteristics (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh, 2008). Research suggests that job satisfaction is influenced by restructure, and that experiences of job insecurity and change uncertainty as a result of restructure decrease job satisfaction among workers (Haynie, Harris, and Flynn, 2016; Howard & Frink, 1996). Haynie et al., (2016) found that job satisfaction was negatively affected by change uncertainty, suggesting that organisations can mitigate the likelihood of decreased job satisfaction during restructure by providing high levels of communication about and involvement in change processes. Interestingly, Haynie et al., 2016) also found the relationship between job satisfaction and change uncertainty was mediated by core self-evaluations (a multi-faceted personality trait consisting of locus of control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and neuroticism).

In their study of the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction in unstable workplace conditions Howard and Frink (1996) found that low job satisfaction can influence life satisfaction, and that this relationship was not reciprocal in nature. This suggests that the impacts of restructure seep into other areas of people's lived experience and are not isolated to their work experiences. As a result, conceptualising the individual as a whole being within a holistic system, rather than a worker in a work environment, is necessary (Mayer, 2005).

Restructure, Job Insecurity, and Uncertainty

During restructure employees are likely to feel job insecurity (Kivimaki et al., 2003). Job insecurity is considered a classic work stressor and is defined as "an involuntary change concerning the future existence of the present job" (Sverke, Hellgren, and Naswall, 2002, p.243). Research by Schreurs, Van Emmerik, Notelaers, and De Witte (2010) highlights that uncertainty creates feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and lack of control. This finding is further supported by research by De Witte (1999) that suggests that uncertainty contributes to the psychological burden of job insecurity and that "anticipation of a negative event may be as powerful as the event itself" (p.3).

Meta-analysis reveals that job insecurity is negatively correlated with job attitudes (job satisfaction, distrust of management), organisational attitudes (organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour), work related behaviour (performance, turnover intention), and health (physical and mental) (DeWitte, 2005; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld, & Smith, 1995; Sverke, et al., 2002). In their review of predominantly cross-sectional studies Thomson and Michel (2018) found that job insecurity as a result of organisational change was the most significant stressor for workers, and that this was significantly and consistently related to poor health outcomes. Their findings indicate a particularly significant effect on mental health (Thomson & Michel, 2018).

As mentioned above, uncertainty contributes to the psychological burden of job insecurity (De Witte, 1999). Uncertainty is an aversive state commonly experienced as a result of restructure, that results from a lack of information or the inability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information (Paulsen et al., 2005). According to Milliken (1987 cited in Paulsen et al., 2005) uncertainty involves an individual's perceived inability to accurately predict the consequences of decisions on the content and features of their work situation including job role, job task, and reporting lines. It is distinguished from job insecurity which involves employees perceptions regarding the continuity of the job itself (De Witte, 1999). Job uncertainty has been linked to reduced job satisfaction and commitment, increased turnover intention and stress, and shown to have an ongoing effect on both leavers and stayers after restructure (Armstrong-Strassen, 2002; Paulsen et al., 2005).

Restructure and the Psychological Contract

Psychological contract theory posits that there is a perceived reciprocal obligation between employer and employee wherein the employer offers security in exchange for loyalty from the employee (Schreurs et al., 2010). Failure on behalf of the employer to provide the desired or expected level of job security is thus perceived as a violation of that contract by the employee (De Witte, 2005). Researchers propose that violation of the psychological contract results in negative consequences for both the employee and employer including reductions in employee well-being (De Witte, 2005), organisational commitment (Schreurs et al., 2010), and job involvement (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010); and increases in negative work attitudes (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010). According to De Witte (2005) employees may react to job insecurity by "attempting to restore the resulting imbalance by showing less involvement, less motivation, and by lowering his or her performance" (p.4). Emberland and Rundmo (2010) support the hypothesis that employees may change their work performance to redress the perceived imbalance between loyalty and security, however they do not extrapolate on the possible direction in which performance may change.

Prior research has demonstrated that organisational restructuring is significantly related to perceptions of psychological contract violations, mostly due to perceived broken promises regarding job security (Niesen et al., 2018; De Witte, 2005; Turnley & Feldman, 1998). Freese, Schalk, and Croon (2010) outline three ways in which restructure impacts on the psychological contract. First, restructure may change the work situation of employees (Freese et al., 2010). Second, the organisational atmosphere may change as an inadvertent impact of the restructure

(Freese et al., 2010). Third, the way in which the restructure is implemented (for example consultation, communication, participation in decision making) can impact on the psychological contract (Freese et al., 2010). Using a longitudinal design, Conway, Kiefer, Hartley, and Briner (2014) examined the relationship between organisational changes and psychological breach, and whether this relationship was moderated by job insecurity or organisational commitment. They found that organisational change over time predicted psychological contract breach, and that psychological contract breach negatively predicted organisational commitment (Conway et al., 2014). Interestingly, Conway et al. (2014) also found that job security moderated the relationship between psychological contract breach and organisational citizenship behaviour toward the organisation, but not toward colleagues or customers.

Turnley and Feldman (1998) found that managers in organisations undertaking restructure are more likely to experience psychological contract violation across several components of the psychological contract including job security, amount of responsibility, and decision making input. For managers, psychological contract violation resulted in reductions of organisational loyalty, organisational citizenship behaviours, and organisational commitment (Turnley & Feldman, 1998).

Restructure and Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is defined as a workers' identification with and attachment to their organisation and constitutes one of four work commitment constructs (Schmidt & Lee, 2008, p.299). Organisational commitment has been shown to be a significant predictor of turnover and early-retirement intentions in longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of older workers (Schmidt & Lee, 2008; Sejbaek, Nexo, & Borg, 2013; Von Bonsdorff, Vanhala, Seitsamo, Janhonen, & Husman, 2010). More generally, workers with high levels of organisational commitment are less likely to display absenteeism and more likely to have high job performance (Brumley, 2014). Organisational restructure has been shown to undermine and erode organisational commitment amongst employees, particularly in environments of change uncertainty (Brumley, 2014; Probst, 2003).

In a Mexican case study Brumley (2014) used a feminist lens to highlight the complex interplay between "gender, parental status, and work stage over the employees' gendered life course" (p.618) and its effect on sources of organisational commitment. She found that workers who were also parents tended to derive their organisational commitment from family-friendly policies (Brumley, 2014). On the other hand, workers in the early or mid-career stage who were not parents tended derive organisation commitment from career-friendly practices and policies (Brumley, 2014). Importantly, Brumley (2014) also found that women's organisation commitment decreased over the gendered life course due to the unevenness of workplace conditions.

Restructure and Social Support

Social support has been defined as "an interpersonal exchange of affect, affirmation, and aid" (Heaney, House, Israel, & Mero, 1995, p.418). Drawing on the work of House (1981), Smollan (2017) defines four types of social support. Emotional support involves providing comfort and empathy, while instrumental support comprises addressing the stressor, for instance reallocating workload. Informational support involves provision of knowledge, while appraisal support provides feedback and encourages reflection (Smollan, 2017). Social support is typically provided by managers and colleagues inside the organisation, and by partners, families, and friends outside of the organisation (Fugate et al., 2002; Smollan & Morrison, 2019). When considering social support inside the organisation Smollan and Morrison (2019) found that giving social support can have positive as well as negative consequences for the giver. Among the positive consequences were stronger relationships, reciprocity, and improved job satisfaction and wellbeing (Smollan & Morrison, 2019). Negative consequences included emotional exhaustion, emotional labour, and resentment (Smollan & Morrison, 2019).

Support can also be provided by organisations. Perceived organisational support is an amorphous concept which, according to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) "derives from the employees' tendency to assign the organisation humanlike characteristics of care and concern for the welfare of others" (p. 698). Tangible organisational support often involves the employee assistance programme (EAP), which aims to provide support to employees during and after organisational change (Smollan, 2017). Additionally, the effects of EAP have been found to be correlated to the supportiveness of the organisational culture (Smollan, 2017).

Employees with strong relationships with their managers are less likely to engage in destructive behaviours (Turnley & Feldman, 1998). Turnley & Feldman (1998) found that although managers were likely to engage in less organisational citizenship behaviour as a result of psychological contract violation, relationships with supervisors and colleagues mitigated against negative reactions to psychological contract violation. “Positive working relationships with supervisors and co-workers make it more likely that employees will remain loyal to their organisations and not engage in ‘neglectful’ behaviours” (Turnley & Feldman, 1998, p.78)

An assumption often made about people undergoing organisational restructure is that their primary concern and focus is on the impacts of change to them (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018). In their study of change in the German police, Jacobs and Keegan (2018) did find that participants were concerned about the impact of change on themselves. But importantly, participants were equally concerned about the impact of change on colleagues, and the impact of change on work, organisation, and occupation (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018). Further, several authors have found that observation of the stress and suffering of colleagues exacerbates employees own feelings of stress and justice cognitions (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Smollan & Morrison, 2019).

Restructure and Networking

Several authors have found that social supports and friendships were especially important for women during periods of redundancy, and these were considered by women to be a high priority in maintaining life balance and overcoming loss (Liu, 2007; Simmons & Betschild, 2001). Importantly, social connections were also viewed as critical to recommencing gainful employment (Liu, 2007, p.145). Older unskilled female workers tended to have smaller social networks which disadvantaged them in finding work after redundancy, whereas women with professional husbands tended to benefit from their husbands’ broader networks (Liu, 2007, p.145). Edwards et al. (1996) found a similar effect, where networking and sponsorship was viewed as imperative in organisational advancement. Interestingly, they found that informal networking processes tended to benefit men (Edwards et al., 1996). Taken together these findings implicate a gendered social network that may serve to disadvantage women during organisational change and restructure.

Stayers and Leavers

Importantly, the lived experience of restructure differs for those who stay in the organisation compared with those who take or are made redundant (Baruch & Hind, 1999; Isaksson & Johansson, 2000; Kivimak et al., 2003). Kivimaki et al (2003) found that workers who remained with an organisation after restructure (stayers) were more likely to report deterioration in physical health, and that this deterioration was associated with changes in the psychosocial work environment rather than any individual behavioural change. Interestingly, the degree of physical health deterioration appears to be mediated by the degree of downsizing (the greater the degree of downsizing the greater the self-reported physical health deterioration) (Kivimaki, et al., 2003). For survivors; high job security, organisational commitment, and perceptions of fairness in the downsizing process were also related to positive outcomes (Isaksson & Johansson, 2000, p.242).

Those who left the organisation after restructure (leavers) reported significantly better health outcomes than stayers, although this held true only for those who left and were reemployed (Kivimaki, et al., 2003). Kivimaki et al. (2003) suggest that health may have been a confounding factor which influenced the decisions of leavers to seek reemployment or to retire (ie. those that chose to retire may have had poorer health to begin with). Research also indicates that choice has a major impact on health and satisfaction outcomes following restructure (Isaksson & Johansson, 2000), with "forced choice to stay or retire related to greater psychological distress and higher number of health complaints than voluntary choice" (Kivimaki et al., 2003, p.64). Finally, a finding from Isaksson and Johansson's (2000) study comparing early retirees and stayers after restructure found that women were more likely than men to apply for early retirement, and that this was likely the result of a complex interplay between multiple factors including personal financial circumstances and caregiving and family roles. Significantly, the number of single or divorced women was higher among stayers than among early retirees (Isaksson & Johansson, 2000).

Restructure & Older Workers

Older workers are more likely than other age cohorts to be made redundant due to downsizing or restructuring, particularly during economic recession (Buyens, Van Dijk, Dewilde, & De Vos,, 2009; EEO Trust, 2014; Mountford, 2011; Taylor & Walker, 1997). Several factors may contribute to this trend. In their study of perceptions of career ending among mainly white collar employees, Buyens et al. (2009) found that negative stereotypes of older workers were influential in employer decisions about redundancy. Edwards et al. (1996) suggest older workers, and particularly older women workers, are more likely to occupy middle management positions which can be particularly vulnerable to redundancy in de-layered and flattened organisations. Importantly, Kira and Klehe (2016) note that the distress associated with job loss can be particularly pronounced for older workers, due in part to the increased centrality of work to self-definitions as a consequence of time spent in the workforce.

Once made redundant, older workers are less likely than other age cohorts to find alternate employment and more likely to be ‘underemployed’ when they do find replacement work (Feldman, 2012). Feldman (2012) notes that such underemployment is typically characterised by work which provides less pay, benefits, challenge, or responsibility than previous work (p.160). According to Mountford (2011) these factors can often lead to older workers taking ‘early retirement’. Prospective research from the public service sector by Breinegaard, Jensen, & Bonde (2017) corroborates these findings, suggesting that organisational change coupled with a poor psychosocial workplace environment contributes to early retirement among older workers.

The timing of retirement is often postulated to be a purposive decision made by individuals in planning for their withdrawal from employment (Moen, 1996). However as Moen (1996) so succinctly states, in the face of restructure “then individuals are no longer in control of the timing of their own retirement” (p.138). As shall be argued later in the following section, the effect of unanticipated early retirement due to restructure can have significant and negative implications for older women workers.

2.6 Retirement

Traditional definitions of retirement can be seen as an extension of the masculine models of work and career which pervade the literature (Everingham et al., 2007). Such models typically define retirement as “later life withdrawal from the work force” (Moen, 1996, p.131) and conceptualise retirement as a gateway to a life of leisure, through which workers pass at the end of a linear and continuous working life (Everingham et al., 2007). Economic rationality and the gendered division of labour often underlines traditional definitions, as can be seen in Atchley’s (1988) seminal work. This defines a retired person as “(1) any person who performs no gainful employment during a given year; (2) any person who is receiving a retirement pension benefit, or (3) any person who is not employed year round.” (Atchley, 1988). Feminist researchers argue that economic definitions serve to exclude women who often have discontinuous work histories, while simultaneously devaluing work compared with employment (Richardson, 1999). Simmons and Betschild (2001) highlight that traditional definitions assume that retirement is a gender neutral concept, thereby assuming male experiences as normative and excluding other roles and experiences from the model. Evidence from interviews with older women indicate that many do not view themselves as ‘retired’, noting that work continued for them regardless of whether the label of retirement was applied (Simmons & Betschild, 2001). Clearly then, these linear models of retirement are insufficient to explain the experiences of women (Simmons & Betschild, 2001).

Duberley et al., (2014) argue that innovative conceptualisations of retirement for women must “start from the standpoint of women’s experiences” (p.85). In doing so, women’s retirement comes to be seen not as a unitary event, but as one of a series of discontinuities experienced by women across a gendered life course, influenced by relational systems and situated within broader meso- and macro-contexts (Phillipson, 2013; Kim & Moen, 2002; Price, 2000, Richardson, 1999).

A life course perspective on retirement

A life course perspective conceptualises individuals within macro- and meso-contexts which influence their choices and opportunities, whilst simultaneously positioning individuals within time (Phillipson, 2013). As Moen (1996) highlights "this emphasis on social and temporal embeddedness locates retirement within the framework of an individual's prior occupational trajectory and on-going situational and structural exigencies and opportunities." (pp.131-132). As a result, retirement can be viewed as both an objective transition and a subjective transformation where meaning and identity are imbued with new representations (Macmillan, 2005; Phillipson, 2013). According to Moen (1996) "gender serves to shape the nature of one's occupation as well as the timing and duration of employment, what can be seen as one's occupational career. In turn, both gender and occupational career affect the barriers, resources, and opportunities that shape the life quality of individual men and women as they move through and beyond retirement" (p.132).

Retirement Decision Making

People are living longer than ever, with the average life expectancy for a 55 year old woman in New Zealand now 88.8 years (Statistics NZ, 2018). Despite this, the age for superannuation eligibility has remained stagnant at 65 years old, with the majority of people retired from the labour force by this age (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). This means that workers either need to fund a retirement of on average, 20 years or more; or extend their working life (OECD, 2017). Public policy and rhetoric surrounding decisions about extending the working life often positions workers as de-gendered and individualised, and posits that individuals have control over decisions about how long they work (Loretto, 2010). Such rhetoric ignores not only the fact that workers can be effected by restructure and therefore have little choice in continuing to work; but also that retirement decisions are made within relational systems (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013).

According to Loretto and Vickerstaff (2013) retirement decisions are rarely made by individuals in isolation. Rather, they "reflect [individuals'] domestic context and the interaction of temporal and long-run factors associated with partnerships, families, health, and gender roles" (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013, p.80). To this end, Kim and Moen (2002) argue that retirement should be viewed as a "couple phenomenon" (p.221). Although conceptualisation of retirement decision making in this way does not have absolute applicability, it does usefully highlight the importance of considering older women's retirement decision making in a broader context of relationships. Such relationships clearly extend beyond the couple. Research has found that the presence of dependants in the home (through illness, disability, or age) is a significant predictor of women's retirement (Hatch & Thompson, 1992 cited in Richardson, 1999; Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013)

Importantly, family and caring responsibilities are not the only factors influencing women's early retirement decisions (August, 2011). Loretto and Vickerstaff (2013) highlight the interplay between 'proximal shocks' (for instance sudden ill health or redundancy) and personal and contextual factors which influence decision making. Overall, the literature highlights a number of significant personal and contextual 'push and pull' factors including health status (Arber, 2004), work centrality (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009), job satisfaction (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013), organisational environment and policies (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Duberley et al., 2014), and financial status (Kim & Moen, 2002).

Financial (In)security

A significant body of research indicates that women are less likely than men to plan for their retirement (Duberley et al., 2014; Loretto & Vickerstadd, 2013; Onyx & Benton, 1996; Simmons & Betschild, 2001). According to Loretto and Vickerstaff (2013) this reflects deeply gendered roles in relation to financial management and retirement planning. Evidence from the New Zealand context indicates that men and women are equally likely to plan for their retirement through enrolment in private superannuation schemes, but that men typically have higher median balances (Statistics NZ, 2017). This dollar difference can be attributed to both the gender pay gap as well as discontinuous work histories that typify women's career experiences (Statistics NZ, 2017; Richardson, 1999; Myers, 2017).

