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79/21

**TWO NOTES ON  
LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS**

BY  
OLAF FOSS AND EIVIND HOFFMANN

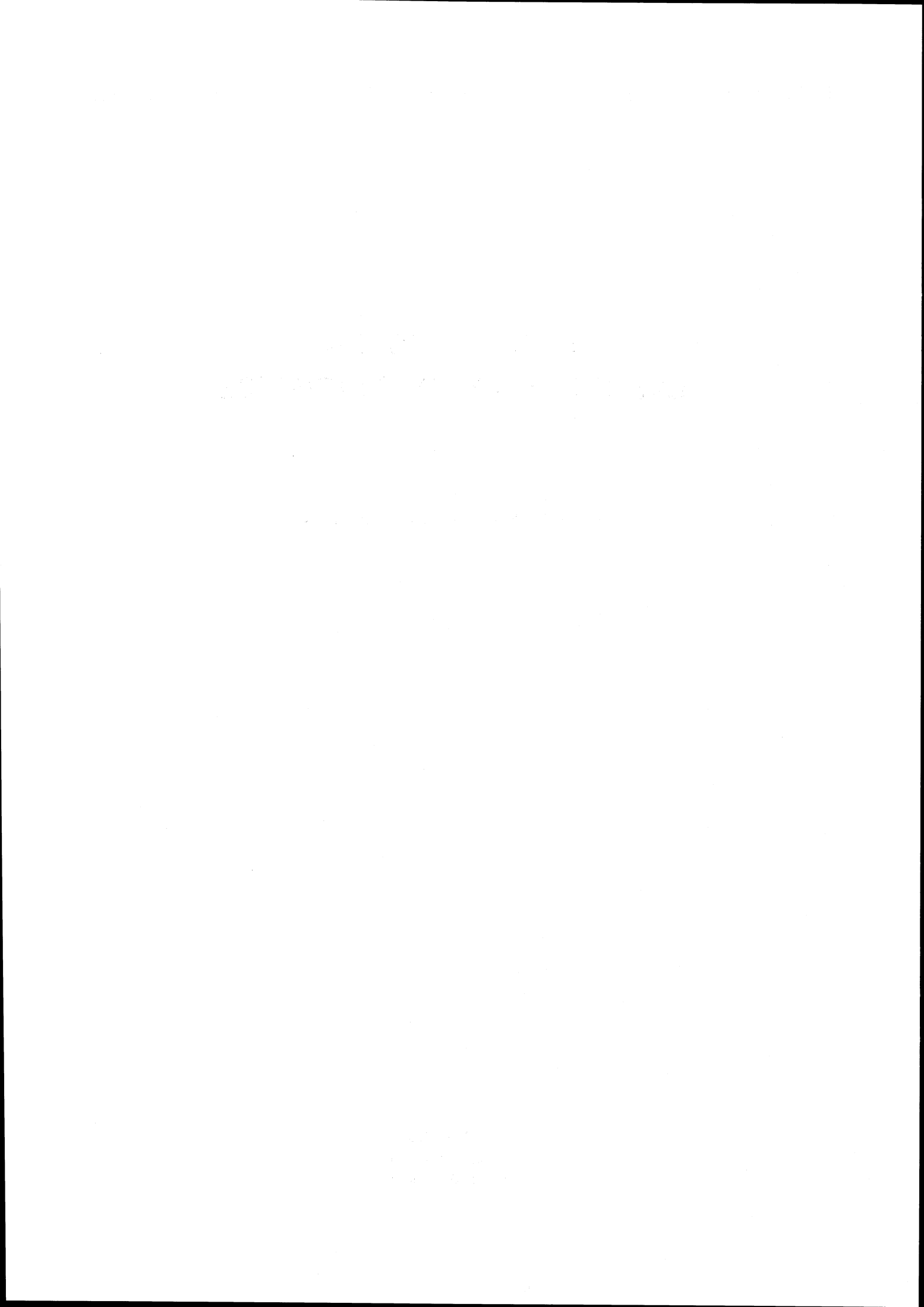
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**TWO NOTES ON  
LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS**

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## PREFACE

This report contains one invited and one contributed paper prepared for the meeting on manpower statistics organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Conference of European statisticians, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 16-20 July 1979 in Geneva. The papers are intended as contributions to discussions on methodological issues, but they also present some Norwegian experience with manpower statistics and some results from different surveys.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the ILO, the ECE or the Bureau.

Central Bureau of Statistics, Oslo, 11 October 1979

Petter Jakob Bjerve

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. This is essential for ensuring the integrity of the financial statements and for providing a clear audit trail. The records should be kept up-to-date and should be easily accessible to all relevant parties.

2. The second part of the document outlines the procedures for handling cash and other assets. It is important to ensure that all cash receipts are properly recorded and that all disbursements are supported by valid documentation. Regular reconciliations should be performed to ensure that the books are in balance and that there are no discrepancies.

3. The third part of the document discusses the requirements for preparing financial statements. These statements should be prepared in accordance with the applicable accounting standards and should be reviewed by a qualified professional. The statements should provide a clear and concise summary of the organization's financial performance over the reporting period.

4. The fourth part of the document outlines the procedures for managing accounts payable and receivable. It is important to ensure that all bills are paid on time and that all invoices are properly recorded. Regular follow-up should be performed to ensure that all accounts are up-to-date and that there are no outstanding items.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the requirements for maintaining accurate records of fixed assets. These assets should be properly valued and their depreciation should be calculated and recorded. Regular physical counts should be performed to ensure that the records are accurate and that there are no discrepancies.

6. The sixth part of the document outlines the procedures for handling payroll and other personnel-related transactions. It is important to ensure that all payroll transactions are properly recorded and that all personnel records are maintained accurately. Regular audits should be performed to ensure that all transactions are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the requirements for maintaining accurate records of all other transactions. This includes any other financial activities that may occur during the reporting period. All transactions should be properly recorded and supported by valid documentation. Regular reconciliations should be performed to ensure that the books are in balance and that there are no discrepancies.

