

The new economy and the work life balance: Conceptual
explorations and a case study of new media.

Dr Diane Perrons
Department of Geography and Environment and
Associate Fellow Gender Institute,
London School of Economics,
Houghton Street
London WC22AE
UK
Email d.perrons@lse.ac.uk

The new economy and the work life balance: Conceptual explorations and a case study of new media.

Abstract

Given the varied claims made about the new economy and its implications for the organisation of work and life, this paper critically evaluates some conceptualisations of the new economy and then explores how the new media sector has materialised and been experienced by people working in Brighton and Hove, a new media hub. New technologies and patterns of working allow the temporal and spatial boundaries of paid work to be extended, potentially allowing more people, especially those with caring responsibilities, to become involved, possibly leading to a reduction in gender inequality. This paper, based on 55 in depth interviews with new media owners, managers and some employees in small and micro enterprises, evaluates this claim. Reference is made to the gender differentiated patterns of ownership and earnings; flexible working patterns, long hours and homeworking and considers whether these working patterns are compatible with a work life balance. The results indicate that while new media creates new opportunities for people to combine interesting paid work with caring responsibilities a marked gender imbalance remains.

The new economy and the work life balance: Conceptual explorations and a case study the new media.

Introduction

Given the diverse nature, varied understandings and different claims made about the new economy, this paper seeks to explore how one sector, new media, has materialised in one particular location – Brighton and Hove, focusing on the gender differentiated nature of opportunities and risks, work and working hours and the impact on work life balance.

The paper divides into three sections. The first explores some of the varied conceptualisations of the new economy and outlines some of the potential risks and opportunities that have been identified in the literature. The second, outlines the view put forward by government and politicians, including the UK's Women's Unit, that the new economy, especially the development of communication and information technologies and in particular the Internet, which potentially extends the spatial and temporal range of paid work, provides new opportunities for people with caring responsibilities, and potentially a means of reducing gender inequality. The main section evaluates this expectation by reference to a qualitative study of the new media sector in Brighton and Hove, which has become a new media hub. It does so by exploring gender differentiated patterns of ownership, management and earnings; working practices, in particular long hours, flexible working patterns and homeworking, and considers the extent to which these working patterns are compatible with a work life balance, especially when caring responsibilities are involved. The paper concludes by contesting some of the ideas about the new

economy and makes some suggestions for redressing gender imbalance that, so far, seems to be being reproduced in this new area of activity.

1) The new economy, new media and the organisation of work

The new economy is a concept that has recently entered academic and media discourse and although widely used has several meanings with differing implications for the well being of the economy, individual and social welfare. Optimistically the term has been used to refer to the unprecedented coexistence of economic growth and a booming stock market with low inflation, tight labour markets and low wage pressures (Greenspan, 1998). More substantively it has been used to depict 'a new technological paradigm centred around micro electronics-based information/communication technologies, and genetic engineering' (Castells, 2000:9). The development of Internet, in particular, is said to have profound implications for the organisation of economic activity and for increasing productivity (Castells, 2001). Other analyses focus more circumspectly, on the changing character of work associated with technological change, deregulation and globalisation (Sennett, 1998; Beck, 2000; Carnoy, 2000) and the new social inequalities that seem to be accompanying these processes. Ulrich Beck (2000) argues that work at all levels is characterised by insecurity and increasing inequality. Similarly, Richard Sennett (1998) maintains that new, insecure and increasingly fragmented forms of work are leading to an imbalance between the values required for a successful working life and those required for a stable family leading to the 'Corrosion of Character'. Fernando Flores and John Gray (2000:24) speak of the 'death of the career' and argue that lifelong identities are giving way to 'brief habits' and 'the lives of wired people are more like collections of short stories than the narrative of a bourgeois novel.' The

empirical support for these claims is however more varied. Interestingly, Danny Quah (1996, 2001) and Robert Reich (2001) in different ways link the positive and negative dimensions analytically and argue that they form part of an emerging digital divide. That is, they argue that some of the essential characteristics of the knowledge-based economy, which contribute to economic growth, also increase economic inequality (Perrons 2001). Reich (2001) and Martin Carnoy (2000) also emphasise that the new economy puts increasing pressure on maintaining a work life balance, and on social sustainability, but otherwise less attention has been given to questions of reproduction and the gendered nature of emerging inequalities in the new economy, an omission noted by Castells (2001)ⁱ and something this paper seeks to explore.

Perhaps more is said about the ‘new economy’ and the lives and livelihoods of people working within it than is actually known and there may be a tendency to generalise from the little that is known especially within popular writings (see for example Reeves, 2001 in which a very optimistic and one sided view of the future of work is developed). Thus, detailed, comparative, empirical work is necessary in order to investigate the varied forms taken by the new economy and how it is experienced in practice. Kevin Doogan (2001) has made an explicit empirical critique of the insecurity thesis and this paper also seeks to make a contribution to the debate by reporting on a qualitative analysis of the experiences of women and men working in the new media sector in Brighton and Hove.

In this brief review of work on the new economy emphasis is placed on explanations which foreground long lasting, substantive changes, that is, the potential offered by new information and commuting technologies and new working arrangements in

terms of time and contracts, rather than those that rest on nominal economic variables, such as inflation free growth, as the sustainability of the new economy on these criteria has already been questioned as economic growth in the USA began to slow down in the middle of 2001.

Thus thinking of the new economy as characterised by the increasing use of information and computing technologies, and the Internet, it is clear that new ways of organising the production, distribution and exchange of existing goods as well as entirely new goods and services have come into being. The distribution and exchange of goods via the Internet is generally referred to as E-commerce and takes place between businesses and consumers (B2C), a well known example of which would be Amazon.com which supplies books, videos and CDs, and transactions between firms or businesses (B2B) which so far are quantitatively more significant (OECD, 2000) and have been said to lead to new forms of business organisation. Castells (2001) argues for example that the Internet has allowed the potential of networked forms of organisation within and between firms to be realised. Existing services such as training, marketing, advertising and public relations are also increasingly being provided through the Internet, becoming e-training, e-marketing and e-pr, usually in addition to traditional means of provision through CD Roms, videos and brochures. The Internet also facilitates the development of new interactive services including digital TV, games and interaction with virtual worlds, for example with a pop groupⁱⁱ. In turn, these new services, products and methods of distribution generate new forms of knowledge-based employment ranging from web based graphic design, web system/database management, video installations through to programming. One outcome is a range of new activities and jobs now commonly referred to as new

media, which do not fit neatly into existing industrial sectors or occupational categories.

This conceptualisation of the new economy conforms to media images, which emphasise ICT and high status employment and also forms the main subject of this paper. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that these activities also generate and depend on a range of lower level jobs in distribution and consumer services. E-commerce, designed and managed by the higher-level workers, generates low status employment in warehousing and deliveryⁱⁱⁱ. Some work is displaced from conventional retailers and banks to call centres and some is transferred to consumers who manage their own transactions directly via the Internet. Furthermore, given the long hours worked by knowledge-workers (see IER/IFF, 2001) there has been an expansion of jobs in the personal care and consumer services sector to cater for their needs (see Perrons, 2001). Thus, the new economy is characterised by a duality or digital divide, which in practice may build upon and possibly reinforce existing social divisions of class, gender, race and ethnicity. Middle class, well-educated and white men are likely to be over represented in high level 'self programmable' (Castells 2000) jobs, while women, ethnic minorities and people from lower social classes are more likely to be found in the generic, lower paid jobs, in delivery and personal services such as office cleaning, personal fitness, catering and care. There is however some similarity in the contractual structure and temporal demands of employment, if not in lifestyles and levels of pay, between high and low level workers that create problems for managing work life balance.