As a consequence of careers often shaped by discontinuities, women can reach retirement age with insufficient financial resources to fund their retirement (Duberley et al., 2014). This appears to be particularly the case for women who have been divorced, widowed, or experienced poor health (Duberley et al., 2014). As a result, older women are at greater risk for poverty than older men (Ginn & Arber, 1991; Krekula, 2007; Ministry for Women, 2017). In response to insufficient retirement funds, older women may choose to continue in employment, despite a desire for greater balance between employment and other areas of their lives (Winklemann-Gleed, 2011). This suggests that financial (in)security is a key factor in decision making about workforce exit, particularly for women (Lytle, Clancy, Foley, & Cotter, 2015).

Voluntary vs Involuntary Retirement

Models of retirement decision making are typically predicated on the assumption that retirement is voluntary and undertaken by active, purposive agents (Feldman, 2012). Such assumptions neglect the significant likelihood of restructure in the lives of older workers (Szinovacz & Davey, 2005). In fact, Szinovacz and Davey (2005) found that nearly one in three older workers perceived their retirement was involuntary.

Drawing on social cognitive theory, Bandura (1977) highlights that self-efficacy can serve as a protective mechanism across the life course. Threats to perceived control and lack of influence or choice over critical events in one’s life can result in feelings of anxiety and hopelessness (Moen, 1996). Experiences of restructure are typically characterised by job insecurity which can increase stress and challenge self-efficacy via identity-maintenance processes (Moen, 1996; Sverke et al., 2002). In their literature review on the experiences of involuntary job loss on older workers Kira and Klehe (2016) found that job loss caused self-definition threats, including threats to self-worth, self-distinctiveness, and self-continuity. Threats to self-worth involved experiencing shame and negative stereotypes relating to unemployment and ageing; while threats to self-distinctiveness involved feelings of expertise being discounted (Kira & Klehe, 2016). On the other hand threats to self-continuity involved loss of work-related identities and discontinuity of ‘bread-winner’ identity (Kira & Klehe, 2016). In response to self-definition threats, participants initiated coping responses, including protecting self-definitions under threat (for instance by becoming more critical of employers and the labour market), and restructuring self-definitions (for instance by exiting work-related identities or increasing the importance of non-work identities) (Kira & Klehe, 2016).

In their study exploring the effects of involuntary retirement on leavers and stayers, Isaksson and Johansson (2000) found that lack of control in decision making had a prolonged impact on individuals. In addition, they found beneficial effects on adaptation (for those who retired as well as those who stayed) when individuals felt they had influence over the outcomes of restructure (Isaksson & Johansson, 2000). Influence over the outcome of restructure also has broadly positive benefits (Moen, 1996). Workers who are 'restructured out' or who experience involuntary retirement are more likely to experience health problems, lower psychological well-being, and job displacement (Herzog, House, & Morgan, 1991; Szinovacz & Davey, 2005). Not surprisingly, workers who experience involuntary retirement are less likely than those who retire voluntarily to report high levels of retirement satisfaction (Isaksson & Johansson, 2000).

Szinovacz and Davey (2005) identified gendered differences in the perception and experience of involuntary retirement. In general, they found that "earlier female retirees as a group were more likely to experience forced retirement" (Szinovacz & Davey, 2005, p.45). More specifically they found that marital status and caring obligations were significantly related to perceptions of involuntary retirement among women, but not men (Szinovacz & Davey, 2005). As Richardson (1999) highlights, women are more likely than men to retire due to caring obligations, and this often occurs involuntarily due to unexpected health decline or gendered expectations.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature across several fields of academic research relevant to the research question, including work, older workers, careers, restructure, and retirement. Importantly the literature reviewed in this chapter is situated within two essential contexts – intersections of gender and age which are central to the research question; and the New Zealand context in which the research was undertaken. Overall, the research points to distinct experiences of work, career, and restructure for women compared with men, and indicates layered disadvantages for older women in particular. What is more, qualitative research on restructure experiences of older women appears scarce. Taken together, this literature review serves to highlight the importance of research on the experience of restructure among older women workers and the impact of the restructure on their careers. The following section outlines the methodological choices in undertaking this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in the current research. A clearly articulated methodology is necessary to ensure academic rigour and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013). Methodological choices are underpinned by broad philosophical meanings situated within paradigmatic and epistemological positions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Gray, 2014). The researcher should ensure these positions are coherent from epistemology through to choice of methods and make these positions explicit (Carter & Little, 2007; Creswell, 2013). In order to provide a detailed justification of methodological choice, an overview of the ontology, epistemology and paradigm framework employed in this research will first be presented. Subsequently the methodology chosen for this research – narrative inquiry, is discussed. After that a detailed explanation of the methods, including sampling, participant recruitment, and data collection is given. Finally, this research draws on Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method in analysing data, and an overview of this process is provided.

3.1 Ontology, Epistemology, and Paradigm

Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2014). It is concerned with the researchers' assumptions about the form and nature of reality, about what is and what it means to be (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Ontological positions can be grouped dichotomously, with relativism on the one hand and realism on the other (Gray, 2014). The ontological position of relativism underpins this research. A relativist ontology argues that multiple realities exist and suggests there are several ways to access these (Gray, 2014, p.10). Crotty (1998) further argues that through the lens of a relativist ontology "meaning does not exist independently of consciousness" (Crotty, 1998, p.10). Consequently, realities are constructed through the meanings ascribed or constructed by people's perceptions of them (Gray, 2014).

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). It is concerned with the researchers' basic beliefs about knowledge- what it means to know, what can be known, and what constitutes knowing (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002). Importantly, epistemology provides a philosophical framework for evaluating the legitimacy of knowledge (Gray, 2014; Maynard, 1994). Additionally, epistemology informs the researcher's methodological approach to finding the 'truth' (Crotty, 1998). Three central epistemological views are generally acknowledged by researchers – objectivism, constructivism, and subjectivism (Crotty, 1998, Gray, 2014). The current research draws from a constructionist epistemology. This epistemological position contends that "there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover" (Crotty, 1998, p.8). Rather 'truth' and meaning are constructed through the interaction between subject and object (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2014). Consequently, I take for granted that narratives and the meanings attached to them are fluid and constructed for different audiences, at different times, and for different purposes (Polkinghorne, 1995; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Through this perspective multiple accounts of 'truth' can exist which are equally valid (Gray, 2014). As a result positivist concepts of reliability and validity are not applicable for this research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Instead, as Creswell (2013) argues research in this epistemology should be measured through the concepts of trustworthiness and rigour.

A paradigm is "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105) in methodological choices (Gray, 2014). It is grounded in the historical and social context of the discipline and therefore situated within ontological and epistemological beliefs which guide assumptions brought to the research by the researcher (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002). This research subscribes to an interpretive paradigm (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The interpretive paradigm is concerned with the "meanings people attach to the events of their lives" (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p.16). To this end, experiences are interpreted by individuals situated within social and historical contexts (Bruner, 1991; Gray, 2014). My role as researcher in an interpretive paradigm is intersubjective, meaning that I seek to understand and interpret the stories shared by participants (Creswell, 2013; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Savin-Baden & Van Nierkirk, 2007). In analysing and interpreting the data "the researcher does not just play back to the participants what they have told her, but interprets the significance of their self-understandings in ways the participants may not have been able to see". (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p.16).

3.2 Methodology

Methodology is the approach to systematic inquiry that lies behind the selection and implementation of research methods and is informed by a particular paradigm or epistemological perspective (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2014). It is “the description, the explanation, and the justification of methods, and not the methods themselves” (Kaplan, 1964, p.18 cited in Carter & Little, 2007). The methodology chosen for the current research question is narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry is concerned with the lived experience of people through their told stories, and this approach is considered appropriate for the research question (Creswell, 2013; Hiles, Cermak, & Chrz, 2017). A narrative approach is somewhat flexible in terms of its paradigmatic requirements and can be aligned with an interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2013; Grey, 2014, Grant & Giddings, 2002). The situation of narrative inquiry methodology within an interpretive paradigm allows for the exploration of experience and the meanings that people attach to these experiences (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Although many types of narrative may emerge through this methodology, the current research question sought oral stories about women’s experiences of restructure (Creswell, 2013).

There is an emphasis in this methodology on the stories of individuals situated within (usually chronological) time and space which is used to give order and meaning to the told experience (Bruner, 1991; Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995). This focus on temporally meaningful episodes sets narrative apart from other genres of research (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995). I argue that the sequential experience of restructure lends itself to being organised across linear time, with experiences occurring before restructure, during restructure, and after restructure (Creswell, 2013). Polkinghorne (1995) refers to this type of storied narrative as diachronic data, and suggests that interviews are the most common source of this type of data in contemporary narrative inquiry.

Stories are linguistic expressions of human experience and can be defined as “narratives that combine a succession of incidents into a unified episode” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7). Stories and storytelling are deeply embedded and uniquely describe human experience (Hiles et al., 2017). They capture both the complexity of events and the personal meanings attached to those events (Polkinghorne, 1995). For this reason, the stories of women in this research were elicited to more deeply understand their experiences of restructure and the meanings attached to those experiences. As Savin-Baden and Van Nierkerk (2007) posit, “humans are storytelling organisms who lead storied lives… and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones” (p.461-462).

A central principle of narrative inquiry is that individuals construct events through narrative, rather than simply describe them (Chase, 2005). Narrative is a way of understanding our own and others’ actions, and of making sense of events as they unfold over time – in the words of Chase (2005) “narrative is retrospective meaning making” (p.656). It places the self at the centre as the main protagonist and in doing so emphasises the narrator’s voice (Chase, 2005).

The position of the researcher in narrative research is often seen as collaborative, with stories emerging from the dialogue between participant and researcher (Creswell, 2013; Savin-Bader & Van Nierkerk, 2007). Although the stories shared are those of the participants, my own voice as narrator comes to the fore in the analysis and presentation of those stories (Chase, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1995). As Chase (2005) highlights researchers in narrative inquiry “develop their own voice as they construct others’ voices and realities” (p.657). My voice as narrator is both constrained and enabled by the social resources, circumstances, and environments in which I am situated; and is aimed at and adjusted for an academic audience (Chase, 2005).

Drawing on Bruner’s (1985) seminal work, Polkinghorne (1995) makes a useful distinction between narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. In the former, descriptions of events are collected as data and the researcher then configures these to cohere to a plot (Polkinghorne, 1995). In the later researchers collect stories as data, analyse them using processes that suit their paradigmatic positions, and describe themes across the data (Polkinghorne, 1995). It is the later approach – analysis of narrative that was used in the current research.

3.3 Methods

Methods are the procedures and techniques used in a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of data in pursuit of an answer to a research question or hypothesis (Crotty 1998; Gray, 2014; Grant & Giddings, 2002). Research methods are guided by methodologies, and in some cases can be prescribed by methodology (Carter & Little, 2007; Grant & Giddings, 2002). Crotty (1998) highlights the importance of describing research methods in specific terms in order to justify and substantiate the research process.

According to Creswell (2013), the establishment of trustworthiness and rigour are essential to the establishment of sound qualitative research. Rigour can be achieved through the deliberate and articulated design of systematic methods that include data collection, analysis and reporting, and that demonstrate methodological congruence between the research question and the chosen methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). In the following section I highlight the coherence of data method choices with the research question and the aforementioned methodological choices.

Sample

Unlike quantitative research samples which aim to be statistically representative, qualitative research samples are selected purposively, consisting of participants who have knowledge or experience of the topic of research (Carter & Little, 2007; Morse et al., 2002). The sample for this research consisted of women aged 55 years or older, who had experienced organisational restructure. To ensure that the experience was fresh in the minds of participants, their experience had to have occurred not longer than five years prior to the interview. Organisational restructure can be an unpleasant experience, and in order to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation, a selection criteria for participants was that their experience of restructure had not occurred in the year immediately prior to interview (Collins, 2005).

Braun and Clarke (2013) highlight that sample size in qualitative inquiry should be guided by adequacy and saturation. Adequacy means that the size of the sample should yield enough data to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the topic in order to answer the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Saturation is concerned with the richness of data, and indicates that depth and breadth of information is achieved (Bowen, 2008; Kuzel, 1992). It refers to the point at which no new information or insights are being generated through the inclusion of additional data (ie. increase in sample size) (Sandelowski, 1995). Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, and Braun (2017) further recommend sample size for thematic analysis at

Masters level be between six and 15 interviews. The sample for this research consisted of twelve participants.

Research suggests that the lived experience of restructure differs for those who stay in the organisation compared with those who are made redundant (voluntarily or non-voluntarily) (Baruch & Hind, 1999; Isaksson & Johansson, 2000; Kivimaki et al., 2003). As a result, six of the participants have continued working in the organisation after restructure, and six participants left the organisation after restructure.

Participant Recruitment

The primary sampling strategy used for this research was snowballing. Snowballing involves the recruitment of participants through the networks of the researcher and other participants of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). If participants knew of anyone else who might like to take part in the research, they were asked to forward the participant information sheet to their contact via email, with the researcher copied in. Potential participants were invited to contact the researcher should they wish to participate in the research. Potential participants who did not reply to the initial email were sent one follow up email after seven days, at which point if the potential participant did not respond in the affirmative to the invitation no further correspondence was sent. Price (2005) cautions against homogeneity which can occur when snowball samples are used as the sole recruitment activity. Table 1.0 below outlines the demographic information collected about participants in the sample and shows a variety of ages and work roles.

Table 1.0 Demographic information about participants

Name (pseudonym)	**Industry**	**Role**	**Age**	**Stayer / Leaver**
Jane	Education	Manager	58	Stayer who left after a time
Martha	Public Sector	Manager	72	Stayer who left after a time
Caroline	Public Sector	Advisor	70	Stayer who left after a time
Rose	Manufacturing	Executive Assistant	72	Stayer who stayed

Maggie	Education	Coordinator	57	Stayer who stayed
Rachel	Education	Advisor	63	Stayer who stayed
Hannah	Media	Director	57	Leaver who was reemployed elsewhere
Julia	Education	Manager	62	Leaver who was reemployed elsewhere
Mia	Education	Advisor	61	Leaver who was reemployed elsewhere
Katrina	Manufacturing	Executive Assistant	63	Leaver who left the paid workforce
Rebecca	Education	Lecturer	63	Leaver who was reemployed elsewhere
Anna	Education	Director	68	Leaver who was reemployed elsewhere

Data collection

Creswell (2013) recommends that narrative research principally uses interview as the method for collecting data. Interviews are a source of primary data which are seen to "add richness and credibility to qualitative manuscripts" (Myers, 2013, p.120). Interviews were conducted on campuses over a period of six months. In instances where participants were unable to meet on an AUT campus, the interview was conducted via Skype. I followed Minichiello, Aroni and Hays' (2008) recommendation that no more than two interviews be completed in one day. Participants were provided with a copy of the participant information sheet and asked to provide their consent to participate on the research consent form.

Audio recordings of interviews allows for an accurate and full record of the interview which, according to Minichiello et al., (2008) enhances trustworthiness of the data. Additionally, Oakley (2005) highlights that electronic recording frees the interviewer to engage and build rapport with the participant. Consequently, interviews were recorded digitally using the voice memos function on an iPhone 8. I followed the recommendation by Minichiello et al., (2008) to save each recording under the participants' pseudonym, topic, and date of interview. After transcribing the interviews, voice recordings were deleted.

Three interview types are generally acknowledged by researchers – structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Myers 2013); and these will be discussed here. Structured interviews are characterised by pre-defined questions and timeframe which are rigidly adhered to, and are often used in political polling or market research (Myers, 2013). According to Oakley (2005) this type of interview tends to reside within masculine hegemony and can act as a mechanism for the establishment of positivist objectivity and power dynamics. Structure interviews are not an appropriate tool for interviewing women nor for developing a narrative about stories which is necessary in narrative research (Creswell, 2013; Oakley, 2005). On the other hand unstructured interviews provide considerable narrative freedom to the participant and have few pre-defined questions and (Myers, 2013). One challenge of this the unstructured approach is the lack of consistency across interviews which can make analysis difficult, particularly for the beginner researcher (Myers, 2013). The third type of interview - the semi-structured interview; walks a middle ground, taking advantage of the benefits of structured and unstructured interview techniques while trying to mitigate the risks (Myers, 2013). This interview type provides some structure and focus via pre-prepared questions while allowing for improvisation and the opportunity to explore emergent questions that may arise in the process of coming to understand the experiences of participants and the meanings participants ascribe to those experiences (Grant & Giddings, 2002). This approach is appropriate for the research question and aligned with the chosen methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Connolly & Peltzer, 2016).

Semi-structured Interviews

Myers and Newman (2007) highlight several pitfalls for the researcher to avoid when undertaking semi-structured interviews. Among those is lack of time, which on the one hand can lead to incomplete data collection, and conversely on the other can lead to participants generating opinions under time pressure (Myers & Newman, 2007). Both instances are likely to impact upon the reliability and validity of the data and therefore should be avoided. Participants in the present study were advised via the participant information sheet that the interview was likely to be 60 minutes in duration. In instances where the interview was not completed in this time frame, participants were given the opportunity to continue the interview or to reschedule an ancillary interview time to complete the interview.