## CONTENTS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| <b>PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUES OF HARMONIZING MANPOWER STATISTICS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES -<br/>NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCES by Eivind Hoffmann</b>          |      |
| 1. Introduction .....  | 7    |
| 2. Harmonizing - for what purpose? .....   | 7    |
| 3. Techniques of harmonizing employment statistics .....   | 9    |
| 3.1. Units and populations .....   | 10   |
| 3.2. Classifications .....   | 10   |
| 3.3. Definitions .....   | 10   |
| 3.4. Units of measurements .....   | 11   |
| 3.5. Methods of data collection .....  | 11   |
| 4. Other areas of manpower statistics .....  | 11   |
| 4.1. Unemployment statistics .....   | 11   |
| 4.2. Statistics on wages and other labour costs .....  | 12   |
| 4.3. Statistics on labour market policies .....  | 12   |
| 4.4. Statistics on working conditions .....  | 12   |
| 5. Concluding remarks .....  | 12   |
| <br>   |      |
| <b>PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND THEIR RELATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET -<br/>SOME NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCES by Olaf Foss and Eivind Hoffmann</b> |      |
| 1. Introduction .....  | 13   |
| 2. Indications of labour market attachment of persons not in the labour force .....  | 13   |
| 2.1. Introduction .....  | 13   |
| 2.2. Information on labour market attachment in LFSS and the special survey .....  | 14   |
| 3. Some data on labour force attachment of persons not in the labour force .....   | 15   |
| 3.1. Situational characteristics and labour market experience .....  | 15   |
| 3.2. Attitudes to paid employment .....  | 16   |
| 3.3. Intentions and time perspective .....   | 17   |
| 3.4. Availability for work .....   | 18   |
| 3.4.1. The availability concept .....  | 18   |
| 3.4.2. Appraisal at own employability .....  | 18   |
| 3.4.3. Barriers to labour market participation .....   | 19   |
| 3.4.4. Demands on a potential job .....  | 19   |
| 3.5. Actual labour market behaviour of persons not in the labour force ("gross flows") ..  | 20   |
| 4. Concluding remarks .....  | 22   |
| <br>   |      |
| Issued in the series Reports from the Central Bureau of Statistics .....   | 23   |



PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUES OF HARMONIZING MANPOWER STATISTICS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES -  
NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCES

by Eivind Hoffmann

1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion in this note of problems and techniques of harmonizing manpower statistics from different sources will mainly be conducted in terms of employment statistics. This is done both to simplify the exposition and to be able to draw directly upon the experiences of the author. In section 4, however, at the end of the note, some supplementary remarks referring to other areas of manpower statistics will be added.

The harmonizing of manpower statistics must be regarded as desirable in itself, but it is also reasonable and illuminating to discuss harmonizing in relation to more specific aims. In section 2 some Norwegian examples are described.

The question of how to harmonize statistics can be approached from many perspectives, and involves most aspects of the data collection process. It is necessary to consider - and perhaps make adjustments for - differences in the sources of the basic information, the methods of data collection, time references, definitions and classifications of variables. Some of these topics will be discussed in section 3 on the basis of Norwegian practices and recent experiences.

2. HARMONIZING - FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

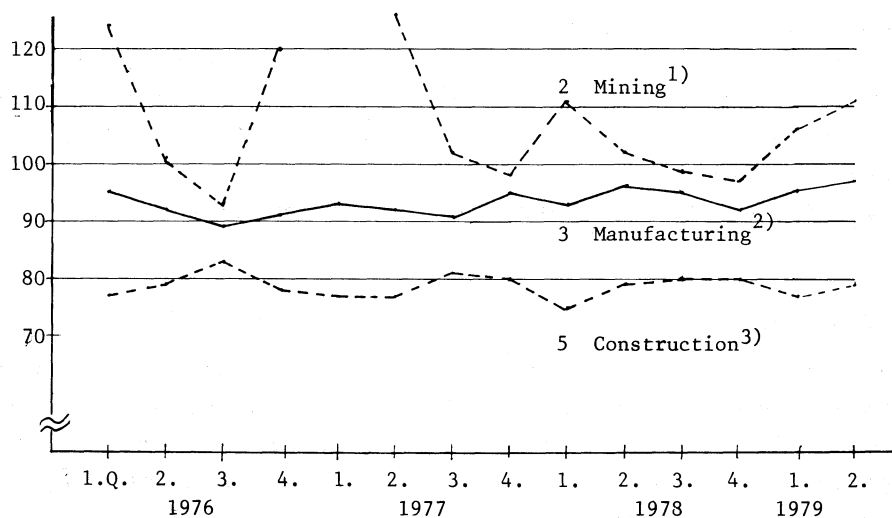
The major purpose for harmonizing data is to be able to give a complete picture where the data from each of the available sets of statistics fail to give a complete picture at the required level of detail - for example in terms of industry x region. This may of course include the problem of estimating changes over time or constructing continuous timeseries. Three examples from the Norwegian situation may illustrate the problems:

(1) The sample size and the sample design of the quarterly Labour Force Sample Survey (LFSS) does not give possibilities for a breakdown by industry and/or by region with sufficient detail to satisfy the demands from the analysts and planners. We have, however, also a large amount of surveys of special industries which includes questions on employment. Most of these surveys are yearly - with a rather long production period.

One study has investigated the possibilities of combining the different data on sectoral employment by industry at the county level - using the 1970 Population Census and the 1974 Census of Establishments as bench-marks - to obtain the required details both for levels of employment and for changes. It was concluded that for the period after 1970 it is possible to obtain yearly estimates of total employment at the county level for 17 of the 30 sectors identified. For 10 of the sectors it is only possible to obtain county estimates for 1974 (for the Census of Establishments) and for 3 sectors such estimates are not possible even for 1974 (as they were not included in the 1974 Census). It is also clear from this study that even if it had been possible to obtain data on employment in all sectors from the different sectoral statistics, they would not have been consistent in terms of reference periods, minimum intensity of work, units of measurement (persons, man-years) etc. The resulting figures on total employment would have been very difficult to compare with total employment figures taken from a single source, and it would not be possible to make such comparisons at the county level - only at higher regional levels. The total time lag between the reference period and the time of publication of the total estimates would also have been unacceptably long.



(2) We have in Norway tried to design a mail survey of establishments to give the same aggregate results in terms of total employment at the one-digit industry level as the Labour Force Sample Survey. The main purpose of this Regional employment survey (RES) has been to give estimates at the county level and for each local labour office district. (There are 19 counties and 104 local labour office districts.) The reference weeks used in the Regional employment survey and the definition of employment has been the same as in the Labour Force Sample Survey, however, the results have not been satisfactory in terms of comparability. Neither in terms of level of employment nor in terms of changes over time do we get the same results. The diagram below gives a picture of the results.



- 1) Total employment according to LFSS 1. Q. 1979: 13 000.  
 2) " " " " " " " 387 000.  
 3) " " " " " " " 159 000.

(3) It is often desirable to be able to describe the development over time by replication of a previous set of cross-sectional statistics - for example a census or a sample survey. We have in Norway experimented in updating the aggregate employment data from the 1970 Population Census through a sample survey referring to the year 1975. This was done through a mail survey in early January to the respondents of the Labour Force Sample Survey of the 1st quarter of 1976. In order to control for quality the LFSS, which was by interview in mid February, had tagged on a replication of the relevant parts of the control survey conducted as part of the 1970 Census. The results from this double replication can be summarized as follows:

- (a) The replication of the Census and the replication of the Control Survey gave different results for the development of employment 1970 - 1975. (Cfr. table 1.)
- (b) The differences between the Census and the Control survey were larger for some key variables in 1970 than the corresponding differences between the Mini Census and the Control Survey for 1975. (Cfr. table 1.)

