

Women and Gender Equity in Employment

Patterns, progress and challenges

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Abstract

Over the last forty years there has been a transformation in the gender composition of the UK workforce as women are increasingly likely to be in paid employment for the major part of their adult lives. Women have entered an increasing range of occupations and sectors and secured high level positions within some firms and organisations.

Yet gender imbalances remain with respect to the scale and form of employment and in remuneration. In many ways the organisation of the workplace and the domestic division of labour retain the imprint of a male breadwinner society which presents a challenge to gender equity within employment and in society more generally. So despite progress concerns remain regarding employment segregation, the value of women's work and the uneven division of domestic labour. These are recurring themes in the literature over the last forty years so¹ the processes leading to these outcomes merit continued attention.

This paper is divided into two sections: patterns and progress; and challenges and make some tentative recommendations by way of conclusion. It was commissioned by IES as part of its Visiting Fellows scheme, marking the Institute's 40th anniversary.

1. Patterns and Progress²

There has been a gender revolution in employment relations in the UK but an incomplete one. Between 1971 and 2008, the gender gap in employment and economic inactivity fell owing to divergent trends in women's and men's employment and economic inactivity rates. Women's employment rate has increased and economic inactivity rate decreased while for most of the period male trends have been in the reverse direction (Figure 1). The rate of change slows from the late 1990s as male employment increased between 1993 and 2004. The recession starting in 2007/8 is not yet evident in the annual statistics, though trends for the first quarter of 2009 all indicate employment decline for women and men: vacancies and economic activity and the employment rates are all down, while redundancies and unemployment are rising, threatening to reverse some of the employment gains and moves towards greater gender equity made over the last forty years.³

The 1960s sexual revolution and changes in reproductive technologies widened women's choice beyond marriage and childbirth. Women could take a long term view of their future; increasing numbers entered higher education and raised the proportion of graduates from around one quarter in the late 1960s to over half by 2007.⁴ Consequentially women have increased their presence in professional and managerial work and cracked the glass ceiling by occupying positions of power and responsibility in the public and private spheres.⁵ Whether for intrinsic or instrumental reasons these moves were facilitated by the institutionalisation of some second wave feminist demands⁶ in the equal opportunities and equal pay legislation⁷ and since 1998 by enhanced childcare provision with the National Childcare Strategy.⁸ Now public bodies even have a duty to promote gender equality, alongside other dimensions of social identity currently linked with labour market disadvantage, including: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age. These measures are brought together in the Equalities Legislation and reflected in the establishment of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. In addition in the decade ending in 2008, employment expanded year on year, sustained by a growing economy and employment and welfare policies aimed to ensure 'employment opportunity for all' with 'work for those who can, security for those who cannot' (see DWP 1999). This move towards an adult worker model reflects a profound change in social thinking from the male breadwinner model inscribed in post-war welfare policy.⁹

The equal pay legislation and subsequent amendments such as equal pay for work of equal value in 1983 were particularly significant in challenging pay differentials.¹⁰ A notable success was the Cumbrian National Health Service (NHS) workers, who, in 2005, after an eight year legal case, secured one of the largest ever equal value claims. They established comparability between women; working in a variety of occupations

including: nursing, healthcare and catering; with men; working as craftsmen, joiners and wall washers.¹¹ Overall, the gender pay gap has declined since the early 1970s (Figure 2) and especially so among full time employees in younger age groups, reaching parity in 2008 for full time workers aged between 22 and 29 at the median and a pay gap of 5 per cent to women's advantage in the upper quartile of the distribution (Figure 3).¹²

Rising employment and earnings reflects and contributes to changing social attitudes towards gender roles and to gender equity. Women are now able to access credit and acquire mortgages without a male guarantor and have more choice with respect to living arrangements. Nearly all occupations and sectors are more gender balanced than forty years ago. Nonetheless, progress has been slow and uneven. The comparatively high employment rate is moderated by recognising that around 40 per cent of women work part time, a figure that has remained stable for nearly twenty years, compared to only 10 per cent of men¹³ and part time workers are concentrated into a narrow range of occupations where they face a much wider pay gap.¹⁴ Motherhood is the key variable; full time work falling from 90 per cent to 40 per cent on the birth of the first child in the mid 2000s.¹⁵ Horizontal and vertical employment segregation remains; responsibilities within households continue to be unevenly distributed and despite the improvement referred to above, the UK has an above average gender pay gap compared to other member states of the European Union, ranking 23rd among the EU 27.¹⁶

So regardless of progress and increasingly supportive legislation many challenges remain. In the section below I address three key challenges to greater labour market equity: segregation, pay and value; time use; and cultural understandings of appropriate gender roles and responsibilities. The discussion is contextualised within the contemporary economy shaped by globalisation, rising inequality, new forms of employment and new employment forms.

2. Challenges

2.1 Context - globalisation, rising inequality, new employment forms and new forms of employment

Situating patterns of gender inequality within a broader economic context helps to identify the underlying processes and to differentiate between those linked to the overall economy that may require redress by state policies, those that can be tackled by firms and organisations, and issues that relate more directly to individuals and households, though all these are interrelated.

