

WHAT IS THE BEST MEASURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN IRELAND?

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Abstract

The paper develops a framework to be applied in the Labour Force Surveys for the measurement of labour force aggregates according to international recommendations. While applying the international recommendations undoubtedly simplifies the task of making comparisons between the labour market situation in different countries, the proposed framework also appears to have presentational and analytical advantages over the approach used hitherto in Ireland. The distinction between work and unemployment and between full-time and part-time work appears to have a much sharper focus. A number of population groups which could be targeted for specific labour market policy measures are separately identified. While the overall levels of employment and unemployment are broadly similar under both approaches, it will be shown that unemployment rates for married females may in reality be two and a half times the levels which can be calculated from the Labour Force Survey reports at present while male unemployment rates may be two to three percentage points lower. The views expressed in the paper are personal and do not necessarily reflect an official CSO position.

Introduction

From their comments it is evident that many economic analysts are of the view that *work* and *unemployment* are completely transparent concepts with no associated measurement problems. The common perception of a person "with a job", "at work" or "in employment" is someone working full-time for perhaps a five day week. Conversely, an unemployed person would be popularly perceived as having no work and in receipt of Unemployment Benefit or Assistance. Furthermore, some analysts who do not fully understand the measurement complexities will often engage in complicated mental gymnastics to try and put an interpretation on quite small changes in estimates of very large aggregates. Those who are involved in formulating questions to measure the number of persons at work or unemployed quickly learn, however, that the underlying concepts are far from transparent.

Recent years have seen considerable changes in working conditions with increasing availability of part-time work, temporary work, career breaks, work

sharing and so on. These developments have increased the blurring of the boundaries between work and unemployment. An additional complication has been the veritable explosion in recent years of a whole range of special State employment and training schemes where participants themselves may have genuine difficulties in deciding whether they are at work or unemployed.

Using data from the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) from 1983 to 1986 this paper examines the extent to which the traditional rigid distinction between work and unemployment may no longer hold. Different measures of labour force aggregates and unemployment rates are presented and discussed, in this context the concept of underemployment is also considered. The detailed analysis of the structure of unemployment identifies more clearly the population groups which might be targeted for special labour market measures.

As an official Statistician I must hastily point out that the question asked in the title of the paper is *not* meant to suggest that the currently published measures of employment/unemployment are in any way unreal or invalid. The purpose is rather to alert users of the data to the fact that quite different measures can be obtained depending on the approach or concepts used. The time may well be opportune to broaden our traditional approach to the measurement of employment and unemployment in Ireland. I hope that the discussion and subsequent reaction to the paper will help us all to better understand the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various alternative measures which might be used to replace or complement the current statistics.

Labour Force Estimates – Historical Approach

At the outset I think it is best to set the present measures of labour force aggregates in Ireland in their historical context. Labour force estimates compiled up to the mid 1970's were based on the periodic stocktaking counts given by the Census of Population. The estimates for intercensal and postcensal years were based on interpolations using the range of relevant indicators available at the time. In general, the Census-based labour force estimates were derived from the respondents' statements of their "usual principal occupation" in conjunction with a description of the "employment status" and the name and nature of business of the employer.

Being just one of many topics to be covered in a Census, the number of questions devoted to establishing the labour force status is of necessity very limited. Furthermore, since the Census questionnaire is designed for self-completion by the public the content and wording has to be relatively simple and easily understood by all sections of the population. Thus complicated filtering procedures which are possible when trained interviewers are used, are totally out of place in the Census. However, it is also probably fair to say that the labour market of even 10/15 years ago was considerably less complex than in recent years and, therefore, more capable of measurement by fairly simple questions.

Based on the subjective information in respect of the *usual* situation given on the Census questionnaire each person was classified to being either “gainfully occupied” or “not gainfully occupied”, the latter category consisting of those who were deemed to be inactive in the context of the labour force. Each gainfully occupied person was further classified as being either “at work” or “unemployed”.

The traditional presentation of labour force aggregates in this manner takes no cognisance (simply because no measures were available) of the possibility of people being

- (a) partly inactive and partly at work,
- (b) partly inactive and partly unemployed,
- (c) partly at work and partly unemployed

It maintains and accentuates the impression of a rigid distinction between those in the labour force and inactive persons and also between work and unemployment. In this regard the approach in Ireland, although lagging behind countries such as Australia, Canada and USA, has been no different to that followed in many other countries.

The increased blurring at the fringes of what are presented as (and largely perceived to be) mutually exclusive labour force conditions suggests that a fresh approach may now be necessary. The question I wish to address is whether labour force profiles can be presented in an alternative format more amenable to useful analysis for manpower or general economic policy purposes.

Labour Force Surveys

Over the past few years many countries have increasingly based their labour force estimates on the results of Labour Force Surveys (LFS). In Ireland such surveys have been carried out in 1975, 1977, 1979 and annually since 1983 according to a consistent EEC-wide basis. The Irish LFS is a large sample household survey carried out on an annual basis in April/May and covering about 45,000 households.

In contrast to the self-completion approach used in the Census the LFS is carried out by a team of specially trained interviewers. This approach allows a carefully inter-linked set of detailed questions to be included on the questionnaire from which valuable structural information on employment and unemployment can be compiled. The LFS can be used to produce labour force estimates using two radically different basic approaches:

- based on the responses given to a question on the *usual situation with regard to employment* (Q11 on the LFS questionnaire) and frequently referred to as the *Principal Economic Status (PES)* of respondents
- or alternatively based on the person's *situation last week* as indicated at Q17 and investigated in detail in subsequent questions

The official mid-April labour force estimates for 1975 and subsequent years are based on the LFS usual Principal Economic Status details (at the 1981 and 1986 Censuses respondents were similarly presented with a range of PES options in a tick-box style question) This approach was adopted because it was very close to the traditional Census-based approach used prior to the LFS – thereby ensuring reasonable continuity with the information available up to then

The classification by usual principal economic status is based largely on each respondent's assessment of his or her circumstances and although certain coding rules are applied, it is mainly subjective There are inevitably some weaknesses in this approach arising mainly from the time period which different respondents might envisage as being appropriate to the word "usual" How, for example, would a respondent with a long continuous employment record who becomes unemployed shortly prior to being interviewed in the LFS react to the question? Is the question answered consistently by women whose main role is that of homemaker but who nevertheless engage in part-time work or perhaps who are looking for work? These practical considerations make it very difficult to frame additional meaningful questions to explore in greater depth the usual situation with regard to a person's labour force status The labour force aggregates estimated on the basis of the LFS usual principal economic status question are contained in Tables 1A – 1E for males, single/widowed females, married/separated females, females and total persons, respectively

By concentrating attention on a short precise recent period it is possible to meaningfully analyse the labour force status of LFS respondents in far more depth Thus, there are a whole range of questions (Nos 17–49 on the 1986 LFS) which probe the situation *last week* (i.e. the week prior to the interview) For persons working in the week prior to interview there are, for example, questions on the type of work, the hours worked, if more than one job held, whether the respondent was looking for another job and if so, why, etc For persons not working in the week before the survey there are other questions on the reasons for not working, previous work experience, whether looking for work, the type of work sought, whether available for work, etc Therefore, a much more detailed picture of the labour force status can be established than is possible using only the respondents' subjective self-assessment of their usual situation

International Recommendations

In the late 1970's the continued relevance of traditional measures of labour force aggregates was increasingly debated internationally It was accepted that the concepts of employment and unemployment required clarification and various proposals were made to more rigorously define them In the United States, where a range of unemployment rates are published each month, the National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics published a

report "*Counting the Labour Force*" in 1979. In Ireland the "Report of the Interdepartmental Study Group on Unemployment Statistics", published in April 1979, proposed that more precise definitions of employment and unemployment should be formulated for use in the Labour Force Surveys. The OECD working party on employment and unemployment statistics discussed various labour force concepts in depth. Finally, the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians meeting under the auspices of the International Labour Office (ILO) in Geneva in October, 1982 agreed a "*Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment*".

The Resolution, which was adopted as the international standard in 1983, superseded earlier standards agreed in 1954 and 1966. The following are the main definitional features of the Resolution.

- (1) The economically active population was described in paragraph 5 in the context of the production of economic goods and services as defined for the system of national accounts. The economically active population includes persons who fulfil the requirements for inclusion among the employed or the unemployed.
- (2) While the Resolution mentions two approaches towards measuring the economically active population (*viz* the *usually active* population and the *currently active* population) it is evident that the definitions and tests of employment and unemployment subsequently specified can be more usefully and rigorously applied when the concept used is the currently active population, also referred to as the *labour force*.
- (3) Priority classification is accorded in the Resolution to the concept of *employment*. Persons in employment are those who during a brief reference period were *at work for at least one hour* for a wage or salary, profit or family gain. Also to be included among those in employment are persons with a job/enterprise who were temporarily not at work during the reference period due to certain circumstances (i.e. holidays, parental leave, illness, strike, etc.). Thus persons who are mainly engaged in non-economic activities (students, homemakers, etc.) during the reference period are classified as employed if they satisfy this basic minimum work criterion.
- (4) The concept of *unemployment* is defined to comprise persons who during the brief reference period were
 - (a) **without work** i.e. they could not satisfy the basic minimum criterion for classification as employed,
 - (b) **available for work** i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the period, and

- (c) **actively seeking work** i.e. had taken specific steps in a specified recent period
- (5) The concept of *underemployment* is defined to exist when a person's employment was inadequate either because of an insufficiency in the volume of employment (visible underemployment), or where because of a misallocation of labour resources there was under-utilisation of skill, etc (invisible underemployment) The Resolution recognises that for operational reasons the statistical measurement of underemployment was likely to be confined to visible underemployment
- (6) In section 12(2) the Resolution gingerly touches on the concept of *discouragement* where it is recognised that persons who may want to work and are available for work may nevertheless not be seeking work (perhaps because of local labour market difficulties!)

Comments on the ILO Recommendations

The casual reader might easily come to the conclusion (although the subsequent evidence produced in the paper does not really bear this out at least in the Irish context!) that the ILO recommendations must have been heavily influenced by Politicians with a wish to measure employment and unemployment in such a way as to minimise derived unemployment rates. After all, persons who are mainly engaged in non-economic activities are included among the employed on satisfying a very weak work criterion, while, for example, persons laid off for a few weeks who consider it futile to look for an alternative job locally may be excluded from the unemployed since the active job search criterion is not satisfied

Section 10(2) of the Resolution allows a certain flexibility in that the job search criterion might be relaxed in certain circumstances. The opinion has been expressed at Conferences that this flexibility might be appropriate only in the case of developing countries. However, the long recession has given rise to a situation where labour absorption is inadequate in many regions of the industrialised countries, if not on a continuing basis at least on a seasonal basis. Statisticians and labour market analysts would in my view do well to avoid an ostrich-like approach to the phenomenon of discouragement

Labour force aggregates are analysed not only at national level, but also increasingly by international agencies (EUROSTAT, OECD, ILO, etc) for the purpose of making international comparisons. I personally think that it is unfortunate that in such comparisons the focus is essentially on the unemployment rate, since this type of analysis provides no information on the differing national structures of part-time working, underemployment or discouragement (although over the years the OECD Employment Outlook has addressed these issues in a number of interesting analyses)

I am convinced that a very sound theoretical framework for thoroughly analysing labour force aggregates both in the national and international contexts can be elaborated on the basis of the Resolution – provided that the impact of part-time working, underemployment and discouragement are not ignored

Application of the International Standards in Ireland

As already outlined the official mid-April labour force estimates for 1975 and subsequent years are based on subjective respondent answers to the usual Principal Economic Status (PES) question in the LFS. Over a relatively short timespan in the late 1970's and early 1980's Irish labour force estimates were revised on a number of separate occasions. There was, therefore, a real and very justifiable concern that the introduction of a completely new approach with the consequential revision of recently changed figures would run the risk of bringing the statistics into disrepute. From this point of view the timing of the ILO Resolution was not very convenient for Ireland and this was the main reason why the application of the international standards has not been addressed publicly up to now.

Over the past few years there have been many discussions at OECD/EUROSTAT on the question of comparable unemployment rates. The OECD has been gradually extending its calculation of standardised unemployment rates (SURs) and is at present considering the Irish data. Within the past few weeks EUROSTAT has published comparable unemployment rates for EEC countries. The time may now be opportune, therefore, to expand the presentation of the annual labour force aggregates and the remainder of the paper develops a framework which might be used to present these aggregates in future.

The key questions in the LFS for classifying persons as being in employment, unemployed or not economically active in the context of the international recommendations are:

Question 17 which is the first step in establishing whether the respondent should be classified as being in employment in the reference week

Question 38 which identifies those respondents not in employment who might satisfy the job search criterion for classification among the unemployed

Question 44 which distinguishes between active and passive job search

Question 45 which identifies those respondents looking for work who are also available for work within the following two weeks

The replies to these questions can be crossclassified to establish whether, for example

- persons in employment are in full-time or part-time employment,
- persons in part-time employment are underemployed,
- unemployed persons are seeking full-time or part-time work,
- persons who are not economically active satisfy at least some of the criteria for classification among the unemployed, etc

For persons aged 15 years or over I propose to develop a framework consistent with the international recommendations which would present the following labour force groupings on a regular basis

In Employment

- Full-time
- Part-time but not underemployed
- Part-time and underemployed

Unemployed

- Seeking full-time work
- Seeking part-time work

Not Economically Active

- Marginally attached to the labour force
 - Lay-Offs not looking for work
 - Discouraged workers
 - Available and passively seeking full-time work
 - Available and passively seeking part-time work
- Other persons not economically active

I will define these categories in terms of combinations of replies to the relevant LFS questions

Persons at Work

I examined nine population groups among those who indicated that they were at work for at least 1 hour in the reference week – i.e. those for whom code 1

was recorded at Q17. These categories, defined according to various reply combinations to subsequent questions, are listed in Table A.