Table 1. Proportion of total population 16-73 years of age who was employed. 1970 and 1975. Percentage

|                                    | 1970         | 1975         | Changes<br>1970-1975 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                       |              |              |                      |
| Census 1970/Mini Census 1975 ..... | 64,9 (+ 1,3) | 70,1 (+ 1,0) | 5,2 (+ 1,6)          |
| Control Surveys .....              | 72,5 (+ 1,3) | 72,2 (+ 1,0) | -0,3 (+ 1,6)         |
| <b>Males</b>                       |              |              |                      |
| Census 1970/Mini Census 1974 ..... | 86,5 (+ 1,4) | 85,5 (+ 1,1) | -1,0 (+ 1,3)         |
| Control Surveys .....              | 90,2 (+ 1,2) | 86,3 (+ 1,1) | -3,9 (+ 1,2)         |
| <b>Females</b>                     |              |              |                      |
| Census 1970/Mini Census 1975 ..... | 43,7 (+ 2,0) | 55,7 (+ 1,6) | 12,0 (+ 1,8)         |
| Control Surveys .....              | 55,0 (+ 2,0) | 58,8 (+ 1,5) | 3,8 (+ 1,8)          |

Standard deviations due to sample error are given in parenthesis ( ).

- (c) Some changes between 1970 and 1975 as measured by the two control survey (or the Census and Mini Census) were less "real" than others. One important example concerns the criterion traditionally used in the Norwegian Population Censuses for classifying persons as employed or not employed - namely "income from own work" as main source of livelihood (a "usual activity" criterion). The results in table 2 show that the increase in total employment - and especially employment among women - would be much higher when using the "main source of livelihood" definition than when using a "number of hours worked" definition. One may suggest at least three different explanations for this results: (a) A change in attitudes with respect to importance of different sources of livelihood; (b) Less time are being used for housework and other productive non-market activities; (c) Increase in real hourly wages. One tentative conclusion may be that it is less easy to replicate (and harmonize) over time concepts which contain a large element of subjective evaluation. (The 1980 Census will not use "main source of livelihood" as the basis for defining employed persons, but will use "number of hours worked". The 1970 Census included both concepts, but the former was the main definition used in the publication of the Census results.)

Table 2. Proportion of employed persons who said that income of own work was the main source of livelihood, by number of hours worked during the last year. 1970 and 1975. Percentages

|                            | Males |      | Females |      |
|----------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|
|                            | 1970  | 1975 | 1970    | 1975 |
| Total .....                | 81    | 80   | 28      | 40   |
| 1 000 hours and more ..... | 97    | 99   | 75      | 93   |
| 500 - 999 hours .....      | 58    | 63   | 29      | 57   |
| 100 - 499 " .....          | 14    | 15   | 9       | 16   |

### 3. TECHNIQUES OF HARMONIZING EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

There are two major aspects to consider when discussing techniques of harmonizing statistics, namely the statistical populations involved and their units on the one hand, and the definitions and classifications of the characteristics of these units on the other hand. The techniques of harmonizing manpower statistics must be designed to overcome differences with respect to these two aspects which are due to different methods of data collection, different time references, different definitions or different classifications.

### 3.1. Units and populations

The major units in employment statistics are persons and establishments. The major instruments for harmonizing these units in the statistics in Norway are a Central Population Register (CPR) and a Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises (CREE) respectively. The Population Censuses of 1970 and 1980 used/will use the CPR as a basis, and it also serves as the sampling frame for all sample surveys of persons and households. Similarly the CREE was used as a basis for the Census of Establishments 1974 and serves as the sampling frame for sample surveys of establishments. However, experience shows that the populations of these two registers are not mutually harmonized, i.e. they are not "complete" in terms of each other. Thus when measuring employment through the LFSS we find some employed persons claiming to work in establishments (at places of work) which are not included in the CREE - either by design or by default (both possibilities are likely). Similarly when measuring employment through the for example RES we find that the establishments include among their employees some persons who are not included in the CPR - either by design (most likely) or by default (less likely), the treatment of short term foreign workers is probably the most important reason. The problems described in example (2) above are at least partly due to this lack of harmonization between the CPR and the CREE.

These registers also serve as the points of departure when the methods of data collection necessitates a statistical population or statistical units which deviates from those of the registers - as for example is often the case in the use of administrative information systems as sources of statistics. In Norway we are now developing a major new system of statistics on employees based on an administrative information system. The Central Bureau of Statistics has had substantial influence on the administrative system, and it has been necessary to find solutions which make it possible to handle persons (employees) who are not included in the CPR; and which make it possible to handle units (employers and subunits of the employers, in the case of multi-establishment enterprises) which may not in all cases correspond directly to the units of CREE, and which in some cases do not have corresponding units in the CREE. In this new Norwegian system it is information from the administrative system which identifies a person as an employee and gives the basis for classification by age, sex and the place of work; the CPR gives the information on marital status, citizenship and place of residence; and the CREE gives the major information on industry. The links are provided by the identification numbers of persons and employers.

### 3.2. Classifications:

The standard industrial classification (based on ISIC (1968)), the standard classification of occupations (based on ISCO (1958) and the standard classification of education (based in ISCED) are used wherever applicable - with some minor exceptions regarding the classification of education. The industrial classification of an establishment in the Central Register of Establishment and Enterprises is authoritative and is consulted also when determining industry in surveys on persons. The classifications of marital status, age and regions are according to general rules and recommendations.

### 3.3. Definitions:

The definitions of marital status, age and place of residence are common to all manpower statistics where applicable. The key definitions of employment (and unemployment) vary between different bodies of statistics because of differences in data collection methods, and also because of differences in time references and in required intensity of work (or search activity). The definitions of (main) industry, occupation and place of work will of course vary with the differences in the definition of employment. It has, for example, in the new administratively based statistics on employees, been necessary to design complicated rules to decide which employment - of several possible ones - is the main one. These rules must take into account both the possibility of deficient reporting by the employers of the termination of an employment and the possibility that the same person may in fact have several employers at the same time. The differences between the resulting definition of employment in the new set of statistics and those of the LFSS and the RES will be analysed both for the individual person, the single establishment and in the aggregate.