Contemporary labour markets are shaped by globalisation, new information and communication technologies, new forms of employment arising from economic restructuring towards services and new employment forms. New employment forms have arisen in the context of economic deregulation and include privatisation of public sector services, sub contracting of non core business and greater flexibility of working times, contracts, status and locations. These changes have expanded employment but simultaneously weakened career structures and the collective power of workers.¹⁷ Employment profiles are flatter, inhibiting career progression and making equal opportunity claims, such as the NHS workers referred to above, difficult, as there are fewer potential comparators within the same organisation.

In high income OECD countries these changes are coincident with rising earnings inequalities and a fall in the share of output accruing to labour, especially the low paid.¹⁸ Between 1985 and 2005 earnings dispersion (P90/P10) increased by around 11 per cent for women and 10 per cent for men in eleven OECD countries (the OECD 11).¹⁹ For both women and men the increase was greater at the upper end of the distribution (P90/P50) 8 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, but when full time workers are taken together the increase in inequality is less marked owing to a decline in the gender wage gap.

The UK matches these overall trends though inequalities between women began to fall in the second half of the 2000's while inequalities among men continued to widen (see Figure 4). Higher paid men are moving further away from lower paid men and from women. The outcome of these divergent trends is a fall in the gender pay gap (see Figure 5).²⁰ This fall reflects women's entry into higher paid professional and managerial jobs, consequent upon their rising qualifications and increased amount of time spent in employment²¹ and the movement of men into lower paid service work as manufacturing employment declined.²² So while the gender wage gap has narrowed from 28.7 per cent in 1975 to 12 per cent in 2006 (median hourly earnings for full time workers), the size of the gap varies across the distribution and is higher

and more resilient in the upper decile, remaining at around 20 per cent between 1998 and 2008, and even there it is understated as the highest earners are excluded.

Orthodox explanations for rising overall earnings inequality emphasise either globalisation, migration and trade or skill biased technological change, and while debates between these perspectives continue, in essence, both relate to a polarisation in employment with increases in both well paid professional and managerial jobs and in lower paid work in personal services as middle level manufacturing work has been largely offshored.²³ Paul Krugman (2002) argues that neither of these explanations convincingly explains the dramatic widening of earnings inequalities in the US, especially in the top decile, and suggests instead that social norms have become more tolerant of greater inequality. Similar arguments have been made for the UK, by Tony Atkinson (2002) who refers to new social codes. These explanations are rarely differentiated by gender, but the studies specifically on the gender wage gap tend to neglect these wider social determinations of change and focus only on individual characteristics which is limiting in a different way. In the discussion below these explanations are integrated to some degree.

2.2 Value and pay: segregation; overvaluation of “men’s” and undervaluation of “women’s” work

The majority of studies on the gender pay gap are underpinned by human capital theory, so focus mainly on individual qualifications and years of experience even though these generally account for only a third of the gap. The ‘unexplained’ part is attributed to discrimination and left largely unexplained. Some studies include occupational segregation, understood as the concentration of women into occupations with high proportions of female workers.²⁴ Segregation remains remarkably resilient in the UK; over 50 per cent of women work in just 10 (out of 77) occupations and the 5 C’s: cashiering, caring, clerical, cleaning and catering still characterise the major share of women’s work alongside teaching. Men are more likely to be managers and senior officials, process, plant and machine operatives and in ‘skilled trades.’²⁵ Additionally, the extent of occupational concentration varies by contract and is particularly high among part time women whose range of occupations is far more limited and much more confined to stereotypically feminised forms of work.²⁶

Women’s share of professional and managerial occupations has increased but even within these spheres finer level job segregation leads to continuing gender inequality.²⁷ For example a longitudinal study of graduates found significant pay gaps of 14.9 per cent within three and a half years of graduation, and 18.5 per cent after seven. The gap was linked to working hours, public or private status but industry sector, workplace job segregation and degree subject were also important,

with 8 per cent left unexplained. This example illustrates that qualifications and different forms of work are gendered and valued differently with those subjects and occupations where women predominate valued less highly, so graduate qualifications alone are not sufficient to bring about gender equality in employment outcomes (Purcell et al, 2005).

Focusing on individual variables tends to emphasise 'gender deficits' rather than context and overlooks how the work environment, labour market and wider economy are shaped by gendered norms and assumptions that operate to women's disadvantage (Rubery et al 2005). Making this point is crucial because it broadens the explanation from a form of methodological individualism to include social explanations of change. Raising these broader social questions is important because although individuals can raise their level of qualifications, qualifications alone are not sufficient to generate gender equity (Purcell et al 2005) and what are currently low paid jobs will continue to exist, indeed predicted to expand (Lawton 2009) so these individual solutions will be unable to remedy gender inequity in society without further change in either the gender composition of sectors and occupations or in the value of work.

This wider perspective raises questions about the comparative value and status of work and how wages are determined. If wages are partially determined by social norms, then it opens the way for questioning the current earnings distributions and examining the link between pay and the social value of different forms of work, which is central to questions of gender equity given continuing segregation in employment, by occupation.