Group 1 contains persons who worked full-time in the reference week either in a principal regular job or in an occasional or seasonal job. This group poses no classification problem, being clearly in full-time employment.

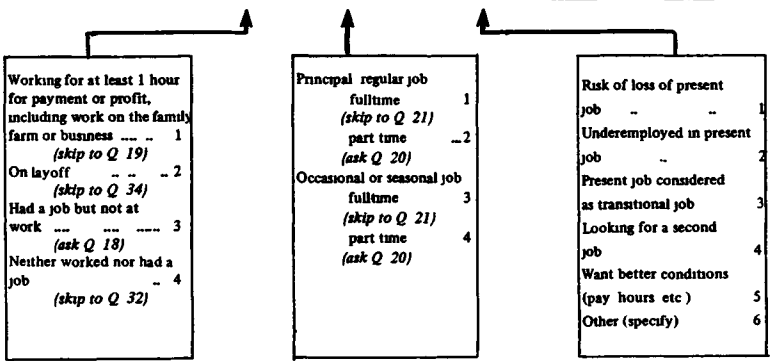
Groups 2-9 relate to persons who worked in a part-time job in the reference week. Persons in part-time employment have to be analysed in greater detail to identify those whose part-time employment is involuntary and who may, therefore, be underemployed. To be classified as underemployed, such persons will be required to satisfy jobsearch and availability tests.

Group 2 contains persons who were not looking for work, who were clearly in part-time employment by choice and who cannot, therefore, be considered to be underemployed. I would expect that this type of employment might be mainly characterised by married women.

Group 3 contains persons who were looking for full-time work and who indicated that they were available within two weeks. Although according to the international recommendations such persons are in employment, they are also quite clearly underemployed. Persons in *Group 4* are similar to those in *Group 3* with the exception that they are not immediately available for work because they cannot leave the present job immediately. Presumably this group have certain minimum notice requirements attaching to leaving their present job and will be treated as underemployed. *Group 5* on the other hand give what I will describe as inactive reasons for not being available for full-time work. Persons in this group are at work part-time by choice and, therefore, are not underemployed.

Table A Persons at work in the reference week further classified on the basis of responses to other LFS questions

| Population Subgroup | What was person's employment situation last week? <i>(Show card)</i> | Would person describe this job as his/her Principal regular job and as full-time or part time? <i>(insert appropriate code see below)</i> | Is person looking for another job? Yes. 1 <i>(ask Q 31)</i> No. 2 <i>(skip to Q 50)</i> | Why is person looking for another job? <i>(Show card)</i> <i>(skip to Q 39)</i> | Is person looking for full-time or part time work? full-time 1 <i>(ask Q 41)</i> part-time 2 <i>(skip to Q 42)</i> | Would person accept a fulltime job if part time work could not be found? Yes .. 1 No 2 | Is person available for work immediately <i>(i.e. within two weeks)?</i> Yes 1 <i>(skip to Q 47)</i> No 2 <i>(ask Q 46)</i> | Why is person not available immediately? Must complete education 1 Cannot leave present job immediately 2 Personal responsibilities 3 Illness, incapacity 4 Other (specify) 5 |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | Q 17 | Q 19 | Q 30 | Q 31 | Q 40 | Q 42 | Q 45 | Q 46 |
| 1 Working in a fulltime job | 1 | 13 | | | | | | |
| Working part time | | | | | | | | |
| 2 - Not looking for work | 1 | 24 | 2 | | | | | |
| 3 - Looking and available for fulltime work | 1 | 24 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | |
| 4 - Looking for fulltime work but not available immediately for work reasons | 1 | 24 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 2 |
| 5 - Looking for fulltime work but not available immediately for inactive reasons | 1 | 24 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 1 3 4,5 |
| 6 - Looking and available for a second part-time job | 1 | 24 | 1 | 4 | 2 | | 1 | |
| 7 - Looking and available for part-time work willing to accept fulltime work | 1 | 24 | 1 | not 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 8 - Looking and available for part-time work only | 1 | 24 | 1 | not 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| 9 - Looking but not available for part-time work | 1 | 24 | 1 | | 2 | | 2 | |



Groups 6–9 relate to persons in part-time employment who indicate that they are looking for part-time work. Such persons might well be underemployed if the work sought is additional to their present work and if they satisfy the availability test at Q45.

Group 6 contains persons who are looking for a second job and who satisfy the availability test. Such persons are underemployed. Persons in *Group 7* indicate that, while they are looking for part-time work, they are nevertheless available and willing to accept full-time work and are, therefore, underemployed. Persons in *Group 8* are similar to those in *Group 7* except that they are unwilling to accept full-time work. Their answers at Q31 also suggest that they are looking for part-time work to replace the present part-time job rather than as an addition to it and therefore they are not underemployed. Finally, persons in *Group 9* who indicate that they are not available for work, will be treated as not being underemployed.

To summarise, persons at work in the reference week are all regarded as being in employment but are classified into the 3 categories

- (1) Full-time employment Group 1
- (2) Part-time employment but not underemployed Groups 2, 5, 8, 9
- (3) Part-time employment and underemployed Groups 3, 4, 6, 7

Persons on Lay-Off

Persons on lay-off will be coded 2 at Q17. The treatment of persons on lay-off in the international recommendations is rather vague. Such persons might be regarded as “with a job but not at work” and therefore eligible to be included among those in paid employment if they are adjudged to have a formal job attachment (ILO, para 9-a2). Indeed the original draft Resolution mentioned lay-offs specifically in this context¹. Such a treatment would, in my view, contradict common sense and would undermine the acceptability of what is otherwise a tight theoretical framework.

Users will expect that persons classified as unemployed should be in a weaker position due to the inadequacies of the labour market than persons classified as being in employment (the common sense test!). A respondent who was not at work in the reference week and was not looking for work because “I had found work which I am starting tomorrow” is classified quite correctly as unemployed (ILO, para 10-4). Such a respondent is clearly in a stronger position than a person on lay-off who is not looking for work because “I expect a recall from lay-off three weeks from now”. Consequently, the possibility of regarding persons on lay-off as being in employment should not be entertained unless they are getting paid while on lay-off and I doubt if this is ever the case. The final agreed Resolution deleted the reference to the possible inclusion of persons on lay-off among those in employment although there are those who will still argue the possibility under the revised wording.

Two labour force categories comprising laid-off persons are defined *Group 10* comprises those persons on lay-off who indicate that they are either looking for work or they are not looking as they have found a new job. Persons in this group are evidently unemployed.

Group 11 comprises those persons on lay-off who indicate that they are not looking for work either because they are awaiting recall from lay-off or otherwise. Such persons might fall to be considered under three paragraphs of the ILO Resolution, namely

- if the reason such persons are not looking for work is because the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance due to inadequate labour absorption then they might be classified as unemployed according to paragraph 10(2)
- under paragraph 10(5) countries may relax the job seeking criterion in the case of persons temporarily laid-off although such persons classified among the unemployed are to be identified as a separate subcategory
- finally under paragraph 12(2) countries adopting the standard definition of unemployment are asked to identify persons not classified as unemployed who were available for work but not seeking work and to classify them as a separate subcategory under the population not currently active

My personal view is that the jobsearch criterion in the International Standards should be the determining factor and accordingly I propose to classify persons in *Group 11* among those not economically active but marginally attached to the labour force. Persons marginally attached to the labour force should not be overlooked when considering the inadequacies of the labour market, information will be readily available on such persons under the proposed framework.

Persons with a job but not at work

Such persons are coded 3 at Q17. I originally examined nine groups of persons with a job who were not at work but since for every year certain of these were always zero I subsequently collapsed them into the six considered below. The categories, defined according to various reply combinations to subsequent questions, are listed in Table B.

Persons in *Group 12* are not at work but have a new job to start in the future and according to paragraph 10(4) of the international standards should be considered as unemployed. This group is so small that it does not merit any further disaggregation so I propose to include such persons as unemployed and seeking full-time work.

Persons for whom codes 2-9 are recorded at Q18 will be considered to be in employment in accordance with paragraphs 9(a2), 9(b2) and 9(3) of the

Resolution However, it is necessary to consider various subgroups of such persons to investigate whether some of them are underemployed *Group 13* contains persons who, though not at work, had a full-time job and were therefore in full-time employment *Group 14* contains persons with a part-time job who since they were not looking for work were not underemployed Persons in *Group 15* indicate that they are looking for full-time work and that they are available immediately This group is clearly in part-time employment but underemployed *Group 16* is similar to the previous group with the exception that persons in this group do not satisfy the availability test and therefore are not underemployed Persons with a part-time job and not at work in *Group 17* indicate that they are looking for part-time work only and will be included among those not underemployed – in the years examined this group exists to all intents in theory only

Table B Persons with a job but not at work in the reference week further classified on the basis of responses to other LFS questions

| Population Subgroup | What was person's employment situation last week? <i>(Show card)</i> | Why was person not working last week? <i>(Show card)</i> code 1 skip to Q 32 all others ask Q 19 | Would person describe this job as his/her Principal regular job and as full-time or part-time? <i>(insert appropriate code see below)</i> | Is person looking for another job? Yes 1 <i>(ask Q 31)</i> No 2 <i>(skip to Q 50)</i> | Is person looking for full time or part-time work? 1 <i>(ask Q 41)</i> 2 <i>(skip to Q 42)</i> | Is person available for work immediately <i>(i.e. within two weeks)?</i> Yes 1 <i>(skip to Q 47)</i> No 2 <i>(ask Q 46)</i> |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | Q 17 | Q 18 | Q 19 | Q 30 | Q 40 | Q 45 |
| 12 With a job but not at work as it is A new job to start in the future | 3 | 1 | | | | |
| 13 With a fulltime job but not at work for other reasons | 3 | 2-9 | 13 | | | |
| With a part time job not at work for other reasons and | | | | | | |
| 14 - Not looking for work | 3 | 2-9 | 24 | 2 | | |
| 15 - Looking and available for fulltime work | 3 | 2-9 | 24 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 - Looking but not available for fulltime work | 3 | 2-9 | 24 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 17 - Looking for part time work | 3 | 2-9 | 24 | 1 | 2 | |

| |
|--|
| Working for at least 1 hour for payment or profit including work on the family farm or business 1 <i>(skip to Q 19)</i> |
| On layoff 2 <i>(skip to Q 34)</i> |
| Had a job but not at work 3 <i>(ask Q 18)</i> |
| Neither worked nor had a job 4 <i>(skip to Q 32)</i> |

| |
|---|
| New job to start in the future 1 |
| Bad weather 2 |
| Slack work short-time 3 |
| Labour dispute 4 |
| Education or training outside the place of work 5 |
| Own illness or injury 6 |
| Maternity leave 7 |
| Holidays 8 |
| Other (specify) 9 |

| |
|---|
| Principal regular job - |
| fulltime 1 <i>(skip to Q 21)</i> |
| part time 2 <i>(ask Q 20)</i> |
| Occasional or seasonal job |
| fulltime 3 <i>(skip to Q 21)</i> |
| part time 4 <i>(ask Q 20)</i> |

Persons who neither worked nor had a job

These are persons coded 4 at Q17. I originally examined seventeen groups of persons who neither worked nor had a job in the reference week but subsequently collapsed them into the ten shown in Table C.

Groups 18–23 all indicated that they were looking for work. Persons in *Group 18* indicated that they had engaged in an active search for full-time work and that they were available immediately. This group are clearly unemployed and seeking full-time work. Persons in *Group 19* are very similar except that their jobsearch is passive. They will be included among those available and passively seeking full-time work in the population not economically active. Persons in *Group 20* are available for work and have engaged in an active jobsearch for part-time work. These will be included among those unemployed but seeking part-time work. Persons in *Group 21* are similar to those in *Group 20* except that their jobsearch activity is passive. They will be included among those available and passively seeking part-time work in the population not economically active. Persons without work and looking for work will have a blank at Q44 only if they have not yet started to look for work and consequently *Group 22* will be treated as not marginally attached to the labour force in the population not economically active. Persons in *Group 23* who although they say they are looking for work also indicate that they are not immediately available will also be treated as not marginally attached to the labour force in the population not economically active.

Persons in *Group 24* are not looking for work because they have either found a new job, are awaiting recall from lay-off or are awaiting the results of a public sector competition. The group is defined in this way for completeness and is largely dominated by persons who have found a new job, they have been included among those unemployed and seeking full-time work.