### 3.4. Units of measurement:

The person is of course the most common unit of measurement in the employment statistics - the interest being the number of persons having a certain combination of characteristics. However, for certain purposes, other units of measurement are more appropriate. The most important example is the need for a measurement of labour input to be used in economic analysis and together with data from the national accounts. The two major alternatives for units of measurement are then "man-years" and "hours worked" (disregarding all questions of the need and possibility to introduce weights to adjust for quality differences). Man-years has been the predominant unit of measurement in the supplementary tables to the Norwegian national accounts, and the estimation of man-years should in principle take into account and correct for differences in definitions in the statistics used. However, this has in practice been possible only to a limited extent. It has recently been concluded that a conversion to "hours worked" will be desirable, as the proliferation of part-time work and other "untraditional" working arrangements have made it increasingly difficult to give the concept of man-year a uniform meaning over time and over industries. A system based on "hours worked" may also be better suited to combine and reconcile data based on information on employment partly from establishments and partly from individuals.

### 3.5. Methods of data collection:

The use of administrative information systems as sources for statistics is becoming more widespread, also in employment (and other manpower) statistics. This often makes the harmonizing of these statistics very difficult, both with other sources of statistics but also when trying to ensure consistent timeseries. We had, for example, in Norway up to 1971 an administratively based set of employment statistics which was thought to be of a very good quality. However, comparisons with the results from the 1960 and 1970 Population Censuses have led us to conclude that minor changes - both formal and informal - in the administrative system providing the data, as well as structural changes in the economy, resulted in an inflated change during the -60s in total employment as measured by the administrative data. However, if the statistical agency is aware of these problems and can participate in the planning of the information system from the beginning and monitor closely the working of the system, then there is always a chance of obtaining satisfactory solutions to major statistical issues. The CBS of Norway has some positive experiences in this field, one of which is the new administrative basis for statistics on employees mentioned earlier; and we intend to monitor this new set of statistics very closely, both by watching the administrative system and by matching data from it with data from other sources.

We have in Norway - as indicated earlier - conducted a few experiments in collecting the same information from the same respondents both by mail and by interview. The results seem to confirm that these different means of obtaining the data in themselves represent problems when harmonizing data from different surveys.

## 4. OTHER AREAS OF MANPOWER STATISTICS

The problems in harmonizing statistics are of course essentially the same for all areas of manpower statistics, whether you are seeking to harmonize the statistics within the area or between areas. Some wellknown and important issues may, however, be worth mentioning.

### 4.1. Unemployment statistics:

These statistics are of course important both for economic and social policies. One of the major issues is how to delineate in meaningful and practicable way those who are to be counted as unemployed from those who are to be regarded as employed on the one side and those who are to be regarded as outside the labour force on the other. The solution to this problem requires - as recognized in the ILO recommendations - definitions dealing simultaneously with all three major groups.

It is also increasingly recognized that it may require the definition of groups which are intermediary to those which consist of the unambiguously employed, unemployed and outside the labour force respectively; as a possible approximation to the continuum of situations which exist in the "real" world.

Another issue of some importance is the question of reference periods (and required intensity of work) when using the work history of those unemployed to classify them according to former industry and occupation. There is a definite need to harmonize these aspects of the unemployment statistics with the corresponding aspects of employment and vacancy statistics. (The harmonization of unemployment and vacancy statistics also involve a number of other questions - reference periods for example - which deserve further discussion, but our work in this area has been extremely limited.)

4.2. Statistics on wages and other labour costs are in Norway only very poorly or not at all integrated or harmonized with statistics on employment and unemployment. There are also great difficulties in making comparable wage statistics for different industries, occupations or areas for collective wage agreements. This creates considerable problems both for the analysis of labour market behaviour and for the linking of the employment statistics with the national accounts. Suggestions, both in terms of general principles and in terms of practical solutions used in other countries related to particular institutional settings, would be valuable.

4.3. Statistics on labour market policies have become of greater importance as such policies have become more widespread in the present economic situation. Such policies have tended to blur the distinction between employment and unemployment - thus making it important to harmonize the statistics on the persons involved at least partly in the programs, with employment and unemployment statistics. So far we have in Norway not been able to get much done in this area, but a special survey on those registered as unemployed at the local labour offices at a specific date in 1978 covering both their recent work histories and their participation in special projects initiated by the labour market authorities, represents a promising beginning. This survey was conducted by the Directorate of Labour.

4.4. Statistics on working conditions: The general problems involved in developing statistics in this area are probably more important than any special problems related to the harmonization with other areas of manpower statistics - at least if one is thinking of physical working conditions. Even so, there are, however, important questions of harmonization and coordination with statistics on wages and other labour costs; especially since it is often assumed that there is a negative correlation between wages and other conditions of work.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The experiences and conclusions which we have obtained in Norway in our limited work on the harmonization of manpower statistics (mainly employment statistics) seem to indicate that the harmonizing of manpower statistics is technically very difficult as soon as you require consistent data at some level of detail below the most general aggregates. This does not mean, however, that we shall stop trying.

## PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND THEIR RELATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET - SOME NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCES

by Olaf Foss and Eivind Hoffmann

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian Labour Force Sample Survey (LFSS) has from the beginning included questions designed to give information on the relationship and attitudes to employment among persons currently outside the labour force. The most explicitly formulated concern behind these questions was initially an interest in the untapped labour reserves, i.e. persons willing to accept paid employment provided that given requirements were met - as well as a wish to know the nature of these requirements. The questions as they were originally formulated, were criticized for not making it possible to distinguish between requirements mainly related to working conditions or availability of suitable work (i.e. hours of work, type of work, distance between home and place of work) and requirements mainly related to the person's situation (i.e. the need to look after children or sick relatives, the pressure of home-work or studies, attitude of other family members). It was also criticized that certain groups were excluded from this sequence of questions by the use of screening.

While the criticism of the original sequence was valid in terms of the original intentions of these questions, it also reflected a change or widening of interest. The interest was shifted to the other side of the coin, namely "hidden unemployment" due to structural factors in the labour market, due to "camouflage" by alternative social security schemes or due to lack of alternatives for coping with necessary domestic tasks - alternatives provided neither by the market nor by public services. The initial sequence was also criticized from the point of view of welfare measurement. Finally it was criticized as having a bias in favour of paid employment - some interviewers claimed that the questions as formulated implicitly and in a nagging manner criticized those who did not have paid employment.

The consequence of the discussion and criticism of the initial sequence was both that it was changed and that a special survey was designed in order to examine in more detail the relationship of people outside the labour force to paid employment. Particular attention would be paid to the study of their motivations and perceived restrictions as well as to their objective situation. Some results from this special survey will be presented in this paper, as well as some results from the ordinary LFSS.

