

**Men, Gender and Work in Dublin:
Initial Findings on Work and Class*.**

John Goodwin

Address for correspondence:
Centre for Labour Market Studies,
University of Leicester,
7-9 Salisbury Road,
Leicester LE1 7QR.
Tel: (UK) 0116-252-5944
Fax: (UK) 0116-252-5953

e-mail: jdg3@le.ac.uk

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the
British Sociological Association Conference,
Glasgow 6-9th April 1999

Abstract

One of the most important events in the development of sociology was the feminist critique of the 'male' sociological orthodoxy, and as we approach the millennium, the need for such a radical 'sociology of gender' remains. However, for the gender debate to be truly radical, sociology has to fully encompass the view that men need to be considered both empirically as well as theoretically. Indeed, whilst there have been great strides forward in the theoretical considerations of men, a comprehensive 'empirical' analysis of men is still required.

This paper presents evidence on men's lives in the Republic of Ireland. In the 1990s, the Republic of Ireland has experienced one of the most dramatic economic transformations in Western Europe. However, regardless of the size and longevity of such economic change, a sizeable part of the Irish population has not benefited from this economic success. Unemployment remains at around 11 per cent, of which seventy three per cent are men.

Using data collected from 170 Irish men, during 1997 and 1998, this paper will contribute to the gender debate by outlining why an empirical consideration of men is important and by documenting and exploring how men experience working life and economic change in Ireland. An initial analysis of the data suggests that paid 'formal' employment is not important to Irish working class men.

1. Introduction

Ireland has been transformed over the past decade. More accurately, it has witnessed an economic 'miracle'. Since 1987, there has been a sustained and well-balanced economic boom. This remarkable performance has been in stark contrast to the very mediocre performance since the foundation of the state in 1922...Ireland has become the 'Celtic Tiger' economy of Europe, and it is leading the European Union in nearly every economic sphere.

(Sweeny 1998: 1)

As Sweeny (1998) suggests the recent economic 'boom' in Ireland represents was one of the most successful periods in Irish History. Indeed, out of the last ten years, 1996 and 1997, have been the most remarkable in the economic history of the Republic of Ireland. In this time Ireland has witnessed the development of the 'Celtic Tiger' phenomenon and a revitalised optimism amongst the Irish people. To confirm such success, the OECD has demonstrated that Ireland is the fastest growing economy among its 29 members and that this is set to remain the case for 1998. However, alongside this economic miracle, exists a society still affected by economic disadvantage, poverty and deprivation. For example, although official unemployment rates have dropped from 11 per cent to around 8 per cent between 1997 and 1999, those who are unemployed tends to be concentrated among the same sizeable (and homogeneous) group. It is also these individuals who are not feeling the benefits of this recent economic success and who, despite participating in government training, ultimately remain unemployed. A good proportion of this group is male. For example, if one explores the unemployment figure in more detail, it is possible to see that men account for nearly 70 per cent of those unemployed, of which half were claiming benefit for more than three years (as compared to only 16 per cent of female claimants). Alongside this, one can also place a rising male suicide rate which suggests that Irish men are seven times more likely to commit suicide than women (O'Connor 1998). Such debates and issues suggest that an exploration of the Irish male's experience of working life would be a useful contribution to the sociology of gender.

The general aim of this paper is to touch on some of these issues and report on some initial findings of an ongoing study into Irish men's attitudes to and experiences of work. The broader objectives of this research are to:

- explore the linkage between men and work for Irish males;
- explore the content and nature of their work and link it to the broader contextual life processes that they have experienced;
- explore the impact that education and training experiences may have had on their working lives;
- ascertain and explore the attitudes of the respondents to a number of important life issues such as sex equality, household participation, religion, work, life satisfaction, training and education and politics.

The remainder of this paper is organised into four main sections. The first section reflects on the issues central to this research and establishes why it is important to consider men's roles generally and more specifically, why it would be useful to explore these issues in Ireland and amongst Irish men. This debate begins by suggesting that despite the theoretical moves made in the conceptualisation of men and masculinity, good empirical accounts are still largely absent. Following on from this discussion, the current Irish economic 'boom' is explored and the implications for Irish men's working lives are highlighted. In the second section the methodology is outlined and information on the location of the research is presented. Third, the data and findings are discussed around two main themes of *Working Life*, and *Social Class*. Both qualitative data in the form of responses from in-depth interviews and quantitative survey data are presented. This final section is the conclusion in which it is suggested that for the gender debate to be truly radical, men need to be considered both empirically as well as theoretically and that the male experience of work needs to be further documented and explored.