Damian Grimshaw and Jill Rubery (2007) identify 5 V's that help to account for the undervaluation of jobs done disproportionately by women: visibility; relating to the compression of a range of skills into a single group and the correspondingly limited opportunities for career progression; valuation; which refers to the low value accorded to the skills involved; vocation; the way that complex work is attributed to women's "natural talents" rather than skills; value-added; the comparatively low monetary value of the output; and finally, variance; the fact that women are over represented in part time employment which in the UK *de facto* if not *de jure* confines them to a narrower range of sectors and occupations, where many experience downward occupational mobility and a much wider pay gap.²⁸

Relating these dimensions specifically to one field of employment in which women are over represented - care work: by which I mean the tasks of social reproduction and include childcare, elder care and some aspects of nursing and teaching, helps to clarify the link between 'women's' work and low pay. With respect to visibility, while there are hierarchical career structures within carework: in childcare, ranging from qualified teachers and nurses to classroom and assistants with little formal

training, the work itself, involves direct personal encounters and people's needs are often unpredictable and not easily differentiated by task or 'skill', at least not at the moment required. So in practice the work done often involves a range of tasks. As a formally qualified nursery manager referring to work of assistants, commented 'they have an equal say in planning and in contact with the children, there is no difference in the work they do.'²⁹ Yet, pay differences vary by qualification, though, the highly qualified in these sectors, earn considerably less than equivalently qualified people working in more masculinised sectors and occupations.³⁰ In this respect, it is commonplace to link women's work to their vocation, the idea that they are using their natural talents rather than formal skills, and as a consequence they do not require commensurate monetary recompense.

Carework is characterised by low value added in the sense that the output has a low market value partly because of its economic properties. Care is a composite good (Folbre and Nelson 2000), simultaneously consisting of guarding, (preventing any harm), caring for identifiable bodily needs and nurturing. It involves direct human encounters, so possesses an inherently affective dimension that also makes measurement difficult and limits productivity increases, unless the character of the work is profoundly, and many would consider adversely, changed, so overall relative costs tend to rise over time. As these properties are rarely acknowledged in social policy, rising costs are often attributed to an assumed inefficiency of the public sector and as a consequence to privatisation. The private producers often struggle to make profit and many do so by restricting their services to an elite or subsidised clientele and by employing people with labour market disadvantage on low wages.³¹

By exploring the character of carework it is possible to account for some of the reasons for low pay and given women's over representation in this sector, for one dimension of the gender pay gap. What is less clear is why the work in these sectors is not regarded as being more skilled and why the social value of this form of work is not recognised and rewarded. If asked people generally express a greater preference for the well being of family and friends above material rewards. In addition good quality carework creates positive social externalities or social gains in terms of more educated and rounded social citizens. Recognising the social value of the work provides an economically rational argument for this sector and the workers employed therein to receive a larger share of social output. It might also be argued that the social value is far higher than that arising from the work of highly paid workers in finance. As Adair Turner Chair of the Financial Services Authority argued with respect to high level finance workers, high market returns and associated earnings 'can just as easily reflect market imperfections rather than proof of social value as Adair Turner (2009:5).³²

Currently, women are over represented in low paying occupations and sectors, yet the social value of what they do might be considered equally if not more worthwhile.

With respect to social values, care and finance work, both reflect market misrecognition or imperfection; finance is associated with negative social externalities and some very overpaid workers while carework is associated with positive social externalities and underpaid workers. Less well understood, though repeatedly found, are the processes driving the gendering of these activities. I turn very briefly to some ideas from gender theory to help explain the gendering of employment segregation in the final section but first turn to the continuing uneven division of labour with respect to childcare and domestic opportunities which in part is a reflection of uneven pay and continues to constrain women's opportunities in the workplace. Similarly to occupational segregation it also reflects deeply embedded norms and assumptions about appropriate gender roles.

2.2.3 Working times and the uneven gendered distribution of domestic labour

One of the most striking changes in employment patterns over the last forty years has been the increasing proportion of mothers, including those of very young children, in paid employment so households now supply more paid labour than ever before. The female employment rate is high despite comparatively limited childcare facilities³³ and long working hours for men, especially fathers, with respect to other EU countries. This 'circle is squared' through the majority of mothers working short part-time hours fitted around domestic work and their children's care (Himmelweit and Sigala 2004:455). Women still provide 75 per cent of housework within the family, alongside 38 per cent of hours of paid work, while men's paid and domestic work has remained largely unchanged over the last decade (Harkness 2008) though men express aspirations for being more involved in childcare and have become more involved over the years, supplementing their traditional breadwinning role with nurturing, though the working hours of men, especially among fathers are among the highest in Europe. Similarly to mothers, discussed in more detail below, men's involvement varies by expected working hours, flexibility within and control over working hours, the availability of leave and the extent to which it can be taken without incurring either or both unsupportable financial costs or career penalties as a consequence of stepping outside of expected cultural practices.