## 2. INDICATORS OF LABOUR MARKET ATTACHMENT OF PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE

2.1. Introduction

At a specific time both persons in the labour force and persons outside the labour force may be thought of as being different with respect to the "strength" of their labour force attachment and their attachment to other "spheres of activity". In this connection labour market attachment may be conceived of as measured by degree rather than as a dichotomy. Even though we can easily mention several relevant indicators of labour force attachment there are no easy way of determining the relative strength of a person's total attachment or the ordinal location of different groups of persons on a conceived continuum representing the degree of attachment to the labour market. Labour force attachment is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and it is not possible or relevant to collapse these dimensions into a single measure. Established measures of "unemployment" do not, for example, necessarily secure that the persons that are thus classified, constitute the group of nonemployed persons with the objectively strongest labour force attachment. If we regard other "attachment indicators" than those specified in the ILO-recommendations, we may find that groups outside the labour force (according to ILO-definitions) in several ways can be said to show as strong (and in some ways even stronger) attachment to the labour market as persons counted as "unemployed" by established methods.

The two central criteria of the ILO unemployment definition, availability for work and active job-seeking, exclude a great number of non-employed persons from being classified as "unemployed". How many is, among other things, dependent on the operational interpretation of the two criteria. Some of the persons excluded are supposedly very similar to those classified as unemployed in so far as they actually belong to this theoretically defined group, but are not classified accordingly because of incorrect information. (This works both ways, of course.)

Some of the persons are in situations that are easily associated with "unemployment" in several ways, but fail to meet one or more of the definitional requirements. In this category we find those who have stopped their job-seeking or who never started looking because they knew there were no jobs available. We may also find persons who are looking for a job in ways that some consider to be "too passive" to qualify as job-seeking activities.

Some of the persons are less easily associated with unemployment in the conventional meaning of the word, but may be looked upon as close to the labour market in other ways, i.e. by having a high probability of becoming job seekers if certain specified conditions are met. Personal characteristics, family situation and institutional conditions may reduce the persons' immediate availability for work and/or require labour market adjustments which widens the range of characteristics and situations compatible with paid employment.

In this paper we shall focus on persons not in the labour force and try to illustrate their relations to the labour market by employing several alternative indicators of labour market attachment.

Persons not in the labour force are rather heterogeneous with respect to several of the properties that influence labour force attachment and it is futile, if not impossible, to try to establish unambiguous categories with regard to the dimension "labour force attachment" on the basis of just a few indicators.

The data used are made available mainly through the special survey linked to the LFSS in the last quarter of 1976.

## 2.2. Information on labour market attachment in LFSS and the special survey

In the Norwegian quarterly LFSS respondents outside the labour force are asked if they would like to have paid employment or if they are in need of paid employment. Those who answer in the affirmative are asked why they did not look for work (the main reason) and what job characteristics are required to fit their idea of a suitable job. Up to the third quarter of 1978 those who were asked these questions had stated as their main activity in the survey week one of the following roles/activities:

- homework
- at school
- without work/other activities

Starting in the third quarter of 1978 some additional groups were exposed to this sequence of questions, namely those who as their main activity/situation stated

- own illness
- disabled
- retired, pensioner

Only conscripts now escape these questions.

In the special survey in connection with the Labour Force Sample Survey in the fourth quarter of 1976, all respondents outside the labour force were asked these questions. In this survey information was also gathered on several other indicators of labour force attachment and the initial sequence of evaluative questions was elaborated upon.

The questions covered among other things the following topics (in addition to all the information gathered in the Labour Force Sample Survey):

- labour market experience: previous employment situation and work experience, job-seeking activity during the last twelve months/since leaving last job
- job-seeking intentions
- how soon respondents who would like a job wanted to start working
- job characteristics required
- expected consequences of having a job on selected living conditions
- appraised influence of various factors on the possibility of having/taking a job
- main source of livelihood, household disposable income, whether the persons received pensions or insurance money, time spent on household work and family care.

### 3. SOME DATA ON LABOUR FORCE ATTACHMENT OF PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE

#### 3.1. Situational characteristics and labour market experience

"Persons not in the labour force" is a very heterogeneous group with respect to a series of situational characteristics as well as labour market experience. These dissimilarities imply differences with regard to attitudes and behaviour towards the labour market of a kind that makes a uniform treatment of the whole group rather misleading.

Taking the respondents' main activity as an indicator of their current life situations, we get a picture that leads us to expect important differences in both past and future labour market behaviour as well as in motivational factors and factual and appraised restrictions on their freedom of action towards the labour market.

The differences between groups of respondents in current situation with regard to labour market behaviour, are illustrated in table 1 and 2, where persons outside the labour force are distributed according to indicators of "current life situation" and recent labour market experience, respectively.

Table 1. Persons not in the labour force, in groups, for age, sex and main activity during the survey week. Per cent. 1976, 4th quarter<sup>1)</sup>

|                                     | Total             |       |       |       | Males |       |       |       | Females |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                     | Total             | 16-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 | Total | 16-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 | Total   | 16-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 |
| Total .....                         | 100 <sup>2)</sup> | 24    | 25    | 50    | 30    | 11    | 3     | 16    | 70      | 13    | 23    | 35    |
| Housework .....                     | 44                | 4     | 20    | 20    | (1)   | (0)   | (0)   | (0)   | 44      | 4     | 20    | 20    |
| At school .....                     | 20                | 18    | 2     | (0)   | 11    | 10    | 1     | (0)   | 9       | 8     | (1)   | (0)   |
| Without work,<br>other activities . | 3                 | 1     | 0     | 1     | 1     | 1     | (0)   | (0)   | 1       | (0)   | (0)   | (1)   |
| Own illness,<br>disabled .....      | 16                | (0)   | 3     | 12    | 7     | (0)   | 1     | 6     | 8       | (0)   | 2     | 7     |
| Retired, pensio-<br>ners .....      | 17                | (0)   | (0)   | 17    | 10    | (0)   | (0)   | 9     | 9       | (0)   | (0)   | 7     |

1) See footnote 1, table 2. 2) Grand total = 956 thousand persons (conscripts and laid-off workers are excluded).



Table 2. Proportion of those outside the labour force who had had paid employment during the last 12 month, classified by main activity and sex. Per cent. 1976, 4th quarter<sup>1)</sup>

|                                      | Total | Males | Females |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|
| Total .....                          | 27    | 42    | 21      |
| Housework .....                      | 17    | (42)  | 17      |
| At school .....                      | 69    | 70    | 67      |
| Without work, other activities ..... | (53)  | (55)  | (49)    |
| Own illness, disabled .....          | 8     | (10)  | (7)     |
| Retired, pensioners .....            | 14    | 19    | (7)     |

1) An estimate is quoted within brackets ( ) in the table if its standard deviation exceed 40 per cent of the estimate itself. The rules leaves all absolute quantity figures less than 8 000 and all annual averages less than 5 000 within brackets. The reliability indicates also applies for percentage figures. Here, however, the most unreliable estimates as replaced by colons :

Respondents in different cells of table 1 and 2 should preferably be analysed separately due to assumed disparities in attitudes towards labour force participation, job-seeking intentions, reasons for wanting or not wanting to participate, reasons for not seeking work/availability/requirements of potential job situations and requirements with regard to personal, family or institutional adjustments etc.

