

Introduction: gender inequalities in production and reproduction

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How are gendered lives changing? This book examines not only how gender inequalities in contemporary societies are changing, but also how further change towards greater gender equality might be achieved. We focus on inequalities in productive and reproductive activities, as played out over time and in specific contexts. We examine how lives and structures are changing and how policy can intervene to promote further advances towards greater equality. We explore why changes in gender inequalities are so much faster and more consistent in some spheres and social groups than in others. In particular we investigate the dynamic processes that lead to and shape inequalities between adult men and women; the different patterns of resource allocation and constraints in reproductive and productive activities; and the reciprocal influences of changing lives and structures. We also consider how the time-processes involved in individual and institutional change can differ, for example if organisational inertia causes institutions to lag behind individual change.

Gender inequality is a well-worked field. However, the research presented in this book is both innovative and timely. It moves discussion forwards from misleading static and universal accounts to dynamic and contextualised ones. We use life-course perspectives and longitudinal accounts of resources and constraints to understand more of how the lives of women and men are changing. However, we push beyond the standard analysis of life-course stages. These have been depicted as a sequence of configurations of status in different life spheres – mainly education, work, family and welfare (for example, Heinz and Marshall 2003). In such accounts, the male life-course is conceptualised primarily in terms of occupational trajectories from education, through employment and into retirement, while the female life-course is viewed as being orientated around the family, with paid occupation as a secondary activity. Thus the traditional gender role division between men's production and women's reproduction

is built into much of life-course analysis, which is unhelpful if we want to examine how the gendering of lives is changing.

In this book our focus is not only on the interplays between men's and women's life courses. We also examine how institutional structures help shape gendered lives. There has been a good deal of social theory that emphasises how individuals 'do gender', that is, adopt behaviour conforming to different expectations for men and women (McDowell 1992; Sullivan 2004; West and Zimmerman 1987). What is sometimes overlooked is that while interacting individuals are 'doing gender' institutions are doing gender as well (Kruger and Levy 2001). Institutional logics not only include the labour market, the family and their linkages, but also the arrangements of costs and schedules of kindergartens and schools, of care-giving institutions for sick and older family members, and so on. These create monetary demands but also transportation needs, management and planning requirements to such an extent that Hochschild (1997) calls them producing a 'third shift' besides those of paid work and housework. Such institutional structures reflect and reinforce gendered expectations. They provide constraints and opportunities for the family and work choices of men and women. They also have a marked influence on how couples manage their finances and time.

Virtually all human societies display a gender division of labour, both between and within the spheres of paid work and unpaid activities. Very broadly, men's activities are primarily productive and women's (traditional) activities have been more concerned with reproduction, unpaid housework, and nurturing or caring activities within the family. This book confronts a puzzle. With the demise of the male breadwinner family there has been something of a paradigm shift in gender relations. But has this shift brought more or less equality?

Shifts towards gender equality have been very uneven across ethnic and social groups, age and geographical regions; and often far slower than many of the conventional theories of human capital would suggest, predicting that market forces would make gender discrimination too costly for good business. The gender 'wage gap' has proved unexpectedly stubborn and marked new inequalities between women – linked to education and class differences – are emerging. The life chances of women, men and children are increasingly polarised by educational attainment, but it is far from clear whether and under what circumstances a convergence of men's and women's education and employment experience will result in further reductions in gender inequalities.

In this book we insist that to understand the way gendered lives are changing it is necessary to take seriously the importance of time. It is also necessary to investigate the different timescales involved in how gender

relationships are changing in the interlinked spheres of family, education, labour market and welfare state. As we shall see, progress on gender equality has been very uneven across these different domains, with the narrowing of the gender gap in education and employment far outstripping gender changes in the domestic sphere. Moreover, policies have varied markedly across different countries in their promotion of egalitarian arrangements for supporting parents and workers. The Swedish state has pioneered policies to encourage egalitarian parenthood, giving workers of both sexes support for combining employment and parenthood. Other countries, particularly in Southern Europe, have few such policies in place. Yet even in a country such as the UK, where the state has had a relatively hands-off stance in pushing the gender-equality agenda, there is no denying the massive changes across and within the lifetimes of women and men born in the twentieth century.

It is more than eight decades since the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 gave men and women equal voting rights in the UK. The period since then has seen great changes in the lives of women and men. Girls have become as likely as boys to receive secondary education and, eventually, to overtake them in entering higher education. Marriage has ceased to be a bar to women's employment or a prerequisite for living together or having children. Divorce has become easier, as has legal redress against domestic violence. Fertility control and childbirth have become safer. Child health has improved and housework has become less onerous. And there is opportunity for women to have paid careers in an increasing number of occupations.

Technology has transformed the tasks needed in paid and domestic work. The boundaries between them have shifted and the lines of gender demarcation have blurred. Women now work in formerly male fields – from clergy to football journalism, for example. The expectation that motherhood and employment are incompatible has been overtaken by the experience that they are increasingly combined. For all the qualifications that should be made about the limits to some of these changes – few women in top jobs, the persistence of the gender pay gap, and the sacrifices needed to combine paid work and caring roles – it is important to acknowledge there has already been great progress towards gender equality.

