

TRICIA DAWSON

GENDER, CLASS AND POWER

An Analysis of Pay Inequalities
in the Workplace



Gender, Class and Power

Tricia Dawson

Gender, Class and Power

An Analysis of Pay Inequalities
in the Workplace

palgrave
macmillan

Tricia Dawson
Keele Management School
Keele University
Keele, UK

ISBN 978-1-137-58593-6 ISBN 978-1-137-58594-3 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58594-3>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018936137

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Macmillan Publishers Ltd. part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to John Abbott; Professor Carole Thornley; the former Graphical, Paper and Media Union (currently a sector of Unite); and, in particular, all those who gave their time to provide me with the information that I have used in this book. Any mistakes remain my own.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
	Research Process	7
	Organisation of the Chapters	10
	References	15
2	Theories of Discrimination	19
	Power, Gender and Pay	21
	Power	21
	Power Resources	25
	Bradley's Model of Gendered Power	26
	Extending the Model	29
	Economic Theories of Discrimination	32
	Neo-classical Explanations	32
	Alternative Economic Explanations	35
	Gender-Based Theories of Discrimination	38
	Gendered Practices and Policies: Workplace and Union	40
	Conclusions	45
	References	46

3	The Development of the Printing Industry: Workers' and Employers' Organisation	55
	Early Development: 1470–1780	56
	The Nineteenth Century	62
	The Early Twentieth Century	65
	Post Second World War	68
	Developments Post-Merger: The GPMU	73
	The End of Independent Print Unions: Amicus and Unite	75
	Conclusions	75
	References	79
4	Missed Opportunities: The Failure of Union Solidarity in the Struggle for Control of the Labour Process	81
	Early History	82
	The Nineteenth Century	83
	The Early Twentieth Century	89
	Two World Wars and the Interwar Years	90
	Post-Second World War	95
	The GPMU Merger	104
	Conclusions	109
	References	111
5	Gender or Skill? The Continuation of Segregated Work	115
	Occupational Segregation and the Labour Process in General Printing	116
	Job Content	125
	Barriers to Removing Occupational Segregation by Sex	133
	Conclusions	142
	References	146
6	Challenging Inequality: Employers and Unions	151
	Discriminatory Treatment at Work	153
	Employment Policies	157
	Recruitment and Promotion Processes	157
	Training Processes	159
	Hours of Work and Caring Responsibilities	162

Union Internal Democracy	167
The Efficacy of Structural Change in the GPMU	167
The GPMU: A Reassessment	174
Conclusions	179
References	181
7 Wage Leadership: The Continuation of Unequal Pay	185
Pay Determination Between 1950 and 1991	188
Pay Determination Post-1991	192
National Bargaining	193
Negotiating Processes at National Level	195
Local Bargaining	201
Bargaining Processes at Local Level	204
Pay Outcomes	209
Conclusions	215
References	218
8 ‘Paid Class 3, Treated Class 3, Act Class 3[?]’: Overcoming the Barriers	223
Women’s Invisibility in the Work Organisation	225
Women’s Invisibility in Bargaining Processes	233
Summary and Final Comments	239
References	244
Appendix: Characteristics of Survey Respondents and Interviewees	247
Glossary	255
Index	257

Abbreviations

ASLP	Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers
ATCA	Art, Technical, Clerical and Administrative (trade group board of the NGA)
BDC	Biennial Delegate Conference; pre-1991, the SOGAT conference, 1991 onwards the GPMU conference
BDM	Biennial Delegate Meeting; the NGA conference
BFMP	British Federation of Master Printers
BPIF	British Printing Industries Federation
EC	Executive council
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EPA	Equality policy adviser
EU	European Union
F/MoC	Father or mother of the chapel
GFC	Global financial crash
GPMU	Graphical Paper and Media Union
GPR	Guaranteed proportional representation
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
LTS	London Typographical Society
MEG	Minimum earnings guarantee
NATSOPA	National Society of Operative Printers and Media Personnel (also NSOP&A)
NEC	National Executive Committee

