

### International Social Survey Programme

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) involves leading academic institutions in 40 countries in an annual survey of economic and social policy issues. New Zealand is represented in the ISSP by Massey University. Each year the ISSP member countries carry out a 30-minute survey using the same questionnaire. The data from these surveys are deposited in central archives in Cologne and Madrid where they are freely available to all members. This collection of data enables researchers to examine similarities and differences between countries, and to monitor changes over time.

The ISSP addresses a different topic each year in a roughly seven-year cycle. Previous topics have included roles of men and women in society, social networks, social equality, citizenship, the role of government, the environment, national identity and religion. In 2005, the fourteenth year New Zealand has been involved in the ISSP, the topic was attitudes to work, a replication of a similar survey concluded in 1997.

### Survey Details

Between September and November 2005, a nationwide mail survey was conducted of 2500 people aged 18 and over, randomly selected from the New Zealand Electoral Roll. The survey produced 1300 valid responses, an effective response rate of 59%. A sample of this size has a maximum error margin at the 95% confidence level of approximately plus or minus 3%.

### Attitudes to Work

A job is more than just a way of earning money; in fact, 90% of New Zealanders would prefer to have a paid job and 70% would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need the money. If they could choose between different kinds of jobs, more would prefer being self employed (50%) than being an employee (42%), to work in a small firm (60%) rather than a large firm (22%), and to work in a private business (65%) rather than for the government or the public service (18%).

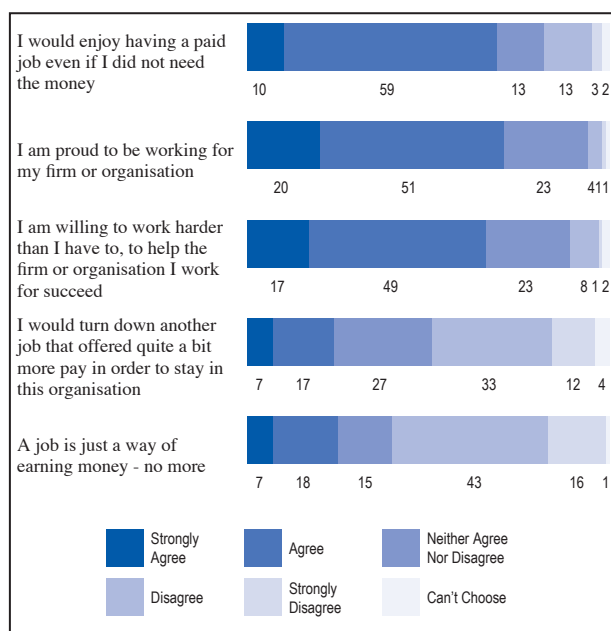
The most important characteristic of a job is that it is interesting (see Figure 1), followed by job security, good opportunities for advancement, and the opportunity to work independently, help other people and be useful to society. Providing a high income is also important, but less so than non-monetary considerations. Although it was the least important of the characteristics considered, the importance of flexible hours in a job has increased significantly over the last eight years. Together with an increase in the importance of being allowed to work independently, this suggests many New Zealanders no longer accept the traditional 'nine to five, five days a week' pattern of work.

Job Characteristic	Proportion who consider this important %
An interesting job	97
Job security	93
A job that allows someone to work independently	83
Good opportunities for advancement	82
A job that allows someone to help other people	79
A job that is useful to society	75
High income	70
A job that has flexible hours	60

**Figure 1 – What is important in a job?**

### Job Satisfaction

Seventy percent of our respondents were in paid work, and the large majority of these (80%) were satisfied with their job (their main job, if they had more than one). This is reflected in high levels of pride in the firms or organisations they work for, and the fact that 65% said they were willing to work harder than they have to in order to help their firm or organisation succeed, and 25% said they would turn down another job that offered quite a bit more pay to stay with their current employer (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2 – The role of work**

Most of those surveyed said their jobs allowed them to work independently (85%), were interesting (80%), gave them a chance to help other people (80%) and improve their own skills (77%). Most respondents considered their jobs were useful to society (68%), but only 30% said their jobs provided good opportunities for advancement or that their incomes were high.