The UK has not been at the forefront of change in gender equality legislation and policy. In particular, compared with some other countries in Europe, the UK was relatively late in recognising that sex equality in employment was not attainable without complementary support for nurturing activities. Elder care, childcare and early education only became part of the New Labour agenda in the 1990s. Moreover, it has only been in the last couple of decades that employment legislation in

the UK has begun to recognise fathers' rights to time off for parental duties. Yet changing fathers' involvement in childrearing is crucial if societies are to achieve gender equality without problematic levels of fertility decline.

In her Presidential Address to the European Society for Population Economics, Joshi (1998) argued that too many formal and informal structures have been based on a presumption of the male breadwinner model, at least in the UK. This hampers the renegotiation of family life. She suggested that we need a more 'family friendly' employment structure which ensures that there is enough time for caring activities for both men and women. Furthermore, she warned that if the issue of men's shared responsibility for their children is avoided, if child-rearing is regarded as only mothers' business, it could be a business with a bleak future. This taps into a wider debate about the conflict or compatibility of gender equality and sustaining 'replacement level' fertility. As McDonald (2000) suggests, if women are provided with opportunities nearly equivalent to those of men in education and market employment, but these opportunities are severely curtailed by having children, then, on average, women will restrict the number of children that they have to an extent where fertility rates are precariously low. He suggests that the answer for countries concerned about low fertility rates is more not less gender equity and that fertility tends to be higher in countries that provide more family-friendly working conditions.

Although women's and men's lives are changing in terms of the division of domestic and paid work, it is far from clear whether trends are leading to a situation where gender differences become irrelevant. In the UK, families with young children in the twenty-first century still predominantly have 1.5 breadwinners rather than dual full-time earning career couples. It is not obvious in which direction changes may or should continue. A norm of dual full-time earning by both parents implies a norm of full-time alternative childcare, which may not be desirable or sustainable for many families. Greater flexibility for both parents to maintain paid careers is another possibility currently being promoted by European initiatives and canvassed by a coalition government consultation (HM Government 2011). A third possibility, that would be compatible with gender equality goals, is a unisex version of the single breadwinner partnership. This outcome, however, faces considerable obstacles when the male breadwinner model is still embedded in cultural and structural conditions that favour the traditional gender role divide. Another outcome as pointed out above is that the stresses of combining employment and childbearing may lead to an increasing proportion of couples postponing or rejecting parenthood.

That low reproduction may be one adaptation to increases in women's production is also discussed in Esping-Andersen's book *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles* (2009). An alternative adaptation could be greater sharing of domestic roles. He doubts whether it is realistic for men to substitute entirely for the decline in female domestic work without support from the state. He sees more scope for public policies that promote the reconciliation of work and motherhood, and support child development. Interestingly, Esping-Andersen does present evidence about the participation of men in housework from both Denmark and Spain, which are positioned at opposite ends of the spectrum of gender specialisation practice in Europe. This suggests that an increasing male contribution to domestic work may be 'incomplete' but it is not inconceivable. It also appears more likely where the household has help from outside (market or state) and where the woman is more educated.

However, the major respect in which the 'revolution is incomplete' for Esping-Andersen, is in its limited reach down the education and social scale. Highly educated dual-earner (full-time) couples with high incomes contribute to a widening of income inequalities, with one-earner couples, workless families and youths at the bottom of the distribution. The increased employment of women both boosts the prosperity of some dual-earner families and raises other people out of poverty. In the last decades of the twentieth century in Britain the latter, equalising, tendency was dominant (Davies and Joshi 1998), but this is under-charted territory. Esping-Andersen (2009) finds some international evidence of female earnings contributing to disequalising trends. Thus, another concern is how best to tackle increasing social inequality.

Tackling gender inequalities is intrinsically linked to addressing unacceptable social inequalities. Although it might not be clear whether gender differences will become less important in the way parenthood and employment are combined in the future, what is clear is that many unacceptable gender differences remain. The poverty among today's elderly women still bears witness to the inadequacy of the earnings and pensions over the lifetime of their generation. The poverty of lone mothers is still a major source of disadvantage for the next generation. The equalities agenda matters and so does the issue of how society rewards nurturing activities, whether caring is done by men or women, paid or unpaid.

In this book we present some of the findings from a five-year research initiative that brought together a strong team of internationally renowned researchers with the common goal of studying the changing lives and structures that govern gender inequalities in production and reproduction. From the outset, the research was devised with the view that the collective 'output' would add to more than the sum of the parts, with similar

issues tackled from different theoretical and methodological orientations of different disciplines. Thus, the book, of necessity, crosses disciplinary boundaries, drawing together experts from sociology, economics, demography, human geography, social policy, management and law. Because the authors have all worked together over a five-year period and have met frequently to present and discuss their work, it has been possible to identify common themes and complementary questions.