xii Abbreviations

NEDO	National Economic Development Office
NGA	National Graphical Association
NPA	Newspaper Proprietors' Association
NS	Newspaper Society
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NUPBPW	National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers
NUWDAT	National Union of Wallcoverings, Decorative and Allied Trades
P&KTF	Printing and Kindred Trades Federation
PPITB	Printing and Publishing Industries Training Board
SLADE	Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers
SOGAT	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades
SPEF	Scottish Printing Employers Federation
TA	Typographical Association
TUC	Trades Union Congress

List of Figures

Fig. 2.1	Model of gendered power resources	30
Fig. 5.1	Full-time employment in printing and publishing, 1997–2004 (thousands). Source: Labour Market Trends, 1997–2004	118
Fig. 5.2	Part-time employment in printing and publishing, 1997–2004 (thousands). Source: Labour Market Trends, 1997–2004	119
Fig. 5.3	Women and men employed in information and communication sector, 2004–2017 (thousands). Source: ONS (2017)	121
Fig. 6.1	Shiftworking, by sex. Source: Survey of GPMU members (2002) ($N = 1216$)	164
Fig. 7.1	Comparison of family/earning status, by sex. Source: Survey of GPMU members (2002) ($N = 1216$)	215

List of Tables

Table 5.1	Departmental proportions by gender	122
Table 5.2	Gender proportions by department	122
Table 5.3	Predominant gender of colleagues	123
Table 5.4	Percentages of workers operating machines, by sex	127
Table 5.5	Percentages of those running machines who also set them, by sex	127
Table 5.6	Length of service, by sex	139
Table 6.1	Does management treat all employees well?	155
Table 6.2	Women are treated less favourably than men in my company	155
Table 6.3	Method of obtaining current job	157
Table 6.4	Duration of initial training	160
Table 6.5	Frequency of overtime working, by sex	163
Table 6.6	Extent of extra hours working, by sex	163
Table 7.1	National agreement grades by sex and notional indication for those not following the agreement	187
Table 7.2	Basic pay	211
Table 7.3	Gross pay	212
Table 7.4	Extra payments	214
Table A.1a	Characteristics of survey respondents	247
Table A.1b	Characteristics of survey respondents—geographical distribution	249

xvi **List of Tables**

Table A.2	Characteristics of employers interviewed	250
Table A.3	Characteristics of union officers interviewed	250
Table A.4	Criteria for selection of worker interviewees	251
Table A.5	Characteristics of union officers and activists interviewed: 2014–2017	253



1

Introduction

Forty years after the implementation of the Equal Pay Act, gender pay discrimination continues unabated. At the commencement of this research, the researcher was equality policy adviser (EPA) to the Graphical, Paper and Media Union (GPMU), with responsibility for equalities nationally. This research was driven by the need to understand the totality of barriers to achieving equal pay in the British printing industry. The union had worked hard on many policy areas that contribute to challenging the pay gap—maternity, paternity, parental leave and pay; harassment and bullying (under the banner of Dignity at Work); childcare; and equal opportunities. Training courses had been run with women members, union local negotiators and male workplace representatives to try to increase gender awareness. Greater publicity was given to these issues in union communications, at conference fringe meetings and in conference debates. Radical structural change ensured women were included at national level in all decision-making bodies of the union. None of this had made a marked difference to women's access to jobs or their access to equal pay. It was time to tackle equal pay directly. In a union that had an 83 per cent male membership, it was hard to see how to build momentum

for this crucial policy area or how solidarity could be called for when it seemed that few thought there was an equal pay issue; it was more about access to Class 1 jobs, not about pay.