A second pitfall identified by Myers and Newman (2007) is lack of trust. An interview is an artificial situation and typically involves a researcher asking a stranger to share their experiences, ideas, and opinions (Myers & Newman, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1995). Myers (2013) highlights that richer, more detailed stories are likely to be told when participants feel comfortable. The establishment of rapport early in an interview can help to facilitate trust, and this can be achieved through making the participant feel comfortable and minimising social dissonance (Minichiello et al.,2008; Myers & Newman, 2007). Special attention was paid to the interview environment to facilitate participant ease. Participants were provided with water and a comfortable chair, and chairs were positioned at an angle to appear non-threatening (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Drawing on a model of perceptual communication patterns proposed by Bandler and Grinder (1979), Minichiello et al.,(2008) further suggest that rapport can be achieved through understanding participants' perceptual models and communicating symmetrically. They suggest this can be achieved by "matching the perceptual language, the images of the world, the speech patterns, pitch, tone, speed, the overall posture and the breathing patterns of the informant" (Minichiello et al., 2008, p.83).

Finally, Myers and Newman (2007) highlight that knowledge is constructed in the telling of stories during interviews. In the exchange between interviewer and interviewee, stories are told in response to questions (Minichiello et al., 2008). In narrative inquiry the role of the researcher is as active listener, rather than as interrogator (Minichiello et al., 2008). In my research I used active and empathic listening to encourage the unfolding of narrative stories during interviews, providing both verbal (listening noises) and non-verbal (nodding, smiling) cues (Minichiello et al., 2008).

Throughout the process of conducting the interviews I maintained a research journal in which I maintained a reflexive practice of reflecting on interviews and noting reflections throughout the process of interviewing, listening to interviews, transcribing, and analysing. This process of reflection allowed me to refine my interview techniques, including decreasing verbal interruptions of participants' stories; becoming more comfortable with silences which allowed participants to consider their responses to prompts; and enhancing my confidence in exploring unexpected lines of narrative.

Interview Questions

An interview guide was developed which included a list of topics and broad, open ended questions (Minichiello et al., 2008; Myers & Newman, 2007). Drawing on research which indicates three stages of restructure experience the guide was structured in chronological time with a focus on these three stages - before, during, and after restructure (Paulsen et al., 2005; Smollan & Morrison, 2019; Fugate et al., 2002). While the interview guide provided some structure, it was not rigidly adhered to. A strength of semi-structured interviews is its flexibility which facilitates investigation of interesting lines of enquiry (Minichiello et al., 2008; Myers & Newman, 2007). This flexibility is seen as necessary when working within a narrative inquiry methodology as it provides "a more valid explanation of the informant's perceptions and constructions of reality" (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008, p.51).

Myers and Newman (2007) suggest that four key areas be prepared for a semi-structured interview – the opening (introducing yourself), the introduction (explaining the purpose of the interview), the key questions, and the close (clearing questions, expressing thanks, snowballing). I followed this approach to providing an overarching framework for the feel of the interview, but drew on Flick's (2009) approach to start the interview with a broad generative question to set the tone and signal to the participant that I was interested in their story. Open ended questions, focussing on 'how', 'when', and 'what' were asked, in order to elicit rich responses (Minichiello et al., 2008). I tried to keep questions short and clear, and devoid of jargon, to enhance their understandability and answerability (Kvale, 1996, p.130 cited in Minichiello et al., 2008).

Several questioning techniques were used during interviews, and a brief outline of the main ones is provided here. Descriptive questions were used particularly at the start of the interview to ease participants into the interaction. These ask participants to describe events, people, places, and experiences and are seen as nonthreatening (Minichiello et al., 2008). Opinion questions (what do you think about that?) were asked to probe the interpretive and cognitive processes of participants to understand what participants thought about events and experiences (Minichiello et al., 2008). Feeling questions (how did you feel about that?) were asked to understand participant's emotional responses to events and experiences (Minichiello et al., 2008). Contrast questions (what was the difference between x and y?) were asked to enable participants to make comparisons in their worldview and to discuss the meanings attached to these experiences (Minichiello et al., 2008). Probing questions and nudging probes (tell me more? what happened then?) were used throughout interviews to garner greater detail and to tease out common sense and taken for granted understanding (Minichiello et al., 2008). In addition when participants made generalisations I asked them to tease these out by providing an example (Minichiello et al., 2008).

Transcription

Oral stories were transcribed into written texts, in order to prepare the data for analysis (Van Maanen, 1988, cited in Polkinghorne, 1995). The process of transcription is not merely administrative, but an inherently interpretive and transformative process (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Minichiello et al., 2008). As a result, decisions about transcription were carefully made to ensure thoroughness, consistency, and rigour (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Following guidelines from Braun and Clarke (2013) an orthographic transcript was created for each interview. An orthographic transcription focuses on what was said, and includes the spoken words and non-verbal utterances (laughs, ums, ahs, hmm-mms) from an interview verbatim (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It does not include how things were said, or any researcher observations during the interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This method of transcription is appropriate for the thematic analysis method employed in this research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Minichiello et al., (2008) recommend that the first interviews are transcribed by the researcher to gain familiarity with the data and any issues that may arise in transcription. I transcribed six interviews (including the first), and the remaining six transcriptions were completed by a third-party transcriber. I followed Braun & Clarke's (2013) recommendation that transcriptions be completed as close to the interview as possible, and ideally within 48 hours.

3.5 Data analysis

As mentioned earlier, Polkinghorne (1995) describes two main modes of analysis in narrative inquiry – narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. An analysis of narrative aims to draw themes out of transcribed texts, and this is the approach taken here (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995; Savin-Bader & Van Nierkerk, 2007). In their seminal work Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as "the searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning" (p.15). The selection of thematic analysis in the current research is justified for three principal reasons. First, thematic analysis is compatible with a constructionist epistemology which is necessary to ensure methodological congruence and rigour (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Myers, 2013). Second, "thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.5) which is necessary for the current research question. Third, thematic analysis is an established, explicit, and accessible form of analysis, especially for researchers starting in their career, as is the case here (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The Braun and Clarke (2006) method of thematic analysis was carried out on the transcribed data. Six steps are outlined in this method, and these will be summarised briefly here. First, interviews were transcribed to provide a verbatim account of all non-verbal and verbal utterances (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step generated a data set whilst also familiarising me with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Second, the data was manually coded "giving full and even attention to each data item, and identifying interesting aspects in the data items" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.19) using Nvivo 12 to indicate potential patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Third, coded extracts were sorted and collated into candidate themes, and refined to ensure that "data within themes cohere together meaningfully" while ensuring sufficient distinction between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.20). This was an inductive and recursive process which involved shifting from the data to the themes repeatedly (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Subsequently the themes were defined and named to capture the essence of each theme and ensure they fit into the overall story of the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, the findings were constructed incorporating "vivid examples or extracts which capture the essence" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.23) of each theme and constructing an argument relevant to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the writing of the findings participants names were changed to pseudonyms in order to ensure their confidentiality, and any reference to organisations' names omitted. All participants received a copy of a draft version of the findings and were given the opportunity to propose their preferred pseudonym and to remove quotes that they felt identified them. None of the participants felt the quotes used in this research identified them.

3.6 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has outlined the ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions of this research, and provided justification of these choices supported by relevant literature. This research is underpinned by an interpretive paradigm that draws from a constructivist epistemology where notions of trustworthiness and meaning as constructed through interaction between the subject and the object, and is concerned with the "meanings people attach to the events of their lives" (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p.16). The chosen methodology is narrative inquiry, which is aligned with the epistemological and paradigmatic positions of this research, and gives primacy to participants' stories. Twelve participants who met the selection criteria were recruited through snowball sampling, and participated in semi-structured interviews with the researcher. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis technique described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013). The themes determined through this analysis are outlined in the following findings chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Preface: A note about time

In the telling of their stories of restructure, a linear framework of five distinct stages emerged. These stages were: before restructure; during restructure phase one; during restructure phase two; after restructure; and post restructure. The end of one stage and initiation of the next was marked by a restructure event. These events were: the formal notice of restructure was given; the outcome of the restructure was announced; the restructure was implemented; participants started in their new role (in the organisation, or were re-employed in another organisation) or started a new focus in their lives. This linear framework is diagrammatically outlined in Figure 1.

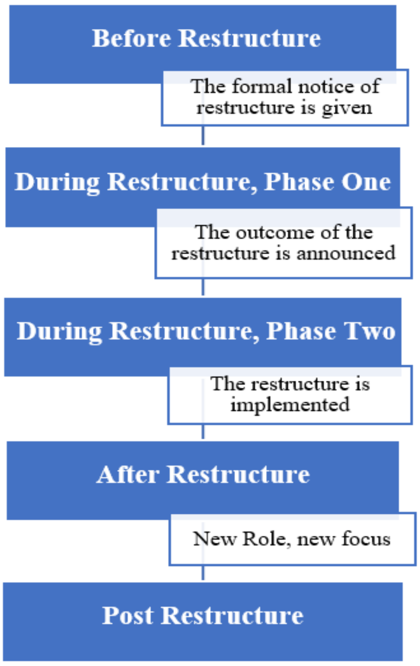

Figure 1.0 Diagram of stages of restructure experience

Although all participants experienced this series sequentially, time spent in each period of time was unique to each individual and to each restructure. For example, the time spent in "During Restructure, Phase One" (the period of uncertainty) lasted several months for Rose, whereas for Hannah the period was the length of a single meeting.

Finally, many of the participants have experienced multiple but separate restructures over a five year period.. Interestingly, these participants spoke about each restructure as having its own unique characteristics and effects. As a result, where participants spoke about several distinct restructure experiences, these were each captured and analysed. Participants' discussion and reflection of the collective effect of multiple restructures is captured in the Post Restructure period.

4.2 Before Restructure: A period of routine

Prior to the announcement of the impending restructure, participants were generally engaged and went about their work in a fairly routine manner, feeling close and connected to the organisation. That is not to say that this period was characterised entirely by tranquillity- several participants spoke of the typical challenges faced in navigating corporate or management roles; but on the whole the emphasis of participants stories during this phase was of a period of normality (whatever that looked and felt like for each participant). Additionally, many participants spoke about changes in management, leadership, and strategy during this period, and the ways in which these changes preceded the restructure announcement.

4.2.1 Business as usual

Before the restructure announcement most participants were working in roles in the mode of 'business as usual'. Participants like Julia highlighted that they felt they were doing well in their roles and had taken on higher acting responsibilities including management. Some participants, particularly those in non-management roles, were unaware of the impending restructure and noted that there were no indications that this phase of business as usual would change. As Katrina highlights: *"so you know, it was just normal every day to day work and yeah, there was nothing in the wind."* When telling their stories many participants were brief in their recounting of this period of time, suggesting that this was perhaps one of less significance than the subsequent periods and actions.

4.2.2 Connectedness

Participants expressed feeling closely connected to the organisation and particularly to their teams prior to the restructure announcement. Many participants talked about how their work team felt like a family, with this feeling reflecting both the time spent at work (typically 40+ hours per week) as well as assumptions about culture, closeness, and community. Participants like Mia and Julia bought into cultural values espoused by their organisation, which focussed on a culture of care for employees. The investment in culture and community enhanced the sense of distress and betrayal experienced by participants who felt blindsided by redundancy.

Participants spoke about feeling strongly committed to the organisation. They highlighted instances where they had gone above and beyond the scope of their roles to contribute to the organisation; through volunteering at events, participating in work groups, and mentoring or supporting other staff. Additionally, participants talked about managing activities that while not formally in their job description, helped to smooth or ease aspects of organisational operation. Jane noted that before the restructure she *"had a really strong engagement with the organisation, so you know I would go to things after hours, you know I would volunteer I would contribute"*.

Length of tenure was central to participants feelings of connectedness. Participants spoke of working in organisations for decades, and highlighted the interconnectedness of their lives with the organisation. Length of tenure was not just about the amount of time spent in a role or organisation, but about the sense that they had lived a large portion of their lives alongside the organisation. As Julia highlighted *"It was – ah like my previous manager had said, it was like we were whanau, we were family, so when my daughter was born they all knew"*. Participants described organisations as living entities, and highlighted how both had experienced growth, hardship, and prosperity; with this contributing to a sense of entwined journeys. "*that length of time showed where I started from and how we grew, the [organisation] grew, I grew and what I contributed…"* (Mia). Assumptions about long term tenure also contributed to a sense of security and to an unspoken psychological contract that participants held with their organisations – that they had given much of their lives to the organisation and expected security, transparency, and dignity in return.

4.2.3 New Management

At odds with the general tone of business as usual was the way many participants spoke about new management, leadership, or strategy. New management at the micro (line manager), meso (director, CEO), and macro levels (government) affected participants' experiences at work prior to the restructure announcement.

As has been outlined above, for many participants the announcement of a restructure was preceded by a new manager starting in the organisation. Some new managers appeared to have role descriptions with distinct similarities and overlapping responsibilities which signalled to participants that their role was possibly at risk. As Hannah notes "*so she came on board at the end of 2012 it was interesting that um as soon as she came on board I have to admit that I felt like my days were numbered*". Other participants experienced hostility and unease with their new manager. It made them feel uncomfortable but at the time they did not understand this underlying cause: *"Now when the new manager came in I felt he was a little bit hostile you know? Um I just got those vibes at team meetings and things like that" (Julia)*. New managers also brought new expectations and ways of communicating that were unclear or confusing to participants, and this sat at odds with participants' general experience of doing well in their jobs.

New managers brought new strategic directions, approaches, and actions which directly led – in some cases – to organisational restructure. In some organisations a shift in strategy was the result of financial or competitive pressures. Rebecca, who worked in the education sector, highlighted the financial pressures arising from a decrease in student enrolments, which resulted in the closure of whole departments.

Not all changes to organisational strategy were the result of meso-level (ie. organisational led) factors. Caroline, who worked in a public service role, was affected by the change of direction brought about by a new government, whose influence over the direction of her department was significant. Martha also experienced budget cuts when ministry funding was substantially reduced, and this triggered the restructure. Importantly, participants highlighted an awareness of the meso and macro factors which they felt influenced the restructures in their organisations. To this end, participants saw restructures within the broader political and business context, the implications of which will be discussed in the "Reflection" period. Importantly, this broader contextual awareness did not ease the unexpectedness or pain of subsequent restructure periods.

4.3 The formal notice of restructure is given

During this event, participants were formally given notice that the organisation was intending to undertake a restructure. The announcement of restructure was carried out in two ways, either in a one to one meeting with the participants' line manager, or in group meetings with the effected team(s). Paradoxically, participants highlighted that the announcement felt unexpected even in instances where they had anticipated it. As Hannah put it *"even though I'd known it was coming it felt like the bottom had dropped out of my world*".

Regardless of announcement method, participants described being asked to attend a meeting without a clear agenda, and at the meeting being advised that the organisation intended to undertake a restructure. At this point the roles impacted by the intended restructure were identified.

> *"we went to a meeting and ah we were called to a meeting one morning. It was just - it was very quick. It was quite awful actually and um our, our roles were read out, not our names but the roles, so we knew who it, you know, we knew ah who was being ah made redundant when, yeah, when our positions were read out. So - and one of them was - and, and I was in that group."* (Mia)

Participants recalled feeling shocked by the meeting. In most cases, information about the case for restructure and the consultation process were provided at the meeting, although participants generally struggled to recall the detail of this information due to their experience of shock. For others there was a lack of clarity about what the process and rationale for the restructure actually was, and this may reflect organisations' (in)experience with restructure. For participants who experienced a group announcement, there was a sense of publicness which was uncomfortable and even embarrassing, particularly for those identified as at risk of redundancy. Generally participants spoke of being expected to return to work after the meeting, to carry on with business as usual, and that this was particularly difficult as they felt shaken by the announcement.

4.4 During Restructure, Phase One: A period of uncertainty and social tension

After the announcement of the restructure, participants entered a period of uncertainty and social tension. Social tension was characterised by strained relationships with colleagues, direct reports, and managers. Despite most participants receiving information about the case for restructure, many participants were unclear about *why* the restructure was being implemented and why *their* jobs were being targeted for restructure. Many participants reported feeling uncertain about their worth to the organisation, and this laid the foundation for feelings of pain, loss, and trauma in the next phase (Phase Two). Social tension emerged in this initial phase as it became clearer which jobs were being impacted by the restructure. Overall, participants in this phase were concerned about how the restructure would impact their jobs, their work team, and their colleagues.

4.4.1 The process of restructure

The way in which the restructure was conducted during phase one had a significant impact on whether participants perceived that the organisation viewed them as a 'person' or as a 'pawn'. Decision making power, consultation, and (lack of) clarity about the rationale for restructure were key issues of this subtheme.

Decision making power was located at the senior leadership level and many participants felt removed from this level of leadership during the restructure process. Decisionmakers were perceived to make decisions about the fate of employees without knowing who the employees were. Decision makers were viewed as omnipotent in that they were situated at the top of a hierarchy and participants didn't know who the decision makers were or why they were making the decisions they did. The information vacuum and participants' sense of invisibility and disempowerment created a strong sense of distrust among the impacted workers: "*I don't think they saw me as a person through that process at all… they were just literally looking at the balance sheet." (Hannah)*

Often it was the middle-managers who were the bearers of news but not the architects of restructure. In this context, middle-managers were expected to shepherd their teams through the restructure and align them with the new organisational structure. For some participants (mainly stayers), this meant that they felt protected by their managers. Maggie highlighted that her manager was able to protect her team from a large amalgamation of teams within the organisation due to her close relationship with senior leaders, and this strengthened Maggie's commitment to her line manager. For others (mainly but not exclusively leavers), a sense of distrust of their manager emerged which created feelings of isolation and exclusion. As Rebecca noted *"we didn't necessarily have faith in our managers that they would support us or guide us in that process"*. Where managers were seen to protect, inform, and support their teams, participants came out of the restructure with ongoing strong relationships with their line manager. Where managers were seen to take the side of the leadership team in pushing through change, distrust persisted amongst stayers and leavers.