Another indicator of relationship to the labour force is information on whether the respondent has tried to get a job during a reasonable period of time, for instance during the last 12 months. When conscripts are left out, about 4 per cent of the persons outside the labour force in the fourth quarter of 1976 had actually tried to get a job during the last 12 months or since leaving the last job.

In the following analysis we have tried - as far as the size of the sample makes possible - to keep apart persons in qualitatively different life situations. We have considered several indicators of labour force attachment separately and to some degree looked at the relation between a few of them. Finally we have examined table showing gross flows of persons between different states being outside the labour force and in the labour force. This is to illustrate the actual labour market behaviour of groups with different values on some of the "attachment variables" and thus give an indication of the predictive validity of some of these variables.

### 3.2. Attitudes to paid employment

We assume that there are persons outside the labour force who want to work and are available for work as well as persons who want to work, but are not immediately available. Persons in these categories do not actively look for work or they do not look in such a way that they are counted among the registered unemployed or in the LFSS as job seekers. Conceptually the categories are ambiguous and difficult to relate to reasonable definitions of a labour supply concept. We especially want to emphasize the relativity and highly subjective nature of the "availability" concept.

The former group (those who want a job and are available for work) fits closely a common definition of a category called "discouraged workers".

The number of persons who in the 4th quarter of 1976 said that they would like to have a job or were in need of a job, correspond to about 200 thousand persons out of a total of about one million persons outside the labour force. In other words: about one fifth of the persons outside the labour force aged 16-74 wanted a job or were in need of a job by this measure. This is a considerable proportion. But still four fifths of the persons outside the labour force did not consider themselves as wanting or needing a job. The proportion who wanted a job varied considerably with stated main activity during the survey week. Variation with age is found for women in housework only, where more than forty per cent of persons aged 16-49 wanted a job, compared to only 15 per cent of those over 50 (table 3).

Table 3. Proportion of those outside the labour force who wanted a job, classified by sex, age and main activity during the survey week, Per cent. 1976, 4th quarter<sup>1)</sup>

|                           | Total |       |       |       | Males |       |       |       | Females |       |       |       |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|                           | Total | 16-74 | 25-49 | 50-74 | Total | 16-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 | Total   | 16-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 |
| Total .....               | 22    | 24    | 36    | 14    | 20    | 21    | 23    | 20    | 23      | 26    | 38    | 12    |
| Housework .....           | 29    | 44    | 39    | 15    | :     | :     | :     | :     | 29      | 44    | 39    | 15    |
| At school .....           | 18    | 18    | 16    | :     | 18    | 19    | 8     | :     | 18      | 18    | :     | :     |
| Without work .....        | 64    | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :       | :     | :     | :     |
| Other activities .        | 31    | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :     | :       | :     | :     | :     |
| Own illness .....         | 24    | :     | :     | 14    | 25    | :     | :     | :     | 24      | :     | :     | 13    |
| Disabled .....            | 13    | :     | 11    | 13    | 17    | :     | :     | 19    | 8       | :     | :     | 8     |
| Retired, pensioners ..... | 13    | :     | :     | 13    | 19    | :     | :     | 18    | 6       | :     | :     | 6     |

1) See footnote 1, table 2.

Women with housekeeping as their main activity constituted about 44 per cent of all persons outside the labour force. Almost 30 per cent in this category said that they wanted a job or were in need of a job. About 80 per cent of the women in the middle age group, 25-49 years, stated housekeeping as their main activity. In this category about two fifths said that they wanted a job.

The data also demonstrate a certain interest in labour force participation among the retired and among persons who state "own illness", "unable to work" or "going to school" as their main activity during the survey week. We know too little about the premises upon which the persons based their answers. It may well be that those who were "ill", "unable" or "school attendants" presupposed a change in their personal situation (for instance their health condition). These problems are to be illuminated in a future survey.

### 3.3. Intentions and time perspectives

We have two additional indicators of future labour force attachment. They are the answers to questions about job seeking intentions and about how soon the persons would like to start working. The latter indicator in particular is well suited to sort out persons who obviously do not want to start working "now". We cannot tell by this indicator, however, if persons who say that they want to start working "now" are actually able to do so, which would mean that they are in fact more easily available to/closer to the labour market than persons who want to start working later.

When we exclude persons with "going to school" as their main activity, only one third of all persons who wanted a job said that they believed they would actually try to get a job during the first twelve months. One fifth answered "don't know" or did not answer the question. Among married women with housekeeping as their main activity, about 28 per cent of those who wanted a job said that they would try to get a job during the next twelve months.

When persons "going to school" are kept out, we thus find that less than 10 per cent of the persons outside the labour force both wanted a job and believed they would try to get a job during the next twelve months.

Persons aged 16-19 who stated "going to school" as their main activity, were not asked whether they would like to start working "now" or at a later date. Among the other persons not in the labour force who wanted a job, almost two fifths declared that they want a job "now".

Almost half of those who wanted a job and believed that they would look for work during the next twelve months, said that they wanted a job "now". But there are also a good one third of those who did not believe they would look for work, who reported that they wanted a job "now". These persons possibly experienced motivational conflicts and/or other barriers against job-seeking - for instance that the labour market available to them did not suit their minimum claims or preferences.

Among married women with housekeeping as their main activity and job-seeking intentions almost 30 per cent wanted to start working "now" and an additional 14 per cent within a month.

Excluding persons 16-19 years old who were "going to school", we found that a good five per cent of the persons outside the labour force wanted a job and wanted to start working "now", and actually intended to try to get a job during the next twelve months.

The data show that a great majority of persons who said that they wanted a job had a long term perspective on their wishes and could not be expected to be found among the registered unemployed or employed persons in the near future.

### 3.4. Availability for work

#### 3.4.1. The availability concept

Immediate availability for work is a crucial requirement of the most common measures of unemployment and in the so called ILO-guidelines of 1954. The conclusions of the previous chapter and the relationship between the registered unemployment and the "hidden unemployment" is best understood in the light of this concept. The concept of availability, however, is not easy to define neither theoretically nor operationally and a definition is not given in either of the two "official" concepts of unemployment used in Norway.

A tentative definition of the term may be as follows:

A person is available for work when there are at least one job within a reasonable travelling distance which the person can fill and is willing to have.

By "willing to have" is meant that the job characteristics and the costs involved in having the job meet the person's minimum requirements. By "can fill" is meant that the person possesses the experience and the physical, psychological and educational qualifications required to fill the job. The job must also be compatible with the persons total life situation.

Operationally it is possible to determine a persons "availability" in two different ways: a "paternalistic" way in which a researcher or the "authorities" make the judgement - based on the person's objective characteristics - that a person is or is not to be considered available for the labour market; the alternative is to use the person's own evaluation of his or her availability.