It was in these circumstances that it seemed necessary to investigate the totality of barriers that affected women's access to pay and jobs—maybe this would throw light on points of leverage that could be developed into a meaningful campaign that might begin to shift barriers that had existed since the printing industry's inception in the fifteenth century. This research was designed to examine the persistence of these barriers. It commenced in 2000 and the first phase was completed in 2007, during which time the GPMU ceased to exist as an independent union, merging with Amicus in 2004, then Unite in 2007. Subsequently, the author, as a professional academic, updated the research to take account of events leading up to, and after, the great financial crash (GFC) of 2008. While the GPMU supported and helped fund the original research, the second phase was unsupported and conducted as time allowed between 2014 and 2017. This second phase revisited some of the union officials who were originally interviewed but also included women activists, who were excluded in the original research for lack of time. This provided an opportunity to fill a gap in the research and to allow for reflection on the GPMU's approach to equalities that has afforded a useful corrective to the original research and a more balanced account. Time has also allowed the researcher to reflect on and refine the original approach and understanding of the barriers identified.

During the two decades before the original research, manufacturing industry had altered considerably. Employment had greatly diminished, shifting to the service sector, trade unions were contained and industrial action diminished drastically. In printing, there was also significant technological change affecting the labour process. Despite these changes, there does not appear to have been any corresponding change in the position of women in these jobs, even by 2017. The aims and objectives of this research were, thus, to determine the causes of the gender pay gap in the printing industry, why it is so resistant to change and under what conditions change may be effected.

While the ultimate aim of this research is to uncover the unequal rewards women receive from paid employment, there is also an appreciation that

[m]oney is only one form of gender power relations in the workplace and in the labour market ... [there is also, for instance] equality of opportunity to pursue careers, or to participate fully in trade unions. (Wajcman 2000: 187)

As such, this book considers the historical development of women's work in the printing industry, followed by an analysis of work organisation, employment policies and trade union democracy in contributing to unequal pay. This culminates in a discussion of the pay structure and the contribution of pay determination processes in embedding unequal pay outcomes. It should be noted, however, that while a national agreement controlled the pay structure at the time of the original research, this agreement foundered in 2010 and no longer exists. Employers are free to impose pay in many companies, although where chapel (workplace branch) organisation remains strong management prerogative may still be contained.

The researcher's own experience and the focus of earlier research affected the choice of sector. In particular Cockburn had published a highly regarded study of newspaper compositors and their response to radical technological change in Cockburn (1983). This account dealt mainly with men because it focused on a sector from which women were, traditionally, excluded: newspaper production. It provided a sensitive and detailed analysis of men's relationship to new technology and to women, highlighting the importance of masculine ideology. However, it remains the case that women's responses were only marginally important in that research. Within the print unions, the researcher recalls hostility after the publication of Cockburn's book. In the second phase of research, the researcher questioned a woman official who had been around at that time, someone who would identify as a socialist feminist (R2[4]). She, too, felt some hostility because, it seems, union officials felt the study did not do enough justice to class relations in the industry. This research attempts to avoid that pitfall.

Conversely, this research is focused on the sector of the industry where women were most often found—the general printing industry. This sector covers ‘packaging, advertising materials, security printing, business forms, books, periodicals, magazines, stationery and catalogues’ (Gennard and Bain 1995: 22–23). The labour process is still recognisable from 200 years ago, comprising a basic division between pre-press (production of material for printing), printing (the actual process of printing onto various materials) and the bindery (all activities required to produce a finished product). Despite technological change, print production still maintains this basic division, which is highly gendered. Women had entered pre-press areas at various points (with limited success, see Chap. 5), whereas they were excluded before changes in technology made their typing skills useful for employers. Re-segmentation has been the issue here, maintaining degrees of gender segregation that affect pay. Women continue to be found in the largest numbers in binderies, although their jobs have greatly reduced in number. Here they are segregated into jobs regarded as unskilled and commanding the lowest pay rates. Meanwhile, in the press rooms where the printing is carried out, women have barely made their presence felt, even today.

