Work-time, male-breadwinning and the division of domestic labour: male part-time and full-time workers in unsettled times.

Sociology

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Abstract

The majority of male workers spend full-time hours in the labour market while part-time employment is heavily female dominated. A decade of economic unrest in the UK following the recession of 2008-9 was accompanied by a considerable expansion in the numbers of men working part-time. Growing male part-time employment is a significant phenomenon, with potential for narrowing gender inequalities in ways of working, inside and outside the home. Applying a gendered lens to men's working lives, the article focuses upon the ramifications of this growing male work-time diversity. Unsettled times can create the circumstances for opening up acceptable behaviours, for 'undoing' gender roles. The financial circumstances of male part- and full-timers, and men's engagement in unpaid domestic work, are compared. Part-time jobs are associated with more financial hardship than are full-time, but they offer up the potential for narrowing gender inequality in the sharing of core domestic work tasks.

Introduction

This article examines male work-time through a gendered lens. Its backdrop is the UK in 2009-2019, the decade that followed the recession of 2008-9 and was marked by austerity politics and significant unrest (O'Hara, 2015). The precise stimulus for the research was a notable expansion in the numbers of men working part-time during this time period: Labour Force Survey (LFS) data (Figure 1) show upward peaks, after a stage of more gentle growth. This increase in male part-timers provoked a range of critical and new questions among researchers and policy makers regarding the structure of the labour market and the quality of men's jobs (e.g. Bell and Blanchflower, 2013). Our concern in this article is with the ramifications of growing work-time diversity among men for male workers and their households. Drawing on sociological theories of gender and men's breadwinning work, we ask first which groups of men were most likely to work part-time. Then, when compared with male full-timers, how were male part-timers faring in financial terms: did they report equal levels of financial security or more hardship? Finally, did the men employed part- and full-time differ too in their involvement in unpaid domestic work?

INSERT FIGURE 1 AROUND HERE

While the growth in male part-time working has raised strong concerns among labour market analysts that it was associated with mounting underemployment and rising precarious employment among men (Borowczyk-Martins and Lalé, 2019; Clarke and Bangham, 2018; Grimshaw and Rafferty, 2012) in 'unsettled times' (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010), the sociological attention paid to reduced male work-time in the contemporary UK has been slim. The neglect by sociology is surprising because the time that men commit to

the labour market, especially in uncertain times, is a fundamental sociological concern, long-standing since the discipline's foundational focus on changes in the extent and conditions of men's waged labour under industrialising capitalism (Strangleman, 2016). Our research shines a much needed sociological light on men and their hours of work to begin to fill a significant gap in current knowledge.

The article asks original questions about men's work-time that emerge from a sociological understanding of men's working lives and, specifically, from a framework that places upfront the gendering of men's work and problematises the persistence of male-breadwinning. Guided by insights from the sociology of breadwinning/caring roles (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh, 2014; Crompton, 1999; Pfau-Effinger, 1998), we explore the gendered nature of part-time work in the UK. A gender-informed analysis is invaluable because the UK norm of full-time work for men and extensive female-dominated part-time employment is charged with cementing the gendering of work, paid and unpaid: limiting the work-life choices available to women and men, and creating work intensification for women via bolstering their 'two roles' (Fagan et al., 2013). The article asks whether more male part-timers might signal an adjustment in gendered working lives in the UK, narrowing gender inequalities. The next section recaps on men, women and part-time work in the UK.

Men, women and part-time work

The extant literature shows that part-time employment is extensive in the UK but it is notoriously over-concentrated in lower waged posts that offer weaker workplace benefits than full-time jobs, bringing a heightened risk of financial insecurity to part-timers (e.g., Author, 2015a; Fagan et al., 2013; Nightingale 2019; Thornley, 2007). However, this well-

known picture is based largely on the experiences of women who crowd the UK's part-time labour market. This article is concerned with growing work-time diversity among men and, as such, its focus is a comparison of the increasing numbers of male part-timers with those men in full-time employment. Nevertheless, it is valuable to consider first how male part-timers compare with the female part-time majority.

Figure 2 with UK LFS data shows that part-time work accounted for 41% of female employment and 13% of male in 2019, with women's higher percentages persistent over time. However, we cannot simply extrapolate what we know about part-time work from women's experiences to men's because the ways in which men and women work part-time, why they do it and the characteristics of their jobs can all differ markedly (Nightingale, 2020). The knowledge base on male part-timers in the UK is still only emergent but we do know that while many women enter part-time jobs during the child rearing years to help them reconcile multiple demands from home and paid work (Author, 2018), male part-timers are generally at different life-course stages. One main group of male part-timers consists of younger men aiming to transition later into full-time jobs and a second group is of older men transitioning gradually into retirement (Author, 2020; Delsen, 1998). We also know that, compared with female part-timers, many of whom are themselves in jobs low down the occupational scale, male part-timers are even more concentrated in lower-level work in e.g. elementary and sales occupations, and are often employed in hotels, restaurants and distribution work (Author, 2015a). The negative effects of working part-time can be greater for men than women too: men face the greater part-time pay penalty, for example (Nightingale, 2019; Belfield et al., 2017), and are more likely than female part-timers to be in poverty (JRF, 2021). A 'hierarchy of job quality', based on Tilly's (1996) influential dimensions of 'good quality' part-time work,