New working patterns and the work life balance

With the possibilities offered by ICT, increasing deregulation and associated moves towards the 24/7 society, the temporal range of working hours has expanded leading to an expansion of flexible and long working hours (Harkness, 1999; Presser, 1999; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1998; IER/IFF, 2001; Twomey, 2001). For example, the recent IER/IFF (2001) survey found that 11% of workplaces in the UK (covering 19% of the employees) operated 24 hours a day 7 days a week and 11% of employees, amongst whom fathers were especially prevalent, were working 60 or more hours a week. There was also a connection between flexibility and long hours in that the former were sometimes allowed simply to permit the latter, that is the demands of the workplace were so intense that people were 'allowed' to work on Saturdays and Sundays and take work home, a practice which has been facilitated by ICT and internet access which enables continual connection between work and home through mobile phones and email^{iv}. This can be construed positively as a means of extending the range of locations from which paid work can be carried out, more negatively as a means of work invading the home or indeed elements of both. The Department for Employment and Education (DfEE, 2001a and 2001b) emphasises the business case for flexibility, termed work life balance, and provides illustrations of how it can increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, improve staff commitment, increase retention rates and so reduce employer costs. Indeed within this perspective flexible working seems to be more concerned with accommodating life to rather demanding and unquestioned working hours rather than one of reorganising work to allow time for domestic and caring responsibilities. The IER/IFF survey (2001) found that while some forms of flexible working were permitted, especially work at weekends and during unsocial hours, only a tiny minority of employers provided other forms of flexibility such as job shares or forms of leave additional to statutory requirements.

Neither did many provide any direct assistance with childcare (2% provided a workplace crèche and 3% financial assistance) yet 26% of workplaces provided workplace counselling/stress management. They suggest that employers are prepared to pay to alleviate their employees' stress but less willing to provide facilities that might prevent it in the first place' (IER/IFF, 2001: 25). It is important to recognise however that even when available, the take up rate of family leave related arrangements is low (DfEE, 2000a) possibly because of stigmatisation. Thus, flexible working patterns have opened up opportunities for a wide range of people, including carers, to take paid employment, even though employers often retain control over the parameters of flexibility (Dex and McCulloch, 1997; Breedveld, 1998; Figart and Mutari, 1998; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1998; Perrons, 1999).

New working patterns have eroded the boundaries and collective rhythms of working life and the concept and reality of a fixed working day has declined for many people. The process is also cumulative. As working hours become more varied, people will expect services to be available at a wider range of times. Further, as the boundaries of the working day have become more opaque, many salaried workers are expected to work long hours to demonstrate commitment (Hochschild, 1997; McDowell, 1997; Doyle and Reeves, 2001; Fagan, 2001) and to match the working hours of different time zones. The main reason given by employees for long hours is 'to get the work done' but the IER/IFF survey (2001) found that 70% of those working over 60 hours enjoyed their work compared to 57% in the survey as a whole. Entrepreneurs and freelancers similarly work long hours to get the work done, but also because of the unpredictable nature and flow of work together with tight deadlines and in some cases endorsing the findings of the IER/IFF survey, because of intrinsic work satisfaction,

which means that the boundaries between work and life become blurred (see Massey, 1996; IER/IFF, 2001; Reeves, 2001 and the case study below). This blurring can also be explained by the fact that knowledge work depends on human rather than fixed capital and so is characterised by bursts of activity followed by fallow periods and thus does not fit easily into a 9-5 structure (Gershuny, 2000). Consequently knowledge based societies are said to be moving to a postindustrial time regime (Doyle and Reeves, 2001; Fagan, 2001; Gershuny, 2000).

Richard Reeves (2001) argues that concern over long working hours is misplaced because they often reflect worker preferences. He argues that time at work increasingly involves doing interesting things in attractive physical and social environments and so may be preferred to watching a TV soap, carrying out domestic work or looking after children. In part following the ideas of Arlie Hochschild (1997) Reeves argues that:

‘while the workplace is growing in attractiveness for many people home, or ‘life’ is looking a bit gloomy. For dual-earner couples with children, life outside work is one of fixed timetables (childcare), conflict (whose turn is it to pick up the kids?), low-skill work (cooking, cleaning nappy disposal) and thankless masters and mistresses (the kids). As work enters the post-industrial era, home life has become industrial’ (Reeves, 2001: 128).

There may be some truth in this illustration for some people, or on occasions for many but Reeves (2001) pays little attention to the terms and conditions of employment for those who might provide childcare and domestic services or ‘life-style fixers’ (Denny, 2001) or whether they similarly would welcome increased working hours.

Furthermore, Reeves (2001) seems to overlook the complex nature of care work. Although the domestic division of labour may be a source of conflict (Beck, 2000) or the outcome of complex processes of intra household negotiation (see Jarvis, 1999), this should not negate the multifaceted nature of care work, or its potential for positive utility (Perrons, 2000). Michael Rose (1999) for example, found that domestic workers, including cleaners and dinner ladies had the highest levels of job satisfaction. Good quality care may also bring positive social benefits (see Folbre and Nelson, 2000; Folbre 2001). If however the gender division of domestic labour and child care is systematically uneven, which it currently is in the UK (Murgatroyd and Neuburger, 1997) and if longer working hours are generalised, then time or the willingness to work long hours will form a new means of gender differentiation, just as other differences, such as qualifications and formal opportunities are becoming more equal. That is, even though some people may enjoy their paid work, it should not automatically be assumed that they dislike reproductive work but rather that the demands of the long hours culture in the context of a society with a social deficit in child and elder care provision, often forces a choice between jobs with career possibilities and those that can be combined with caring for at least one parent, typically the mother.

A further strand of thought in discussions of the new economy is insecurity and risk in both work and home life. Dealing only with the former in this paper, workers at both ends of the jobs hierarchy have been said to have been affected by increasing insecurity - Beck (2000) Sennett (1998) Flores and Gray (2000) - but there is also extensive debate about whether there is any evidence for their claims in relation to the UK (Doogan, 2001 and Heery and Salmon, 1999). At the aggregate level only a small

proportion of new jobs in the UK during the 1990s were full time and permanent (Gregg and Wadsworth, 1999), giving some support for the insecurity thesis but counter evidence suggests that there has been little change in the average length of time that people stay with any individual employer: average job duration for men was 10.5 years in the 1970s and now 9.5 years and for women there has been little aggregate change (Green, Felstead and Burchell, 2000). Furthermore there has been an increase in long-term employment (defined as employees who have been in 'current employment' for ten years or more) from 34.6% to 36.7% for men and from 21.2% to 28.5% for women between 1992 and 1999. These increases were found across growing and declining, public and private, traditional and new sectors and across all occupations, and was greater in the higher skilled, managerial and professional groups than in elementary and lower skilled occupations (Doogan 2001:423). Doogan (2001) explains the paradox of increasing long term employment and the high perception of insecurity among employees, varying between 28 per cent to 53 per cent (MORI, 2000 cited by Doogan 2001), to 'manufactured insecurity' generated by the government introducing market discipline into a growing range of jobs, partly through privatisation. This manufactured insecurity may have lowered wage demands (see IPPR, 2000) and thus contributed to inflation free growth and possibly to an unwillingness to risk changing jobs, thereby accounting for the increase in long term employment. Whatever the explanation, not all elements in society ever had a career so writers emphasising increasing insecurity are perhaps overstating the extent of change. Furthermore, in new media temporary or contract work can also be a positive choice, as it provides an opportunity for individuals to continually update their skills, knowledge and pay as they move from project to project and firm to firm (Ó'Riain, 2000). However, this security is very contingent on tight and expanding

labour markets and leaves unanswered broader questions of caring and social reproduction or social sustainability (Carnoy, 2000).