Consultation with staff was part of the restructure process however, participants generally felt that restructure outcomes had already been determined. In some instances employees banded together to make group submissions, adding to a larger narrative around collective agency and collegial support. In instances where submissions were made during the consultation phase, participants reported feeling that their submissions were ignored or disregarded, and that little feedback was provided in relation to submission ideas. As a result, consultation periods were commonly seen as paying lip-service, or fulfilling a legal requirement. Maggie said *"I think that's what made a lot of st-, a lot of our staff angry is that you just say you're transparent but you've just said thank you and it doesn't matter what you've said. This is gonna go ahead".* Lack of genuine consultation represented a loss of agency and empowerment for participants, and resulted in decreased engagement in both the process and the organisation. Additionally, many participants interpreted the lack of genuine consultation to mean that the organisation did not care about them personally. This was at odds with how many participants felt before the announcement of restructure. Participants' close connection with the organisation which had developed over decades of service was disrupted and the ensuing dissonance caused significant feelings of pain and loss.

The clarity of the rationale for the restructure was critical at this juncture. Participants highlighted the need for clarity in two key areas – rationale for the overall restructure, and rationale for the specific roles being restructured. Lack of clarity on either of these areas resulted in unease, uncertainty, and rancour. As Rachel highlighted, *“there was a lot of yeah, a lot of ill feeling about, about that and why some staff were retaining their jobs and other staffs were being made redundant. And the justification for that wasn't very clear, so - so yeah, that was a very […] from our perspective it was yeah, it was not the right way to go about it*”.

4.4.2 Social Impact

The social impact of this stage was considerable. Social impact encompasses participants relationships that were impacted by the restructure, including relationships inside and outside of the organisation. Participants highlighted the ways in which relationships within the organisation became strained amid the political manoeuvring that occurred during the period ‘During Restructure, Phase One’. They also discussed the social supports that served as important coping mechanisms for them.

Social tension with colleagues arose at this stage in the restructure due to perceived discrepancies in the treatment of similar roles during the restructure. In Jane’s instance, her name was automatically assigned to a new, non-contestable position, whereas other staff members were not. It was unclear to Jane what the rationale for this was, and it created some social tension with other staff querying why this was the case:

> *“so it was a really big restructure in terms of the impact of people personally, and a new role which initially didn’t feel like it particularly sat with my skill set because it was effectively leading what had been a call centre and I had no background in that so um it was awkward in the fact that I felt like why was my name just put there and also probably dealing with kind of the rumblings that occurred at that time that other people also wondered that.”* (Jane)

In another instance, Maggie’s role was considered ‘out of scope’ and therefore was not included with the other roles which were being put into a new team. This created some resentment from colleagues who had not wanted their teams to amalgamate, and caused Maggie and her team to insulate themselves from colleagues and teams who were the targets for amalgamation. Maggie describes the loss of closeness with her colleagues that resulted from this:

> *"and our work colleagues that we were close to, we didn't know what to say to them…which wasn't... We felt like we were on the outer of our friends, because a lot of these colleagues were friends you know? We, we kinda make friends with colleagues and just because they had to go to a different area - so we had to kind of ((pause)) ah how would I say? Not distance ourselves, but we couldn't go how's your day going? How are you, you know and, and joke or, or talk casually to them 'cause we didn't know how they felt…"* (Maggie)

Many participants highlighted that a distinction between potential leavers and potential stayers emerged during this time due to the identification of roles that were in the scope of the restructure. Leavers engaged in more conversations about the restructure with other leavers, than they did with stayers. A sense of awkwardness between potential leavers and stayers arose during this time, in which people were unsure how to talk about what was going on. Speaking about survivor guilt from a leaver's perspective, Rebecca said:

> "*Well I think it was mainly they didn't talk about the restructure, you'd have conversations about something else. It was the ones who were being restructured we had more of a kind of personal conversation. So if I met you know the 2 I C there, there's no way he would say 'how are you? How are you feeling about this?' It would be that it was kind of like off the agenda somehow."* (Rebecca)

Conversely, several stayers reported that the regularity of conversations during this phase and the emotional and empathetic energy required during those conversations was exhausting. Jane and Martha described themselves as compassionate people who wanted to support their colleagues through the restructure, but that the frequency and emotionality of those conversations was draining. *"((long pause)) I probably wouldn't have spent so much time talking about it to people because it actually was tiring. You know so for a period every conversation was quite negative."* (Jane)

Perceived political manoeuvring within the organisation was noted by participants during this time. Leavers in particular questioned whether decision making in this period was politically influenced. They believed that colleagues may have been aware of 'behind the scenes' discussions and decisions, and had chosen not to share that information. Moreover, several leavers felt there were staff who had influenced decision makers for their own political gain, and to the detriment of leavers. As Julia highlights *"Oh a lot of very snide comments and ah afterwards my colleague and I who was also made redundant, we felt that that person had had a hand in influencing the new manager…*". Despite strong feelings on the topic, none of the leavers had evidence that this had actually occurred. Stayers spoke about the negative experiences of being blamed for being involved with or aware of the restructure. Rachel described an incident where a potential leaver accused her of political influence after the restructure was announced: "*And I remember one of the staff members came into my office and said were you behind this? Did you know this was happening? - which um made me feel really awful. She'd been here a lot longer than I had, so two of them had been here a lot longer than I had, so yeah, it was, it was really uncomfortable."*. In general stayers were less effected by political manoeuvring during this time. It may be that political manoeuvring was less personal for them; and their role was not affected. Nevertheless stayers spoke about the ways in which colleagues had jostled for position during this period, and how some staff had positioned themselves to come out of the restructure in a stronger position than beforehand. Jane encapsulates this by commenting that *"I sort of saw you know younger people that really sort of positioned themselves for those kind of key [strategic] roles"*.

Social support provided by colleagues, family, and personal faith practices was very important in terms of helping participants cope with the process of restructure. Support received from colleagues helped participants feel connected and encouraged a sense of shared experience. Supportive conversations gave participants confidence in their work efforts to date, enabled them to find solutions to challenges that occurred as a result of the restructure announcement, and to share the burden of their experience. Participants spoke warmly about their families and the support received from them. In particular participants with partners spoke positively about their calming and reassuring influence, and the importance of emotional support provided by partners throughout the restructure. Families provided participants with both an outsider perspective on the restructure as well as space away from the restructure (to 'forget' about it for a time). As Anna highlighted, *"I've got a very supportive partner, and had I been by myself I think I would have just gone completely under […] It makes you realise how important* *family and friends but also key links within the institution that you work in are, because they keep you floating".* Several participants spoke about their faith and its importance during this time. A faith perspective provided participants with two important things. First, it provided a set of values which participants drew on to guide their conduct during the restructure. Second, it created a sense of destiny where the restructure was framed as an intended part of "God's plan".

4.4.3 A wake up call (Re-evaluating)

The announcement of restructure and the ensuing uncertainty prompted participants to re-evaluate their health, finances, and values. They began to think about what was meaningful to them at this stage in their lives.

> *"In a way it forced me into doing things differently and looking at how can I actually make this work for me, rather than me working for the institution. And I kind of think I've spent most of my career working for the institution, institutions plural […] so it's a bit of a wake up call. Um it was probably a good one."* (Anna)

The re-evaluation of health occurred at two levels. First, participants thought about the ways in which the restructure was impacting on their health during this time (increased stress, loss of sleep). Second, participants looked ahead and considered how much time they felt they were likely to continue to have in good health. This caused them to re-evaluate how they wanted to spend that time. For Rose, who had experienced several previous bouts of cancer, health and finances were tied together. She had already drawn down from Kiwisaver in order to fund previous cancer treatment and as a result didn't have a large retirement fund to draw on. The risk to her of being made redundant without a redundancy payment was a significant financial concern.

All participants at this stage experienced a re-evaluation of finances, forcing them to think about what would happen to them and their dependents, if they didn't have an income. The financial positions of participants in this study were varied. Some participants were sole breadwinners whose families relied on their income; while other participants were single, with limited savings and no other source of income. There were participants who had spouses that were also working and were able to give the participant financial support, or who were retired and financially comfortable. Jane spoke about feeling blessed and privileged to be in a financially secure position such that a redundancy would not have financially impacted her. Julia spoke about her family as a financial safety net and the way this period caused her to question that:

> *"…point in time when something like that traumatic happens to you, because luckily for me I had something to fall back on. Okay, I had family, I had a husband, I had parents um and they would have bailed me out if, if - but, but, but the thought is in your head, what if they can't? What do we do?"* (Julia)

All participants spoke about debt, about the need to reduce or eliminate debt, and of the need to live modestly and be careful with money. They spoke about uncertainty and the way that this period had shaken their assumptions about the security of their income.

Finally, participants began to question what was important for them *'at my age'*. Participants started to consider aspects of their selves outside of their employed selves and imagined what a life without employment might look like. A common thread across participants was the idea of time freedom. Many participants spoke about not wanting to work 9-5 and considering taking *'frivolous'* roles; roles that were low stress, or low skill, or altruistic. Participants spoke about how this stage had given them cause to consider how they wanted to live with their loved ones; to spend more time with their grandchildren or their spouses while they were active and healthy.

> *"I suppose as a - 'cause I'm getting older, I'm getting closer to retirement age as well and sort of thought well if I did something different for another five years would that be such a bad thing, in terms of my career? I thought well maybe that would add an interesting dimension… so I think probably I, I could relax a little bit more about it."* (Rachel)

4.5 The Outcome of the Restructure is Announced

During this event, participants were given formal notification of the outcome of the restructure. Typically this involved participants receiving written notification outlining the final determination of the restructure, the new organisational structure, and the terms of their 'next step' (eg. exit, new role/report/team, or re-application). An offer of support (for instance, EAP) typically accompanied this event. The effect of the announcement was to provide certainty about the future, which was different from the previous period where uncertainty was prevalent. The event also served to deepen distinctions between leavers and stayers, as depicted in

Figure 2. As Julia highlights *"And then suddenly wham!... One day you got a job the next day you don't"*.

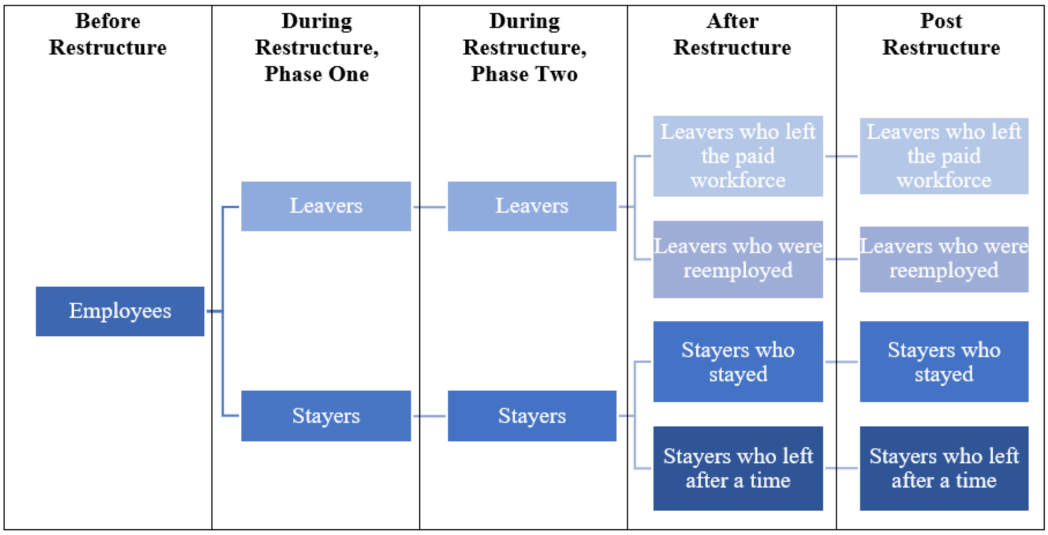

Figure 2 Diagram of distinctions between leavers and stayers over time

4.6 During Restructure Phase Two: A period of oscillation and pain

"During Restructure Phase Two" denotes the period of time between being made aware what actions would be taken as a result of the restructure, and the implementation of those actions. For leavers, this was the period of time between the announcement and their last day of work. For stayers, this was the period of time between the announcement and their new role, reporting line, or team.

This period of time was characterised by sharper distinctions between the experiences of leavers and stayers, with leavers generally feeling unwanted and unvalued, and experiencing significant pain, grief, and loss. Also characteristic of this period for leavers was an oscillation between wanting to leave gracefully and no longer caring about investing effort in the organisation or in their role. Hannah summarises this sentiment:

> *"I veered between trying to be completely engaged in the company and what was going on um you know dressing extremely well and looking my best and all that to turning up to work in jandals and not giving a shit you know"* (Hannah)

4.6.1 Not wanted, not valued

Business decisions that organisations made regarding the restructure were experienced by participants at a deeply personal level. Despite common business rhetoric about restructure being about the role and not the person, the *experience* of restructure was deeply personal. In particular, leavers felt that they were not valued and not wanted by the organisation.

> *"The whole way through my experience was of being an experienced older woman, whose experience was not valued. And I think the key thing that keeps coming out of this for me all the way through is a lack of valuing of experience and insight and wisdom."* (Anna)

Because participants had been in the workforce a long time, had accumulated significant experience, and had often served in the same organisation for considerable periods, not being valued by the organisation was a blow to their self-concept and self-esteem.

> *"and its really interesting now I talk about it because I always used to think it was about lack of financial security but its not. Its about lack of knowing who you are in the world and um uh a lack of a sense of self."* (Hannah)

In this phase, leavers in particular felt rejected by their organisations, and highlighted how difficult it was for them to come to terms with the rejection. Hannah explains *"It felt <u>terrible.</u> It took me <u>ages</u> to um feel ((pause)) that ah, to get over the sense of rejection. Yeah."*. Leavers also expressed feeling embarrassed and humiliated during this stage of the restructure. Similar to feelings of not being valued, embarrassment was felt deeply such that one participant would avoid driving past her former place of work. *"I was in a way embarrassed by what happened at [organisation] and I, and for the longest time I didn't want to go drive past that place." (Julia)*

Most participants spoke about the indignity with which restructures were conducted over this time. They highlighted outcomes including their position or salary being downgraded, and instances where they were required to reapply for roles that they felt was not significantly different to their original role. Caroline described the outcome of her restructure:

> *"in the restructuring they decided basically to downgrade the position um (.) but to reappoint me to it. So they cut the salary in half (.) and reappointed me to it um and the whole grading of the role was dropped three spots. I was - my salary was halved, but I was reappointed which meant that I wasn't (.) I couldn't - I wasn't being offered redundancy…" (Caroline)*

Martha described the process of re-applying for roles as drawn out and stressful, and she regarded it as problematic for the positive functioning of the work team and for organisational productivity, which she felt decreased. Indeed, all participants highlighted the feeling that productivity decreased significantly over this time. Leavers reported not doing as much work as previously, and stayers reported feeling disrupted by the dynamics of those leaving and of the impending changes. It is interesting to note a growing trend of 'gardening leave' for middle-managers made redundant in light of perceived productivity dips during this period.

Unexpectedly, the 'not wanted, not valued' theme was also felt by stayers in their observation of this phase of the restructure. In observing the organisation 'not valuing' and 'not wanting' colleagues who were similar to them, stayers started to reflect on their own security and sense of belonging to their organisations. Rachel who was a stayer through several restructures said that "*I did remember feeling if the, if the [organisation] values your role so, so little, then you'd be better to go somewhere else." (Rachel).* Some stayers started to question the value of long service, often for the first time in their careers. As Maggie observed *"But they were told you know, all your years of experience mean nothing".* Observation of the psychological contract breaches of colleagues was sufficient to partially breach the psychological contract for themselves. To this end, observing how the organisation treated colleagues in a manner they described as *"poorly"* led stayers to consider the possibility that the organisation might treat them in a similar way at some stage in the future. For many stayers it was the first time they had considered the organisation might treat them *"poorly"*.

4.6.2 Pain and Loss

For leavers this period was characterised by experiences of pain, loss, and grief. Leavers highlighted grieving for the loss of their jobs which had given them meaning and purpose, the loss of valued colleagues and social connections, and the loss of employment which gave them stability and security. Katrina equated the experience of pain, loss, and grief during this period to that experienced during a bereavement. *"Oh, it was terrible. I um (.) it almost felt like a bereavement really. Um yeah, so it was a - it was very hard to work those last few weeks that I was to work." (Katrina)*

Leavers also reported feeling *"traumatised"* and *"victimised"* and highlighted that the experience of restructure was one of the most traumatic events of their lives. Given the age and stage of participants, this is a significant finding:

> *"if you were to ask me what was one word that described that whole experience, it was the word traumatic. I was very traumatised. I don't think I've been, ever been that traumatised in my life, 'cause I've had children, I've had miscarriages, I've had divorces" (Julia).*

An interesting finding is that leavers experienced pain and loss even in instances where they anticipated the restructure and were financially secure. This may suggest that pain and loss was more deeply tied to identity and self-concept, than to concerns about financial resources. As Hannah points out:

> *"Um its really hard to describe because like I said I was expecting it to happen. The date of my final day at work coincided with the date on which I paid my mortgage off. I had things set up to cope um without work um. I had a redundancy package, I had um you know if I look at it from any perspective I was in an extremely privileged and lucky position. But I guess the fact that I was A) in a job that I hated anyway, and B) had felt like it was coming, didn't make me able to reconcile what happened with how I felt at the time. It was literally like, you know, all those clichés the rug being pulled, it felt like someone had pushed me off a cliff ((laughs)) it was just awful."* (Hannah)

Leavers described continuing to work during this period of time as extremely difficult, and recalled instances of crying at work. Katrina, who had been an EA at the same company for 35 years noted that during this time she *"was in tears every day until the day I left… It was really, really hard"*. Generally, leavers were expected to continue their jobs as normal, and in some instances were tasked with training others to undertake components of their jobs. Many leavers had personalised their work spaces, and the process of removing their possessions from their workspace (clearing out their desk) was emotionally challenging. *"I even had like many years of photos on my wall that just went around one wall and around another wall and just taking those off the wall, a few day by day, I was just yeah, just a mess." (Katrina)*

4.6.3 Saving face, sparing feelings

Many participants described an organisational environment of secrecy about redundancy during this time in the restructure. Some participants felt secrecy occurred due to non-disclosure terms written into redundancy contracts, whereas for others secrecy around redundancy was an effort by leavers to 'save face'. The effect of secrecy was that in many instances redundancy was not discussed among leavers and stayers. Hannah spoke about seeing colleagues *"just sort of disappear"* and there being no formal announcement or discussion of the process across the organisation.