Persons in *Group 25* have indicated that they neither worked nor had a job in the reference week and that they were not looking for work. Yet when asked at Q48 whether they want a job they answer in the affirmative. Furthermore, at Q49 they give very plausible reasons for not engaging in an active jobsearch – they believe they lack the education, skills and experience to succeed in a highly competitive jobs market, they have formed the opinion that they are regarded as being too young or too old by employers, they have engaged in a futile jobsearch in the past and perhaps do not want to spend any more of their meagre resources on such futile jobsearch, or they just believe that no work is available. Although there are many strong reasons for including this group of *Discouraged Workers* fairly and squarely among the unemployed perhaps even using the notion of “inadequate labour absorption” in paragraph 10(2) of the Resolution, I consider that these should be included among those marginally attached to the labour force in the population not economically active. They should be actively considered when assessing the various subgroups affected by the inadequacies of the labour market – both at a national level and also in the context of international comparisons (Chapter 6 of the 1987 OECD

Employment Outlook contains an interesting analysis of some aspects relating to discouragement)

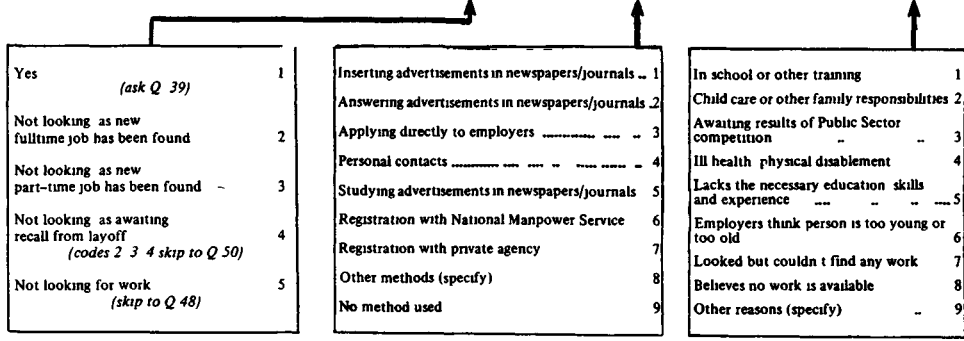
Persons in *Group 26* indicate that although they are not looking for work they want a job. The reasons for not looking given at Q49 however are what I refer to as inactive reasons suggesting that such persons are not really available for work. They will be included among those not marginally attached to the labour force in the population not economically active.

Finally, persons in *Group 27* neither worked nor had a job, were not looking for work and did not want a job. They are clearly not economically active and are not marginally attached to the labour force.

Table C Persons who neither worked or had a job in the reference week further classified on the basis of responses to other LFS questions

| Population Subgroup | What was person's employment situation last week? | Is person looking for work? - either full-time or part-time | Is person looking for full time or part-time work? - full-time 1 (ask Q 41) part-time 2 (skip to Q 42) | What is the main way person has looked for work in the last four weeks? (Show card) | Is person available for work immediately (i.e. within two weeks)? Yes 1 (skip to Q 47) No 2 (ask Q 46) | Does person want a job? Yes 1 (Ask Q 49) No 2 (Skip to Q 50) | Which of the following reasons best describes why person is not seeking work? (Show card) |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Q 17 | Q 38 | Q 40 | Q 44 | Q 45 | Q 48 | Q 49 |

| Available for work and | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------|------------|---|-------|---|---------|
| 18 | - actively looking for fulltime work | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1-8 | 1 | |
| 19 | - passively looking for fulltime work | 4 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 1 | |
| 20 | - actively looking for part-time work | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1-8 | 1 | |
| 21 | - passively looking for part-time work | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 1 | |
| 22 | - not yet started to look for work | 4 | 1 | | Blank | 1 | |
| 23 | Looking but not available for work | 4 | 1 | | | 2 | |
| 24 | Not looking for work as either (a) a new job has been found (b) awaiting recall from layoff (c) awaiting results of Public Sector competition | { 4 4 | 2 3 4 5 | | | 1 | 3 |
| Want a job but not looking | | | | | | | |
| 25 | - because of discouragement | 4 | 5 | | | 1 | 5-8 |
| 26 | - for inactive reasons | 4 | 5 | | | 1 | 1 2 4 9 |
| 27 | Not looking for work and no job wanted | 4 | 5 | | | 2 | |



Summary of Proposed Framework

The twenty seven population groups which I have distinguished are all pretty well homogenous within the delimiters which have to be observed for accurate classification of labour force status according to the International Standards. The LFS estimates of the numbers of persons, males and females in each of these groups are given for 1983 and 1984 in Table 2A and for 1985 and 1986 in Table 2B.

Clearly the numbers in some of these groups are very small and the standard errors of the estimates are relatively large. Nevertheless, this type of approach is necessary so that the framework elaborated and the definitions used will be as transparent as possible for users. The rest of the paper deals with combinations of the individual subgroups as follows.

Persons in Employment

- Full-time Groups 1, 13
- Part-time but not underemployed Groups 2, 5, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17
- Part-time and underemployed Groups 3, 4, 6, 7, 15

Unemployed Persons

- Seeking full-time work Groups 10, 12, 18, 24
- Seeking part-time work Group 20

Persons Marginally Attached to the Labour Force (not economically active)

- Lay-Offs not looking for work Group 11
- Discouraged workers Group 25
- Available and passively seeking full-time work Group 19
- Available and passively seeking part-time work Group 21

Other Persons not Economically Active Groups 22, 23, 26, 27

The Labour Force (i.e. employed and unemployed) aggregates estimated according to this framework are given in Tables 3A-3E for males, single/widowed females, married/separated females, total females and total persons, respectively. These estimates are now compared with those based on the subjective replies to the usual Principal Economic Status (PES) question as shown in Tables 1A-1E.

Comparison of Labour Force Estimates on the two approaches

While in the paper the focus, naturally enough, is on the differences between the two approaches it must be made clear that the vast majority of the population are classified in the same way under both approaches. This is evident in Table D which broadly summarises for 1986 information which is presented later in greater detail.

Table D Males and females classified by ILO labour force status and further classified by Principal Economic Status, 1986 (000)

| ILO Labour Force Status | Principal Economic Status | | | Total |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | At work | Unemployed | Inactive | |
| Males | | | | |
| In Employment | 740.4 | 1.8 | 2.5 | 744.9 |
| Unemployed | 0.4 | 139.5 | 6.4 | 146.3 |
| Inactive | 0.6 | 32.4 | 319.9 | 352.8 |
| Total | 741.4 | 173.7 | 328.8 | 1 244.0 |
| Females | | | | |
| In Employment | 339.1 | 1.2 | 9.8 | 350.1 |
| Unemployed | - | 40.3 | 40.0 | 80.2 |
| Inactive | 0.4 | 12.4 | 828.8 | 841.6 |
| Total | 339.5 | 53.9 | 878.6 | 1 271.9 |

It can be seen that the main differences arise for persons who describe themselves as unemployed or inactive by their choice of Principal Economic Status. The main features for the four year 1983-1986 period are now summarised.

(1) Males

The number of males at work in the reference week was some 3,500 to 5,500 greater than the number who gave their usual PES as at work for each of the years 1983 to 1986. Furthermore, the year to year changes were almost identical under both approaches. Between 17 and 21 thousand males worked part-time in the reference week of whom some 10 to 12 thousand did so by choice while the remaining 6 to 8 thousand were underemployed.

The application of the active jobseeking and availability criteria results in the number of unemployed males according to the ILO Resolution being some 20

to 28 thousand lower than the number whose usual PES was unemployed. In 1983 and 1984 the difference was around 20,000 while in 1985 and 1986 the difference was about 28,000. About 50 per cent of the difference was accounted for by the 25–44 age group with the remainder split fairly evenly between the 45–54 and 55–64 age groups. The unemployment rates based on the international standards for these three age groups were well below the levels based on the PES approach with the result that the overall male unemployment rate was between 2 and 3 per cent lower. There were very few (about 2,000) males who were looking for part-time work.

(2) Single/Widowed Females

The estimated numbers at work were similar under both approaches with the numbers in employment according to the ILO Resolution some 3 to 4 thousand higher, largely due to the 15–24 age group. Some 4,000 of those in employment were in part-time work and were underemployed. The numbers unemployed and the unemployment rates were very similar under both approaches.

(3) Married/Separated Females

By far the biggest differences between the two approaches occur for married and separated females. This is really no great surprise since part-time work is much more suitable and attractive for such women because of family responsibilities while subjectively most would still see their homemaker role as being their principal status. In addition the "home duties" PES description might be expected to be chosen in cases where unemployed would be more appropriate.

The numbers at work according to the ILO Resolution exceeded by between 7 and 13 thousand the numbers whose PES was at work, the differences being largely accounted for by the 25–54 age groups. Between 33 and 40 thousand were in part-time work in the reference week and only 2,000 or so of these could be regarded as being underemployed.

The numbers unemployed according to the PES approach averaged about 10 thousand while the average according to the ILO Resolution was about 34,000 – about half of whom were looking for part-time work. The unemployment rate for married/separated females measured according to the international recommendations is about two and a half times the level measured according to the principal status approach.

(4) Total Persons

A summary of the results for all persons combined shows that the numbers at work according to the ILO Resolution are 15 to 23 thousand higher than the numbers whose usual PES is at work. Furthermore, of those at work in the reference week some 50 to 60 thousand were working by choice in part-time jobs while some 12 to 15 thousand were in part-time jobs but underemployed.

The sex differences in the measures of unemployment according to the two approaches were in opposite directions and tended to cancel one another out with the result that for total persons the two approaches gave very similar measures

Generally speaking it would appear that the complexities involved in the measurement of labour force aggregates for females (and married/separated females in particular) are beyond the scope of the traditional PES approach. The definitional and presentational framework I am proposing is more discerning and sets the salient points into much sharper focus.

Persons Marginally attached to the Labour Force

As mentioned earlier I consider that certain categories of persons who according to the ILO Resolution are to be included among those "not economically active", should really feature in any analysis of the labour force aggregates when considering labour market policies. This could be particularly important for certain regions within countries where labour absorption is for the time being inadequate either for seasonal or recessionary reasons. I have suggested that four categories be classified as being marginally attached to the labour force. Failure to take account of such categories would undoubtedly mean that take-up levels for various employment schemes would have a smaller than anticipated effect on the level of unemployment. Over the four years examined the number of persons marginally attached to the labour force varied from about 16 to 25 thousand. The details are given in Table 4.

The number of persons marginally attached to the labour force splits almost evenly between males and females. About half of the males were passively seeking full-time work - i.e. they replied that they were looking and available for full-time work but at Q44 they indicated that they had used no particular method of jobsearch. For 1985 and 1986 the number of male discouraged workers was around 4,000, while most of the balance was accounted for by persons on lay-off who were not engaged in an active jobsearch.

The largest group of marginally attached females were discouraged, accounting for about two-thirds of the total in the 1984-1986 period.

Most of the marginally attached and particularly those discouraged females were married/separated. In the case of females passively seeking work there were as many seeking part-time work as were seeking full-time work. Table E classifies persons marginally attached to the labour force in 1986 other than those on lay-off according to the length of time since last worked.

Table E Discouraged Workers and Passive Jobseekers classified by Sex and length of time since last worked, 1986

| Category | Never had a Job | Period since last worked | | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| | | Within previous year | 1-2 years | 2 years or over | |
| Thousands | | | | | |
| Discouraged Workers | | | | | |
| Male | 0 5 | 0 5 | 0 4 | 2 1 | 3 5 |
| Female | 0 6 | 0 3 | 0 2 | 4 7 | 5 8 |
| Passively seeking full-time work | | | | | |
| Male | 1 2 | 0 9 | 0 7 | 3 2 | 5 9 |
| Female | 0 7 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 4 | 1 6 |
| Passively seeking part-time work | | | | | |
| Male | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 1 | 0 2 |
| Female | 0 3 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 1 2 | 1 7 |
| Total | | | | | |
| Male | 1 7 | 1 3 | 1 1 | 5 4 | 9 5 |
| Female | 1 6 | 0 7 | 0 6 | 6 3 | 9 2 |

For both males and females in these categories about one in six indicated that they had never held jobs other than holiday work. About a quarter of the males and one seventh of the females indicated that they had worked within the past two years while over half the males and two thirds of the females indicated that while they had worked previously, it had been more than two years ago - cases where the actual duration was not stated have been included with this latter category. It is not unlikely that persons who have never been successful in getting a job or who have lost jobs and endured a number of unsuccessful jobsearch attempts may not actively engage in jobseeking. At the national level labour market policies should not overlook such persons. Furthermore, any international comparisons of unemployment levels which fail to take account of them are, in my view, not complete and could lead to misleading conclusions. Others take a different position, the matter has been extensively discussed at international meetings without any agreed consensus emerging.

Proposed ILO-based Framework compared to Principal Economic Status (PES), 1986

I now compare the classification of persons according to my proposed framework against the subjective self-assessment of the Principal Economic Status for the year 1986. The details for males are given in Table F while those for females are in Table G.

For males all but 1,000 of those in full-time employment described themselves as working for payment or profit under PES. About 2,000 males working in part-time employment by choice had PES descriptions of either student or retired. About 1,000 of those in employment but underemployed described themselves as unemployed or first jobseekers on PES.