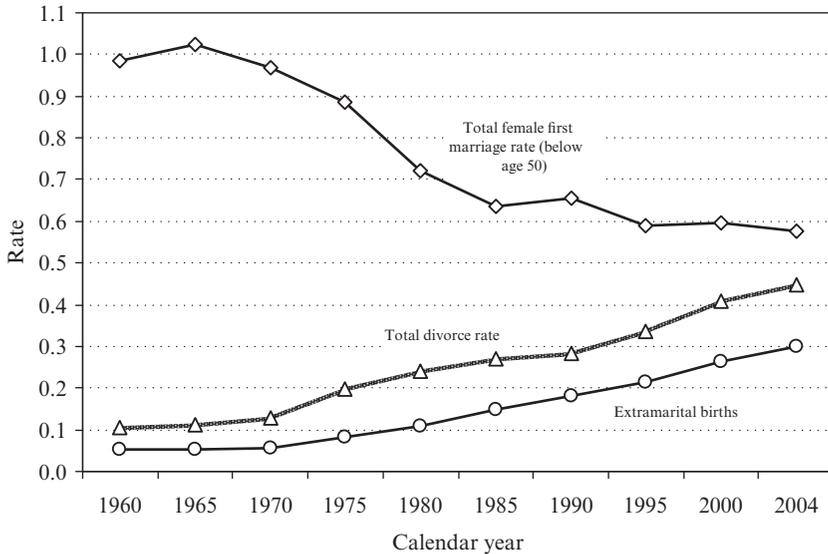
At the outset the authors of the book were given questions which were relevant to the overarching theme of gendered lives. Although individual chapters do not necessarily address every question, most contribute to answering a good number. The ten questions are these:

1. Has the significance of gender declined over time?
2. What are the causes and consequences of the incomplete revolution in gender roles?
3. Why are gender inequalities in access to resources so resistant to change?
4. Does it make sense to focus on gendered lives, given the interplay of gender with other identities such as class, race, age and citizenship?
5. Does a focus on gender inequalities make sense, given that male and female lives are so closely interlinked?
6. What are the main drivers of change in the gendered aspects of production and reproduction?
7. What is the role that institutional structures play in helping shape gendered lives?
8. Who stands to gain or lose from the traditional gender order?
9. Is there clear evidence showing how gender equality benefits individuals and society?
10. What policy interventions might be most effective in promoting gender equality and why?

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we set out some of the necessary background information that illustrates the social changes that have been going on in the UK and in Europe more widely regarding the changes in family life, education, labour-force participation and the gender pay gap. These institutional structures help shape the interweaving life-course experiences of the women and men who are the subjects of this book. We then give a brief summary of the organisation of the book and an account of the main focus of individual chapters. In the final section, we highlight some of the unexpected findings from our research and tentatively pull together some of the overarching themes and policy recommendations concerning gendered lives.

DEMOGRAPHIC, EDUCATION AND LABOUR-FORCE CHANGE

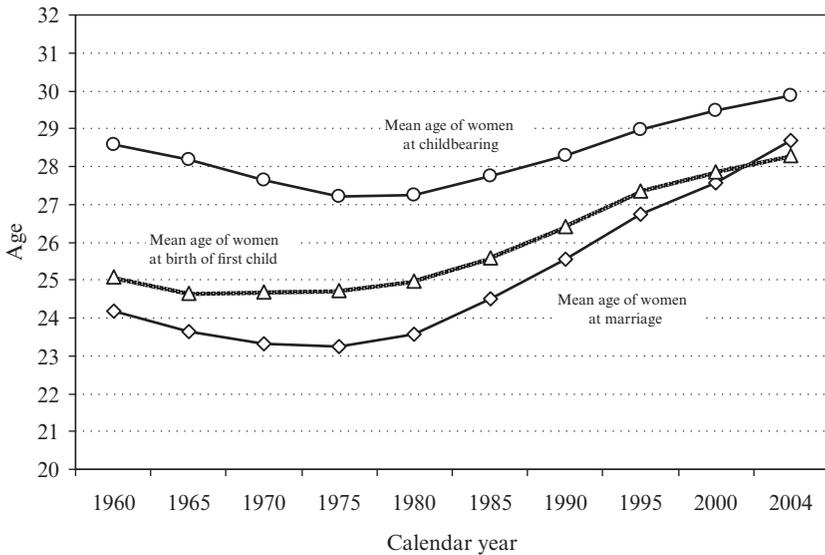
Men and women have been caught up in an era of considerable family change that has affected the rates and timing of partnership formation and dissolution and childbirth throughout Europe (and most of the Western world). In Figure I.1 we can see for 15 European Union (EU) countries the decline in the marriage rate, the rise in the divorce rate and the rise of extramarital births. The first-marriage rate almost halved since the 1960s, the divorce rate quadrupled and more children than ever are born outside of marriage. It would be wrong to conclude that people are less likely to live in partnerships because cohabitation rates have also been on the rise. Nevertheless, the changing partnership patterns do go hand in hand with women delaying childbirth, as Figure I.2 shows. Childlessness has



Note: Definitions. Total female first marriage rate: sum of age-specific first marriage rates (for women up to the age of 50 years) in one year of observation. The total divorce rate is similarly the sum of duration-specific proportions of married women divorcing in a given calendar year. Extramarital births show the proportion of births where the mother was not legally married.