places male part-timers' jobs at the bottom (Author, 2020). Tilly classified the quality of part-time jobs in the USA according to pay and benefits; skill, training and responsibility; turnover; and promotion ladders, also citing the importance of quality work-time. Previous research by the author, building on Tilly, showed men's part-time jobs in the UK to be poorer quality, on average, than those held by either female part-timers or female and male full-timers.

INSERT FIGURE 2 AROUND HERE

Gender and men's work-time

It is striking that full-time working is such a dominant norm of men's labour market engagement in the UK because the national 'working-time regime' is well-known to be characterised by weak 'legal, voluntary and customary regulations which influence working-time practice', according to the influential conceptualisation by Rubery et al. (1998: 72), opening up avenues for numerous 'non-standard' forms of employment, including part-time. A sizeable number of women do work part-time, as we saw, while figures for men are far lower. Sociological theories of gender roles, male breadwinning and provisioning can be used to speculate why (most) men work full- not part-time despite the prevalence of part-time employment in the UK.

A gender-informed approach emphasises the structures and processes that compel men to work full-time because of combined heavy gendered financial and moral obligations to be male breadwinners. The male-breadwinner model denotes a division of labour in which men are engaged in full-time paid work in the public sphere (Crompton, 1999). The literal interpretation of breadwinning has an avowedly financial dimension (Horrell and

Humphries, 1997), with the male breadwinner provisioning for his family, but structural changes in working and family lives in the UK have brought powerful trajectories towards two- not just one-earner households. While the prevalence of the solo male-earner family is diminishing, however, the ideology of the male breadwinner still retains a hold and impacts upon identity and expectations. There can be critical implications for men's identity formation if they are not the main earner of the home (Nadim, 2016).

A range of breadwinner/carer models have been developed in different disciplines to classify commonality and variation in the gender division of work, within and outside the home, considering the extent to which the most highly gender asymmetrical model is stable or being eroded (e.g. Fraser, 1997; Lewis, 2001). In sociology, Pfau-Effinger's version (2012) proposes that different gender orders produce varied 'gender arrangements' in different societal contexts (e.g. dual breadwinner/external carer, dual breadwinner/extended family carer). This model is pertinent here because Pfau-Effinger pays specific attention to varieties in part-time working too and classifies the UK as having a 'male breadwinner/female part-time carer' gender arrangement. One alternative to male-breadwinning, a 'dual part-timer' arrangement in which part-time working is also adopted by men, has long been proposed as one (albeit elusive) way to reduce inequality in working lives (Ibanez, 2011). More generally, modifying men's long hours of paid work is widely acknowledged to be a pre-requisite for progressing gender equality in a society, yet it remains an obstinate challenge (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh, 2014). The challenge is intensified in the UK because both the weekly hours worked by male full-timers can be very long and the hours of female part-timers short, resulting in gender-polarised paid work-time that has consequences for unpaid work within the home (Fagan et al., 2013). Lyonette and Crompton (2015: 38) concluded about the UK:

‘If men continue to work long hours, and many women are effectively forced to work part-time, even those couples who want to share [domestic work] will find it impossible to do so’.

Shining a male-breadwinner light on men’s work-time shows that, since men are expected to be and identify as independent breadwinners, few see part-time working as a viable option (Benschop et al., 2013; Sheridan, 2004). Part-time jobs rarely provide a breadwinner wage: enough to support dependents too (Nightingale, 2020). Young men and the semi-retired have thus dominated the male part-time labour force, with part-time employment only entered voluntarily as men ‘transition’ into or out of the labour market: the U-shaped part-time profile over the life-course (Delsen, 1998).

Holter’s (2007) study of male part-timers in their peak working years (in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Israel, Norway, and Spain) is an interesting contrast to this dominant portrayal of male part-time employment. Most of the men sampled were working part-time due to ‘new circumstances’ arising from changes to their socio-material conditions, but Holter did find a minority of ‘new men’ for whom the main factor leading to their reduced hours was ideological, including a commitment to caring. Moreover, he found that the experience of different ways of working (even if these were involuntarily chosen because of socio-material change) could alert the men, their family members and employers to the positive feasibility of alternatives to male full-time employment. Roberts’ study of men in the UK suggests too that there can be an ‘opening up of acceptable behaviours and reference points’ for men as an outcome of economic, social and political change (Roberts, 2018: 284). ‘Unsettled’ times have long been charged with creating new circumstances and opening up acceptable

behaviours that can pave the way for rethinking gendered work roles: for Risman (2009), the processes that reinforce the gendering of work can become more visible and more open to 'gender undoing' than 'doing'.