Overall, leavers spoke about being conflicted between feeling on the one hand that they wanted to leave the organisation gracefully, and on the other hand that they wanted to "stick it" to the organisation. As Hannah articulated, *"And although I would have liked on some level to have taken them to court and all that sort of aggro stuff, when it came to it what I actually did was I want to do this in as dignified and as quiet a way as possible" (Hannah).* Additionally, there was a sense that leavers did not want the organisation to think it had gotten the better of them, and that by leaving the organisation gracefully they were showing that they were still excellent employees, and in a sense showing the organisation what it was missing out on by letting them go. As Julia highlights,

> *"I was very angry at the time I remember and um it was out of um that intense ah anger and annoyance that I outsitted the last few days at [the organisation] and applied for jobs while sitting at the office, trying to show you don't need me, I've got somewhere else to go… ((laughter)) kind of thing."* (Julia)

All stayers highlighted that this period of time was awkward for them. On the one hand, they wanted to offer support, sympathy and condolence to leavers, many of whom were trusted colleagues. On the other hand, stayers were often unsure of what to say, and in many instances did not feel entitled to provide sympathy given their own positions were safe. The desire to spare the feelings of colleagues was also tempered by organisational secrecy surrounding redundancy, which often meant stayers felt that they couldn't talk with their colleagues about what was going on.

> *"Yeah, so it was very hard you know, knowing how they feel and us looking you know, as if oh we've just escaped a, a, a, a, an arrow here, but it wasn't 'cause we didn't know what was happening…"* (Maggie)

> *"We felt like we were on the outer of our friends, because a lot of these colleagues were friends you know? We, we kinda make friends with colleagues and just because they had to go to a different area - so we had to kind of ((pause)) ah how would I say? Not distance ourselves, but we couldn't go how's your day going? How are you, you know and, and joke or, or talk casually to them 'cause we didn't know how they felt…"* (Maggie)

Stayers in middle management positions also spoke about the emotional drain of this time, noting that their efforts to support direct reports who had been made redundant were tiring. Martha recalls this period as *"It was the worst time of my life in any job that I've ever had. I felt so tired and pressured and hopeless".*

Stayers also noted that absences increased during this time, with leavers in particular taking more sick days and unexplained absences than in previous time periods:

> *"well it was very awkward for a month until the staff left. I think it was at the end of the year, so I think it was about November they left… and then it was formalised and the staff whose jobs had been disestablished, some of them just stopped coming to work."* (Rachel)

4.7 The outcome of the Restructure is Implemented

During this event the restructure was implemented, the effect of which was stayers witnessed and/or experienced changes in roles, team configurations, reporting lines, and line managers; and leavers exited the organisation.

For leavers this event often involved exit interviews and farewell occasions. Leavers described farewell occasions variably, but most notable was the sense that after often decades of service and a period of pain through the restructure process, the life of work as they had known it simply stopped.

> *"I was given a farewell and you know, there was a lot of ang-, anguish and colleagues were, were - there was people who were furious […] but anyway, so um I had a farewell which was very nice and um kind words were said and, and I left. Umm so yeah, 14, 14 years […] and suddenly my role is not even there. Um and like I said ah ((pauses)) there, there it was."* (Mia)

Some leavers, like Julia decided they did not want to have a farewell occasion because it felt inconsistent with the way they had been treated:

> *"Oh I remember it was very, very bitter, because um um I think they tried to - you know, we had a choice of ah you know, having a farewell and I chose*

> *not to. Like I said I was very annoyed at that time and I thought what, what on earth is this, you know? First of all they get rid of you, then they're going to try and say sweet nothings at the farewell."* (Julia)

Several participants highlighted that during this time they processed the idea of taking legal action against their organisations. None of the participants in this study chose to proceed with legal action, and the participants that had considered it highlighted that their decision not to proceed was driven by a concern for their own wellbeing and a desire to avoid a protracted and potentially traumatic litigious process. Speaking about her decision to not proceed with legal action, Hannah said:

> *"And then you have to carry a level of resentment with you for a long time in order to get you through that and um you know I can get really really angry and pissed off with people and with everything that happened but I certainly didn't want to have to carry it around for months and months and sustain it in order to take me through that process."* (Hannah)

4.8 After Restructure: A period of sensemaking

After the restructure was implemented the participants were able to reflect on the experience and start to understand what had occurred. For stayers, new ways of working dominated their experiences as they made sense of and adjusted to new managers and roles, and continued to feel the impact of ongoing changes in relationships with their colleagues.

The divisions between leavers and stayers that had emerged in the previous two periods were now distinct – stayers continued to work in their organisation while leavers did not. By the end of this period, leavers and stayers would be further divided into four groups. Stayers would be divided into stayers who stayed in their post-restructure roles, and stayers who – after a time - either left the organisation or moved into different roles. Leavers would also be divided into leavers who left employment altogether post-restructure, and leavers who were re-employed elsewhere, i.e. in a different organisation.

4.8.1 New ways of working

Stayers highlighted this period as challenging for them, and particularly noted the difficulty of working for a new manager who had high expectations but provided little direction. For stayers in management roles there was an expectation from senior leadership that increased efficiency and output be realised as an outcome of the restructure, but without a clear plan about how this would be operationalised. For Jane this resulted in an increased workload and feeling overwhelmed: *"as a group of managers we all felt quite overwhelmed with the lack of direction um (.) and so that was quite tiring as well it was just so much to do and so much to navigate yeah" (Jane).*

Additionally, stayers reported problematic aspects of their relationship with their new line managers. Martha described instances of bullying and poor communications around expectations from her new line manager. She recalled instances of feeling blindsided in board meetings where her new line manager would often vocalise that she hadn't reported on key areas correctly, despite her feeling she had followed his instructions. Jane spoke about the challenges of working with a new manager who had a *"different lens"* and didn't see things in the same way. She found her new manager to be a micromanager who limited the tasks and projects she was able to undertake.

Participants, particularly stayers spoke about the need to upskill and engage in professional development after the restructure. They highlighted three reasons for this: 1) that the new direction of the company required staff to have new skills; 2) that their new roles involved some new tasks, competencies, and skills; and 3) because they were concerned about their ongoing job security.

> *"I'm thinking to myself I need to figure out how I'm going to survive this, because I knew that if I just kept doing the work for like - managerial work wasn't going to be there anymore. I had to now put my hand up for all kinds of stuff…"* (Rose).

There continued to be negativity in the wake of the restructure. Stayers highlighted that many of their colleagues expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of their new roles, teams, and managers, and that there was little recourse for resolving these issues. Additionally, Stayers felt unable to criticise the restructure, and noted that attempts to have ongoing discussions about the restructure, its implementation, and opportunities for improvement, were frowned upon by senior managers. In Maggie's case, the service delivery model changed and several teams were combined into one. Where previously service had been provided by specialist areas, the new model was based on front line staff being able to provide service across all areas. Despite many staff feeling this resulted in a decrease in service quality, voicing these opinions was disapproved of. As Maggie explained: *"You know and the proof is that they can all do it, but they can't all do it well. […] But we* - *nobody was allowed to say that."*

For middle managers who were tasked with shepherding stayers through the restructure, the social impact of managing people resistant to change was enormous. Jane reported the restructure had created stress among employees in her team, and that the lack of clarity about the rationale for the restructure left workers with decreased engagement and motivation to do the work, as well as resentment at the change and having a new manager. Jane experienced bullying in the workplace which she attributed to the fallout from the restructure:

> *"you know when I think about it on reflection too it was really (.) it was probably symptomatic of the restructure and that it hadn't (.) the speed in which it had happened and I think that was just the fallout actually from a restructure that possibly hadn't been managed well um by the managers in terms of communication"* (Jane)

4.8.2 At My Age

The emergence of commentary about ageing, as well as the articulation of age-isms occurred in participants stories about this post restructure period. Several stayers noted that they felt *"lucky"* to have a job *"at my age*" after the restructure, despite the challenges they faced during this time. Caroline noted that she stayed because her job prospects (if she left) were limited due to her age and gender. She said "*if I decided I didn't want that job anymore I would just have had to have left the Department and I was 62 and I didn't think there was any chance that I would get another job at 62 and as a woman." (Caroline).*

Leavers expressed fear about their prospects of finding another job *"at that age"* and mentioned anecdotal reports referring to the difficulties older people had in finding employment: *"you're unemployable once you're over 50 and you're female" (Hannah).* This fear bore out in the experiences of job hunting for some of the leavers. Julia highlighted that *"It wasn't easy at that age for me to um get good jobs […] put it this way, that if you get laid off at after a certain age the choices are very limited." (Julia).* For Hannah and Anna - who were the breadwinners in their families, the experience of not having another job lined up was *"terrifying".*

They both highlighted the importance of personal and business networks in finding reemployment after their restructure. As Anna noted:

> "*But for an older person, knowing that it's going to be difficult to get another job unless you happen to be in the right place at the right time, or you have the right contacts, it's quite terrifying. I was reasonably sure that if I really wanted it I would be able to find work. In fact I'd already put my name out to a couple of things and they'd shown some interest. So it it was great that I did pick up something so quickly."* (Anna)

An interesting age-related commentary that emerged was about tenure in relation to age. Most participants mentioned tenure and loyalty as positive traits that they held, mentioning that *"I don't flit between jobs"*. Participants who noted these traits also made the comparison between themselves and the lack of these traits in *"millennials".* Although the emergence of age-isms hadn't occurred in earlier phases of the restructure, these comments feed into earlier ideas about the psychological contract, loyalty, and betrayal, and potentially serve to position older workers as distinct in their restructure experiences from younger workers.

4.8.3 Recovering, Reorienting, Reemerging

After the restructure was implemented leavers described a flurry of activity during which their primary focus was to fill the void that restructure had created. Hannah described throwing herself into new ventures and business start-ups while Julia explained she *"was applying for jobs left, right and centre"*.

Despite intending to undertake part time work, one leaver left the work force altogether after restructure. Katrina, who had been at the same company for 35 years, thought she would apply for part time work after her redundancy, but found the process too overwhelming. She said:

> *"So I mean I got a CV put together (.) but when I, when, when I'd applied for this job or, or when I applied to work at the, at the plant way back in 1982 um all I needed to do was a typing test and show my references. That was it. That was the interview. Um (.) oh and a bit of a chat obviously. But now you've gotta blimmin' well jump through hoops and do all sorts of things and it actually was just yeah, too much, too much for me and um (.) so my thinking was um I'm just going to retire and enjoy my life."* (Katrina)

In spite of the flurry of activity, this was an important period in which participants took time to process the loss and change resulting from restructure. All leavers described critical events during this period which moved them through recovery and into a new phase in which they reconsidered what was meaningful and reoriented their lives accordingly. For Rebecca it was the offer of a full time role that brought into focus the importance that she placed on time freedom versus security when thinking about the end of her working life. For Hannah it was a physical injury that forced her to physically stop:

> *"And it it's really interesting again you know to talk about it now, because I haven't talked about it but I look back on it and 2013 was really really awful and then you know I broke my ankle and it just seemed like everything was just sort of piling on top, and you know it was quite a bad break you know I couldn't move, and um, but actually it was all the start of everything coming right."* (Hannah)

The process of job hunting was important in its own right. As has been outlined in the above sections, the experience of restructure for leavers was generally painful and damaging for their self-concept. In being shortlisted for interviews and offered new jobs, there was some healing of this pain. Mia explains: *"But um in the process I did get like I said invited to interviews and things like which made me feel good, because at that point that I needed that affirmation that ah somebody else needs you, somebody else wants you" (Mia)*

Unexpectedly and in spite of the pain experienced, all leavers described their departure from the organisation via the restructure as a blessing. Several leavers, as well as 'stayers who left after a time' described events in their personal lives that occurred after the restructure. Not working provided these participants with the space and opportunity to give time and attention to those personal events. For Hannah, Mia, and Martha, time away from work allowed them to care for family members who were sick or grieving. For leavers who left the workforce altogether, the restructure was an opportunity for them to focus on other areas of their lives and take up opportunities that they would not have had time for had they been working.

> *"I think for me (.) for me (.) after it all happened it was a, it was (.) a blessing I suppose for me 'cause it, you know, (.) um just got me out there more and yeah, I don't know. It's hard to explain. (.) I just en- - I enjoy life and this has*

> *given me the opportunity to enjoy it even more and…you know, pack more stuff in, get that bucket list ticked off and you know? Had I still have been working, then you don't have as much time to do you know, everything that you wanna do. So I'm still adding to my bucket list so ((laughs)) yeah, so having the time for myself is really - I'm just loving it."* (Katrina)

Importantly, all leavers highlighted the importance of their redundancy packages over this time. Redundancy packages helped to cover bills during the time they were unemployed, and reduced financial stress by providing a financial cushion. Several leavers spoke about the way their redundancy had enabled them to attain financial freedom by paying down or paying off their mortgage.

4.9 New Role, New Focus, New Life

The events that occurred after the implementation of the restructure crystalised the distinctions between the four groups of participants – stayers who stayed in their after-restructure roles, stayers who after a time left the organisation or moved into different roles, leavers who left employment altogether, and leavers who were reemployed in a different organisation. Events in this post restructure period included starting a new job, re-focussing on their after-restructure work role (rather than focussing on the restructure), or starting a new phase of life signalled by a distinct change in daily activities (for instance increased time spent volunteering, exercising, with friends and family, on a new hobby).

Of the participants who were stayers, half left their role after some time and moved into a secondment, a substantively different position within the organisation, or left the organisation altogether. Participants in this group spoke about the challenges of working in the aftermath of the restructure and the relief they felt when they had moved on. As Jane highlighted: *"So yeah it was a really hard eighteen months and so I sort of felt when that secondment came up I thought yaye I've got my get out of jail free card otherwise I probably would have left there (.) if that hadn't happened"(Jane).*

Of the leavers, all but one were reemployed in the paid workforce. Some leavers spoke about being reemployed at a reduced salary, while others spoke about their new jobs being at the same salary compared with their prior role. None of the leavers spoke about being reemployed at a higher salary than their previous role.

All leavers who were reemployed spoke positively about their new roles. They highlighted that their new roles provided freedom and flexibility, which they valued. Freedom and flexibility looked different for each of the participants. For Julia and Mia, flexibility in their new roles was the ability to get involved in projects that were not strictly in their job descriptions. For Anna and Rebecca their new roles gave them time freedom, allowing them to work fewer days and to determine how and where they wanted to spend their time. When talking about her new role Hannah said: *"It allows me to work from home two or three days a week and um I just can't imagine a better job."*

In contrast to their feelings during the restructure, participants who left their post-restructure roles (both stayers who left after a time, and leavers who were reemployed) spoke about feeling wanted and valued in their new roles. This was an important step in going some way towards resolving the damage to participants' self-concept and self-esteem that had occurred as a result of the restructure. Anna said:

> *"So by the time I came back to NZ I had a full time job filling in a position in a National team um and the salary was more or less the same as what I'd been getting. No no no team to manage and no budget responsibilities, it was great. But where my expertise and advice were valued and as soon as I slotted into that role I realised actually I had a hell of a lot to offer, and in some ways the experience that I'd been through had contributed to that. But man it was just like you know I was um I was just so valued. That was even more healing in a sense because it made me realise a lot of what I'd been through was completely you know it hadn't been handled well and it was not right, not right. "* (Anna)

Participants also highlighted the importance of meaningful and purposeful work in their new roles. Recalling a conversation with a friend about why she continued to work in her new role Julia said: *"I said to her one of the reasons why I accepted this job when I realised what it was, was helping a little bit um groups that were underprivileged, Maori, Pacifica and all that and I felt like I was in a place where I was giving something back. I was required, I was needed, I was appreciated and for those reasons I stay." (Julia)*

4.10 Post Restructure: A period of reflection

Post restructure refers to the period of time after participants had settled into their new roles and lives. It is characterised by reflectiveness, a change in the relationship between participants and work, and questioning the validity/benefit of restructure.

4.10.1 My relationship to work has changed

Participants described the ways their relationship to work had changed as a result of their restructure experiences. The main changes experienced were about job security, organisational commitment, and time freedom.

