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Gender and the Quality of Work

From Boom to Recession

Helen Russell, Frances McGinnity & Gillian Kingston



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**GENDER AND THE QUALITY OF WORK:
FROM BOOM TO RECESSION**

Helen Russell, Frances McGinnity and Gillian Kingston

Helen Russell is an Associate Research Professor, Frances McGinnity is a Senior Research Officer and Gillian Kingston is a Research Assistant at the Economic and Social Research Institute.

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FOREWORD

Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union and each member state is required to designate a body for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons on grounds of sex. The Equality Authority is the designated gender equality body in Ireland and this role will continue to be fulfilled by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission which will shortly be established through the merger of the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission.

This research report “*Gender and the Quality of Work: From Boom to Recession*” examines the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality in employment. It considers the relative evolution of labour market aggregates such as employment and unemployment over the period 2007- 2012 and also examines measures of job quality such as pay, hours, work pressure and job control for the periods for which data is available.

The initial labour impact of the economic crisis was heavily concentrated in the private sector – where women on average are under-represented - and within that in the particularly male dominated construction sector. As a result the dramatic job losses of the 2007-2009 period disproportionately affected men, the gender gap in employment narrowed considerably and a new gap opened up as unemployment rates among men increased more rapidly than among women. Between 2009 and 2012, a further slow decline in employment was more evenly shared between men and women and did not significantly alter this gender picture. In terms of job quality the findings suggest that the economic crisis adversely affected the working conditions of those in employment although the report does not identify a consistent gender pattern across the various indicators examined

I would like to thank the authors - Helen Russell, Frances McGinnity and Gillian Kingston - for their expert report. As the labour market recovers it will be important to continue to monitor developments from a gender perspective. For example it is already notable that in 2013 employment grew and unemployment fell much faster for men than for women. However as the authors highlight, a lack of gender disaggregated data on key indicators – most notably on the pay gap - remains a significant obstacle to effective equality monitoring

David Joyce B.L.
Acting Chairperson
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (designate)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report considers the implications of the current recession for gender equality in the Irish labour market. While the economy veered from boom to bust there was a steep decline in employment and a rise from very low levels of unemployment to rates of over 14 per cent. While the broad outline of these changes is now familiar, it is less clear what the consequences of these changes have been for gender equality and how changes in employment have played out at the level of job quality. This is set against a backdrop of a rapid rise in female employment, which was a distinctive feature of economic boom in Ireland (Russell et al., 2009).

What are the implications of recession for gender differences in employment? The first part of the report examines gender differences in overall employment, unemployment, labour market participation and employment by sector in the period 2003–2012, with a particular focus on the recession period, 2007–2012, using the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS).

What about the quality of work? Previous international research highlights gender differences in working conditions and the experience of work and suggests that working conditions can be undermined in recession. In this report quality of work is measured in a multi-dimensional way using high-quality Irish and international survey data. Given the range of relevant dimensions identified in the literature it was possible to focus only on a selection of key indicators. Chapter 3 focuses on extrinsic factors connected with socio-economic security – job security and pay, as well as working hours. Chapter 4 considers two key intrinsic dimensions of job quality – job control and work pressure. The key question in the report is: has there been convergence or polarisation in employment and working conditions between men and women in the current recession? The period of analysis for working conditions is determined by the data points available but in each case there is a pre-recession period, which is compared to a recession period. Where the ESRI/NCPP surveys of employees are used, the data points are 2003 and 2009.

Gender Differences in the Labour Market in Recession

Drawing on insights from work on gender segregation in labour markets, segmentation theories and the debate on women as labour market ‘buffers’ to frame expectations, Chapter 2 examines overall gender differences in the labour market in recession. The report finds that the changes in employment and unemployment during the recession differ for men and women, with a convergence in employment rates perhaps more accurately described as a ‘levelling down’, given the deteriorating employment situation of both men and women. At the onset of recession in 2008–2009 the gender employment gap narrowed as the employment rate fell for both sexes but more steeply for men. Since 2009 the gender gap in employment rates has remained stable, at between 7 and 8 per cent.

The gender segregation of employment in Ireland plays a significant role in the story of overall employment rates. The property bubble and subsequent crash led to a disproportionate rise and fall in the male-dominated construction sector. Job losses were also high in manufacturing and agriculture, which had a low female employment share. Women’s over-representation in retail and in administrative and support services placed them at risk of contractions in this sector; however, their concentration in public sector employment sheltered them from job loss.

Theories of labour market segmentation suggest that women are more likely to be found in jobs in the secondary segment, which are more insecure and much more easily lost in recession. These theories do not explain the patterns of job loss observed in Ireland. In Q1 (quarter 1) 2012 the male unemployment rate, at just under 17 per cent, was more than 50 per cent higher than that of women (10 per cent).

Up to the end of 2012, the labour market behaviour of women and men has been similar in this crisis. There is little evidence of women disproportionately withdrawing from the labour market: overall we see a gender convergence in labour market participation rates, mainly due to falls in labour market participation by men. The gender gap in participation among the working age population (15–64) was 18 per cent in 2007 and 14 per cent in 2012. Given changes in the educational and age profile of women, we would have expected a rise in participation in this period, and this did not happen. This means that these participation figures may be an underestimate of the effect of the recession on women's participation. Further research that updates the female participation forecast in the light of economic changes would be very useful for establishing the extent of this change.

Taken together, these participation and employment rates do not support the idea of a 'buffer role' of women in the labour market. In spite of the relatively recent rapid rise in labour market participation, the results indicate that the rapid increase in employment and participation among women during the boom has not been reversed. That said, the gender gap in employment – the lowest ever – may yet increase in the recession or in the recovery period, as women may find it more difficult to return to the labour market than men, and thus the full gender impact of recession may not yet have had effect.

Gender Differences in Job Quality

However, overall employment and participation rates tell only part of the story, as jobs vary enormously in quality. Pay has been the central focus of economic analyses of the quality of work, but sociological accounts of quality of work focus more on how work is organised, skill, intensity and autonomy (Gallie, 2012). From a large range of items, indicators were selected to reflect a range of dimensions of job quality. Chapter 3 focuses on extrinsic factors connected with socio-economic security – job security and pay, as well as working hours, using microdata from the QNHS, the European Working Conditions Survey, the NCCP/ESRI Employee Surveys and the European Social Survey. Chapter 4 considers two key intrinsic dimensions of job quality – autonomy or 'control over work activities' and work pressure, using detailed data from the NCCP/ESRI Employee Surveys.

The findings suggest that the economic crisis has adversely affected the working conditions of those in employment. Particularly salient changes were the sharp increase in involuntary part-time working, subjective insecurity, work pressure and the experience of pay cuts. Rates of temporary employment and long working hours have been subject to less change, and trends here may be driven by longer-term processes rather than recession. Job control has actually risen, though only for men.

What about gender differences in working conditions? Before the recession part-time work was much more prevalent among women than men, accounting for one-third of female employment compared to 7 per cent of male employment in 2007. Rates of part-time work have shown some gender convergence. However, as with the overall employment rate, these can be interpreted as a levelling down of conditions, since the bulk of the increase in part-time work has been involuntary.

Job security is measured both as the rate of temporary contracts (objective job security) and people's own assessment of their security, and these show somewhat different patterns. Temporary employment rates have risen somewhat in the private sector for men, though change is modest and rates of temporary employment are low by international standards. This is not true of subjective job insecurity, which has risen very rapidly in recession. In 2010, over one-quarter of Irish workers feared that they would lose their jobs in the next six months, which is very high by international standards. Subjective insecurity is strongly influenced by sector, and here gender segregation has a protective effect for women, for the most part, and insecurity is higher among men.

For gender differences in pay, the report draws on published data and previous analysis. The figures suggest that there has been some widening in the 'raw' gender gap in mean hourly wages over the period of the recession. However, figures are only available to 2010 and so the very significant changes introduced in public sector pay since then are not captured. In addition, analysis of the gender pay gap which adjusts for compositional differences between men and women suggests there was actually some narrowing of the pay gap between male and female workers in the private sector (Bergin et al., 2012).

There was a small average rise in employees' control over their jobs between 2003 and 2009. Using statistical modelling we find that the rise in job control for men is accounted for changes in the sector, occupational position, and working hours of these jobs, suggesting some evidence of 'creative destruction' for men, where low control jobs were lost in recession. For women, job control shows a rather different pattern. The combined index of job control was slightly lower for women than men in 2003, and after controlling for other factors, women's job control levels fell between 2003 and 2009. Consequently, when we account for other changes, the gender gap in job control is greater in 2009 than 2003.

Regarding work pressure, the combined index of work pressure was somewhat lower for women than men in 2003, but rose more rapidly between 2003 and 2009, reversing the gender gap. This rise is not accounted for by changes in sector, occupation, working hours and other factors, suggesting women suffered a 'pressure disadvantage' in recession.

Gender Differences within the Public and Private Sectors

Given that the public sector is a major source of employment in areas associated with women's employment in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe, the report also investigates how employment rates and job quality vary between men and women in the public and private sector. Is there a protective role of the public sector in recession for women, in terms of employment and working conditions, or does public sector adjustment pose a threat to gender equality in employment and working conditions?

Women's concentration in public sector employment definitely sheltered them from job loss. This is particularly true in the first period of the recession (2007 to 2009), when private sector employment declined by 16 per cent, while public sector employment grew by 4 per cent. Public sector employment began to shrink in the later phase of the recession (2009 to 2012) but still at a slower rate than the private sector. Some similar patterns are found for fear of job loss. Subjective insecurity was strongly influenced by sector, and here gender segregation or women's concentration in the public sector also had a protective effect, for the most part.

Previous work in Ireland has found that the gender pay gap is typically smaller in the public sector than in the private sector. Analysis has also shown a wage premium for workers in the public sector up to 2010 (Kelly et al., 2012; CSO, 2012), so here too women's over-representation in the higher paid public sector has tended to reduce gender inequality in wages overall. As to the impact of recession on these patterns, the lack of data since 2010 means the very significant changes introduced in public sector pay since then are not captured. Hence neither the effects of recession on the gender pay differentials within the public sector nor the role of public sector employment on the gender pay gap can be properly assessed. We argue that reductions in the public sector pay premium may feed through to a widening of the economy-wide gender pay, though quantifying the precise impact would require further research.

However, segregation also had costs for women in other measures of job quality. Women's over-representation in the public sector at least partly accounted for the higher levels of work pressure and lower levels of job control they reported in 2009 compared with 2003. This report finds that both male and female public sector workers experience higher work pressure and lower job control than their private sector counterparts. In addition average levels of job control among women working in the public sector fell and work pressure rose between 2003 and 2009. While the public sector may have protected women from job loss, it did not reinforce gender equality in the working conditions considered.

Future Research and Policy

The report points to a number of implications for policy and future research. One potential avenue for future research would be to exploit the two ESRI/NCCP workplace surveys to assess the impact of recession on gender differences in a wider range of working conditions and indicators of employee well-being, to supplement the analysis of job control and work pressure. With so much change in the Irish labour market, it may be time to revisit the work-place surveys, to give a more up-to-date picture of the Irish work-place as it emerges from recession and allow continued monitoring of stability and change in working conditions. The focus of this report is gender equality in the labour market, but as decades of research have shown, labour market inequality has implications for inequality in the home. The changing distribution of paid employment in Ireland between men and women and the narrowing of the gender employment gap may have implications for the gender division of housework and caring and gender inequalities in household decision-making.

For a number of the perspectives addressed in this report, analysts would ideally conduct longitudinal analysis of the labour market transitions of individuals and couples. Do wives become 'added workers' in recession, with a woman taking up employment when her husband loses his job? An analysis of flows into and out of temporary employment could establish to what extent rates of temporary employment are affected by higher exits of unemployment among temporary workers and increasing use of temporary contracts for new hires.

The scale of the changes in employment rates and earnings since 2007 mean that for evidence-based policy, it is essential that changes in employment and pay among men and women across the economy are monitored adequately. Yet exchequer figures on public service numbers are not provided on a gender disaggregated basis, and gender-differentiated statistics on pay have been a casualty of cuts in public expenditure in Ireland. The National Employment Survey (NES) which provided the figures for monitoring the gender pay gap was discontinued in 2009, and the new Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) does not include

information on the gender of employees. Therefore there are no national figures on the gender pay gap published for 2011 and 2012, a crucial period in wage development in Ireland. For future years, the CSO plans to produce a dataset that covers broadly the same grounds as the NES, by combining Revenue Commissioners' data, QNHS and Census data.

Despite some signs of recovery in the labour market, it is likely that the analysis in the report has not measured the full extent of the recession and cuts in public expenditure on gender differences. For example, the Haddington Road Agreement (in May 2013) introduced for public sector workers further significant cuts in pay, increases in working hours and changes to work scheduling and flexibility in the form of adjustments to job-sharing and flexi-time arrangements. These changes have potential implications for gender differences in working conditions, yet there was no gender impact assessment of either the Haddington Road Agreement or the preceding Croke Park Agreement. It will be equally important to measure gender outcomes in the labour market when Ireland emerges from recession and austerity.

1 GENDER AND THE QUALITY OF WORK: FROM BOOM TO RECESSION

1.1 Introduction

The rise in female employment was a striking feature of the economic boom in Ireland (Russell et al 2009). The recession has led to a dramatic contraction of the labour market and headline figures show that employment has fallen more sharply for men than women. Yet, while the broad contours of the gender distribution of job losses is known, it is less clear how the gender gap in employment evolved over the recession and how it is related to the scale and pattern of job losses in different sectors. What about the quality of work? The issue of job quality has become of increasing concern within the European Union, with 'more and better jobs' a key priority of the Lisbon Strategy (European Commission, 2001). Previous research highlights gender differences in working conditions and the experience of work (e.g. Gallie, 2007). Other literature suggests that working conditions can be undermined in recession, e.g. through organisational change, financial pressures, staff cuts (Capelli et al., 1997; Burchell et al., 2002; Russell and McGinnity, 2013).

The key questions are:

- Has there been convergence or polarisation in employment and working conditions between men and women?
- What are the implications of the current recession in Ireland for gender equality in the labour market?

We look at a variety of indicators of quantity and quality of jobs for men and women in Ireland drawn from a number of sources.

Given that the public sector is a not only a major source of employment in areas associated with women's employment in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe, we will also investigate how employment rates and job quality vary between men and women in the public and private sectors (Rubery, 2012). Is there a protective role of the public sector in recession for women, in terms of employment and working conditions, or does public sector adjustment pose a threat to gender equality in employment and working conditions?

This chapter reviews theoretical approaches to women and work, working conditions and the economic and policy context, before presenting the structure of the report.

1.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Gender, Employment and Recession

Theoretical frameworks offer a number of competing expectations about gender and recession. Gender differences in the impact of recession may result in differences between men and women both in the paid employment and the jobs they do, and differences in family or caring roles.

The segregation perspective draws attention to the concentration of workers in particular sectors or occupations. Men and women typically cluster in different types of jobs and in different sectors, both internationally (Charles and Grusky, 2004) and

in Ireland (Russell et al., 2009). Explanations for segregation vary. Sex-typing of jobs may be related to stereotypes of men and women – for example, that women will excel in personal service, caring and interpersonal interaction and men will excel in physical labour and interaction with things (Gerson, 2002). Other explanations stress the role of preferences, and argue that women choose female-dominated jobs because they are more family-friendly, for example.

Whatever the causes, the pattern of gender segregation can provide insights into why recession may have differential impacts by gender (Rubery, 2013). Job losses will be strongly affected by sectoral and occupational employment losses in recession (though by sectors more than by occupations as crises tend to have a distinctive sectoral impact). Authors analysing gender and recession have argued that to the extent that women work in protected sectors, like the public sector, this may shelter women from job loss (Bettio, 2002). In the private sector, industries more dependent on national demand (e.g. retail, construction) will fare worse than the export sector. Men will be particularly badly hit in construction, but job losses in the retail sector will also hit women.

While the prevailing pattern of segregation is likely to influence initial job losses in recession, Rubery (2013) argues that the recession may act as a catalyst for employers to implement or accelerate longer-term restructuring, a process known as 'substitution'. The availability of women at lower wages or lower hours of work, or both, may provide incentives for substituting women in previously male-dominated occupations, for example. Previous work showed restructuring may be more closely related to labour shortage and technological change (see Reskin and Roos, 1990), and may thus be more relevant to hiring in the recovery. However, substitution may occur in recession by out-sourcing to lower-cost providers – for example, by agency work in the health sector and caring professions. Thus this might include replacing well-paid secure, female jobs with low-paid female jobs, as well as replacing well-paid male jobs with female jobs.

An alternative influential perspective on female employment is the 'labour market reserve' or 'buffer' hypothesis. Women constitute a 'reserve army of labour' that is pushed back by employers when demand slows down and called out when demand is booming (Bruegel, 1979; Holst, 2000). This implies that women's employment will fall more sharply than men's in recession. It certainly has some resonance in the economic boom, when female employment rose very rapidly from 40 per cent in 1990 to over 60 per cent in 2007 (Russell et al., 2009). On the one hand this means that more women will be potentially affected by this recession than in previous recessions in Ireland, as more of them were in paid employment. On the other hand, a relatively recent history of paid employment may mean that, on average, women may be more likely to be pushed out of the labour market in Ireland than in other countries with a longer tradition of women's paid employment. Of course other groups may also act as buffers, for example young men and migrant workers (see McGinnity et al., 2014, for further discussion). Note also that while this is essentially a demand perspective, emphasising employers' behaviour (Bettio and Verashchagina, 2013), in practice labour supply decisions may be influenced by labour demand: women's decision to participate – or withdraw – from the labour market may be closely linked to the availability of jobs.

Yet to the extent that households become increasingly dependent on women's earnings, particularly in the context of excessive housing costs during the boom period, it is perhaps more likely that women and couples will seek to maximise household employment and labour income. Indeed, theoretical models of labour

supply suggest that the unemployment of one spouse should increase the likelihood of employment of the other, typically the woman (see Ashenfelter, 1980). This is the so-called 'added worker' effect, and has been influential in accounts of previous recessions, both in the UK and elsewhere. As it may be difficult to find a job to supplement family income, an extension of this 'added worker' effect is the idea that couples or households will simply try to maintain household employment and reduce the financial or poverty risks associated with household joblessness. This runs counter to the women as buffers perspective and suggests one might observe a rise in female breadwinner households in situations where male employment is high.

For proponents of labour market segmentation theories, the important divide is not between male and female labour, but between primary and secondary jobs. Some explanations highlight internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), others how 'disposable' workers are (Edwards et al., 1975). The common theme is that there is limited mobility between sectors, and jobs in the secondary sector tend to be low quality and insecure, with limited prospects for advancement. Women, often secondary earners, are part of the secondary job segment. Jobs in the secondary segment are by nature more insecure and much more easily lost in recession, and this will disadvantage women, but also other groups like young workers and migrant workers.

Note here that we do not expect a homogenous experience for all women. The experience of recession will be cross-cut by education, age, class, race or nationality, etc. This is probably more explicit in segmentation theories but can also apply to the other processes (e.g. ability to combine caring role and employment varies by education, Russell et al., 2009).

1.3 Measuring Quality of Work

Quality of work is a multi-dimensional concept and has been measured in a variety of ways. Pay and rewards have been the central focus of economic analysis of quality of work, but sociological accounts of quality of work focus more on organisational features and skill and autonomy (Gallie, 2007; Gallie, 2012).

The Employment Committee of the European Union which has been tasked with revising indicators of job quality have identified four core dimensions (EMCO, 2009; Eurofound 2012; Bothfeld and Leschke, 2012):

1. Socio-economic security (with adequate earnings, job and career security as sub-dimensions)
2. Education and training (with skills development/learning and employability as sub-dimensions)
3. Working conditions (with health and safety, work intensity, worker autonomy/involvement and collective interest representation as sub-dimensions)
4. Work–life and gender balance

In contrast to discussions in the early 2000s, earnings have now been included as a dimension of quality of work, alongside other extrinsic dimensions of work, including

security and prospects, as well as intrinsic quality (including skills, environment and intensity) (Eurofound, 2012).

Kalleberg (2011, p. 5) defines quality of work in the following way:

“job quality depends heavily on economic compensation such as earnings and fringe benefits like health insurance and pensions; the degree of job security and opportunities for advancement; the degree to which people are able to exercise control over their work activities and to experience their jobs as interesting and meaningful; and the extent to which peoples’ time at work and control over their work schedules permit them to spend time with their families and in other non-work activities that they enjoy.”

In the chapters that follow we draw on these definitions to address quality of work in a multi-dimensional way. Given the range of relevant dimensions identified in the literature it is possible to focus on only a selection of key indicators. In Chapter 3 we focus on two extrinsic factors connected with socio-economic security: job security and pay. We also consider hours of work. This is a basic structural feature of employment which in itself is not an indicator of job quality but is linked both to an individual’s ability to secure a living wage and to their capacity to achieve work–life balance. In Chapter 4 we consider two key intrinsic dimensions of job quality: autonomy or ‘control over work activities’, and work intensity or pressure.

Subjective assessments of work such as job satisfaction have been used as indicators of job quality especially in psychological studies of work. However, here we follow Green and Mostafa (2012) in considering this to be an outcome of quality of work rather than a direct measure of working conditions. Job satisfaction is influenced by work values – for example, some employees may prioritise extrinsic rewards such as pay and promotion opportunities, others may place a greater emphasis intrinsic factors such as skill utilisation and autonomy, and in other cases factors such as working hours and flexibility may take greater precedence. Moreover, job satisfaction, in common with other subjective measures such as life satisfaction, is influenced by expectations. Adaptation to prolonged poor conditions or comparison with others who have low-quality work or the unemployed who have lost jobs may lead to a disjuncture between job satisfaction and objective assessments of working conditions and could lead to a paradoxical rise in job satisfaction during recession (Clark, 2011). This process also has a gender dimension, as it is often observed that women have higher levels of job satisfaction than would be predicted on the basis of their observed working conditions (Hakim, 1991; Clark, 1997).