In summary, more male part-time employment is a hugely provocative phenomenon within the UK context. It represents a potential real change to men's working lives, that has ramifications across sociology's core interests in, for example, men and masculinities, gender and family relations, job quality and the structure of the labour market, and the doing and sharing of paid and unpaid work. Yet many questions remained unasked about this phenomenon. The article explores three research questions about men and their work-time across an unsettled decade in the UK:

Question 1 concerns which men work part-time. Was the male part-timer transitional profile still applicable as the numbers of male part-timers increased?

Question 2 concerns how male part-timers were faring in financial terms. Did men in part- and full-time jobs report being similarly financially secure?

Question 3 asks if the men employed part- and full-time differed in their involvement in unpaid domestic work.

Methods and data sources

The article draws upon secondary analysis of quantitative data in order to examine work-time diversity among working men. Data from the LFS are drawn upon to recap on trends over time in male part-time employment. The LFS gathers large volumes of nationally representative data that provide the official UK measures of employment and unemployment (ONS, 2015). The main analysis is of the *UK Household Longitudinal Study*

(UKHLS, University of Essex, 2020). The UKHLS is an ESRC-funded survey (2009 onwards) that samples around 100,000 individuals across 40,000 households. The article explores the waves available at the time of analysis in which questions are asked about domestic work. Male employees who said they are 'in paid employment'¹ and aged 20-65 are the focus to explore men's peak working years. Part-time is working fewer than 30 hours a week, standard in analysis of UK data. Appendix Tables 1 and 2 summarise sample sizes in each wave and the key variables, respectively.

1. Research Question 1 concerns which men work part-time.

LFS data on levels of part-time working by age are analysed to examine whether the male part-timer transitional profile persisted as numbers grew: any weakening might signal that 'alternative' ways of working are available to diverse groups of men.

2. Research Question 2 concerns men's financial circumstances.

UKHLS data on men's wages and evaluations of their financial circumstances are analysed. On the use of subjective measures of finances, asked about their financial situations, participants are usefully reflecting on both their incomes and outgoings. Sociology values research that takes peoples' self-reported experiences, values and attitudes into account. Influential studies have shown that not being able to manage financially day-to-day is a key source of anxiety and have uncovered deep feelings of financial fear and despair among workers living on low and precarious incomes in the UK (e.g. Shildrick et al., 2012; Skeggs and Loveday, 2012). Subjective measures of economic lives are increasingly used outside Sociology too: the landmark report by economists Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi (on 'the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress', Stiglitz et al., 2007), for

example, offered a rounded critique of the domination of objective measures of economic lives. It recommended that: 'Statistical offices should incorporate questions to capture people's life evaluations, hedonic experiences and priorities' (Recommendation 10). Even though it might suggest an over-individualized approach, researching subjective feelings of financial hardship is especially valuable for exploring peoples' everyday economic experiences in unsettled times (Weller, 2012).

Here, the men surveyed reported what they would like to have but could not afford to buy for their households. We focus upon the inability to afford four key items: a holiday away from home (for at least one week a year, not staying with relatives at their home), to make regular savings, replace worn furniture, and have money for oneself (the latter data is not available in wave 2). Holidays signal men's (in)ability to afford a concentrated period of leisure away from paid work and are known to be an expenditure that the UK population cuts back on quickly in times of hardship (Family Holiday Association, 2019). The inability to make wished for regular savings indicates financial inelasticity and, crucially, that no desired nest egg or monetary safety net is being built up, no 'rainy day fund'. An unmet wish to be able to afford to replace worn furniture speaks to the impact of financial strain on everyday domestic living. Lastly, an inability to have some money just for oneself is evidence of overly stretched finances that allow no room for men's personal consideration, be it treats or self-care. There are known inequalities in the ability to keep money back for oneself in a financially-strained home (Bennet et al., 2010). To investigate the men's financial situations more broadly, respondents were asked to report whether they were managing financially (or finding it difficult) and to rate their satisfaction with household income.

3. Research Question 3 concerns men's unpaid domestic work.

Only participants in couples in the UKHLS are asked about their domestic work. Four routine domestic tasks are analysed: grocery shopping, cleaning, cooking, washing/ironing clothes.

The men's assessments of the ways in which these tasks are carried out in their homes were used to identify men who do *not* have a 'gender-traditional' arrangement (taken to be when the 'men mostly' do the household task or it is 'shared equally' with a partner).

The article draws upon descriptive analyses of the UKHLS to provide an overall portrait of key breadwinning and caring elements of men's working lives across a decade, and variation by work-time. These analyses are supported by regression models in order to control for key personal and job characteristics associated with work-time variation. Logistic binary regressions are used because the dependent variables are dummy variables (coded 1 and 0).