Work organisation processes are crucially linked to bargaining processes in this sector. Multi-employer bargaining had dominated general printing, in contrast to many other sectors (Roe 2003). The national agreement for the sector had considerable importance, not just for those directly party to it but also non-union and non-federated companies. This meant that even where the union was absent or had minimal membership, or where companies were not members of the employers’ association, the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF), they often benchmarked wages and conditions against the agreement. This was important because the national agreement significantly influenced the allocation of people to both jobs and pay grades (Craig et al. 1984). Women’s pay was institutionalised by such arrangements. This is no longer the case, and all workers’ wages and conditions were adversely affected, especially following the GFC. Traditionally, there was also an expectation of second-tier bargaining, which was waning even at the time of the original research. But there is some recent evidence that strong chapels are beginning to recoup some of their lost benefits. These chapels are likely

to be entirely male, so the pay gap could begin to widen again. This book attempted to tease out these processes to identify their gendered effects.

This account also needs to be seen in the context of the decline of traditional printing as a major industrial sector in Britain. Economic restructuring and, in particular, increased international competition were affecting the industry, even during the original research, but the subsequent economic upheaval exacerbated these trends. Technological change reduced the need for labour and facilitated the movement of production overseas. Much of the actual printing process is undertaken in other countries, while the remaining work has moved increasingly into the communications¹ sector. This has greatly reduced unionisation. Whereas there were some 280,000 members claimed at the time of the merger to form the GPMU, there are now only around 50,000—and this includes IT workers who are not in traditional print areas at all. Women's employment suffered relative to that of men, reducing their numbers even further. This has made the problem of challenging gendered processes even harder.

Previously technological change had tended to result in the unions 'following the job' to the new equipment. For instance, the decline of letterpress printing led the unions to focus attention on lithographic printing, the new technology of the period. Similarly the decline of compositors' jobs led to a focus on typesetting and attempts at retaining it as a male occupation. The only times this has not been evident have been when this has involved movement into a feminised sector, such as the operation of office-based printing equipment or, latterly, the move into publishing and information technology. The decline of the GPMU can be, at least partially, attributed to this strategic failure—although there were, and still are, attempts being made to gain organisation in what was termed 'new media'.

This book attempts to provide as comprehensive a picture as possible of both the economic and social processes that produce gendered outcomes. Specifically, it considers the unequal allocation of power resources that generate and sustain women's invisibility in the workplace, in the trade union and in bargaining processes, rendering them seemingly irrelevant in all three areas. This theory rests on the elements of power identified by Lukes (2005), especially hidden forms of power that tend to

'naturalise' the status quo. The vehicle for this exercise of power is a set of power resources, providing unequal access to power, dependent on gender. This examination of power resources rests on the idea of class and gender operating as dynamics, rather than fixed structures, to embrace the notions of 'continuity within change, order within variability, fixity within fluidity' (Bradley 1996: 7). Bradley's (1999) multi-dimensional model of power resources is utilised to investigate the unequal use of power to sustain the status quo. It is extended to include legal power, a resource accessed through women's campaigning. The model also attempts to analyse how access to certain key power resources extends access to further power resources that subsequently operate to reinforce each other and embed gendered power relations. Processes of reproduction, rationalisation and resistance in the workplace and, to some extent, the home (Collinson et al. 1990) are analysed. The result is to demonstrate how unequal access to power resources, including temporal differences in such access, results in relative privilege for both employers and male workers that are so embedded they appear natural and, therefore, invisible. Consequently, women struggle to challenge existing workplace relations, especially given their late entry into paid work. To the extent women have successfully achieved legal protection, equal opportunities policy initiatives and structural change in unions, it is argued here that gendered power relations give rise to a process of 'proceduralisation' that averts transformational change.

Intersectionality can be understood as the identification of, for example, race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion as interlocking elements of 'one overarching structure of domination' (Collins 1990: 222). This book embraces the idea that 'gender cannot be understood in isolation from other social constructions such as 'race' and class' (Holgate et al. 2006). Throughout the following chapters, both gender and class relations are given their due weight in the analysis. The result is a new synthesis of existing theoretical strands to expose both the visible and invisible processes of power relations in sustaining women's (relative) invisibility and resulting, apparent, irrelevance. The tenacity and intractability of these processes are revealed throughout the following chapters.