"Situational characteristics" as mentioned in chapter 3.1. may form a basis for a "paternalistic" judgement. In the special survey, however, considerable emphasis was put on the persons' subjective definitions of their situations. Answers to questions about perceived barriers and job requirements was considered essential to judgements of their availability.

We shall below make some brief comments based on three sequences of questions in the special survey:

- a a question about the persons' own appraisal of their employability within what they consider an acceptable commuting distance.
- b questions about the degree to which selected conditions were regarded as barriers to labour market participation.
- c questions about the persons' requirements concerning characteristics of potential jobs.

#### 3.4.2. Appraisal at own employability

In one question the respondents were asked if they believed it necessary to move to another place to find a suitable job. A total of about 6 per cent of persons outside the labour force (excluding 16-19 years olds "going to school") answered "yes" to this question. This percentage is more than doubled when we focus on those who said that they wanted a job and it is as high as 16 per cent in the group that wanted a job and thought that they would try to get a job sometime during the next twelve months. A total of 30 per cent "didn't know" or didn't reply to the question, which partly reflects a certain distance to the labour market as the proportion of "don't know"/no reply is especially high among those who reported that they did not want a job. Among those who wanted a job and stated "lack of suitable jobs available" as their main reason for not trying to get a job, one out of four considered it would be necessary to move to get a job and 13 per cent didn't know or didn't reply.

### 3.4.3. Barriers to labour market participations

In the special survey one sequence of questions was put to all persons outside the labour force asking for an evaluation of the effect of a selected set of conditions on the possibility of their taking a job. According to information based on these questions it was found that the evaluation of each condition varied considerably between groups defined by whether they wanted a job or not and their reported main reasons for not trying to get a job. This result reflects the heterogeneity of the group "persons outside the labour force" and those who "wanted a job" with respect to their life situations and the elements in these that keep them outside the labour force.

"Own illness" was mentioned by about one out of four of the total number of persons outside the labour force as a condition making it "very difficult" to take a job, but only by 12 per cent of the persons who wanted a job but did not seek work due to lack of suitable jobs available. Lack of suitable jobs available was considered a major difficulty by more than one fourth, also among those who wanted a job but reported other reasons than lack of suitable work as the main reason for not trying to get a job. Almost half of those who wanted a job but could not find a suitable job believed that lack of education or experience would make it very difficult to get a job. This belief was much less widespread in the group that wanted a job, but were stating other main reasons for not seeking work, and it was even more rare among the persons who did not want a job. The presence of small children constituted a major problem for almost one third of those who wanted a job and mentioned other conditions than lack of suitable work as the main reason for not seeking work.

The effect of the variable "main reason for not trying to get a job for the survey week" on the reported probability of job seeking within the next twelve months varied considerably by the labour market experience of the persons. Among persons with recent work experience the proportion was largest (63 per cent) when other reasons than lack of suitable jobs available were stated as the main reason for not seeking work. The opposite was the case when the labour market experience was less recent and among persons with no experience at all. The lowest proportion with job seeking intentions was found among persons with labour market experience older than twelve months and other reasons than labour market conditions as the main reason for not seeking work for the reference week.

The proportion among those who wanted a job that would like to start working at once was much larger in the group that reported lack of suitable jobs available than in the group with other reasons for not seeking work. This holds regardless of their main activity/situation during the survey week. The difference was least in the largest group: married women with housework as their main activity.

### 3.4.4. Demands on a potential job

Almost half of those who wanted a job reported that they wanted a permanent job. Among married houseworking women the proportion was almost 60 per cent. The proportion was high in all groups except among those reporting "unable to work" or "retired" as their main situation during the survey week.

A sequence of questions was asked to get information about the preferences with regard to job characteristics among the persons who responded positively to one or more of the subjective indicators of labour market attachment. The answers give information on preferences for indoor/outdoor work, preferences with regard to location and regularity of working hours and maximum acceptable commuting time.

About one tenth of the persons reported no special preferences regarding any of these conditions. More than 60 per cent expressed special preferences on two or more. Preferences concerning length, location of and regularity of working hours proved to be of great importance. About half of the persons wanted neither to work outside regular hours nor to work at irregular hours or in shifts.

The proportion with multiple preferences was largest in the group with other reasons for not seeking work than lack of suitable jobs available. As expected we found a negative relationship between the number of preference and the proportion with job seeking intentions.

The results from this survey clearly demonstrates that there in all groups of persons are multiple factors behind the observed lack of current job seeking activity as well as different expectations as to their future relations with the labour market; and that the strength of the various "participation barriers" varies considerably between persons classified by whether they want a job or not and by their main reason for not trying to get one.

### 3.5. Actual labour market behaviour of persons not in the labour force ("gross flows")

The actual behaviour of persons outside the labour force - especially with respect to employment - is both an important set of information about the groups identified from other considerations and a possible point of departure for additional classifications for this groups. This is particularly relevant if the forecast of the number of future labour market entrants is one of the aims of the survey. We have - on the basis of the panel design of the Norwegian LFSS - made some tables showing the activities of the persons who in the surveys of 1977 were classified as outside the labour force - one quarter and one year later. The main results are given in table 4. Similar tables have also been constructed for those who were employed and those who were unemployed.

It can be seen from the table that a significant proportion of those outside the labour force in 1977 - more than 10 per cent - had in fact transferred to the labour force after three months, and after one year this proportion was 20 per cent. The proportions transferring from outside to inside the labour force differed between groups defined by age or the persons' initial situations much as can be expected from a priori reasoning. The proportions also increased from the three months period to the period of one year for all groups, except those of the age group 50-74 years and those of the persons who were disabled, pensioned, or retired. (The latter group is of course to a large extent part of the former.)

It is interesting to note that the answers to the questions on whether or not those outside the labour force want work without seeking do seem to reflect genuine differences in the prevalence of attitudes towards paid employment as judged by subsequent behaviour. The proportion who had entered the labour force three months or one year later was significantly higher among those who responded positively to these questions than among the others. However, the results from these questions cannot function as a predictor for the number of new entrants into the labour force - at least not within a year's time - as the number of new entrants from those who responded positively to the questions was only about one third of those who did not. The proportion of persons transferring to the labour force after three months was slightly higher among those who claimed lack of suitable work available as the reason for not seeking work than among those claiming other reasons, but it was lower after one year. This seems to indicate that the labour market obstacles to employment for the individual may be less easy to remove (or adapt to) than the difficulties mainly due to the domestic or personal situation of the individual.