Participants spoke about fundamental changes in their conceptualisation of job security as a result of the restructure. A key change was that participants no longer took for granted that their roles were secure; to the extent that both leavers and stayers regarded their new jobs could be restructured at any time. Mia describes this shift in her thinking: *"I thought I was safe and secure and I'd be there 'til, 'til I retired… ah so that, that I felt was a, a good lesson and I don't have that attitude anymore. Um ((pauses)) you know, I'm, I'm aware that um things can change really in a bl-, blink of the eye…" (Mia)*

Participants also spoke about a decrease in their organisational commitment and engagement as a result of the restructure. For stayers who stayed in their roles, persistent thoughts about exiting the organisation, and a decrease in general engagement were noted. Unexpectedly, leavers who went on to work at other organisations also reported decreased commitment and engagement with their new organisations. *"I don't know whether it's through the restructure or whether it's just another year but I don't feel any, I feel much less engagement with the organisation when you know they're possibly gonna to exit you you know." (Jane).*

In contrast with participant's behaviour before the restructure (where participants would go the extra mile and do things outside of work hours) participants post restructure reported a significant decrease in activities that could be considered above and beyond the scope of their roles. Julia said that she no longer volunteered or did extra things at her new role. When asked why that was the case she said: "*So that's why I'm saying w-, when we did those little bit extra things and it counted for nothing in the end." (Julia).*

Participants generally highlighted the importance of time freedom during this stage of their working lives. Rebecca who was reemployed in a variety of contract and part time roles in what she described as a *"portfolio career"* highlighted that time freedom was so important to her that it lead to her turning down the offer of full time employment. Talking about her career post-restructure Rebecca said: *"It's got a huge amount of variety but the really biggest issue is I've got time freedom. And that really surfaced very recently for me".*

Most participants had considered or were planning to decrease their working hours, and many had already moved to less than full time hours. As Mia noted: *"I'm just ki- kind of giving myself another year or so before I start to go down - so I'll probably go down to part time I think. I don't think I'll be - there ever would be a stage where I sit at home".*

A few participants also reflected that their experience of restructure had changed the type of work they would now consider doing. Jane spoke about this at some length:

> *"Um and I I there was some aspects of managing people that I really loved. I loved the mentoring and the encouragement but it made me realise I don't want to manage difficult people […] And I would avoid managing again. So I think the experience really has made me shy of managing staff um ((pause)) so that was one impact."* (Jane)

4.10.2 Questioning Restructure

In reflecting on their experiences participants located restructure in the context of macro and meso factors, considered the broader impacts of restructure on people and organisations, and questioned the benefit of restructure.

Many participants spoke about the macro and meso contexts in which restructure was undertaken. To this end, participants situated restructure within a broader socio-political context that contributed to the organisational decision to undertake a restructure. Rebecca spoke about the global pressure on student enrolment numbers, compounded by an increasing focus on employability as a key outcome of a university degree, and a corresponding decrease in enrolments for arts based courses. These variables contributed to a decline in student numbers and consequently to the decision to restructure. Caroline and Martha also spoke about macro-level changes, and pinpointed a change in government as having tremendous impact in the available funding to their respective organisations; which ultimately drove the decision to restructure.

As has been articulated in the "Before Restructure" section, for many participants the announcement of a restructure was preceded by a new manager starting in the organisation. In reflecting on this time, several participants came to question whether new managers were specifically brought in lead the restructure. Other participants articulated an emerging leadership culture of using restructure as a proving ground for leadership competence. As Rachel said: "*it seems that when you get a, a new person, a new senior person and they've got to stake their claim or make their mark, and the way to do it is to restructure or review." (Rachel)*

Of concern for participants, particularly leavers – was the loss of knowledge and skills within the organisation as a result of restructure. After leaving, Caroline described being asked to return to the organisation in a contracting capacity to complete a critical legislative function for the organisation because core administrative roles had been restructured and the organisation no longer had the in-house expertise necessary to undertake the function. Maggie noted that it took four years to fully re-build capability to complete specialised work, because the specialty had been removed through the restructure and no plan for absorbing the expertise had been put in place. Importantly, Rachel highlighted that organisations do not only loose technical knowledge and skills through restructure, but established connections and relationships across the organisation that people build over time and are not easily replaceable.

Unexpectedly, several participants described an outcome of restructure as "white-streaming". Mia described white-streaming as the loss of dedicated indigenous roles to generalist roles. She highlighted that this had occurred in two restructures she had been involved in, which resulted in the disestablishment of indigenous roles and teams. Rebecca highlighted the loss of pacific staff during a restructure she was impacted by:

> *“so there was kind of a whitewashing of the staff I think I don’t know ((pause)) if that was unconscious, unintended, quite what that, they were seen as expendable, I don’t know um obviously the [department] had all pacific island staff so you know but yeah there seemed to be a bit of a homogenising of the remaining staff, that’s what I observed you know from the outside um in terms of like the process I didn’t think it was well handled in any way.” (Rebecca)*

All organisations provided employee support through the restructure via an employee assistance programme (EAP) or similar, and the offer of assistance was well regarded by participants. However, most participants felt that organisational obligations should be extended over and above the provision of emotional support. As Rebecca noted: *“They’ll offer you EAP to help you deal with your <u>feelings</u> but they wont offer you career counselling to help you plan your future. So I think it’s a serious gap.” (Rebecca).* Three ideas regarding organisational obligations emerged; 1. That organisations should provide EAP or similar support; 2. That organisations should provide career counselling or redeployment to facilitate employees getting another job; 3. That organisations should provide options for employee decision making during a restructure including voluntary redundancy.

Thinking back over the successive restructures she had been involved in, Rachel highlighted a transformation in the way she thinks about restructures. She described being very emotionally upset and worried during her first restructure, and that in the latest restructure she noted a sense of ambivalence and inevitability. Rachel noted that she felt *“a bit more philosophical”* about the latest restructure and felt that was related to age and stage (her children were older and she was more financially stable during the latest restructure). Importantly, Rachel also spoke of an immunity effect where the cumulative effect of restructure was to become increasingly numb to its emotional toll. “*I kind of had the attitude well bring it on, you know? If you want to make me redundant just go ahead.” (Rachel).* Reflecting on the instability in her department, Rachel highlighted significant staff turnover and the difficulty of working in an organisation with constantly shifting direction. On reflection she queried whether she would have gone into her occupation in the first place, given the cumulative impact of successive restructures “*Ah maybe it's like that in all workplaces, but it - given my time again would I have chosen this area because of that, I don't know.” (Rachel).*

This thesis now turns to a discussion of these findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of this research was to explore how the experience of organisational restructure impacts the careers of older women workers. As has been outlined in previous chapters, this research conceives of career as an individual's employment, work, educational, and other relevant experiences, which form a unique pattern over the individual's life span (Myers, 2017). While the previous section has detailed the findings of this research over five sequential restructure phases, the following discussion is presented as a synthesis of the findings from across the entire experience of restructure, and is situated within the context of the research question and the literature previously presented. There are six major findings discussed in this chapter. First, that the experience of restructure changed participants' relationship to employment. Second, that the experience of restructure changed participants' relationship with organisations. Third, that the experience of restructure oriented participants to (re)consider what was meaningful to them at this stage of their lives. Fourth, that the experience of restructure changed the trajectory of participants careers. Fifth, that social support was important through the restructure experience. Sixth, that the experience of restructure contributed to participants' retirement intentions.

5.1 The experience of restructure changed participants' relationship to employment.

The findings from this research suggest that the experience of restructure fundamentally changed participants' relationship to employment in two important ways. First, through challenging participants' self-concept as a worker; and second through challenging the belief that work was secure.

5.1.1 Challenging participants' self-concept as an employee

Participants in this research had an established narrative about themselves as workers, which reflected a deeper self-concept of *being* a worker. They described themselves as loyal, hard-working, and generally doing well in their roles prior to the restructure. The advent of neo-liberal capitalism has seen work given increased primacy and centrality in the lives of individuals, and this is reflected in the concept of the ideal worker (Brumley, 2014; Moore, 2009). Older workers "usually developed deeply rooted work-related self-definitions that closely intertwine with their more private self-definitions and values. Losing a job challenges workers' possibilities to enact work-related self definitions and thereby their possibility to enact important parts of themselves" (Kira & Klehe, 2016, p.244). Kira and Klehe (2016) note that the distress associated with job loss can be particularly pronounced for older workers, due in part to the centrality of work to self-definitions as a consequence of time spent in the workforce. Because participants had been in the workforce a long time, had accumulated significant experience, and had often served in the same organisation for considerable periods, not being valued by the organisation was a blow to their self-concept and self-esteem. Indeed many leavers in particular described grieving for the loss of their jobs which gave them meaning and purpose.

In reflecting on the challenge to her self-concept Rebecca said:

"I think it's very dangerous for workers to be um tied up with their job title because if they do lose their job then they lose their identity and I think that's a really hard place to come back from. […] it's not that you're not finding purpose and meaning in the work you're doing but you need to separate out, you know, don't think of work in terms of nouns think of it in terms of verbs. It's what you're doing not what you are." (Rebecca)

Sverke et al. (2002) highlight that experiences of restructure are often characterised by job insecurity, which can increase stress and challenge self-efficacy through identity-maintenance. The formal notice of restructure caused a period of job insecurity wherein participants reported feeling uncertain about their worth and value to the organisation. This laid the foundation for feelings of pain, loss, and trauma after the outcome of the restructure was announced. Despite there being a wealth of research about the negative and sustained impact of restructure on workers' stress, satisfaction, and wellbeing (Collins, 2005; Kivimaki et al., 2003; Smollen & Pio, 2018, de Jong et al., 2016), the extent and intensity of pain, loss, and trauma experienced by participants in this research, was unexpected. Participants variably described restructure as traumatic and victimising, and related it to deeply personal prior experiences of pain and loss like miscarriage, divorce, and death. It is argued that participants felt loss during the restructure so viscerally because their self-definition was challenged (Kira & Klehe, 2016). For participants whose self-concept was intimately tied with their work, the experience of restructure was devastating: "*I felt completely inadequate as a human being, completely" (Hannah).*

Furthermore, the secrecy surrounding redundancy diminished opportunities for both leavers and stayers to engage in discussions about the outcomes of restructure, which may have served to normalise the experience and provided support for leavers in maintaining their self-concept as valued workers (Kira & Klehe, 2016). Many participants highlighted the organisational environment of secrecy about restructure and redundancy, and this served to heighten feelings of shame and embarrassment while deepening existing divisions between leavers and stayers. To this end, the findings of this research indicate the need for greater care and transparency in organisations' approach to restructure. One way this could be achieved is via increased communication and consultation in the "During Restructure, Phase One" which involved a period of uncertainty and social tension (Smollan & Pio, 2018).

Consultation is a legal requirement of the restructure process in New Zealand and was undertaken in all restructure experiences in this research (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). While consultation occurred, participants generally felt that restructure outcomes were predetermined and that periods of consultation were mainly focussed on achieving legal requirements rather than engaging authentically and meaningfully with workers. Participants had a high expectation of what consultation involved. To this end, participants were not satisfied to be passive recipients of 'informing'. Rather they expected consultation to involve some participatory aspects, particularly including two-way interaction and communication. In their research Smollan and Pio (2018) found that inadequate or inconsiderate information and lack of involvement in decision making processes undermine workers perceived value. It is likely that participants lack of involvement in decision making lead to them feeling unwanted and unvalued, and that this was connected to core beliefs about themselves as workers (Riach&Loretto,2009).

All but one of the leavers in this research found alternative employment, albeit in many instances at reduced levels of pay or responsibility. Similarly, Feldman (2012) found that many leavers who went on to gain employment elsewhere, where underemployed (time, responsibility, remuneration) in their new roles. Leavers in the current research described the process of job hunting as an important step in restoring the self-concept, which had been damaged by the experience of restructure (Kira & Klehe, 2016). In being shortlisted for interviews and offered new jobs the self-definition threat to 'participants as workers' was reduced as the self-definition was restored.

5.1.2 Challenging the belief that employment is secure

Participants in this research had deeply held assumptions about long term tenure that contributed to their sense of job security. These assumptions can be explained by psychological contract theory which refers to the perceived reciprocal obligations between employee and employer, and involves the exchange of loyalty from employees with security from the employer. (DeWitte, 2005; Rousseau, 1995; Schreurs et al., 2010). Violation of the psychological contract results in negative consequences for both the employee and employer, as employees attempt to correct imbalance in the psychological contract by reducing effort, performance, motivation, and involvement (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010; Schreurs et al., 2010). Prior research has shown that organisational restructure is related to perceived violations of the psychological contract, mostly as a result of perceived broken promises regarding job security (Niesen et al., 2018; De Witte, 2005; Turnley & Feldman, 1998).

Before restructure participants recalled feeling secure in their roles, spoke of the interconnectedness of their lives with the organisation, and envisaged working in the organisation until their voluntary retirement from paid employment. The announcement of the restructure was described by participants as unexpected, even in instances where they were anticipating it. At first glance this description appears contradictory. However, when viewed through the lens of a fractured core belief about security underpinned by a psychological contract, the unexpectedness can be seen to reflect cognitive dissonance and disbelief. Unexpectedness did not derive from the practical realities of the restructure, but by the meaning attached to the restructure- that work was not secure. Research suggests that older workers are more likely to have higher job involvement, organisational commitment, and work attachment than workers of other age groups (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2012; McNair, 2006 cited in Vickerstaff, 2010). Furthermore, Schalk (2004) highlights that older workers have a stronger psychological contract compared with younger workers, which may result in stronger reactions to its violation.

After the outcome of the restructure was announced, participants recalled experiences of pain and grief. Leavers in particular highlighted grieving for the loss of employment which gave them stability and security. The job security literature notes that uncertainty about employment creates feelings of stress, powerlessness, hopelessness, and lack of control (Schreurs et al, 2010). In their review of predominantly cross-sectional studies Thomson and Michel (2018) found that job insecurity as a result of organisational change was the most significant stressor for workers, and that this was significantly and consistently related to poor health outcomes. Their findings indicate a particularly significant effect on mental health (Thomson & Michel, 2018).

Evidence from this research indicates that the process of restructure impacted the psychological contract for stayers as well as leavers. In observing the organisation not valuing and not wanting colleagues who were similar to them, stayers started to reflect on their own sense of security. Indeed, as has been outlined in the findings chapter observation of breaches in the psychological contract of colleagues was sufficient to partially breech the psychological contract for themselves. This finding is supported by recent research which has found that the observation of colleagues' stress and suffering exacerbates employees own feelings of stress and justice cognitions during organisational change (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Smollan & Morrison, 2019).To this end, observing the organisation treat colleagues in a manner they described as *"poorly"* lead stayers to consider the possibility that the organisation might treat them in a similar way. For many stayers it was the first time they had considered the organisation might treat them in this way. Emberland and Rundmo (2010) highlight that a perceived reduction in expected levels of security can result in negative work attitudes, which are argued to persist amongst employees who stay after a restructure.

Overall, participants highlighted that their conceptualisation of job security had changed as a result of the restructure. This finding contributes to the body of literature on the impact of restructure on job security (Kivimaki et al., 2003) and extends this research by suggesting that participants not only experience job insecurity as a result of restructure, but reconceive of jobs as insecure. The outcome of this was that participants no longer took for granted that their roles were secure to the extent that both leavers and stayers regarded their new jobs could be restructured at any time. A well-established consequence of psychological contract violation is a decrease in organisational commitment (De Witte, 2005; Schreurs et al., 2010), to which this discussion now turns.

5.2 The experience of restructure changed participants' relationship to the organisation.

As has been mentioned in the previous section, breaches of the psychological contract result in decreased organisational commitment (Schreurs et al., 2010). Participants in this research discussed a decrease in their organisational commitment and organisational engagement over the course of the restructure. Importantly and unexpectedly, this finding held for both stayers and leavers. Stayers felt less committed to their organisation, and leavers felt less committed to their new organisation.

Before restructure participants spoke about feeling close and connected to their organisations. Many participants highlighted feeling strongly engaged with their organisation and described their work team as being like a family. They recalled examples of behaviour indicative of organisational commitment including instances of going above and beyond the scope of their roles to contribute to their organisation through volunteering, mentoring, and additional work responsibilities. Organisational commitment reflects workers' identification with and attachment to their organisation, and is part of the broader work commitment construct (Schmidt & Lee, 2008). Highly engaged and committed workers are more likely to have high job performance and less likely to display absenteeism (Brumley, 2014).

After restructure participants described being less engaged and less committed to their organisations. This supports the findings of Brumley (2004) that organisational restructure undermines and erodes organisational commitment of employees, particularly in environments of change uncertainty. For stayers, persistent thoughts about exiting the organisation and a general decrease in engagement were noted. This finding is aligned with research by De Witte (2005) which shows that perceived job insecurity strengthens employee's intention to leave and is associated with a reduction in organisational citizenship behaviour. As De Witte (2005) highlights "these attitudinal and behavioural consequences of job insecurity threaten the survival of the organisation. Dissatisfied and less committed employees are less dedicated to the company and its goals" (p.4).

An unexpected finding was that leavers who went on to work at other organisations also reported decreased commitment and engagement with their new organisations. This suggests that the effects of organisational restructure on organisational commitment go beyond the organisation at the centre of the restructure to all organisations in general. One mechanism through which organisational restructure may decrease organisational commitment is via perceived breaches of the psychological contract (Schreurs et al., 2010). To this end, De Witte (2005) theorises that reduced company involvement can be interpreted as a passive coping strategy used to restore the balance of the psychological contract. In "psychologically withdrawing from the organisation, the aggravating nature of an eventual job loss is reduced beforehand" De Witte, 2005, p.4). The implication of this for organisations could be that employees are less committed to the organisation and less likely to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour after restructure, even if the restructure did not occur in the organisation in which the employee is currently employed (Conway et al., 2014).

5.3 The experience of restructure oriented participants to (re)consider what was meaningful to them at this stage of their lives

Prior to the restructure participants were in the mode of business-as-usual, not only in their jobs but also in their careers and many participants considered that they would work in their organisations or roles until their retirement. However the restructure experience caused many of the participants to reassess what was meaningful to them at this stage of their lives. This finding supports research by August (2011) that found women aged 55 years and older were more likely than other age groups to want to do work that was meaningful to them, to focus on their own health, and to consider end of career decisions including meaningfulness at this later stage of their lives. Critically, meaningfulness was considered in the context of relationships with others. As an example, participants who reconsidered and reprioritised health as meaningful, did so in the context of health enabling a long and active life spent travelling with their partner or enjoying time with their grandchildren. The relational nature of these considerations resonates with the life course perspective, which highlights the interdependence of lives and relationships across the life span (Elder, 1994; Hartzell & Dixon, 2019). In this research participants' attention to meaningfulness cohered around four key areas: time freedom and flexibility, meaningful work, finances, and health.

