



With the demise of the male breadwinner family, there has been something of a 'paradigm shift' in gender relations. But will this shift bring more or less equality? Major labour market change, particularly in relation to women, together with dramatic changes in parenting and partnership, and greater recognition of gender equality issues in the policy arena, have served to break apart the traditional gender-role division. Yet shifts in gender equality have been very uneven across ethnic groups, age, and geographical regions; and often far slower than many of the conventional theories of human capital would suggest. The gender 'wage gap' has proved stubborn and new pay inequalities between women are emerging. The life chances of women, men and children are increasingly polarized by educational attainment, but it is far from clear whether and under what circumstances a convergence in human capital will result in reductions in gender inequalities. GeNet brings together eight institutions and over twenty researchers from the disciplines of economics, psychology, sociology, geography, social policy, law and demography to address these and related issues. Using an innovative range of methods and data sources both quantitative and qualitative, longitudinal and cross-sectional, the Network will undertake nine substantive projects grouped into three interlinked themes:

T H E M E **1**

Pathways to Adult Attainment

1 Changing Occupational Careers of Women and Men

Shirley Dex, Heather Joshi
(Institute of Education) and Peter Dolton
(University of Newcastle)

2 Biographical Agency and Developmental Outcomes

Ingrid Schoon (Institute of Education)

3 Gendered Pathways to Adulthood

Wendy Sigle-Rushton (London School of Economics), John Hobcraft and Kathleen Kiernan
(University of York)

T H E M E **2**

Resources, Gender, Ethnic and Class Inequalities

1 Gender, Time Allocation and the 'Wage Gap'

Jonathon Gershuny (University of Oxford)

2 Within-household Inequalities and Public Policy

Holly Sutherland (University of Essex), Sue Himmelweit (Open University) and Fran Bennett
(University of Oxford)

3 Gender, Ethnicity, Migration and Service Employment

Linda McDowell (University of Oxford) and Claire Dwyer
(University College London)

4 Class and Gender, Employment and Family

Rosemary Crompton (City University), Alison Park
(National Centre for Social Research)

T H E M E **3**

Policy Responses to Gender Inequalities

1 Addressing Gender Equality Through Corporate Governance

Simon Deakin and Jude Browne (University of Cambridge)

2 Tackling Inequalities in Work and Care: Policy Initiatives and Actors at the EU and UK Levels

Jane Lewis (London School of Economics) and Ceridwen Roberts
(University of Oxford)

We have the critical mass, diverse expertise, time and resources to make a significant impact on one of the most pressing issues of our time: gender equality. We aim to push forward theoretical understanding while simultaneously providing substantive evidence to help and inform practitioners, policy makers, and researchers in the field of gender equality. We will promote a range of publications, seminars and conferences to ensure our findings reach as wide an audience as possible, including the academic community, policy makers, business and the general public. The Network is sponsored by an ESRC investment of £3million and will run for five years from October 2004.



Part of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Priority Network Programme

Network Co-ordinator

Jacqueline Scott
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Free School Lane
Cambridge CB2 3RQ
Tel: +44 (0)1223 334520
Fax: +44 (0)1223 334550



"Individual aspirations can be understood as a compass which can help young people chart a successful future, yet aspirations are themselves gendered"

2 Biographical Agency and Developmental Outcomes

Background

Individual aspirations are a key influence on educational and occupational attainment. They are associated with upward social mobility, family status and health. Individual aspiration can be understood as a compass that can help young people chart a successful future, yet aspirations are themselves gendered and can be explained, in part, in terms of changing socio-historical context. This project will study the formation of aspirations from birth to adulthood, investigating how individual and contextual factors interact and develop over time. While remaining sensitive to the influence of context, the study explores the ways in which agents actively forge their identity over the lifecourse. Key questions include:

- 1 Have aspirations and life plans of men and women growing up in different socio-historical contexts changed in the last 30 years?
- 2 How do men and women differ in the aspirations and life plans they have for the future?
- 3 How are differences and changes in aspirations influenced by family, school and other contextual factors, such as class or region?
- 4 How do teenage aspirations shape adult outcomes in education, work and family formation?

Methods and Data

This project draws on data from the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS), the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70), as well as more recent data of young people coming of age at the turn of the millennium. The data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis, time-dependent analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM). As well as the variable-based approach describing the 'average' person, a person-based approach will be adopted, analysing how variables combine in individuals, addressing the multitudinous factors that influence individual development.

Output

The study will develop models which contribute to our understanding of the respective influence of individual and social experiences on women's and men's future goals. A gendered typology of modes of biographical agency will be developed and used as a means of interpreting gender specific transition patterns. Results will be published in academic journals and heavily promoted in key policy arenas such as education and skills.

