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Essays *on*
Equality

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Essays on Equality

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Foreword



Julia Gillard
Former Prime
Minister of Australia
and Chair of the
Global Institute for
Women's Leadership

Welcome to this first edition of *Essays on Equality*, a new publication from the Global Institute for Women's Leadership. Written by GIWL researchers, members of our Advisory Council and leading researchers and campaigners, this essay collection provides research-informed reflections on the fight for women's equality.

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand **Helen Clark**, a patron of GIWL, kicks us off, writing on the importance of feminist leadership from men and women to help change mindsets, institutions and the law. She reminds us that we all gain from gender equality, so it is everyone's responsibility.

GIWL Senior Research Fellow Dr **Rose Cook** questions whether the huge growth in diversity and inclusion activities, and the millions invested in them, is actually making a difference. She calls for an evidence-based and targeted approach to D&I training, and highlights GIWL's upcoming executive education programme, which aims to address some of these challenges.

GIWL Advisory Council member Professor **Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic** explains that by mistaking confidence and charisma for competence, we end up with poorer leaders and fewer women at the top. He argues we need to value different characteristics if we are to improve leadership quality and boost the number of female leaders.

Emma Kinloch, GIWL Research and Projects Associate, tackles the thorny issue of Brexit, critiquing the ways in which women have been excluded or undermined during the UK's negotiations for a deal with the EU. Given this is one of the biggest challenges the UK has faced since the Second World War, and the disproportionate way Brexit is likely to impact women, their voices must be heard in this debate.

Another member of the GIWL Advisory Council, **Iris Bohnet**, Professor of Business and Government and Academic Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School, contributes

a piece with colleagues **Siri Chilazi**, **Annisha Asundi** and **Lili Gill Valletta** on what the world of venture capital could learn from orchestra directors, who have combatted gender bias through blind recruitment processes.

Laura Jones, GIWL Research Associate, looks at women and the future of work, arguing that while new technology can help address gender inequality in the workplace, more fundamental structural and cultural changes are needed to make the world of work fairer.

Taking a global look at gender inequality, **Diva Dhar**, Senior Programme Officer, Gender Data and Evidence, at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, writes on one of the most glaring manifestations of inequality between men and women: the gap in unpaid care work, which she argues must be better analysed and researched.

Did you know that the average voter in the UK is a woman? Professor **Rosie Campbell**, GIWL Director, looks at women's policy preferences, how they vote, and whether Britain's politics is changing as, for the first time, female voters became more likely to vote Labour at the 2017 general election.

Finally, **Sam Smethers**, Chief Executive of the Fawcett Society, one of the UK's leading charities campaigning for women's equality, rounds off our collection by highlighting policy changes that could drive real progress in improving women's working lives. Expanding gender pay gap reporting, equalising parental leave and mandating flexible working are just some of her suggestions.

I hope you find these contributions enlightening and informative. While they lay bare the challenges we face, they also offer hope, and crucially, practical solutions to help create a fairer, more equal world. If you'd like to pick up any of the themes here, or have any other thoughts, please do get in touch with the GIWL team: giwl@kcl.ac.uk.

Julia Gillard

Gender equality is everyone's struggle – but also everyone's gain



Helen Clark
Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, former head of the United Nations Development Programme, and member of the Global Health 50/50 Advisory Council

The struggle for women's rights has been the subject of the written word for at least 500 years. Yet progress towards equality is breathtakingly slow. The World Economic Forum estimates that it will take 202 years to achieve parity in the workplace – measured in wages, seniority and participation.¹ Progress is hampered by entrenched social and cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination against women, and by pockets of active resistance to gender equality that persist in many countries, communities and families. Indeed, woven through the rise of authoritarian nationalism in diverse countries around the world is a common thread – an effort to roll back the rights of women.

Nonetheless, the fight for gender equality appears to be gaining momentum, spurred on not only by the rise of more interconnected generations of feminists (both women and men) who argue against the immorality of inequality and mobilise around universal harms, such as violence against women and sexual harassment, but also by an increasing body of evidence showing that gender equality delivers major economic and social returns.

Gender equality in the corporate workplace, for instance, brings financial benefits to companies. When boards are more gender-equal, companies are more likely to be attuned to the attitudes and behaviours of whole populations, rather than of just one half of them. When women participate at a critical mass in politics, women's perspectives are better reflected in legislation and decision-making, with measurable consequences on political agendas. International evidence suggests that when there are significant numbers of women parliamentarians, issues previously unaddressed will come to the fore – not least those dealing with access to healthcare, education and other public services, pay equity and violence against women.

Despite decades of struggle and empirical evidence on the shared benefits of gender equality, however, the march

towards equality faces deeply entrenched challenges. In 2018 the New York Times Glass Ceiling Index found more US Republican senators and Democratic governors named John (14 per cent and 19 per cent respectively) than the total number of women occupying these positions (12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).² A similar story can be told of business leadership: the index noted that there were as many men named James as women heading Fortune 500 companies – 5 per cent in both cases. We need a faster rate of change – ensuring that not only John, but also Jane, Jameela and Jasmin are equitably represented in these seats of power and decision-making in every country and community around the globe.

How do we achieve faster progress towards gender equality, including at the level of leadership? How do we ensure that

“We need to frame gender equality as a good that benefits everyone in society. The fight for equality is a tide that lifts all boats”

women have equitable opportunities to fulfil their potential – both inside and outside the workplace? We need to significantly shift the needle in three areas.

First, we need to frame gender equality as a good that benefits everyone in society. The fight for equality is a tide that lifts all boats. Redefining family-caring roles as shared rather than the principal responsibility of women promotes women’s retention and progression in the workforce and, as evidence increasingly shows, contributes to improved relationships between fathers and their children, reduced risk of divorce, improved outcomes for children and greater family economic security.

For too long the struggle for gender equality has polarised people, created unnecessary divisions and fears, and most damagingly, been viewed as solely the responsibility

“For too long the struggle for gender equality has polarised people”

of women. When a new gender equality initiative, Global Health 50/50, sent out a call for volunteers, 60 people came forward – 59 of whom were women. The idea that it is predominantly the duty of women to further the cause not only perpetuates the false idea that they alone reap the benefits, but also puts the onus on women to challenge and change entrenched power structures. By repositioning gender equality as an issue that benefits everyone, we can dismiss the notion that one group’s equality comes at the cost of another. Gender equality is not a zero-sum game, but a shared responsibility for creating societies that work for everyone.