The conclusion that income is not the main consideration in a job is supported by the fact that 65% of respondents would prefer to work the same number of hours and earn the same money, compared to 20% who would prefer to work longer hours and earn more money (10% would choose to work fewer hours and earn less money). Nevertheless, given the opportunity to change the way they spend their time, most New Zealanders would spend more time with their family (75%), friends (65%) and in leisure activities (80%), rather than in a paid job (or doing housework). And 55% of respondents agreed that the demands of their job sometimes interfered with their family life. These results suggest that many New Zealanders would prefer more leisure time and that this number has increased by about 10% since 1997.

## Job Security and Working Conditions

New Zealanders' perceptions of job security have increased since 1977, reflecting the decline in unemployment levels over the intervening period. Seventy percent of working respondents considered their job secure; as a result 60% don't worry at all about the possibility of losing their job and only 15% worry more than a little about this prospect. Nevertheless, 55% of those in work thought it would be fairly difficult to find a job at least as good as their current one and only 30% considered it likely they would try to find a job with another firm or organisation within the next 12 months.

To avoid unemployment, 85% of respondents said they would be willing to accept a job that requires new skills, and 70% would be willing to accept temporary employment or to travel longer to get to work, but only 45% would be willing to accept a position with lower pay. Among respondents who were not working and not retired, 65% said they would like to have a paid job either now or in the future and 50% believed it was likely or very likely they would find one. However, only 25% of this group were currently looking for a job.

The perceived influence of trade unions on working conditions and job security is reflected in the fact that 50% of respondents believe working conditions of employees would be much worse than they are without trade unions (25% disagree). In addition, 40% of those surveyed agreed that trade unions are very important for the job security of employees (30% disagree).

Half of those with jobs said they sometimes came home from work exhausted, and a further 35% said this happens to them often or always. This situation is at least partly attributable to the fact that 50% of respondents sometimes have to do hard physical work, but a major contributing factor also appears to be stress at work. Nearly 80% of respondents sometimes find their work stressful and 30% sometimes work in dangerous conditions. Nevertheless, New Zealand workplaces are generally good places to be in; 75% of respondents described relations between management and

employees at their workplace as good, while 90% described relationships between workmates and colleagues in the same way.

Around 17% of those with jobs have no say in how their daily work is organised, the rest have jobs where they are completely free to decide how their daily work is organised (32%) or can decide this within certain limits (50%). Only 14% of respondents were in jobs where they were entirely free to decide when they start and finish work; most were equally divided between jobs where their starting and finishing times are decided by their employer or where they can decide their start and finish times within certain limits. However, the large majority of those surveyed (80%) said it would not be too difficult to take an hour or two off during working hours, to take care of family or personal matters.

### Men, Women and Work

Attitudes towards women and paid work depend critically on whether the woman has children and, if she does, how old they are. Around 40% of New Zealanders believe a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works, and that family life suffers when a woman has a part-time job (see Figure 3). Thus, while 83% of respondents approve of married women working full-time before they have children, only 2% approve of women with children under school age working full-time. Approval is higher for mothers of young children working part-time (30%), and, for women working full-time, increases to 14% after the youngest child starts school and to 65% after the children leave home. Overall, however, around 40% of those surveyed agreed that family life suffers when a woman has a full-time job (though 30% disagreed).

Despite the general attitude to working mothers, 50% of New Zealanders believe a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work, and 46% believe that having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person. Interestingly, a significant proportion (37%) agree that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for

pay. This suggests that many respondents did not consider paid work to be the defining characteristic of a woman's role in a family.