1.4 Working Conditions and Recession

How might recession impact on working conditions? One possible scenario is that recession will lead to a deterioration in working conditions. Increased financial pressures (both in the private and public sector), staff reductions and a shift in the balance of power in favour of the employer could lead to greater work intensity, declining wages, less worker control, declining health and safety standards, an erosion of employee-centred flexibility and a rise in employer driven flexibility (e.g. involuntary reduction working hours, working overtime at short notice, temporary contracts). Employers may cut back on other dimensions of work quality – for example, on non-essential spending like staff training. This perspective implies that there will be a deterioration in working conditions across the labour market for both men and women. However, to the extent that women have endured poorer working

conditions prior to the recession this process could lead to a levelling downwards in employment conditions.

While at face value this might appear to be the most obvious trajectory, it is not certain that there will be a uniform decline in working conditions during recession. Sectoral changes in employment may lead to a decline in employment in the least skilled industries leading to an apparent rise in the skill levels of the remaining workforce. Similarly, employers are likely to respond to recession by shedding temporary workers and low-skilled workers but are more likely 'hoard' high-skilled workers until there is an upturn. The selective nature of job loss may well lead to an apparent improvement in working conditions among 'survivors'. Drawing on Schumpeter's (1970) theory of capitalism as a system of 'creative destruction' Gallie (2013) argues that economic crisis may accelerate technological change, enhance the need for innovation and reduce reliance on hierarchical control structures. Such change could lead to improved working conditions during recession, at least along some important dimensions of job quality. A broad implication of this perspective is that the impact of recession on gender differences in working conditions will depend partly on patterns of job loss for men and women. For example, employers' 'hoarding' of high-skilled male employees, may lead to an improvement in working conditions for male 'survivors', yet no change for women. Or the 'creative destruction' of low-quality male jobs may lead to an improvement in working conditions for men, but no change for women. In fact, gender differences in job loss may be rather different from changes in gender differences in working conditions of those who remain in employment.

A further possibility is that recession will have a polarising effect on working conditions between core and peripheral workers or between well-paid, high-skilled knowledge workers and low-paid, low-skilled service or manual workers. The position of temporary, part-time, low-skilled, non-unionised workers who are more vulnerable to market pressure may deteriorate, while conditions of the core (high-skilled, professional, knowledge workers, unionised workers) are maintained or improve. To the extent that men are more likely to occupy core positions and women are over-represented in peripheral positions with non-standard contracts, there may be rising gender inequality for those still at work.

In assessing the influence of recession it is important to recognise the role of longer-term processes and institutional inertia (or path dependency). Certain trends, such as reduction in working hours¹ and rising skill levels of the workforce, have been underway long before the current recession; therefore changes observed since the onset of recession may be a continuation of an existing process and not a 'recession effect'. Indeed, Kalleberg (2011) argues that polarisation of working conditions is a long-term trend in the US following from the increasingly neo-liberal regime from the 1970s, which involved the de-regulation of the labour market, declining trade-unionism, and globalisation of competition. Compositional changes in the American workforce such as the greater number of female and migrant workers were also argued to have contributed to polarisation in working conditions over the last four decades (Kalleberg, 2011). A further implication of the distinction between recessionary factors and longer-term trends is that some changes are unlikely to be reversed with an upturn in the business cycle.

¹ The Haddington Road Agreement (May 2013) increased hours of work across the public sector, which may mean there will be sector specific break in this trend (see below).

1.5 Economic and Policy Context in Ireland: Boom to Bust

The period 1994 to 2007 was one of exceptional economic growth in Ireland. In the period 1994 to 2000 the average annual increase in real GNP was 7 per cent, among the highest in the OECD. Growth fell slightly in 2001–02 but then returned to 4–6 per cent per annum up to 2007, at which point Ireland's GNP per capita was among the highest in the European Union, having more than doubled over the previous twelve years (Nolan et al., 2013). Real median household incomes adjusted for household size increased by 116 per cent over the same period. The numbers employed expanded dramatically, from 1.2 million in 1994 to 1.7 million by 2000 and 2.1 million by 2007. Unemployment declined very rapidly, from 16 per cent in 1994 to 4 per cent by 2000, staying at that level up to 2007. Migration also played an important part in the expansion of the workforce, first of return Irish nationals, later increasingly immigration of non-Irish nationals. The latter part of the economic boom was accompanied by a property boom and very rapid increase in levels of household debt.

The Irish economy went into crisis in 2008. The crisis was triggered by the global financial crisis, but this led rapidly to a bursting of the property bubble, which in turn bankrupted the main Irish banks and generated a fiscal crisis of the state, with the fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio soaring. This meant that employers were confronted by a chronic deterioration in business conditions in the private sector. Private sector employers in Ireland have tended to respond to the crisis by cutting jobs, rather than wages (e.g. Bergin et al., 2012), and job losses were particularly heavy in the early years of recession. Unemployment rose from 4 per cent in 2007 to 14.4 per cent in 2008, with the unemployment rate for men aged 20–24 soaring from 8 per cent to over one in three.

Public sector workers were also affected. As noted above, the recession and financial crisis led to a rapid deterioration in the public finances. After 2008, the Government introduced a number of pay and pension cuts in the public sector, as well as changes in working conditions and a reduction in staff numbers. Prior to 2008 there was strong growth in public sector pay. The pay and pensions bill grew by 84 per cent in nominal terms between 2001 and 2008, and evidence suggests that the public sector pay premium was at much higher levels in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe (O'Connell, 2013). The Government's immediate crisis response included pay cuts and a hiring moratorium (IMF, 2012). A public sector pension levy, in effect a wage cut, was imposed. From May 2009 the first €15,000 of earnings were exempt, a levy of 5 per cent was applied to earnings between €15,000 and €20,000, 10 per cent was applied to earnings between €20,000 and €60,000, and 10.5 per cent was applied to earnings above €60,000. In December 2009 wage cuts were announced and from 1 January 2010 all public salaries were reduced, with cuts of 5–8 per cent on salaries up to €125,000, and cuts of 8–15 per cent for those on pay above €125,000, with the exception of senior civil servants who negotiated a cut of 3 per cent (O'Connell, 2012). In this time frame public sector wages were cut by 13.5 per cent on average (IMF, 2012).

In March 2010, the government struck a new multi-year deal, and in June 2010 the 'Croke Park Agreement' was introduced. The deal was made with public sector unions, protecting workers against layoffs and further wage cuts, in exchange for a validation of the 2009–10 pay cuts and cooperation on an early retirement scheme in the public sector, redeployments and other efficiency measures (IMF, 2012). In January 2011 an additional reduction of 10 per cent in salaries was introduced for

new entrants to the public sector, and other measures introduced included a unified public service pension scheme, and a €200,000 salary cap (IMF, 2012).

Further changes were introduced subsequently which have affected the working conditions of public sector employees, but these occurred after the period for which we have data so are not picked up in our analyses. In May 2013 the 'Haddington Road Agreement' (HRA) was introduced, and in June 2013 the authorities enacted legislation to implement further public service pay cuts and changes to working conditions negotiated under the agreement. The agreement included a freeze or suspension of pay increments, under some conditions a non-recurring reduction in annual leave, changes in overtime pay, and a salary reduction for those over €65,000. Furthermore, an increase in working hours was introduced: the standard full-time working increased from 35 to 37 hours those with a working week of 35 hours or less, and increased to 39 hours for those with a working week of 35 hours or more, the minimum full-time working week increased to 35 hours.² The agreement also includes the potential to reduce access to flexible working conditions (flexi-time) and work-sharing.

All workers – and indeed those not in employment – were affected by other tax and social welfare changes, such as the introduction of a Universal Social Charge – a new form of income tax – property tax, indirect tax increases and social welfare cuts (see Nolan et al., 2013; Callan et al., 2012). Barry and Conroy (2013) argue that, in addition to budgetary cuts, the period 2008–2012 has also seen dramatic cuts to both equality institutions more generally and those pertaining specifically to gender equality: 'An entire architecture of public and statutory bodies established or supported to promote equality, monitor progress, enhance awareness and innovative practice has been restructured, closed down, endured drastic budget cuts or been part absorbed in departments of government' (op cit, p. 199). The authors argue that gender equality policy has been a victim of the recession.

1.6 Report Outline

This report considers a wide range of measures of gender equality in the labour market to examine whether we find polarisation or convergence in gender differences in the labour market, in light of the perspectives outlined in this chapter. Chapter 2 considers broad changes in the labour market by gender using the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) to 2012. This encompasses employment rates, unemployment rates, unemployment rates by age, changes in labour market participation and sectoral changes in employment by gender, including changes in male and female employment in the public and private sector.

Chapter 3 turns attention to the quality of employment for those still employed. The chapter considers three important aspects of working conditions: working hours, job security and pay, and draws on a variety of data sources – the Quarterly National Household Surveys, the ESRI/NCPP Employee Surveys, the European Working Conditions Surveys and published data based on the National Employment Surveys (NES) (see Appendix 1 for further details). Working hours includes changes in part-time employment, particularly involuntary part-time employment, and whether there is

² The working hours of job sharers and part-time staff increased on a pro-rata basis. Union co-operation with the Haddington Road Agreement was not compulsory. However, unions that did not sign the agreement were not given the protections on compulsory redundancies, redeployment limits, outsourcing and many other issues, and also faced more stringent pay cuts and freezes under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013.

any evidence of polarisation of working hours (very long hours or very short hours). Job security covers both contract status (permanent versus temporary) and also subjective feelings of job security. The section on pay considers the overall gender gap in hourly wages – both adjusted and unadjusted, as well as the gap for men and women in the public and private sector.

Chapter 4 focuses on gender differences in two important ‘intrinsic’ measures of job quality: job control and work pressure. The chapter considers how these have changed for men and women between 2003 and 2009 using two national surveys of Irish employees. The analysis considers to what extent these changes can be understood by the changing composition of jobs and workers and work-place change, and implications for gender equality in ‘intrinsic’ working conditions.

Chapter 5 summarises the implications of a deep recession following a sustained economic boom for gender equality in the Irish labour market, on the basis of the measures investigated. It considers some policy implications and avenues for future research. The rapidity and depth of the recession in Ireland, following a rapid rise in female employment during the boom, make it a particularly interesting case to consider the impact of recession on gender equality.

2 BROAD CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET BY GENDER

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes broad changes in labour market patterns by gender, using data from the Quarterly National Household Surveys (QNHS).³ We examine changes in the period 2003–2012, which was marked by large-scale labour market changes, as outlined Chapter 1. It is of significant interest to explore this period as it was a time of rapid growth and a rapid decline. A striking feature of the economic boom was the rise in female employment (Russell et al., 2009). Ireland entered recession in late 2008 and has since faced a sustained increase in unemployment. In the context of this crisis it is vital to explore how the downturn has affected male and female labour market outcomes. We know that the current recession has seen a huge rise in male unemployment; however, women are also now more likely to be directly affected by the recent recession due to greater numbers being formally engaged in the labour market than in previous recessions (Swaffield, 2011).

Here we examine changes in labour market outcomes – primarily employment, unemployment and participation rates. In the final section of the chapter we examine the sectoral distribution of employment by gender, including the public and private division, and consider the implications of this segregation for recessionary effects. As the period in question is one of large scale economic change, we examine whether there has been a convergence or polarisation in male and female employment rates. We question whether the reduction in labour market gender gaps observed prior to the recession will continue, but at a slower pace, or whether improvements to employment gap will be stalled by the recession? .

We draw on a range of hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter, to question how the recession has impacted on male and female employment, unemployment and labour market participation.

From the segregation perspective (Rubery, 2013) we might expect that women's employment should be protected in a recession due to the concentration of women in sectors that have been more sheltered from job loss. Women's greater concentration in the public sector is likely to have protected them from unemployment in the early part of the recession. We also know that in the private sector it is the male-dominated construction industry that has been particularly hard hit, although there has also been a decline in other sectors such as retail, which counts for a significant proportion of female employment.

However, the view that women act as a 'reserve army of labour' or are employed in 'buffer' roles would lead us to expect that employment rates should fall for women, particularly for women with children, and there will be a rise in female inactivity rates. This 'reserve army' are called out when demand is booming, and will be reabsorbed into the family economy in recession as the female workforce are shed to make way for male employment (Rubery, 2013). Women may act as a flexible labour reserve that is more likely or more willing than men to retreat into inactivity at times of low economic demand (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013).

³ The QNHS is undertaken by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and its main objective is to provide estimates on short-term indicators of the labour market such as employment and unemployment.

The Core–periphery perspective states that women are more likely than men to occupy flexible, insecure jobs, which are more easily adjusted in the downturn (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Edwards et al., 1975). This is in line with segmentation theory which states that women are a part of the secondary segment, which faces ruthless competition in an unregulated labour market (Bettio et al., 2013). According to these theories women will face higher unemployment in a recession, as their secondary jobs will be shed first.

However, women’s labour market participation has transformed since previous recessions, gender norms have changed, and women may not withdraw in a recession. Furthermore, in a downturn households may focus on maximising employment and income. This perspective would lead us to believe that women will maintain employment during the recession. Of course, inactivity rates may increase for both sexes as falling wage rates may also influence participation decisions, particularly for the lower educated.

Female labour market participation and education levels have changed dramatically since previous recessions. Russell et al., (2009) found that changes in the educational qualifications of the adult female population and demographic changes in the age profile accounted for about 40 per cent of the rise in female participation between 1994 and 2007. The rest of the change was due to behavioural changes, including responses to increased demand due to the economic boom, or changes in other characteristics. We ask whether the recession has impacted on this growth in female employment and participation, and assess the labour market outcomes for both genders.

2.2 Changes in Employment Rates

To assess the broad changes in the labour market by gender experiences we first examine employment levels as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).⁴

Table 2.1 shows employment numbers broken down by gender between 2003 and 2012. The changes in employment can be split into three distinct phases. During the boom period between 2003 and 2007 an additional 169,000 women and 161,000 men took up employment. This increase in employment came to an abrupt end with the onset of recession in 2008. By the 4th quarter (Q4) of 2009 male employment had decreased by 188,000, more than wiping out all the gains since 2003. In this first part of the recession female employment fell by 47,000. During the second stage of the recession from Q4 2009 to Q4 2012, employment loss slowed, male employment fell by a further 46,000 and women’s employment by an additional 26,000. As the scale of decline in female employment during recession did not match the remarkable rises in the years immediately before the crash, employment levels for women were still considerably higher in 2012 than in 2003.

⁴ The ILO regards an individual as being in employment if he or she worked in the week before the survey for one hour or more for payment or profit, and includes all persons who had a job but were not at work in the week before because of illness, holidays, etc.

Table 2.1: Employment (ILO) numbers (000s), Q4 2003 to Q4 2012

	2003	2007	2009	2012	Change 2003–07	Change 2007–09	Change 2009–12
Female	765.6	934.2	887.2	860.9	168.6	-47	-26.3
Male	1,060.5	1,221.8	1,034.3	988.0	161.3	-187.5	-46.3
All	1,826.1	2,156.0	1,921.5	1,848.9	329.9	-234.5	-72.6

Source: QNHS Online, analysis based on all employed aged 15 years and over.

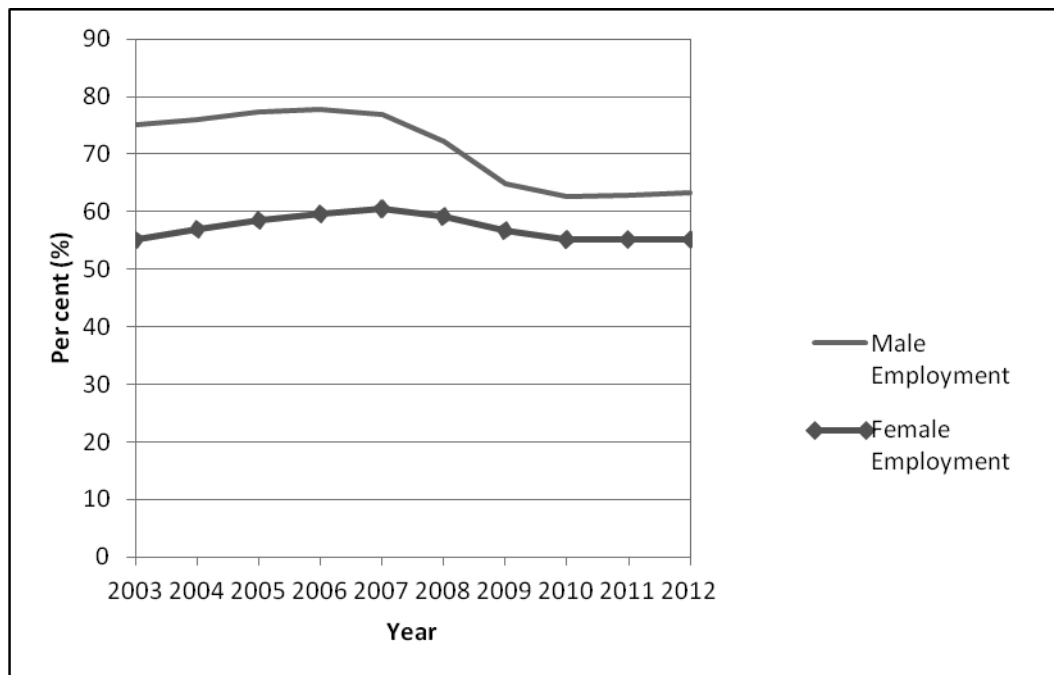
These dramatic changes in fortune are also reflected in the employment rates over the period (see Figure 2.1). The proportion of the female working age population (15 to 64 years) in employment grew from 56 per cent in 2003 to 61 per cent in 2007, thus exceeding the EU target for 2010 of 60 per cent for the first time. The male employment rate grew from 75 per cent in 2003 to 78 per cent in 2006 but was already in decline by 2007. In the first phase of the recession, between 2007 and 2009, female employment rates fell to 57 per cent. In the second phase, the female employment rate declined by a further 2 per cent in 2010 but then remained stable. A similar pattern is noticeable for men with the trough occurring in 2010. There was a marginal increase in the employment rates of both men and women in 2012.

Figure 2.1 also illustrates trends in the gap between women and men's employment rates. Despite the rapid increase in employment between 2003 and 2007 the gender employment gap remained large, narrowing by 3.3 percentage points from 19.4 percentage points in 2003 to 16.1 percentage points in 2007.⁵ Between 2007 and 2010 the gender employment gap narrowed considerably and stood at 7.3 percentage points in 2010, a process driven primarily by the decline in the male activity rate. However, from 2010 onwards the gender gap in employment rates remained relatively stable, and was 7.8 percentage points in 2012.

It is worth noting that these overall employment rates do not take account of differences in working time, which are also strongly gendered. In Chapter 3 we consider how working hours have changed over the recession for women and men.

⁵ The gender gap in employment is calculated as the difference between employment rates of men and women (OECD, 2002)

Figure 2.1: Employment Rates (ILO), Q4 2003 to Q4 2012



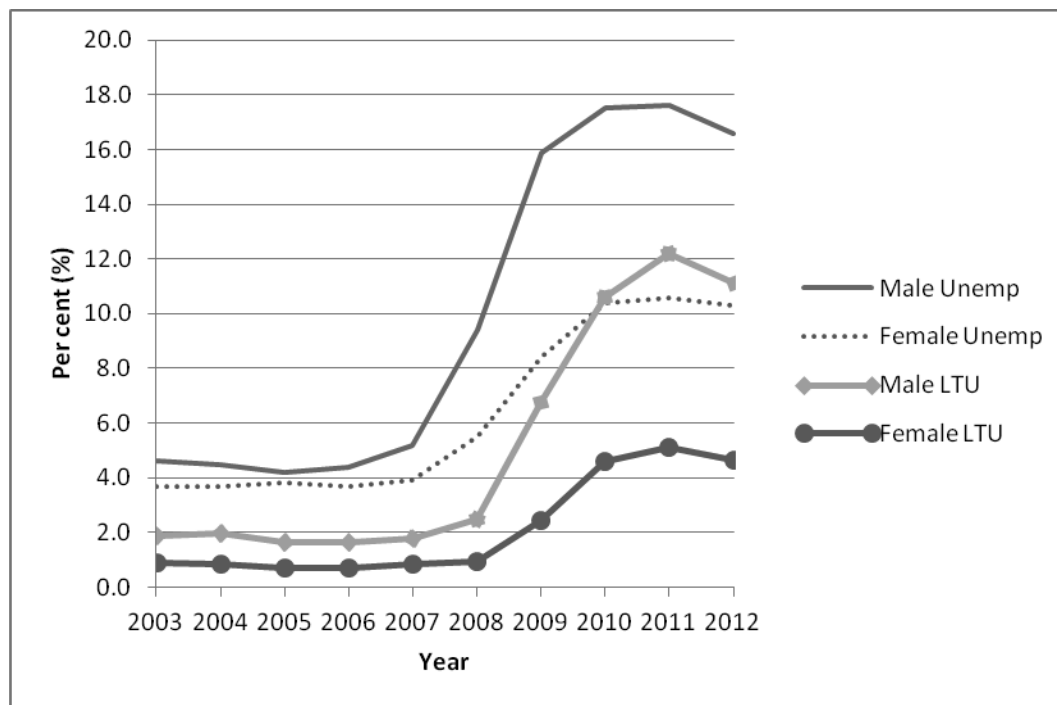
Source: QNHS Online, analysis based on population aged 15–64.