Second, we need workplaces that allow people to meet their personal and family responsibilities without penalty. We need employers to demonstrate commitment to supporting diversity – including gender diversity – and foster environments that transcend traditional gender norms that keep both men and women from realising their potential. Creating conditions for fair and equitable workplaces requires committed leadership, but employees, staff associations and unions have a role to play too. At a minimum, there should be robust policies and programmes that ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment, promote flexible working hours, mandate paid parental leave and provide support for caregivers.



Recent data shows how far we are from this reality. In a sector collectively committed to achieving gender equality as a Sustainable Development Goal, global organisations active in health should be considered standard-bearers in promoting gender-equitable workplaces. Yet in its review of 200 such organisations, Global Health 50/50 found that only 30 per cent reported having flexible work policies. Meanwhile, just a quarter of organisations publish their sexual harassment policies – an important workplace transparency measure overall.

Third, we need to create structural change. Women cannot achieve equality in the workplace or in positions of leadership unless they have comprehensive equality in all aspects of their lives, underpinned by supportive legal environments. A 2019 report by the World Bank reported that only six countries out of 187 gave women and men equal rights in relation to laws affecting access to employment and entrepreneurial activity.³ In some regions of the world, women had less than half the legal rights of men.

To know whether our efforts are shifting the needle, we can, of course, keep counting the Johns and Janes, but more fundamentally we need rigorous and independent monitoring systems and initiatives that hold policymakers, employers and workplaces to account. We need initiatives like Global Health 50/50, which is showing how evidence, coupled with smart, political advocacy can shine a light on inadequate gender equality practices and drive rapid organisational change. We need more places to follow in the steps of countries like Britain and Iceland in mandating gender pay gap reporting. But gender equality is not simply

about putting women in seats of power that have traditionally been held by men – it means rewiring power structures that dictate who can access opportunity and who cannot, whether they be women or any other underrepresented group. In short, we need shifts in three areas – mindsets, institutions and the law. These can be driven by feminist leadership – from both women and men.

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Most diversity and inclusion training is flawed. Here's how to fix it



Rose Cook
Senior Research
Fellow, Global
Institute for Women's
Leadership

In recent years there has been a huge growth in the diversity and inclusion landscape. From 2014 to 2016 Google alone spent \$265 million on programmes such as unconscious bias training, and research suggests that 84 per cent of organisations in the UK have a diversity strategy. That might sound like cause for celebration. But there's just one problem: there is little evidence that organisations have actually become more diverse as a result.

The proportion of women in senior business roles in the UK fell to 19 per cent in 2018, from a high of 21 per cent in 2017. And over the last 15 years, that figure rose by just one percentage point. Even in companies supposedly concerned with social justice, where diversity training is widely used, senior staff are still overwhelmingly male and some unsettling sexual harassment cases have stained the supposedly forward-thinking veneer.⁴

So why is the “diversity industrial complex”⁵ so lamentably ineffective at improving diversity in organisations? Many of the reasons undoubtedly lie beyond the programmes themselves, in deep-rooted cultural issues and the unequal gender division of unpaid labour globally. But let's take a look at a typical D&I session. Many of us have experience of these sessions, involving large numbers of people who have no choice but to attend, comprising cringeworthy and poorly conceived activities, led by well-meaning external speakers with little expertise in the research behind diversity and inclusion issues nor direct experience of making change in organisations.

According to Katerina Bezrukova and colleagues, who conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of diversity training in 2016,⁶ it's little wonder that these programmes are ineffective when many use negative messaging, focusing on identifying discriminatory behaviour or unconscious tendencies in participants. Programmes are not always sufficiently focused on behaviour change; their methodology

is more suited to raising awareness. In some cases, this will be preaching to the converted; in others it could be perceived as coercive or shaming and met with backlash from those who may feel there is too much attention on diversity issues.

“Diversity training should be ongoing, integrated into a wide range of business activities”

Another factor inhibiting success is that diversity training often consists of a large-scale, one-off, mandatory session. Evidence suggests that diversity training should be ongoing, integrated into a wide range of business activities and processes, while at the same time increasing contact among different groups of employees and fostering shared values. But these principles have made little headway into diversity programmes, which mainly continue to be one-off sessions based on an awareness-raising model.

So far, so depressing. At the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership, we wanted to take a different approach to diversity training, informed by our knowledge of the evidence base and our principles as an institute. We’ve put together an exciting programme that aims to improve workplace diversity and inclusion by addressing every stage of the pipeline as individuals move through organisations: from how people are hired, how work is assigned and what happens during performance evaluations, to how



compensation is determined and how people obtain leadership positions.

Instead of blanket-marketing to anyone who might be interested or encouraging compulsory participation (as is often the case with this type of training), we wanted to target people who have the power to actually change things in their organisation and focus their minds on how to go about it. Often, employees attending mandatory diversity training get on board with the content but have little power to change the structural factors that led to diversity problems in the first place, such as recruitment and promotion practices, working-time policies, bullying and sexual harassment. Our hope is that those attending our courses

“The key to solving the gender imbalance in leadership does not lie in ‘fixing women’”

will have the power to develop evidence-based, tailored strategies to tackle these problems in their organisations.

As an institute, we stress that the key to solving the gender imbalance in leadership does not lie in “fixing women” – for example, making them more confident, increasing their ambition or encouraging them to “lean in”. As Michelle Obama frankly put it: “That shit doesn’t work all the time.”⁷

Moreover, these types of approaches imply that it is up to women to fix diversity and inclusion in organisations. That’s why the first theme of our executive education programme is on changing processes – not people. We will show how organisational processes can often be subtly biased against women and minorities and how workplace norms can undermine even the most progressive initiatives. We will present the research evidence on biased recruitment and retention practices and consider what initiatives might “de-bias” them, drawing both on the research and on our participants’ own unique expertise as agents of change in their organisations.

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“The first theme of our executive education programme is on changing processes – not people”
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Rather than focusing on what helps to promote women and minorities to positions of power, we will consider the nature of power itself, challenging our participants’ understandings of what leadership is.

What traits and behaviours are associated with successful, profitable teams that also have high levels of job satisfaction and healthy staff turnover? We will explore what the research says about what makes

an effective leader, sharing some surprising insights revealing that leadership is not all it seems and can be found in unlikely places.

Finally, our courses will turn to making the case for diverse and inclusive organisations. While there is a lot of evidence on diversity-related problems in organisations, as well as emerging evidence on solutions and the business case for diversity, change won’t happen unless champions can convince their organisations that it is necessary. We will use case studies from businesses that have made significant progress and build on participants’ own experiences of pushing for equality to identify successful strategies for making the case for change.