Source: Council of Europe (2006).

Figure I.1 Total female first marriage rate (below age 50), total divorce rate, and extramarital births, 1960–2004, EU15

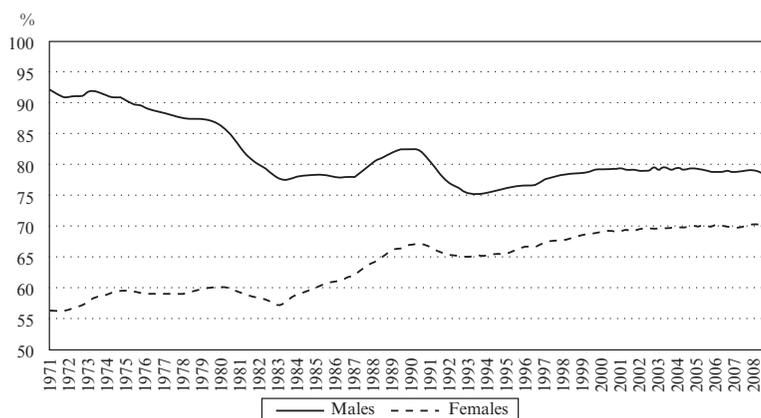


Source: Council of Europe (2006).

Figure I.2 Mean age of women at marriage, at birth of first child and at childbearing, 1960–2004, EU15

also been on the increase in recent decades. For example, Portanti and Whitworth (2009) show that in the UK the proportion of women remaining childless has increased from an estimated 10 per cent of the 1945 cohort, to 19 per cent of women born in 1960. Their analysis also shows that, for women born between 1956 and 1960, childless women were less likely than mothers to be in partnerships and more likely to have higher educational qualifications and managerial or professional occupations. Thus, partnership and fertility trends interlink with the rapid increase of women into higher education and employment.

In terms of changing gender roles, women's lives have undoubtedly changed more than those of many men over the past half century or so. In the UK, social norms of the early post-war years led women to believe that their future would be defined by marriage and motherhood, not by occupational careers. Yet the second half of the twentieth century saw dramatic increases in women's educational qualifications and employment. It is salutary to remember that women were not permitted to become full members of the University of Cambridge until 1947. Prior to this, women could be admitted to study but were not entitled to take degrees. More generally, on the eve of the Second World War women constituted less



Note: Years indicate Q1 figures.

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey.

Figure I.3 Percentages of men and women of working ages employed in the UK

than a quarter of the entire university population in England (Dyhouse 2006). At the start of the twenty-first century, the proportion of women in tertiary education is higher than men in most countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including Britain (Broecke and Hamed 2008).

Not surprisingly, the increase in women's educational qualifications was accompanied by an increase in women's participation in employment (see Figure I.3). Men by contrast, have been on a declining path in their aggregate employment rates, as restructuring and decline took place in labour sectors that formed the traditional employers of men (see Dex 1999). Other aggregate level changes went hand in hand with women's qualification changes. No longer were women located in a few occupational ghettos. In Britain, there was a large growth of jobs in professional occupations, for both men and women. Also, for women but not men, there was a rise in associate professional and technical occupations that require vocational qualifications, such as healthcare associates (see Figures I.4a and I.4b). There has been a decline in both men's and women's jobs in elementary occupations, which come at the bottom of the occupational ladder and require no more than basic education. In Figure I.5 we can see that the more recent increase in women's employment has been concentrated overwhelmingly in two industry sectors, the public sector (education, health and public administration) and the financial services sector.

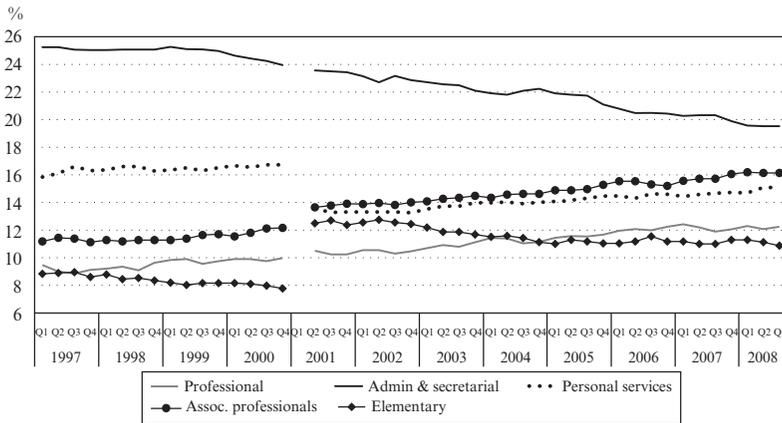
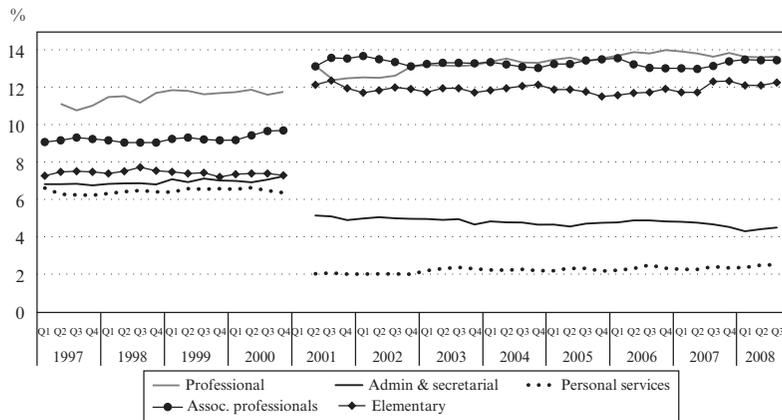