Time freedom and flexibility came to be viewed by participants with increased importance as a result of restructure experiences. Participants defined time freedom as not being bound to a 40 hour work week with 9am to 5pm work days. The central concept of time freedom as articulated by participants was that they wanted determination and agency over their time, rather than feel that an organisation owned their time. Flexibility on the other hand was generally defined by participants as agency over how to spend their work time. For instance, among participants who continued to work 40 hour weeks flexibility included control over when and where to work, and the type of work they did (e.g. being able to take up new and interesting projects within their new jobs) (Myers, 2017). August (2011) highlights that many women over 55 years old continue to seek balance and challenge in their careers. To this end time freedom can be seen as an effort to seek balance between employment, caring, health, and personal interests; while flexibility can be seen as an effort to continue doing stimulating and challenging work (Myers, 2017). It is also argued that the increased importance of agency and control over one's time may serve as a protective mechanism for participants (Kira & Klehe, 2016; Moen, 1996). Isaksson and Johansson (2000) found that lack of control in decision making about end of work decisions had a prolonged impact on both leavers and stayers, and that beneficial effects on adaptation were found when individuals felt they had influence over outcomes. It is postulated that participants may have sought to increase their control over their time as a protection mechanism to insulate themselves from future restructures (Kira & Klehe, 2016).

The desire to engage in meaningful and purposeful work at this stage of their lives also increased in importance to participants. Leavers in particular highlighted the importance of meaningful and purposeful work in their new roles. Meaningful work appears to be particularly important for women aged 55 years and older (Sullivan & Carraher, 2018; Newman, 2011). This finding is aligned with the Kaleidoscope Career Model (Maniero & Sullivan, 2006) which posits that authenticity is given primacy in the late career. Importantly, and as August (2011) highlights, although participant were generally concerned with meaning at this stage in their lives, several participants were also concerned with seeking challenging work and with seeking balance between work and other areas of their lives.

In considering what was meaningful to them participants often evaluated and reprioritised their health. Organisational restructure has been shown to have a negative impact on employees health, whether or not the restructure involves job loss (de Jong et al., 2016; Kivimaki et al., 2003). Moreover health is likely to be negatively impacted throughout the experience of restructure due to the effects of job insecurity, which have been shown to be a greater risk to health than job loss itself (Thomson & Michel, 2018; Ferrie et al., 1995). For participants in the present study health was considered in the context of meaningfulness in two important ways. First, participants experienced impacts on their health during the restructure, including stress and loss of sleep. These effects crystallised the importance of health in the broader context of their lives. Both leavers and stayers spoke about prioritising their own health as a result of the restructure (August, 2011). Second, participants considered what activities brought meaning to them at this stage of their lives and evaluated the level of health and fitness that would be required to undertake these activities (for instance spending time with active grandchildren, travelling overseas).

Participants were triggered to consider their financial position as a result of their restructure experiences. The genesis of this consideration occurred in the early stages of restructure through feelings of job insecurity which forced participants to consider what would happen to them and their families if they didn’t have an income. In addition financial considerations revolved around the types of activities that would be meaningful to participants at this stage of their lives (e.g. travelling with their partner), and the means required to undertake these activities. Taken together, these concerns highlight the ways that career decisions are made in the context of relationships and interconnected lives (Elder, 1994). Throughout the experience of restructure participants spoke about feeling concerned and worried about finances. This supports research from the financial insecurity literature that shows financial security is a key concern for women in decision making about workforce exit (Lytle et al., 2015). Interestingly and in contrast to research that suggests older women are more likely to experience poverty as a result of restructure, there were no participants in this study who experienced financial crisis as a result of the restructure (Krekula, 2007; Ginn & Arber, 1991). One explanation could be that participants described having financial safety nets including kiwisaver, families who could provide financial support, partners who worked, and having unencumbered homes, which cushioned the financial impact of the restructure. Another explanation is that all participants were in white collar, professional roles and leavers received redundancy packages that perhaps enabled them to be better placed to reduce debt and absorb financial challenges than blue collar workers, although this needs to be explored by future research.

5.4 The experience of restructure changed the trajectory of participants' careers.

The experience of restructure changed the direction of participants' careers, and in some cases changed the trajectory of those careers. It is useful to make the distinction here between direction which implies a change of work role, and trajectory as a change in social role. According to Elder (1994) the life course is characterised by trajectories and transitions. Trajectories are life course dynamics that occur over time, typically involving distinctive social roles like work, marriage, and parenthood (Macmillan, 2005). Transitions are typically shorter in duration, marking the start and end of trajectories (Macmillan, 2005). Importantly, transitions mark periods of change; change as people move between roles, as they experience certain states or roles, and as they cease to do so (Macmillan, 2005). This perspective can be useful for understanding restructure within the broad conceptualisation of career as used in this research, which is an individual's employment, work, educational, and other relevant experiences, which form a unique pattern over the individual's life span (Parry & Taylor, 2007; Duberley et al., 2014; Sullivan & Baruch, 2010).

Stayers experienced a change in the direction of their career via new post-restructure roles. This period of time was described as difficult and challenging, primarily due to closer supervision by new line managers, unclear expectations, low tolerance for errors, and high workloads, which have been described by Kivimaki et al. (2003) as common features of post-restructure work environments. While the design of this research meant that half of the participants stayed in post-restructure, an interesting finding was that half of these stayers left their post-restructure roles after some time; either to move into secondments or other roles within the organisation, or to leave the organisation altogether. For "stayers who left after a time" the trajectory of their careers shifted in ways that reflected changes in their social roles – from employees to "retirees", and from "managers" to employees.

Despite concerted effort during participant recruitment, none of the participants in this study benefitted from their experience of restructure via promotion. This challenge reflects the research of Edwards et al. (1996) who found that women tend not to benefit from promotional opportunities arising from organisational change and restructure. According to Collins (2005) this is likely underpinned by the positioning of women in areas of the business where managerial roles are less likely to be expanded or in 'soft skills' roles that are at greater risk of redundancy.

5.5 Social support and networks were important throughout the restructure experience

Several authors have found that social supports and friendships were especially important for women during periods of redundancy, and these were considered by women to be a high priority in maintaining life balance and overcoming loss (Liu, 2007; Simmons & Betschild, 2001). Certainly, the findings of the current study highlighted the importance of partners, family, and friends as a source of social support throughout the experience of restructure.

Social support has been defined by Heaney et al. (1995) as "an interpersonal exchange of affect, affirmation, and aid" (p.4818). Four types of social support have been identified, including emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal (Smollan, 2017). Participants in the present study spoke about receiving emotional, instrumental, and appraisal support from their partners, family, and friends. Emotional support involved providing comfort and empathy, while appraisal support involved help putting the restructure into perspective and encouraging reflection (Fugate et al., 2002). Instrumental support was provided by some partners through encouraging participants to consider ceasing work, and thereby reducing the stressor (Smollan, 2017). Social support was also provided to participants from colleagues, managers, and staff within the organisation. Smollan and Morrison (2019) found that social support from others in the organisation has positive consequences including stronger relationships, improved job satisfaction, and reciprocity. Certainly for participants in the present study, strengthening relationships with colleagues and developing reciprocity throughout the restructure was a benefit of social support. On the other hand, providing social support to others was sometimes emotionally exhausting for participants. Emotional exhaustion, resentment, and emotional labour have been found to be negative consequences of social support provision inside an organisation (Smollan & Morrison, 2019). Support was also provided by organisations during restructure. Tangible organisational support was offered to participants by means of employee assistance programmes (EAP). The uptake of this tangible support was minimal. According to Smollan (2017) the effects of offering EAP have been found to be correlated to the supportiveness of the organisational culture. Although this was not the focus of the present study, it may be that participants in this study felt unsupported by the organisational culture and therefore did not engage in offers of EAP.

More recent evidence from the organisational change literature has shown that employees are concerned not only with what happens to them through organisational change, but to what happens to their colleagues (Jacobs and Keegan, 2018; Smollan & Morrison, 2019). While participants in the present study highlighted the importance of receiving support from colleagues during their restructure experiences, they also highlighted concern for their colleagues. Additionally, participants were concerned about the long term implications of restructure on their organisations through loss of knowledge and skills, as well as on their respective fields (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018). As a result this study supports the notion that employees going through organisational restructure are more altruistic and less utilitarian than has been traditionally assumed (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018).

Social connections have been viewed by some researchers as critical to recommencing gainful employment (Liu, 2007; Edwards et al., 1996). Evidence from research in China shows that older unskilled female workers tend to have smaller social networks which disadvantaged them in finding work after redundancy, whereas women with professional husbands tended to benefit from their husbands broader networks (Liu, 2007, p.145). Findings from the present research shows that personal and business networks were important in finding reemployment after restructure. Although care should be taken in comparing between distinct samples (unskilled vs professional) this research extends the findings of Liu (2007) into a Western context in which women's own professional networks (rather than the networks of their male relatives) have primacy in terms of importance for finding reemployment after restructure.

5.6 The experience of restructure contributed to participants' workforce exit intentions, and the traditional conceptualisation of retirement did not resonate with participants.

Research suggests that once made redundant, older workers are less likely than other age cohorts to find alternate employment, which can lead to early retirement (Ng & Feldman, 2012). While the present study is qualitative in nature and makes no claim to generalisability, this study found only partial support for the findings of Ng and Feldman (2012). One of the participants in this study intended to find reemployment after her redundancy, but found the process of job search overwhelming and decided to "retire". The remaining five participants were reemployed in the paid workforce. Participants in the post redundancy period did feel concerned about whether they would be able to find work and were acutely aware of statistics released in New Zealand that demonstrated they were less likely to do so. One possible reason for this could be the skilled (professional) nature of participants' prior experiences and that New Zealand was generally economically buoyant and had low unemployment at the time restructures were occurring (Statistics NZ, 2020). Ng and Feldman (2012) also found that older workers are more likely than other age cohorts to be 'underemployed' when they do find replacement work, often taking work that provides less pay, benefits, challenges, or responsibility. Indeed some leavers in this study were reemployed at a reduced salary or in a role with less responsibility. However, all leavers spoke positively about their new roles and highlighted the freedom and flexibility their new roles provided, which they valued. Several leavers spoke about their new roles offering greater challenge and that this was an enjoyable facet of their new roles.

For stayers the experience of a poor psychosocial workplace environment in the post-restructure period appeared to contribute to early retirement intentions (Breinegaard et al., 2017). Two stayers left the paid workforce altogether during this period, citing push factors including a negative and stressful work environment (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Other stayers highlighted the poor psychosocial work environment contributed to persistent thoughts about leaving the organisation and leaving the workforce. Importantly, participants noted that organisational exit and early retirement thoughts had not occurred to them prior to the restructure.

Participants in this study did not talk about the concept of retirement as a cliff-edge demarcating the end of their careers. Similarly, in their interviews with older women Simmons and Betschild (2001) found that many of these women do not view themselves as ‘retired’, noting that work continued for them regardless of whether the label of retirement was applied (Simmons & Betschild, 2001). Indeed, for women in the present study who did “retire” although paid employment ceased, work did not. This finding corroborates the call for innovative conceptualisations of retirement for women must “start from the standpoint of women’s experiences” (Duberley et al., 2014, p.85); and that view women’s retirement not as a unitary event, but as one of a series of discontinuities experienced by women across a gendered life course, influenced by relational systems and situated within broader meso- and macro-contexts (Kim & Moen, 2002; Price, 2000).

Evidence from the involuntary retirement literature shows that older women workers are more likely to retire early or involuntarily due to caring or relational obligations (Szinovacz & Davey, 2005; Richardson, 1999). According to Loretto and Vickerstaff (2013) retirement decisions are made within relational systems. To this end, retirement decisions “reflect [individuals’] domestic context and the interaction of temporal and long-run factors associated with partnerships, families, health, and gender roles” (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013, p.80). It is generally agreed that women are expected to hold multiple role commitments over the gendered life course, particularly with regard to caring for dependents (children, grandchildren, aging parents, partners). Hatch and Thompson (1992, cited in Richardson, 1999) found that the presence of dependants in the home (through illness, disability, or age) was a significant predictor of women’s retirement. As a result, it was expected that gendered caring roles and responsibilities would be a central theme in the stories participants shared in their retirement decision making during- and post-restructure. However this does not appear to be the case. While participants did talk about their caring roles and responsibilities, these were not central in their decision making processes about retirement or in their post-decision making rationalisation of those choices. This finding potentially lends weight to August’s (2011) conclusion that family and caring responsibilities are not the only factors influencing women’s early retirement decisions. Indeed, the findings of this study do support the literature which highlights a number of significant personal and contextual ‘push and pull’ factors including health status (Arber, 2004), work centrality (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009), job satisfaction (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013), organisational environment (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Duberley et al., 2014), and financial status (Kim & Moen, 2002).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research aimed to examine experiences of restructure and the ways in which those experiences impact the careers of older women workers. Based on thematic analysis of interviews with 12 participants, it can be concluded that participants' experiences of restructure impacted their careers in a number of key ways. The findings indicate that restructure is a significant life event that changes the relationship to work and to the organisation, and has broad impacts on the trajectory of women's careers. This final chapter presents an overview of the main findings, outlines the contributions to theory and practice, the limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Overview of the research

This research is situated within an interpretive paradigm, which is consistent with the constructionist and relativist world-view that underpins this research (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The methodological choice taken in this research was a narrative approach, which is primarily focussed on the stories of individuals (Creswell, 2013). Stories are linguistic expressions of human experience, and act to construct and give meaning to events, rather than simply describing them (Chase, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1995). Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 12 purposively selected participants who had previously experienced restructure (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Myers & Newman, 2007). Data from the interviews was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2013) method of thematic analysis.

The findings of this research show that restructure changed participant's relationship to employment. The mechanisms by which this occurred were twofold. First, restructure challenged participants' self-concept as an employee. It did this through challenges to participants self-definition (Kira & Klehe, 2016). Second, restructure challenged the strongly held belief that employment is secure. It did this through breach and violation of the psychological contract, which involves the unspoken exchange of loyalty from the employee with security from the employer (DeWitte, 2005).

This research also found that the experience of restructure changed participant's relationship with organisations. As has been previously highlighted in the literature, participants in this study described themselves as less committed and engaged with their organisations after restructure (De Witte, 2005; Schreurs et al., 2010). Notably, this decline in commitment was also described by leavers in their relationships with their new organisations. This finding has important implications for organisations broadly, indicating that the decision to embark on a restructure may have ramifications for the organisations' own workforce, as well as other organisations' future workforce.

Drawing on the life course and later careers literatures, this research found that the experience of restructure oriented participants to consider what was meaningful to them at 'this stage' of their lives (Elder, 1994; Maniero & Sullivan, 2006). At the centre of considerations of meaning were concerns about health, wealth, work, and time. While participants were largely concerned with 'authenticity' in this stage, the findings also contribute to an emerging body of research which demonstrates that women 55 years and older continue to be concerned with balance and challenge (August, 2011). The findings also highlight that although older women are more likely to experience financial insecurity (Krekula, 2007; Ministry for Women, 2017), this was not the experience of all women in the current research. This finding highlights the need for a more fine grained approach to research on financial insecurity among older women, and potentially calls for the need for research on the financial impact of restructure to more fully understand the conditions under which restructure may lead to short term financial crises versus long term financial disadvantage.

An important finding of this research is that the experience of restructure changed the trajectory of participants careers (Elder, 1994; Macmillan, 2005). In all instances, the participants of this study had the direction or trajectory of their career changed by restructure, in a way that had not been planned or intended by the participant.

This research also found that social support from inside and outside the organisation was important throughout the experience of restructure. As well as receiving social support, participants in this study gave social support to others. This finding contributes to an emerging body of research that highlights a less egocentric view of employee response to restructure and shows that employees are concerned about the effect of restructure not only on themselves, but also on their colleagues and their organisations during restructure (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018). Additionally, participants' social connections and networks were important in their job search efforts after the restructure.

Finally, this research found that the experience of restructure contributed to participants workforce exit intentions. Amongst stayers in particular, the experience of restructure coupled with a poor psycho-social environment in the 'after restructure' period contributed to persistent thoughts about, and in some instances action to, leave the organisation and leave the workforce.

Moreover, in this research the traditional conceptualisation of retirement did not resonate with participants. This likely reflects the ways in which women continue to work even after they have left employment, and lends weight to the broad definition of career as used in the present research. Unexpectedly, caring roles and responsibilities did not appear to be central in participants' decision-making processes about retirement, and this finding warrants further investigation because it challenges generally held views on gendered roles (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2013).

6.2 Contributions to theory and implications of this thesis

This research contributes to the body of literature on organisational restructure. It extends this line of enquiry to an under-studied cohort, that being women aged 55 years and older. Furthermore it contributes a qualitative perspective to the literature, using a narrative methodology to focus on the complexity of restructure experiences and the personal meanings attached to these (Polkinghorne, 1995). Finally, this research contributes to the literature by offering a perspective from the New Zealand context.

A three-stage model has traditionally been used in organisational change research exploring experiences of, and reactions to restructuring (Paulsen et al., 2005; Smollan & Morrison, 2019; Fugate Kinicki, & Scheck, 2002). The three stages focus on time bound periods – before restructure, during restructure, and after restructure; labelled anticipation, implementation, and aftermath respectively (Paulsen et al., 2005; Smollan & Morrison, 2019). This three stage model influenced the design of the interview guide, which focussed on the before, during, and after stages of restructure. However, participants in this study described five distinct stages of their restructure experience; before restructure, during restructure phase one (the stage after the formal notice of restructure is given), during restructure phase two (the stage after the outcome of the restructure is announced), after restructure, and post restructure. This finding suggests a more fine-grained approach to stages of restructure than has previously been proposed.

6.3 Contributions to practice and implications of this thesis

Based on these conclusions, practitioners should consider the impact of restructure on employees carefully before undertaking restructure. For participants in this study, restructure was a painful and traumatic experience that resulted in fundamentally changed lives. What is more, impacts of restructure were felt after the restructure for both leavers and stayers, and contributed to reduced organisational commitment and engagement for leavers in their new organisations and roles.