Project Contact and Principal Investigator

Professor Ingrid Schoon
Faculty of Policy and Society
Institute of Education
University of London
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL
I.Schoon@ioe.ac.uk
+44 (0)20 7612 6238



"Individual aspirations can be understood as a compass which can help young people chart a successful future, yet aspirations are themselves gendered"

2 Biographical Agency and Developmental Outcomes

Background

Individual aspirations are a key influence on educational and occupational attainment. They are associated with upward social mobility, family status and health. Individual aspiration can be understood as a compass that can help young people chart a successful future, yet aspirations are themselves gendered and can be explained, in part, in terms of changing socio-historical context. This project will study the formation of aspirations from birth to adulthood, investigating how individual and contextual factors interact and develop over time. While remaining sensitive to the influence of context, the study explores the ways in which agents actively forge their identity over the lifecourse. Key questions include:

- 1 Have aspirations and life plans of men and women growing up in different socio-historical contexts changed in the last 30 years?
- 2 How do men and women differ in the aspirations and life plans they have for the future?
- 3 How are differences and changes in aspirations influenced by family, school and other contextual factors, such as class or region?
- 4 How do teenage aspirations shape adult outcomes in education, work and family formation?

Methods and Data

This project draws on data from the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS), the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70), as well as more recent data of young people coming of age at the turn of the millennium. The data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis, time-dependent analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM). As well as the variable-based approach describing the 'average' person, a person-based approach will be adopted, analysing how variables combine in individuals, addressing the multitudinous factors that influence individual development.

Output

The study will develop models which contribute to our understanding of the respective influence of individual and social experiences on women's and men's future goals. A gendered typology of modes of biographical agency will be developed and used as a means of interpreting gender specific transition patterns. Results will be published in academic journals and heavily promoted in key policy arenas such as education and skills.

Project Contact and Principal Investigator

Professor Ingrid Schoon
Department of Psychology
City University
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
I.Schoon@city.ac.uk
+44 (0)20 7040 8497



"... policies can sometimes reinforce traditional gender roles within the household"

4 Gender, Time Allocation and the "Wage Gap"

Background

The part-time work directive, parental leave rights and more flexible working hours are just some of the policies that seem to have helped to improve British women's opportunities in the sphere of paid work. However, such policies can sometimes reinforce traditional gender roles within the household. Women who take the greater responsibility for unpaid domestic work may reduce their paid work hours which can subsequently reduce their human capital (their education, training, experience and so on). This is a recursive process: if one partner takes responsibility for unpaid work, her (rarely his) human capital declines relative to the partner who engages mainly in paid work. This, in turn, leads to an intensification of work-role differentiation over time. Part of the gender wage gap, therefore, is to be accounted for by some women's enduring responsibility for domestic work and their subsequent decline in human capital. This project will explore these issues by considering the following questions:

- 1 What are the associations between gender (im)balance in unpaid work time and wage differentials? What causal processes underlie these associations?
- 2 Do cross national differences in the domestic division of labour show variation associated with different policy regimes?
- 3 Particularly, do countries with longer working hours and scarce childcare have more conventionally gendered arrangements?

Methods and Data

The project uses three data sources: i) longitudinal analysis of the British Household Panel Survey which has extensive data on work history, attitudes to parental responsibilities, and measures of domestic labour distributions; ii) the Home-on-Line (HoL) study (1999/2001) with estimators and income measures similar to the BHPS; and iii) The Harmonised European Time Use Study (HETUS), including more than 20 large national random-sampled whole-household time-diary collections.

Output

When deciding on policies aimed at enhancing equality of opportunity, organizations and governments need to understand how their policies interact with, and possibly reinforce, traditional gender norms. This project will make a significant contribution to these debates and written output will include information for general readers and a book as well as academic articles.