Results

1. Men's work-time in the UK using the LFS

Research Question 1 concerns which men work part-time. Figure 3 using the LFS shows a clear U-shaped profile, with levels of part-time work higher among younger and older men.

The LFS also shows the men's reasons for working part-time. In Figure 4a, encouragingly, the largest group of part-timers (56% in 2020) said that they did not want a full-time job. The next biggest group consisted of students.

INSERT FIGURES 3 AND 4 AROUND HERE

Was there stability or change in the typology of male part-timers as their numbers increased? The U-shaped profile persisted but the floor of the U did stand at a higher level after 2008, signalling growing part-time employment for men in the peak working-age bands too, a time in life when male-breadwinning is more widespread. While, encouragingly again, in each year the largest group of part-timers were those who did not want a full-time job, the overall percentage reporting that they could not find a full-time job grew after 2008. A peak in 2012/13 saw almost a third of involuntary part-timers, with a gradual decline after (Figure 4a). Finally, men in the mid-career age bands, the men most likely to have breadwinning responsibilities, were also the part-timers most likely to be involuntarily so (Figure 4b), with considerable escalation in 2012.

2. Male workers in the UKHLS

Research Question 2 concerns men's financial security. Crucial to the concept of breadwinning is financial responsibility, provisioning for oneself and potentially others too. This section thus asks how male part-timers compared financially with full-timers. The focus here is on male employees in the UKHLS who said that their current employment situation was 'paid employment'.

Before looking at finances, it is useful to first summarise the men's employment characteristics. Table 1 reaffirms that male part-timers were more likely than full-timers to be working in lower-level occupations: just over half worked in Semi-routine/Routine jobs (both to start and end our time period), compared with a quarter of male full-timers. They were the men most likely to be working in retail; to be paid by the hour (rather than

salaried); and on a temporary rather than permanent contract. These reaffirmed weaker characteristics of men's part-time jobs shape their finances, discussed next.

INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE

a. Breadwinning and men's finances

First, we affirm too that the well-known part-time pay penalty applied to our sample: the hourly gross median wage was far lower for male part-timers in 2018-19 (£9.8 compared with £13.7 for full-timers. Table 1). Fully 42% of male part-timers were lower paid that year: here (compared with 19% of male full-timers), though the part-time pay penalty had been more severe a decade earlier (when 51% of the part-timers were low paid).

Moving beyond the pay gap, we also ask about men's ability to afford desired items for their households (Figure 5). Each year and for most items, there was a substantial part-time/full-time gap. For example, around a quarter or more of male part-time workers would have liked but could not afford an annual holiday away from home, to replace worn-out furniture, money for themselves, and to make regular savings. Furthermore, men's assessments of their own financial situations, and satisfaction with their incomes too, echoed this picture of more financially-comfortable full-timers (Figure 6). More male part-timers reported that they were 'just about getting by' or in 'financial difficulties' (e.g. 45% versus 32% of full-timers in 2009-10). Both groups of men saw progress over time, but the part-time penalty persisted across most measures.

INSERT FIGURES 5 AND 6 AROUND HERE

There was also a connection between objective financial measures (wages) and subjectively reported financial situations. For example, a greater percentage of the male part-timers reporting financial problems were low paid (55% in 2018-19) compared with the financially comfortable part-timers (36%. The figures for 2009-10 were 64% and 40%).

We might predict that the financial difficulties impacting more part-time workers result from characteristics that differentiate the two groups of men, and that other variables might explain away much of the aggregate part-time financial penalty. We use logistic regressions to model whether working men were in 'financial difficulties/just about getting by' or not by work-time. We employ this as an overview financial variable because, in it, workers are reflecting on their incomes and financial outgoings in the round. Controls were added in for key job (occupational group, contract type, work schedule, wage) and personal characteristics (age, marital and parental status, ethnic group) known to be associated with financial inequality: workers in manual occupations, on non-permanent contracts, in jobs with night/evening or mixed shifts, and with low wages have greater likelihoods of financial insecurity than do workers higher up the occupational hierarchy, in secure posts and in jobs with more social hours and better pay (Author, 2015b). Incomes and outgoings also vary considerably across life-course stages and there are well-recognised deep financial divisions among different ethnic groups in the UK (Khan, 2020).

Table 2 shows regression results for 2018-19²: in Model 1 (just including work-time): part-timers were more likely than full-timers to report financial difficulties. With job characteristics as controls in Model 2, part-timers were still significantly more likely to be

facing financial hardship than men working full-time. With personal characteristics in Model 3, while men who were married, without young children and White were in the stronger financial situations, the overall conclusion about the importance of work-time for men's finances is unchanged. The explained variance is low, suggesting that there are other factors influencing working men's subjective evaluations of their financial circumstances (such as their health and wider networks of financial support). The purpose of the regressions here is to see whether the significance of the key explanatory variable persists or disappears after controls are added. The emphasis is not on trying to explain variation in the dependent variable as fully as possible. Pseudo R-squared values are modest but they did increase substantially when controls were included (see a similar discussion in Sullivan and Gershuny, 2018).