The range of the developments associated with the new economy is immense and the ramifications difficult to assess. It is important to emphasise however that these developments have not happened because of new technologies but rather because of the ways in which technological developments occur within a capitalist and increasingly global economy. The processes shaping these changes are those, which motivate the decision makers in the large corporations and nation states and on the individual and social response. Similarly, the capacity of people to organise their own work biographies and plan their lifetime finances continues to vary now, as in the past, with individual and social factors. The former include responsibilities and opportunities outside as well as within the workplace and these remain highly structured by individual characteristics including gender, ethnicity, race, social class, educational background, age and stage in life course as well as individual preferences. Social factors include the level of development, the welfare regime and prevailing labour market regulations, company size and status. Thus although everyone is affected by and to a lesser degree affects these developments, they are experienced in different ways and to different degrees depending on their existing individual and social positions. Therefore, these issues require empirical investigation, as there will be considerable variation in outcomes. Before presenting the findings of the case study however, the current state of gender inequality in the UK is outlined together with some indication of official thinking about how the new economy might contribute to increasing gender equality while maintaining a work life balance.

2) The new economy potential for redressing gender imbalances

Gender inequalities in employment in the UK have narrowed in that more women, (73%) more mothers with dependent children (69%) and more mothers with very young children (under 5) (58% in 2000 compared to 48% in 1990) are economically active than ever before while male activity rates continue to decline from 88% to 84% during the 1990s. The figures above together with the fact that in the age group 25-39 the gap between the female (75%) and male 94% activity rates is at its highest (Twomey, 2001) indicate that children still constrain women's participation rate and although there has been some convergence between women and men, gender inequalities in terms of hours of work, segregation and earnings remain (Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1998; Thair and Risdon, 1999; Twomey, 2001; Bower, 2001). On the most favourable measure, hourly earnings, women remain at 80% of the male level but only receive 60% of male average earnings (EOC, 2000). A study projecting lifetime incomes identified a very wide gender gap, 'the female forfeit', even for those women without children (Rake, 2000). Furthermore, women are over represented in part time employment, which often represents the private solution to the low levels of childcare in the UK and indeed the increase in women's activity rate is associated with the increase (12%) in part time work between 1990 and 2000 compared with a 4% increase in full time employment (Twomey, 2001).

There is an extensive range of recent literature on the position of women in the labour market (Crompton, 1997; Walby, 1997; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1998; Bradley, 1999; Thair and Risdon, 1999; McDowell, 2001 to name a few) and some studies of women in various sectors associated with the new economy (Baines, 1999; Stanworth 2000) but to my knowledge less detailed analysis of the implications of ICT on

women's employment overall. Nevertheless the Women's Unit of the UK government has argued that ICT represents 'one of the biggest opportunities for women in the 21st century to earn more, have more flexible working practices and adapt their current business or try a business start-up'. Thus, they maintain that 'self-employment and enterprise offer women a real alternative means of earning good income and achieving greater flexibility in their working lives' (Women's Unit, 2000). That is given the way that contemporary technologies extend the range of working opportunities both temporally and spatially they potentially provide a means of opening up new opportunities for paid work and thereby potentially redress current gender inequalities. As the case study below illustrates there is some substance to this view, but the flexibility offered by ICT for new working patterns could also be seen as a way of allowing government and employers to sidestep any responsibility for facilitating work life balance by passing the responsibility entirely to the individual (woman) by allowing her to adjust her life around paid work (see also Hardill and Graham 2001).

Entrepreneurs, homeworkers and freelancers can manage their own routines, even if they always cannot control the quantity of work. In some ways they may realise the vision of the 'electronic cottage' (Toffler, 1980) although the problems of social isolation, family tensions also have to be recognised (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz, 1995; Huws, 1996; Baruch, 2000) leading to the contrasting image of the 'electronic cage' (Zimmerman cited by Baines, 1999: 20). Women also face constraints; although they are beginning to become more qualified than men as measured by the number of graduates, they have a long historic deficit to overcome. Furthermore they are under-represented on ICT courses and the proportion working in IT has fallen.

Women also have greater difficulty in obtaining access to capital and the Women's Unit have been holding workshops to identify ways of overcoming these constraints. The purpose of the empirical investigation discussed below is to illuminate some aspects of new economy, to outline the differential opportunities and constraints experienced by women and men in this sector and to consider the implications for managing work life balance.

3) Opportunities and constraints for women and men in the new media sector in Brighton and Hove

Brighton and Hove - 'the place to be'

Brighton and Hove on the South Coast of England with a population of 255,800 (ONS 2001) has been socially constructed as 'The Place to be' and become the 'focal point for creative industries in Europe' (BHC, 2000). It has always been a very vibrant place where *'eyebrows are more often pierced rather than raised at eccentric behaviour'* (BHC, 2000) and it attracts celebrities, media, arts people as well as tourists. It is also a divided town, with more restaurants but also more people sleeping rough per head than anywhere outside London and of 354 council areas in the UK it is the 94th poorest (ONS, 2001 and Edwards 2000). Thus while marketing itself as the 'Place to be' it is simultaneously applying for and receiving funds targeted at the poorest areas under a variety of regeneration programmes nationally and from the European Union. Brighton and Hove was chosen for this study because it is said to constitute a 'new media hub' and in fact reflects the varied dimensions of the new economy within a relatively small location (see also Tang, 1999 and Pratt, 2000). It has at least 200 new media companies with a further 170 companies in East Sussex - the surrounding county^v. Most of the companies are very small but it is this type of company that corresponds to the opportunities for women identified by the Women's Unit.

However, the research findings suggest that although the new media sector provides opportunities for women, significant gender divisions remain.

The results reported come from a wider study of the local labour market in the context of the new economy, deregulation, equity and representation. Initially, seven in- depth interviews were carried out with women who attended the Women in the New Economy seminar in Sussex sponsored by the Women's Unit in July 2000. From these, key issues were identified and fifty further interviews lasting between forty-five and seventy five minutes, based around a structured questionnaire, were carried out with owners, managers and some employees of small firms and micro enterprises^{vi}.