Figure I.4a Percentage of employed women in selected occupation groups, UK



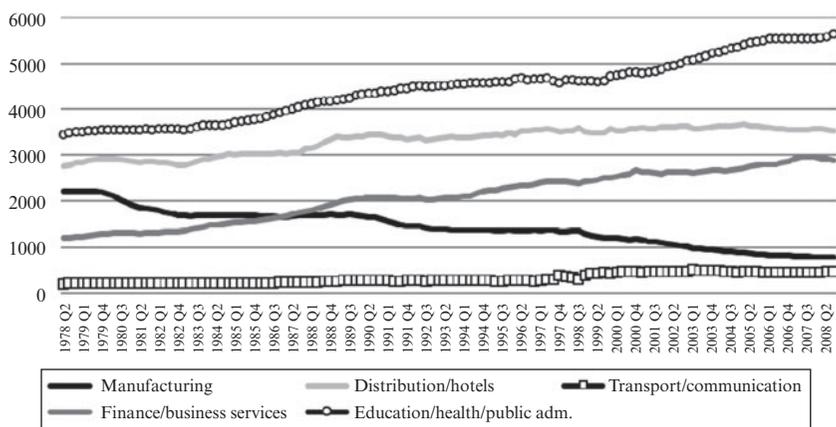
Note: The gap disjointed series in 2001 resulted from changes in the definitions of occupational categories moving from SOC90 to SOC2000.

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey.

Figure I.4b Percentage of employed men in selected occupation groups, UK

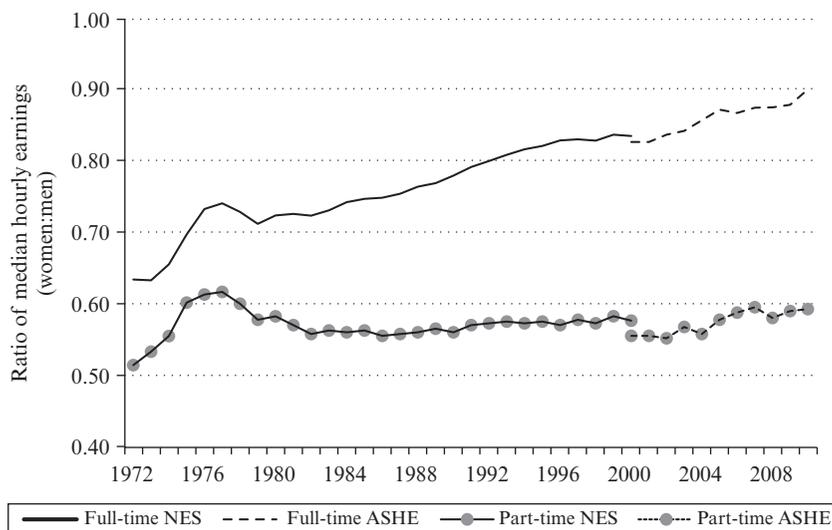
Men’s employment by industry (not shown) also increased in financial services over the same period, but remained at a stable level in the public sector and declined markedly in manufacturing.

One of the main gender equality indicators, the female to male hourly



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey.

Figure I.5 UK women's employment numbers in thousands, for selected industry sectors



Sources: NES – New Earnings Survey; ASHE – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

Figure I.6 Ratio of women's median hourly earnings to those of male full-time employees, 1972–2010, by hours worked, UK

wage ratio has also been improving, following an upward path for women working full-time hours (see Figure I.6). In 2010 women working full-time were earning 90 per cent of the median hourly wage of the man in full-time employment. However, when women working part-time hours are considered, the ratio has been much lower and flatter over the 1980s and 1990s, with signs of improvement only occurring since 2000 (still below 60 per cent of a man's wage in full-time work). While the wage ratio of women's to men's hourly rates of pay has improved, it has not reached levels of equality, even after controlling for other influences (Neuburger 2010). In all OECD countries the proportion of women who work part-time exceeds the proportion of men (OECD 2010). However, only the Netherlands and Switzerland have a higher proportion than the UK of women working part-time and the gender difference in the UK is particularly stark. In the UK, almost 40 per cent of women work part-time compared with less than 10 per cent of men (OECD 2010). The main reason for part-time work is that the hours and locality make it easier to combine employment and family responsibilities. The low rates of pay reflect the typically low-level occupations involved.