While we know that training is only one piece of the puzzle, we hope that GIWL’s executive education programme can dispel the idea that just throwing money at the problem will make diversity concerns go away. We want to demonstrate that an evidence-based and targeted approach to training people on diversity and inclusion issues is the only real way to accelerate the pace of change.

For more information
about GIWL’s
executive education
programme, email
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Men outnumber women in leadership because we mistake confidence for competence



Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic
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Leadership, the process that enables individuals to work together in the pursuit of a common goal, has been a critical resource throughout the evolution of humankind. Every significant accomplishment in human history – the use of fire, the invention of writing, the mapping of the human genome, and so on – sprang from collective action that could not have occurred without leadership.

A century of science has provided an enormous amount of evidence about what good and bad leadership looks like, but this does not erase the archetypes of leadership in our minds. Our gut feeling for what constitutes good leadership is shaped much more by our ancestral and evolutionary roots than by the latest research on leadership, as our brains have been shaped by millions of years of evolution. Even when old models of leadership are no longer effective, they still match our imaginary leadership archetypes fuelled by our instincts, and it is not easy to unlearn them.

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“Manifestations of hubris – often masked as charisma or charm – are commonly mistaken for leadership potential”
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In my view, this is the main reason for the uneven sex ratio in leadership and management across the board, throughout countries worldwide. And part of this is our inability to discern between confidence and competence – that is, because we commonly misinterpret displays of confidence as a sign of competence. This is consistent with the finding that leaderless groups have a natural tendency to elect self-centred, overconfident and narcissistic individuals

as leaders, and that these personality characteristics are not equally common in men and women.⁸ So, when it comes to leadership, the only advantage that men have over women is the fact that manifestations of hubris – often masked as charisma or charm – are commonly mistaken for leadership potential.⁹ And again, these occur much more frequently in men than in women.¹⁰



So long as we continue to associate leadership with “masculine” features, we can expect female leaders to be evaluated more negatively, even when their performance

“This tendency to uphold typically male leadership styles as more desirable is costing us, not just in terms of gender equality, but also in terms of lost revenue”

is higher than that of their male counterparts, and even when those who evaluate them are women.¹¹ For instance, a recent study on social sensing, in which male and female leaders were tagged with sociometric badges that monitored everything they did and said for weeks, showed that despite a lack of behavioural or performance differences between men and women, men were promoted to leadership roles much more frequently than women were.¹²

Yet this tendency to uphold typically male leadership styles as more desirable is costing us, not just in terms of gender equality, but also in terms of lost revenue. There is now compelling scientific evidence for the notion that women are

more likely to adopt more effective leadership strategies than men. Most notably, in a comprehensive review of studies, Alice Eagly and colleagues showed that female managers are more likely to elicit respect and pride from their followers, communicate their vision effectively, empower and mentor subordinates, and approach problem-solving in a more flexible and creative way, as well as fairly reward direct reports.¹³ In contrast, male managers are statistically less likely to bond or connect with their subordinates and are relatively more inept at rewarding them for their actual performance.

Indeed, whether in sports, politics or business, the best leaders are usually humble¹⁴ – and whether through nature or nurture, humility is a much more common feature in women than men. For example, women outperform men on emotional intelligence, which is a strong driver of modest behaviours. Furthermore, a quantitative review of gender differences in personality involving more than 23,000 participants in 26 cultures indicated that women are more sensitive, considerate, and humble than men, which is arguably one of the least counterintuitive findings in the social sciences.¹⁵

An even clearer picture emerges when one examines the dark side of personality¹⁶: for instance, our normative data, which includes thousands of managers from across all industry sectors and 40 countries, shows that men are consistently more arrogant, manipulative and risk-prone than women. We also need to acknowledge the importance of emotional intelligence – or EQ – which should be a core competency in any data-driven model of leadership potential. Paying more attention to EQ would augment both the quality of leaders and the number of female leaders, increasing the overall levels of personal effectiveness, self-awareness and transformational leadership in organisations.

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“Whether in sports,
politics or business,
the best leaders are
usually humble”
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So how do we fix this to not just increase the representation of women in leadership but also improve the quality of our leaders overall? As I argue in my latest book, *Why do*

“Too many decision-makers overrate their intuition, and political agendas interfere with the selection of talented leaders”

so many incompetent men become leaders (and how to fix it)?, organisations can take concrete steps. For example, they can stop interpreting displays of overconfidence, narcissism, psychopathy, and charisma as a sign of leadership potential. In an ideal world, leaders would follow science-based practices and prioritise engaging with and inspiring their employees, and providing them with a sense of meaning and purpose.

So we need to properly understand leadership talent and learn how to measure it. These solutions are easier said than done. Too many decision-makers overrate their intuition, and political agendas interfere with the selection of talented leaders, especially when the decision-makers are more interested in their own agendas than their organisation’s wellbeing. Knowing how to detect true leadership potential is clearly not enough. We also have to introduce measures that place better leaders in key roles and promote a culture that helps them succeed.

While it is certainly a sign of progress that a growing number of organisations are putting in place deliberate interventions to increase the proportion of women in leadership, a more reasonable goal would be to focus instead on selecting better leaders, which would also take care of the gender imbalance. There is no conflict between boosting gender equality and boosting leadership quality. On the contrary, it is harder to improve the standard of leadership without improving the number of female leaders.

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No Brexit deal can represent the “will of the people” without women in the negotiations



Emma Kinloch
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Three years, two prime ministers, one big problem.

In the UK our politics has been dominated by one story and one story alone for the last three and a bit years: Brexit. It has led to total paralysis in the British political system. With no consensus in parliament and Boris Johnson's pledge to take the country out of the EU “do or die”, the prospect of a no-deal Brexit is very real indeed. The deadlock faced by our political class is unprecedented in the post-war era.

One solution to the impasse was suggested by the only Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas. In August 2019 she proposed an all-female “Emergency Cabinet” to block a no-deal Brexit. This suggestion drew derision, bemusement and cries of sexism from all sides of the political debate. Citing the pivotal role Christiana Figueres and Ségolène Royal played in bringing about the Paris climate agreement, as well as Betty Williams' and Mairead Corrigan's activism that kickstarted the Peace People's movement during the darkest days of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, Lucas argued that women do politics differently.¹⁷

While there is some debate as to whether this is the case, there is a rich seam of feminist theory on the importance of women's presence in the political process.¹⁸ And the gender-justice argument cannot be overlooked: women make up half the population so should make up half of the voices in political debate.