Gender composition, size of companies and earnings

New media is an emerging sector comprising of wholly new companies, which have developed in response to new needs as well as existing companies that have restructured their operations to make use of contemporary technologies. Of the companies participating in the survey, 63% had been in existence for less than 3 years, while 14% were over 5 and a further 11% over ten years old. The majority (70% n = 38) are owned and managed by men, despite the fact that the original interviewees were women attending the women in the new economy conference. Just over half of the total are limited companies (38% female and 63% male) and 20% (43% female and 11% male) are one-person firms. Measured by direct employment the majority of the companies in the survey were small, 50% having no direct employees and 25% not even employing freelancers on an occasional basis (see Figure 1). Companies owned by women tended to have a smaller number of

employees of either kind than men but the difference was not statistically significant (see Figure 1).

{Figure 1 near here}

Women are also over represented among the smaller companies as measured by turnover. Only 1 wholly owned female company, compared to 14 owned by men had a turnover of above £500,000 and the two female companies in the £250,000 to £500,000 category were co-owned with their male partners (see Figure 2). When divided into two broad categories - above and below £50,000 - this gender difference is statistically significant^{vii}.

{Figure 2 near here}

There was a significant association in the data between earnings and turnover^{viii}, but in the case of small companies, and especially sole traders, earnings are difficult to evaluate. The owner can receive earnings, dividends or re-invest profits in the company, Indeed, accountants often advise owners that it is tax efficient to pay themselves only the minimum wage. With these qualifications in mind, women in general earned less than men^{ix}. Taking earnings and turnover together it is clear that the majority of people in this sector do not conform to the media image of high earners even though they were mainly graduates and worked long hours (see below). For people on low earnings especially, a further problem arises from their irregularity:

'I earn less than £10,000 p.a. sometimes there is a whole month with no earnings - the big companies in particular are very slow at paying out.' (Woman, aged 35-44, web page designer, caring responsibilities, herself major role, ID 1).

Gender, caring responsibilities and working hours

Working hours for women and men in this sector are varied, often flexible but also long, the mean number of weekly hours for women was 46 (SD = 16) and 48 (SD = 17) for men. The main gender difference was at the upper end of the distribution with a small number of men working extremely long hours (6 working over 70 hours a week compared to only 1 woman who worked over 65 hours). However, the median (45) and mode (55) for women were higher than for men 45 and 40 respectively, probably because men were more likely to be managers of larger companies with more standard working hours, while women were more likely to be sole traders or owners with more varied working patterns. Some women and men worked part-time hours but for different reasons. For the men this was either because their new media activity was a second job (this was also the case for one of the women), or because they had been unable to get more work. For women domestic responsibilities were more likely to curtail their hours see Figure 3. Women were statistically more likely (at the 5% level) to have a major responsibility for childcare. Overall working hours were long and were either increasing or remaining the same as was the pressure of work, only a minority 12% and 9% respectively reporting trends in the reverse direction. It is necessary however to point out that the data rests on self-reporting - there is no independent corroboration and being 'busy' forms part of the identity of a successful operator in new media (see Reich, 2001).

{Figure 3 near here}

There are four main reasons why people work long hours in this sector: the unpredictable nature and flow of work; uncertainty associated with a business start up (see also Baines and Wheelock 2000); the need to continually update skills and knowledge, and the intrinsic satisfaction derived from the work itself.

In new media, many products and services are 'bespoke', but clients are often uncertain about what they want or what to expect and frequently change their specifications as the project develops. Over a third of interviewees autonomously identified this lack of clear boundaries around project content and corresponding uncertainty about the volume of work, as a major source of strain especially because deadlines were often inflexible - for example, the launch date for a web site. As many of the companies were new and building their reputations they wanted to produce high quality products, and often did not charge for all of the amendments made. They also considered themselves to be at the cutting edge of new software developments and were intellectually interested in exploring new possibilities. Thus the hours of unpaid work could be seen as a form of 'physic income' (Baines, 1999) or self-exploitation or indeed a combination of the two. Furthermore, there was a reluctance to turn down work, similarly to all new start-ups, because of uncertainty about future contracts.

For owners and sole traders, working long hours was often seen as temporary, and a form of investment in the company and their own future as illustrated in the sentiments below which were repeated many times.

'I am working long hours now (110 a week) but this will not be forever. I want to earn a lot now so that I can *do* things later on - like travelling.' (his emphasis, man, aged 25-34, specialist web programmer, no caring responsibilities, ID 7).

'At present I am building the company up, - the harder I work the more I enjoy it'. As a Director, at present, the company's interests come first.' (man, aged 25-34, project manager and localiser, on average working 74 hours a week no caring responsibilities, ID 13).

'Well, I'm in a start up role at present and we have been expanding a lot so I'm still trying to get structures in place. Last week I worked about 70 hours but this will go down. I aim to work standard hours. I do aim to 'get a life'. But work is part of life - I enjoy it. The company is covered by the Working Time Directive and they agree with it.' (woman, aged 25-34, manager, no caring responsibilities, ID 39).

Many of those unhappy with the current volume of work had considered expanding the number of employees or utilising freelancers more intensively. Freelancers form an important part of this sector, not only do they help companies manage the fluctuations in the flow of work, but also allow companies, especially the smaller ones, to draw upon a much wider range of skills than their size would permit, in accordance with the changing nature of their work. One of the larger companies, which had experienced dramatic expansion immediately prior to the survey, subsequently 'let go' half of its staff, but then within two days was advertising for freelancers^x. Indeed uncertainty was an important reason why others were reluctant to expand. Besides having to finance extra office space to accommodate new workers

and ensuring a sufficient flow of work there were also problems of monitoring quality, given that there was little formal accreditation for skills in this sector and concern that growing beyond a 'reasonable size' would lead a loss of control and a qualitative change in their working lives.

'We plan to expand to about the size of 25 -30. After that we would have to think carefully about the costs and benefits of further expansion. If we expanded too much it would change the atmosphere. We might set up another company instead.'
(man, aged 25-34, database design and management, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 15).

This perspective confirms the image of new independent operators as a 'cross between employer and day labourer, self exploiter and boss on their own account... with the objective of moulding their own lives rather than conquering world markets' (Beck, 2000: 54-55 see also Baines, 1999 for a similar finding in the case of media freelancers). Having control over their work was important, as explained below by a respondent, previously earning £100,000 p.a. with a London company, now paying himself only 25% above the minimum wage (having allowed for dividends):

' well it's like prostitution isn't it. I set up my own company so that I have freedom and can control what work I do.' (man, aged 25-34, E-commerce developer - no caring responsibilities, ID 53).

This comment reflects the findings of Rose (1999) from the wider scale analysis of SCEL data in relation to work satisfaction, that although there was a positive

association between job skills and job satisfaction, the more significant association was found between own skills and job satisfaction. Specifically, the least satisfied workers were high skilled workers in low skilled jobs. In the case of Brighton and Hove, job dissatisfaction arising from the nature of the work or the wider context in which it was offered were important reasons for new media people to set up on their own (see also the comment from ID 35 below). Indeed for the ordinary employee there may be an inverse relation between firm size and job satisfaction, in that work in the larger firms was more likely to become formulaic and less challenging. In several cases, there was also desire to escape from office politics and from male power structures. Having been independent one female respondent found that:

'after a while you can't go back - you think why should I be doing this for them and they aren't doing it very well anyway. Power has to be earned by respect for competencies - not imposed. The IT world is still a very male world and some men have difficulty in treating women as equal.' (woman, aged 35-44, Internet PR, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 12).