2.3 Changes in Unemployment Rates

The economic boom and bust is also clearly evident in unemployment statistics. Figure 2.2 shows the unemployment and long-term unemployment rates for males and females between 2003 and 2012.⁶ Male and female unemployment rates converged between 2003 and 2005, and in Q4 2005 there was only a 0.4 percentage point difference in unemployment rates between the two sexes. From the onset of the recession in 2008 unemployment rates increased sharply for both sexes; however, they rose particularly dramatically for males. At the end of the period in 2012, there was a gap of 6.3 percentage points between male and female unemployment rates. Unemployment rates stabilised between 2010 and 2011, and marginally decreased in Q4, 2012.

⁶ The ILO defines an unemployed person as someone who, in the week before the survey, was without work but was available for work and had taken specific steps in the preceding four weeks to find work (i.e. was looking for work).

Figure 2.2: Unemployment (ILO) and Long-term Unemployment Rates, Q4 2003 to Q4 2012



Source: QNHS Online, analysis based on population aged 15 years and over.

Figure 2.2 also shows long-term unemployment rates for males and females between 2003 and 2012. The long-term unemployment rate is the number of persons unemployed for one year or more expressed as a percentage of the total labour force (CSO, 2013). Any increase in the long-term unemployment rate lags behind an increase in the unemployment rate due to the time period involved. This is an important indicator of recession effects because long-term unemployment can have serious implications on a person’s livelihood, potential effects include scarring, detachment from the labour market and society. Furthermore, long-term unemployment heightens the risk of people falling into poverty, and makes it more difficult for people to return to work (Gallie et al., 2003).

The male and female long-term unemployment rates increased sharply from 2008 onwards. As with the ‘main’ unemployment rate, the increase was greater for men, increasing from 2.5 per cent in Q4, 2008, to 12.2 per cent in Q4, 2012. Female long-term unemployment rates increased from 0.9 per cent to 5.1 per cent in this time-frame. Long-term unemployment moderately decreased for males and females between 2011 and 2012, this was the first annual decrease recorded since Q2, 2007 (CSO, 2013). These trends have resulted in a widening of the gender gap in longer-term unemployment. In 2007 the male long-term unemployment rate was 2.1 times greater than the female rate and in 2012 the ratio was 2.4. In absolute terms the gap rose from 1 percentage point to 6.5 percentage points.

Underlying the general patterns of unemployment outlined here, there are distinct differences across age groups. The upsurge in unemployment and long-term unemployment during the recession has been much greater amongst young people than prime-aged workers (McGinnity et al., 2014) The unemployment rate for 15–19 year old females increased by 18.8 percentage points between 2007 and 2012, and

peaked at 35.2 per cent in 2011 (QNHS, own analysis). Gender differences in unemployment rates are wider among the younger age groups, with young males experiencing higher rates of unemployment. In Q4 2012 there was a 13 percentage point difference between the male and female unemployment rate for the 20-24 age group, and an 8 percentage point gap among the 15-19 age group, compared with an observed overall gap of 6 percentage points.

It has also been noted that the unemployment rates recorded during the recession are affected by the extent of emigration (Barry and Conroy, 2013; Duffy and Timoney, 2013). Table 2.2 presents male and female emigration rates between 2006 and 2012. It shows that emigration has increased rapidly for both sexes between 2008 and 2012. Pre-recession in 2007 5,000 more men than women emigrated and in 2012 almost 11,000 more men than women emigrated. However the male to female ratio was the same in both years. This suggests that while emigration may affect unemployment rates overall, it may not have had a major impact on gender differences in unemployment rates.

Table 2.2: Emigration levels (000s) 2006–2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*
Males	18.7	25.7	29.6	41.9	40.6	41.9	48.9
Females	17.3	20.6	19.6	30.1	28.7	38.8	38.2

Source: QNHS Population and Migration Estimates 2012.

Note: * denotes preliminary findings.

2.4 Changes in Labour Market Participation

Prior to the economic crisis, female labour market participation⁷ was on a long upward trajectory (see Russell et al., 2009). In the final years of the boom, from 2003 to 2007, female activity rates grew from 58 per cent to 63 per cent (see figure 2.3). Activity rates also increased for men over this period but at a slower pace. Rising female participation rates during the boom can be related to factors such as increasing educational attainment, changes in legislation and social provision, and changes in the nature of labour demand (Russell et al., 2009). There has been an almost universal trend towards more women in higher education and in employment, and consequently a large number of dual-earner households, in Ireland, as in other European countries (Rubery, 2013).

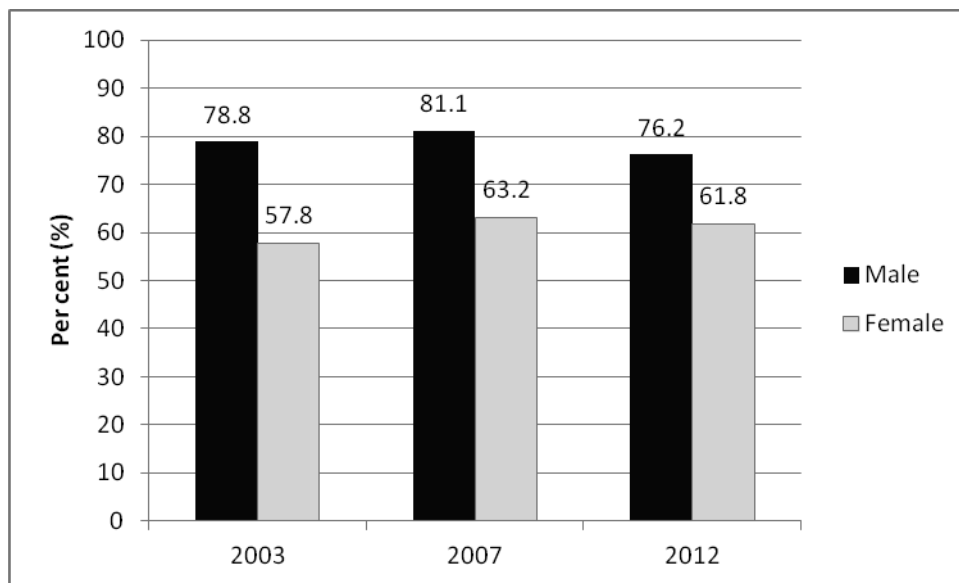
With the onset of recession in 2008 there was a significant decline in activity rates for men, but changes in female activity were much more subdued. Men's activity rate dropped by 4.9 percentage points between 2007 and 2012, while women's rate fell by 1.4 percentage points. This has led to a narrowing of the gender gap in labour market participation over the recession, from a gap of 21 percentage points in 2003, to 18 percentage points in 2007, to 14 percentage points in 2012. To put this in a longer-term perspective, the gender in gap in labour market participation rates in Ireland was around 40 percentage points in 1990 (Russell et al., 2009).

Alongside labour demand, participation rates among women are strongly influenced by age and educational attainment. Previous research (Russell et al., 2009) forecast

⁷ The participation or activity rate is defined as the proportion of women or men within the relevant age population who are either employed or unemployed (according to the ILO measures described above). The non-participant or 'inactive' population contains all those outside the labour market – e.g. retired, carers, students, unable to work due to illness or disability, or who are not engaged in any paid employment.

that changes in the educational composition and the age structure of the female population would lead to an increase in participation of about 4 percentage points over the 13 years between 2007 and 2020. This growth has not materialised, which suggests that the recession has blocked this underlying increase in female labour supply. The population predictions may also have been effected by recession, for example due to immigration; therefore, without further research we cannot accurately estimate the dampening effect of recession.⁸

Figure 2.3: Labour Market Participation Rates by Gender, 2003–2012



Source: QNHS Microdata, population aged 15–64 years.

Labour market participation is strongly patterned by age. The 15–19 year-old group traditionally reports low rates of labour market activity as a large proportion of this group are still in education. Response to the recession has been particularly strong amongst this group: participation rates among young men aged 15–19 fell by 12 percentage points, and among those aged 20–24 years by 16 percentage points. Among young women the declines were 10 percentage points, and 11 percentage points respectively, which led to a narrowing of the gender participation gap among the under 25s. This trend was driven by a much higher proportion of young men staying on in education and training in contrast to the boom period when they were pulled into the labour market by the expansion of well paid but relatively low-skilled jobs in the construction sector (Keane 2013; Barry and Conroy, 2013). Among the 20–24-year-old age group there has also been a growing NEET problem – i.e. those who are not in employment, education or training (McGinnity et al., 2014; Kelly and McGuinness 2013).

Among the 25–54 age groups, rates of participation remained stable for women over the recession and decreased for men, again reducing the gender gap. Among the 55–64 age group, participation increased marginally for women (from 41 to 46 per cent) continuing the longer-term rise in activity for this group. Although the gap

⁸ No forecasts of male activity rates are available. The estimates in Russell et al., (2009) are based on population forecasts produced in FitzGerald et al., (2008).

narrowed considerably between 2003 and 2012, gender differences in inactivity are particularly wide for the age 55–64 group. Differences in participation by this age cohort are likely to reflect the very different labour market faced by women early on in their careers, which is likely to have long-term effects on activity levels (Russell et al., 2009).

2.5 Sectoral Changes in Employment by Gender

As noted in Chapter 1 the impact of the recession in Ireland has been highly structured by industrial sector. Segregation theories have argued the sex-typing of jobs and the consequent concentration of men and women in different occupations and sectors has implications for the extent to which women and men are exposed to sectoral based expansions and contractions of employment (Milkman, 1976; Bettio, 2002). Table 2.3 illustrates the scale of employment change in different sectors of the Irish economy between 2003 and 2012.

Over the boom period from 2003 to 2007 the largest expansion in employment occurred in the construction and the administrative sectors, which increased by 44 and 49 per cent respectively. Above-average employment growth also occurred in the wholesale and retail, the professional and technical, the health, the arts and entertainment, and the financial sectors.

Turning to the recession period, the largest fall in employment occurred in construction, where employment fell by 61 per cent between Q4 2007 and Q4 2012. This compares to overall decline of 14 per cent. The next highest rates of losses occurred in the administrative and support services, the agriculture, the industry, and the wholesale and retail sectors. In contrast to the prevailing trend of decline, increases in employment were recorded in the information and communication, the health and social work, the other services, and the education sectors between 2007 and 2012.

Table 2.3: Proportion and number employed in each sector, Q4 2003 to Q4 2012

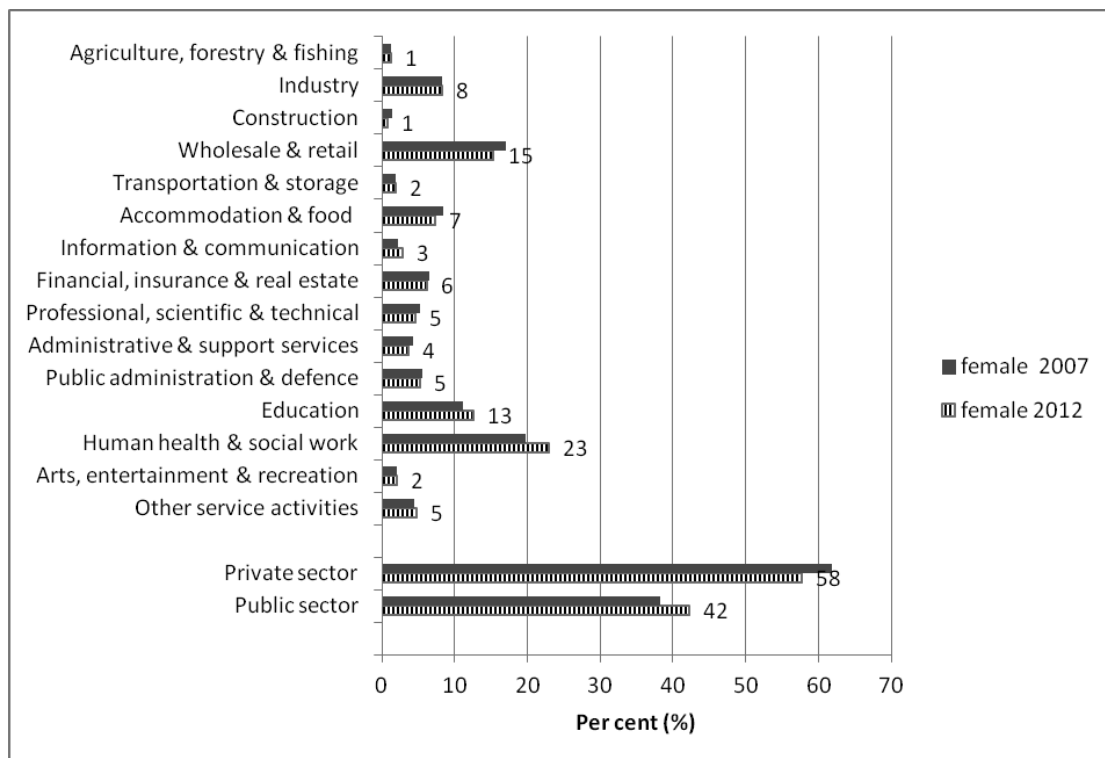
NACE Categories	2003 (N)	2007 (N)	2012 (N)	% change 2003–2007	% change 2007–2012
Agriculture	117,999	114,285	89,999	-3.1	-21.3
Industry	292,824	285,411	237,182	-2.5	-16.9
Construction	185,481	266,174	103,212	43.5	-61.2
Wholesale & retail	257,776	316,797	273,394	22.9	-13.7
Transport. & storage	88,311	97,997	88,956	11.0	-9.2
Accomm. & food	115,546	132,186	118,263	14.4	-10.5
Info. & communic.	63,335	70,746	83,173	11.7	17.6
Financial activities	85,547	105,434	102,796	23.2	-2.5
Prof., scien. & tech.	88,552	114,568	102,225	29.4	-10.8
Admin. & support	54,582	81,478	63,233	49.3	-22.4
Public admin.	87,195	104,548	95,975	19.9	-8.2
Education	121,759	141,496	145,310	16.2	2.7
Health & social work	174,033	222,111	245,696	27.6	10.6
Arts, entertainment	32,334	40,958	39,460	26.7	-3.7
Other services	53,467	54,557	56,781	2.0	4.1
Total	1,818,741	2,148,746	1,845,655	18.1	-14.0

Source: QNHS Microdata, all people employed aged 15+.

In order to understand the gendered impact of these sectoral changes in employment one needs a sense of the distribution of the workforce across these categories. Gender segregation is still a common characteristic of all labour markets (Scott et al., 2010) and Ireland is no exception to this trait (Russell et al., 2009; Barry, 2011). Figure 2.4 shows the distribution of the female employment across sectors. Taking the figures for 2007, we can see that three sectors account for almost half of all female employment: human health and social work sector (20 per cent), the wholesale and retail sector (17 per cent), and the education sector (11 per cent). Fewer than 2 per cent of employed women were working in the construction, the industry or the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors.

This distribution of female employment means that women were not so exposed to the large fall in construction, industrial and agricultural employment. However a significant proportion of the female workforce was vulnerable to the declines in the wholesale and retail sector. Moreover, the education and the health and social work sectors accounted for a significant proportion of female employment before the recession hit, and sheltered female employment during the downturn when these sectors continued to expand. It is notable that the proportion of females employed in the public sector, defined here as public administration, health and education, is greater in 2012 than in 2007 (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Distribution of Employed Females across Sectors, Q4 2007 and Q4 2012



Source: QNHS Microdata, employed people aged 15+.

Note: Figures on sectoral distribution are based on all employed people; however, the public–private sector distribution is based on employees only. Public sector = the public administration, the health and the education sectors.

Table 2.4 shows the female share of employment in each sector in 2003, 2007 and 2012, and the percentage change in the female share over this time-frame. The results demonstrate that the Irish labour market is still very segregated by gender. The most female dominated sectors are education (74.6 per cent in 2012) and

human health and social work (80.5 per cent). The most male dominated sectors are construction, agriculture, and transport and storage

These figures also highlight some interesting changes in the level of segregation across sectors. Between 2007 and 2012 the female share of the financial sector declined by -6.2 percentage points, while in the accommodation/food sector it fell by 6.1 percentage points. In contrast, the female share increased in the industry, education, agriculture, construction, transport, and arts and entertainment sectors. These figures suggest that there have been differential job losses between men and women within these sectors, favouring men in the financial sector and in the accommodation and food sectors, and in a way that favours women in the industry and the education sectors. Occupational segregation within sectors may contribute to these patterns, which is a potential question for future research. The female share decreased in the 'other services' sector. As this sector was expanding the results suggest gender differentials in recruitment, which again may be linked to the occupational distribution of these vacancies.

Table 2.4: Female share of employment by sector, Q4 2003 to Q4 2012

NACE Category	Female Share in Each Sector			Percentage Point Change 2007–2012
	2003	2007	2012	
Agriculture	9.9	10.9	12.2	1.3
Industry	28.8	27.0	30.0	3.0
Construction	3.9	5.1	6.4	1.3
Wholesale & retail	49.0	50.4	48.3	-2.1
Transport. & storage	21.0	17.8	18.2	0.4
Accomm. & food	57.1	59.0	52.9	-6.1
Info. & communic.	32.4	30.0	29.8	-0.2
Financial activities	56.5	58.7	52.5	-6.2
Prof., scien. & tech.	40.4	42.5	39.5	-3.0
Admin. & support	54.3	49.7	49.1	-0.6
Public admin.	45.1	50.0	46.9	-3.1
Education	69.9	73.5	74.6	1.1
Health & social work	80.3	82.7	80.5	-2.2
Arts, entertainment	45.7	45.4	45.6	0.2
Other services	65.6	76.2	72.1	-4.1

Source: QNHS Microdata, population aged 15+.

The final dimension of gender segregation that we consider is the extent to which men and women have been affected differentially by job losses in the public and private sector. Table 2.5 shows the changes in the number of male and female employees in the public and private sectors between 2003 and 2012. Rubery and Rafferty (2013) argue that women's over-representation in the public sector has traditionally afforded women greater security during economic downturns; however, the protective role of the sector has been challenged in this recession. Due to large fiscal debt, the economy has been subject to severe austerity measures that include drastic cuts in public spending, a freeze on public sector recruitment and voluntary redundancies, therefore public sector employment may not be as protected as in other downturns. Reducing the public sector pay bill has been a central measure of the austerity package. Reductions in the number of public sector workers have been achieved by means of a series of voluntary incentivised redundancy and early retirement packages (O'Connell, 2013).

Table 2.5: Changes in male/female employees in public and private sector

	Percentage Change 2003–2007		Percentage Change 2007–2009		Percentage Change 2009–2012		Change 2007–2009 (000s)		Change 2009–2012 (000s)	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
M	8.0	16.6	5.2	-20.0	-0.5	-2.1	6,349	-157,615	-638	-13,373
F	28.2	18.0	3.8	-10.1	-1.2	-3.9	12,504	-53,736	-4,166	-18,812
All	22.1	17.2	4.2	-16.0	-1.0	-2.9	18,853	-211,351	-4,804	-32,185

Source: QNHS Microdata, Employees only.

Notes: In this table, the public sector consists of those in the public administration, the education and the health and social care sectors. The data differ from those in Table 2.1 because as the self employed and employed for whom sector is not known are not included in this table.

In the absence of precise information on public and private sector employment in the QNHS we use the NACE Sector categories and combine the public administration, human health and social work, and education sectors to derive numbers for the public sector. This is a widely used measure but will misclassify some workers for example health workers, teachers, and childcare workers who are employed in private enterprises.

In the first two years of recession there was a decline of 16 per cent in private sector employees. The number of male employees in the private sector decreased by 20 per cent (157,615 persons) in this period. Female employment in the private sector declined by 10 per cent between 2007 and 2009 (53,736 persons). In the second phase of the recession private sector employment decline slowed and the gender distribution shifted. Between 2009 and 2012 more female jobs were lost in the private sector than male jobs (18,812 versus 13,373). This amounted to a decline of 4 per cent of female private sector employees and 2 per cent for male employees. This gender difference in the experience of employees contrasts with the overall decline in employment over the same time period observed in Table 2.1 above, which was more heavily concentrated among men. Overall falls in self-employment were substantial and were male-dominated, between 2009 and 2012 there was a decline of 12,712 self-employed males, all of whom located in the private sector.

The trends are quite different within the public sector. Between 2007 and 2009 public sector employment increased for both men and women. Male public sector employment increased by 5 percentage points and female by 4 percentage points. However during the second phase of recession, the protective role of the public sector began to decline, as fiscal debt and declining public expenditure significantly curtailed public sector employment. Furthermore, a moratorium on recruitment in public service employment was implemented and an incentivised early retirement scheme was introduced (see Chapter 1). Between 2009 and 2012 there was an employment decline of just under 5,000 which consisted predominately of women's jobs. Given the gender composition of the sector, this amounted to a decrease of 1 per cent in public sector employment for women and of 0.5 per cent for men.

Exchequer figures report that whole-time equivalent employment in the public sector rose by 14,325 between 2007 and 2009 and subsequently fell by 24,432 between 2009 and 2012 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2012). This represents an increase of 4.5 per cent in the first period and a decline of 7.7 per cent in the second period. Unfortunately, no gender breakdown of these figures is available. While the change in the first period is of a similar scale to that observed

with the QNHS data, the exchequer figure for the subsequent decline in employment is more substantial. It appears that the definition of public sector, which includes all education and health employees, though widely used in Ireland and internationally, considerably overstates the size of the public health sector.⁹ It is possible that there has been a shift from public to private sector employment in the health sector through out-sourcing of services and the use of agency staff. This has certainly been a noticeable trend in the UK (Rubery, 2012). A clear improvement for future gender monitoring would be the provision of gender disaggregated exchequer figures on employment in the public sector.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter we examined the gender impact of the crisis, and explored how gender labour market positions have changed. Past experiences of recession cannot provide sufficient insight into the gender impact of this crisis as the labour market position of women has changed considerably (Bettio et al., 2013). Prior to the crisis male and female employment rates and female participation rates were at an all-time high.