The extent of adjustment by mothers is influenced by qualifications and ethnicity (Sigle-Rushton and Perrons 2006). Managerial and professional women are much more likely to retain labour market attachment and to work full time than the lower qualified who are more likely to withdraw from the labour market. Part time work is associated with downward occupational mobility and a steep pay penalty,³⁴ that has scarcely changed over 30 years³⁵ so gender inequality tends to widen on motherhood and overall inequality widens at the household level owing to associative matching in partnering. Professional families are able to afford nannies and private nurseries,

while lower earning families are much more reliant on informal family care, especially grandparents and juggling working hours between parents.³⁶

While the government has consistently advocated a flexible labour market and flexible working times this has not eliminated working time expectations founded on a breadwinner model of the household in senior positions in the private sector even though the proportion of breadwinner households has fallen from over half to less than a quarter in the last thirty years and the modal model is the 1.5 earner household, even in households with dependent children below 5 years old.³⁷

High level professional and managerial work is often organised on the premise of 'total time availability' owing to the 'client based' and 'unpredictable flow of work', 'key deadlines' or more simply the idea that the manager has to 'be there.'³⁸ Yet none of these rationalisations are convincing. Arrangements are made when workers take holidays, albeit accompanied by their Blackberry's, or in cases of personal tragedy, so work can be organised differently. What seems to be lacking is creative imagination with current understandings reflecting deeply embedded gendered norms. The current gender asymmetry with respect to domestic labour, often economically rational given the pay gap, nonetheless 'allows men to mobilize female altruism'³⁹ as women are left to manage work and care. This uneven division of time is a key factor underlying enduring gender inequalities in the labour market, though the extent and form of these constraints varies by social class.⁴⁰

Understandings of gender: Cultural boundaries surrounding understandings of the 'economy' and appropriate gender roles

There are no concrete walls or 'armed guards' barring women's access to the labour market in the western world. What exists instead are 'cultural boundaries' (Epstein 2006:320) or deeply embedded cultural practices and gendered social norms that uphold and reinforce existing practices and understandings of appropriate roles for women and men and the value of different activities. These cultural boundaries or understandings of appropriate gendered behaviours are deeply rooted and have become naturalised through repeated practice and proscribe or at least limit boundary crossings despite the formally permissive equalities legislation.

These practices become cumulative as some social groups or identities are not considered suitable for certain positions and then become unsuitable by virtue of not having had the necessary practice, experience or social networks. The gender of people holding positions becomes identified with those positions, such that leadership and authority 'stick' to and become equated more with men who then shape the notion of leadership as male. Likewise, aptitudes for social care work, perceived to be 'physically but not intellectually challenging,' 'dirty, gruelling and low paid'; stick to women, who are believed to have the apposite "natural

predisposition” or “personality type.”⁴¹ Thus particular economic or social attributes are inextricably identified with particular social beings. In this way occupations become gender stereotyped and while the boundaries are permeable and divisions vary across cultures and over time, indeed such variations reflecting their social/cultural rather than natural construction, they nonetheless have a certain fixity that shapes expectations, making people reluctant to transgress by entering gender incongruent occupations. Occupational segregation itself is therefore one of the strongest influences on career choice leading to segregation being perpetuated from one generation to the next.⁴² Similarly reward structures reflect social understandings of what is deserving or undeserving, what is skilful and what is simply talent, what is worthy of financial recompense and what merits less than a living wage. These notions are gendered yet become sedimented in the social imagination as natural and difficult to challenge.

Conclusions and recommendations

Over the last forty years there have been profound changes in the gender composition of the labour force and more widely in social life, leading to greater gender equity. Workplaces are less segregated, women have moved into positions of power and responsibility, and men have become more involved in childcare. A further significant improvement is greater accessibility to gender disaggregated data which facilitates detailed knowledge of differential positioning in the labour market and within the home.

In many ways there is now greater symmetry between women's and men's lives, but the convergence has been principally one sided, with women being partially assimilated into the largely unmodified masculinised model of working to a greater extent than men have been assimilated into the feminised world of domestic reproduction and care.⁴³ This asymmetric convergence together with continuing gender segregation and a gender pay gap especially in part time work, contributes to enduring disadvantages to women in the labour force, in their life time earnings,⁴⁴ and in retirement incomes. The extent of both gender inequality and disadvantage vary by social class and ethnicity⁴⁵ but effectively the costs of reconciling paid work and family life continue to be borne by women. A further concern is the looming recession, anticipated to be deeper, wider and more prolonged than those of the 1980s or 1990s, giving women less protection than previously.

Formal commitment to equality and diversity is very strong in government and organisational policies. To translate this commitment into substantive outcomes existing strategies could be implemented more effectively. Organisations would secure greater knowledge of inequality by implementing gender pay audits and investigating unwarranted gender differences in pay and promotion. Audits would reveal the existence of gendered practices, if not their underlying processes. Flexibility, in the sense of shorter, rather than unlimited working hours, especially in professional and managerial occupations would reduce occupational downgrading, allow a more efficient use of the labour force and reduce the size of the gender pay gap.⁴⁶ While addressing women's practical gender interests, this practice would not necessarily redress the asymmetry in gender roles between work and care, nor differential life time earnings. More fundamental change would require state policies with respect to overall working times, parental leaves and childcare, in addition to organisational and social change with respect to occupational stereotyping.⁴⁷

Strengthening the National Childcare Strategy to implement 'affordable, accessible and available childcare for all' would allow real choices for parents regarding the division of the time between paid and unpaid work, choices which at present are restricted mainly to higher earners.⁴⁸ Such measures could redress the current

situation whereby an estimated 40 per cent of the female labour force is working below their potential.⁴⁹ A more equitable framework within organisations and the state in turn is likely to lead to more equitable outcomes with respect to the gender division within the home.