For this woman working independently enabled her to escape the glass ceiling, which she had continued to experience in the new economy (see Stanworth, 2000).

For employees, the situation of long working hours was more problematical and employees were often treated in a rather paternalistic way. Employers, just as owners, faced unpredictable volumes of work and tight deadlines and although they could, and in fact often did, take on temporary or freelance workers, this could not always be done at short notice, so existing employees found themselves working extremely long

hours. One company as a matter of policy required employees to voluntarily opt out of the EU Working Time Directive, but if employees did work long hours they were compensated by time off in lieu and also by special bonuses.

'If they 'throw an all nighter' {work through the night} I pay for them to have a 'stressbuster - at the Grand' {a one or half day special massage and health treatment at a major hotel}. (man, aged 25-34, project manager and localiser, no caring responsibilities, ID 13).

Another small company provided a free breakfast at 8.30 a.m. because

'It encourages people to be here on time and so we can start work fairly promptly at 9 a.m.' (man, aged 35-44, manager and internet marketer, some caring responsibilities, ID 43).

Thus echoing the concierge strategy of Microsoft (Chaudhuri, 2000). This company also held various social events such as long weekends away and a company football team (male only), but was also in conflict with employees over the implications of the EU Working Time Directive for paid holiday. In fact, there was a curious mixture of concern for employees' well being on the one hand, but an unwillingness to endorse regulations to enhance employees' rights on the other.

Time is especially important in new media, where skills and knowledge need continual updating and networking is necessary to find out about contemporary developments and to acquire work. The vast majority of companies stated that they provided time at work for employees to engage in self-learning via magazines and the

Internet. Some also had informal systems of work shadowing and workshops for exchanging ideas. Single operators would clearly have to provide this time for themselves. Some employees also saw their time with an organisation as a period in which to acquire new skills prior to setting up on their own.

' I have always worked long hours - it is self-imposed, I have a tendency to be a workaholic. When I worked for an organisation, I was trying to gather work experience. I would stay late to work with the software experimenting etc. At home I would no longer want to see a computer - I tried to incorporate study hours into the working environment but it was difficult - you were often so busy - working every minute. Different projects would dovetail with one another, it was like a continuous production line - I wanted to get away from feeling a cog in a process, I wanted more autonomy.' (man, aged 25-34, web design and multi media, caring responsibilities, evenly divided, ID 35).

Work life balance

The most striking finding was that the vast majority of people surveyed liked their work, with (80%) strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement that 'generally speaking I am very satisfied with the nature of my work'. Gender differences were not very marked except that the 10% that disagreed with this perspective were all male.

The following quotations encapsulate this perspective:

'I enjoy work - the barriers between work and non work are very blurred.' (woman, aged 35-44, web designer, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 12)

'Work and life merge - work is my hobby work is myth.' (man, aged 45-54, web designer, no caring responsibilities, ID 9).

'Work excitement and pressure are opposite sides of the same coin.' (man, aged 35-44, Internet consultancy and web designer caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 24).

People clearly enjoyed and were 'personally very much involved in their work (75% strongly agreeing or agreeing with this view and 90% thinking about work when they were not there (see Figure 4) even though work was very demanding, 57% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement: 'I am often too tired when I get home from work to do other things' and 64% often taking work home. Responses were more divided over the question of work life balance with just under 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that 'my work takes up time beyond a reasonable working day that I would rather spend on other activities' and the same proportion strongly agreeing or agreeing (54% men and 47% of women) with the statement that 'generally speaking I am very satisfied with my work life balance.'

{Figure 4 about here}

One third of men and 40% of women were however dissatisfied and either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, as did just over 40% of people with pre-teen children living at home. The reasons underlying the negative response differed between women and men. A higher proportion of men than women were dissatisfied

with the amount of time they spent at work (too much) and in the home (too little). Similarly, people, women and men, without caring responsibilities expressed concern that they were perhaps becoming rather one dimensional and spent too much time working. Those with pre-teen children living at home, women and men, basically felt time starved and often felt very torn between the competing demands on their time, wanting to have more time to spend at work and at home as the women below explain:

'I have to cut down work in the school holidays because I cannot do that much when the kids are around. I feel very torn.' (woman, aged 35-44, web page designer caring responsibilities, major role ID 1).

'I only managed to take one day off with my daughter during the whole her summer holidays.' (women, aged 35-44, web designer- caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 12).

Another man with three young children regularly spent the time between 6 and 8 in the evening having dinner with and helping his children with homework, but this was just about the only time, other than a few hours on Sunday and sleeping that he spent away from his computer:

'all I do is work, I have no concept of not working'..... The job rules me - I started as a programmer but I am now a manger, litigation, marketer. All the pressure is on me and I don't pass it on. I don't have holidays or any social life.... 'I absolutely

hate it' (man, aged 25-34, E commerce and web application, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 14).

This particular individual might well fit the description of working in an electronic cage (Zimmerman, 1983 cited by Baines, 1999:20) rather than the electronic cottage. All of which provides some empirical support for a renegotiation of the gender division of labour between paid and unpaid work. Another woman, a single parent running her own company and working on average 60 hours a week, when asked what happened if her school-aged child was unwell replied, 'I am sodded big time' (woman, aged 35-44, Internet PR, caring responsibilities, sole responsibility, ID 54). When asked about what could be done to improve her situation she replied, 'I'd like to find myself a good wife,' which provides some confirmation for the ideas of Reeves (2001) about the relative preferences between paid work and childcare and domestic services, although in this case, and probably more generally too, these preferences are shaped by perceived financial constraints. This person was however an owner/manager and had considerable flexibility and was able to take the child into the office when all other arrangements failed.

Flexible working

Flexible working and home working, neither of which affected the volume of work, were practiced to organise working time around domestic responsibilities, or vice versa. Working in the evening, at night and during the weekend was also inevitable, in cases where the number of hours worked exceeded a standard week. Only a minority of people in the survey regularly worked standard hours and women were less likely

to do so than men. Over two thirds regularly worked flexible hours and only 2% never did so. Nearly 60% of people regularly worked evenings and 35% did so sometimes and just under a quarter of people reported that they regularly worked at night (between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. in the morning). Relative to their representation in the survey, women expressed a slightly higher tendency to regularly work in the evening and a lower tendency to work at night than men. However, the proportion saying that they worked at night sometimes was relatively higher than for men. Nearly half of the people reported that they regularly worked on a Saturday and Sunday with only 25% never doing so, figures considerably higher than the IER/IFF (2001) survey reported earlier.

Just over 40% of the sample had pre-teen children living with them, but only 20% had an evenly divided, a major role or total responsibility for their care (see Figure 2).

None of the respondents had responsibility for elder care. Where the partner of the interviewee had major responsibility for childcare, which was more likely the case for men rather than women, working hours followed a similar pattern to those with no caring responsibilities, corresponding to the general tendency in the UK for fathers to work very long hours (Harkness, 1999; IER/IFF, 2001). Of the fourteen people who worked over 50 hours a week 5 had dependent children living with them including two women, one a single parent and sole carer and one whose partner took major responsibility for care. What is striking is the lack of caring responsibilities overall, which can not be explained by age as the majority (80%) were between 25 and 44 (38% between 25 and 34 and 42% between 35 and 44 years) the primary childrearing ages, which raises doubts about the extent to which this sector facilitates work life balance. Indeed recognising the incompatibility one manager argued:

'We have no intentions of starting a family until we can get to grips with the business' (man, aged 35-44, project manager, no caring responsibilities, ID 10).