At the onset of the recession in 2008 and 2009 the gender employment gap narrowed as the employment rate fell for both sexes but more steeply for men. However, the decrease in the gender employment gap is due to the large decrease in male and female employment rates: male employment rates have fallen faster and are now more like the employment rates of women. The convergence in the gender employment gap is due to a 'downward levelling' of employment rates, reflecting the deteriorating employment situation of both women and men. In historical perspective though, the gender employment gap is very low indeed, and implies that much of the significant rise in women's paid employment during the economic boom has not been reversed. That said, females traditionally behave as 'slow movers' who experience comparatively slower re-absorption back into the labour market and lower employment rates (Bettio et al., 2013), so the gap may yet increase.

A downward levelling process can also be observed for participation. The recession brought the long-term rise in female participation rates to a halt, and female activity declined by 1.4 percentage points from 2007 to 2012. Previous forecasts suggested that rising educational attainment and a changing age profile should have led to an increase in female activity rates over this period which suggests a somewhat greater dampening effect of recession on female participation than is captured in the 1.4 per cent figure. Men's activity rates fell by 5 percentage points bringing the gender gap in participation to an all-time low of 14 percentage points. This compares with a gap of 21 percentage points in 2003 and a gap of 40 percentage points in 1990.

The greatest social impact has undoubtedly been the large and sustained increase in unemployment (NESC, 2013). In term of gender unemployment differences, prior to the recession unemployment rates were low and almost equal for men and women (around 4 per cent). From the onset of the recession in 2008 unemployment rates increased rapidly for both sexes, but male unemployment levels rose particularly sharply.

⁹ For example, the exchequer figures record 102,100 whole time equivalent workers in the health service in 2012, in the same year the QNHS classifies 230,860 employees in the Health sector. One third of the health sector employees in QNHS are part-time, which accounts for some of the discrepancy between the two sources. It is clear nonetheless that the QNHS Health sector figures contain a substantial proportion of private sector employees.

Our analysis shows that sectoral segregation has played a significant role in the gendered pattern of labour market change. Employment contractions were most severe in the traditionally male-occupied sectors of manufacturing and construction, which accounted for less than 2 per cent of female employment before the recession, meaning males were more vulnerable and exposed to unemployment. Women were exposed to the job losses in the wholesale and retail sector, which accounted for 11 per cent of female employment before the crisis. In contrast, women's over-representation in the health and the education sectors sheltered them from job losses as both sectors continued to expand through the recessionary period.

The segregation effects also involve a differentiation between the public and private sectors, though the data here are imperfect. QNHS data show that in the first phase of the recession between 2007 and 2009 there was an increase in public sector employment (defined as health, education and public administration) and a large decline in the number of private sector employees, particularly for males. Between 2009 and 2012 employment decreased in both the public and private sector for both sexes, but job losses in the public sector were concentrated among women, partly because of their over-representation in this sector and partly because their employment declined at a higher rate. Therefore while public sector employment was a source of protection from major job loss in the 2007-2009 periods, this is less true of the latter period (2009-2012) when public sector employment began to decline but still at a somewhat slower pace than private sector employment. During this period the impacts of recruitment freezes and voluntary redundancies in the public sector were beginning to appear. It remains to be seen whether further cuts in public spending introduced since 2012 will lead to a further decline in public sector employment relative to the private sector.

The narrowing of the gender gap in employment rates and activity rates over the recession are not consistent with the 'reserve army of labour' hypothesis that women constitute a labour reserve that is pushed back by employers when demand slows down and called out when demand is booming (Bettio and Verashchagina, 2013). However while female participation has not declined as much as men's there is some evidence that the anticipated increase in female activity driven by changing age and educational profiles has been thwarted. This suggests that entrants (or re-entrants) such as women re-entering the labour market may also have become discouraged, but further data on transitions is needed to investigate this issue. There is also evidence that young people, both male and female, are fulfilling this buffer function. The idea that women's jobs were more 'peripheral' and more easily shed is also not supported by the data. The pattern of effects observed in the Irish labour market is more consistent with the segregation perspective, which emphasises the concentration of women and men in different sectors of the economy that were differentially affected by the recession.

This chapter has shown the severe effect of the economic crisis has had on the quantity of employment in the Irish labour market in the following chapters we investigate the changes in the quality of jobs and consider the gender differences underlying the headline employment figures.

3 CHANGES IN WORKING HOURS, JOB SECURITY AND PAY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we consider how the recession has impacted on three important aspects of working conditions: working hours, job security and pay. As outlined in Chapter 1 these three dimensions of work form part of the core focus of research on quality of work. Pay and rewards have been the central concern of economic analysis of quality of work, while sociological studies have paid particular attention to the distribution of pay across different groups (skill, groups, gender, race) and in seeking to explain trends and institutional differences in earnings inequality. Job security is often grouped alongside pay as a key extrinsic feature of employment, for example appearing together in Eurofound's dimensions of working conditions (Eurofound 2012).¹⁰ Within the 'flexicurity' debate the concept of security has been broadened to include 'career security', which is not tied to the current job but relates to an individual's ability to secure similar quality work if the current job ends. However, here we focus on the narrower concept of job security, which we measure using both contract status (temporary versus permanent), and individuals' own assessments of job security, referred to in the literature as 'objective' and 'subjective' job security. Hours of work are also closely linked to pay and economic security since working hours influence a worker's ability to command a living wage. Working hours are also extremely important for other dimensions of quality of work such as work pressure and the ability to reconcile work and family (Russell and McGinnity, 2013; McGinnity and Russell, 2013).

All three of these working conditions have been historically structured by gender. Non-standard employment, encompassing part-time work and non-permanent employment, has predominantly been the domain of female workers across Europe and other OECD countries, while gender differences in pay are an almost universal feature of advanced capitalist societies (OECD, 2012).

The focus of this chapter is to consider how gender differences in these job characteristics have changed over the period of the recession in Ireland. Have long-term gender differentials in these working conditions been altered by the sudden collapse in employment or has it been 'business as usual' in gender terms? Alternatively, has gender segregation in the labour market meant that women have been protected from a deterioration in working conditions, as suggested by theories outlined in Chapter 1? We particularly focus on the role of public sector employment in mediating the effects of recession on women's pay and job security. Changes in hours of work may shed further light on the applicability of the 'buffer theory' which suggests that women will withdraw from the labour market, and the 'added worker' theory which suggests that women may increase their working hours to compensate for a decline in employment of their male partners.

3.2 Changes in Working Hours

Working hours are a central feature of the working environment and changes to working hours can be used by employers and government as a response to recession. Reducing working time through short-time working as a means of maintaining labour in periods of reduced demand is a feature common in some labour markets such as Germany and France (OECD, 2009, 2010). Reduced working

¹⁰ Eurofound is the European Foundation for Working and Living Conditions, an agency of the European Union.

hours through the increased use of part-time contracts may also occur as part of a process of substitution from more expensive better protected employment to cheaper, more contingent labour (see Chapter 1). This could take the form of replacing women with other women – for example, through out-sourcing public sector jobs to private sector workers who are on more precarious contracts and are working shorter hours, or through the entry of men into the traditionally female part-time sector. Rubery (2013) argues that substitution of this sort may be part of a downgrading of work conditions, whereby non-standard working hours, lower levels of pay and poorer security become normalised for a wider section of the workforce. Part-time work in Ireland, as elsewhere, has traditionally been the preserve of women. In the pre-recession period, 78 per cent of part-time workers were female but has this gendered aspect of employment altered with recession?

The link between non-standard hours of work, particularly part-time work, and other aspects of work quality is not uniform. The size of the part-time pay gap is much wider in some countries than others (McGinnity and McManus, 2007; Bardasi and Gornick, 2008). The concentration of part-time employees in low-level occupations is particularly acute in the UK, however the pattern differs in other countries – for example, in Greece, Italy and Portugal, women in managerial and professional occupations were the group most likely to work part-time (Warren, 2010).

Previous research for Ireland using the ESRI/NCPP 2009 employee survey found that, controlling for education, experience and other personal characteristics, those working part-time earned 6 per cent less per hour than full-time workers (Russell and McGinnity, 2011).¹¹ Part-time workers were also found to enjoy less autonomy than full-time workers with the same levels of human capital, and even than those in the same occupations, sectors and types of organisation (ibid, p. 94). Focusing on private sector workers only and based on analysis of the National Employment Survey, Bergin et al. (2012) found that there was a 14 per cent penalty for part-time work in Ireland in both 2006 and 2009, with a somewhat bigger gap existing for men (17 per cent) than women (12 per cent).

Extremely long working hours may also be an indicator of poor work since long hours are associated with higher levels of work pressure and greater levels of work–life conflict (see Chapter 4). Increased working hours may also occur during recession in organisations where there has been significant labour shedding, where remaining employees are expected to take on the roles of others who have left the organisation due to job loss. Therefore, we also consider whether there have been changes at both ends of the distribution of work hours.

3.2.1 Changes in Part-time Work 2003–2012

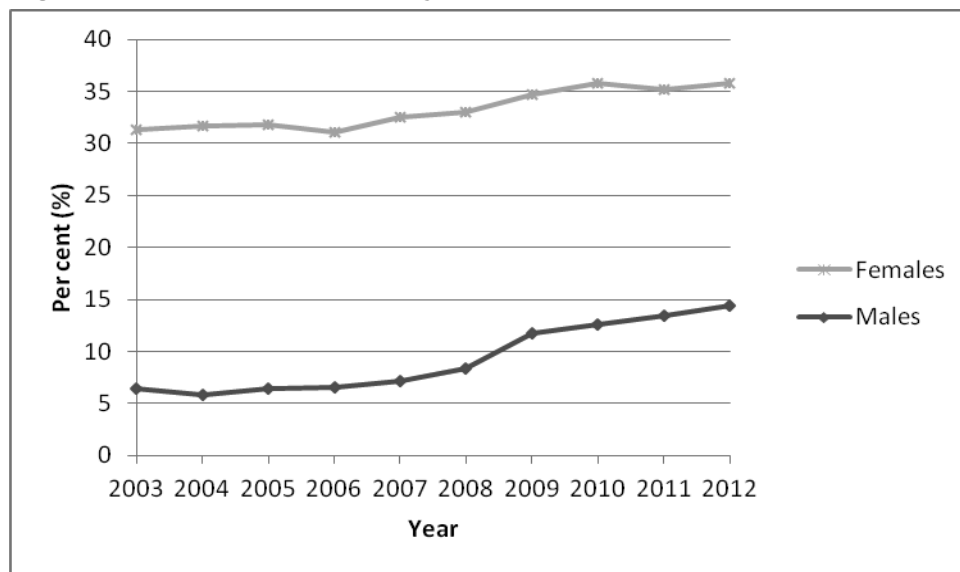
Prior to the economic crisis part-time employment was on an upward trend in Ireland. Over the boom period 2003 to 2007 part-time employment was rising at an even quicker pace than full-time employment for both women and men: female part-time employment increased by over 26 per cent in that short period (see figure 3.1). During the recessionary period part-time employment remained stable among women, while full-time employment declined leading to a continued increase in the part-time employment rate for women¹² from 32 per cent in 2007 to 35.8 per cent in 2012. The contrasting trends in part- and full-time employment during the recession were even more stark for men. There was a reduction of 19 per cent in full-time employment between 2007 and 2012 but an increase of 63 per cent in part-time

¹¹ Involvement in part-time work was self-defined rather than based on hours of work.

¹² The part-time employment rate is the proportion of all employed women who work part-time

employment, albeit from a low base. This resulted in a rise of the part-time employment rate for men from 7 per cent in 2007 to 14 per cent in 2012.

Figure 3.1: Part time Employment Rate 2003 to 2012



Source: QNHS, microdata files Q4 for each year.

Notes: Includes all employed aged 15+. Based on ILO definitions.

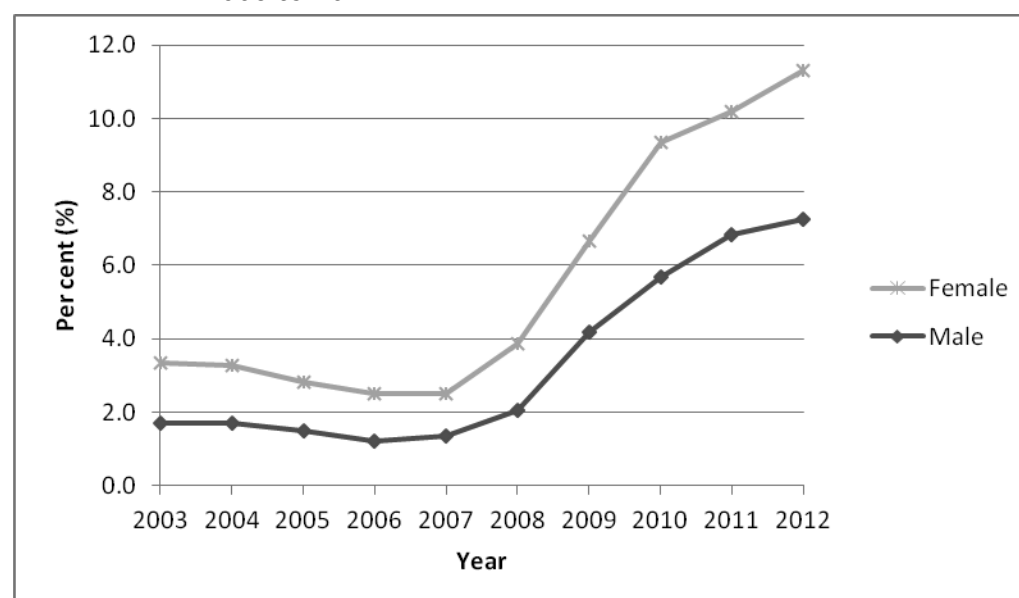
The extent to which these increases in part-time employment represent a deterioration in working conditions is at least partly indicated by information on whether entry into part-time work was constrained by lack of full-time opportunities. Involuntary part-time employment is defined as cases where individuals say they are working part-time because they could not find a full-time job. This is not to imply that all those who work part-time because of caring commitments are exercising an unconstrained choice, since clearly factors such as wage levels and availability of care services also influence this decision (Warren, 2010; McGinnity and McManus, 2007).

The level of involuntary part-time work jumped sharply with the recession, reversing the previous downward trajectory. In 2007 fewer than 3 per cent of employed men and women worked part-time because they could not find a full-time job, but by the end of 2012 more than 11 per cent of employed women and 7 per cent of employed men were in this position (see figure 3.2). The proportion of part-time workers who were working part-time involuntarily (as a proportion of part time workers) rose from 8 per cent to 32 per cent for women and from 19 per cent to 50 per cent for men. Put another way, 46 per cent of the new part-time jobs created during the recession were in fact involuntary part-time positions.¹³

The proportion of involuntary part-time female workers in Ireland is not much higher than the EU average, accounting for 24 per cent of female part-timers in 2011 compared with 21 per cent for the EU15 and 60 per cent or close to it in Spain and Portugal (Table 3.1). However, the scale of the change in Ireland has been exceptional, being second only to Spain in the absolute increase and showing the biggest rise in proportionate terms since the scale of 2007.

¹³ Of the additional 129,000 additional part-time jobs in 2012 compared to 2007 59.5 thousand were involuntary.

Figure 3.2: Involuntary Part-time Work as a Proportion of All Employment 2003 to 2012



Source: QNHS microdata Q4 for each year

Note: per cent of all employed (age 15+) who are working part-time because they could not find full-time job.

Table 3.1: OECD Share of Involuntary Part-timers as Percentage of Part-time Employment, Women

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change 2007–11
Austria	10.0	9.3	8.5	8.8	7.4	-2.6
Belgium	14.4	14.7	12.0	11.3	10.0	-4.4
Denmark	11.9	10.7	11.4	11.9	12.8	0.9
Finland	30.3	31.1	30.9	31.7	30.5	0.2
France	30.4	31.8	30.7	31.5	29.7	-0.7
Germany	17.3	18.4	16.7	17.0	13.5	-3.8
Greece	34.7	32.7	34.6	36.1	40.1	5.4
Ireland	5.0	3.9	13.3	19.3	23.7	18.7
Italy	27.3	29.3	33.8	37.5	40.5	13.2
Luxembourg	3.0	6.5	7.8	7.3	8.8	5.8
Netherlands	3.9	3.2	4.4	4.1	5.3	1.4
Portugal	55.4	54.8	48.7	57.1	60.0	4.6
Spain	36.2	38.1	50.1	53.0	57.8	21.6
Sweden	23.2	22.7	23.9	23.1	22.7	-0.5
United Kingdom	6.7	..	9.4	10.2	12.5	5.8
European Union 15	17.6	18.3	19.7	20.8	20.9	3.3

Source: *OECD.StatExtracts* downloaded from <http://stats.oecd.org/> on 15 May 2013.

'..' represents missing data

To what extent has this increase in involuntary part-time work been borne disproportionately by women or men? Has the segregation of the labour market and the sectoral nature of the recession led to pockets of greater advantage and disadvantage in this aspect of working conditions? To answer these questions we construct a probit model of involuntary part-time work, in which the chances of being involuntary part-time are calculated for different groups of employees, holding other characteristics constant. We compare involuntary part-time employment to all other employment (full-time or voluntary part-time) because to compare it to only voluntary part-time would be to create a contrast with a more selective group.

Results of statistical modelling (Table A1 in the Appendix) show that the women are more likely to be involuntary part-time employed than men but the size of the difference is less than 1 per cent. The model also shows that, holding compositional factors constant, there was a rise of 6 per cent in the chances of involuntary part-time employment between 2007 and 2012. The increase over time is not significantly different for women and men. The youngest age group (under 25 years), and women in the oldest age groups (55 plus) are more likely to be involuntarily part-time employed but the marginal effects are small. Involuntary part-time work is also more common among the least educated. Being non-Irish reduces the chance of involuntary part-time employment by 2 per cent and having a partner leads to a reduction of less than 1 per cent. Having a pre-school child increases the likelihood of working part-time involuntarily but only for men, and the effect is very small (see Appendix table A2). These results for family status contrast with findings for the factors that influence part-time employment more generally, where among women having young children strongly increases the chances of part-time work.¹⁴

Involuntary part-time work is more strongly associated with sector of employment than individual characteristics. Compared with the manufacturing sector, working in one of the service sectors increases the likelihood of involuntary part-time work. This is particularly true of the hospitality, the arts and other services, and the administrative and support sectors.

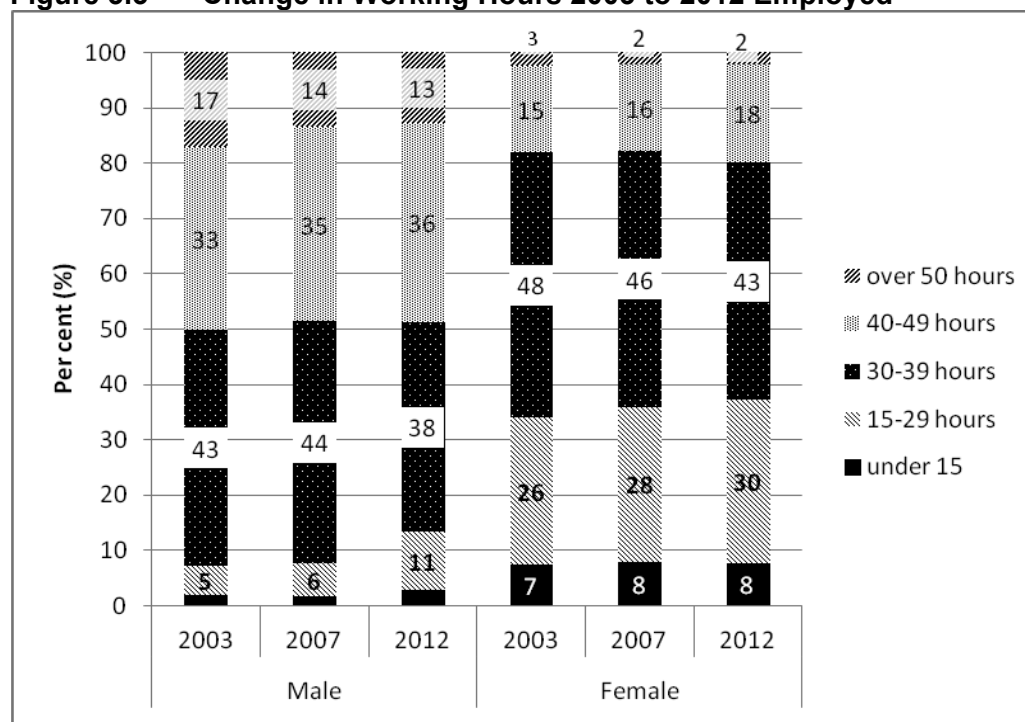
Adding sector to the model has little impact on the effect of the year suggesting that the changes over time are not strongly patterned by sector (Table A2 in the Appendix). However, adding the sector reduces the (already small) gender effect, which means that women are more likely to be involuntarily part-time partly because of the sector they work in. This association has not changed over the period.

3.2.2 Polarisation in Working Hours?

Some have argued that there has been a polarisation in working hours in Ireland (O'Farrell, 2013) as well as the USA (Kalleberg, 2011). This would imply that there has been an increase in those working long hours as well as an increase in those working short hours, with a shrinking of the middle groups. However the results show that this is not the case for Ireland (Figure 3.3). While the increase in part-time working is reflected in the growth of the proportions of both men and women working less than 30 hours, the proportion of women working over 50 hours has remained unchanged and the percentage of men working these hours has decreased. The decline occurred during the boom period and remained stable since 2007. The proportions working 40 to 49 hours per week has increased marginally over the period. A high proportion of those working long hours are self-employed: only 6 per cent of male employees were working 50 hours or more in 2012 (analysis not shown).