As Lucas highlighted, this gap in women's representation is never more apparent than in the Brexit process – and it has been since day one, when Theresa May appointed three men to the positions of foreign secretary, international trade secretary and Brexit secretary to carry out the UK's negotiations with the EU.

Now Boris Johnson's “war cabinet”,¹⁹ a group of cabinet ministers tasked with thrashing out Brexit, comprises

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove, Chancellor of the Exchequer Sajid Javid, Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay, Foreign Secretary Dominic Rabb and Attorney General Geoffrey Cox. Notice any similarities? The full cabinet has nine women members, so why not give one a seat at the table? The most puzzling omission is

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“The full Cabinet has nine women members, so why not give one a seat at the table?”
.....

Home Secretary Priti Patel – she holds one of the great offices of state, and you might think her input was a necessary addition, particularly given that, as the government itself has acknowledged, a no-deal Brexit risks causing civil disobedience, undermining national security and leading to increased immigration checks.²⁰

Boris Johnson isn't the only one who has form when it comes to excluding women from the key sources of power in British government. Just look at his neighbour's team at Number 11, the residence of the chancellor. Arguably the most powerful government department, the Treasury is now run by an all-male ministerial team, led by Sajid Javid. Decisions made by Treasury officials in the event of a no-deal exit will be hugely consequential to the future of the UK.

The obvious counterargument to the charge that women have been silenced in this process is that our second-ever female prime minister, Theresa May, was in charge of Brexit for three years. The symbolic power of having a woman in the highest political office of the nation cannot be denied, yet within months of taking office May was subject to the usual slurs often directed at female politicians. The “Maybot” cartoon,²¹ a caricature of an unfeeling robot with no capacity for empathy, took on a life of its own, illustrating the age-old double bind for female leaders that you are either too sweet to lead or to shrill (or robotic in this case) to like.²²

The seeds of the Maybot nickname were sown during May's leadership election, when she was challenged by fellow leadership contender Andrea Leadsom for not having children and therefore less of a “stake in the future”.²³



Another aspect of May's premiership is also borne out in the leadership literature. While many are familiar with the “glass ceiling” that stops women from reaching power, the “glass cliff” appears when women are promoted at a time of crisis: when they fail to solve the mess they have inherited, they fall or are pushed off the cliff.²⁴

May's trajectory clearly maps onto this – in the wake of an unexpected referendum result she was almost immediately selected as prime minister, endured a shaky general election, had her exit deal rejected repeatedly by parliament, before being metaphorically pushed off the cliff and being forced to resign. The final insult is that when women have “had a go” at being leader and failed, there is a retreat back to the old norms of alpha male leadership. Case in point: Boris Johnson.

“While many are familiar with the ‘glass ceiling’ that stops women from reaching power, the ‘glass cliff’ appears when women are promoted at a time of crisis”

So why does this matter? Aside from the gender injustice of having only one half of the population taking decisions on the most significant political process since the Second

World War, the impact of a no-deal Brexit will disproportionately affect women, according to research by the Women's Budget Group and the Fawcett Society. In particular, they raise the devastating effect an economic downturn would have on sectors with a high proportion of female workers, such as food, clothing and textiles.²⁵

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"The impact of a no-deal Brexit will disproportionately affect women"
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Any downturn, whether as a result of a no-deal or any other type of Brexit, will lead to reduced economic growth. And as we saw during the recent years of austerity in the UK, slow growth is usually offset by government cuts that hit women hardest.²⁶

Without women in the rooms where power lies, decisions will be taken on what type of Brexit the UK pursues, and on how to mitigate any potential fallout, which do not represent the will of the people – whether they voted Leave or Remain. How could they with half of the population unrepresented? If we don't redress this imbalance, it's women who will yet again pay the price.

Be like an orchestra: how to eliminate gender bias in venture capital funding



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Blind auditions, where musicians perform behind a curtain, helped increase the fraction of female musicians in the major US symphony orchestras from about 5 per cent in the 1970s to almost 40 per cent today. When orchestra directors couldn't see who was playing, they based their selection decisions on the quality of the performance, rather than the personal qualities of the performer. An ingenious design intervention, the curtain and the accompanying research remind us that good people interested in maximising the quality of their product – such as orchestra directors seeking the best-sounding music – fall prey to bias.²⁷

In the world of early-stage investing, what venture capitalists (VCs) arguably care most about is the return on their investment. But they fall short of creating a level playing field for the most brilliant investing minds. Much like orchestras 50 years ago, US venture capital today is dominated by men – approximately 90 per cent of VC investors are men and roughly 88 per cent of venture dollars go to all-male founding teams. These venture capitalists have never had the benefit of the curtain to come face-to-face with how their biases affect their decision-making. They still believe in the power of meritocracy.

Unfortunately, the evidence tells an overwhelmingly different story. Research by Paul Gompers,²⁸ Laura Huang,²⁹ Malin Malmström,³⁰ Lakshmi Balachandra,³¹ Alison Wood Brooks and colleagues³² suggests that female entrepreneurs are not given a fair shake, and neither are female investors. These challenges within the investor community also have a direct impact on the ecosystem of female founders seeking and securing funding. According to Pitchbook, all-female founders received only 2.3 per cent of the \$130 billion in total VC funding in 2018.

So, why can't venture capitalists be more like orchestra directors? We set out to explore this question, partnering with the New England Venture Capital Association³³ and



Culturintel,³⁴ a female co-founded AI-powered research firm. In 2018, we conducted various in-depth one-on-one interviews with male and female VCs, and took a look at what venture capitalists and entrepreneurs were saying about the process of raising capital in more than 500,000 open-source conversations online across diverse gender and ethnic segments.

The curtain intervention is increasingly popular among organisations like the UK government, KPMG and HSBC, which are experimenting with blind recruitment – and tech start-ups like London-based Applied³⁵ are providing the software to implement the practice. But it's not had much impact on venture capital pitches thus far. One challenge is that in contrast to orchestra directors, who are looking for the best performers today, venture capitalists are looking for the people who will generate the best financial returns tomorrow.

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"Female entrepreneurs are not given a fair shake, and neither are female investors"
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Investors take a bet on the future. While they care about someone's historical track record, they invariably evaluate founders based on potential rather than performance. It is all about trust – and people are more likely to trust others who look like them.

Much of the research on "potential bias" so far has taken place in corporations and shows that when performance appraisals are based

on both past performance and future potential, the gender gap is much more pronounced.³⁶ Or, as articulated by one of the VCs we interviewed: “Women get promoted on performance, and men get promoted on potential.” A female founder explained how this applies to securing venture capital funding: “Guys secure tons of funding out of a paper-napkin idea versus ... women and femme entrepreneurs, they have numbers, they have traction and still they hear, ‘It’s not enough. You need to come back with more proof.’”