For those with senior positions or running their own companies even when the hours of work are long the pattern can be arranged so as to enable them to spend some time with their children as one respondent explained:

'I would like to be able to spend more time with the children'. 'Being an MD {managing director} however enables me to work flexible hours so I can go to school events.' (man, aged 35-44, new media productions, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 36).

For some people, especially mothers, being able to work flexibly was critical given the continuing low level of publicly provided and high cost of private childcare in the UK, despite recent initiatives.

'During school holidays it's a bit tricky, but otherwise after dropping kids to school, I do 0.5 hrs housework and then work through until I pick the children up at 3 p.m. Then I will work in the evening, sometimes at night and usually one of the weekend days.' (woman, aged 35-44, web page designer, caring responsibilities, major role, ID 1).

But even so she went on to point out that:

'The school hours limit my day - it ruins concentration. I would like something like an au pair to pick up children from school. The children go to an after school club (open until 6 p.m.) on two days a week but it does not always work and it costs

quite a lot - £8 for the two children for each session.' (woman, aged 35-44, web page designer, caring responsibilities, major role, ID 1).

home working and work life balance

Of those working from home either some or all of the time (63%), most (58%) felt that it enabled them to combine work and family life. Some were extremely positive in this respect and the proportion of women expressing this view was greater than men; 55% of women who worked from home viewed homeworking positively in this respect compared to 44% of men. One respondent was particularly enthusiastic:

"IT's WONDERFUL!" {her emphasis}

'As I own and run my own business in the home, my work/life balance could not really be improved. I have the flexibility I need which is why I set up the business in the first place.' (woman, aged 35-44, web design and specialist software, caring responsibilities, major role, ID 46).

Another respondent (similar to ID 1 above) commented on the way school hours can interrupt the flow of thought but also pointed out the value of children.

'you just get motoring on a project and you have to pick them up on the other hand sometimes the enforced break is needed. I enjoy looking after them - I don't resent it.'

He went on to say:

'I don't mind if they (the children) come in the office. I sometimes work there while they play - children do not need a high input all of the time they just like you

to be there. 'People in the west worry too much. I think children like to see you working and being with you - the notion of a special period of childhood is a particularly western concept.' (man, aged 25-34, web design and multi media, caring responsibilities, evenly divided, ID 35).

This comment was unusual, but unfortunately partners were not interviewed in this study so there is no independent corroboration of this rather positive view of combining paid work with caring. More often mixed responses and tensions between home and work were reported together with strategies for overcoming them:

'You need to create a workspace, then working at home is enjoyable. If the job is difficult then being at home can be difficult - if she cries and my partner is looking after her it's hard to concentrate and not to interfere.' Otherwise at present I enjoy the flexibility because I can take her to the park etc and be around.' (woman, aged 25-34, web designer, caring responsibilities, major role, ID 28).

'Home work does create some tensions with the children but I don't feel isolated - I have increased the number of contacts through the web.' (man, aged 45-54 consultant and trainer, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 31).

This comment also reflects the way in which the web itself has become an important medium for social contact, and in some cases virtual connections were consolidated through physical meetings. For example there is locally based electronic email list through which members exchange technical, discuss local and national events and organise physical social gatherings. One respondent actually met her current partner

via a chat room. Only a tiny minority appeared to depend on the Internet as the primary means of social (virtual) contact.

Homeworking also created tensions:

'I work from home, so am continually kicked out of the office and accused of ignoring my family and being a workaholic and preferring the computer to real people. 'It's too easy to just go in for 30 minutes and spend 3 or 4 hours without noticing the time slipping away.' (woman, aged 35-44, Internet PR, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 12).

Overall the findings indicate that the experience of homeworking is varied and is probably influenced by the precise nature of the work being done as well as the gendered politics of the household (see Baines, 1999). There were also tensions for the homeworkers themselves, as they could never really escape from work even when they wanted to.

'Even when I do have some spare time, I sometimes find it difficult to relax in my home as I associate it with work and the PC and the 'to do' list always beckoning.' (woman, aged 25-34, web designer and writer, no caring responsibilities, ID 34)

'After working at home I was a wreck ...it is not healthy there are enough pressures at home already - it is much better now - when I close the door I can forget work. I would never do it again - not as a business - I worked longer hours at home 'because it is quite compulsive - you are constantly reminded of work, - you could

never escape it.' (man, aged 25-34, web designer, no direct caring responsibilities, ID 18)

Some respondents also reported that home working was positive from the point of view of managing a work life balance but had negative effects in terms of the work itself.

'The main problem with working from home is both social and work isolation - there is no one to bounce ideas off. Otherwise working from home enables me to combine work and family life and have a higher net income than if I worked elsewhere. There are tensions though and I can't always concentrate when there are piles of washing lying around for example.' (woman, aged 35-44, web designer, caring responsibilities, major role, ID 1).

Other respondents reported that although much could be done through the internet, face to face meetings were vital both to convince potential clients of their own merits, considered difficult from the home, and so that they too could assess whether they could trust their potential clients, which is crucial considering that the products or services supplied are often customer specific:

'I moved into the studio because I needed a space to meet clients -I could not meet them in my flat because it was too small. Face to face contact still matters so I need a space in which to meet clients so as to convince them that you can do the job.' (man, aged 25-34, specialist web programmer, no caring responsibilities, ID 7).

Other home workers met clients in the numerous cafes or hotel restaurants in the town, thereby facilitating the necessary face to face contact without disclosing the actual size of the company. Contemporary telephone technology was also used to divert calls or provide an answering service that also provides a professional image for small organisations.

This study really confirms that there are mixed responses to homeworking, and whether it enables people to manage their work/life balance is really contingent on their overall context (see Baines, 1999). The key difference between this sector and other forms of homeworking is that potentially incomes are higher as the new technologies allow single operators to operate very efficiently in highly professional ways from home as one woman explained:

'The Internet - this is just what I was waiting for.' I can now run my own business from home and have much more flexibility and control over my work than when I was a free lancer.' (woman, aged 35-44, web designer, caring responsibilities, partner major role, ID 12).

Conclusions

The new media sector in Brighton and Hove provides a small-scale illustration of the way some aspects of the new economy materialise in practice. This research is based on 55 interviews in an emerging and varied sector, which is highly volatile, so further research is necessary before any definitive statements can be made about the opportunities and constraints it provides (see Batt, Christopherson, Rightor and Jaarsveld, 2001 for work on the new media in the US).