Of the 173,700 males who on the usual PES basis were classified as unemployed or first jobseekers only 139,500 were classified as unemployed under the proposed ILO-based framework. Of the balance 9,400 are classified as marginally attached to the labour force, 1,800 as being in employment while some 23,000 failed either the jobsearch or availability tests and were classified as not economically active. Some 6,800 males who did not describe themselves as unemployed on PES (mostly students or retired) satisfied the jobsearch and availability criteria for inclusion among the unemployed in the proposed framework.

In the case of females who described their PES as being at work all but 400 were classified as being in employment under the proposed framework although 37,700 were in part-time employment, of whom 5,800 were underemployed. Of the 53,900 females who described themselves as unemployed or first jobseekers some 40,300 were classified as unemployed, 1,200 as in employment, 1,900 as marginally attached to the labour force and 10,500 not economically active. On the other hand some 1,900 students are classified as being in employment and 5,300 as being unemployed in the proposed new framework. Similarly, among the females choosing Home Duties as the PES description some 7,800 are classified as being in employment (mostly part-time) under the proposed framework while a considerable 34,300 are classified as unemployed and a further 7,300 are classified as being marginally attached to the labour force.

Table F Males aged 15 years and over classified by Economic Status according to the proposed framework and further classified according to the subjective assessment of PES, 1986

| Economic Status in the Reference Week consistent with ILO Resolution | Subjective respondent assessment of Principal Economic Status (PES) | | | | | | | Total |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | Working for Payment or Profit | Looking for first regular job | Unemployed having lost or given up previous job | Student | Home Duties | Retired | Other (inc unable to work) | |
| | Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In Employment | | | | | | | | |
| Fulltime | 725.1 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.2 | - | 0.1 | - | 726.3 |
| Part-time not under employed | 8.1 | - | 0.1 | 1.7 | - | 0.4 | - | 10.3 |
| Part-time under employed | 7.2 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 0.1 | - | - | - | 8.3 |
| Unemployed | | | | | | | | |
| Seeking fulltime work | 0.4 | 21.0 | 117.0 | 3.5 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 143.5 |
| Seeking part-time work | - | 0.1 | 1.4 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 0.4 | - | 2.8 |
| Marginally Attached to Labour Force | | | | | | | | |
| Layoffs not looking for work | 0.1 | - | 1.5 | - | - | - | - | 1.6 |
| Discouraged Workers | - | 0.1 | 2.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 3.5 |
| Passively seeking fulltime work | - | 1.0 | 4.7 | 0.2 | - | - | - | 5.9 |
| Passively seeking part-time work | - | - | 0.1 | - | - | - | - | 0.2 |
| Other persons not economically active | 0.5 | 2.1 | 20.9 | 116.6 | 5.6 | 148.2 | 47.9 | 341.6 |
| Total aged 15 years and over | 741.4 | 24.6 | 149.1 | 123.2 | 6.0 | 150.8 | 48.8 | 1 244.0 |

Table G Females aged 15 years and over classified by Economic Status according to the proposed framework and further classified according to the subjective assessment of PES, 1986

| Economic Status in the Reference Week consistent with ILO Resolution | Subjective respondent assessment of Principal Economic Status (PES) | | | | | | | Total |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | Working for Payment or Profit | Looking for first regular job | Unemployed having lost or given up previous job | Student | Home Duties | Retired | Other (inc unable to work) | |
| | Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In Employment | | | | | | | | |
| Fulltime | 301.4 | - | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.7 | - | - | 302.7 |
| Part-time not under employed | 31.9 | - | 0.3 | 1.7 | 6.5 | 0.1 | - | 40.5 |
| Part-time under employed | 5.8 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.6 | - | - | 6.9 |
| Unemployed | | | | | | | | |
| Seeking fulltime work | - | 12.2 | 24.5 | 4.3 | 14.9 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 56.1 |
| Seeking part-time work | - | 0.3 | 3.3 | 1.0 | 19.4 | 0.2 | - | 24.1 |
| Marginally Attached to Labour Force | | | | | | | | |
| Layoffs not looking for work | - | - | 0.6 | - | - | - | - | 0.6 |
| Discouraged Workers | - | - | 0.3 | 0.1 | 5.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 5.8 |
| Passively seeking fulltime work | - | 0.5 | 0.4 | - | 0.6 | - | - | 1.6 |
| Passively seeking part-time work | - | - | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1.5 | - | - | 1.7 |
| Other persons not economically active | 0.4 | 1.3 | 9.2 | 117.6 | 629.3 | 48.2 | 26.0 | 831.9 |
| Total aged 15 years and over | 339.5 | 14.4 | 39.5 | 125.0 | 678.7 | 48.7 | 26.2 | 1 271.9 |

The previous paragraphs and Tables F, G illustrate clearly the repercussions of using the subjective self-assessment replies of respondents for the measurement of labour market aggregates without further probing. Of course, if respondents describe their situation vis-à-vis consistent parameters then the year to year trends should not be greatly affected. However, if any basic reconditioning of respondents' attitudes occur either suddenly or over time then inconsistency could arise and there could be serious comparison problems in relation to other data sources. In any event, it is evident that changes of a few thousand from year to year in some large aggregates could arise because of lack of continuity in the selection of PES descriptions even when there are no changes in the actual status.

There is a strong case, therefore, in favour of moving to the proposed new more definitive framework for the economic analysis of labour force aggregates. It involves greater probing of the LFS respondents' answers, it focuses on a precise recent period and it is also considerably more informative.

Alternative Unemployment Rates including the Underemployed

The usual unemployment rate calculation expresses the unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. Some countries which have measurement problems concerning the armed forces calculate rates based on the civilian labour force. For certain uses different measures of the unemployment rate might be considered and some countries (USA, Canada for example) publish a range of unemployment rates on a regular basis.

From conversations with colleagues in these countries it seems that the publication of a range of rates can give rise to certain difficulties over and above the risk of confusing the non-technical user. I gather that Government politicians on the one hand and opposition politicians on the other have been known to select the extreme rates that best suit their purpose and draw unwarranted general inferences from the data. Generally speaking, however, I understand that the media focus on the principal "official" unemployment rate and regard the others as a distraction.

Because of the contrasting labour force structures in different countries I feel that international comparisons on the basis of the standard unemployment rate only, might well be misleading since very short duration part-time work is treated in exactly the same way as full-time work both in the numerator and denominator. The effect on employment population ratios is likely to be even greater!

For international comparisons the suggestion in paragraph 21(6) of the Resolution is a good one – i.e. that a composite rate of unemployment and visible under-employment be compiled as the ratio of unemployed labour time available for employment to the total labour time employed or available for employment. Indeed, in the national context when the labour force structure is

in transition such a composite measure seems to be much more indicative than the standard unemployment rate

To calculate this type of composite rate as comprehensively as possible would probably require the classification of persons in (a) full-time and (b) part-time work by sector and the derivation of usual working hours in each case on the basis of Q25 of the LFS. These figures could then be used to calculate the labour time available for employment for the following three categories

- (1) persons seeking full-time work
- (2) persons seeking part-time work
- (3) persons working part-time who are underemployed

Such a detailed analysis is outside the scope of this paper, but I propose to illustrate the approach by using the simplifying approximation that the labour time involved in part-time work is half that required for full-time work. A composite rate of unemployment and visible underemployment can then be defined in the context of the proposed ILO-based framework as follows

Numerator (Unemployed persons seeking full-time work) + $\frac{1}{2}$ (Unemployed persons seeking part-time work) + $\frac{1}{2}$ (persons in part-time work who are underemployed)

Denominator Numerator + (persons in full-time work) + $\frac{1}{2}$ (persons in part-time work who are not underemployed) + $\frac{1}{2}$ (persons in part-time work who are underemployed)

The derived composite rates for males, females and married/separated females over the 1983-1986 period are as follows

| | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Males | 13.7 | 15.3 | 16.5 | 16.9 |
| Females | 14.1 | 15.8 | 17.9 | 18.0 |
| Married/Separated Females | 16.2 | 17.2 | 19.1 | 19.5 |

The composite rates for males are fractionally (0.3 to 0.5 percentage points) above the corresponding unemployment rates shown in Table 3A, while for total females the composite rates are correspondingly below the unemployment rates in Table 3D. The greatest impact is for married/separated females which is not surprising since part-time working is of much greater significance for this group. The composite rates are from 1.2 to 2.1 percentage points below the corresponding unemployment rates shown in Table 3C. Such rates may be calculated for any age-sex-marital status subgroups of the population.

Conclusion

In the paper I am proposing an alternative ILO-based framework which is eminently suitable for the economic analysis of labour force aggregates. The

framework has a number of advantages over the present approach based on the description by the LFS respondent of the usual Principal Economic Status, namely

- (1) The focus is on the current activity of respondents in a specific recent period – i.e. the week prior to the LFS interview – eliminating the need for them to interpret the meaning of “usual status”
- (2) Answers on this basis regarding jobsearch and availability for work are probed and are less responsive to reconditioning of respondents’ attitudes
- (3) The framework gives much more comprehensive and useful information for analytical purposes
- (4) The resulting estimates would be classified according to international standards and be more amenable to comparison with those compiled on the same basis for other countries

The framework clearly identifies persons marginally attached to the labour force but who are otherwise classified as being not economically active. Many of these persons as well as many other inactive persons could very well seek places in training, retraining or jobplacement schemes. Furthermore in the event of strong economic recovery many would undoubtedly recommence an active jobsearch. Finally, I think there are excellent reasons for calculating composite rates of unemployment and underemployment for both national and international analysis.

**Table 1A Males classified by Age Group and Usual Labour Force Status
(based on Q11 of the LFS), 1983-1986**

| Usual Labour Force Status | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| At Work | 1983 | 154 0 | 366 7 | 126 9 | 97 3 | 32 6 | 777 6 |
| | 1984 | 145 5 | 368 8 | 125 7 | 95 2 | 30 3 | 765 6 |
| | 1985 | 143 4 | 363 8 | 121 4 | 90 0 | 25 6 | 744 3 |
| | 1986 | 133 2 | 369 4 | 121 7 | 87 8 | 29 2 | 741 4 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 45 9 | 63 6 | 17 0 | 12 3 | 1 3 | 140 1 |
| | 1984 | 51 4 | 70 6 | 19 6 | 13 7 | 1 1 | 156 4 |
| | 1985 | 51 5 | 81 3 | 23 9 | 14 9 | 1 3 | 172 8 |
| | 1986 | 55 7 | 79 7 | 22 2 | 15 0 | 1 1 | 173 7 |
| Labour Force | 1983 | 199 9 | 430 4 | 144 0 | 109 7 | 33 9 | 917 7 |
| | 1984 | 196 9 | 439 4 | 145 4 | 108 9 | 31 4 | 922 0 |
| | 1985 | 194 9 | 445 0 | 145 3 | 104 9 | 27 0 | 917 1 |
| | 1986 | 188 8 | 449 1 | 143 9 | 102 8 | 30 4 | 915 1 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 22 9 | 14 8 | 11 8 | 11 2 | 3 8 | 15 3 |
| | 1984 | 26 1 | 16 1 | 13 5 | 12 5 | 3 5 | 17 0 |
| | 1985 | 26 4 | 18 3 | 16 4 | 14 2 | 4 9 | 18 8 |
| | 1986 | 29 5 | 17 7 | 15 4 | 14 5 | 3 8 | 19 0 |

Table 1B Single/Widowed Females classified by Age Group and Usual Labour Force Status (based on Q11 of the LFS), 1983-1986

| Usual Labour Force Status | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| At Work | 1983 | 119.4 | 62.4 | 16.9 | 16.9 | 7.7 | 223.2 |
| | 1984 | 118.0 | 60.9 | 14.0 | 14.6 | 5.7 | 213.2 |
| | 1985 | 113.6 | 56.4 | 12.6 | 14.0 | 5.7 | 202.2 |
| | 1986 | 110.1 | 63.0 | 12.8 | 12.7 | 5.9 | 204.4 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 24.2 | 6.5 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 0.2 | 33.6 |
| | 1984 | 27.6 | 7.5 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 38.8 |
| | 1985 | 31.2 | 7.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 42.0 |
| | 1986 | 29.6 | 8.9 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 41.9 |
| Labour Force | 1983 | 143.6 | 68.9 | 18.3 | 18.1 | 7.9 | 256.7 |
| | 1984 | 145.6 | 68.4 | 15.8 | 16.3 | 6.0 | 252.1 |
| | 1985 | 144.7 | 64.1 | 14.1 | 15.5 | 5.9 | 244.2 |
| | 1986 | 139.6 | 71.9 | 14.4 | 14.3 | 6.1 | 246.3 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 16.9 | 9.5 | 7.4 | 6.7 | 3.0 | 13.1 |
| | 1984 | 19.0 | 10.9 | 11.3 | 10.3 | 4.9 | 15.4 |
| | 1985 | 21.5 | 12.0 | 10.3 | 9.6 | 4.0 | 17.2 |
| | 1986 | 21.2 | 12.3 | 11.4 | 11.3 | 4.1 | 17.0 |