With the recession there is some indication that existing gains, including those in legislation, may be lost.⁵⁰ Yet the efficacy of the neo-liberal model under scrutiny and there is renewed interest Keynesian ideas. These ideas would have to be modified to suit the global context and from a gender perspective the concept of the economy would need to be widened to include the reproductive sphere in order to recognise carework as a social investment and reward workers accordingly. As societies reconsider their modus operandi there is an opportunity for restating rather than retreating from the long standing concerns, relating to segregation, pay and time use which sustain the asymmetric convergence in gender roles and gender inequality in work and in the home. The demands for equal pay and childcare provision seemed radical forty years ago yet are now institutionalised. Certainly without radical changes along these lines, gender as a key axis of social differentiation and disadvantage for women could remain for the next forty years and even beyond.

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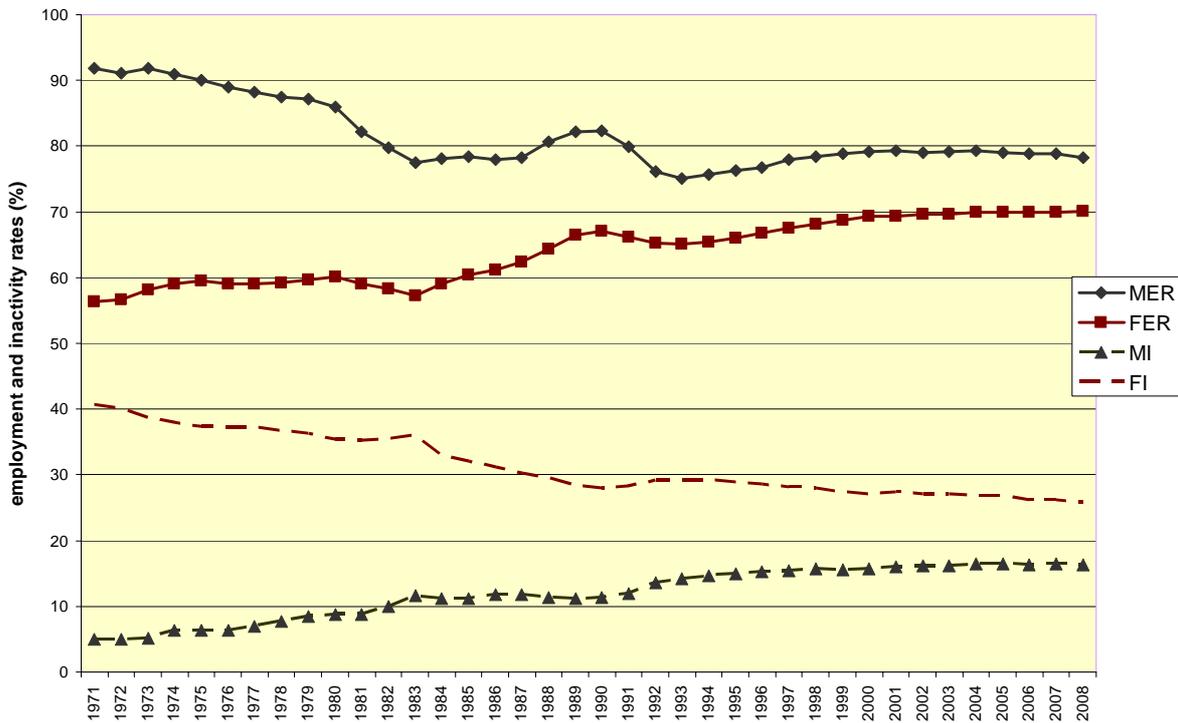
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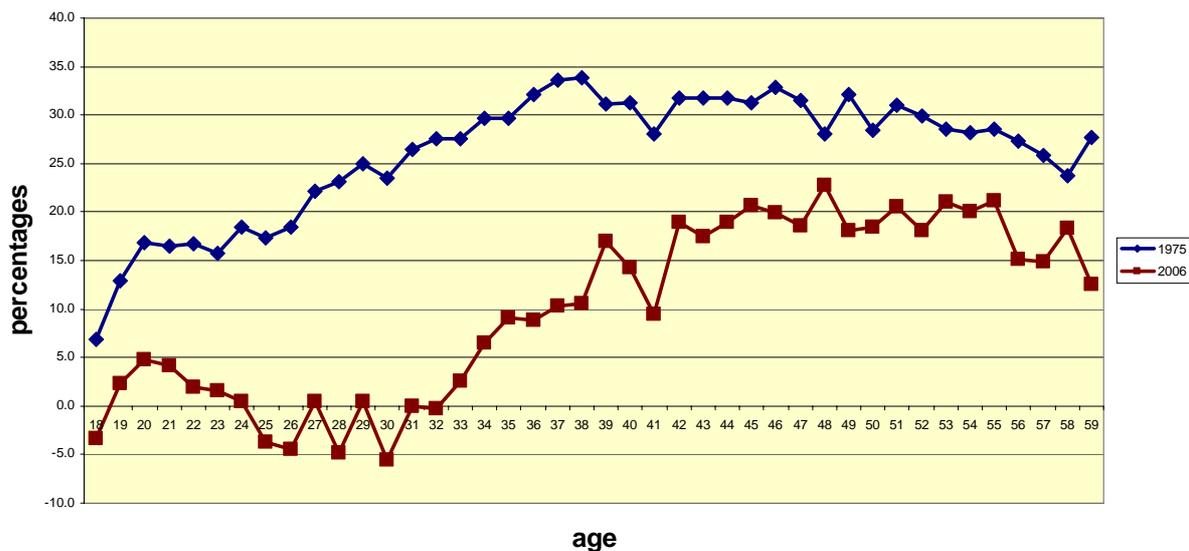
Figure 1 Employment and Labour market Inactivity 1971-2008



NB. Since 1992 - the percentage of female employees who work part time has remained fairly stable hovering between 41 and 43 per cent while the male figure has almost doubled from 5.6 per cent in 1992 to 10.7 per cent towards the end of 2008.