Project Contact and Principal Investigator

Professor Jonathan Gershuny
Department of Sociology
University of Oxford
Manor Rd
Oxford
OX1 3UQ
jonathan.gershuny@sociology.ox.ac.uk
+44 (0)1865 286175



"... policies can sometimes reinforce traditional gender roles within the household"

4 Gender, Time Allocation and the "Wage Gap"

Background

The part-time work directive, parental leave rights and more flexible working hours are just some of the policies that seem to have helped to improve British women's opportunities in the sphere of paid work. However, such policies can sometimes reinforce traditional gender roles within the household. Women who take the greater responsibility for unpaid domestic work may reduce their paid work hours which can subsequently reduce their human capital (their education, training, experience and so on). This is a recursive process: if one partner takes responsibility for unpaid work, her (rarely his) human capital declines relative to the partner who engages mainly in paid work. This, in turn, leads to an intensification of work-role differentiation over time. Part of the gender wage gap, therefore, is to be accounted for by some women's enduring responsibility for domestic work and their subsequent decline in human capital. This project will explore these issues by considering the following questions:

- 1 What are the associations between gender (im)balance in unpaid work time and wage differentials? What causal processes underlie these associations?
- 2 Do cross national differences in the domestic division of labour show variation associated with different policy regimes?
- 3 Particularly, do countries with longer working hours and scarce childcare have more conventionally gendered arrangements?

Methods and Data

The project uses three data sources: i) longitudinal analysis of the British Household Panel Survey which has extensive data on work history, attitudes to parental responsibilities, and measures of domestic labour distributions; ii) the Home-on-Line (HoL) study (1999/2001) with estimators and income measures similar to the BHPS; and iii) The Harmonised European Time Use Study (HETUS), including more than 20 large national random-sampled whole-household time-diary collections.

Output

When deciding on policies aimed at enhancing equality of opportunity, organizations and governments need to understand how their policies interact with, and possibly reinforce, traditional gender norms. This project will make a significant contribution to these debates and written output will include information for general readers and a book as well as academic articles.

Project Contact and Principal Investigator

Professor Jonathan Gershuny
Institute for Social and Economic Research
University of Essex
Colchester
CO4 3SQ
gershuny@essex.ac.uk
+44 (0)1206 872734



"...policies that pay no attention to inequalities within households will have unwanted effects and will fail to tackle women's hidden poverty within the household."

5 Within-household Inequalities and Public Policy

Background

Any gender sensitive policy analysis needs to go 'through the front door' and open up the closed box of the family or household unit. Many initiatives in fiscal, social security and labour market policies focus on income at the level of the family. However, policies that do this and pay no attention to inequalities within households will have unwanted effects. For example, the conventional assessment of who is living in poverty is based on total household income; policies trying to alleviate such poverty may fail to tackle women's hidden poverty within the household. The government has been taking an increasing interest in the gender and intra-household effects of its policies and the case for examining such inequalities is persuasive, not only on moral grounds, but also in order to improve the effectiveness of policy design. That said, a practical approach to analyzing the effects of policy on within-household inequalities has yet to be developed. This project will explore a number of alternative approaches to understanding these issues:

- 1 How do current policies and potential policy changes impact on gender roles and relationships within households?
- 2 Does the source and recipient of income affect perceptions about entitlements and within-household distribution of resources?
- 3 What ambiguities and tensions arise in attempting to improve both the distribution of resources between households and women's access to resources within the household?
- 4 What lessons can be drawn from the above for developing policies that improve women's financial autonomy?

Methods and Data

Diverse methods will be used including in-depth interviews with approximately 30 low/moderate income couples; quantitative analysis of existing household micro-datasets; and policy simulation using a tax-benefit model to illustrate the gender effects of current and potential policy changes on individual resources allocations and incentives. While each part of the project is designed to deliver its own findings, it is also intended that the sum should be more than its parts and that each component will be informed by the others. The qualitative research is being designed after some initial investigation of quantitative datasets; its findings will feed into further quantitative analysis and the policy simulations will apply what has been learned about the effects of policy design on intra-household distribution of resources to examining the gendered effects of some reform proposals.

Output

By drawing on such a wide range of material, the project will provide a timely analysis of the overall effect of policy initiatives on gender inequalities, roles and relationships and the consequences for women's financial autonomy. A range of publications for both the academic and policy communities will be developed. Findings will be presented at relevant conferences and policy seminars.

Principal Investigators and Project Contacts

Fran Bennett
Department of Social Policy and Social Work,
University of Oxford
Barnett House
Wellington Square
Oxford, OX1 2ER
fran.bennett@socres.ox.ac.uk
+44(0)1865 270321

Susan Himmelweit
Faculty of Social Sciences
The Open University
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA
s.f.himmleweit@open.ac.uk
+44(0)1908 654492

Holly Sutherland
Institute for Social and Economic Research
University of Essex
Colchester
CO4 3SQ
hollys@essex.ac.uk
+44(0)1206 873534



"In service work, gender and ethnicity, as well as class, language skills and appearance are of growing significance"