Table 1C Married/Separated Females classified by Age Group and Usual Labour Force Status (based on Q11 of the LFS), 1983-1986

| Usual Labour Force Status | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| At Work | 1983 | 13.2 | 75.5 | 21.6 | 11.1 | 1.7 | 123.2 |
| | 1984 | 12.8 | 78.3 | 21.9 | 10.2 | 1.4 | 124.5 |
| | 1985 | 12.0 | 83.5 | 22.7 | 10.0 | 1.6 | 129.8 |
| | 1986 | 11.5 | 89.0 | 23.1 | 9.9 | 1.5 | 135.0 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 2.1 | 5.5 | 1.4 | 0.7 | - | 9.7 |
| | 1984 | 1.7 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 8.3 |
| | 1985 | 2.5 | 6.6 | 1.4 | 0.7 | - | 11.2 |
| | 1986 | 2.1 | 8.1 | 1.2 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 11.9 |
| Labour Force | 1983 | 15.3 | 81.1 | 23.0 | 11.8 | 1.7 | 132.9 |
| | 1984 | 14.5 | 83.5 | 22.8 | 10.5 | 1.4 | 132.8 |
| | 1985 | 14.6 | 90.2 | 24.0 | 10.7 | 1.6 | 141.0 |
| | 1986 | 13.6 | 97.1 | 24.2 | 10.4 | 1.5 | 147.0 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 14.0 | 6.8 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 0.0 | 7.3 |
| | 1984 | 11.6 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 3.1 | 1.7 | 6.2 |
| | 1985 | 17.6 | 7.4 | 5.7 | 6.6 | 0.0 | 8.0 |
| | 1986 | 15.3 | 8.4 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 2.8 | 8.1 |

Table 1D Total Females classified by Age Group and Usual Labour Force Status (based on Q11 of the LFS), 1983-1986

| Usual Labour Force Status | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| At Work | 1983 | 132.5 | 137.9 | 38.5 | 28.1 | 9.4 | 346.4 |
| | 1984 | 130.8 | 139.2 | 35.9 | 24.8 | 7.1 | 337.8 |
| | 1985 | 125.6 | 139.9 | 35.3 | 24.0 | 7.3 | 332.0 |
| | 1986 | 121.6 | 152.1 | 35.8 | 22.6 | 7.4 | 339.5 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 26.4 | 12.0 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 0.2 | 43.2 |
| | 1984 | 29.3 | 12.7 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 0.3 | 47.1 |
| | 1985 | 33.7 | 14.3 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 0.2 | 53.2 |
| | 1986 | 31.6 | 17.0 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 53.8 |
| Labour Force | 1983 | 158.9 | 150.0 | 41.3 | 30.0 | 9.6 | 389.6 |
| | 1984 | 160.1 | 151.9 | 38.7 | 26.8 | 7.4 | 384.9 |
| | 1985 | 159.3 | 154.2 | 38.1 | 26.2 | 7.5 | 385.3 |
| | 1986 | 153.3 | 169.0 | 38.7 | 24.7 | 7.7 | 393.3 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 16.6 | 8.0 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 2.4 | 11.1 |
| | 1984 | 18.3 | 8.4 | 7.1 | 7.5 | 4.2 | 12.2 |
| | 1985 | 21.1 | 9.3 | 7.4 | 8.4 | 3.1 | 13.8 |
| | 1986 | 20.7 | 10.0 | 7.3 | 8.5 | 3.9 | 13.7 |

Table 1E Total Persons classified by Age Group and Usual Labour Force Status (based on Q11 of the LFS), 1983-1986

| Usual Labour Force Status | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|---------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| At Work | 1983 | 286 5 | 504 6 | 165 4 | 125 4 | 42 0 | 1 124 0 |
| | 1984 | 276 3 | 508 0 | 161 6 | 120 0 | 37 4 | 1 103 4 |
| | 1985 | 269 0 | 503 7 | 156 7 | 114 0 | 32 9 | 1 076 3 |
| | 1986 | 254 8 | 521 5 | 157 5 | 110 4 | 36 6 | 1 080 9 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 72 3 | 75 6 | 19 7 | 14 2 | 1 5 | 183 3 |
| | 1984 | 80 7 | 83 3 | 22 4 | 15 7 | 1 4 | 203 5 |
| | 1985 | 85 2 | 95 6 | 26 7 | 17 1 | 1 5 | 226 0 |
| | 1986 | 87 3 | 96 7 | 25 1 | 17 1 | 1 4 | 227 5 |
| Labour Force | 1983 | 358 8 | 580 4 | 185 3 | 139 7 | 43 5 | 1 307 3 |
| | 1984 | 357 0 | 591 3 | 184 1 | 135 7 | 38 8 | 1 306 9 |
| | 1985 | 354 2 | 599 2 | 183 4 | 131 1 | 34 5 | 1 302 4 |
| | 1986 | 342 1 | 618 1 | 182 6 | 127 5 | 38 1 | 1 308 4 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 20 2 | 13 0 | 10 6 | 10 2 | 3 4 | 14 0 |
| | 1984 | 22 6 | 14 1 | 12 2 | 11 6 | 3 6 | 15 6 |
| | 1985 | 24 1 | 16 0 | 14 6 | 13 0 | 4 3 | 17 4 |
| | 1986 | 25 5 | 15 6 | 13 7 | 13 4 | 3 7 | 17 4 |

Table 2A Persons, Males and Females aged 15 years and over in each of 27 population categories, 1983 and 1984

| Group | Activity in Reference Week | 1983 | | | 1984 | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------|--------|---------|-------|--------|---------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Working in a Full-time Job | 738 2 | 292 7 | 1 030 9 | 722 0 | 285 7 | 1 007 7 |
| Working Part-time | | | | | | | |
| 2 | not looking for work | 10 9 | 46 6 | 57 5 | 10 9 | 36 8 | 47 7 |
| 3 | looking and available for full-time work | 7 2 | 4 4 | 11 6 | 5 3 | 4 2 | 9 5 |
| 4 | looking for full-time work but not available for work reasons | 1 0 | 0 9 | 1 9 | 0 6 | 0 8 | 1 4 |
| 5 | looking for part-time work but not available for inactive reasons | 0 4 | 0 4 | 0 8 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 6 |
| 6 | looking and available for a second part-time job | - | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 2 |
| 7 | looking for part-time work would accept full-time work | 0 2 | 0 4 | 0 6 | 0 2 | 0 4 | 0 6 |
| 8 | looking for part-time work only | 0 2 | 0 2 | 0 4 | 0 1 | 0 4 | 0 5 |
| 9 | looking but not available for part-time work | 0 1 | 0 3 | 0 4 | 0 2 | 0 2 | 0 4 |
| Persons on Lay-Off | | | | | | | |
| 10 | looking for or have found work | 2 3 | 0 6 | 2 9 | 1 5 | 0 3 | 1 8 |
| 11 | not looking for work | 2 8 | 1 2 | 4 0 | 1 6 | 0 7 | 2 3 |
| With a Job but not at Work | | | | | | | |
| 12 | as it is a new job to start in the future | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 2 | - | - | - |
| 13 | full-time job but not at work for other reasons | 23 3 | 13 5 | 36 8 | 30 1 | 19 0 | 49 1 |
| 14 | part-time job not looking for work | 0 5 | 2 0 | 2 5 | 0 5 | 3 2 | 3 7 |
| 15 | part-time job looking and available for full-time work | 0 2 | 0 1 | 0 3 | 0 1 | 0 3 | 0 4 |

Table 2A(contd) Persons, Males and Females aged 15 years and over in each of 27 population categories, 1983 and 1984

| Group | Activity in Reference Week | 1983 | | | 1984 | | |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| With a Job but not at Work (contd) | | | | | | | |
| 16 | part-time job looking for full-time work but not available | 0 2 | 0 1 | 0 3 | - | 0 1 | 0 1 |
| 17 | part-time job looking for part-time work | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Persons who neither worked nor had a job | | | | | | | |
| 18 | available and actively looking for full-time work | 113 4 | 41 2 | 154 6 | 129 5 | 47 9 | 177 4 |
| 19 | available and passively looking for full-time work | 3 5 | 1 4 | 4 9 | 3 4 | 1 3 | 4 7 |
| 20 | available and actively looking for part-time work | 2 3 | 17 9 | 20 2 | 2 9 | 18 8 | 21 7 |
| 21 | available and passively looking for part-time work | 0 2 | 1 2 | 1 4 | 0 1 | 1 0 | 1 1 |
| 22 | available but not yet started looking for work | 4 6 | 6 9 | 11 5 | 4 8 | 7 3 | 12 1 |
| 23 | looking but not available for work | 14 8 | 17 6 | 32 4 | 15 6 | 19 6 | 35 2 |
| 24 | not looking for unemployed reasons | 1 4 | 1 5 | 2 9 | 1 9 | 1 5 | 3 4 |
| 25 | Discouraged Workers | 1 8 | 3 8 | 5 6 | 3 1 | 6 1 | 9 2 |
| 26 | want a job but not looking for inactive reasons | 24 8 | 39 7 | 64 5 | 29 2 | 54 1 | 83 3 |
| 27 | not looking for work no job wanted | 267 4 | 745 4 | 1 012 8 | 269 5 | 745 0 | 1 014 5 |
| Total Aged 15 years and over | | 1 221 7 | 1 240 1 | 2 461 8 | 1 233 5 | 1 255 2 | 2 488 7 |

Table 2B Persons, Males and Females aged 15 years and over in each of 27 population categories, 1985 and 1986

| Group | Activity in Reference Week | 1985 | | | 1986 | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Working in a Full-time Job | 712 0 | 285 2 | 997 2 | 706 0 | 290 6 | 996 6 |
| Working Part-time | | | | | | | |
| 2 | not looking for work | 10 4 | 42 9 | 53 3 | 9 5 | 37 5 | 47 0 |
| 3 | looking and available for full-time work | 5 5 | 4 7 | 10 2 | 6 7 | 5 0 | 11 7 |
| 4 | looking for full-time work but not available for work reasons | 0 3 | 1 0 | 1 3 | 1 3 | 1 4 | 2 7 |
| 5 | looking for part-time work but not available for inactive reasons | 0 2 | 0 3 | 0 5 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 6 |
| 6 | looking and available for a second part-time job | - | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 2 |
| 7 | looking for part-time work would accept full-time work | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 2 | 0 1 | 0 3 | 0 4 |
| 8 | looking for part-time work only | 0 1 | 0 4 | 0 5 | - | 0 6 | 0 6 |
| 9 | looking but not available for part-time work | - | 0 1 | 0 1 | - | 0 3 | 0 3 |
| Persons on Lay-Off | | | | | | | |
| 10 | looking for or have found work | 1 4 | 0 2 | 1 6 | 1 8 | 0 3 | 2 1 |
| 11 | not looking for work | 2 6 | 0 6 | 3 2 | 1 6 | 0 6 | 2 2 |
| With a Job but not at Work | | | | | | | |
| 12 | as it is a new job to start in the future | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 2 | 0 2 | - | 0 2 |
| 13 | full-time job but not at work for other reasons | 20 5 | 12 9 | 33 4 | 20 3 | 12 1 | 32 4 |
| 14 | part-time job not looking for work | 0 5 | 1 5 | 2 0 | 0 5 | 1 8 | 2 3 |
| 15 | part-time job looking and available for full-time work | - | 0 2 | 0 2 | 0 2 | 0 2 | 0 4 |

Table 2B (contd) Persons, Males and Females aged 15 years and over in each of 27 population categories, 1985 and 1986

| Group | Activity in Reference Week | 1985 | | | 1986 | | |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| With a Job but not at Work (contd) | | | | | | | |
| 16 | part-time job looking for full-time work but not available | - | 0 1 | 0 1 | - | 0 1 | 0 1 |
| 17 | part-time job looking for part-time work | - | 0 1 | 0 1 | - | - | - |
| Persons who neither worked nor had a job | | | | | | | |
| 18 | available and actively looking for full-time work | 138 6 | 56 0 | 194 6 | 139 4 | 53 8 | 193 2 |
| 19 | available and passively looking for full-time work | 5 6 | 1 3 | 6 9 | 5 9 | 1 6 | 7 5 |
| 20 | available and actively looking for part-time work | 2 5 | 19 0 | 21 5 | 2 8 | 24 1 | 26 9 |
| 21 | available and passively looking for part-time work | 0 4 | 1 5 | 1 9 | 0 2 | 1 7 | 1 9 |
| 22 | available but not yet started looking for work | 4 8 | 7 4 | 12 2 | 5 4 | 9 1 | 14 5 |
| 23 | looking but not available for work | 15 6 | 18 2 | 33 8 | 11 6 | 14 3 | 25 9 |
| 24 | not looking for unemployed reasons | 1 8 | 1 9 | 3 7 | 2 0 | 2 0 | 4 0 |
| 25 | Discouraged Workers | 4 1 | 8 7 | 12 8 | 3 5 | 5 8 | 9 3 |
| 26 | want a job but not looking for inactive reasons | 29 8 | 68 8 | 98 6 | 22 9 | 40 5 | 63 4 |
| 27 | not looking for work no job wanted | 283 7 | 732 5 | 1 016 2 | 301 7 | 767 7 | 1 069 4 |
| Total Aged 15 years and over | | 1 240 7 | 1 265 5 | 2 506 2 | 1 244 0 | 1 271 9 | 2 515 9 |