Research Process

This section briefly identifies the philosophy behind the analysis contained in this book and the methods used. While this research was undertaken from an industrial relations (IR) perspective, the aim was to ensure women occupied a central position in it to avoid the gender blindness that is traditional in IR research (Ledwith and Hansen 2013). IR research is interdisciplinary and draws on many cognate disciplines to gain an understanding of workplace relations. In this research economics, sociology, history and law all play a part in exposing gender relations in printing. Intersectionality is a key aspect of this approach—an attempt to do justice to both class relations and gender relations and how they interrelate. While inevitably such research identifies tensions in gender relations, there was no desire to demonise men, but to understand the pressures on both women and men in the workplace and the potential to overcome them. Employers play a key role in provoking and stoking these tensions, and it was crucially important to expose these processes.

A key issue highlighted in this book is the maintenance of invisibility. This does not just relate to the invisibility of women and their issues but the invisibility of employers' mechanisms for maintaining gender relations and the invisibility of relative male privilege among workers. Male identity is taken as the norm so often that it is not seen as an identity at all. As such all other identities are measured against it and, increasingly, criticised for disappearing into a post-structural morass (see, e.g., Fraser 2008). Such an argument evokes the suspicion of gender analysis that tended to envelope IR research, which was, traditionally, more concerned with class antagonisms (Foster and Williams 2010). But this book, it will be seen, exposes the persistence of discrimination in the industry and how closely this is bound up in male identity—in terms of both employers and male workers.

Ultimately, the aim of the research contained in this book was emancipatory, aimed at transforming and empowering those involved (and beyond) to change their lives (Gottfried 1993). Given the author's role as EPA for the GPMU, it could be argued that this aim also informed the researcher's 'day job', feeding into processes of policy development and

implementation along the way and so was not 'just talk' (ibid.). Instead it proceeded from a 'political commitment to produce useful knowledge that ... [would] make a difference to women's lives' (Letherby 2003: 4) and as such affected both the 'why' of choosing the research topic and the 'how' of constructing the research (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004).

In this light, the research was explicitly concerned with what was problematic for women, rather than men (Harding 1987). While it is true that men and women share many workplace problems, 'it is indisputable that gender has an important impact on the experience of work' (Holgate et al. 2006: 310), but this is not immediately obvious in IR research. This was largely true of printing industry research, too, with the exception of the studies of unions conducted by Ledwith et al. (1985), Ledwith (1991), Colgan and Ledwith (1996) and Ledwith and Colgan (2002). These studies have provided invaluable material but concentrate primarily on union dynamics, rather than broader industry developments and employer strategies.

However, in looking at research questions from a gender perspective, the researcher can be accused of relativism (Harding 1987), of taking a post-modernist or post-structuralist approach. Post-modernism eschews major theories reducing everything to the local, while post-structuralism relies heavily on discourses to carry the full weight of explanation, ignoring structural issues (Connell 1987: 242). Like Bradley (2007) this study ultimately does not find the individualising tendencies of these approaches helpful and, conversely, while recognising the continuing importance of structures, is keen to include an appreciation of the protagonists' ability to act for themselves.

The research utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The contribution made by quantitative methods in this research was to provide for the widest possible gathering of information across the sector on all the key aspects of employment, for example, recruitment, training, promotion, pay, treatment of workers, domestic responsibilities/work interface and union/member relations. Data on different experiences of work, by sex, would be available for the first time for this sector on a broad basis. Qualitative methods encompassed both extensive documentary research and interviews with specific groups: employers, union officials and union members.