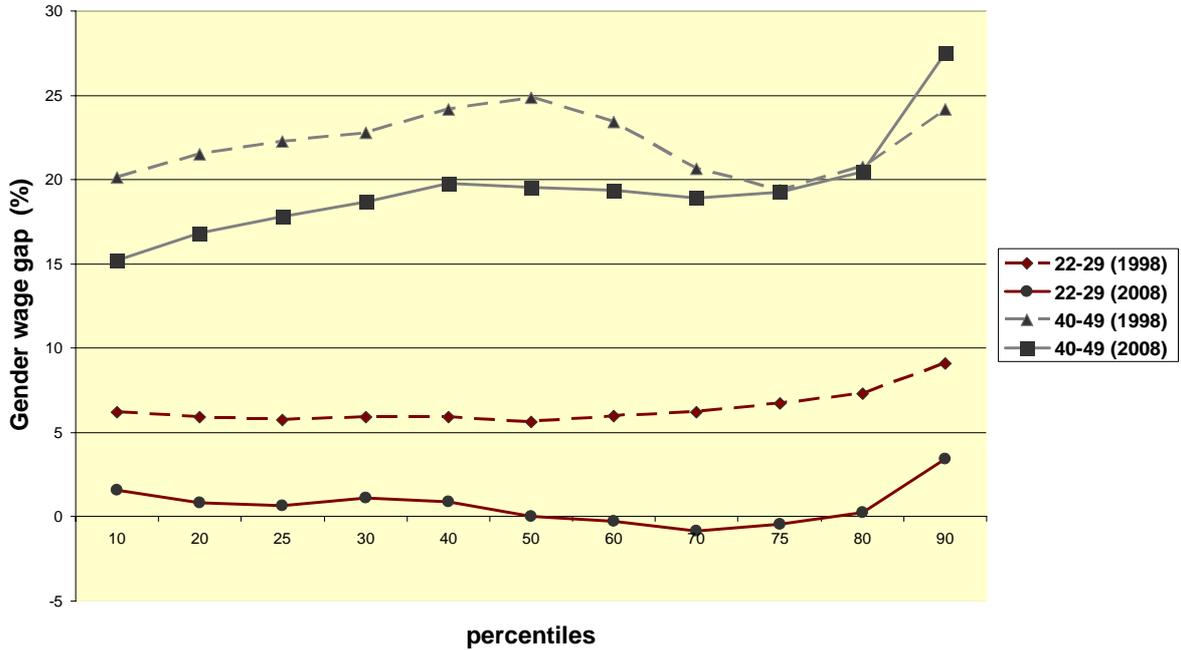
Source: data from ONS. Figures relate to total employees in employment 16-59/64.

Figure 2 Gender pay gap by age 1975 and 2006 full time employees (median hourly earnings (gross earnings including bonus and overtime))



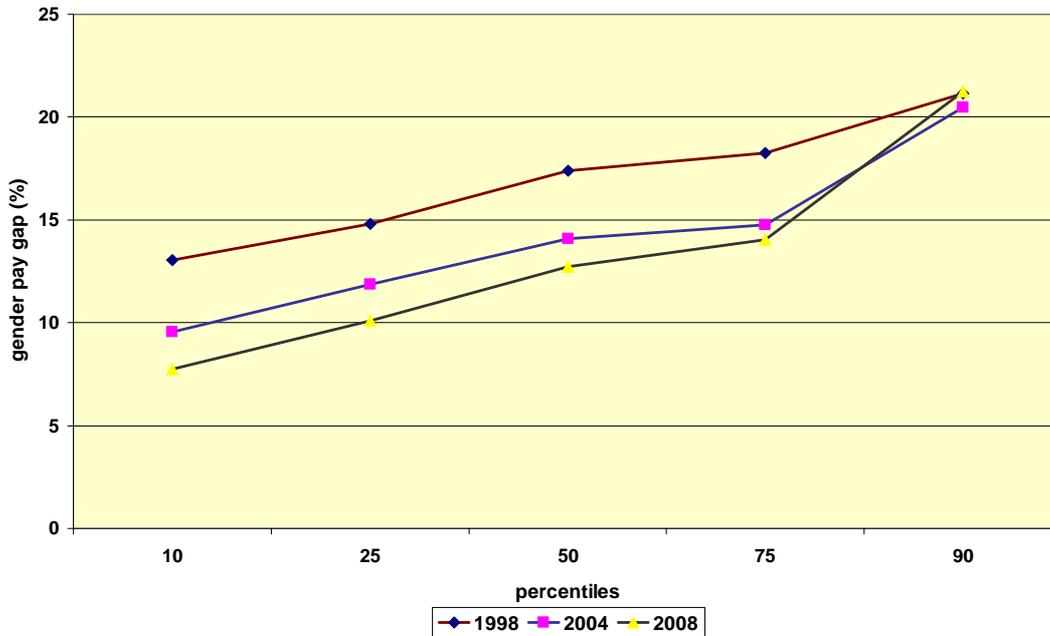
Source: NES panel data. Presented as Figure 6 in Leaker (2008). I am grateful to ONS who supplied me with the data so I could reproduce the diagram.