Table 3A Males in the labour force classified by Age Group and Labour Force Status in the Reference Week, 1983-1986

| Labour Force Status in Reference Week | Age Group | | | | | Total | |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In | | | | | | | |
| Employment | | | | | | | |
| (Total) | 1983 | 157.1 | 367.4 | 127.0 | 97.6 | 33.1 | 782.4 |
| | 1984 | 148.5 | 369.7 | 125.9 | 95.4 | 31.0 | 770.4 |
| | 1985 | 146.4 | 365.0 | 121.6 | 90.3 | 26.5 | 749.8 |
| | 1986 | 135.4 | 370.1 | 121.8 | 88.0 | 29.6 | 744.9 |
| Full-time | 1983 | 148.6 | 361.7 | 125.0 | 95.0 | 31.1 | 761.5 |
| | 1984 | 141.8 | 364.4 | 124.3 | 93.5 | 28.1 | 752.1 |
| | 1985 | 139.1 | 360.5 | 120.4 | 88.4 | 24.1 | 732.5 |
| | 1986 | 128.6 | 363.7 | 120.0 | 86.1 | 27.9 | 726.3 |
| Part-time not under employed | 1983 | 4.6 | 2.6 | 1.1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 12.3 |
| | 1984 | 4.1 | 2.8 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 12.1 |
| | 1985 | 4.2 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 11.2 |
| | 1986 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 10.3 |
| Part-time and under employed | 1983 | 3.9 | 3.1 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 8.6 |
| | 1984 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | - | 6.3 |
| | 1985 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | - | 6.1 |
| | 1986 | 3.2 | 3.7 | 0.9 | 0.5 | - | 8.3 |
| Unemployed | | | | | | | |
| (Total) | 1983 | 44.5 | 54.5 | 12.4 | 7.4 | 0.9 | 119.5 |
| | 1984 | 49.0 | 61.7 | 15.0 | 9.2 | 0.9 | 135.7 |
| | 1985 | 48.2 | 68.3 | 17.5 | 9.3 | 1.1 | 144.3 |
| | 1986 | 53.5 | 67.2 | 16.8 | 8.3 | 0.4 | 146.3 |
| Seeking full-time work | 1983 | 43.7 | 54.0 | 12.1 | 6.9 | 0.6 | 117.2 |
| | 1984 | 48.3 | 61.0 | 14.5 | 8.5 | 0.5 | 132.8 |
| | 1985 | 47.5 | 67.7 | 17.1 | 8.8 | 0.6 | 141.8 |
| | 1986 | 52.5 | 66.7 | 16.3 | 7.8 | 0.2 | 143.5 |
| Seeking part-time work | 1983 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 2.3 |
| | 1984 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 2.9 |
| | 1985 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 2.5 |
| | 1986 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 2.8 |
| Total Labour Force | 1983 | 201.6 | 421.9 | 139.4 | 105.0 | 34.0 | 901.9 |
| | 1984 | 197.5 | 431.4 | 140.9 | 104.6 | 31.9 | 906.1 |
| | 1985 | 194.6 | 433.3 | 139.1 | 99.6 | 27.6 | 894.1 |
| | 1986 | 188.9 | 437.3 | 138.6 | 96.3 | 30.0 | 891.2 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemploy- ment Rate (%) | 1983 | 22.1 | 12.9 | 8.9 | 7.0 | 2.6 | 13.2 |
| | 1984 | 24.8 | 14.3 | 10.6 | 8.8 | 2.8 | 15.0 |
| | 1985 | 24.8 | 15.8 | 12.6 | 9.3 | 4.0 | 16.1 |
| | 1986 | 28.3 | 15.4 | 12.1 | 8.6 | 1.3 | 16.4 |

Table 3B Single/Widowed Females in the labour force classified by Age Group and Labour Force Status in the Reference Week, 1983-1986

| Labour Force Status in Reference Week | Age Group | | | | | Total | |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In Employment (Total) | 1983 | 122 0 | 62 4 | 17 0 | 17 2 | 8 0 | 226 7 |
| | 1984 | 121 0 | 61 1 | 14 3 | 15 0 | 5 9 | 217 3 |
| | 1985 | 116 4 | 56 6 | 12 9 | 14 3 | 6 3 | 206 5 |
| | 1986 | 112 4 | 63 2 | 13 0 | 12 8 | 6 0 | 207 5 |
| Full-time | 1983 | 114 7 | 59 9 | 15 6 | 15 0 | 5 9 | 211 2 |
| | 1984 | 113 7 | 59 0 | 12 9 | 13 0 | 4 6 | 203 3 |
| | 1985 | 108 8 | 54 8 | 11 5 | 12 4 | 4 7 | 192 1 |
| | 1986 | 105 3 | 61 4 | 11 8 | 11 1 | 5 0 | 194 6 |
| Part-time not under employed | 1983 | 4 0 | 1 9 | 1 3 | 2 1 | 2 1 | 11 5 |
| | 1984 | 4 1 | 1 5 | 1 2 | 1 9 | 1 3 | 10 1 |
| | 1985 | 4 2 | 1 2 | 1 3 | 1 9 | 1 5 | 10 1 |
| | 1986 | 3 7 | 1 1 | 1 1 | 1 6 | 1 0 | 8 5 |
| Part-time and under employed | 1983 | 3 3 | 0 6 | 0 1 | 0 1 | - | 4 0 |
| | 1984 | 3 1 | 0 6 | 0 2 | - | - | 4 0 |
| | 1985 | 3 5 | 0 6 | 0 1 | - | - | 4 2 |
| | 1986 | 3 4 | 0 7 | 0 1 | 0 1 | - | 4 4 |
| Unemployed (Total) | 1983 | 24 6 | 5 1 | 1 2 | 1 0 | 0 1 | 32 2 |
| | 1984 | 27 7 | 6 2 | 1 7 | 1 2 | 0 3 | 37 0 |
| | 1985 | 31 0 | 6 8 | 1 6 | 1 0 | 0 2 | 40 8 |
| | 1986 | 30 6 | 7 4 | 1 4 | 1 4 | 0 3 | 41 0 |
| Seeking full-time work | 1983 | 23 8 | 4 5 | 0 8 | 0 6 | - | 29 8 |
| | 1984 | 26 8 | 5 6 | 1 3 | 0 7 | 0 1 | 34 5 |
| | 1985 | 30 0 | 6 1 | 1 1 | 0 7 | 0 1 | 38 0 |
| | 1986 | 28 9 | 6 3 | 1 0 | 0 8 | 0 1 | 37 2 |
| Seeking part-time work | 1983 | 0 8 | 0 6 | 0 4 | 0 4 | 0 1 | 2 4 |
| | 1984 | 0 9 | 0 6 | 0 4 | 0 5 | 0 2 | 2 5 |
| | 1985 | 1 0 | 0 7 | 0 5 | 0 3 | 0 2 | 2 8 |
| | 1986 | 1 8 | 1 0 | 0 4 | 0 6 | 0 2 | 3 8 |
| Total Labour Force | 1983 | 146 6 | 67 5 | 18 2 | 18 2 | 8 1 | 258 9 |
| | 1984 | 148 7 | 67 3 | 16 0 | 16 2 | 6 2 | 254 3 |
| | 1985 | 147 4 | 63 4 | 14 5 | 15 3 | 6 5 | 247 3 |
| | 1986 | 143 0 | 70 6 | 14 4 | 14 2 | 6 3 | 248 5 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 16 8 | 7 6 | 6 6 | 5 5 | 1 2 | 12 4 |
| | 1984 | 18 6 | 9 2 | 10 6 | 7 4 | 4 8 | 14 5 |
| | 1985 | 21 0 | 10 7 | 11 0 | 6 5 | 3 1 | 16 5 |
| | 1986 | 21 4 | 10 5 | 9 7 | 9 9 | 4 8 | 16 5 |

Table 3C Married/Separated Females in the labour force classified by Age Group and Labour Force Status in the Reference Week, 1983-1986

| Labour Force Status in Reference Week | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|--|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In | | | | | | | |
| Employment | 1983 | 13.5 | 81.8 | 25.1 | 12.5 | 2.1 | 135.0 |
| (Total) | 1984 | 13.0 | 83.9 | 24.4 | 11.1 | 1.9 | 134.3 |
| | 1985 | 12.3 | 90.6 | 26.2 | 12.1 | 1.9 | 143.0 |
| | 1986 | 11.7 | 93.3 | 24.8 | 11.1 | 1.7 | 142.7 |
| Full-time | 1983 | 12.1 | 59.3 | 14.9 | 7.7 | 1.2 | 95.1 |
| | 1984 | 12.0 | 64.7 | 16.2 | 7.5 | 1.0 | 101.4 |
| | 1985 | 11.4 | 68.4 | 17.2 | 7.6 | 1.2 | 106.0 |
| | 1986 | 10.8 | 72.3 | 16.5 | 7.4 | 1.1 | 108.0 |
| Part-time not under employed | 1983 | 1.2 | 21.3 | 9.9 | 4.8 | 1.0 | 38.1 |
| | 1984 | 0.8 | 17.9 | 7.9 | 3.4 | 1.0 | 31.0 |
| | 1985 | 0.8 | 20.7 | 8.6 | 4.4 | 0.7 | 35.2 |
| | 1986 | 0.7 | 19.3 | 7.9 | 3.6 | 0.7 | 32.1 |
| Part-time and under employed | 1983 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | - | 1.8 |
| | 1984 | 0.2 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 0.1 | - | 1.9 |
| | 1985 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 0.1 | - | 1.8 |
| | 1986 | 0.1 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 0.1 | - | 2.6 |
| Unemployed | 1983 | 4.4 | 20.6 | 3.1 | 1.0 | - | 29.1 |
| (Total) | 1984 | 3.8 | 21.7 | 4.4 | 1.5 | - | 31.6 |
| | 1985 | 4.9 | 25.1 | 4.9 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 36.4 |
| | 1986 | 4.5 | 27.4 | 5.9 | 1.4 | 0.1 | 39.2 |
| Seeking full-time work | 1983 | 2.8 | 9.0 | 1.3 | 0.5 | - | 13.6 |
| | 1984 | 2.5 | 10.3 | 1.8 | 0.6 | - | 15.3 |
| | 1985 | 3.5 | 13.4 | 2.6 | 0.7 | - | 20.2 |
| | 1986 | 2.9 | 13.1 | 2.4 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 18.9 |
| Seeking part-time work | 1983 | 1.6 | 11.6 | 1.8 | 0.5 | - | 15.5 |
| | 1984 | 1.3 | 11.4 | 2.6 | 0.9 | - | 16.3 |
| | 1985 | 1.4 | 11.7 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 16.3 |
| | 1986 | 1.6 | 14.3 | 3.4 | 1.0 | - | 20.3 |
| Total Labour Force | 1983 | 17.9 | 102.4 | 28.2 | 13.5 | 2.1 | 164.1 |
| | 1984 | 16.8 | 105.6 | 28.8 | 12.6 | 1.9 | 165.9 |
| | 1985 | 17.2 | 115.7 | 31.1 | 13.6 | 2.0 | 179.4 |
| | 1986 | 16.2 | 120.7 | 30.7 | 12.5 | 1.8 | 181.9 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemploy- ment Rate (%) | 1983 | 24.6 | 20.1 | 11.0 | 7.4 | - | 17.7 |
| | 1984 | 22.6 | 20.5 | 15.3 | 11.9 | - | 19.0 |
| | 1985 | 28.5 | 21.7 | 15.8 | 11.0 | 5.0 | 20.3 |
| | 1986 | 27.8 | 22.7 | 19.2 | 11.2 | 5.6 | 21.6 |