Documentary evidence was a crucial element of the research strategy, much of it preceding and informing the development of the survey and interview schedules. Such evidence requires careful handling to identify the potential biases in documents, especially for areas of history that have been largely ignored. For example, existing histories may reveal as much from what is left out, or how it is reported, as from what is actually presented. Such was the case with some of the histories used here (see, e.g., Roe 1996). Documents may also operate as ‘guides for action ... [and where they are] the outcome of collective decision making through negotiation or consultation, they become important tools in the practice of industrial relations’ (Healy 1997: 209), as is recounted in Chap. 7 with the implementation of the national agreement.

The contribution made by the interviews was vital in developing theory, going deeper into the barriers to eliminating discrimination and also allowing assessment of how interviewees’ backgrounds might contribute to their attitudes and behaviours. In particular, this provided a rich source of evidence for men’s and employers’ resistance to change despite the success of women’s campaigning. Crucial issues of process, such as collective bargaining and work organisation, were teased out. In particular, it was the main method of giving women a voice in identifying their own problems and of relating these to the attitudes exhibited by men in the workplace. One aspect of the terminology used in explaining some aspects of the research needs explaining. It has become more common to refer to the relevant union officials as paid officials rather than full-time officials (FTOs), in order to recognise that the full-time model of union office may disadvantage women and there is no reason to insist on full-time hours. However, it is used knowingly in this book to attest to the fact that such officials were, in fact, full-time.

Given the author’s role as EPA, participant observation was also an important aspect of the research. While this requires strenuous efforts on the part of a researcher in maintaining ‘a high degree of self-awareness (Bryman and Bell 2011: 440) to counteract the effects of such familiarity with the research subjects, it also allowed the author to utilise her experience to ‘inject some judgement about employer and Federation claims ... [and therefore] the gap between rhetoric and reality’ (Roe 2003: 10–11).

The purpose of this variety of methods was to examine practice and process in gender power relations at work. It must be acknowledged, however, that capturing practices which tend to occur ‘unreflexively ... [that] happen fast, are “in action” and occur on many levels’ (Yancy Martin 2003: 344) is very difficult and also hard to express clearly. But as Joan Acker (1990) has argued, making such practices visible is essential to challenging discrimination. Creating visibility of practice is the essence of this study and has powerful effects, as can be seen in the news every day at the time of writing, with the erupting sexual harassment scandals emanating from the entertainment and political arenas (see, e.g., bbc.co.uk and other media outlets October/November 2017).

Organisation of the Chapters

This book is divided into eight chapters. Following the introduction, Chap. 2 analyses theoretical contributions to the debate on the causes of women’s unequal pay. The chapter begins with a consideration of different forms of power before discussing Lukes’ (2005) three dimensions of power, with a particular focus on the issues of non-decision-making and covert forms of power. Bradley’s model of gendered power resources (Bradley 1999) is fully explained and then extended to incorporate legal power, something women have fought for using their collective power. The model then builds to discuss the division into primary and secondary power resources and how they can reinforce each other. Women’s late entry into factory work is seen as decisive in weakening their access to crucial power resources.

The rest of the chapter divides between economic explanations for unequal pay, gender-based theories and the workplace effects of gendered processes. Neo-classical theory is quickly disposed of before considering the effects of segmented labour markets and their ability to foster division that works to employers’ advantage (Edwards et al. 1975). While segmentation is easily exposed, it is not clear that employers are always its sole creators, union sectionalism, especially that of craft unions, may also be implicated. However, there is a weakness in its application to discrimination in that it relies too heavily on pre-market disadvantage

(Walby 1988). Theorists of patriarchy (Millet 1971; Firestone 1970) were also unconvinced, believing men were the problem, rather than capitalism. Socialist feminists could not accept such an approach and, instead, sought answers in dual systems theory (Hartmann 1981). The articulation of these processes was difficult to pin down, and it retained the problems of patriarchy's lack of explanatory power and its attendant problems of essentialism and ahistoricism (Rowbotham 1982).

