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**Critical Interpretive Research into the Life World
Experiences of Mature-Aged Workers Marginalised from
the Labour Force**

By

**Christopher Jacob Kossen
B.A, G.Dip.A(Dist), G.Dip.FET(Dist), M.A.**

**Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences
School of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Sociology
James Cook University**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the subjective life world experiences of a group of mature-aged workers in regional Australia who are marginalised from the labour market, either by having no employment, or insufficient employment. The context of these marginalised mature-aged workers is shaped by key factors explored in this thesis, including negative stereotypes of ageing, employer discrimination and the emergence of a core-periphery labour market, where many workers remain trapped on the periphery. Given these contextual factors it is not surprising that participants in the study were frustrated by what they perceived as discrimination by employers and employment agencies, based on a perception that they were unable to adapt to the dynamics of the new economy. Participants also complained that services available from both Centrelink and the Job Network were demeaning and inappropriate for their needs. The thesis also explores the impact of labour force marginalisation on participants' financial, psychological and relationship experiences and concludes that unemployment and underemployment cause considerable disadvantage and distress. The thesis concludes with a discussion of three workshops provided to participants as a means of addressing: firstly, potentially debilitating psychological impacts of labour force marginalisation; secondly, the individualisation of blame for labour force marginalisation associated with neoliberal rhetoric and; thirdly, literacy-based job search strategies that are designed to help participants attain desirable employment outcomes. This study provides some support for the utility of workshops based on action research principles as an intervention-based measure for the benefit of marginalised workers. Overall this study provides qualitative support to complement the existing body of predominately quantitative research in this field.

Related Publication and Conference

Activities during Candidature

Kossen, C. & Pedersen, C. 2008, "Older Workers in Australia: The myths, the realities and the battle over workforce 'flexibility'", *Journal of Management Organisation*, 14(1).
<http://jmo.e-contentmanagement.com/archives/vol/14/issue/1/article/2024/older-workers-in-australia>

Kossen, C. & Pedersen, C. 2006, "Myths and realities: a critical exposé of older workers and industrial relations reforms in Australia" Australian and New Zealand Association of Management (ANZAM), *Management: Pragmatism, Philosophy, Priorities*, (Referred Conference Paper), 6-9 Dec 2006, Yeppoon, Australia.
<http://eprints.usq.edu.au/1756/>

Kossen, C. & Wilkinson, R. 2005 "Gold Collar Workers: Golden Future or Impoverished Futures" *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 10(2) 698-712.

Kossen, C. 2005, "Age Discrimination from the Perspective of Marginalised Mature-Aged Workers", Special Guest Presentation (invited) to mark the first anniversary of the Federal *Age Discrimination Act (2004)*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), Sydney.

Kossen, C. 2003, "Underemployment among older workers: A barrier to financial security", *Age, Work and Employment: Thinking about the Future*, (Refereed Conference Paper), June 2003, Stirling Management Centre: University of Stirling, Scotland UK.

Kossen, C. 2003, "Marginalisation of Mature Age Workers: Combating the Problem with Participatory Action Research", *Emerging Researches on Ageing*, Conference Paper (Refereed) Proceedings, Australasian Centre on Ageing, Brisbane, 22-27.

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