¹⁴ Pre-school children increase the likelihood of part-time work among women by 20 per cent and having a partner increases it by 5 per cent. Full model results are available from the authors. These findings are taken from identical models from those shown in the appendix with the dependent variable changed to part-time employment versus full-time employment.

Figure 3.3 Change in Working Hours 2003 to 2012 Employed



Source: QNHS microdata, Q4 for each year. All employed (employees plus self-employed) aged 15+.

These trends mean that the gap in the mean number of hours worked by men and women has narrowed over the period of the recession from 9 hours in 2007 to 7.8 hours in 2012 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Mean Working Hours 2003 to 2012

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Male	41.2	41.0	40.7	40.3	40.3	39.9	39.2	39.0	38.9	38.8
Female	31.9	31.8	31.6	31.6	31.3	31.1	30.7	30.5	30.6	31.0
Gap	9.3	9.2	9.1	8.7	9.0	8.8	8.5	8.5	8.3	7.8

Source: QNHS. All employed aged 15+.

3.3 Job Security

The changing nature of European labour markets, in particular processes of deregulation and flexibilisation, have led to a proliferation of precarious work such as employment on fixed-term contracts or with low pay or both (Eichhorst and Marx, 2011). Here we examine whether the recession has affected these changes and whether there are gender differences in job security during the recession.

Many studies use the proportion of employees on non-permanent contracts as an indicator of insecurity, yet there is still a wide degree of variation in the security and other working conditions enjoyed by 'permanent' and temporary employees across countries (Burchell et al., 2002; Paugam and Zhou, 2007; Booth et al., 2002). Indeed the low level of protection for permanent employees in liberal employment regimes, including Ireland and the UK, is seen as important reason for the relatively low rates of temporary employment in these countries. Partly because of these institutional differences, subjective measures of security are also widely adopted in the literature, using indicators such as the perceived likelihood of losing one's job, ratings of job security, and satisfaction with job security. See Burchell et al., (2002) and De Witte

and Naswall (2003) for discussions of the measures and concepts of insecurity used in research.

Previous research demonstrates that subjective insecurity is influenced by work characteristics such as occupation, organisation size, public versus private sector employment (Clark and Postel-Vinay, 2009; Erlinghagan, 2008), wider economic factors such as the unemployment level (Green, 2009; Gash and Inanc, 2013) and individual characteristics such as sex, age, family responsibilities (Erlinghagan 2008). The role of institutions in shaping the extent of subjective insecurity has received greater attention in recent years with the availability of large cross-national data-sets (Chung and van Oorschot, 2011; Erlinghagan, 2008). These two studies suggest that while institutional factors such as employment protection levels and social security spending were correlated with levels of subjective insecurity, these factors were less important than individual or job characteristics and market conditions.

Even if individuals over-estimate the risk of job loss (McGuinness et al., 2012), there is widespread evidence that perceived job insecurity has a detrimental effect on psychological well-being and health (e.g. Dekker and Schaufeli, 1995; De Witte, 1999; Drobnič et al., 2010), work–life balance (Gallie and Russell, 2009) and can lead to a deterioration in organisational commitment and performance (e.g. Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003; Davy et al., 1997).

3.3.1 Non-Permanent Contracts During the Recession

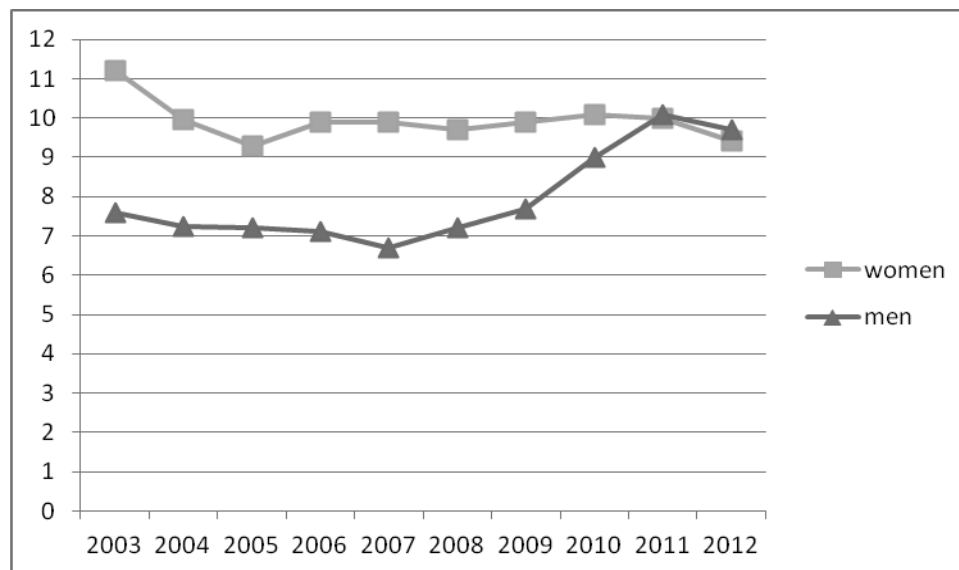
Cross-national differences in employment regimes and the different paths taken to flexibilisation and deregulation (Esping-Andersen and Regini, 2000) mean that there is wide variation in the use of non-permanent contracts. For the period 2004 to 2010 rates ranged from over 20 per cent of the workforce in Spain, Portugal and Poland, to less than 10 per cent in the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Norway and many of the Eastern European and transition countries (Gash and Inanc, 2013 based on European Labour Force Survey data). In Ireland low levels of employment protection for permanent workers has meant that there has been little incentive for employers to expand temporary contracts except perhaps in the public sector where permanent employees have greater protection.

The impact of recession on temporary contracts is not entirely predictable. While temporary workers are more easily shed during periods of economic contraction, it is also possible that new workers are more likely to be offered and to accept temporary employment, as employers shift additional risk to employees. Furthermore, as the discussion in Chapter 1 outlines, the sectoral and occupational differences in the effect of the recession may lead to changes in the nature of temporary employment that is driven by compositional or structural factors.

Gash and Inanc (2013) found that during the crisis, and controlling for compositional factors, the risk of involuntary temporary employment increased most in Ireland. However, this increase was from a very low base. Increases in risk were also observed in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary, and to a lesser extent in Poland and Greece. Conversely, involuntary temporary employment decreased in the UK.

Across Europe temporary work is more common among women than men, and in many countries is highly concentrated among younger workers. Ireland was no exception to this pattern. Before the economic crisis in the last quarter of 2007, 10 per cent of female employees were on temporary contracts compared with 7 per cent of male employees (see Figure 3.4). However, during the period of the recession non-permanent employment grew rapidly among men, while the rate for women remained stable. This led to a convergence in the temporary employment rates for men and women in 2011, with some evidence of a decline for both sexes in 2012.

Figure 3.4: Temporary Employment Rate by Gender 2003 to 2012



Source: QNHS micro data, Q4 for each year. Employees aged 15+

Pre-recession in Q4 2007 the rate of temporary employment was 2 per cent higher in the public than in the private sector.¹⁵ After an initial widening of this gap in 2008 the rates converged at 10 per cent in 2011 as rates of temporary employment in the private sector rose while those in the public sector appear to have been declining gradually since 2008.

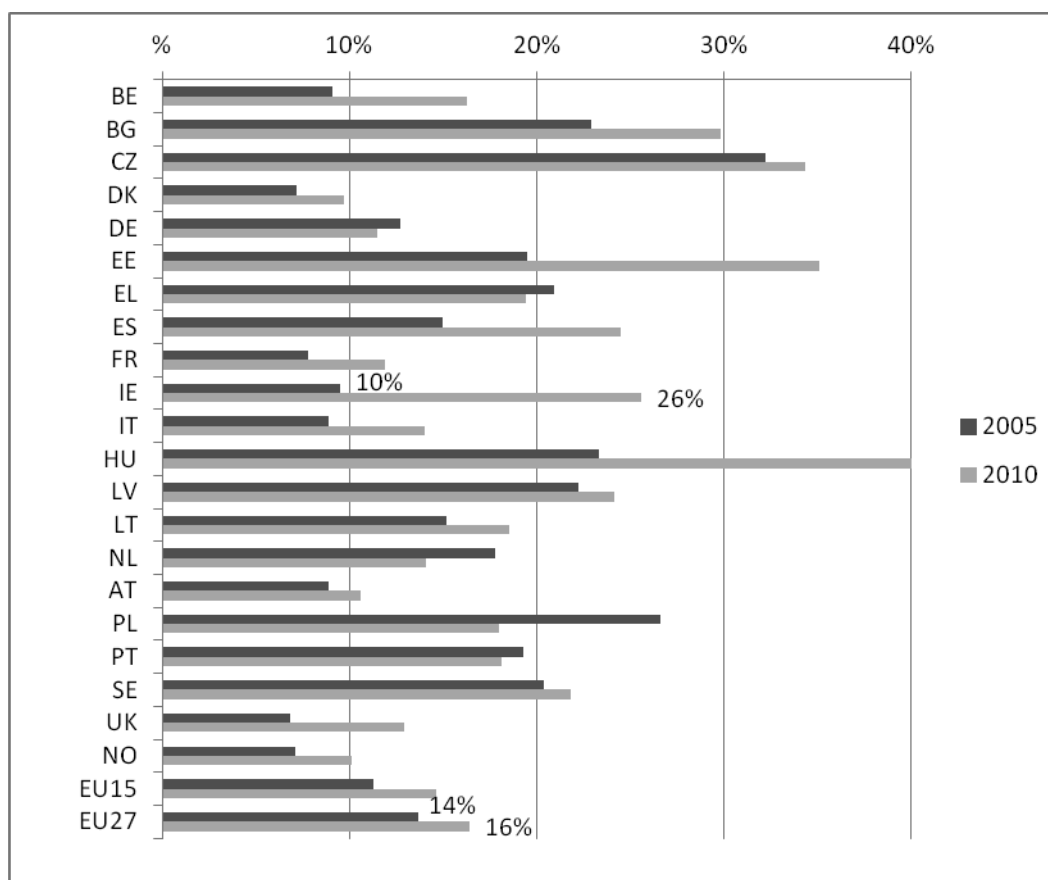
3.3.2 Subjective Job Insecurity

The level of subjective job insecurity varies substantially across European countries (e.g. Green, 2009; Paugam and Zhou, 2007) and there is some evidence that this has increased. Eurofound (2010) reported that workers' anxiety over their job security has also increased in recent years. In 2005, 14 per cent of workers in the EU27 feared that they might lose their job in the next six months; in 2010, the figure had risen to 16 per cent. The growing sense of insecurity was even more dramatic in Ireland (see Figure 3.5) and by 2010 more than a quarter of Irish workers were concerned that they might lose their jobs.

There was no gender difference in the average level of perceived insecurity across the EU27 and the scale of the increase was identical for men and women. In Ireland men were marginally more likely to feel insecure about their jobs than women and this did not change between 2005 and 2010 (24 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men in 2010: the equivalent figures for 2005 were 9 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men).

¹⁵ Note that as these figures are from the QNHS, they rely on a proxy measure of public and private sector employment which counts health, education and public administration as public and all other sectors as private (see Chapter 2).

Figure 3.5: Percentage of Those Employed who Believe they Might Lose their Job in the Next 6 Months



Source: Generated from Eurofound’s EWCS mapping tool. Selected EU countries and Norway.

Note: Includes employees and self-employed.

While these figures show the rise in insecurity in Ireland has been exceptional for both men and women, they do not show whether this trend has been affected by underlying compositional changes. To address this question we switch to the information from the ESRI/NCPP national employee survey. In both 2003 and 2009 respondents were asked how their job security had altered over the preceding two years. The contrast between the pre-recession and recession period is stark: in 2003 less than 5 per cent of workers reported that their security had decreased but in 2009 this had risen to one-third of workers. As with the perceived risk of job loss, the rise in subjective insecurity was somewhat higher for men than for women (Table 3.3). Levels of insecurity were significantly higher in the private sector in both years.¹⁶ In 2009, 36 per cent of private sector employees felt their security had decreased compared with 24 per cent of public sector employees, reflecting persistent differences in protection against job loss in the two sectors. Interestingly, in the public sector women were more likely to report a decrease in job security (25 per cent of women versus 22 per cent of men) whereas in the private sector, insecurity was more acute among men (33 per cent of women, 39 per cent of men). How far are these gender differences a consequence of the gender segregation by sectors and occupation and in types of contracts?

¹⁶ The ESRI/NCPP employee survey contains a direct measure of whether the worker is in the public or private sector.

Table 3.3: Perceived Changes in Job Security over the Past 2 years

		2003	2009
Men	Security increased	13.3%	13.0%
	no change	81.8%	50.3%
	Security decreased	4.9%	36.7%
		100.0%	100.0%
Women	Security increased	13.1%	11.6%
	No change	83.3%	57.5%
	Security decreased	3.6%	30.8%
		100.0%	100.0%
Total	Security increased	13.2%	12.3%
	No change	82.5%	54.0%
	Security decreased	4.3%	33.7%
		100.0%	100.0%

Source: NCPP/ESRI employee survey, employees only.

To find out we estimate a model of subjective insecurity in 2009 (Table A3 in the Appendix). This shows that without any sectoral controls women are less likely than men to feel their security has decreased in the preceding two years. However, women's protection from insecurity is found to be due to sectoral segregation. Insecurity is highest in the construction and manufacturing sectors, and when sector is held constant there is no gender difference. A further test of whether sector has a different effect on male and female employees, shows that this is true in the 'education' and 'other services' sectors. Within these sectors female employees are more insecure than their male counterparts, within the remaining sectors there is no difference in the subjective security of women and men.

Adding a further set of controls shows that insecurity is higher among those on non-permanent contracts as expected but there is no difference between part-time employees and full-time employees.¹⁷ Unlike the figures for temporary contracts, it is not the youngest group that report greatest insecurity but those aged 25 to 54 years. This anomaly may arise because the measure used refers to decreased security over the last two years, for the youngest age group there is likely to be a tenure effect i.e. gaining two years experience in a job may lead to greater perception of security which is less relevant for workers with longer tenure.

3.4 Changes in Pay

Classical economic theory suggests that wages will decline in recession as greater competition for scarce jobs will lead to a decrease in the reservation wage and to 'labour market clearing' as employers take on surplus workers at a lower level of pay. However, in practice it is observed that wages are not as responsive to recession as this theory would predict (e.g. Autor and Katz, 1999; Babecky et al., 2009) and a range of explanations have been put forward for this resistance. Labour market and welfare institutions such as unemployment benefits, minimum wages, and union agreements have been identified as preventing wages from falling below a minimum threshold (Autor and Katz, 1999). Labour supply factors can also prevent a downward pressure on wages if workers withdraw from the labour market (through emigration or economic inactivity). The ability of the labour market to clear may also be impeded by segmentation and segregation. If those losing their jobs have different skills or characteristics which mean that they do not compete for jobs in the sectors or occupations where there are vacancies, they exert no downward pressure on wages in those sectors. Moreover, the insider-outsider theory suggests that those in jobs will protect wages as they have little interest in generating new jobs (Lindbeck

¹⁷ Part-time workers are defined as those working less than 30 hours per week.

and Snower, 1988). The negative effect of wage cuts on morale and productivity are also cited as reasons why employers prefer strategies that cut staff numbers or hours rather than cutting pay for existing employees (Shapiro and Stiglitz, 1984).

These processes suggest that wage levels and wage differentiation may not exhibit changes commensurate with the shifts in employment and unemployment. Nevertheless, there are features of the current economic crisis that could mean there is greater impact on wages and on gender differences in wages compared with earlier recessions. Principal among these features is public sector pay cuts (see Chapter 1), which may be more salient for women as a much greater proportion of female employment is in the public sector (see Chapter 2).

As outlined in Chapter 2 women make up the majority of employees in the public sector: 73 per cent in 2007 before the recession (based on the NACE categories of public administration, education, and health). Moreover, the size of the gender pay gap has tended to be narrower in the public sector than in the private sector in Ireland both for graduate entrants (Russell et al., 2005) and for all employees (O'Connell et al., 2010; see Table 3.4).¹⁸ In 2007, the unadjusted gender wage gap was 8 per cent in the public sector compared with 19 per cent in the private sector. Women's concentration in public sector employment has therefore narrowed the economy-wide gender pay gap in Ireland and any shift in the balance of public and private sector employment for women is likely to have implications for gender differences in pay. The figures presented in Chapter 2 suggest that the proportion of employed women who work in the public sector has increased over the period of recession up to 2012.

Public sector pay cuts are also likely to have consequences for the gender pay gap. Firstly a reduction in the pay premium for public sector workers will reduce the contribution of the public sector to a narrower national gender pay gap. Secondly, within the public sector we might expect that if pay cuts are progressive – i.e. increasing with salary levels – then this would lead to a narrowing in the GPG insofar as women are concentrated among the lower paid public sector workers. However, the original pay cuts, which took the form of a pension levy, will not appear in the pay figures described below because they reduced net rather than gross pay. The public sector pay cuts introduced in 2010 were not strictly progressive with some higher paid workers experiencing a smaller percentage decrease than lower paid workers (see Chapter 1). The most recent public sector pay cuts and additional working hours that will reduce hourly pay levels were introduced in June 2013 and effects on pay differentials between women and men and the public and private sector is as yet unknown.

It is significant that no gender impact assessment of these changes was conducted by government before their introduction (Barry and Conroy, 2013). Indeed the practice of gender mainstreaming has been notably absent in the austerity policies introduced across the EU during the economic crisis (Villa et al., 2013). Gender

¹⁸ Using regression techniques, O'Connell et al. (2010, p. 147) analysis of the ESRI/NCPP National Workplace Survey, found the weekly wage premium for men was 26 per cent in the public sector and 31 per cent in the private sector, for employees working 15 hours or more (and with weekly hours controlled). In contrast, using a decomposition analysis of the 2003 National Employment Survey McGuinness et al. (2009) found that there was a relatively large raw gender pay gap in the education and health sectors and a raw gap that was smaller than average in the public administration sector. They found that the adjusted gender pay gap was lower than average in education and public administration but higher than average in health. There is no overall figure for the gender pay gap for the public and private combined. Again, using OLS models rather than decomposition techniques and drawing of the NES 2003 and NES 2006, Kelly et al. (2009b) show that controlling for a range of organisational and individual characteristics, including working hours, the male premium for weekly wages was 17 per cent in both the public and the private sectors in 2006 and was 16 per cent in the public sector and 14 per cent in the private sector in 2003.

differentiated statistics on pay have also been a casualty of cuts in public expenditure in Ireland. The National Employment Survey (NES), which provided the figures for monitoring the gender pay gap, was discontinued by the CSO in 2009 (CSO figures for 2010 reported below are based on estimates from the Revenue Commissioners data). The new Earnings Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) does not include information on the gender of employees. Therefore, there are no national figures on the gender pay gap published for 2011 and 2012, a crucial period in wage development in Ireland.¹⁹

The figures in Table 3.4 suggest that over the period 2007 to 2010 the gender gap in mean hourly earnings widened from 10.7 to 13.2 per cent.²⁰ From the sectoral breakdown it is clear that the raw gender gap has been much wider in the private sector than in the public sector, both during the boom period and the recession, with the most recent figures showing a gap of 21 per cent in the private sector compared with 12 per cent in the public sector. The NES contains direct information on whether the employing organisation is in the public or private sector.

The trends in the mean gender pay gaps are similar in both sectors. Between 2007 and 2010 the raw gender gap widened 19 per cent to 21 per cent in the private sector, and from 8 to 12 per cent in the public sector. However, the pay figure for public sector men in 2007 looks somewhat anomalous and the trend since 2008 suggest an initial widening of the gap followed by slight decline.

While these paint a picture at a very general level we know that such aggregate levels of earnings are also strongly affected by characteristics of employees, particularly education, skill levels, and tenure, and by work-place factors. Changes in male and female earnings could also be driven by changes such as increases in the educational qualifications of the employed.

¹⁹ The SILC contains earnings information but the number of respondents is much smaller than the NES.

²⁰ Over the same period the gap in median level of women's and men's pay narrowed from 13.4 per cent to 10.3 per cent. The median figure tends to reduce the impact of outliers at the top end of the pay scale (where the tail is much longer) and suggests that there may have been widening of the gender pay gap at the top end of the income distribution. However, pay levels by decile for women and men are not published by the CSO. We use mean here as that is implicitly the measure used in models of the gender pay gap (and models of public/private pay differentials).

Table 3.4: Mean Hourly Wages in the Public and Private Sector 2006 to 2010

		Men	Women	Unadjusted GPG
		€	€	per cent
2010	Private	21.37	16.86	21.1
	Public	29.62	26.03	12.1
	All	23.19	20.12	13.2
2009	Private	21.61	17.26	20.1
	Public	31.79	27.58	13.2
	All	23.63	20.61	12.8
2008	Private	21.25	16.69	21.5
	Public	31.37	27.46	12.5
	All	23.06	20.21	12.4
2007	Private	19.77	15.94	19.4
	Public	28.17	25.79	8.4
	All	21.17	18.91	10.7
2006	Private	18.95	15.56	17.9
	Public	28.71	24.45	14.8
	All	20.59	18.22	11.5

Sources: CSO (2007) National Employment Survey 2006; CSO (2009) National Employment Survey 2007; CSO (2011) National Employment Survey 2008 and 2009; CSO (2012) National Employment Survey 2009 and 2010 Supplementary Analysis.