Figure 3 Gender pay gap selected ages (1998 and 2008) by decile distribution



Source: Measure: ASHE data Table 20 (6a) 1998 and 2008 Hourly earnings excluding overtime

Figure 4 Varying Gender Pay Gap Across the Distribution (percentiles UK 1998- 2008)



Source: Ashe Tables 1.6a 1998, 2004, 2008. Gender wage gap calculated as $100 - (f/m \text{ (decile ratio)}) * 100$. Data relate to men and women aged 16-65m and 16-60f and for hourly earnings excluding overtime

Notes

- ¹ See for example the conclusions of: Miriam Glucksman (writing as Cavendish 1982:163) 'The most immediate priorities for working-class women would seem to be the shortening of the working week, better nursery provision, shops staying open later, fighting equal pay cases, demanding equal job opportunities for girls, and a whole host of other practical changes.' Over twenty years later Rosemary Crompton (2006) writes '(E)vidence in this book suggests that control over working hours would make a major contribution to a reconfiguration of employment and family life. If working hours were shorter, men would be enabled to increase their contribution to the work of caring, and women would be better enabled to avoid the 'mummy track' of part time work.' Crompton recognises that such measures would be unpopular with employers but ..'likely to be necessary if contemporary societies are to effectively adapt to what has become one of the most significant changes in contemporary Western Societies – the recognition of women's equal status to that of men' (2006:218).
- ² This paper does not address unemployment because of the complexity of securing comparable rates over time.
- ³ National Statistics (2009) ONS LFS data shows that the highest levels of employment and lowest levels of inactivity for women and men were recorded in Spring 2008 since when numbers in employment have fallen, though yearly data up until November 2008 still registers a marginal increase in the female employment rate and fall in inactivity rate. For men there is a marginal fall in the employment rate and somewhat conversely in the inactivity rate.
- ⁴ See Dyhouse (2006) who reports that the proportion of women graduates remained largely unchanged between the 1920s and the late 1960s. The 2008 figure comes from the HESA (2008) database.
- ⁵ EHRC (2008) finds that despite progress has been very slow.
- ⁶ Four key feminist demands were equal pay, equal education opportunity, 24 hour nurseries and free abortion and contraception on demand.
- ⁷ In 1962 there were separate pay scales for some professions including teaching.
- ⁸ The strategy was originally outlined in (DWP 1999) and committed the government to providing accessible affordable and available childcare for children 0-14 in every neighbourhood. For a review and assessment of the strategy as it has developed over the years see La Valle and Smith (2009)
- ⁹ Lewis and Guillari (2005).
- ¹⁰ The 1970 Equal Pay Act required equal pay for women and men for the same work and became effective in 1975. Equal pay was then included within the Sex Discrimination Act which covered a broader range of issues including equal access to jobs. In 1983 legislation was passed to require equal pay for work of equal value. The Duty to Promote Gender Equality in public bodies came into effect in 2007, similar measures having been taken with respect to Race in 2000. The 2006 Equalities Act and subsequent amendments combine Race, Disability, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Age
- ¹¹ UNISON (2005)

- ¹² For this age group the male advantage in the top decile was only 3.5% (ASHE 2009).
- ¹³ Male part time work doubled between 1992 and 2008 to 10% but remains comparatively low. National Statistics (2009).
- ¹⁴ The part time gap is calculated in relation to male full time earnings so not strictly comparable with the gender pay gap. But on these figures in 2008 at the average it was 36.6% and median 39.9 comparable figures for 1998 41.9 and 44.9. For a fuller discussion of the Part time penalty see Manning and Petrongolo (2008). Women part time workers are concentrated in their prime age range 35-44 while male part timers are more likely to be at the extremes of the age distribution. Further, data suggests that 59 per cent of women work part time at some stage in their life (Gregory and Connolly 2008). This means that the implications for life time earners are significantly greater for women.
- ¹⁵ Paull (2008)
- ¹⁶ Estimates vary and cross national comparisons are complex but reliable comparable data from the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES) (which relates only to the private sector) analysed by the EU Group of experts on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment (Plantenga and Remery 2006) finds that for 2002 the UK has the highest gender pay gap among the EU 25.
- ¹⁷ Relations have also been distanced so that increasing numbers of employees are employed indirectly via agencies – who are also able to select employees indirectly according to managerial preferences (Perrons 2004).
- ¹⁸ Among OECD high income countries, earnings inequalities have been increasing between 1975 and 2005 (OECD 2008). Since 1980 there has also been a decline in the share of output accruing to labour, especially the low paid (IMF 2007).
- ¹⁹ OECD 11 includes Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan the Netherlands, New Zealand Sweden, US, UK and Korea (OECD 2007).
- ²⁰ At the very top of the overall distribution the gap from median incomes is especially wide. Using income rather than earnings data Brewer, Sibieta and Wren-Lewis (2008) find that the top 0.1% - of the distribution, which amounts to 47,000 people have a - pre-tax income minimum of £350K –average £780K [Average pre-tax income in UK £25K] and among these, 9 out of 10 are male, live in London or the South East and work mainly in property, law and finance.
- ²¹ See Makepiece, Paci, Joshi and Dolton (1999).
- ²² For a discussion of these trends in the 1990s see Bruegel and Perrons (1998).
- ²³ Goos and Manning (2003); Kaplannis (2007)
- ²⁴ The EOC analysis carried out by Wendy Olsen and Sylvia Walby (2004) lies in between these approaches in the sense that the gender wage gap is differentiated into components, some of which relate to individual characteristics, such as life time working patterns and interrupted careers (36%), the fact that women are likely to work for small firms and ones that are less unionised 18%, a further 8% to lower qualifications of older women and the rest to discrimination and differential career choice, but questions are not raised about the value of different forms of work.