Even among UK graduates, the gender pay gap increases as men's and women's careers advance. According to Purcell and Elias (2008) this is mainly due to the gender division of labour in the public and private spheres. For 1995 graduates, the gender pay gap in their first job after their degree was 11 per cent and this rose to 19 per cent seven years later (in 2002–03). They note that there are many factors that help explain the gender pay gap. For example, sector and hours of work alone accounted for half of the gender differences in earnings seven years after graduating. In addition, many women made career adjustments because of family responsibilities. Undoubtedly children reap the benefits of mothers having higher education. However, it is more doubtful whether the UK economy is reaping its maximum payback for the investment in education, when so many women have few options but to rein in their careers to facilitate family demands.

THE OVERVIEW AND ORGANISATION OF *GENDERED LIVES*

The chapters are grouped in three parts. Part I examines gendered lives unfolding across time. This section contains three chapters, with Hobcraft and Sigle-Rushton (Chapter 1) examining the childhood origins of adult socio-economic disadvantage. Their focus is on whether cohort and gender matter. Using data from two British birth cohort studies – children born in

1958 and 1970 – they compare to what extent there are common predictors across gender and birth cohorts of adult socio-economic disadvantage. A striking feature of their analysis is how few gender differences they found. They do find some positive effects of structural changes for women in terms of job outcomes. However, their main conclusion warns against simplistic models of causation and they suggest that adult disadvantage is likely to involve the accumulation of a series of experiences and a variety of complex interplays of childhood circumstances. Bukodi, Dex and Joshi (Chapter 2) examine changing career trajectories of men and women across time. As well as examining gender differences, they investigate whether education and childbirth have different career implications across generations. They also look at how the various labour market conditions facing different cohorts as they enter the labour force affect the career progression of men and women. The findings suggest a shift towards greater occupational gender equality across time. It also seems that the new legislative environment in the UK helps reduce the loss of occupational status that was associated with motherhood in the past. The authors specify additional ways that policy can help reduce the occupational penalties associated with family care. Gershuny and Kan (Chapter 3) present a fascinating account of how the gender gap in paid work-time and unpaid work-time is closing slowly. Using the Multinational Time Use Study from 12 OECD countries, they see a slow but continuing trend of gender convergence in work time and in the domestic division of labour regardless of policy regime types. Policy regimes do make a difference though and the move towards gender equality has been much faster in Nordic countries than in the Southern countries of Europe. They also examine men's and women's total work hours, which show similar amounts of total work time but different gendered shares of paid and unpaid work. They conclude that, as far as gender roles are concerned, there is lagged adaption, rather than a stalled revolution.

Part II is about gender inequalities in the household and workplace. Bennett, De Henau, Himmelweit and Sung (Chapter 4) examine financial togetherness and autonomy within couples. While it has long been a policy focus to consider differences between household incomes, there has been much less concern about how that income is made up, or how it is received and by whom. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, they find that gender roles matter in what makes couples satisfied with their household income. The qualitative interviews with low to moderate income couples show that a woman's earnings were seen as less important than the man's for the household, but also more likely to be hers to spend. Thus, notions of 'togetherness' tend to favour the man's employment and relative entitlements within the household at the cost of the woman's access to household resources and overall financial autonomy. If gender

roles matter in household finances, they seem to matter far less when it comes to migrants' experience of precarious employment. McDowell, Batnitzky and Dyer (Chapter 5) explore the world of waged work for both men and women migrants who have come to the UK in search of a better life. Their study examines the experiences of 37 workers who obtained basic entry-level jobs in service jobs at a hospital or hotel through an employment agency. The study suggests that national stereotypes matter in terms of job allocation. In the hotel, for example, Indian men, because of their association with colonial hospitality and service, were given more visible jobs than men of other nationalities. In the hospital, skin colour seemed a less significant axis of differentiation between migrants, perhaps because of the long association between the National Health Service and Caribbean nurses. Migrant men may have had to take on 'feminised' work such as cleaning and caring for others; but men in more traditional jobs that rely on bodily strength such as security and portering were no less at risk when it comes to job security or job conditions. The overall finding is that migrants, male and female alike, are among the most exploitable and exploited of bottom-end service sector employees, with little security and almost no labour market rights.

Part III focuses on gender inequalities in a changing world. McLaughlin and Deakin (Chapter 6) examine the equality law and the limits of the 'business case' for addressing gender inequalities in corporations in the UK. Their focus is particularly on the gender pay gap. Their findings are not encouraging. They suggest that shareholders engaged with socially responsible investment have so far proved to have very little impact in the area of employment conditions and pay. Moreover, the implementation of the section of the 2010 Equality Act, which contains mandatory reporting of gender pay gaps, has been postponed by the Conservative-Liberal coalition government. Their interviews with managers from firms in both private and public sectors that have explicitly endorsed commitment to greater gender equality were also discouraging. Few were sufficiently persuaded by the business case for equality for 'good practice' to be likely to prevail in the absence of legal compulsion.