Table 4. Persons not in the labour force in 1977 by activity one quarter and one year later. Per cent<sup>1)</sup>

|   | Persons not in the labour force, total | Situation                   |                           |                         |                             | Do not want paid employment | Want work without seeking |                       |               | Age         |             |             |             |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|   |  | Disabled, pensioned/retired | Engaged in own house-work | Attended school/studied | Engaged in other activities |                             | Total                     | Lack of suitable work | Other reasons | 16-24 years | 25-49 years | 50-66 years | 67-74 years |
| Total number of persons not in the labour force ..... | 993000                                 | 294000                      | 460000                    | 203000                  | 36000                       | 847000                      | 146000                    | 64000                 | 82000         | 254000      | 256000      | 260000      | 222000      |
|   |  |                             |                           |                         |                             |                             | Per cent                  |                       |               |             |             |             |             |
| Activity one quarter later ..                         | 100                                    | 100                         | 100                       | 100                     | 100                         | 100                         | 100                       | 100                   | 100           | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         |
| Employed .....  | 11                                     | 4                           | 11                        | 16                      | 34                          | 9                           | 19                        | 21                    | 17            | 16          | 15          | 7           | 3           |
| Workinghours per week/in the survey week              |  |                             |                           |                         |                             |                             |                           |                       |               |             |             |             |             |
| 30 hours and more ..                                  | 5                                      | (1)                         | 3                         | 8                       | 25                          | 4                           | 8                         | (8)                   | 8             | 9           | 6           | (2)         | (1)         |
| 1-29 hours  | 5                                      | 2                           | 6                         | 7                       | (3)                         | 5                           | 9                         | 12                    | 7             | 6           | 7           | 4           | (2)         |
| Non employed persons seeking work                     | 1                                      | (0)                         | (1)                       | 3                       | (3)                         | 1                           | (3)                       | (4)                   | (2)           | 3           | (1)         | (0)         | (0)         |
| Not in the labour force                               | 88                                     | 96                          | 89                        | 81                      | 63                          | 90                          | 79                        | 75                    | 81            | 80          | 84          | 93          | 97          |
| Attended school/studied ...                           | 17                                     | (0)                         | 1                         | 76                      | (7)                         | 23                          | 17                        | 10                    | 21            | 57          | 7           | (0)         | (0)         |
| Engaged in own house-work .....                       | 42                                     | 13                          | 80                        | 3                       | (3)                         | 61                          | 58                        | 60                    | 57            | 14          | 69          | 56          | 24          |
| Other activities ..                                   | 30                                     | 83                          | 8                         | (2)                     | 53                          | 6                           | 4                         | (5)                   | (3)           | 10          | 8           | 37          | 73          |
| Want work without seeking .....                       | 12                                     | (2)                         | 18                        | 13                      | (6)                         | 8                           | 46                        | 48                    | 45            | 13          | 22          | 8           | (1)         |
| Activity one year later ....                          | 100                                    | 100                         | 100                       | 100                     | 100                         | 100                         | 100                       | 100                   | 100           | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         |
| Employed .....  | 19                                     | 3                           | 16                        | 37                      | 65                          | 17                          | 32                        | 29                    | 35            | 37          | 25          | 7           | 3           |
| Workinghours per week/in the survey week              |  |                             |                           |                         |                             |                             |                           |                       |               |             |             |             |             |
| 30 hours and more ...                                 | 10                                     | (1)                         | 5                         | 24                      | 55                          | 9                           | 15                        | 10                    | 18            | 25          | 10          | (2)         | (1)         |
| 1-29 hours .  | 7                                      | (2)                         | 10                        | 9                       | (5)                         | 8                           | 15                        | 16                    | 14            | 10          | 13          | 4           | (2)         |
| Non-employed persons seeking work ...                 | 1                                      | (0)                         | (1)                       | 3                       | (4)                         | (1)                         | (3)                       | (4)                   | (3)           | 4           | (1)         | (0)         | (0)         |
| Not in the labour force                               | 79                                     | 96                          | 83                        | 60                      | 31                          | 81                          | 64                        | 67                    | 62            | 59          | 74          | 93          | 97          |
| Attended school/studied ...                           | 13                                     | (0)                         | (1)                       | 51                      | (15)                        | 16                          | 13                        | 11                    | 15            | 41          | 5           | (0)         | (0)         |
| Engaged in own house-work .....                       | 40                                     | 15                          | 74                        | 4                       | (3)                         | 58                          | 47                        | 51                    | 44            | 11          | 63          | 56          | 28          |
| Other activities .....                                | 27                                     | 81                          | 8                         | 5                       | (14)                        | 7                           | 4                         | (5)                   | (4)           | 7           | 6           | 36          | 69          |
| Want work without seeking .....                       | 10                                     | 3                           | 15                        | 9                       | (2)                         | 9                           | 29                        | 31                    | 27            | 10          | 19          | 8           | (1)         |

1) See footnote 1, table 2.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The work referred to above has of course only strengthened the view that it is very difficult - both conceptually and as the basis of the results from a LFSS - to draw a firm and clear line between those who are inside the labour force during a period and those who are outside. The relationship to paid employment span more or less continuously from those persons who are firmly established as full day/full year workers to those who from choice or circumstance never will engage in paid employment. Consequently it is not very meaningful to regard those outside the labour force as one homogeneous group - for example when trying to identify "discouraged workers" or "possible labour market entrants". Classifications like these may only have meaningful interpretations when referring to sub-groups of population groups defined as consisting of persons having similar situational circumstances - i.e. housewife, students, pensioners etc.

In the short run these results have led to some changes in the ordinary LFSS. It is now possible to make the distinction between labour market and domestic and personal conditions serving as obstacles to active jobsearch (cfr. table 4); the screening has been removed and there has been added a question on how soon paid work can be started - a question to those outside the labour force who state that they need/would like to have suitable paid employment. This question is designed to make it possible to identify a group of "discouraged workers" who are fulfilling the same conditions as those classified as unemployed, except that they have not bothered to apply for non-existent work.

In the longer run, these results will influence the major rethinking of the Norwegian LFSS which we shall undertake in the early 1980's, as a consequence of the establishment of a new system of administratively based statistics on employees. The main functions of the LFSS and supplementary surveys will then be

- to serve as controls of the results from the administratively based statistics - both at the individual and the group level;
- to be a source of aggregate information on those groups which are not covered by the administratively based statistics;
- to be a source of information on groups outside the labour force, and their relationship to the labour market especially;
- to be a source of information on variables not obtainable from administrative sources, for persons both inside and outside the labour force.

Presently, we believe that when revised, the LFSS should be designed as a survey on time use - covering all major activities of all respondents during the reference week as well as the respondents' relationship to the labour market, both in terms of past experiences and acts and in terms of attitudes and expectations. This approach shall, we hope, enable us both to satisfy the requirements of the ILO-definitions and meet the needs of a wide range of labour market studies requiring other definitions. However, detailed work along these lines cannot start until 1981.

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