Subsequently, the adoption of intersectionality, a looser conception, allows for complexity, especially in recognising that all women are not the same. It was black women that created this awareness (Crenshaw 1991). However, the tendency to a post-structural or post-modernist approach that some intersectional analysis incurs is not suitable for an industrial relations approach. Instead, this analysis adopts what may be termed a mid-level intersectional investigation (McCall 2005) and seeks to do justice to both the class and gender elements.

Chapter 3 is the first of two chapters looking at the historical processes relevant to understanding gendered workplace practices. This chapter primarily focuses on men's work organisation and pay processes and how they established their dominant position in both—relative to women. It covers the period from the introduction of printing into Britain in the late fifteenth century up to the present day. It examines the formation of the printing craft guild, its effect on the organisation of jobs in the industry and the exclusion of women. Importantly, this gender group formation established men as the dominant force and embedded it to the extent that it became invisible; class relations effectively subsumed into male class relations. The chapter continues with an analysis of the effects of the collapse of this system and how its practices were, nevertheless, carried over into capitalist work organisation. It highlights how the unions addressed divisions in the labour process that created new male segments (contrasted with female segments in Chap. 4). In particular, it exposes the heavily masculine culture of the print chapel.

The chapter also discusses the development of trade unionism, the war of attrition with employers and the development of employers' associations. The advent of national bargaining is covered and the appearance of a plethora of extra payments that had such a marked effect on the gender pay gap (GPG) subsequently. Post Second World War, employers began

to gain greater traction in delivering efficiency and productivity, and this was greatly assisted by technological developments that put a strain on union relations. The resulting mergers are explained, especially the failure to breach the craft/non-craft divide until 1991. The formation of the GPMU is shown to have been long overdue and a response to industrial and political developments that was, arguably, 'too little, too late'. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the merger that ended independent print trade unionism in Britain.

Chapter 4 explains women's entry into the industry and its contested nature. Women are shown to have acted in solidarity with men on many occasions, but where men supported women, it appears it was mostly as a bulwark, protecting men's pay and conditions (Musson 1954; Bundock 1958). Women were excluded where possible and segregated where not. Even when women were first unionised, it was into their own unions, which were generally too weak to prevent their use as cheap labour. Eventually the men's unions were forced to bring them into membership. However, they had limited direct representation, even the forerunner of the London Women's Branch was initially reliant on a male official. It is also apparent that men were able to mobilise state power (Walby 1986) to ensure that women's encroachment into men's jobs was removed after each of the world wars. Gradually, from the 1960s on, women began to gain traction within unions, if not in the workplace. Employers utilised labour market segmentation to their advantage, while male trade unionists protected their status and pay, supporting occupational segregation of women. Even the Equal Pay Act is shown to have had minimal effect. However, from the 1980s structural change within unions increased women's influence, culminating in guaranteed proportional representation (GPR) in the GPMU. But the progressive measures appearing, as they did, so late were insufficient to improve women's access to jobs and pay before industry restructuring removed large numbers from the industry. Women had started out literally invisible and were moving back into that situation in the 2000s.

Chapter 5 moves on to examine the twenty years prior to the research: the period of greatest technical change. The labour process is examined, especially as it relates to the gender divide. Job content and barriers to women's progression are revealed. Traditional factors played a part, such as men's claim

to be the sole workers responsible for heavy lifting, despite evidence to the contrary. The effects of increasing flexibility are also examined. The latter was seen as implicated in the removal of women from the industry, as a response to intensified competition. Skill continued to be a key factor and the monopolisation of skill definitions in favour of men. The outcome was that women remained trapped in jobs defined as unskilled, and the link between the national agreement and job allocation (Craig et al. 1984) was shown to be decisive. Men also became subject to segmentation processes, reducing the numbers able to claim the highest pay.