Scott and Plagnol (Chapter 7) examine work-family conflict (WFC) and well-being in Northern Europe. Using data from the European Social Survey, they examine how both the experience of WFC and well-being are gendered in ways that reflect the gendered division of paid and unpaid work. They also explore how different policies in support of maternal employment and a more equitable divide of domestic labour may reduce or enhance men's and women's well-being. Contrary to expectations, they found that men, not women, benefited from a less traditional gender role divide in household chores. They suggest that men may be uncomfortably

conscious of work getting in the way of their doing a fair share of chores at home, whereas women have long been used to doing a 'double shift'. They conclude that more attention needs to be paid to the gender division of unpaid work if we are to understand how changes in family and employment impinge on well-being. Lewis (Chapter 8) examines the policy challenges of achieving greater gender equality and work–family balance cross-nationally. Her focus is on the way in which time to care and time to work have been balanced over the past decade. In particular, she examines how part-time work and different forms of care leave (maternal, paternal and parental) influence the time available to care, and how childcare services and care by kin influence the time available for paid work. One problem for policy-makers is that the interests of family members may conflict. While it is commonly acknowledged that children need one-to-one care for their first year, it is problematic to provide that when mothers have increased their participation in paid work and fathers have not made a similar change in their contribution to unpaid work. Focusing on reducing work–family conflicts for women alone only reinforces gender inequalities, including pension inequalities in later life. However, making an adult worker family model a practical reality requires considerable policy skill, if the welfare of families is to be maximised, while the trade-offs between the interests of family members are minimised.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS, TENTATIVE ANSWERS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Gendered Lives offers many examples of unexpected findings. Here we highlight two.

The first example comes from the research that explored the early childhood origins of adult disadvantage (Chapter 1). One of the great contributions of social science has been to show the importance of early childhood in shaping subsequent life experiences, whether in health, education, relationships or socio-economic status. We know, for example, that children who display aggression in childhood are more likely to end up in disadvantaged circumstances, such as living in social housing, receiving benefits and having a low-skilled occupation. Given that women are more likely than men to be in such disadvantaged adult circumstances, it seems likely that the childhood origins would also differ by gender. Surprisingly, Hobcraft and Sigle-Rushton (Chapter 1) find few gender differences in the pathways to adult disadvantages. Thus, despite there being pronounced gender differences in both childhood experiences and adult outcomes the mechanisms that link the two are surprisingly similar for both men and

women. This is important because it points away from a single or simple explanation of adult gender inequalities. Causation in human behaviour is often complex. The challenge is to take account of the complex interplays between biological (for example, hormonal) and social factors, and the experiences that accrue as a result. This points the way towards a still more nuanced approach to the measurement and analysis of the dynamics of gender inequalities than has been achieved to date.

A second unexpected finding is from the research that seeks to unpack how individuals in heterosexual couples talk about and assess their household finances (Chapter 4). In particular, the study focused on accounts of 'togetherness' and financial autonomy and how these ideas feature in the lives of couples managing their household income. It was a breakthrough in social science when research began to unpack the 'black box' of household finances. Policy-makers tend to show more of an interest in a household's total income than who has access to that income and how it is used. Yet we know from many studies that household income is rarely shared evenly. It seems likely that both men's and women's satisfaction with their household income would be different depending on whether they have earned the money themselves or whether it has been earned by the partner. However, that common-sense assumption is wrong. Bennett et al. (Chapter 4) find that gender roles matter in what makes couples satisfied with their household income and, for both men and women, the job of the man matters more than the job of the woman.

Such unexpected findings contribute to the answers we can tentatively draw out from our ten questions. The first three questions asked: (1) 'Has the significance of gender declined over time?' (2) 'What are the causes and consequences of the incomplete revolution in gender roles?' and (3) 'Why are gender inequalities in access to resources so resistant to change?' These three questions interlink. There is certainly evidence of a shift across generations towards gender equality in the occupational careers of men and women, as Bukodi et al. demonstrate in Chapter 2. Education is an important part of the story of the decline in gender inequalities, but so too is the increasing instability in the career paths of men. Yet, as Gershuny and Kan illustrate in Chapter 3, gender inequities in the division of labour persist and, at best, there has been a lagged adaptation in both the slow change of institutional structures and gender-role ideologies. Moreover, in times when marital break-up is relatively common, the gender specialisation in paid and unpaid work makes the woman economically vulnerable. Bennett et al. (Chapter 4) show that traditional gender role attitudes are well entrenched, at least in households with relatively limited resources. They claim that the view that the man has more entitlements, relative to the woman, to the resources and benefits from the household's collective

labour is but a modern version of the notion that it is in the whole family's interest that the man eats well even when food is scarce for other family members, because all their fortunes depend on his strength as the main breadwinner. The saying 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' comes to mind – the more things change, the more they stay the same. But this is too pessimistic, because as Gershuny and Kan (Chapter 3) suggest lagged adaptation does not imply a permanently stalled gender-role revolution.