Two of the findings, at least, conflict the theoretical work on the new economy, which emphasises insecurity, isolation and community fragmentation (Beck, 2000; Sennett, 1998). With a small number of exceptions, both men and women owners, managers and self-employed had few concerns about job security, or their ability to acquire work. It has to be emphasised however, that the survey was conducted mainly in the Autumn of 2000, that is after the first burst of the dot.com boom but before the onset of the first recession of the 21st century, since when the job market has been much more volatile and there have been job losses in Brighton and Hove, especially in some of the fast growing companies, and freelancers, who probably bear the cost of the fluctuations, were not the focus of the study, though the distinctions between freelancers and sole traders in this sector are rather blurred. At the time of the survey, the problem was more likely to be over work arising from its unpredictable nature and flow, and the former was often seen as an exciting intellectual challenge. There was also a strong sense of community, in terms of the physical location, Brighton and Hove, and in terms of physical, virtual, social and business locally based networks, thus casting some doubt on the ideas of insecurity and fragmentation that have been associated with the new economy. There was also little concern with questions of health and safety, despite long hours spent at the computer.

The research provides mixed support for the expectations of the Women's Unit that ICT will provide new opportunities for women to earn more and have more flexible working practices. The use of ICT which forms a vital part of the new media sector has expanded the temporal and spatial range of paid work and thereby provided the necessary flexibility and time sovereignty to enable people to combine interesting,

enjoyable, intellectually challenging and highly satisfying work with family life. Indeed the survey included some people who fully encapsulated the positive image of teleworking in the global economy, for example a woman working from her front room and sub contracting some of her work to a programmer in India. Furthermore, some women found that this was the only way of entering this sector as their age (perceived to be too old at the age of 35 to 40) and lack of formal qualifications meant that they had been unable to obtain work as employees. Nevertheless serious tensions between work and life remained for half of the sample overall and a higher percentage among those with major or sole caring responsibilities who were disproportionately women. The reasons for dissatisfaction varied; a higher proportion of men wanted to have more time to spend at home and women expressed a strong desire for more time for both. Furthermore, the sector is characterised by gender imbalance with women being under represented overall and over represented in the smaller firms measured either by turnover or by the number of employees. The sector is characterised by high qualifications but from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds so the main constraints seem to lie with finance and especially time. Some provisional explanations are given below but more research on this issue is required as well as on the extent of and reasons for gender imbalance in the sector more generally and especially among employees.

There was some suggestion of gender bias in lending practices by banks and venture capitalists. One company in particular emphasised the significance of assistance from a business angel, known through past business contacts, who had been far more effective in terms of offering the required level of funding while allowing the firm autonomy over its use. Certainly, the women owners of larger companies were in the

older age group and had finance from a previous working life. Some short to medium term financial support for equipment and especially income to sustain a livelihood during the early phases of development would be helpful. Many people and especially women had failed to obtain bank loans and venture capitalists were often not interested, as the projects were considered too small or financially insufficiently attractive. Moreover the entrepreneurs, micro businesses were sometimes viewed with suspicion, as some prioritised personal objectives for making a reasonable standard of living in an enjoyable way rather than rapid growth. Earnings overall appear comparatively low and especially for women, considering the hours worked, their qualifications and experience but these are quite hard to assess, especially in the case of independent operators. In terms of time, women worked fewer hours, earned less than men and were more likely to have sole or major responsibility for childcare, although only a small proportion in the survey had any direct responsibility for care and this is not explained by age and thus casts some doubt on the compatibility between work in this sector and family life.

Thus although ICT permits greater flexibility in working hours and locations which potentially allows those with caring responsibilities access to paid work, an important starting point for redressing gender inequalities, the traditional constraint of time arising from the uneven division of domestic work and caring remains. This finding echoes previous work and suggests that it is necessary to look beyond the work place to wider systems of social support for caring and to ways of resolving inequalities in time use between women and men to resolve persistent gender inequalities in work and to provide a better work life balance for men as well as women. That is, although technology provides new opportunities it is introduced within existing social

structures and unless these are challenged it is likely that they will simply allow life to be squeezed around the growing demands of the work and gender inequality, albeit in new forms, will remain.

References

- Baines, S., and Wheelock, J. (2000) Work and employment in small businesses: perpetuating and challenging gender traditions. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 7, 1, 45-56.
- Baines, S. (1999) Servicing the media: freelancing, teleworking and enterprising' careers. *New Technology, Work and Employment* 14, 1, 18-31.
- Baruch, Y. (2000) Teleworking: benefits and pitfalls as perceived by professionals and managers. *New Technology, Work and Employment* 15, 1, 334-49.
- Batt, R, Christopherson, S, Rightor, N and Van Jaarsveld D. (2001) *Networking. Work patterns and workforce policies for the new media industries* Washington: Economic Policy Institute.
- Beck, U. (2000) *The Brave New World of Work*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bower, C. (2001) Trends in female employment. *Labour Market Trends* 109, 2, 107-119.
- Bradley, H. (1999) *Gender and power in the work place. Analysing the impact of economic change*. Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Breedveld, K. (1998) The Double Myth of Flexibilisation. Trends in Scattered Work Hours and Differences in Time-Sovereignty. *Time and Society* 7, 1, 129-143.
- Brighton and Hove Council (1999) *The Place to Be*. Brighton: Brighton and Hove Council

- Carnoy, M (2000) *Sustaining the new economy. Work, family, and community in the information age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation,
- Castells, M. (2000) Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society. *British Journal of Sociology* 51, 1, 5-24.
- Castells, M. (2001) *The Internet galaxy. Reflections on the internet, business and society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Chaudhuri, A. (2000) Work Unlimited - *Guardian* August 30.
- Crompton, R. (1997) *Women and work in modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Denny, C. (2001) 'Lifestyle fixers take the strain for City workers' *Guardian Newspaper* 16/07 p.5
- Dex, S. and McCulloch, A. (1997) *Flexible employment: the future of Britain's jobs*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- DfEE(2000a) *Creating a work-life balance A good practice guide for employers*. London: DfEE
- DfEE (2000b) *Changing patterns in a changing world. Work life balance feedback* London: DfEE
- Doogan, K. (2001) Insecurity and long-term employment. *Work, Employment and Society*, 15, 3, 419-441
- Doyle, J. and Reeves, R. (2001) *Time Out: The case for Time Sovereignty* London: The Industrial Society.
- Edwards, G. (ed.) (2000) *Region in figures*: London. Office for National Statistics, London: HMSO
- Equal Opportunities Commission (2000) *Women and men in Britain 1999/2000 Pay and Income*. Manchester: EOC

- Fagan, C. (2001) Time, Money and the Gender Order: Work Orientations and Working-Time Preferences in Britain. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 8, 3, 239-266
- Figart, D. and Mutari, E. (1998) 'Degendering Work Time in Comparative Perspective: Alternative Policy Frameworks', *Review of Social Economy* LVI, 4, 460-480.
- Flores, F. and Gray, J. (2000) *Entrepreneurship and the wired life. Work in the wake of careers* London: Demos.
- Folbre, N. and Nelson, J. (2000) For Love or Money – Or both? *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14 (4): 123-140.
- Folbre, N (2001) *The Invisible heart: economics and family values*. New York: New York Press.
- Gershuny, J. (2000) *Changing times: Work and leisure in post-industrial society* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Green, F. Felstead, A. and Burchell, B. (2000) "Job Insecurity And The Difficulty Of Regaining Employment: An Empirical Study Of Unemployment Expectations", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, December 62, (Special Issue), 857-885.
- Greenspan, A. (1998) Is there a new economy? *California Management Review* 41,1, 74-85.
- Gregg, P, and Wadsworth, J. (1999) Job tenure 1975-98. In P. Gregg and J Wadsworth (eds) *The State of Working Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press pp.109-126.
- Hardill, I. and Graham, D (2001) The tyranny of time: Balancing work and home in dual-career households. Paper presented at the Regional Transitions: European Regions and the Challenges of Development, Integration and Enlargement –

International Conference of the Regional Studies Association University of Gdansk
Poland

Harkness, S. (1999) 'Working 9 to 5? ', In P. Gregg and J Wadsworth (eds) *The State of Working Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press pp. 90-108.