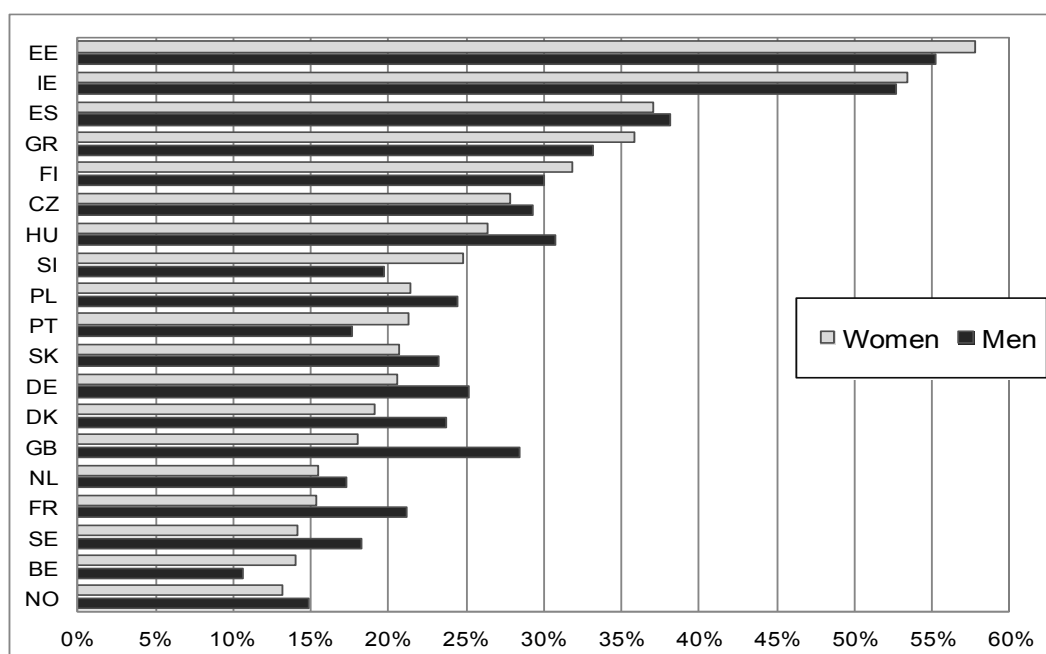
Note: Public sector includes semi-state companies. NES 2010 refers to employees working more than 10 hours per week and 50 or more weeks per year.

Bergin et al. (2012) estimated regression models of hourly earnings in the private sector for 2006 and 2009, controlling for a range of relevant labour market characteristics (education, tenure, nationality, age, contract status, firm size, union membership, and sector). They found the hourly wage premium for men (in the private sector) decreased marginally from 15.6 per cent in 2006 to 14.3 per cent. This figure is net of the pay penalty found for part-time work, which was unchanged at 14 per cent in both years. The penalty for part-time work was observed for both men (17 per cent in 2009) and women (12 per cent in 2009) but because of the greater concentration of women in part-time work this affected a larger sub-group of female workers. Interestingly, Bergin et al. found only a small penalty for fixed-term employment in the private sector (2 per cent) in 2009, but no penalty in 2006.

While figures on the gender pay gap highlight changes in the mean or median levels of women's and men's wages they do not tell us what has been happening at the individual level. What proportion of employees have experienced pay reductions? The European Social Survey (ESS) conducted in late 2010 asked workers whether they had to take a reduction in pay over the preceding three years and over half of Irish workers reported such a reduction. This is far higher than in other EU countries with the exception of Estonia which also had more than half the workforce affected. While these figures do not give an indication of the extent of the wage reductions, they do show that a similar proportion of men and women experienced pay decreases. As the question does not specify net or gross pay it is possible that respondents were including the effects of tax increases in their answers.²¹

²¹ This is also likely to contribute to the difference between the ESS results and the comparison of median hourly pay differences over time which showed no decline in the private sector – see discussion of Bergin et al.'s results above.

Figure 3.6: Percentage of Employed Who Have Had to Take a Reduction in Pay in the Last 3 Years (ESS 2010)



Note: Own analysis of ESS, applying additional constructed weights to correct for sampling error (Gallie ed. 2013 p.28-29 for a description).

3.5 Conclusion

The Irish labour market has been seriously affected by the Great Recession. The results presented here suggest that the economic crisis has adversely affected the working conditions of those remaining in employment. The sharpest changes were in involuntary part-time working, in subjective insecurity and in the experience of pay cuts, while rates of temporary employment and long working hours have been subject to less change and trends here appear to be driven by longer-term structural processes rather than the peaks and troughs of the economic cycle.

The figures on part-time employment show some convergence in women and men's working conditions. These can be interpreted as a levelling down of conditions rather than an upwards equalisation with men, since the major part of the increase in part-time work has been involuntary. The high levels of involuntary part-time work among women as well as men combined with the figures on inactivity rates described in Chapter 2, underline women's commitment to remain in the labour market during the recession. Women have been accepting shorter working hours rather than withdrawing and acting as a 'reserve army of labour'.

The data on objective and subjective measures of insecurity tell somewhat different stories about the impact of recession. While the rate of temporary employment has remained relatively stable for women, and has grown by a relatively modest 3 per cent for men, there has been a very dramatic rise in subjective insecurity for Irish workers. Divergences between these measures is well documented, and in this case the results are likely to be driven by the lack of strong employment protection for permanent workers which means they too feel vulnerable in a period of dramatic job losses.

There is some evidence of a sectoral dimension to the trends of contract type. There was a modest rise in non-permanent contracts in the private sector which did not occur in the public sector, and this suggests that temporary contracts have played a

(small) role as a buffer to manage recessionary changes in the private sector. However, given the scale of change in the economy, the responsiveness of temporary employment is low, and levels remain much lower than in many other countries, suggesting that these types of contracts are not seen as offering much greater flexibility by employers. Further information about flows into and out of temporary employment would be needed to establish how far these figures are affected by higher exits of unemployment among temporary workers and by increasing use of temporary contracts for new hires. These two processes could potentially cancel each other out.

The volatility in the labour market is much more clearly reflected in the levels of subjective insecurity of workers. In 2010 just over a quarter of Irish workers feared that they would lose their jobs in the following six months, and in 2009 one-third reported that their job security has decreased over the previous two years. Both these figures had risen dramatically from the pre-recession period. Subjective insecurity was strongly influenced by sector and here gender segregation had a protective effect on women, with the exception that within education and other services women experienced greater insecurity than men. On this dimension part-time workers do not appear to be disadvantaged, and are not acting as a buffer or reserve army. There is some evidence that younger workers are occupying this role during the Great Recession, but perhaps to a lesser extent in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe (Bettio et al., 2013).

The figures on pay suggest that there has been some widening in the 'raw' gender gap in mean hourly wages over the period of the recession. However, there are a number of limitations with these figures. Firstly the series ends in 2010 and so the very significant changes introduced in public sector pay since then are not captured, so neither the effects on the gender pay differentials within the public sector nor across the economy can be assessed. Secondly the changes in the raw figures also do not take into account differences in the characteristics or composition of the workforce. Research by Bergin et al. (2012) for the private sector suggests that there was a narrowing in the adjusted or modelled gender pay gap between 2006 and 2009 (perhaps due to a widening difference in the experience of male and female workers). The scale of the changes in employment levels and in public sector pay since 2007 means that it is essential if policy is to be based on evidence that pay levels among men and women across the economy are monitored in a meaningful way and that a full analysis of the impact of these changes is conducted.

4 JOB CONTROL AND WORK PRESSURE IN BOOM AND RECESSION

4.1 Introduction

Social scientists examining job quality in recent decades have increasingly argued that it is not only wages, fringe benefits and hours of work that are important influences on job quality, but also ‘intrinsic’ aspects of work. ‘Intrinsic’ aspects of work include the skills attached to the job, opportunities for skill development, the control that employees can exercise over their work, the intensity or pressure of work and work–family conflict (Gallie, 2007). While pay is clearly a crucial element of work, intrinsic factors may be more important for people’s experience of work, and their well-being (Steiber, 2013). This chapter examines gender differences in some intrinsic working conditions and how they changed between 2003 (boom) and 2009 (recession) using two large, nationally representative surveys of employees in Ireland.²²

The scope that employees have for control over their jobs is a central element of job quality (Gallie, 2007). Job control or autonomy has been shown to be crucial for opportunities for self-realisation through work, and is also linked to motivation and personal well-being (Zhou, 2009), as well as job involvement and organisational commitment. Indeed Kalleberg and Vaisey (2005) argued that ‘autonomy’ is a necessary condition for workers to consider their jobs to be of high quality.

Work pressure measures peoples’ experience of difficulty meeting work demands. Work pressure has important implications for employees’ physical and mental well-being. High pressure is associated with a wide range of psychological distress measures and physical health problems such as anxiety, stomach problems and sleep difficulties (Wichert, 2002), also longer-term health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease (Chandola, 2010). The effects of work pressure can also spill over to home life leading to negative outcomes for workers’ families. Previous research found that work pressure is strongly linked to work–family conflict (Gallie and Russell, 2009; McGinnity and Calvert, 2009). Reduced pressure has potential benefits for employers through reduced absenteeism and increased organisational commitment (Burchell et al., 2002). Finally, a key focus in this chapter is the experience of recession in the workplace and Russell and McGinnity (2013) argue that work pressure is more closely linked to current market conditions than other outcomes such as job satisfaction.

The onset of severe economic crisis raises questions about developments in both employee control over their work and work pressure. Did the crisis lead to a decrease in job control, or increased control and responsibility for employees? Did pressure rise with recession, or fall as the overall volume of work fell? Did the patterns of change vary for men and women? These are the questions this chapter seeks to address. The chapter focuses on employees, as many aspects of working conditions are different for the self-employed. Note also as the focus is on the workplace, we are limited, by definition, to those still in employment.

²² 2009 is the most recent survey. For further details of this survey and the key findings, see O’Connell et al. (2010). An earlier work-place survey using a very similar methodology was conducted in 2003, and data from this survey are used for comparison. See O’Connell et al. (2004) for further details. Both surveys were funded by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance; reports can be downloaded at <http://www.ncpp.ie/inside.asp?catid=286&zoned=3>.

4.2 Job Control

Job control is an important feature of jobs. It is related to people's motivation, job involvement and personal well-being. Job control can also mediate some of the negative aspects of work such as work pressure (Gallie, 2007). Optimistic scenarios of change at work posit that employees will be given increased control, as part of wider managerial strategies to enhance employee job involvement and organisational commitment (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Counter-arguments are that this will apply to some 'core' jobs with good training opportunities and to protected jobs, but in peripheral jobs control, skill and security will be low (Cappelli et al., 1997). Job control certainly varies according to occupational level, sector, tenure and age, with higher level occupations and older, more senior workers having higher levels of job control (O'Connell et al., 2004). In terms of gender differences, using data from the UK, Gallie (1996) finds women tend to have lower task discretion than men even within occupational groups. The only occupational class where women have higher control is semi and unskilled manual jobs (Gallie, 1996), though very few women work in these jobs. Comparative analysis of data from the European Social Survey for the 2000s suggests that job control is lower for women in most EU countries, though the difference is modest and varies somewhat across countries. In a number of EU countries task discretion is slightly higher for men (Muhlau, 2011; Gallie and Zhou, 2013). In Britain this pattern is changing: evidence from the 2012 Skills and Employment Survey suggests that in Britain, task discretion rose slightly for women and fell further for men since 2006 (Inanc et al., 2013).

What is the likely impact of recession on job control? One scenario mooted in Chapter 1 is that recession will shift the balance of power from employees to employers, increasing employer control of jobs and leading to a reduction in employee control for both men and women. A second is that sectoral change or the 'creative' destruction of poor quality jobs, might mean remaining jobs are associated with more job control. Thirdly control may increase for some highly skilled privileged 'secure' workers, while others, in insecure, low-skilled jobs see decreasing control. Finally, there may be strong path dependency and relative little change in job control, or gender differences in job control, in spite of significant job losses and labour market turbulence.

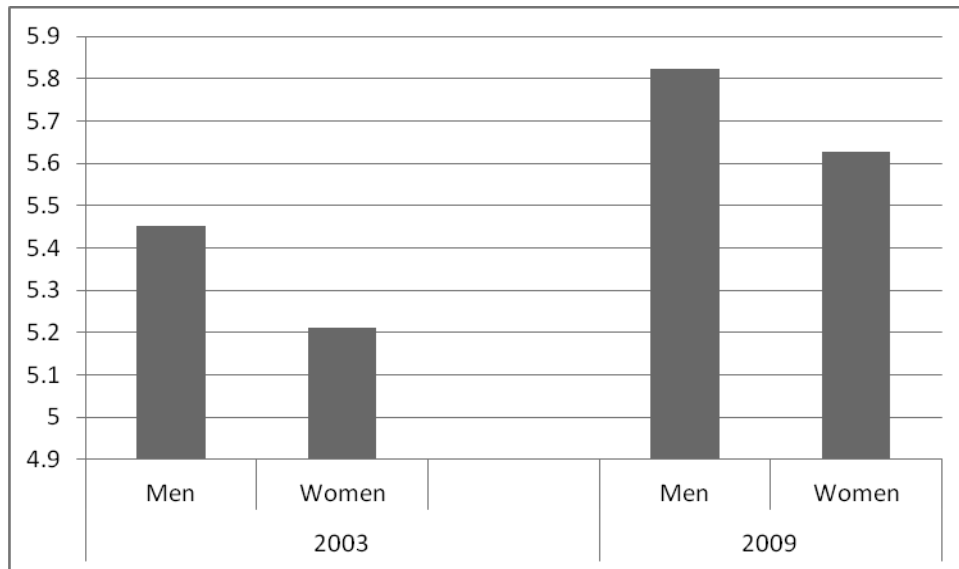
Job control is measured using the ESRI/NCPP as responses to a set of questions regarding employee control of tasks, timing and organisation of work. This is a fairly typical way of measuring job control in survey data (Gallie, 2007). The four items were worded alternately so that some items were positive and some were negative.²³ The response set was 'almost always'; 'often'; 'sometimes' and 'rarely/almost never'. The items were:

- You decide how much work you do or how fast you work during the day
- Your manger decides the specific tasks you will do from day to day
- You decide when you can take a break during the working day
- You have to get your manger's okay before you try to change anything with the way your work is organised

²³ A fifth item was used in the survey but is not included in this analysis. That item was 'your manager monitors work performance'. It was not included as it seems to vary independently of the other items – that is, it rose over time as task discretion also rose, suggesting it may be measuring something else. This was also found in Capelli et al., 1997

When these items are combined they form a reasonably reliable scale, which varies from 0 (low control) to 10 (high control).²⁴ Figure 4.1 presents the mean scores on job control for men and women in 2003 and 2009. Here we see higher average job control in 2009 than 2003. Job control is slightly lower, on average, in 2003 for female employees than male employees (by around 0.2 points), rises for both groups (by around 0.4 points on average), and in 2009 is still lower for female employees (by around 0.2 points) at that time. Note that these differences and changes are modest, given the scale ranges from 0 to 10.

Figure 4.1: Gender by Job Control (Scale), Change over Time.



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

These averages do not suggest an overall deterioration in job quality, at least as measured by job control, but rather an improvement in job control for both men and women, lending some credence to the idea that low quality, low control jobs were lost in recession.

Part of the explanation for women's lower job control may be linked to segregation, and the fact that women's jobs differ systematically from men's in terms of working hours, sector and occupation (see Chapter 1). Working hours are particularly salient for job control, with part-time work being associated with lower job control (Gallie, 2007; Russell and McGinnity, 2011). The question becomes whether these differences are maintained once we account for differences between jobs.

Tables 4.1a and 4.1b present models of the job control index. These are linear regression coefficients, so a value of -0.169 indicates that, controlling for other factors, women scored 0.169 points lower on the job control scale than men. In fact, given interactions, this refers to women in 2003 compared with men in 2003. The 'Year 2009' coefficient tells us that after accounting for other factors, job control was no different for men in 2009 than 2003. Yet the 'Female* Year 2009' tells us that, controlling for composition, job control was even lower for women in 2009 than 2003, thus falling over the period within occupations.

²⁴ Cronbach's alpha was 0.61 in the pooled sample.

Table 4.1a: Job Control (full model, includes age, working hours and sector)

	Coeff.	Sig.
(Constant)	5.641	***
Female	-0.169	*
Year 2009 (<i>Ref. 2003</i>)	0.164	n.s.
Female*Year 2009	-0.264	**
Age: (<i>Ref. under 25</i>)		
Age 25-39	0.878	***
Age 40-54	1.257	***
Age 55+	1.570	***
Marital Status: (<i>Ref. Married</i>)		
Single	-0.224	***
Working hours	0.019	***
Sector: (<i>Ref. Manufacturing</i>)		
Construction	0.212	n.s.
Retail	0.240	*
Hotels and restaurants	0.213	n.s.
Transport	-0.099	n.s.
Finance	0.176	n.s.
Public administration	0.123	n.s.
Education	-0.257	*
Health	-0.263	**
Other services	0.691	***
N. of cases	10,124	
Adjusted R2	0.18	

Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

Notes: * p<.05, **p< .01, ***p<.001. N.s. not significant at p<0.05.

Older workers have higher job control, on average, and so do married workers. There is little sectoral variation, particularly after controlling for occupation; however, job control is somewhat higher in retail and in other services, and lower in education and health than in manufacturing, for example.

Table 4.1b shows that job control is very clearly related to skill levels, with professional and managerial occupations showing much higher levels of job control, and skilled manual and semi- and unskilled manual occupations being associated with much lower job control. Having a temporary contract is associated with lower control, as is having job tenure of less than 5 years, particularly less than 1 year. Interestingly, staff cuts and having a new CEO are associated with lower control, though reorganisation is linked to higher control, possibly as some responsibility is divested to employees.

Table 4.1b: Job control (full model, includes occupation and other job characteristics)

Occ: (Ref. Managerial/professional)		
Associate professional/clerical	-0.565	***
Skilled manual	-1.796	***
Other service sector	-1.391	***
Semi- and unskilled manual	-2.231	***
Temporary contract	-0.350	***
Tenure: less than 1 year	-0.597	***
Tenure: less than 5 years	-0.194	**
Trade union member	-1.034	***
New CEO in past 2 years?	-0.135	*
Staff cuts in past 2 years?	-0.151	*
Reorganisation in the past 2 years?	0.172	**

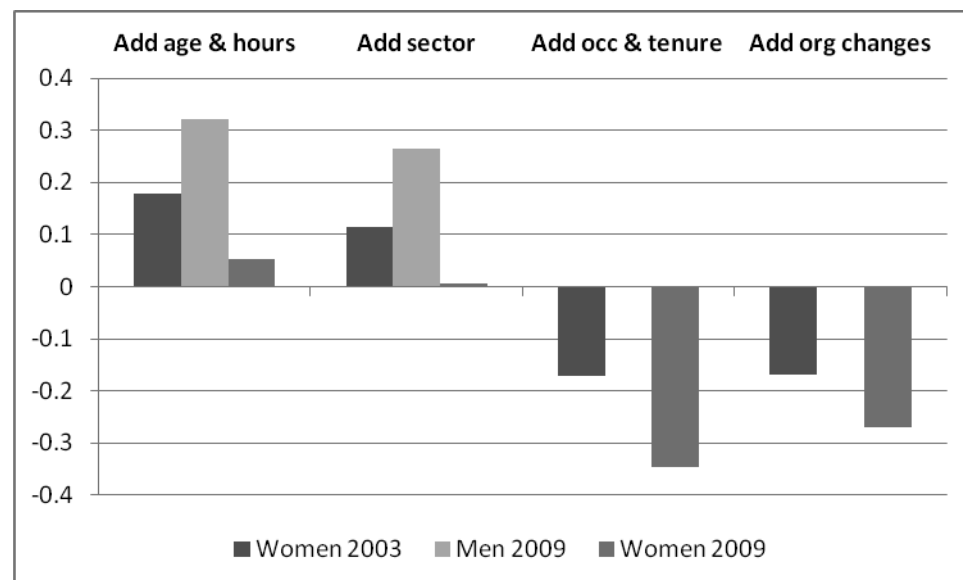
Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

Notes: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001; n.s. = not significant at p < 0.05.

4.2.1 Gender Differences in Job Control over Time

What are the implications of these associations for gender differences in job control, and changes over time? Figure 4.2 presents the modelled gender differences on the 10-point job control scale when the various factors are successively introduced, in an attempt to unpack the gender difference. In Figure 4.2 'Male 2003' as the reference category is set to 0. Again, this is a 10-point scale, so all differences are relatively modest (less than one half on a scale from 0 to 10).

Figure 4.2: Modelling Gender Differences in Job Control: Compared with Men in 2003



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

After adding age and working hours, job control is actually slightly higher for women in both years, and for men in 2009 than for men in 2003. Part of the explanation for lower job control for women is the fact that they work, on average, fewer hours than men: they have higher job control when we take account of this.

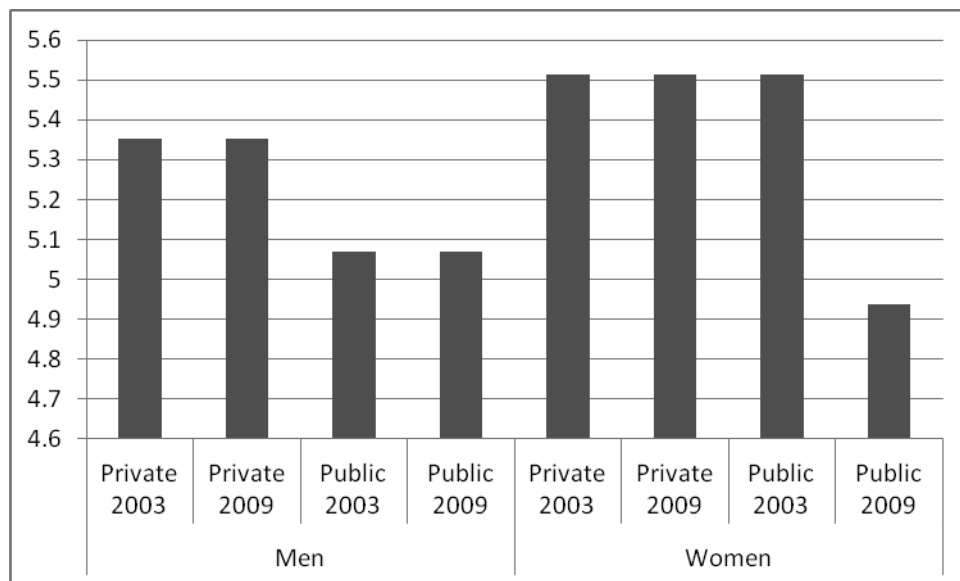
Sector accounts for some of the change over time, suggesting that changes in the distribution of employees across the sectors is playing some part in the initial observed rise in job control. Differences between 2003 and 2009 are now very small indeed.