²⁵ Social Trends (2008) and ASHE data

²⁶ Connolly and Gregory (2008).

²⁷ In 1984, 25 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men were employed in these occupations; by 2007, these proportions were 39 and 45 per cent respectively (Social Trends 2008)

²⁸ Constraining occupational choice, leads to women working below their potential (EOC 2005 see also Manning and Petrolongo 2008; Gregory and Connolly 2008; Tomlinson et al 2009). Connolly and Gregory (2008) trace the occupational paths of individual women and find that 25 per cent move from full to part time work and experience occupational downgrading as a consequence.

²⁹ Perrons (2004).

³⁰ A stark individual illustration relevant to the present crisis is that according to press reports an executive from a failed UK bank, retained to advise on its restructuring at a monthly salary equivalent to three and a half times the annual salary of a childcare worker with twenty years experience – (see Guardian 2008 figures for childcare worker from Pay Scale 2009).

³¹ Baumol (1967) ; Himmelweit 2007; Perrons (2004)

³² Turner (2009) argued that in the years running up to 2007, too much of the developed world's intellectual talent was devoted to ever more complex financial innovations, whose maximum possible benefit in terms of allocative efficiency was at best marginal.' See also Froud et al 2007.

³³ Childcare remains limited despite improvements with the National Child Care Strategy - much of it is provided in the private sector and is beyond the means of low paid families.

³⁴ Manning and Petrongolo (2008)

³⁵ EOC (2005)

³⁶ Crompton and Lyonette (2008)

³⁷ Davies and Joshi (1998) and Lewis and Guillari (2005). The reason for the decline in the male breadwinner model is the growth of dual earner households but largely in the form of 1.5 earner households as the majority of women work part-time., though other changes relate to smaller expansions in female sole earners and in fluctuating numbers of workless households.

³⁸ Perrons (2004).

³⁹ Acker (2008)

⁴⁰ Crompton and Lyonette (2008).

⁴¹ Research Works (2001)

⁴² Gender stereotypes with respect to appropriate employment begin at a young age with most people expressing a preference for jobs in which their own gender is strongly represented see Miller (2005) and Miller and Hayward (2006)

⁴³ See Addis (2002) with respect to the idea of asymmetry; Harkness (2008).

- ⁴⁴ Rake (2000) *Women's Incomes over the Lifetime*, report to the Women's Unit, Cabinet Office. London: The Stationery Office
- ⁴⁵ Gathering data consisting of a large number of observations but perhaps fewer variables, would facilitate greater analysis of intersectionality between the different dimensions of social difference such as gender ethnicity and social class and so as to allow analyses to more directly match real individuals experiences (Sigle-Rushton and Perrons 2006).
- ⁴⁶ See Connolly and Gregory 2008; Manning and Petrongolo 2008. The practice of assuming total time availability makes it difficult for workers to reduce their hours within their existing occupations. If there are no fixed hours proportional contracts are difficult to calculate and can create disharmony among employees
- ⁴⁷ In Sweden and Denmark expected working hours are shorter leading to more women working full time and part time work being less ghettoised (Tomlinson et al 2009) see also arguments of Crompton (2006) referred to in note 1. Arguments resting on attitudinal surveys reporting high levels of satisfaction with hours and with their jobs among part rather than full time workers are somewhat contradicted by findings that women with children report higher overall life satisfaction when working full time see Gregory and Connolly 2008. Decisions take place within existing constraints including passive, as well as active, state policies. In addition attitudes often change following behavioural change (Himmelweit and Sigala 2004) so rather than taken as fixed and given to which policy should respond, they are better regarded as outcomes influenced by, policy as well as other factors.
- ⁴⁸ Crompton and Lyonette (2008)
- ⁴⁹ See EOC (2005); Gregory and Connolly (2008).
- ⁵⁰ TUC (2009). There is already some evidence of a retreat from equalities policies so as to protect employers from what are perceived to be unnecessary burdens of red tape. According to press reports of ministerial statements the government has decided not to insist on equalities information from firms applying for government contracts. (Guardian 2009) and has not implemented to recommendations of reports of advocating compulsory gender audits, preferring instead a light touch. Experience suggest that the light touch approach leads to high levels of paper commitment but continuing unequal outcomes (see Ahmed 2007 with respect to race equality).