Table 3D Total Females in the labour force classified by Age Group and Labour Force Status in the Reference Week, 1983-1986

| Labour Force Status in Reference Week | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|--|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In Employment (Total) | 1983 | 135.5 | 144.2 | 42.1 | 29.7 | 10.1 | 361.7 |
| | 1984 | 134.0 | 145.0 | 38.7 | 26.0 | 7.9 | 351.6 |
| | 1985 | 128.7 | 147.2 | 39.0 | 26.4 | 8.1 | 349.5 |
| | 1986 | 124.1 | 156.6 | 37.8 | 23.9 | 7.8 | 350.2 |
| Full-time | 1983 | 126.8 | 119.2 | 30.5 | 22.7 | 7.1 | 306.2 |
| | 1984 | 125.7 | 123.7 | 29.1 | 20.6 | 5.6 | 304.7 |
| | 1985 | 120.2 | 123.2 | 28.8 | 20.0 | 5.9 | 298.1 |
| | 1986 | 116.1 | 133.6 | 28.3 | 18.5 | 6.1 | 302.7 |
| Part-time not under employed | 1983 | 5.2 | 23.2 | 11.2 | 6.9 | 3.1 | 49.6 |
| | 1984 | 4.9 | 19.4 | 9.1 | 5.3 | 2.3 | 41.1 |
| | 1985 | 5.0 | 22.0 | 9.9 | 6.3 | 2.2 | 45.3 |
| | 1986 | 4.4 | 20.4 | 9.0 | 5.2 | 1.6 | 40.5 |
| Part-time and under employed | 1983 | 3.5 | 1.8 | 0.4 | 0.1 | - | 5.9 |
| | 1984 | 3.3 | 1.9 | 0.5 | 0.2 | - | 5.9 |
| | 1985 | 3.5 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 0.1 | - | 6.0 |
| | 1986 | 3.6 | 2.6 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 6.9 |
| Unemployed (Total) | 1983 | 28.9 | 25.9 | 4.4 | 1.9 | 0.2 | 61.2 |
| | 1984 | 31.4 | 27.9 | 6.2 | 2.7 | 0.3 | 68.5 |
| | 1985 | 35.9 | 31.9 | 6.5 | 2.6 | 0.3 | 77.1 |
| | 1986 | 35.0 | 34.8 | 7.4 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 80.2 |
| Seeking full-time work | 1983 | 26.5 | 13.6 | 2.2 | 1.0 | - | 43.3 |
| | 1984 | 29.2 | 15.9 | 3.2 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 49.7 |
| | 1985 | 33.5 | 19.5 | 3.7 | 1.4 | 0.1 | 58.2 |
| | 1986 | 31.8 | 19.4 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 56.1 |
| Seeking part-time work | 1983 | 2.4 | 12.3 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 17.9 |
| | 1984 | 2.2 | 12.0 | 3.0 | 1.4 | 0.2 | 18.8 |
| | 1985 | 2.4 | 12.4 | 2.8 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 19.0 |
| | 1986 | 3.2 | 15.4 | 3.9 | 1.4 | 0.2 | 24.1 |
| Total Labour Force | 1983 | 164.4 | 170.1 | 46.5 | 31.6 | 10.3 | 422.9 |
| | 1984 | 165.4 | 172.9 | 44.9 | 28.7 | 8.2 | 420.1 |
| | 1985 | 164.6 | 179.1 | 45.5 | 29.0 | 8.4 | 426.6 |
| | 1986 | 159.1 | 191.4 | 45.2 | 26.6 | 8.2 | 430.4 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 1983 | 17.6 | 15.2 | 9.5 | 6.0 | 1.9 | 14.5 |
| | 1984 | 19.0 | 16.1 | 13.8 | 9.4 | 3.7 | 16.3 |
| | 1985 | 21.8 | 17.8 | 14.3 | 9.0 | 3.6 | 18.1 |
| | 1986 | 22.0 | 18.2 | 16.4 | 10.2 | 4.9 | 18.6 |

Table 3E Total Persons in the labour force classified by Age Group and Labour Force Status in the Reference Week, 1983-1986

| Labour Force Status in Reference Week | | Age Group | | | | | Total |
|--|------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|---------|
| | | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 & over | |
| Thousands | | | | | | | |
| In Employment (Total) | 1983 | 292 7 | 511 6 | 169 2 | 127 3 | 43 3 | 1 144 1 |
| | 1984 | 282 5 | 514 7 | 164 6 | 121 4 | 38 9 | 1 122 1 |
| | 1985 | 275 1 | 512 1 | 160 6 | 116 7 | 34 6 | 1 099 2 |
| | 1986 | 259 5 | 526 7 | 159 6 | 111 9 | 37 4 | 1 095 1 |
| Full-time | 1983 | 275 5 | 481 0 | 155 5 | 117 7 | 38 1 | 1 067 7 |
| | 1984 | 267 5 | 488 1 | 153 4 | 114 1 | 33 7 | 1 056 7 |
| | 1985 | 259 3 | 483 7 | 149 2 | 108 4 | 30 0 | 1 030 6 |
| | 1986 | 244 8 | 497 3 | 148 2 | 104 7 | 34 0 | 1 029 0 |
| Part-time not under employed | 1983 | 9 9 | 25 7 | 12 3 | 8 9 | 5 1 | 61 9 |
| | 1984 | 9 0 | 22 2 | 10 2 | 6 5 | 5 2 | 53 2 |
| | 1985 | 9 1 | 24 2 | 10 8 | 7 8 | 4 6 | 56 5 |
| | 1986 | 7 9 | 23 1 | 10 0 | 6 6 | 3 3 | 50 9 |
| Part-time and under employed | 1983 | 7 3 | 4 9 | 1 3 | 0 8 | 0 1 | 14 4 |
| | 1984 | 6 0 | 4 4 | 1 0 | 0 8 | - | 12 2 |
| | 1985 | 6 7 | 4 2 | 0 7 | 0 5 | - | 12 1 |
| | 1986 | 6 8 | 6 3 | 1 4 | 0 7 | 0 1 | 15 2 |
| Unemployed (Total) | 1983 | 73 5 | 80 3 | 16 7 | 9 3 | 1 0 | 180 7 |
| | 1984 | 80 5 | 89 6 | 21 2 | 11 9 | 1 2 | 204 2 |
| | 1985 | 84 1 | 100 3 | 24 0 | 11 9 | 1 4 | 221 5 |
| | 1986 | 88 5 | 102 0 | 24 2 | 11 0 | 0 7 | 226 5 |
| Seeking full-time work | 1983 | 70 3 | 67 5 | 14 2 | 8 0 | 0 6 | 160 5 |
| | 1984 | 77 6 | 76 9 | 17 7 | 9 8 | 0 6 | 182 5 |
| | 1985 | 81 0 | 87 2 | 20 8 | 10 3 | 0 7 | 200 0 |
| | 1986 | 84 3 | 86 2 | 19 8 | 9 1 | 0 3 | 199 6 |
| Seeking part-time work | 1983 | 3 2 | 12 8 | 2 5 | 1 3 | 0 4 | 20 2 |
| | 1984 | 2 9 | 12 7 | 3 5 | 2 1 | 0 6 | 21 7 |
| | 1985 | 3 1 | 13 0 | 3 1 | 1 6 | 0 7 | 21 5 |
| | 1986 | 4 3 | 15 8 | 4 5 | 1 9 | 0 4 | 26 9 |
| Total Labour Force | 1983 | 366 2 | 591 9 | 185 9 | 136 6 | 44 3 | 1 324 8 |
| | 1984 | 363 0 | 604 3 | 185 8 | 133 3 | 40 1 | 1 326 3 |
| | 1985 | 359 2 | 612 4 | 184 6 | 128 6 | 36 0 | 1 320 7 |
| | 1986 | 348 0 | 628 7 | 183 8 | 122 9 | 38 1 | 1 321 6 |
| Per Cent | | | | | | | |
| Unemploy- ment Rate (%) | 1983 | 20 1 | 13 6 | 9 0 | 6 8 | 2 3 | 13 6 |
| | 1984 | 22 2 | 14 8 | 11 4 | 8 9 | 3 0 | 15 4 |
| | 1985 | 23 4 | 16 4 | 13 0 | 9 3 | 3 9 | 16 8 |
| | 1986 | 25 4 | 16 2 | 13 2 | 9 0 | 1 8 | 17 1 |

Table 4 Persons Marginally Attached to the Labour Force, 1983-1986

| Category of Marginally Attached | | Males | Females | | | Persons |
|--|------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| | | | Single/ Widowed | Married/ Separated | Total | |
| Thousands | | | | | | |
| Marginally Attached (Total) | 1983 | 8.3 | 2.7 | 4.9 | 7.6 | 15.9 |
| | 1984 | 8.2 | 2.2 | 6.9 | 9.1 | 17.3 |
| | 1985 | 12.7 | 2.8 | 9.3 | 12.1 | 24.8 |
| | 1986 | 11.2 | 2.5 | 7.3 | 9.7 | 20.9 |
| Persons on Lay-Off | 1983 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 4.0 |
| | 1984 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 2.3 |
| | 1985 | 2.6 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 3.2 |
| | 1986 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 2.2 |
| Discouraged Workers | 1983 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 5.6 |
| | 1984 | 3.1 | 1.1 | 5.0 | 6.1 | 9.2 |
| | 1985 | 4.1 | 1.9 | 6.9 | 8.7 | 12.8 |
| | 1986 | 3.5 | 1.0 | 4.8 | 5.8 | 9.3 |
| Persons passively seeking full-time work | 1983 | 3.5 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.4 | 4.9 |
| | 1984 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 4.7 |
| | 1985 | 5.7 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 6.9 |
| | 1986 | 5.9 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 1.6 | 7.5 |
| Persons passively seeking part-time work | 1983 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| | 1984 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| | 1985 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.8 |
| | 1986 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.9 |

DISCUSSION

Terry Corcoran Donal Garvey's paper is a timely one. Already the Labour Force Survey is an important source of data on the main labour force aggregates – and its importance will grow as the annual series, begun in 1983, becomes more established. Yet only a small number of analysts have looked at the nitty-gritty of the LFS and got a feel for its methodology and for the range of data it generates – the latter being inevitably far greater than what is published. This paper – quite apart from addressing the question raised in the title – gives a useful brief guided tour to the potential of the LFS which will encourage greater recourse to it as a basis for research.

In approaching his central theme the author accepts as his starting point the ILO recommendation of 1982, but enters a caution as to the need to take additional account – over and above that suggested by the recommendation – of

- (a) part-time work
- (b) under-employment
- (c) discouragement

In each case the likely "correction" to the ILO unemployment rate as a measure of the failure of the labour market would be upwards – in the case of (a) by a downward adjustment of the denominator and in cases (b) and (c) by some notional upward adjustment of the numerator. It may of course also be necessary to adjust for the ILO treatment of someone seeking part-time work as being the equivalent, in terms of unemployment, of someone seeking full-time work. These issues are re-addressed in a more concrete context at the end of the paper.

The effect of actually applying the ILO framework to the Irish case is the main subject-matter of the paper. This is done systematically by reference to a number of questions in the LFS. The process – identifying as it does some 27 different groups within the adult population by reference solely to their relationship to the labour market – illustrates rather well the author's point in the introduction on the complexity of the concepts underlying the apparently simple notions of employment and unemployment.

The main effects can be seen in Table D and a number of the appendices. Most notably, as compared to the PES approach, the ILO approach leads to (for 1986)

- (i) transfer of approximately 30,000 males from unemployment to inactivity (a surprisingly large number of whom were aged under 45)
- (ii) transfer of approximately 35,000 married women from "inactivity" to participation in the labour force – about 7,000 to employment and 28,000 to unemployment, the large majority seeking part-time work

Some other outcomes, though less striking, are of note

- the small number of both underemployed and discouraged workers – in each case about 1% of the labour force
- the fact that only just over 1% of all students had a part-time job

The two main effects, however, lead to a measure of the male unemployment rate which is about 3 percentage points below that generated by the PES approach – the difference being most marked in the 55+ age-group, and an unemployment rate for married females of 22% as opposed to 8% on the PES basis – the difference in this case being most marked among 45–54 year-olds. These changes tend to cancel each other, leaving the overall unemployment rate virtually unchanged.

The author seems to see the main problematic element in all this as being related to the treatment of part-time employment as the equivalent of full-time. For international comparison purposes this may be so – many other countries have a substantial body of part-time work, often of relatively short duration. For the purpose of understanding our own situation in isolation, however, the treatment of part-time job-seeking (which accounts for 24% of the unemployed, and for over half of the married female unemployed) may be more critical than the treatment of part-time work (6% of the employed and 24% of the married female employed). In this context it may be noted that Q44, which is used to establish the active current nature of job-search, tends to assume active job-search over the preceding 4 weeks rather than ask whether it occurred.

While some attempt is made for this in the calculation of a “composite” unemployment rate, it is implicitly assumed that the hours of work sought by part-time job-seekers are equal to the average hours actually worked by part-time workers. I would prefer to see this question formally explored through the survey – together with the duration of second jobs. The working time involved in the latter should, clearly, be included in the calculation of the “composite” rates.

Together with these adjustments, a clearer understanding of the implications of an individual or group falling within the proposed definition of unemployment could be gained by further analysis e.g. by reference to the status of other household members. It would also be useful to explore the relationship between unemployment and registration for UA/UB as shown in the LFS. On the PES basis there has been a steady upward trend in registration in recent years.

Finally, a point as to the potential of the survey instrument, per se, to identify some of the phenomena referred to in the paper – such as discouragement, for instance. The small number of discouraged workers identified in the analysis for 1986 casts some doubt on the extent of this potential, I feel. Many people who would be in the labour force if there were greater employment

opportunities are unaware of the fact - and the extent of discouragement if probably better measured through analysis of the sensitivity of participation to demand and other factors. More generally, few decisions in relation to participation, employment and hours of work (both demanded and supplied) are taken other than in the context of the return to employment and of other income. Without linked data on individual and household financial circumstances, the explanatory power of the LFS is inevitably limited.

Paddy Teahon I would like to join Terry Corcoran in thanking Donal Garvey for his excellent paper and in seconding the vote of thanks to that effect. I found the paper extremely interesting as I am sure all here this evening did. I believe that it shows the usefulness of the Labour Force Survey in generating information for policy purposes.

I should say that I see myself speaking tonight in my capacity as a member of the National Statistics Board.

I would like to talk briefly about three different aspects of the paper or three ways in which the paper impinges on other policy related issues of the employment and unemployment situation.