Earning someone’s trust is hard enough, but so much harder when a person from an underrepresented group is perceived to be “guilty” or untrustworthy absent proof to the contrary. Or as one entrepreneur suggested: “Men are good investments until they prove otherwise. Women are unsound investments until they prove they are worth taking a risk on.” Our research shows that, much like in law, trust defaults matter.³⁷ When the baseline was no trust, the participants in our experiments chose to invest 28 per cent of their available resources in their counterparts. When people started with a high level of trust and had to decide how much to distrust their counterparts, they ended up leaving 52 per cent of their assets with their counterparts.

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“Venture capital firms should aim for more diversity in their own ranks as well as among their investments”
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While “fund unless proven otherwise” is likely a hard sell for investors, defaulting to yes is a practice a number of promotion committees have adopted in trying to overcome the widely documented gender gap in promotions. Besides, introducing the curtain might not be so elusive after all. London-based Fuel Ventures³⁸ announced that it would anonymise incoming pitches for three months to remove bias after the firm learned that only 4 per cent were from female founders. While it is too early to judge the model’s returns, this type of experiment at VC firms suggests that some investors are taking inspiration from orchestra directors.

Even if most VC firms balk at the idea of moving to all-out blind evaluations, they should still aim for more diversity in their own ranks as well as among their investments – especially given that companies with a female founder

outperform their male counterparts by 63 per cent, according to a 10-year study by FirstRound.³⁹

Diversity within companies also creates a fairer playing field for founders, as research suggests that VC firms with female partners are twice as likely to invest in companies with a woman on the management team, and three times more likely to invest in companies with female CEOs.⁴⁰ Along the way, this would increase the diversity of ideas getting funded.

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“Basing HR procedures on evidence-based insights is not rocket science but does require deliberate effort”
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To get there, firms will have to rely on a number of tools offered by behavioural science. Overall, it comes down to more structure and more accountability at the firm level, including professionalising and centralising HR procedures. Almost everyone seems to agree that there is much room for improvement in this area: a mid-level female VC suggested: “It goes back to how we all hire people ... Do I like that person? Am I having fun talking to them in this interview? Do I have things in common with them? If you hire people that way, you do not end up with diversity.”

Basing HR procedures on evidence-based insights is not rocket science but does require deliberate effort. VC firms should consider using formal processes for their hiring, including going beyond one’s network in recruitment and deal sourcing; employing state-of-the-art evaluation processes; and formalising onboarding, performance reviews and promotions.

Orchestra directors needed a process change in the form of the curtain to hear the quality of the music instead of seeing the people playing it. In the same way, venture capitalists can redesign their processes – institute a curtain of their own – to recognise the best talent and realise maximum returns.

The future of work can be gender-equal – but technology is only part of the solution



Laura Jones
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“Don’t worry – you’re totally replaceable” is not a phrase we typically associate with career success. In the context of discussions about the future of work, it may conjure up images of super-smart machines taking human jobs. But for women, it may be the key to finally cracking gender equality at work.

To see why, we must turn to an unlikely source: pharmacists. Analysis by Harvard economist Claudia Goldin shows that, compared with other professional groups, pharmacists have a minimal gender pay gap.⁴¹ Hour for hour worked, male and female pharmacists earn almost the same amount. The reason, Goldin argues, is because pharmacists don’t receive a pay premium for long working hours. When pharmacists work longer, they get paid more – but no more for the 50th hour than for the first.

The reason for this is that pharmacists are replaceable. To you or me, one pharmacist is pretty much the same as another. This means there is little need for them to work exceptionally long hours to meet the needs of their clients (they can just hand over to their colleagues), and they can pick their shifts to fit around their lives without suffering career penalties.

By contrast, in many other industries irreplaceability is a worker’s USP. To their clients, lawyers and consultants are (they hope) one-offs. It would be unprofessional of me to send in John when you’ve hired Jane, so there is a strong incentive for Jane to overwork, as only she can get the job done, and done at the time that suits her client.

In these occupations, hour-for-hour earnings rise as working hours increase, so that consultants working 80-hour weeks earn many multiples of their colleagues working a 40-hour week. You can see the problem here for gender equality. These occupations are also those with the largest gender

wage gaps and the largest wage gaps between mothers and childless women.⁴²

The solution, then, to the remaining gender inequality in the labour market (not to mention the negative effects of long hours on physical and mental health) is for all of us to be more like pharmacists. We must design work so that firms do not have an incentive to pay a premium to those who work long hours, and workers have more flexibility over where and when they work. One way that becomes possible is if we become better substitutes for each other.

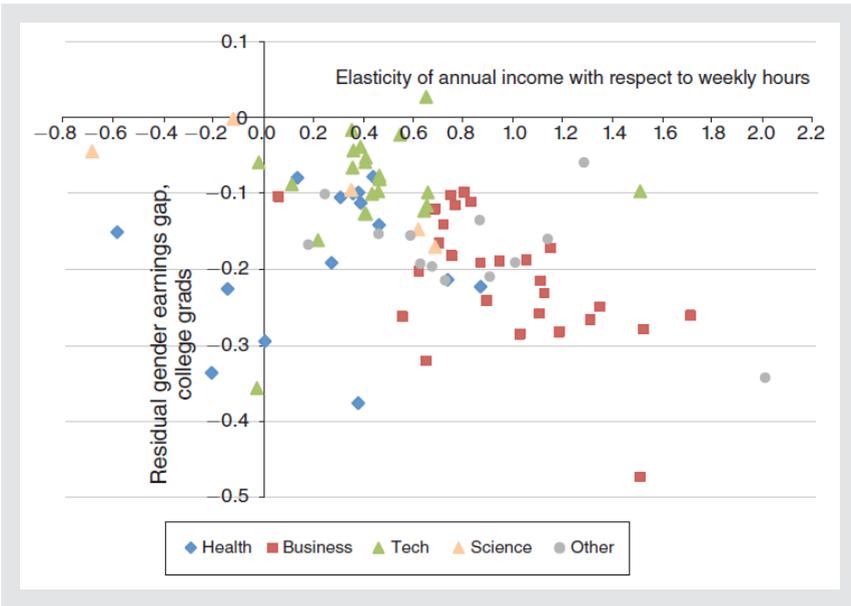
Surely this should be possible, you might think. After all, workplaces have never been more flexible or mobile, while technology means we are no longer chained to our desks and more of us than ever can work where we like.