INSERT TABLE 2 AROUND HERE

These are new and worrying insights into the financial situations of working men in the UK. They reinforce the better-known picture of a substantial part-time penalty based on wage rates but the subjective measures help to indicate the ways in which the part-time disadvantage impacts the men's everyday lives. Compared with full-time employment, part-time working brings with it higher chances of everyday hardship for men. That part-time jobs in the UK are financially inadequate for substantial numbers of the men currently working in them is a worrying state of affairs for the part-timers themselves but, furthermore, it is one that is hardly conducive to tempting more men working full-time to work fewer hours. Money worries are known to deter male full-timers with breadwinner obligations from seriously contemplating part-time options (see the qualitative interviews in

Author, 2010). These research findings do not offer much financial reassurance to men considering a switch from full to part-time working.

b. Domestic work

The final research question concerns men's domestic work. Unpaid domestic work is perhaps the most remarkably gendered form of work, curiously resistant to sizeable change. Women retain major responsibility for this unpaid work and, in particular, for routine core tasks such as cleaning. Meanwhile men remain a 'help' to women within mixed sex couples, dedicating more of their (lesser) domestic work time to flexible tasks like 'DIY' and gardening. Leading writers Hochschild (1989) and Esping-Anderson (2009) located this tenacity in the gendering of domestic work within 'stalled' and 'incomplete' revolutions, respectively. Conversely, others argued that some change was happening. Gershuny et al. (1994) and Sullivan (1997), for example, concluded that the time that women spent on domestic work was falling while men's was rising gently, resulting in a narrowing of the gender gap. The gap remained wide but Sullivan argued that, rather than expect a radical gender revolution in domestic working, some kinds of change are slow (Altintas and Sullivan, 2017). Roberts' (2018) research with young working-class men, across a period marked by economic, social and political change, is of interest here because he is adamant that older theoretical models should not be applied uncritically to changing realities. Roberts critiques those who still presume men lack a 'notion of manhood' that involves being active in the home (as Hochschild, 1989 stated). This notion of manhood did not apply for his participants, among whom he found far more engagement in domestic duties than reported in older studies.

We move onto a sample of men living in mixed-sex couples in the UKHLS. Fundamental to more equal gender arrangements of work among such couples is that men, released from the obligation to work full-time, spend more time on unpaid work within the home, simultaneously freeing women to increase their paid work-time. However, fewer hours in paid work for men can also bring a rather different household scenario. Male part-timers might instead step back from engaging in work that is perceived to be feminine (housework) to compensate for an undermined masculine role in their jobs (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015). We know very little about the division of domestic labour in the homes of the growing number of men who do spend fewer than full-time hours in paid work. Nor do we know much about trends for the full-time male majority.

The findings first affirm that large proportions of the couples in the sample were each year living with 'gender-traditional' arrangements of domestic tasks in that women were doing the bulk of this unpaid work (Figure 7. And see McMunn et al., 2020). Different categories of domestic work are known to be gendered differently (Author, 2011; Kan et al., 2011; Sullivan, 2000) and, here, the most woman-led of the tasks was washing/ironing: just under a third of men reported doing/sharing it in 2010-11, though with participation rising over time. The least gendered task was grocery shopping: each year over half the men reported doing it/sharing it equally.

INSERT FIGURE 7 AROUND HERE

Men working part-time were somewhat more likely than full-timers to mainly do domestic tasks or share them equally with their partners, and with some indication of progress over

time. The largest part-time/full-time gap was in cleaning: by 2016-17, 59% of male part-timers reported doing it/sharing it compared with 46% of full-timers (a part-time/full-time gap of 13%). The next widest gap, in 2016-17, was in washing/ironing, that also showed change over the years as part-timers' participation grew more than full-timers'.

These are thought-provoking findings because men's higher levels of participation in domestic work are commonly located in non-routine tasks rather than such core, routine, open-ended, dirty, feminised work as cleaning. It is no coincidence that cleaning is one of the housework chores most commonly outsourced by couples with the financial ability to do so, invariably to women from working class and/or minority ethnic or migrant backgrounds (Windebank and Martinez-Perez, 2018). Logistic regressions that modelled whether men shared/mostly did the core task of cleaning, or not, affirmed the importance of men's work-time: the men more likely to share/do the cleaning were part-timers not full-timers, including after controls. To be able to include the characteristics of men's partners too, we used a smaller sample of men in couples who we could match with their (female) partner in the data-set. In Model 1 of Table 3, without controls, male part-timers are twice as likely (Odds ratio of 1.9) to share/do the cleaning as are full-timers. In Models 2 and 3, controlling again for men's job characteristics (occupation, contract type, schedule, wage) and personal characteristics (age, parental status, ethnicity), work-time remains important. Model 4 includes partners' labour market status while Model 5 focuses only on men with employed partners. All sets of results reaffirm the potential of shorter hours of work for men's sharing of domestic tasks, even for this feminized, dirty but essential work keeping a home clean. In addition, we see that men in clerical and manual jobs, working nights/evenings, in younger age groups and with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds were participating more

in cleaning than were the reference groups (see Kan and Laurie, 2018 who show that Indian and 'Other Asian' men spend more hours on housework than other men).