- the differences between statistics derived from administrative records in the employment and unemployment area such as the Live Register and purpose designed statistics such as the Labour Force Survey. I believe there is an important issue of avoiding confusion in the general release of statistics in this area.
- the policy uses to which statistics on employment and unemployment are put and the consequences of what Donal Garvey has had to say here this evening.
- a few brief comments on the future of work and the implications of that for statistics on employment and unemployment.

I believe that, because statistics derived from administrative records become available earlier and more frequently than those from purpose designed surveys, these are what are seen to be, and generally accepted as, the employment and unemployment statistics. The Live Register figures are published each month and are derived without reference to the nature of the unemployment in question. They represent an aggregate view of unemployment and are generally interpreted in terms of the trend they disclose rather than the precise level of the different components within them. Unemployment statistics derived from the Labour Force Survey become available on a much less regular basis, currently once a year, and with a significant time lag after the date to which they refer. The reality is that few people, outside of those specifically involved in their work or research in this area, are aware that there is not a one for one correspondence between statistics from the Labour Force Survey and those from the Live Register. I

believe then that we need to distinguish clearly the nature of and purpose to which statistics are put to use so that we can avoid confusion surrounding that use. Evidence from other countries suggests that changes in definitions of unemployment are often viewed with suspicion. It is not difficult to concede that, without careful preparation and explanation, any attempt to change the definition of unemployment as at present included in the Live Register would give rise to considerable confusion and outright opposition to the change. The trend in unemployment as disclosed over a period of years by the Live Register and the Labour Force Survey is not significantly different and there is no intra-year trend available from the Labour Force Survey to compare with that from the Live Register.

On the issue of the uses to which employment and unemployment statistics are put for policy proposals, I believe the Labour Force Survey is potentially of tremendous use. Here also the users of the statistics are fully aware both of the nature of what they are dealing with and the use to which the statistics will be put. They will not be subject to confusion as to what precisely it is that is being measured. I believe we should have much greater examination analysis and policy prescription of the rich potential offered by the Labour Force Survey in all areas of the labour market. I believe Donal Garvey has made a most useful contribution to that process this evening. I look forward to further contributions both from people working in the Central Statistics Office and from those outside the office since I believe that a good deal of useful work remains to be done in the analysis of and policy prescriptions on the Irish Labour Market.

Finally, on the future of work and the additional headaches that this is likely to pose for the statistician in the employment and unemployment area, the experts here tell us that in the future more people will work from their homes. This will bring us to an area where as many of us here will know this evening people already work at home in large numbers who are not included in the employment statistics. As I understand it the reason for this is that statistics of housewives are excluded because their product is not included in the national accounts which of course simply begs the issue. I have spoken already about definitions of employment and unemployment that rely on the numbers of hours worked. It seems to me that whatever possibility there is of determining the length of time we work in the office away from home it would be extremely difficult to distinguish between periods of work and leisure if they were all taking place in the same location.

Bill Keating Firstly, I would like to join with others in congratulating Donal Garvey on a very interesting paper. My main interest in tonight's topic arises from my involvement in inquiries into employment of businesses or public sector bodies. It is from this perspective that I would like to offer some thoughts on other problems in the area of measurement of employment levels.

In the first place, inquiries to business will obtain data on *jobs* as opposed to *persons*. One person may hold jobs in two areas (e.g., two part-time jobs) or

two jobs in one sector (e.g., full-time day teaching and part-time teaching for night classes), some persons here tonight may well lecture part-time at night in addition to their full-time job. Even within the same organisation it is not always possible to distinguish the number of persons as opposed to the number of jobs, it is clearly impossible if one is dealing with a range of organisations. This is one of the major advantages of the Labour Force Survey approach – each person is allocated to one category only.

Then, in terms of classification to economic activity sector, there are problems such as the allocation of persons providing services to a former employer. There have been a number of instances where former employees of a firm (e.g., drivers) are now self-employed but providing services to their former employers. In inquiries completed by their former employers, these persons will *not* be shown as employees but their own perception of their status as expressed in the Labour Force Survey is debatable.

Similarly many more self-employed people are probably being contracted to provide services on a more or less permanent basis to one firm and the same question arises as to their perception of their status. Is a person working in the same business on a regular basis and receiving a regular fee likely to regard himself or herself as an employee although not being so regarded by the employer?

So, while the employment series in industry is still a good *indicator of trends*, its use, for example, in measuring trends in productivity must, for the above and other reasons, be very limited. In fact, labour productivity as such is far less meaningful now than in the past.

A further area of difficulty is that of the various schemes mentioned by Donal. In the case of the Work Experience programme, a weekly allowance is payable by the employer who is then reimbursed by the Department of Labour. While this person is and should be regarded as an employee, is s/he so regarded by the employer who may not have him or her on the payroll as such because of the administrative arrangements. Irrespective of the definition CSO may lay down in its questionnaires, it is clearly a fact of life that the data we get is largely determined by the available records.

I could go on to list especially the difficulties in measuring employment in the building sector, especially as regards labour-only sub-contractors, but this would only give rise to further confusion having already added to the range of issues raised in this thought provoking paper.

Donal Murphy I would like to join with other speakers in congratulating Donal Garvey on the very interesting paper which he has presented to the Society tonight. I had a ring-side seat during his preparation of the paper and, therefore, can vouch for the amount of work that went into it and the mountains of computer print-out which had to be trawled to develop the framework which he is proposing. On behalf of the CSO I would also like to pay tribute to the manner in which he has directed the demography work of the

Office in recent years and the contributions which he made as the Irish representative at international meetings on this topic

Indeed, Donal is ideally suited to the project he tackled in this paper since he participated in the special sub-committee which drafted the ILO Resolution at the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva in 1982. He also participated in the review of the Resolution at the 14th Conference held last year. On both occasions he was a very active participant. Although his purpose in writing tonight's paper was to generate general discussion on this important topic it must also have been a very interesting personal experience for him to translate what he discussed theoretically into a practical operation system.

The 1982 ILO Resolution is not fully specific on all matters. This would have been impossible since the Resolution had to be acceptable to all ILO member countries with differing labour markets. For example, the *job search* period is not specified. The EEC and OECD countries have adopted a four week period, different results would emerge if a longer or shorter period were taken. As Donal mentions in his paper the Resolution allows a relaxation of the *job search* criterion in the definition of unemployed in circumstances where labour market absorption is low. This would directly affect the numbers classified as unemployed and the treatment of discouraged workers. One interesting aspect to note is that although the Resolution specifies that the *availability for work* criterion should relate to the survey reference period, EEC countries apply this to the two week period *following* the interview. The choice made in this regard inevitably affects the figures and relating the question to the following fortnight necessarily introduces a degree of subjectivity into the answer given by respondents. The Resolution touches only very peripherally on the very difficult concept of *discouragement*.

The concept of *employment* in the proposed new ILO-based framework does not appear to present problems, the results obtained differ little from those based on the traditional *Principal Economic Status* (PES) approach. However, the minimum one-hour work requirement is not something which people would commonly perceive as employment. It means, for example, that my school-going daughter who did two hours baby-sitting last week would be classed as employed, or a long-term unemployed person who happened to do some paid odd jobs in the reference week would be similarly treated. This raises the question whether the employment category based on this ILO recommended basis should distinguish between *regular* (full and part-time) jobs and *occasional/seasonal* work. Indeed, the Interdepartmental Study Group on Unemployment statistics in its 1979 report recommended that only persons with a "regular or principal job" should be classified as employed¹. There is also the question of persons in State training schemes. These are almost all classified as being employed under the ILO system. Because of the large number of such persons and likely arguments about whether they should or should not be classed as at work, consideration might also be given to the

desirability of distinguishing them as a separate category in any new ILO-based framework

Although the point is not made in the paper the ILO-based concept of *unemployment* also uses the minimum level of one hour's work in the job search criterion. In practice, I personally can't envisage how a person would purposely search for occasional work. I would imagine that much of this type of work occurs without a job search – people offering such work (e.g. babysitting) generally know somebody is available and approach them directly. However, there are people who want or are in a position only to do occasional/seasonal work and so there may again be some justification for distinguishing those unemployed people looking for regular work from the others.

From the range of questions in the current Labour Force Survey it is not possible to identify "*true discouraged workers*" very definitively. Discouragement is a nebulous concept which has to be tied down far more tightly – for example, by reference to previous work experience, previous job search activity, age, family circumstances, etc. The *lay-off* generates arguments not only at international meetings but also closer to home. My problem with this category is that it embraces people ranging from those who have been recently laid-off with an almost certainty of return to the same job to those who have been laid-off a long time with little or no hope of returning. If the former could be distinguished they would in my view quite legitimately be classified as unemployed, but this would need additional questions in the LFS.

What are the implications of changing over to a new framework based on the ILO recommendations? A complete change over would result in discontinuity and the loss of Census of Population benchmark figures which are currently available on the PES basis. In reality, the approach adopted would be to use the new framework to *supplement* the existing traditional PES approach – i.e. to have the benefit of both methods. This would have the advantage that the benefits of the proposed early publication of the traditional labour force results from the annual Labour Force Survey (LFS), planned from 1988 onwards by specially processing the specially extracted answers to a few LFS questions separately from the rest, which was referred to by Paddy Teahon, would continue to be available. This would not be possible for a new framework based on the ILO recommendation since it necessitates the processing of full survey detail.

The purpose of Donal Garvey's paper was to precipitate discussion on what would be the best framework to be adopted nationally based on the ILO recommendations. The CSO would welcome all comments particularly when people have had time to analyse the details of the framework on which the paper is based. They could at the same time consider the LFS itself. The information collected in this survey is largely determined by EEC Regulation and has remained essentially unchanged for some time. A review of the LFS is commencing shortly in order to make the survey more relevant to the post

1992 Single Market situation Any contributions on this topic would also be welcome

E Embleton I would like to be associated with the vote of thanks to Donal Garvey for his timely and well thought-out analysis of alternative measures of employment and unemployment I am aware that he has long studied such measures and devoted many hours to compiling and analysing them His presentation here tonight is ample testimony of his in-depth knowledge and understanding of the concepts and related measurement problems involved We owe him a debt of gratitude for sharing that knowledge and understanding with us

In making a contribution to the discussion, I do not wish to raise particular points or issues in relation to the alternative measures Instead, I want to draw attention to the longstanding Live Register statistics, particularly the end-of-month count This count has an established status as a widely accepted indicator of the trends in the numbers unemployed It has several advantages over any possible alternative – it is an up-to-date, accurate measure of the number of persons on the Live Register, it is regularly available, it is near-universally accepted and, significantly, it is readily understood The latter is important to users – other measures would lack this quality We know it is not perfect but clearly, we do not as yet have a better or more up-to-date and regularly available alternative Thus, while the alternative measures discussed here tonight have undoubted appeal and merits – they most certainly provide much-needed information on select groups within the total unemployed – they will not be seen by users as constituting appropriate replacements for the existing indicator Indeed, despite the inadequacies of the monthly count, I doubt if the users would thank us if we were to replace it

Reply by D Garvey I would like to thank all of the speakers who contributed to the discussion I will confine this reply to just some of the more interesting points raised

A few speakers mentioned the inherent advantages of measures of employment/unemployment derived from administrative sources compared with those derived following complex analysis of survey responses

In relation to measures of employment, there are no such administrative sources which can usefully be utilised at present The employer files of the Revenue Commissioners are not up to date and even if they were they suffer from two disadvantages

- the P35 is supposed to cover all persons from whom any deduction was made *at any time during the year*
- the details relate to *employments (jobs) rather than persons* since the same person can be returned by more than one employer

The PAYE/PRSI file suffers from disadvantages such as persons with multiple numbers, a large number of persons on the emergency system, many

un-numbered records, etc. However, the Department of Social Welfare is trying to introduce a more unified approach to recipients and the Revenue Commissioners are making a similar effort for taxpayers. Developments will have to be carefully monitored to maximise the statistical output from these systems.

On the unemployment side there is of course the end-of-month Live Register count. There are undoubtedly clear advantages of simplicity, frequency and timeliness associated with this count and it is a reasonable indicator of short-term trends in unemployment. It could however be regarded as a "quick fix" for certain types of user – the casual journalist looking for sensation rather than understanding, or the politician who in the normal cut and thrust of political debate is mainly interested in scoring points. It also suffers from the disadvantage of having to reflect changes in the administrative rules relating to UB/UA and we are all aware that the many tinkering with the system in the UK, for example, have tended to attract media comment which seems to have undermined public confidence in UK statistics generally. Whatever the limitations involved in the Live Register as a measure of unemployment, I am sure that short of moving to a monthly LFS, it will continue to be a useful indicator of short-term trends in unemployment.

In recent years the value of the LFS data has been increasingly recognised, to the extent that we now produce on an annual basis up to 400 special tables according to the specifications of users. Very little detailed analysis or labour market policy formulation takes place without leaning to some extent on LFS data. I am confident that the relative transparency of very useful structural information (e.g. on part-time work and search for part-time work) yielded by the approach I have outlined will increase the demand for LFS data in the future.

Some comments of a definitional nature have been raised – all of which I have heard argued before (often very heatedly) in one forum or another and on which I don't propose to dwell just now.

Finally, I would have to acknowledge that the power or inherent potential of the LFS to measure more peripheral matters such as "discouragement" may indeed be fairly limited.