Chapter 6 examines employer and trade union approaches to tackling discrimination. The existence of a gender inequality regime (Acker 2006) in relation to recruitment, promotion and training becomes apparent. Working patterns, favourable to men but problematic for women with domestic responsibilities, were seen to drive self-selection for the industry, women leaving the industry when children were young and returning at a later time. This is a clear example of an industry resistant to taking responsibility for domestic commitments (Acker 1998). The maintenance of inequality regimes is demonstrated to occur through the operation of asymmetrical power resources that ‘proceduralise’ responses to discrimination that, ultimately, support the status quo. The chapter moves on to consider union structural change. Despite evidence that the union was taking discrimination more seriously, women were still marginalised and so were their bargaining issues, especially pay. Structural change was insufficient, requiring women to make huge sacrifices in order to influence decision-making, and, as McBride (2001) has also found, being blamed for lack of progress. Their relative invisibility is, thus, maintained, and, again, ‘proceduralisation’ is implicated in weakening challenges to the gender regime.

Chapter 7 covers the issues of pay structure, determination and outcomes that are closely linked to work organisation processes. The national agreement played a key part in this analysis, supplemented by a discussion of local bargaining. Member interviews in particular provided an important element in this discussion as they revealed how members respond to processes in which they are largely passive recipients. Class relations demonstrate how the balance of power shifted considerably in favour of employers (Dickens 1997), adversely affecting women, whose

concerns were only beginning to be addressed at this time of union weakness. Economic, social and political factors are acknowledged to be responsible for this development. 'Proceduralisation' is most apparent here, given the effects of pay determination processes. Walton and McKersie's seminal work (Walton and McKersie 1965) is given a gendered reading to make visible the importance of symbolic power in delegitimising both issues of particular importance to women and women as negotiators. As a result, women's issues became visible, but little substantive equality was realised.

Finally, Chap. 8 proposes an explanation for these empirical observations. Utilising the model of gendered power resources, it is argued that women came late to production work. Employers had established the key resource of economic power, while men had acquired technical, collective, sexual and physical power resources. These were sufficient to ensure gendered work organisation and, therefore, pay structures from the outset. Women became a source of cheap labour and men could secure their status against this. While examples of collusion between male workers and employers can be found, it is argued that this is not necessary given the coincidence of interest they shared (Lown 1983). The stability of technology made it difficult to shake gendered work organisation, even when technology changed. Only in the late twentieth century did women begin to marshal sufficient power to challenge their position in the industry. However, technical change, when married to political change, weakened unions at the point where they were beginning to provide greater support to women. In the event, 'proceduralisation' became a mechanism that employers and male workers, sometimes wittingly, sometimes not, utilised to maintain the status quo and retain a focus on class relations that are predominantly identified with white, male trade unionism. Asymmetrical access to power resources made this possible. Ultimately, large-scale contraction of the printing industry removed women's jobs to an even greater extent than men's, rendering them once more largely invisible in work organisation and pay processes. This book begins to explain these processes by outlining existing theories of discrimination and how an analysis of power can strengthen such explanations.

Note

1. In this book ‘communications’ is a loose term denoting recognisable groups of workers such as those in publishing or information technology. However, this work is also being undertaken by customers through desk-top publishing, as is made clear in Chap. 5.

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2), 139–158.
- Acker, J. (1998). The Future of ‘Gender and Organizations’: Connections and Boundaries. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 5(4), 195–206.
- Acker, J. (2006). Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations. *Gender and Society*, 20(4), 441–464.
- Bradley, H. (1996). *Fractured Identities: Changing Patterns of Inequality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bradley, H. (1999). *Gender and Power in the Workplace*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Bradley, H. (2007). *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bundock, C. J. (1958). *The National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Cockburn, C. (1983). *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*. London: Pluto Press.
- Colgan, F., & Ledwith, S. (1996). Sisters Organising – Women and Their Trade Unions. In S. Ledwith & F. Colgan (Eds.), *Women in Organisations*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Routledge.
- Collinson, D., Knights, D., & Collinson, M. (1990). *Managing to Discriminate*. London: Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and Power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.