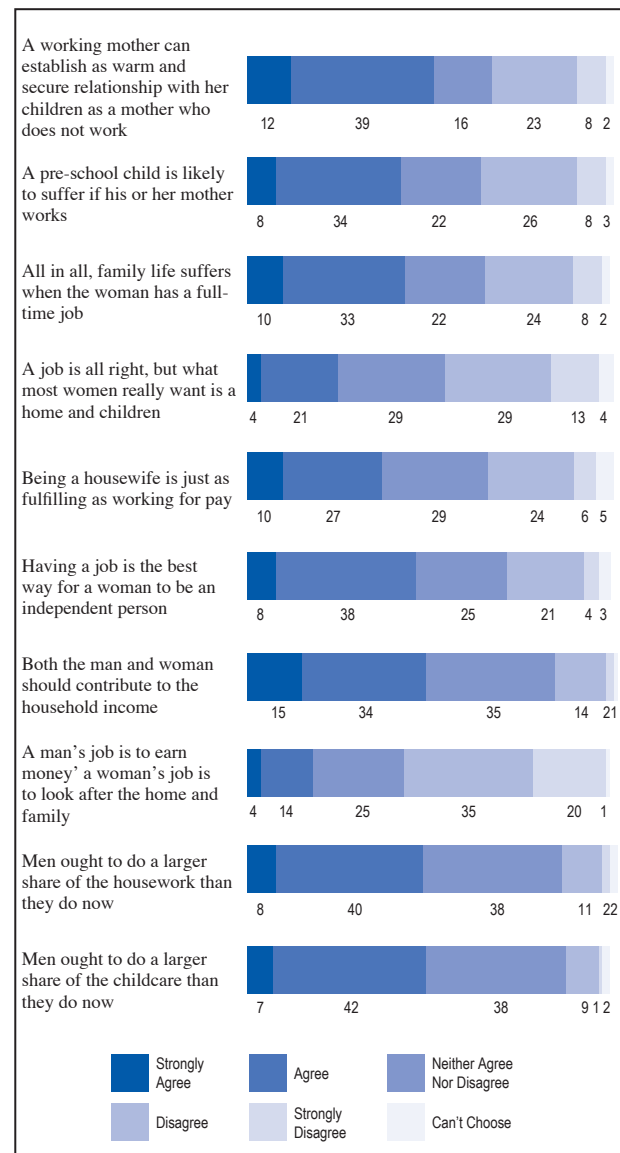


Figure 3 – Men, Women and Work

Only a minority of New Zealanders (14%) support the traditional view that a man's job is to earn money, while a woman's job is to look after the house and family. Just under 50% of respondents agreed that men should do a larger share of the housework and childcare than they do, and a similar proportion believes that both men and women should contribute to the income of a household.

Nevertheless, the responsibility for doing household chores still tends to follow traditional patterns, with women mainly responsible for caring for sick children, preparing the meals, doing the cleaning, caring for sick family members, and shopping for groceries, and men mainly responsible for maintaining the car, making small repairs around the house and putting out the rubbish (see Figure 4). However, in more than a third of households couples are likely to share responsibility for looking after elderly parents, doing the gardening and shopping for groceries.

Task	Task usually done by ...			
	Women %	Men %	Shared %	Someone Else %
Takes time off work when the children are sick	69	5	25	1
Prepares the meals	63	8	28	1
Does the household cleaning	63	4	28	5
Shops for groceries	53	7	40	0
Looks after elderly parents	44	3	47	6
Goes to school camps with children	44	18	31	7
Pays the bills	41	30	29	0
Does the gardening	34	26	36	4
Puts out the rubbish	20	52	21	1
Maintains the car	6	69	17	8
Makes small repairs around the house	5	76	16	3

**Figure 4 – Who does what around the home**

## Conclusions

For most New Zealanders paid work is much more than a way of earning money; it is a source of pride and satisfaction. Most New Zealanders are proud of the work they do and of the firms and organisations they work for. Workplace relationships are generally good and most New Zealanders have some flexibility in how their daily work is organised and when they start and stop

work. Job security is not a major worry for most people, reflecting the high employment level in the country. The most important characteristic of a job is that it is interesting; while income is important it is less so than non-monetary considerations such as the opportunity to work independently, to help other people and to be useful to society.

The changing roles of men and women in our society are reflected in New Zealanders' attitudes to work. It is no longer assumed that a woman's role is to stay at home and look after a family while a man's role is to have a job and earn money. However, traditional gender roles are changing more slowly in the home. In most households women still do most of the housework, cooking, shopping and caring for sick children, while men do most of the repairs, putting out the rubbish and maintaining the car. Though most New Zealanders approve of married women working full-time, once a woman becomes a mother the general view is that her place is at home looking after her children.

## About the Authors

Members of the Massey University Department of Marketing involved in this survey were: Professor Philip Gendall (Professor of Marketing), Tanya Banks and Kathrin Wohn (Research Assistants).

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Access to data from previous ISSP surveys conducted in New Zealand: Religion, 1991 and 1998; Social Inequality, 1992 and 1999; The Environment, 1993 and 2000; The Roles of Men and Women in Society, 1994 and 2002; National Identity, 1996 and 2003; The Role of Government and Work Orientation, 1997; Social Networks, 2001; Citizenship, 2004; is available through the Department of Marketing, Massey University.