Question 4, 'Does it makes sense to focus on gendered lives, given the interplay of gender with other identities such as class, race, age and citizenship?' is an important one. Yet it is not always possible or appropriate to focus on complex interactions, which the concept of 'intersectionality' implies. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that discrimination and inequalities will interact in ways that depend on the context and are specific to time and place (McCall 2005). McDowell et al. in Chapter 5 illustrate how labour market, migration patterns, national origins, gender and skin colour intersect in particular ways to construct workers who are seen as appropriate 'warm bodies' for low-level service sector jobs. However, there are always trade-offs in empirical research and by focusing on the wider picture of labour inequalities, they lose some of the up-close focus on gender differences. Whether the focus on gendered lives makes sense depends on what research question is being addressed.

The related question 5, 'Does a focus on gender inequalities make sense, given that male and female lives are so closely interlinked?' is addressed by almost all the chapters in this book. It is the way that male and female lives interlink – particularly in terms of the division of labour between the reproductive and productive spheres – that helps create and sustain gender inequalities. Question 6, 'What are the main drivers of change in the gendered aspects of production and reproduction?' relates to the changes in family life, education and employment that we have briefly illustrated in the earlier sections of this chapter. Question 7, 'What is the role that institutional structures play in helping shape gendered lives?' refers to a theme that is picked up throughout the book about the reciprocal influences that flow between changing gendered lives and institutional structures such as, family, education, employment, trade unions, welfare state and law. There is a complex set of interlinked cultural and structural changes that reflect and shape both the changes going on in individual lives and also the changes in the institutional contexts, in which gendered lives are set. Examples include the change in the social respectability of paid work for women, the demise of the male-breadwinner family, the shifting reliance of labour-market demand from brawn to brain, the rise of the knowledge economy, the increased emphasis on individualisation in everything from childcare to pensions, the decline of religious authority, the increasing

fluidity of partnerships, changing incentives for the domestic division of labour, and improvements in fertility control, health and longevity.

Question 8, 'Who stands to gain or lose from the traditional gender role order?' in part refers to the conflicting interests at stake of men, women and children. The cross-national analysis of Lewis (Chapter 8) of gender equality and work–family balance unpacks some of these conflicts and the challenge they pose for policy. Question 9, 'Is there clear evidence showing how gender equality benefits individuals and society?' is addressed by McLaughlin and Deakin (Chapter 6) whose qualitative research of employers suggests that the 'business case' for addressing gender inequalities is unlikely to be fully persuasive, even in organisations committed to the diversity agenda. Scott and Plagnol (Chapter 7) look at this in the different context of work–family conflict and well-being in Northern Europe showing that a more equitable gender division of labour has beneficial effects for men as well as women.

The final question, Question 10, 'What policy interventions might be most effective in promoting gender equality and why?' is addressed by all chapters, with authors reflecting on the implications of their findings for policy. McLaughlin and Deakin (Chapter 6) emphasise that legal compulsion will be necessary if much progress is to be made on gender inequalities in pay, even among those UK organisations that emphasise corporate social responsibility. Unfortunately, the implementation of the mandatory pay section of the UK 2010 Equality Law has been put on hold in 2011, with the change in government. This is because there is a perceived conflict between gender equality and the interests of business and economic growth. Thus the question of policy intervention is not straightforward. It depends in part on the political and public will for introducing measures that would enhance gender equality. As Lewis (Chapter 8) suggests, UK policies seek to make adults become more self-provisioning, with welfare increasingly privatised as the individual's responsibility. Given this, government may be argued to have a responsibility to ensure more equal labour market participation and terms and conditions, which in turn means that fathers need to be encouraged to pick up more of the unpaid work of care.

In this introductory chapter, we have sought to set the scene for the subsequent chapters on gendered lives, by examining gender inequalities in production and reproduction. As Glucksmann (1995, p.70) has put it: 'The economic bottom line is that if babies are not looked after they will die; if food preparation ceased people would eventually starve'. Glucksmann (1995, p.67) has described this as the 'total social organisation of labour' (TSOL), that is 'the manner by which all labour in a particular society is divided up between and allocated to different

structures, institutions and activities'. More recently (Glucksmann 2005) has extended the TSOL concept to consider the complex interconnections and shifting boundaries between work activities of all kinds, including paid and unpaid work. From this perspective, the work in the reproductive sphere provides an indispensable contribution to human flourishing and is central, not peripheral to productive activities. Folbre (2009) goes further and argues that the highly gendered and uneven responsibilities for the care of dependents undermines trust and reciprocity between men and women, old and young, rich and poor. Thus, as these authors and many of the chapter findings conclude, change in the gendering of lives is crucial for both the economic well-being and social integration of society.

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