INSERT TABLE 3 AROUND HERE

Discussion

The article offers fresh insight into male workers and their work-time, innovatively turning a gendered lens onto increasing male work-time diversity in the UK across a decade of economic unrest. It draws upon analysis of data gathered from thousands of employees to make a number of original contributions to sociology. It provides contemporary knowledge of who works part-time in the UK and of working men's financial situations, to feed into a gendered analysis of work-time and men's breadwinning roles, and of the division of labour within men's homes, to shed new light onto work-time and housework. Freeing up men's time from paid work and persuading more male participation in unpaid domestic work are both obstinate challenges in a gender revolution that stalled. Yet unsettled times are charged with holding the potential to kick-start change: unsettled times can open up the types of behaviour that are deemed appropriate for men and women, paving the way for gender-undoing in working lives.

The findings of this research show much continuity in gender and work-time: full-time working persisted as the norm for men in the UK and 'transitional part-timers' (younger and older men entering or exiting the labour force, respectively) continued to dominate the male part-time labour force; more men working part-time reported financial hardship than did full-timers; and women still performed most of the unpaid domestic work in mixed-sex

couple households. Elements of change did emerge alongside stability, however, and male part-time employment offered up some fascinating possibilities, particularly in terms of domestic work but also due to a decline in part-timers' financial hardship.

Regarding men's financial situations, after the wide part-time/full-time pay penalty and peaks in hardship that characterised the post-recessionary period, the latter years of the 2010s looked more promising for male part-timers (relative to full-timers). The final wave of data, 2018-19, brought indications both of narrowing part-time/full-time gaps and lower levels of financial difficulties. The impacts of the UK's decision to leave the EU and the Covid-19 pandemic, both causing unrest 2020 onwards, demand further research.

Regarding domestic work, it was suggested that part-time work might free up men's time for housework but, conversely, male part-timers might avoid such 'feminine' work perhaps to protect an identity already undermined by their atypical employment. We show that, compared with full-timers, men working part-time hours were indeed more likely to report engaging in domestic work, also in the essential work involved in keeping a home clean and doing the laundry. This is noteworthy because these tasks are usually portrayed as the most resistant to gender-undoing: the real losing battle in the 'housework wars' that are common to media commentary (e.g. New Statesmen 2016). Our new findings do not signal huge part-time/full-time differences in the sharing of domestic work nor do they reveal dramatic change across the unsettled time period. The results are not at the 'epochal' level of transformative change that more often attract the attention of mainstream sociology (see the critique by Savage, 2009). As Sullivan (2000) has argued too, that epochal focus reflects a masculinist disciplinary tradition and, while progress in the (de)gendering of everyday

domestic work is far from large, rapid or smooth, such gradual change within the home (as reported in this article) is not trivial. It requires far more sociological attention.

Many gaps in knowledge remain around men's unpaid domestic work. Domestic work is still under-researched compared with employment but it is vital labour: core to wellbeing, work-life balance and life satisfaction (Rai et al., 2013). Moreover, its significance is heightened in unsettled times. The domestic sphere can carry a heavy burden, absorbing the fallout of insecurity in multiple ways, with the heaviest load on women (Elson, 2013). Unsettled times also create extra domestic work, both practical and emotional, as earlier periods of job loss (Hutson and Jenkins, 1989) and the current Covid-19 pandemic show (Andrew et al., 2020; Women's Budget Group, 2020). Grocery shopping grows more difficult, making economical meals takes time and careful planning while handling more strained family budgets (including bill juggling and refusing treats to children) are all emotionally draining.

This article was primarily influenced by the ongoing drive to narrow gender inequalities in working lives and to battle the long hours' culture that can exhaust male breadwinners, keep them from their families and communities, while simultaneously impeding the careers of women, especially those with caring responsibilities. A drop in the number of hours that men spend in paid work is a provocative phenomenon for other core sociological reasons too. Curtailing men's long hours of work also underpins a battle to encourage a fairer sharing out of available employment, minimising the wide gaps between those who have too much paid work and those who have too little, and thus lessening stark inequities in levels of economic wellbeing and access to leisure time (Roberts, 2019). These are class and not just gender matters, intersecting with other social divisions including ethnicity. In terms

of class and men's work-time, we know that the opportunity to work part-time hours can increase as work-time autonomy expands up the occupational hierarchy, but men's uncertainty about potentially working part-time can also deepen with more seniority (Atkinson and Hall, 2009). Men in senior roles express views both that their workloads preclude any reduction in working hours and that it is not appropriate for senior managers to be seen to work part-time (Benschop et al., 2013). For working class men, in contrast, strong financial reservations colour their work-time capabilities, with full-time hours essential to get by and over-time working often financially vital (Author, 2010; Fagan and Walthery, 2011). More research is needed into housework practices, the sharing of labour between diverse groups of men and women, and household negotiations in deeply unsettled times.