Lack of participative consultation was an important factor in negative experiences during restructure for participants in this research. Other authors have found that involvement in decision making and high communication can mitigate negative impacts of restructure (Smollan & Pio, 2018). Taken together this highlights the need for agents of restructure to consider consultation periods with a wider lens than legislative requirements, and to truly consider the ideas and inputs of the individuals involved in restructure.

Previous research has shown restructure is a stressful and unpleasant experience for employees (Collins, 2005; Kivimaki et al., 2003; Smollan & Morrison, 2019). However, the findings of the present research take this further and suggest that restructure can be a traumatic experience for older women workers. With this in mind, employers have a responsibility to provide support for employees involved in organisational restructure. This may take the form of support for stayers across the experience of restructure, including EAP, increased managerial support, and opportunities for sharing post-restructure feedback. For leavers, support might include the opportunity to access both emotional and instrumental support, through organisationally sanctioned EAP and career counselling.

6. Limitations of the research

The findings and conclusions from this study are the result of an interpretive research process and as a result contribute to adding richness to existing literature on this topic (Myers, 2017; Grant & Giddings, 2002). The findings are not intended to be statistically representative or generalisable across the population of older women workers who have experienced restructure (Crotty, 1998). Additionally, an interpretive position considers that experiences are interpreted by individuals situated within social and historical contexts (Bruner, 1991; Gray, 2014). Consequently, these findings reflect both a given point in time (the time of the interview), and the position of participants in the socio-political and socio-historical context of their lives (Lee et al., 2011).

The participant recruitment technique used in the current research was snowballing. Snowballing involves the recruitment of participants through the networks of the researcher and other participants of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Snowball sampling is a useful technique when the population of interest is unique or hard to access (Price, 2005). One limitation inherent in snowball sampling is the risk of homogeneity of the sample, as participants are likely to know other participants like them, from similar backgrounds or with similar experiences (Price, 2005). Considerable effort was made to address this risk in participant recruitment, through accessing several primary social networks available to the researcher, and in limiting referrals to two people in participants' networks. However, there remains the possibility that homogenisation of the sample exists and that the sample is skewed to participants working in the education sector.

6.5 Reflections on the research process

I came to this research through an alignment of personal experiences. Previous academic study had opened my eyes to the importance and validity of people and stories in academia, and sparked a deep interest and curiosity in research on women's experiences. Just prior to undertaking the Masters of Business degree, I had experienced a restructure and observed how the experience had various impacts on my colleagues. I wondered what impacts the restructure would have on my colleagues in the late career stage and how the restructure would impact on their lives. Through a subsequent conversation with my secondary supervisor and after some initial research in the field it became apparent that there was little research about this topic. The topic of research became to some extent a way of making sense of my own experiences and observations through restructure, and a way of shedding light on the experiences of others.

As a practitioner in the organisational development field, this research highlights the obligation of care that organisations can adopt as good practice for employees. It highlights the ways in which practitioners should advocate for supportive practices for both leavers and stayers throughout the restructure experience, with a view to mitigating the trauma and decreased organisational engagement experienced by employees during the restructure and for some time afterwards.

Throughout this research I engaged in a reflexive practice which aimed to improve my practice as a researcher but also critically reflect on what my prior experiences and position of otherness as a "younger woman" might bring to the research. Through this reflexive practice I was able to bring conscious awareness to my interactions with participants as well as to analysis of their stories. This practice has also made me question whether my experience of restructure as a younger worker (with more time to rebound or pivot) is different to older workers in the late career stage.

6.6 Future research

The interpretive position of this research views socio-political and historical contexts as shaping narratives and experience (Bruner, 1991). The macro context in which younger workers have emerged is one of sweeping globalisation, consumerism, and casualisation of the workforce, and this context is likely to be different to older workers (Hedge et al., 2006). Taken together with research which shows that older workers are more likely to have stronger organisational commitment, work attachment, and psychological contracts than younger workers (Ng & Feldman, 2012), the experience of restructure for older workers might be distinct from the experience of restructure among younger workers. Future research could explore the meanings attached to restructure, and the impact of restructure, on the careers of younger women workers compared with the experiences of older women workers.

An unexpected and unexplored finding from the present study was the concept of "whitestreaming". Participants referred to whitestreaming as an outcome of restructure where teams in organisations that were either aimed at serving minority or marginalised groups, or staffed primarily by minority or marginalised groups were downsized or disestablished. While Smollan (2017) touched on this issue, there is more work to be done in this area. Future research could address this by exploring the impact of restructure on indigenous groups, using a kaupapa maori or indigenous research approach.

6.7 Conclusion

This research has examined the experiences of organisational restructuring on the working lives and careers of older women workers. Through an interpretive lens it has found that organisational restructure is a significant life event that fundamentally changes the relationship of participants to employment and to organisations, and disrupts the trajectory and direction of women's careers. While the sample is small, this research makes an important contribution to the literature by enriching and progressing a nuanced understanding of the intersections of age and gender in experiences of restructure, and by extending research to a previously understudied cohort.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

15 April 2019

Julie Douglas
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Julie

Ethics Application: **18/131 An examination of the experiences of organizational restructuring on the working lives of older women**

On 12 April 2018 you were advised that your ethics application was approved.

I would like to remind you, that it was a condition of this approval that you submit to AUTEC the following:

- A brief annual progress report using the EA2 Research Progress Report / Amendment Form, available at http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics/forms, or
- A brief Completion Report about the project using the EA3 from, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics/forms. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 12 April 2021 or when the project is completed;

It is also a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified if the research did not proceed or any adverse events occurring during the research. If there has been any alteration to the research, (including changes to any documents provided to participants) then AUTEC approval must be sought using the EA2 form.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

Yours sincerely

K O'Connor

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: kahlia.finch@gmail.com; barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: **An examination of the experiences of organizational restructuring on the working lives of older women.**

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Julie Douglas***

Researcher: ***Kahlia Finch***

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 15 December 2017.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○ I agree to take part in this research.

○ I wish to receive an executive summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○ No○

○ I wish to receive an electronic link to the full published thesis (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 15 April 2019 AUTEC Reference number 18/131

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this for their records.

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced:

15 December 2017

Project Title

An examination of the experiences of organizational restructuring on the working lives of older women.

An Invitation

My name is Kahlia Finch and I am currently undertaking research towards the completion of a Masters of Business at AUT University. I'd like to invite you to participate in this research which explores older women's experiences of organisational restructure and the ways in which it impacts their careers.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research explores older women's experience of organisational restructure and the ways in which it impacts their careers. Through an interpretive lens the meanings that women attach to their experiences of restructure will be investigated. Drawing on research which indicates divergent experiences, the experiences of women who leave the organisation and women who stay post-restructure will be explored.

This research is being undertaken in partial fulfilment of the Masters of Business by the researcher. Depending on the findings, this research may be presented at a conference and/or published in a peer-reviewed journal.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Participants have been identified through a process called snowballing. Snowball sampling is a technique used by researchers to recruit participants which involves existing participants recommending future participants from among their network. This technique is particularly useful when participants are likely to know others who share characteristics which make them eligible for inclusion and in situations where there are no obvious sources for locating members of the population.

Participants in this study must be female and aged 55 years or older who have experienced restructure in the last five years, and not in the year immediately prior to interview. Research indicates that the experiences of workers who stay are different to workers who leave their organisation. As a result this research will ensure an even mix of participants who have stayed and participants who have left following experiences of restructure.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Prior to taking part in this research you will be asked to complete a Participant Consent Form which will be provided to you in hard copy by the researcher.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

The research is concerned with the lived experience of participants, and this is gathered through the telling and sharing of your experience- your 'story', through a one on one interview with the researcher. Interviews will be conducted at one of AUT University's campuses (City, North, or South) based on your preference. The interview is likely to last one to two hours and involves a series of open questions designed to prompt and elicit the recollection of your experiences.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Experiences of restructure are varied and can be unpleasant or stressful. Participants may be at risk of discomfort due to re-living their restructure experiences through sharing of their stories.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participants are able to pause or take a break at any time during the interview, and may choose not to answer questions. Additionally, participants may withdraw from the research at any time. Participants will have had a period of adjustment and reflection following their experience of restructure of at least 12 months, and are likely to have moved on and therefore discomfort or risk are likely to be minimal. Participants may also access AUT Counselling and Mental Health services should they wish to.

AUT Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research, and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling.

What are the benefits?

Your participation in this research benefits the researcher directly in enabling successful completion of the thesis component of the Master of Business. There is some evidence which suggests that the process of storytelling has been shown to develop resilience and reflexivity among participants. Additionally, readers of the research who are facing similar experiences may gain insight into how others have overcome adversity and utilise strategies reflexively in their lives. Participants in this research will receive a modest koha for their participation.

How will my privacy be protected?

The information that you provide will be treated confidentially and no personally identifying information will be published in the research. Records including raw data and transcripts will be kept confidentially to protect personal data. Additionally, you will be provided with the draft findings and discussion sections to ensure that extracts do not readily identify participants inadvertently.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The principle cost to participants is the time commitment of the interview, which is 1-2 hours. Participants may also spend some time reviewing their transcript as well as the findings and discussion sections. There is no financial cost to participants for their participation in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

If you wish to participate in this research please contact me at kahlia.finch@aut.ac.nz by 1 December 2018.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. You will be provided with a copy of your interview transcript to ensure that your story has been accurately captured. You will also be given the opportunity to indicate you would like to receive an executive summary of the research findings and/or an electronic link to the published thesis on the Participant Consent Form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Julie Douglas, julie.douglas@aut.ac.nz (09) 021 9999 x5141

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (09) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Kahlia Finch
AUT University
55 Wellesley St East
Auckland City 1010
kahlia.finch@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Julie Douglas
AUT University
55 Wellesley St East
Auckland City 1010
julie.douglas@aut.ac.nz
(09) 921 9999 x5141

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *15 April 2019*, AUTEC Reference number *18/131*.

Appendix D Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, the question I'm looking at is "How does the experience of restructure impact on the careers of older women workers?"

- Discuss participant information sheet and consent form. Highlight protocol around confidentiality and privacy. Provide opportunity for participant to ask questions / seek clarity.
- Explain that participant can choose not to answer questions, can take a break, and can stop the interview at any point.
- Ask for consent to record the interview, describe purpose of recording and what will happen to recording after the interview. Test the recording device for volume and background noise.

Preamble / Broad generative question (Flick, 2009)

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, I am grateful for your time today. This research is exploring the experience of organisational restructure on the lives of older women workers.

I'd like to ask you to tell me the story of your experience of organisational restructure. So in your own words and in your own way tell me first what was happening before the restructure, second what happened during the restructure, and third what happened after the restructure.

Please take your time in doing this and don't be concerned if you do not tell your story in chronological order. Please remember there is no one right way to do this. I am interested in all aspects and details of your story that are important to you so I may ask some questions to clarify my understanding while listening to you"

Before Restructure

- Tell me about your career before the restructure
- How important was your career to you before the restructure?
- How long were you aware of the impending restructure and your potential involvement before it was officially announced? During this time what were you thinking about?
- How do you define 'career'? What does the word 'career' mean to you? How has it played out for you?

During Restructure

- Tell me your restructure story
- What were the defining moments in your experience of the restructure?
- How was the decision to stay/leave made? Whose decision was it? Who were the key/various players in this process of coming to that decision?
- What was the impact of the experience of restructure on you? How did it impact on you as you were going through it? How did you cope with the restructure?
- How did financial considerations come in to play in your experience?

After Restructure

- Tell me about your life since the restructure
- Looking back on the restructure and your life since, tell me about how your career and life has developed?
- How did you envisage your career developing before the restructure? How has this changed?
- What are the positive things about your career/life at this current stage?

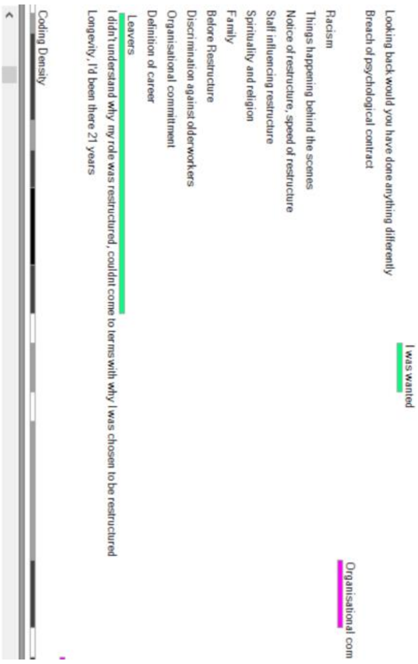
- What are the career and life challenges that you face at this current stage?
- What aspects of your career and life would you like to keep and what would you like to change?
- Looking back is there anything you'd like to have done differently regarding the experience through the restructuring? What is stopping you achieving that now?
- What would your career happy place be? (visualise ideal career/life)
- So where do you see yourself in 3-4 years

Closing (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008)

- Closure statement (ie, I have no more questions, all that we've discussed has given me plenty of food for thought OR time limit occurs)
- Clearing questions (ie,I think we have covered everything that is necessary. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?)
- Snowballing (ie, I am looking for additional participants to join this study. Do you know someone who might like to take part in this study? Remind that a confidential process and would never disclose information shared)
- Express thanks and satisfaction (ie, I've really enjoyed our discussion, thank you for agreeing to participate in the study)

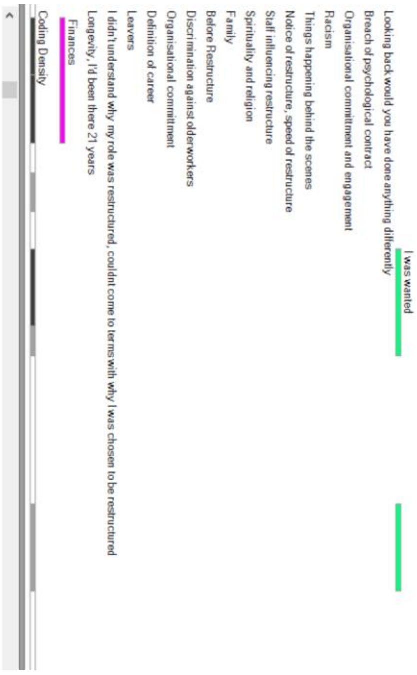
Appendix E: Sample of thematic analysis

Participant:	...and suddenly my role is not even there. Um and like I said ah ((pauses)) there, there it was. So just prior to leaving they asked us for one final interview I think where we were asked - exit interview or something - that we, we had to say what we felt and I said it very strong terms. I said this is a whole lot of bullshit, this AUT is fall apart you know, so I was quite annoyed at that stage...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Mm.
Participant:	...and I went back home, no job, so um like I said I was applying for jobs left, right and centre and so, so that was the first part. And I think November I finished and by March I had a new job, because I applied for - of course I got many interviews um and then I went for this interview at this private provider and at that time, because I had been working for that many years, I thought oh well I'll go to part time and whatever, you know, I don't what happened at the interview. I wasn't even listening and I didn't realise until after he brought me - we came back in to sign I realised it's a full time job...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Oh.
Participant:	...so um they - but, but they were so lovely. They so appreciated me. They wanted me, you know? Then, then I thought well that's fine you know?
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Mm.
Participant:	If somebody wants me that tells me - you know, you know how it is if you're left feeling a rejection...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Mm.
Participant:	...when they tell you you're no longer needed...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Yes.
Participant:	...with all your skills and all this, all that wonderful input you've put into a place, your heart and soul and you're suddenly told no, you're not good enough you know? That's how I felt...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Mm.



...

Participant:	...so um at that point I was happy because it meant only a couple of months had gone by without having a proper salary and all that, so there was a dramatic drop in salary which I didn't care about, because I still at that stage had a mortgage and I needed a job. So joined this new, new, new place and you wouldn't believe it but I'm with them 'til today, because I'm one of those people where I don't flick jobs just for the heck of it.
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Mm.
Participant:	If it's a good fit, which was what [redacted] was, you stay on. You know, you're not constantly looking for new, new pastures and things like that. So um I stayed and then I remember when I met ah another colleague of mine and she had - she waited until she got the right job at the right level and ah she's, and she had a roughly similar salary. But I said to her one of the reasons why I accepted this job when I realised what it was, was helping a little bit um groups that were underprivileged, Maori, Pacifica and all that and I felt like I was in a place where I was giving something back. I was required, I was needed, I was appreciated and for those reasons I stay.
Interviewer:	Mm and an-, and those reasons have continued...
Participant:	((in overlap)) Yeah.
Interviewer:	...through to now?
Participant:	((in overlap)) Yeah...
Interviewer:	((in overlap)) Yeah.
Participant:	...yeah, yeah, even though it's a lot of inconvenience, sometimes I have to travel long distance just to get to the job, but once I'm there the respect I see from students and colleagues and s-, you know, my managers ah makes up for it.
Interviewer:	Mm.
Participant:	So if the people are nice you stay.
Interviewer:	Yes.



Appendix F: Transcriber confidentiality agreement

TE WĀNANGA ARONU
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RA

Confidentiality Agreement

Project title: An examination of the experiences of organizational restructuring on the working lives of older women.

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Julie Douglas***

Researcher: ***Kahlia Finch***

✓ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.

✓ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.

✓ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature: ....

Transcriber's name: Debra Pugh

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

any-type@xtra.co.nz OR debrapugh@xtra.co.nz

907 Waingaro Rd, RD1 Glen Massey,

Ngaruawahia 3793

Phone 0211-320-673

Date: 11 December 2018

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Dr Julie Douglas

julie.douglas@aut.ac.nz

(09) 921 9999 x5141

55 Wellesley St East

Auckland City, 1010