But at second glance, things are less clear. While flexibility may be increasing for some, so too are the rewards associated with overwork. Sociologist Youngjoo Cha's work shows that in the 1970s Americans working more than 50 hours a week experienced an hour-for-hour wage penalty compared with those working up to 40 hours a week.⁴³ By 2000 this had changed into a premium, and the proportion working these hours had grown. This effect was so strong that it partially cancelled out the gains made by women's increased education over the same period.

It is easy to point the finger at broad, seemingly unstoppable forces, such as competition in the era of globalisation and the flexibility-enabling technology that means we can now always be "on", and conclude there is little we can do to stem the tide.

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"We must design work so that firms do not have an incentive to pay a premium to those who work long hours"
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There is cause for qualified optimism, however. As others have argued, technology is not an external, apersonal force, but a "crystallisation of society".^{44 45} Any impetus towards overwork is less to do with the technologies themselves than with the expectations and



As the relative premium an occupation places on long working hours rises, so too does the gender gap in wages

The graph above shows the relationship between the gender wage gap in an occupation (y axis) and the relative returns to overwork (x axis).

The further down the y axis, the greater the gender pay gap in an occupation.

The further to the right along the x axis, the greater the relative premium placed on long working hours in an occupation.

Source: Goldin (2014). Data from American college graduates 2009-2011 working in the 95 highest-paying occupations.

working practices that have built up around them, and upon which they were built. With that in mind, we can avoid falling into the trap of seeing technology or flexibility as problems or solutions in and of themselves, and towards thinking about changes to job design that can harness their full potential and reduce incentives to overwork.

Substitutability may simply be a by-product of the way that pharmacies are set up, but it wasn't always so. 40 years ago most pharmacists ran their own practices, and were forced to live their lives at the beck and call of their customers. Now most are employed by large companies, and advances in information sharing technology and processes mean a seamless service.

It might be hard to think of ways to introduce this logic into other workplaces, but increasingly innovative researchers are partnering with forward-thinking companies to test out ways to do so.

To break the idea that they were unable to perform unless they were available for their clients 24/7, Leslie Perlow

and her team at Harvard implemented a programme with a consulting firm mandating that everyone on the team take one night off a week without calls or emails.⁴⁶ Despite initial resistance, the teams who took part in the experiment reported greater job satisfaction and increased work performance.

Called in by the bosses of a Fortune 500 company worried about employee burnout and high turnover, Phyllis Moen and Erin Kelly designed a programme to increase employees' control over where and when they worked, the core of which was to bring employees and managers together to ask creative questions about working processes that had been taken for granted.⁴⁷ Compared with control groups, Moen and Kelly's experimental groups reported less stress and reduced turnover.

The key is that these are universal approaches to redesigning work, rather than alternative practices which offer individual accommodations to a select few individuals (usually women) who suffer career consequences. Tactics such as these, and other practices which guard against the need for long working hours, such as overlapping skillsets, team-based relationships, and the creation of procedures to maximise knowledge-sharing, need to be used alongside more traditional "individual" options such as job-sharing.

These changes are likely to encounter resistance because they are threatening to the identity of senior leaders brought up in the old way of doing things. But this can surely be overcome if we point out the benefits that will likely accrue to companies who can crack this code.

Overwork is not just bad for women; it's bad for men, too – and translates into increased absenteeism, higher turnover and reduced productivity.⁴⁸ This was true in the 19th century. Back then, hard-fought union battles that led to a reduction in the working day from 10 to eight hours were followed by increased productivity and fewer expensive accidents. Similar changes today are likely to have an even greater impact. Who wants to be the last sucker left paying a premium for an exhausted worker?

Women's unpaid care work has been unmeasured and undervalued for too long



Diva Dhar
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The gender gap in unpaid care work (UCW) is one of the most glaring manifestations of inequality between men and women around the world. Women perform 75 per cent of such work globally, dedicating, on average, four hours and 25 minutes daily to it – more than three times men's average of one hour and 23 minutes. 606 million women of working age perform UCW on a full-time basis, compared with just 41 million men. While it's often not acknowledged or appreciated, unpaid care work really is work – often very hard work. It's essential not just for families, but for the economy as a whole, too.

According to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) definition, UCW encompasses three categories of activities: domestic services for own use within the household, caregiving services to household members, and community services and help to other households. Measuring and recognising this unpaid work is important for several reasons. First, the gender gap in UCW is itself a significant indicator of gender inequality. Second, poor estimation of UCW has



led to underinvestment in public policies and services to address the issue and associated social and economic losses.

Not only is UCW itself a manifestation of gender inequality, but the disproportionate burden borne by women and

girls around the globe has a ripple effect on other domains of their lives, such as education and paid work. With girls doing more UCW, inequalities compound from an early age and diminish girls' social and economic participation, as well as their physical and mental health. Globally, girls aged between five and 14 years old spend 40 per cent more time – or 160 million more hours per day – on unpaid household chores and collecting water and firewood compared to boys. This gender gap increases with age, peaking for women between the ages of 25 and 44 – the prime years for employment and career-building. No wonder that less than half the women in this age bracket are counted as “working”, in the formal sense of the word, by official statistics.

Feminist researchers and advocates have been clamouring for decades for better recognition and valuation of unpaid care to inform social policies and services. The economic contribution of UCW is roughly estimated at \$10 trillion per year, around 13 per cent of global GDP, yet it is not recognised as “work” that is a vital input into economic growth. Besides, this huge (and inexact) number doesn't even begin to capture women's lost autonomy and economic potential. But as the issue begins to receive more attention, there is a growing impetus for better measurement, increased data collection, and stronger evidence on programmes and solutions to address unpaid care. There are three major ongoing efforts to move the field forward to better measure and recognise UCW.

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“While it’s often not acknowledged or appreciated, unpaid care work really is work – often very hard work”
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The first is inclusion in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which now stress the importance of addressing the gender gap in UCW, helping to boost calls for better measurement and policy change. SDG Target 5.4 acknowledges the need for action in both the public and private spheres to redress the gender balance in UCW, highlights the importance of public policy and services to lighten the burden of UCW overall, and calls for redistribution and sharing of UCW within the family and household. The accompanying indicator mandates the reporting and collection of data on time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location. UCW has also been an important theme in numerous influential reports from the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and Goalkeepers, among others.