6 Gender, Ethnicity, Migration and Service Employment

Background

As service sector work dominates the economy, the labour force is becoming more diverse, as migrant workers and growing numbers of women enter waged labour. In service work gender and ethnicity, as well as class, language skills and appearance are significant and it is becoming clear that the nature of employment in service industries is resulting in a two-tier labour force: skilled 'self programmable' labour and unskilled 'generic' labour (Castells 2000). This project will investigate the ways in which this polarisation is related to the growing diversity in the division of labour by considering the following issues:

- 1 Do recruitment practices differ for longer-standing migrant groups (e.g. from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent) compared to newer groups (e.g. Latin America, Eastern Europe and other parts of Asia)?
- 2 How do the working practices and attitudes of employees and employers, including equal opportunities policies, impact on people from different ethnic and national backgrounds?
- 3 What impact do these new forms of work have on domestic divisions of labour, particularly for those employed in the bottom end of the service sector?

Methods and Data

The study will use both quantitative and qualitative methods. The 2001 census and other official data sources will be used to assess changes in Greater London's employment structure, focusing particularly on the hospitality industry and health services. Secondly questionnaires and interviews with key decision makers in two case study organisations (a major London teaching hospital and one or more hotels within a large chain) will be collected. Finally, semi-structured interviews will be undertaken with matched pairs of male and female interviewees in three different occupational positions within each organisation.

Output

The project will provide a detailed analysis of the links between economic restructuring in services and the interaction of ethnicity, racism, migration history, citizenship and gender. The results will be published in both academic journals and in forms suitable for the general reader.

Project Contact

Professor Linda McDowell
School of Geography and the Environment
University of Oxford
Mansfield Road
Oxford
OX1 3TB
linda.mcdowell@ouce.ox.ac.uk
+44 (0)1865 281939

Principal Investigators

Linda McDowell (University of Oxford), Claire Dwyer (University College, London)



"... work has intensified and long hours can create real conflicts in reconciling family and career."

7 Class and Gender, Employment and Family

Background

The class 'fates' of men and women in the same occupational category are different as a consequence of two key factors: women's conventionally assigned responsibilities for caring; and institutional and organisational discriminatory structures. Despite policies aimed at promoting work-life balance, work has intensified, with no relaxation of the long hours needed for career building. Non-professional and non-managerial women are much more likely to work part-time, but this serves to enhance class inequalities. The recent increase in women's (particularly mother's) employment has taken place within a context in which attitudes and assumptions about the 'proper' roles of men and women are changing rapidly - how significant are these attitudes in shaping behaviour? This project will explore how changes in the gender division of labour within both employment and the family (re)structure gender and class inequalities. We shall explore the conflicts of family and career by carrying out case studies of four feminised, or feminising, sectors and professions (retail, banking, accountancy, medicine). Some of our key aims are:

- 1 to investigate gender and class differences through work-life biographical interviews with men and women in these occupations and professions
- 2 to repeat, together with additional questions derived from the case study work, a national survey relating to gender, family, employment and career
- 3 to analyse gender and cohort differences using a newly extended time series data set on attitudes to gender roles based on surveys from 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006

Methods and Data

The project will use both qualitative and quantitative data. Four case studies in retail, banking, accountancy and medicine will examine, from a gender perspective, how occupations and professions have responded and developed with the entry of women. The project will also develop a time series of attitudinal data drawing upon the British Social Attitudes survey (BSA), which incorporates the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

Output

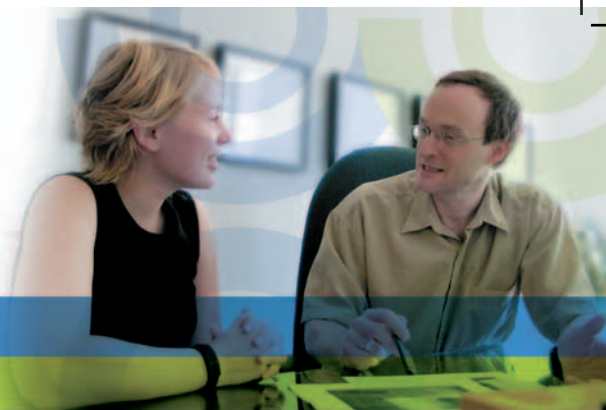
The case studies will lead to a categorisation of parenting strategies and individual career development, which will be evaluated in the analysis of survey data. Attitudes and behaviour towards work/family arrangement are changing rapidly. A deeper understanding of perceptions of the ways in which family/career clashes are linked to workplace culture should help inform both Government and Corporate policy.

Project Contact

Professor Rosemary Crompton
Department of Sociology, City University
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
r.crompton@city.ac.uk
+44 (0)20 7040 8507

Principal Investigator

Rosemary Crompton (City University, London)



"Can new practices of corporate governance, particularly corporate social responsibility, be used to address gender pay equity and work-life balance issues?"