Conclusion

The article provides novel insight into male working lives in the UK in unsettled times, applying a gendered lens to the work of men in part-time and full-time employment. A gender-informed analysis is invaluable because the norm of full-time work for men and extensive female-dominated part-time employment is charged with cementing the gendering of work, paid and unpaid. The article asks whether more diversity in men's paid work-time might signal an adjustment in gendered working lives. It shows that, compared with full-time employment, part-time jobs in the UK are associated with more financial hardship for men but they can offer up the potential for a more gender-equal sharing of core domestic work. A decade of economic unrest and growing precariousness in the world of work, indicated simultaneously by underemployment, multi-jobbing and work intensification, followed by the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ways of

working, call for urgent attention to the potential of, and problems with, reducing men's paid work-time.

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Appendix

INSERT APPENDIX TABLES 1 AND 2 AROUND HERE

1. Numbers of male part-time workers (aged 16+)(in thousands).

Source: ONS. The Labour Force Survey.

Figure 2. Part-timers as a % of all in employment (aged 16+).

Source: ONS. The Labour Force Survey.

Figure 3. Men's level of part-time working, by age (aged 16+).

Source: ONS. The Labour Force Survey.

Figure 4. Reasons for working part-time.

a. Men (aged 16+).

b. Percentage of male part-timers who could not find a full-time job by age (aged 18-65)

Source: ONS. The Labour Force Survey.

Table 1. Summary employment characteristics of male part-timers and full-timers in the UKHLS (aged 20-65).

	2009-10		2018-19	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
% employees who are full-time students	12	0.1	9	0.4
<u>Employees¹</u>				
% who are part-timers	8.2		8.4	
% of part-timers working short weekly hours (1-19)	43		49	
<i>Socio-economic classification</i> (column %)				
Management & professional	30	50	27	51
Intermediate	11	11	12	11
Lower supervisory & technical	6	14	6	12
Semi-routine & routine	53	25	55	26
% working in retail	22	7	27	8
% paid by the hour	61	26	63	27
% in a temporary job	20	4	12	4
Hourly gross median wage (£s)	7.7	11.9	9.8	13.7
% earning below 2/3 of the male hourly gross median wage ²	51	20	42	19
N	874	9,811	472	5,119

¹ Excluding the Unemployed/Full-time students/Retired/Government training scheme/Family care/Long-term sick/Unpaid family business/On apprenticeship.

² Male hourly gross median wage= £11.54 in 2009-10 and £13.46 in 2018-19.

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Figure 5. Proportion of male employees who would like but cannot afford items for their households, by work-time (aged 20-65).

a. An annual holiday

b. To make regular savings

c. Replace worn-out furniture

d. Money for self

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Figure 6. Male employees' financial situations by work-time (aged 20-65).

a. Percentage of men who say they are 'not satisfied' with their household income

b. Percentage of men reporting 'being in financial difficulties/just about getting by'.

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Table 2. Binary logistic regression models of 'in financial difficulties/Just about getting by' or not (male employees aged 20-65. 2018-19).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Odds ratios</i>		
Part-time (<i>reference: Full-time</i>)	1.6***	1.3**	1.3**
Occupational group (<i>reference: Professional/Managerial/Technical</i>)			
Clerical		1.8***	1.9***
Manual		1.6***	1.7***
Job contract permanent (<i>reference: Non-permanent</i>)		1.3	1.4***
Work schedule (<i>reference: Works during the day</i>)			
Nights/Evenings		1.8***	1.8***
Mixed		1.0	1.0
Wage not low waged (<i>reference: low waged¹</i>)		0.6***	0.5***
Age (<i>reference: 60+</i>)			
18-29			0.7
30-44			1.3
45-59			1.3
Marital status (<i>reference: Married</i>)			
Separated/widowed/divorced			1.7***
Single (never married)			1.4***
Parental status child <16 (<i>reference: No child aged <16</i>)			1.8***
Ethnic group (<i>reference: White</i>)			
Asian			1.4***
Black			1.9***
Mixed/Other			1.1
Constant	0.3***	0.4***	0.2***
Pseudo R ²	0.005	0.06	0.09
N	5019	4764	4725

Notes: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

¹ Low waged = below two-thirds of the male median hourly gross wage (all employees aged 20-65).