Heery, E. and Salmon, J. (eds) (1999) *The Insecure Workforce*. London: Routledge

Hochschild, A. (1997) *The Time Bind*, New York: Metropolitan Books

Huws, U. (1996) *Teleworking and Gender* Brighton: Institute of Employment Studies.

IER/IFF (2001) *Work-Life Balance 2000: baseline study of work-life balance in Great Britain* Warwick: Institute of Employment Research

IPPR (2000) Future of Work Findings of a series of focus groups with people in low paid jobs) Funded by the Reed Academy of Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research 30-32 Southampton Street

Jarvis H (1999) The tangled webs we weave: Household strategies to co-ordinate home and work. *Work employment and society* 13, 2, 225-247.

McDowell, L (2001) Father and Ford revisited: gender, class and employment change in the new millennium. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (4) 448-465.

McDowell, L. (1997) *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Massey, D. (1996) Masculinity, dualisms and high technology. In N. Duncan (ed.) *Bodyspace*. London: Routledge pp. 109-126.

Murgatroyd, L. and Neuburger, H. (1997) 'A household satellite account for the UK.' *Economic Trends* No 527 October 63-71.

- OECD (2000) Economic Outlook: Chapter VI E-Commerce: Impacts and Policy Challenges June No. 67 Volume 2000 Issue 1 Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- ONS (2001) Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS website
- Ó Riain, S. (2000) In Global Ethnography Forces, connections and imaginations in a post modern world (ed Michael Burawoy et al (10 authors) University of California Press Berkeley Los Angeles London
- Perrons, D. (1999) Flexible working patterns and equal opportunities in the European Union: conflict or compatibility? *European Journal of Women's Studies* 6, 4, 391-418.
- Perrons, D. (2000) Care paid work and leisure: rounding the triangle. *Feminist Economics* 6,1,105-114.
- Perrons, D. (2001) Understanding social and spatial divisions in the new economy paper presented at the Regional Transitions: European Regions and the Challenges of Development, Integration and Enlargement – International Conference of the Regional Studies Association University of Gdansk Poland
- Phizacklea, A and Wolkowitz, C. (1995) *Homeworking women: gender, racism and class at work* London: Sage.
- Pratt, A.C. (2000) New media, the new economy and new spaces. *Geoforum*, 31, 4, 425-436.
- Presser, H (1999) 'Toward a 24-hour economy.' *Science* 284:1777-1779.
- Quah, D. (1996) The Invisible hand and the weightless economy Centre for Economic Performance Occasional paper No. 12 London: LSE
- Quah, D (2001) Technology dissemination and economic growth some lessons for the new economy Public lecture University of Hong Kong (available from the author's website)
- Rake, K. (ed) (2000) *Women's Incomes over the lifetime* London: The Stationery Office

- Reeves, R. (2001) *Happy Mondays. Putting the pleasure back into work* London: Momentum.
- Reich, R. (2001) *The Future of Success Work and Life in the New Economy*. London: Heinemann
- Rose, M. (1999) Employee skill, occupation, and work involvement. ESRC Future of Work Research Programme Employee Skill, Occupation and Work Involvement Working Paper 1: Work centrality, Work careers and Household: let's ask for numbers
- Rubery, J, Smith M. and Fagan C. (1998) 'National Working-Time Regimes and Equal Opportunities', *Feminist Economics* 4 (1): 103-126.
- Sennett, R. (1998) *The corrosion of character* London: WW Norton and Company,
- Stanworth, C. (2000) Women and work in the Information Age, *Gender, Work and Organisation* 7 (1): 20-32.
- Tang, P. (1999) The Southeast England high-tech corridor: not quite Silicon Valley yet, In H-J Braczyk, G. Fuchs and H-G Wolf (eds) *Multimedia and Regional Restructuring*, London: Routledge, 218-238.
- Thair, T. and Risdon, A. (1999) Women in the Labour Market: Results from the Spring 1998 LFS, *Labour Market Trends*, March: 103-114.
- Toffler, A. (1980) *The Third Wave* . New York: William Morrow and Co
- Twomey, B. (2001) Women in the labour market: results from the Spring 2000 LFS. *Labour Market Trends* 109, 2, 73-124.
- Walby, S. (1997) *Gender transformations* London: Routledge
- Women's Unit (2000) *More choice for women in the new economy: the facts*. London: Cabinet Office
- Zimmerman, J. (1983) *The technological woman: interfacing with tomorrow*. New York: Praeger

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Lotte Dunford for her assistance in arranging the interviews, transcribing tapes and inputting data, the LSE and Leverhulme for their financial support, and all of the people in the new media sector in Brighton and Hove for giving up their time for the interviews. I would also like to thank the participants at the Women, Work and Health Workshop organised by the National Institute for Working Life (Brussels 2000) and those at the 'Gross Domestic Product vs. Quality of Life: A Transatlantic dialogue on balancing work and family', organised by Cornell University (Bellagio, Italy January 2001), Linda McDowell, Róisín Ryan-Flood and the referees for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

notes

ⁱ Castells (2001:7) makes a pledge to remedy this omission viz 'I have vowed to myself (and to the reader) to continue working on this topic (gender and the Internet) and have it ready for a possible second edition of this book' (Internet Galaxy). (my insertions)

ⁱⁱ For example the Gorillaz a virtual pop group, designed by Damon Albarn of Blur, had a top ten hit in June 2001 and also a top selling CD. It is possible to visit the site, talk interactively to the virtual band members and spray graffiti on the walls of their virtual flat.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is encapsulated in a recent advert for Consignia in which Elton John selects a whole range of expensive goods from the Internet, then expresses frustration that they are only virtual, but the door then opens and a large group of very happy looking, (but in reality low paid) postal workers appear with the physical parcels.

^{iv} Overall in the IER/IFF survey 15% of employees worked on Sunday and 12.5% on Saturday and Sunday.

^v This data comes from the Wired Sussex data base - this database is regularly updated, registration is voluntary and free - so is likely to be an under rather than overstatement. In total about 3000 people are employed with a turnover of about £300m.

^{vi} The firms were identified from the Wired Sussex database and invited to participate in the study by email. A 25% response rate was obtained.

^{vii} For calculations about company size I have changed the gender of one company from female to male because the interviewee was neither the owner nor manager.. Chi square was significant at the 5% level.

^{viii} Chi-Square was significant at the 1% level.

^{ix} For example 58% of women (n = 10) earned less than £15,000 p.a. compared to 43% of men (n = 16) and 22% of men (n= 8) above £50,000 compared to 11.8% (n = 2) women, but the differences were not statistically significant.

^x Information from an academic and entrepreneur in the new media sector obtained in the follow up survey and verified by the company concerned. The role of freelancers is being explored in further research.