8 Addressing Gender Inequality through Corporate Governance

Background

Is it possible to combine the advantages of competitiveness with the demands of social justice? Can new practices of corporate governance, particularly corporate social responsibility, be used to address gender pay equity and work-life balance issues? The UK government's Kingsmill Review (2001) appealed to companies to move 'beyond compliance' with minimum legal standards and encouraged shareholders to consider not just ethical but also socially responsible investment. Against this background, this project will explore empirically and theoretically the developing links between corporate governance and pay equity. Among other things it will analyse the impact of different conceptions of corporate social responsibility at EU and UK level, concerning the roles of shareholders and other stakeholders and the extent to which legal regulation acts as a 'floor or rights'. More specifically, it will consider the following questions:

- 1 To what extent are institutional investors willing to put pressure on the companies in which they invest to prioritise the issue of gender equality?
- 2 What are the mechanisms by which pay equity issues are addressed within companies?
- 3 What are the techniques and metrics through which institutional investors and financial markets view the social performance of companies?
- 4 How successful are 'soft law' strategies such as those recommended by Kingsmill?

Methods and Data

Qualitative research will be conducted with managers on both the human resource side and the finance side; with employee representatives; with employees; and also with institutional investors and policy makers. The project will connect the findings with theoretical issues, specifically, the literature on 'responsive regulation' and 'reflexive law' which considers the effectiveness of the types of regulatory techniques suggested by Kingsmill, and the related literature on Sen's 'capability approach'.

Output

The use of corporate governance mechanisms in the context of gender equity is new and much of our research is concerned with processes and perceptions. As such, conceptual and theoretical development is essential at this stage. As well as academic publications, we will prepare documents for policy makers at both organizational and governmental levels.

Project Contact

Professor Simon Deakin
The Judge Institute of Management Studies
University of Cambridge
Trumpington Street
Cambridge, CB2 1AG
sfd20@cam.ac.uk
+44 (0)1223 765339

Principal Investigators

Simon Deakin and Jude Browne (University of Cambridge)



"...at both the EU and UK levels, policy has paid little attention to the way in which the gendered dynamic of work and care impacts on equality."

9 Tackling Inequalities in Work and Care: Policy Initiatives and Actors at the EU and UK levels

Background

Policy makers often pay more attention to gender equality in relation to employment than in relation to care. For example, in 2000, the EC Lisbon Summit foregrounded the issue of social inclusion, but the emphasis was placed firmly on inclusion via the labour market rather than through the care of others in the community, young or old. Further, welfare state restructuring has recast the work/welfare relationship with a firm emphasis on labour market activation and making work pay. Yet the first report on gender mainstreaming (CEC, 2002) suggests that, actually, little has yet occurred to improve outcomes and that there has been even less activity to combat the inequalities faced by black minority ethnic women (and men). Crucially, however, at both the EU and UK levels, policy has paid little attention to the way in which the gendered dynamic of work and care impacts on equality. This project will, therefore, provide analysis of policies developed to address the gendered divisions of work and care. Key questions include:

- 1 How have equality issues been framed at the EU and UK levels?
- 2 To what extent has EU policy influenced UK policy?
- 3 How have the different statutory bodies in the UK framed equality in respect of gender, race and disability?
- 4 To what extent are there tensions and ambiguities in policy developments in respect to the concept of equality, particularly in relation to policies designed specifically to address work and care?

Methods and Data

Policymaking in this area has been considerable in recent years, and the study will explore the way in which the problems have been framed and how far they address the real issues that exist. It will do this through three inter-linked studies (i) of policy trajectories in respect of gender equality at the UK and EU levels; (ii) by an examination of the way in which equality has been conceptualised by the statutory bodies in the UK, and (iii) by detailed investigation of a similar policy initiative at EU and UK levels: that of promoting work/life balance.

Output

At the theoretical level, we will explore the potential of Sen's (1999) work on 'capabilities', which offers a unique approach to welfare as wellbeing, and provides a means of directly addressing carework. One of the principal investigators is well connected in policy circles and is ideally positioned to ensure the project's findings reach key policy makers. Publications will be aimed at the academic community, policy makers and user groups.

Project Contact

Professor Jane Lewis
Department of Social Policy
London School of Economics
Houghton Street
London, WC2 2AE
J.Lewis@lse.ac.uk
+44 (0)20 7955 6754

Principal Investigators

Jane Lewis (London School of Economics), Ceridwen Roberts (University of Oxford)