The second key move has been formal recognition of UCW as a form of work, which happened in 2013, at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, convened by the ILO. UCW is now categorised as a subset of “work” alongside employment, underscoring women’s economic contributions. This shift stressed the importance of considering and measuring unpaid work to both the policy and statistical communities. Over the last few years, the Women Work and Employment partnership between the ILO, World Bank, Data2x and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has been working to develop guidance and operationalise this new definition of work. The partnership is piloting, validating, and harmonising measures to better capture women’s work in household and labour force surveys around the world. This will help uncover the breadth of women’s unpaid work and more accurately value their diverse roles and contributions to the economy.

The third development has been in advancing measurement and data collection. Time use surveys (TUS) are the primary method for collecting data on unpaid work. However, only 88 countries have ever conducted some form of TUS, partly because they can be complex, costly and burdensome. But in recent years, researchers have been working on innovative approaches to collect better data in

this area, including lighter time use modules to include in more periodic labour force surveys (eg ILO); phone surveys (eg National Council of Applied Economic Research and University of Maryland) and even technologies such as wearable activity trackers (eg World Bank) or necklace cameras (eg University of California, Berkeley). These methods will increase the reliability and quality of evidence to show the extent and distribution of care work.

These are important signs of progress, because when accurate data is collected and made available, calls for action can be made and decisions taken. And this can help transform women's lives. For example, data on the "care deficit" in Uruguay helped make the case to expand care services for pre-school children and the elderly. In Finland, data on care and employment led to a string of policies to close the gender gap, such as increased paternity leave and free daycare for pre-school children. Moreover, recognising unpaid care as work is a first step in valuing activities carried out predominantly by women.

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"Researchers have been working on innovative approaches to collect better data on time use"
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This, alongside shifting gender norms around UCW, will be crucial to encourage men to take on more of the unpaid care burden, particularly as the number of women in the labour force increases.

This upsurge of work in measuring, tracking and valuing UCW, and increased efforts to use data to galvanise policymakers, is hugely encouraging. While there is a long road ahead, governments should pay attention to the data and do far more to put in place the policies, services and infrastructure that recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.

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"When accurate data is collected and made available, calls for action can be made and decisions taken"
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The “women’s vote” is a myth: the average voter is a female voter



Rosie Campbell
*Professor of Politics
and Director, Global
Institute for Women's
Leadership*

A staple of every election is a discussion of the “women’s vote”, as if women are distinct from the “normal” votes cast. Given that women make up 51 per cent of the UK population and an even greater proportion of eligible voters – and are just as likely to vote as men – the average voter is in fact a woman.

The average voter behaves differently from male voters in some ways. Women are disproportionately represented among undecided voters, and they tend to make up their minds who to vote for closer to election day. In 2017, for example, data collected in April and May in the run-up to the British general election showed that 18 per cent of women compared with 10 per cent of men said they did not know who to vote for. Women say that they are less interested in politics than men (70 per cent of men and 62 per cent of women reported being interested in politics in 2017), although this gap is reversed when women are asked

“Women tend to favour increased taxation and spending on public services more often than men”

how interested they are in specific policy areas such as education or health. Women are also more likely to select the “Don’t know” option in political attitude questions and on average score slightly lower than men on political knowledge measures.

But in the end, women are just as likely to vote as men. Indeed, in raw terms, women are slightly more likely to vote than men, although this is due to women’s greater longevity combined with higher levels of electoral participation among the old; turnout among women and men of the same age is pretty similar. The growing “grey” vote is much more a female vote than the electorate overall.



There are also consistent sex differences in some political attitudes. Women tend to favour increased taxation and spending on public services more often than men, and they are less likely to support cuts in expenditure on key public services (health and education in particular), perhaps unsurprisingly as such spending cuts have a larger impact on women than men. Women have more egalitarian views than men on a number of issues: they tend to be more progressive on gender equality and less often express racial prejudice or homophobia than men. And there are differences in what political scientists call salience, the priority men and women attach to particular topics. Women report more concern about education and health, while historically men gave relations with the EU and taxation greater priority. But in recent years the gap in strength of feelings about the EU has declined, and there was not a significant difference in the way men and women voted in the 2016 EU referendum, even though men remain slightly more likely than women to be more fervently anti-EU.

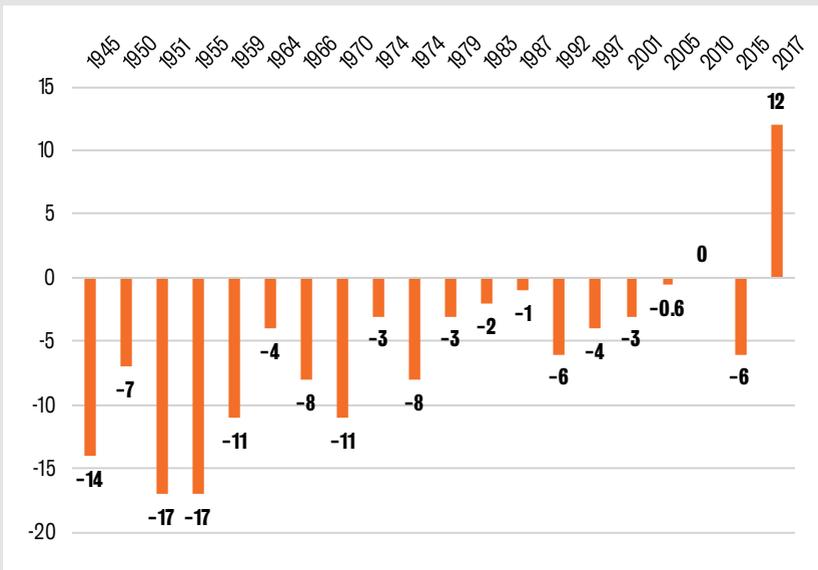
All of the above is well-documented. But the truth about women voters is more inconvenient for those who would find it easier to trot out a simple narrative about what women want. The reality is that there is no single story to tell about women voters. They are not some homogenous group that party strategists can target with ease; they are as

divided in their opinions as men are. Moreover, although there are differences between women and men in their political behaviour, the similarities are often much stronger. This was especially true when it came to voting – since 1974 female voters usually behaved in largely the same ways as male voters – or at least it was until 2017.

Historically, women voters tended to be slightly more likely to vote Conservative than male voters. New Labour managed to reduce this advantage by picking up the votes of younger women, particularly middle- and higher-income mothers, but in most recent elections the overall picture was one of little or no difference in support for the main parties between the sexes. The chart below illustrates the gender gap in support for the two main parties from 1945 to 2017; it is calculated as the difference between the Con-Lab lead for women and for men. A positive score indicates that men are more likely to vote Conservative, a negative score that women are more likely to do so. The decline in Conservative leanings among women voters is apparent, and from 1974 to 2015 the gap rarely reached statistical significance. Given the numbers involved, these

Gender gap in support for two main UK political parties

Positive score indicates men more likely to vote Conservative; negative score indicates women more likely to.



differences may still affect the election outcome, but it also means that they were small enough that variations in the gender gap in individual surveys can be produced by random error.