If we hold occupation and tenure constant, we find that women’s control relative to men’s is lower. Women are more likely to be found in professional occupations than men, and less in low-control manual jobs, but within the same occupations women have less control than men. Note that after adding occupation and tenure to the model, the rise in job control over time for men is no longer significant. Changes in the occupational structure and sectoral structure of employment account for this rise in control for men. Adding change over time reduces this difference marginally but the overall picture remains. Job control is somewhat lower for women than men, and to a greater extent in 2009 than 2003.

4.2.2 The Role of the Public Sector

Is there a role for the public sector in understanding these changes over time? To investigate this we divide employees into those who define themselves as working in the private and public sectors (mainly, though not exclusively public administration, education and health).²⁵ As highlighted in Chapter 2, a much higher proportion of female employment is in the public sector than is male employment, and the female share in health and education is high (80 per cent in health and 75 per cent in education in 2012). To investigate the change over time, men and women are modelled separately. The results are presented in Figure 4.3.²⁶

Figure 4.3: Gender, Job Control and the Public Sector: Modelled Differences



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

After accounting for all of the factors in Table 4.1 a and b, we find no difference in job control for men between 2003 and 2009, but significantly lower job control for men in the public sector in both years. For women, job control does not change for women working in the private sector between the two years, but we find a marked drop in control for women working in the public sector between the two years (see Figure

²⁵ Commercial semi-state bodies are classified as private sector (see also Russell and McGinnity, 2011). Note this is direct measure of public or private sector, not a proxy as in the QNHS analysis.

²⁶ Table A4 in the Appendix presents the full model results.

4.3). Regarding job control, women's over-representation in the public sector is not a protective factor in terms of job quality in recession. In fact, the opposite is true. In 2003 female public sector workers did not report lower job control than private sector workers did, but job control had dropped significantly for female public sector workers in 2009 without a change occurring for women workers in the private sector.

4.3 Work Pressure

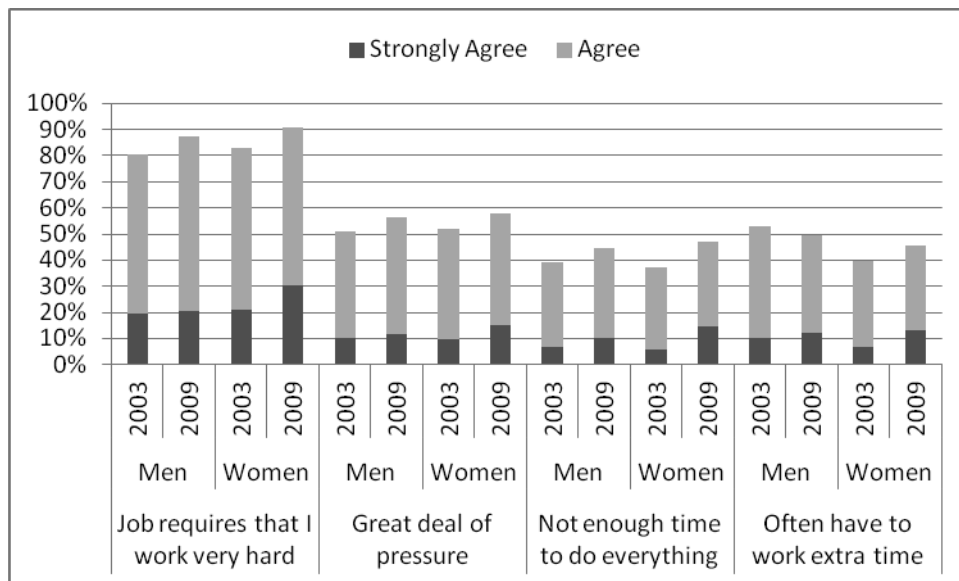
Work pressure measures not just the demands of work but also the individual's ability to meet those demands, depending on their skills and resources (Gallie, 2005). Work pressure measures peoples' experience of difficulty meeting work demands. Difficulties may arise because of physical, emotional or time demands. Work pressure, like job control, tends to be higher in highly skilled, well-paid jobs. In contrast to job control, high work pressure is usually seen as negative, with high pressure having negative consequences for physical and emotional well-being.

Four questions in the workplace surveys are relevant to this experience. Two measure the general level of work pressure, both mental and physical: two others measure time pressure. The four statements are:

- My job requires that I work very hard
- I work under a great deal of pressure
- I never seem to have enough time to get everything done my job
- I often have to work extra time over and above my formal hours to get through the job or to help out.

For each item the respondent was asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. Figure 4.4 presents the proportion of men and women either agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of these statements in 2003 and 2009. For nearly all of these statements, a greater proportion of both men and women agree or strongly agree with the statements in 2009 than in 2003, indicating rising pressure for both men and women in this time period. For example, the proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing that their job requires they work under a great deal of pressure rises from about 80 per cent for both sexes to 87 per cent for men and over 90 per cent for women. The only item where this is not true is the proportion of men agreeing or strongly agreeing that they need to work extra time, which is perhaps not surprising, given that overtime work may fall in recession. In Chapter 3 for example, we saw that the proportion of men working more than 50 hours per week fell between 2003 and 2009.

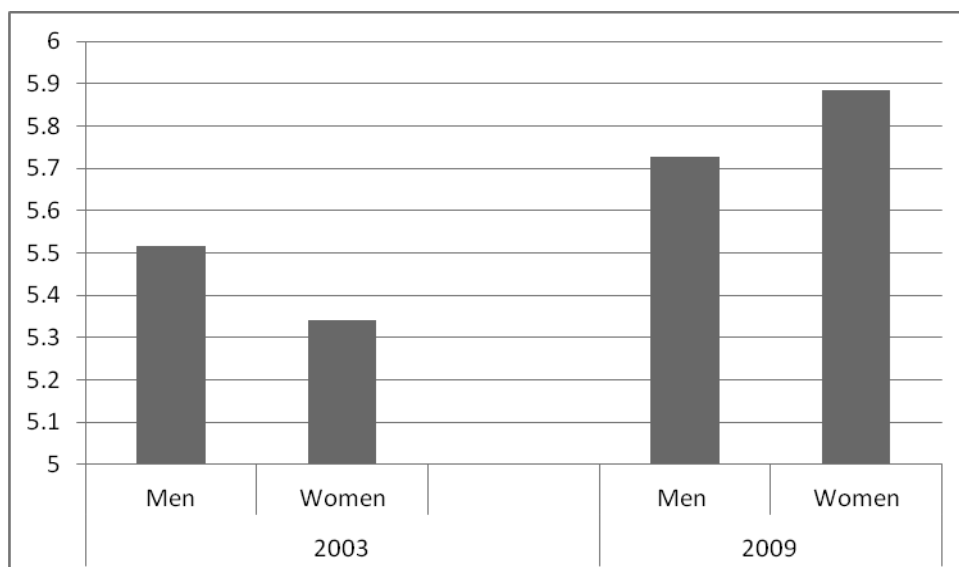
Figure 4.4: Work Pressure Items, 2003 and 2009 for Men and Women (%)



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

These four items are then combined on a scale, as with job control. This scale ranges from 0 to 10 with higher values indicating higher pressure and lower values signalling lower pressure and a midpoint of 5. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.7, indicating that it is valid to combine them. Combining both years 2003 and 2009 – the mean work pressure score for men and women is similar, at 5.62, but this hides variation across years. Pressure rose for both men and women between 2003 and 2009, as found by Russell and McGinnity (2013) - but more dramatically for women (see Figure 4.5). Whereas in 2003, pressure was higher for men than women, by 2009 the opposite was true.

Figure 4.5: Gender Differences in Work Pressure over Time



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

Table 4.2a shows that after controlling for working hours, sector and occupation, work pressure is higher for women and that the rise between 2003 and 2009 was higher for women. For men the change over time is not significant after controlling for these factors.

Table 4.2a: Models of Work Pressure (full model, includes age, working hours and sector)

	Coeff.	Sig.
(Constant)	3.978	***
Female	0.220	***
Year 2009 (<i>Ref. 2003</i>)	-0.060	n.s.
Female*Year 2009	0.200	*
Age: (<i>Ref. under 25</i>)		
Age 25-39	0.113	n.s.
Age 40-54	0.084	n.s.
Age 55+	-0.177	n.s.
Marital Status: (<i>Ref. Married</i>)		
Single	-0.160	***
Working hours	0.037	***
Sector: (<i>Ref. Manufacturing</i>)		
Construction	0.375	***
Retail	-0.026	n.s.
Hotels and restaurants	0.595	***
Transport	0.119	n.s.
Finance	0.182	*
Public administration	0.298	***
Education	0.749	***
Health	0.571	***
Other services	0.200	n.s.
N. of cases	9,530	
Adjusted R2	0.19	

Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

Notes: * p < 0.005; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001; n.s. = not significant at p < 0.05.

We can see from Table 4.2a that once occupation and tenure are controlled for, age is not significantly associated with pressure. Working hours are associated with pressure, with higher working hours being associated with higher pressure. Pressure is also related to sector: compared with manufacturing, pressure is higher in construction, public administration and particularly education, hotels and restaurants and health.

Table 4.2b: Work Pressure (full model, includes occupation and other job characteristics)

	Coeff.	Sig.
(Constant)	3.978	***
Occ (<i>Ref. Managerial/professional</i>)		
Other service sector	-0.691	***
Semi and unskilled manual	-0.911	***
Temporary contract	-0.104	n.s.

Tenure: less than 1 year	-0.150	*
Tenure: less than 5 years	-0.129	**
Trade union member	0.001	n.s.
New CEO in past 2 years?	0.004	n.s.
Staff cuts in past 2 years?	0.185	***
Reorganisation in the past 2 years?	0.229	***
Responsibility up	0.626	***
Decision making up	0.308	***
N. of cases	9,530	
Adjusted R2	0.19	

Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = not significant at $p < 0.05$.

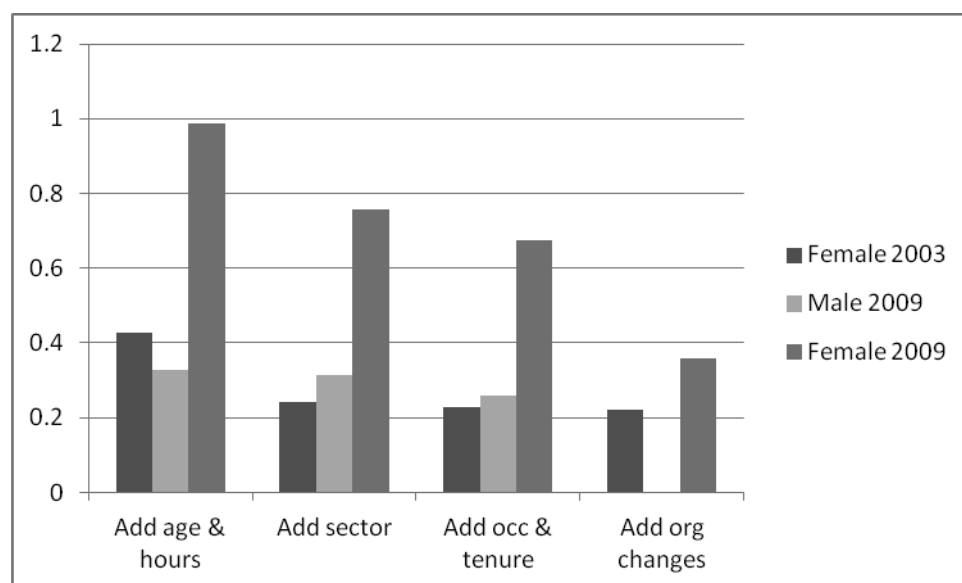
Work pressure is also highest in professional and managerial occupations for those with longer job tenure. As found by Russell and McGinnity (2013), work pressure is also higher for employees working in organisations that have experienced reorganisation or staff cuts. Job changes are also important: those who report that their responsibility and decision making has increased in the past two years experience greater pressure in their jobs.

4.3.1 Gender Differences in Work Pressure over Time

What role do these various effects play in gender differences in work pressure, and specifically gender differences in changes over time? Figure 4.6 presents the modelled gender differences in the 10-point work pressure scale when the various factors are successively introduced, as we did for job control. As in Figure 4.2, 'Male 2003' as the reference category is set to 0.

After adding working hours and age, gender differences in work pressure are significant. The gap is particularly large between men in 2003 and women in 2009. Some of this is accounted for by sectoral differences in employment between the two years, as the next set of bars shows: the difference between men in 2003 and the other groups falls. Once occupation, tenure and changes in organisations are added we find no difference between work pressure for men in 2003 and 2009. This suggests that changes in the distribution of jobs by sector and occupation, and changes within organisations account for the rise in work pressure.

Figure 4.6: Modelling Gender Differences in Work Pressure: Difference from Men in 2003



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

In fact, changes within organisations, in particular reductions in staff numbers and reorganisation, are part of the explanation in understanding the rise in work pressure for men and women, a point highlighted by Russell and McGinnity (2013). Yet a residual difference remains for women in 2009, as they still record higher pressure than both men in 2003 and indeed women in 2003.

4.3.2 The Role of the Public Sector

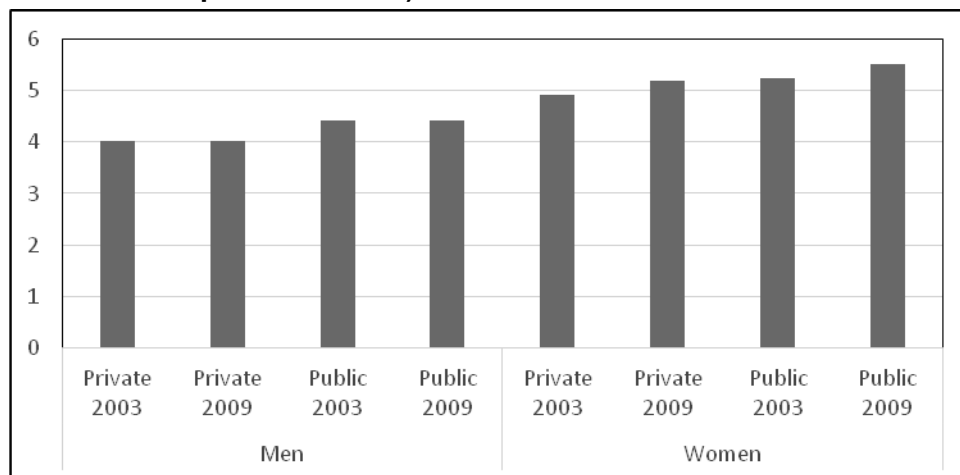
What is the role of women's public sector employment for understanding their overall higher work pressure, and in particular, the greater rise in pressure between 2003 and 2009 that women experienced? In Chapter 2 we report how women's concentration in the public sector somewhat protected them from job loss, at least in the early stage of recession. But what of the experience of those who stayed in employment?

Figure 4.7 shows no difference between men in 2003 and men in 2009, once all the other changes are accounted for (that is the factors included in Tables 4.2a and 4.2b).²⁷ However, work pressure is higher for men in the public sector for both years.

For women, work pressure rose in both the public and the private sector between 2003 and 2009. And because pressure is also higher in the public sector than the private sector for women, by 2009 work pressure is highest for women in the public sector. While pressure did not rise more for women in the public sector than in the private sector, as we see from Chapter 2, the proportion of women employed in the public sector rose. Once again, in terms of intrinsic job quality, we do not find that public sector employment is beneficial for women, but is associated with higher work pressure.

²⁷ Table A5 in the Appendix presents the full model results.

Figure 4.7: Gender, Work Pressure and the Public Sector (modelled work pressure scale)



Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

4.4 Summary of Findings

This chapter looked at two key measures of job quality and the experience of work, job control and work pressure using the ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys from 2003 and 2009. We found that both job control and work pressure rose between 2003 and 2009, though given their association with other measures of employee well-being, one is typically regarded as ‘positive’, namely job control, and one negative, ‘work pressure’.

Using statistical modelling we find that the rise in both job control for men is accounted for by the fact that there were changes in the nature of jobs men were doing and the organisations they were working for between the two time points, suggesting the ‘low control’ jobs were lost. This lends support for the idea of ‘creative destruction’, as discussed in Chapter 1, at least for men. Changes in the sector, occupational position, and working hours of jobs also account for the rise in work pressure for men.

For women we see a rather different pattern. The combined index of job control was slightly lower for women than men in 2003, and when we control for other factors, did not rise as we would have expected. In fact the gender gap in job control is greater in 2009 than 2003 when we account for other changes.

Regarding work pressure, pressure was somewhat lower for women in 2003, but rose more rapidly between 2003 and 2009. The gender gap was thus reversed. This rise is not accounted for by changes in sector, occupation, working hours and other factors, suggesting women suffered a ‘pressure disadvantage’ in recession.

We then investigated the role of the public sector in job control and work pressure. Are women protected by their over-representation in the public sector? Actually, in this chapter we find that both male and female public sector workers experience higher work pressure and lower job control on average. And women working in the public sector experienced a fall in job control and increased work pressure. While the public sector may have protected women from job loss, the role played by the public sector in recession did not reinforce gender equality in working conditions.

Of course, we cannot assume that gender differences in other measures of job quality show the same pattern between the two time points without extensive further analysis. We can, however, argue that these are key measures of job control. Similarly, the ‘recession’ time point here is 2009: gender differences since 2009 may

have evolved in a rather different way than between 2003 and 2009. However, the relative stability of overall gender differences in employment between 2009 and 2012 discussed in Chapter 3 would suggest little change.

5 CONCLUSION

The economic crisis has had far-reaching consequences for the Irish labour market. As the economy veered from boom to bust there was a precipitous decline in employment and a rise from low frictional levels of unemployment to rates of over 14 per cent and up to over one-third among young men (20–24). While the broad outline of these changes is well known, it is less clear what the consequences of these changes have been for gender equality and how these macro-level changes in employment have played out at the level of job quality.

5.1 Gender Differences in the Labour Market in Recession

The changes in employment and unemployment during the recession are found to have a strong gender dimension, with a convergence in employment rates perhaps more accurately described as a 'levelling down', to reflect the deteriorating employment situation of men and women. At the onset of recession in 2008–2009 the gender employment gap narrowed as the employment rate fell for both sexes but more steeply for men. Since 2009 the gender gap in employment rates has remained stable, at between 7 and 8 per cent. Taking a longer-term perspective, the gender employment gap in Ireland is very low indeed, and implies that the rapid employment increase for women during the boom has not been reversed – though the gap may yet increase in the recession or in the recovery period if women find it more difficult to return to the labour market than men.

The gender segregation of employment in Ireland plays a significant role in the story of overall employment rates. The property bubble and subsequent crash led to a disproportionate rise and fall in the male-dominated construction sector. Job losses were also high in manufacturing and agriculture, which had a low female employment share. Women's concentration in public sector employment sheltered them from job loss. This is particularly true in the first period of the recession, when private sector employment declined by 16 per cent, while public sector employment grew by 4 per cent. Public sector employment began to shrink in the later phase of the recession (2009 to 2012) but still at a slower rate than the private sector (see Section 5.3 below for further discussion).

Theories of labour market segmentation that suggest that women are more likely to be found in jobs in the secondary segment, which are more insecure and much more easily lost in recession, do not explain the patterns of job loss patterns observed. In Q1 2012 the male unemployment rate, at just under 17 per cent, was more than 50 per cent higher than that of women (10 per cent).

Up until the end of 2012, the labour market behaviour of women and men has been similar in this crisis. There is little evidence of women disproportionately withdrawing from the labour market. The female activity rate declined by 1.4 percentage points over the recession compared with a drop of 5 percentage points for men. Even adding an additional 2 percent predicted increase in participation, due to rising female education and changes in the age profile of the population, the decline in women's participation appears to be slightly lower than men's. Overall, we see a gender convergence in activity rates. Taken together, these participation and employment rates provide little support for the idea of a 'buffer role' of women in the labour market. In spite of the relatively recent rapid rise in labour market participation, female participation and employment levels are much higher than pre-boom levels. The latest ESRI *Quarterly Economic Commentary* forecasts that the participation rate would fall marginally in 2013 (from 60.2 per cent in 2012 to 59.9 per cent in 2013) and then stabilise in 2014 (Duffy and Timoney, 2013). While employment is forecast

to grow, the speed of increases in employment may vary between men and women, so the full impact of recession may not yet have had effect.

In this recession, the evidence is consistent with the idea that couples or households are trying to maintain household employment and reduce the financial risks associated with household joblessness. This suggests one might observe a rise in female breadwinner households in situations where male unemployment is high. There is some recent evidence to support this view (Watson et al., 2012). Between 2007 and 2010 the proportion of households where the woman was employed full-time and the male was not employed or employed part-time increased from 6 per cent to 11 per cent. This may have implications for the gender division of household labour, sharing of resources and gender inequalities in household decision-making which merit further research (see Section 5.4 below).