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Figure 7. Division of domestic tasks. Percentage of men saying the task is 'shared equally' or 'mostly the man' (male employees in couples, aged 20-65).

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression models of 'Man mostly does the cleaning/shares it equally' or not (male employees in matched mixed sex couples. Aged 20-65. 2016-17).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Odds ratios</i>					
<u>Man</u>					
Part-time (<i>reference: Full-time</i>)	1.9***	1.8***	1.8***	2.0***	2.3***
Occupational group (<i>reference: Professional/Managerial/Technical</i>)					
Clerical		1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6**
Manual		1.2	1.2*	1.2**	1.3**
Job contract permanent (<i>reference: Non-permanent</i>)		1.4	1.3	1.4	1.7
Work schedule (<i>reference: Works during the day</i>)					
Nights/Evenings		1.6	1.4	1.5	2.5***
Mixed		1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Wage not low waged (<i>reference: low waged¹</i>)		1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1
Age (<i>reference: 50+</i>)					
18-34			1.9***	2.0***	1.6***
35-49			1.7***	1.7***	1.5***
Parental status no child<16 (<i>reference: No child aged <16</i>)			0.7***	0.7***	0.9
Ethnic group Minority Ethnic (<i>reference: White</i>)			1.7***	1.9***	2.5***
<u>Female partner's job</u>					
Labour market status (<i>reference: Employed</i>)					
Self-employed				0.9	
Unemployed				0.6	
Outside the labour force ²				0.5***	
Part-time (<i>reference: Full-time</i>)					0.6***
Occupational group (<i>reference: Professional/Managerial/Technical</i>)					
Clerical					0.9
Manual					1.0
Job contract permanent (<i>reference: Non-permanent</i>)					1.5**
Work schedule (<i>reference: Works during the day</i>)					
Nights/Evenings					1.0
Mixed					1.2
Wage not low waged (<i>reference: low waged³</i>)					1.1
Constant	0.8***	0.7***	0.5***	0.6**	0.6***
Pseudo R ²	0.009	0.014	0.04	0.06	0.09
N	3451	3406	3387	3382	2393

Notes: *** p <0.01 ** p<0.05 *p<0.1

^{1 3} Low waged = below two-thirds of the male ⁽¹⁾ or female ⁽³⁾ median hourly gross wage (all employees aged 20-65).

² Family care/Maternity leave/Retired/Student/Long-term Sick/Training scheme/Unpaid family business.

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Appendix Table 1. Sample size (weighted). Male employees aged 20-65.

	2009-10		2010-11		2012-13		2014-15		2016-17		2018-19	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
Employees												
(variable jbsemp=1)	1,076	9,982	828	7,518	869	8,010	858	7,713	689	6,510	558	5,270
Employee and in paid employment												
(variables jbsemp=1 and jbstat=2 ¹)	874	9,811	689	7,360	719	7,874	730	7,568	561	6,381	472	5,119
Male employees in couples (with details on their housework)	n/a	n/a	417	5,508	410	5,780	374	5,271	298	4,497	259	3,516

¹ 'In paid employment' i.e. not the Unemployed/Full-time students/Retired/Government training scheme/Family care/Long-term sick/Unpaid family business/On apprenticeship.

'n/a' because the housework module was not fielded in the first wave.

Source: author's analysis of UKHLS.

Appendix Table 2. Summary of key UKHLS variables

	Wording of question	Categories range
<u>Paid hours</u>		
Weekly hours	Thinking about your main job, how many hours (excluding overtime and meal breaks) are you expected to work in a normal week?	Number of hours
<u>Breadwinning: financial situations</u>		
Pay	Usual gross pay per month (current job)(UKHLS derived variable)	Pay in £s
Material deprivation	Do you (and your family/partner) have:	
	A holiday away from home for at least one week a year, whilst not staying with relatives at their home	I/we have this/Do not need this at the moment' to 'I/we would like to have this but cannot afford this at the moment'
	Enough money to make regular savings of £10 a month or more for rainy days or retirement	"
	Enough money to replace any worn-out furniture	"
	A small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not on your family)	"
Managing financially	How well would you yourself say you are managing financially these days?	'Living comfortably' to 'Finding it very difficult'
Income dis/satisfaction	Please choose the number which you feel best describes how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with: the income of your household	'Completely dissatisfied' to 'Completely satisfied'
<u>Caring: domestic work</u>		
	Could you please say who mostly does this work here. Is it mostly yourself, or mostly your spouse/partner, or is the work shared equally?	'Mostly self' to 'Paid help only'
	Grocery shopping/Cleaning/Cooking/Washing-Ironing.	

¹ Excluding the Unemployed/Full-time students/Retired/Government training scheme/Family care/Long-term sick/Unpaid family business/On apprenticeship.

² The overall results on work-time were broadly the same for each wave so are not shown due to space limitations.