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“This reversal of the traditional party gender gap might represent a tipping point”
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In 2017 we saw the first election where significantly fewer women voted Conservative than men, with the Labour Party eight percentage points ahead among women compared with men. This produces a 12-point gender gap, larger than that seen in any election since the 1950s, and one that is in the opposite direction to the historic trend.

This reversal of the traditional party gender gap might represent a tipping point where the UK’s electoral politics begin to mirror those in the US, where more average voters than men have supported the Democratic presidential candidate in every election since 1980. However, before announcing that the American gender voting gap has come to the UK, we should exercise a little caution, both because 2017 was merely one election and because of the unique circumstances of that one election, in which a late swing played such a large part in the result, since that late-swing will have involved more women than men changing their minds.

So we cannot tell at this stage whether 2017 was a blip or the start of a more fundamental realignment in British politics, with the gender gap flipping directions. Either way, election strategists would be best advised not to ignore the potential for average voters to drive election results.

What will it take for women to be equal at work in the UK?



Sam Smethers
Chief Executive,
Fawcett Society

At the Fawcett Society we focus on the structural barriers to women's equality. But there are clearly cultural and attitudinal barriers too. The argument is often made that changing the law won't help and what we need to do is to change workplace culture. Yet we know that attitudes, behaviours, culture, law, policy and leadership are all interconnected and influenced by each other. The challenge is that we need change across all of these areas if we are to achieve equality for women at work. So what would really make the difference? And where do we start?

Inequality is first and foremost about an imbalance of power. Equal pay legislation, sexual harassment at work, even the parental leave system and flexible working practices, all reflect that imbalance of power in different ways.

Nearly 50 years after the Equal Pay Act came into force in the UK, the employer still holds all the cards when it comes to pay. Gender pay gap (GPG) reporting, which began in 2018 in Britain, helps force large employers to look at themselves and confront the reputational risk of gender inequality in their organisations. But while it provides average pay gap data, it doesn't give the individual woman information about what her colleagues earn, to see whether or not she's being paid equally for doing the same job or work of equal value. This has to change.

Moreover, the focus of GPG reporting has been on reporting the numbers rather than the action proposed to address the gap. We need a requirement for mandatory action plans from businesses, showing the concrete steps they will take to reduce their pay gaps. Reporting on the gender pay gap by ethnicity is also crucial, as Fawcett research shows that the pay gap is experienced very differently depending on which ethnic group you belong to.⁴⁹ We also want to see more employers covered by GPG reporting, so the threshold must come down to include companies with 100 employees or lower.

One of the main causes of the gender pay gap is the unequal impact of caring roles. But is this surprising when we have a leave system which still presumes it's the 1950s, designed with nine months' paid and three months' unpaid leave for her, compared with just two weeks of paid leave for him? Yes, shared parental leave exists and has been a welcome option for some families, but the mother has to share her leave with the father, and it's rarely paid to him at the enhanced rate, so he can't afford to take it. We have to redesign our leave system to give dads longer, better-paid leave, which is use-it-or-lose-it and can be taken at any point in the child's first year.

In addition to this, there could then be a period of shared leave available too. Let's remove the constraints from parents so that they can share care as they wish. If the presumption was equal responsibility in caring for children, we would design our leave system very differently. The fact that it is

"We have a leave system which still presumes it's the 1950s"

not is, in the main, driven by outdated attitudes about whose job it is to care for children.

The right to request flexible working has been a huge success. But the perception prevails that it's more about tweaking the nine-to-five model than an opportunity to transform the way we work. Just 15 per cent of jobs are advertised as flexible,⁵⁰ and one in three requests to work this way are turned down. Many workers do not have access to flexible working, and the lower-paid experience the least flexibility according to a recent TUC survey.⁵¹

We could transform this picture overnight if we legislated to introduce a presumption of flexibility, making every job flexible from day one unless there is a good business reason for it not to be. If the default was flexible rather than inflexible, we would start the conversation in a different place.

Senior roles must also be made available on a part-time or job-share basis. If we assume that the higher you go the longer your working hours become, we will never shake the near-universal male domination of leadership in business and other sectors.

Another fundamental change we want to see is proactive responsibility placed on employers for the culture they promote in their own organisations. We have called for a new duty to prevent harassment, now the subject of a government consultation,⁵² because we want to see more done to prevent the behaviours and incidents, so powerfully demonstrated by the #MeToo movement, that women experience on a daily basis. By configuring equality in terms of individual rights, we have failed to address who is responsible for creating the conditions for equality to exist.

An example of this is the debate about non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), which have been blamed for covering up harassment and discrimination. But for the individual woman, the right to settle a grievance or dispute without having to go public at work or more widely may be extremely important. In our rush to dispense with NDAs, let's not lose focus on her and what is in her interests. Her threat to talk about it may be all the bargaining power she has to resolve the issue and move on. It is not her job to sort out the organisation – that is the employer's responsibility.

.....
“We want to see proactive responsibility placed on employers for the culture they promote in their own organisations”
.....

Don't get me wrong, we want to see NDAs reformed as they have been widely abused. But they are a symptom of a bigger problem, which is the imbalance of power. A duty to prevent harassment and discrimination on the part of the employer would rebalance things and get the emphasis right regarding the highly sensitive and difficult tasks of raising disputes or grievances, without taking anything away from women in the workplace and their rights.

Finally, we need to better value the work that women do, get more women into sectors of the economy where they are underrepresented and into senior positions. Adopting a real living wage for the lowest-paid would be a step forward. Targets, quotas and positive discrimination could provide a step change in women's senior representation if we are bold enough to go there. Dealing with the underlying gender stereotypes we promote and replicate is more challenging, because they are everywhere and they start from a young age. But Fawcett's Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood is looking at how we can better support parents and teachers and what responsibility the commercial sector has for change.⁵³

I don't pretend that the changes we propose provide all the answers. All of the above needs to be underpinned by compelling leadership and confident managers who buy in to the vision for equality and don't act as roadblocks to policies and procedures that work. But government can and should do more to drive progress. It is time to stop accepting the glacial pace of change and instead, when we say we want gender equality, start to look like we really we mean it.



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