5.2 Gender Differences in Job Quality

In this report we measure quality of work in a multi-dimensional way. Pay and rewards have been the central focus of economic analysis of quality of work, but sociological accounts of quality of work focus more on how work is organised, skill, intensity and autonomy (Gallie, 2012). Given the range of relevant dimensions identified in the literature it was possible to focus only on a selection of key indicators. In Chapter 3 we focus on two extrinsic factors connected with socio-economic security – job security and pay. We also consider here hours of work, which is linked both to an individual's ability to secure a living wage and to their capacity to achieve work–life balance. In Chapter 4 we consider two key intrinsic dimensions of job quality – autonomy or 'control over work activities' and work pressure.

The findings here suggest that the economic crisis has adversely affected the working conditions of those in employment. Particularly salient changes were the sharp increase in involuntary part-time working, subjective insecurity, work pressure and the experience of pay cuts. Rates of temporary employment and long working hours have been subject to less change, and trends here may be driven by longer-term processes rather than recession. Job control has actually risen, though only for men.

What about gender differences in working conditions? Before the recession part-time work was much more prevalent among women than men, accounting for one-third of female employment compared with 7 per cent of male employment in 2007. Rates of part-time work have shown some gender convergence, though as with the overall employment rate, these can be interpreted as a levelling down of conditions rather than an upwards equalisation with men, since the bulk of the increase in part-time work has been involuntary.

Job security is measured both as the rate of temporary contracts (objective job security) and people's own assessment of their security and show somewhat different patterns. Temporary employment rates have risen somewhat in the private sector for men, suggesting that employers may be using temporary employment as a buffer to manage economic change, though change is modest and rates of temporary employment are low by international standards. This is not true of subjective job insecurity, which has risen very rapidly in recession. In 2010, over one-quarter of Irish workers feared that they would lose their jobs in the next six months, which is very high by international standards (see Chapter 3). Subjective insecurity is strongly influenced by sector, and here gender segregation has a protective effect for women, for the most part, and insecurity is higher among men. Part-time workers do not feel more insecure than full-time workers.

For gender differences in pay the report draws on published data and previous analysis. The figures suggest that there has been some widening in the 'raw' gender gap in mean hourly wages over the period of the recession. However, figures are available only for the period up until 2010 and so the very significant changes introduced in public sector pay since then are not captured. In addition, analysis of the gender pay gap adjusted for compositional differences between men and women suggests there was actually some narrowing of the pay gap between male and female workers in the private sector (Bergin et al., 2012).

There was a small average rise in employees' control over their jobs between 2003 and 2009. Using statistical modelling we find that the rise in job control for men is accounted for by the fact that there were changes in the nature of jobs men were doing and the organisations they were working for between the two time points. Changes in the sector, occupational position, and working hours of these job accounts for the change over time, and suggests some evidence of 'creative destruction' for men, where low control jobs were lost in recession.

For women, job control shows a rather different pattern. The combined index of job control was slightly lower for women than men in 2003, and when we control for other factors women's job control levels fell between 2003 and 2009. Consequently, the gender gap in job control is greater in 2009 than in 2003 when we account for other changes. Regarding work pressure, the combined index of work pressure was somewhat lower for women than men in 2003, but rose more rapidly between 2003 and 2009, reversing the gender gap. This rise is not accounted for by changes in sector, occupation, working hours and other factors, suggesting women suffered a 'pressure disadvantage' in recession.

5.3 Gender Differences in the Private and Public Sectors

A theme running through the report is the extent to which the public sector sheltered female employees from the potential effects of recession like job loss and deterioration of working conditions.

Women's concentration in public sector employment definitely provided greater protection from job loss. In the first period of the recession private sector employment declined by 211,000, while public sector employment actually grew by 19,000.²⁸ Patterns have changed since 2009, as some of those on short-term contracts were shed as state agencies were closed and health and education and departmental budgets were cut. A voluntary redundancy scheme was also introduced in the health services for permanent employees in 2009. This, together with the recruitment freeze, meant that public sector employment began to shrink in the later phase of the recession from 2009 to 2012, though still at a slower rate than private sector employment. These falls in public sector employment in the later period were concentrated among women, both in the sense that a greater number of female jobs were lost and that women experienced a greater proportional decrease than men (1 per cent versus 0.5 per cent). Continued cuts in public expenditure since 2012 suggest that public employment numbers will decline further. Nevertheless, for the recession period up to 2012, gender segregation has contributed to lower job losses for women compared to men.

Some similar patterns are found in terms of fear of job loss. Subjective insecurity was strongly influenced by sector and here gender segregation – i.e. women's

²⁸ These figures use a proxy measure of public sector which includes NACE categories - Health, education and Public Administration. Exchequer figures suggest the number of whole time equivalents in the public service increased by 14,325 over the period 2007 to 2009 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2013).

concentration in the public sector – also had a protective effect for the most part. The effect of public sector location on the risk of involuntary part-time work is mixed. Those in Public Administration are less vulnerable to this situation (compared with the reference manufacturing sector) while those in the Education and Health sectors share a higher risk of being involuntary part-time along with workers located in service industries in the private sector.

The gender pay gap is typically smaller in the public sector than in the private sector (for graduates, see Russell et al. (2005) and for the whole labour market see Chapter 3). Analysis has also shown a wage premium for workers in the public sector up to 2010 (Kelly et al., 2009a; Kelly et al., 2012; CSO, 2012) so here too women's over-representation in the public sector has tended to reduce gender inequality in wages overall. As to the impact of recession on these patterns, the lack of data since 2010 means the very significant changes introduced in public sector pay since then are not captured. Hence neither the effects of recession on the gender pay differentials within the public sector nor the role of public sector employment in the gender pay gap can be properly assessed. Any reductions in public sector pay may widen the economy-wide gender pay gap, though without detailed statistical modelling it is difficult to estimate the extent of the impact.

Yet segregation also had costs for women in terms of other measures of job quality. Women's over-representation in the public sector at least partly accounted for the higher levels of work pressure and lower levels of job control they recorded in 2009, compared to 2003. In this report we find that both male and female public sector workers experience higher work pressure and lower job control on average. Furthermore, women working in the public sector experienced a greater fall in job control and a larger increase on work pressure. While the public sector may have protected women from job loss, the role played by the public sector in recession did not reinforce gender equality in the working conditions considered. This may not be the case for other measures of job quality such as skill and work–family conflict, but investigating this would require extensive further analysis

5.4 Implications for Future Research and Policy

This report points to a number of implications for future research and policy. One potential avenue for future research would be to exploit the two ESRI/NCCP workplace surveys to assess the impact of recession on gender differences in a wider range of working conditions and indicators of employee well-being, to supplement the analysis of job control and work pressure. These could include: the skill levels of jobs, training opportunities, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and work–life conflict. In addition, given the last survey was conducted in 2009, it may be timely to conduct a third workplace survey, to give a more up-to-date picture of Irish workplaces and working conditions as the Irish labour market emerges from recession.²⁹

The focus of this report is gender equality in the labour market, but as decades of research have shown, labour market inequality has implications for inequality in the home (Kalleberg and Rosenfeld, 1990; McGinnity and Russell, 2008 for Ireland). The changing distribution of paid employment in Ireland between men and women and the narrowing of the gender employment gap may have implications for the gender division of housework and caring and gender inequalities in household decision-making. Recent research on the consequences of changing household employment patterns and income pooling has already highlighted some implications for poverty

²⁹ The Skills and Employment Surveys in Britain are replicated every 5-6 years. For more details see: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/ses2012/index.html>.

and deprivation (Watson et al., forthcoming). Of course any detailed study of the impact of changing household employment patterns on unpaid work would require time-use data, which is not routinely collected in Ireland, aside from one survey in 2005 (McGinnity et al., 2005).

For a number of the perspectives addressed in this report, analysts would ideally conduct longitudinal analysis of the labour market transitions of individuals and couples. Do wives become 'added workers' in recession, taking up employment when their husbands lose jobs? To what extent are employment falls linked to people moving from employment to non-employment, or a fall in transitions into employment, and which groups are most affected? An analysis of flows into and out of temporary employment could establish how far rates of temporary employment are affected by higher exits from unemployment among temporary workers and increasing use of temporary contracts for new hires. This kind of analysis would require longitudinal data for the working age population: longitudinal data with large sample sizes are available for mothers of small children (Growing Up in Ireland) and older people (TILDA).³⁰

The scale of the changes in employment rates and earnings since 2007 means that it is essential for evidence-based policy-making that employment and pay levels among men and women are monitored in a meaningful way. In Chapter 2 we noted that exchequer figures on public service numbers are not provided on a gender-disaggregated basis. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 3, gender-differentiated statistics on pay have been a casualty of cuts in public expenditure in Ireland. The National Employment Survey which provided the figures for monitoring the gender pay gap was discontinued by the CSO in 2009, and in 2010 the CSO used Revenue Commissioner data to update the NES results. The new Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) does not include information on the gender of employees. Therefore there are no national figures on the gender pay gap published for 2011 and 2012, a crucial period in wage development in Ireland and the prospect for any future analysis is unclear.³¹ One possible solution to this evidence gap is the further elaboration of the earnings questions in the QNHS. Since 2009 the QNHS has collected data on employees. Net earnings are collected within income bands in the QNHS, but the NCPP/ESRI survey of employees found that the majority of respondents were willing to provide more exact information on their earnings. The CSO plans to use a combination of existing survey data (QNHS, Census) plus administrative data to meet 5-yearly EU reporting requirements.

The recent Haddington Road Agreement introduced further significant cuts in pay, increases in working hours of public sector workers and changes to work scheduling and flexibility in the form of adjustments to job-sharing and flexi-time arrangements. These changes have potential implications for gender differences in working conditions (Crowley, 2013; Russell and McGinnity, 2011) yet it is significant that there was no gender impact assessment of either the Haddington Road Agreement or the preceding Croke Park Agreement. This dilution of the gender mainstreaming approach to policy formation has also been observed in other European countries and in EU policy (Villa and Smith, 2013) and increases the risk that austerity policies will undermine hard-won progress on gender equality and will aggravate gender differences in employment, as well as other policy areas such as access to services and poverty and social inclusion.

³⁰ There is a longitudinal component of the QNHS but the period is very short (15 months).

³¹ The SILC contains earnings information but the number of respondents is much smaller than the NES.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Data Sources

National Workplace Surveys 2003 and 2009

The first *National Workplace Survey* of Employees was carried out in 2003. The survey was funded by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCP). The questionnaire was developed by a research team led by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and consisted of researchers from the ESRI, UCD Business School and the NCP. The survey was based on a national random sample of household telephone numbers, and used a telephone interview methodology. A total of 5,198 employees were surveyed during the period June–September 2003 by Amárach Research. The response rate was 47 per cent. The sample was re-weighted to be representative of employees using the Quarterly National Household Survey for the relevant period. Further details of the survey methodology and results are contained in O’Connell *et al.* (2004).

A second cross-sectional survey of employees was carried out in 2009. The National Workplace Survey 2009 using the same methodology. A total of 5,110 employees in the public and private sectors aged 15 and over were interviewed. The survey was fielded by telephone from March to June 2009. The response rate was 50 per cent. The resulting data were reweighted to be representative of the national population of employees at work in summer 2009, using the QNHS. For further details of this survey and the key findings, see O’Connell *et al.* (2010).

In both surveys, the questionnaires were designed to capture a comprehensive range of information on the nature of the job and the organization of work. The 2009 survey replicated most items in the 2003 survey, and new items were included to gather data on the on work–life balance and on organisational restructuring and workplace change.

These surveys are of employees, not of workplaces, so that estimates of working conditions may not be the same as one based on a sample of firms or employers. The focus of this report is on factors such as job control, subjective job security and job pressure where employee’s reports are central. Information about organisational changes in the last 2 years are pitched at a general level, asking for example if there have there been staff cuts or a change of CEO, and do not require respondents to have detailed knowledge of organisational policy or practice.

Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)

The report also draws on analysis of the *Quarterly National Household Survey* (QNHS) longitudinal data file, which is compiled by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The main objective of the QNHS is to provide quarterly data on labour market indicators, such as employment and unemployment. The survey is continuous and targets all private households: 3,000 households are interviewed per week, with the total sample for each quarter being approximately 39,000. Households participate in the survey for five consecutive quarters. In each quarter, one-fifth of the households surveyed are replaced and the QNHS sample involves an overlap of 80 per cent between consecutive quarters and 20 per cent between the same quarters in

consecutive years. Participation in the QNHS is voluntary; however, the response rate is high (approximately 85 per cent in recent years).³²

Unless otherwise stated the data was drawn from Quarter 4 as this allowed us to use the most recent data available at the time of writing (Q4 2012) and to compare this to the same quarter in previous years. The data was grossed-up to using CSO provided weights to ensure that it was representative of the population in Ireland in the relevant period.

³² Information provided by the CSO.

Table A1: Probit Model of Risk of Involuntary Part-time Employment: Pooled 2007 and 2012

	Model One		Model Two		Model Three	
	Marginal effect	sig	Marginal effect	sig	Marginal effect	sig
Ref: Male						
Female	0.015	**	0.008	**	0.008	**
Year 2012	0.073	**	0.067	**	0.063	**
Female by 2012	-0.001	n.s.	-0.001	n.s.	0.000	n.s.
Ref: Under 25						
Age 25-39					-0.004	**
Age 40-54					0.001	n.s.
Age 55 plus					0.005	**
Ref: Lower Secondary						
Upper secondary					-0.008	**
Post leaving cert					-0.003	**
Degree					-0.019	**
Ref: Irish						
Non-Irish					-0.024	**
Partner					-0.005	**
Child under 6yrs					0.001	n.s.
Ref: Manufacturing						
Agriculture & fishery			0.041	**	0.030	**
Construction			0.019	**	0.014	**
Wholesale & retail			0.041	**	0.037	**
Transport			0.018	**	0.016	**
Accommodation & food			0.069	**	0.057	**
Info & communications			-0.004	*	0.003	n.s.
Finance			-0.014	**	-0.008	**
Prof. & science			0.003	n.s.	0.013	**
Admin & support			0.066	**	0.058	**
Public administration			-0.012	**	-0.008	**
Education			0.026	**	0.042	**
Health			0.033	**	0.037	**
Arts & other services			0.069	**	0.064	**
Number of obs	259312		259312		259312	
LR chi2(25)	2552.49		5342.03		6931.34	
Prob > chi2	**		**		**	
Pseudo R2	0.0346		0.0725		0.0941	

Employees only: Dependent variable 1 =involuntary part-time 0= all other employees

* P < .05, ** <.005. N.s. not significant at p<0.05.

Source: own analysis of QNHS microdata, q4 2007 and q4 2012

Table A2: Probit Model Involuntary Part-time for Men and Women: Pooled 2007 and 2012

	Men		Women	
	Marginal effect	Sig.	Marginal Effect	Sig.
Year 2012	0.053	**	0.074	**
Ref: Under 25 years				
Age 25-39	-0.004	**	-0.004	*
Age 40-54	-0.001	n.s.	0.004	*
Age 55 plus	0.002	n.s.	0.008	**
Ref: Lower secondary				
Upper secondary	-0.006	**	-0.009	**
Post leaving cert	-0.005	**	0.000	n.s.
Degree	-0.015	**	-0.023	**
Ref: Irish				
Non-Irish	-0.014	**	-0.036	**
Partner	-0.005	**	-0.006	**
Child under 6 years	0.003	*	0.000	n.s.
Ref: Manufacturing				
Agriculture & fishery	0.030	**	0.004	n.s.
Construction	0.009	**	0.038	**
Wholesale & retail	0.025	**	0.048	**
Transport	0.011	**	0.026	**
Accommodation & food	0.046	**	0.067	**
Info & communication	0.000	n.s.	0.009	n.s.
Finance	-0.011	**	-0.008	*
Prof. & science	0.010	**	0.015	**
Administration & support	0.051	**	0.064	**
Public administration	-0.004	n.s.	-0.012	**
Education	0.038	**	0.047	**
Health	0.044	**	0.038	**
Arts & other services	0.065	**	0.067	**
Number of obs	130261		129051	
LR chi2(25)	2816.78		3710.41	
Prob > chi2	**		**	
Pseudo R2	0.0952		0.0852	

Employees only: dependent variable 1= involuntary part-time 0 =all other employees

* p < .05, ** <.005. n.s. not significant at p<0.05.

Source: own analysis of QNHS microdata, q4 2007 and q4 2012

Table A3: Logistic Regression Model of Subjective Insecurity Among Employees, 2009: Probability that security has decreased over the last 2 years¹

	Model 1 Gender only		Model 2 & Sector		Model 3 & Controls		Model 4 & Sector by Gender Interactions	
	Exp(B) ¹		Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Ref: Male								
Female	0.731	**	0.966	n.s.	0.988	n.s.	0.774	n.s.
Ref: Production²								
Construction			1.406	*	1.483	*	1.594	*
Retail			0.575	**	0.630	**	0.567	**
Hotels/catering			0.430	**	0.429	**	0.490	**
Transport/communication			0.662	**	0.714	*	0.652	*
Financial services			0.989	n.s.	0.927	n.s.	0.885	n.s.
Public admin			0.314	**	0.325	**	0.354	**
Education			0.358	**	0.392	**	0.258	**
Health			0.399	**	0.427	**	0.364	**
Other service			0.382	**	0.436	**	0.202	**
Ref: Under 25 years								
Age 25-39					1.768	**	1.799	**
Age 40-54					1.900	**	1.929	**
Age 55 plus					1.204	n.s.	1.241	n.s.
Ref: Lower Secondary								
Upper secondary					1.078	n.s.	1.089	n.s.
Post leaving cert					1.323	*	1.345	*
Degree					1.264	*	1.287	*
Non-permanent job					1.913	**	1.887	**
TU member					0.723	**	0.717	**
Part-time <30hrs					1.022	n.s.	1.033	n.s.
Staff cuts in last 2 yrs					2.527	**	2.519	**
Business re-organisation					1.475	**	1.482	**
Female education							2.074	*
Female other							3.796	*
Constant	0.549	**	0.787	**	0.187	**	0.193	
Number	5,041		5,041		5,041		5,041	

* p < .05, ** <.005. N.s. not significant at p<0.05.

Source: own analysis of NCPP/ESRI National Workplace Survey 2009

1 An odds ratio less than one indicates a lower risk than the reference category, while an odds ratio greater than one indicates a higher risk than the reference category.

2 The National Workplace Survey uses the NACE Rev 1 classification of industrial sectors, there were very few agricultural employees in the sample (<40) so these have been grouped with manufacturing in the 'Production' category.

3 All gender by sector dummies are controlled for in the model but only significant interactions are reported here

Table A4: Job control for men and women separately, pooled data 2003 and 2009.

	Men		Women	
	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.
(Constant)	5.351	**	5.514	**
Year 2009	0.137	n.s.	0.143	n.s.
Ref: Under 25				
Age 25-39	1.115	**	0.808	**
Age 40-54	1.605	**	1.119	**
Age 55 plus	1.879	**	1.427	**
Ref: Managerial/professional				
Associate professional	-0.750	**	-0.366	**
Skilled manual	-1.879	**	-1.505	**
Other service sector	-1.383	**	-1.275	**
Semi and unskilled manual	-2.545	*	-1.797	**
Temporary contract	-0.290	*	-0.390	**
Tenure less than 1 yr	-0.595	**	-0.619	**
Tenure less than 5 yrs	-0.239	*	-0.193	*
Trade Union Member	-0.932	**	-1.034	**
Working Hours	0.023	**	0.016	**
Public Sector	-0.281	*	-0.045	n.s.
Public Sector by 2009	-0.094	n.s.	-0.577	***
New CEO in past 2 yrs?	-0.116	n.s.	-0.143	n.s.
Staff cuts in past 2 yrs?	-0.092	n.s.	-0.141	n.s.
Reorganisation in past 2 yrs?	0.197	*	0.107	n.s.
N of cases	4,764		5,377	
Adjusted R2	0.24		0.12	

Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

* p<.05, **p<.001. n.s. not significant at p<0.05.

Table A5: Work Pressure for men and women separately, pooled data 2003 and 2009.

	Men		Women	
	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.
(Constant)	4.030	***	4.917	***
Year 2009	0.102	n.s.	0.282	***
Ref: Under 25				
Age 25-39	-0.009	n.s.	0.197	*
Age 40-54	-0.047	n.s.	0.150	n.s.
Age 55+	-0.419	***	-0.086	n.s.
Public Sector	0.395	***	0.334	***
Public Sector by 2009	0.101	n.s.	0.047	n.s.
Ref: Managerial/professional				
Associate professional	-0.748	***	-0.931	***
Skilled manual	-0.717	***	-1.811	***
Other service sector	-0.619	***	-0.972	***
Semi and unskilled manual	-1.110	***	-1.231	***
Temporary contract	-0.044	n.s.	-0.182	*
Tenure less than 1 yr	-0.196	n.s.	-0.203	*
Tenure less than 5 yrs	-0.002	n.s.	-0.183	**
Trade Union Member	-0.153	*	0.138	*
Working Hours	0.050	***	0.032	***
New CEO in past 2 yrs?	0.024	n.s.	0.073	n.s.
Staff cuts in past 2 yrs?	0.225	**	0.174	*
Reorganisation in past 2 yrs?	0.358	***	0.285	***
N of cases	4,657		5,279	
Adjusted R2	0.14		0.17	

Source: ESRI/NCPP Workplace Employee Surveys, 2003 and 2009.

* p<.05, **p< .01, ***p<.001. n.s. not significant at p<0.05.

The Equality Authority

Birchgrove House
Roscrea
Co. Tipperary
Phone: (0505) 24126
Fax: (0505) 22388

Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1
Phone: (01) 417 3336
Fax: (01) 417 3331

Public Information Centre
Lo Call: 1890 245 545
Email: info@equality.ie

www.equality.ie

The Economic and Social Research Institute

Whitaker Square
Sir John Rogerson's Quay
Dublin 2

www.esri.ie