2. Issues for Research: Why Men and Why Ireland ?

We might ask why women are seen as 'working mothers' even though they work in the workforce, while statistics on levels of fatherhood in the workforce remain uncollected.

(Brod 1987: 265)

The feminist critique of androcentric, male dominated sociology is now well documented (for example see Oakley 1974; Morgan 1981; Stacey 1983; Seidler 1994; Goodwin 1999). As a consequence of this, sociological feminist critiques were committed to addressing the discipline's inherent sexism both in terms of its social theory and social research. The product of this project was very powerful and is still central to the gender debates that exist in sociology today. Indeed, so important was this project that it would be time consuming here to reflect fully on the contributions of feminist scholars, and such

contributions have been largely explored elsewhere. However, one main point needs to be made. Namely, that one possible consequence of this feminist critique, is that men have become increasingly hidden in gender based research. For example, on examination of much of the literature on gender and other areas central to sociological enquiry, such as gender and employment, men are often absent or marginal to the analyses made (Goodwin 1999). This was illustrated by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985 and 1987) who, in an analysis of sociological abstracts between 1963 and 1978, raised concerns about the limited availability of good empirically based research on men. They suggested:

Approaching the recent literature, we were concerned with three things: its empirical discoveries, its political assumptions and its theoretical framework. Its empirical content turns out to be slight. Though most social science is indeed about men, good quality research that brings masculinity into focus is rare.

(Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1987: 64)

Such an approach was replicated by Goodwin (1999) who examined the actual number of articles published on gender between 1983 and 1993. Three brief points can be made about those findings. First, as with the results reported by Carrigan et al (1987) the vast majority of gender based research actually looked at the role of women and did not consider the roles of men explicitly. This confirms the views of scholars such as Hearn (1987) but also highlights the still current trend to equate the study of women with the study of gender. The optimistic view of Mac and Ghail (1996) that the situation has changed is open to question and debate. Despite some increase in the publication of material that reflects on men critically, the gender debate is still centred on the experiences of women.

A critical analysis of men and masculinities is particularly important in the study of work, organisations and management. Yet an examination of the available literature reveals a recurring paradox. The categories of men and masculinity are frequently central to analyses, yet they remain taken for granted, hidden and unexamined. Men are both talked about and ignored.

(Collinson and Hearn 1994: 3)

Second, that the vast majority of those articles published on men were in fact mainly from outside Britain and Ireland. As such it seems that British and Irish sociologists only have a limited interest in the issue of men and the nature of men's lives.

Finally, despite the fact that there is an increasing amount of work published on men and despite the fact that men are dealt with in studies of women, one must question how men are actually dealt with in much of this existing literature. The vast majority of the work on men is either theoretical or political, with very few empirical articles being published 'about men'. For example, the work of Hearn, one of the main exponents of men's studies, is largely located within a theoretical discourse (this is also true of a number of others such as Connell 1995 and MacInnes 1997). Yet it seems amazing to note that such a trend still exists. Goodwin (1999) in an analysis of sociological abstracts, suggests that of those article on men written by British or Irish academics, only two were empirically based.

At first sight these arguments are problematic and hint back at problems in sociology's past and the politics of gender research. However, the argument here is not that the feminist critique of sociology was wrong, more simply that considerations of men may continue to be appended to studies of women, which will ultimately contribute very little to our understanding of men's experiences in Britain or Ireland. Where considerations are offered they should attempt to move away from the purely theoretical. What is required is a more integrated approach where the forward moves made in the analysis of women are applied to men and men's issues in an empirical as well as theoretical analysis.

As Brod (1987) suggests this study of men is bringing men back towards critical analysis rather than equation with the generic. What is needed is a critical assessment of what it is to be male. As Hearn (1989) notes, it is no longer possible to take for granted maleness or masculinity. What it is required is an ongoing critique of the historically and culturally accepted notions of what it is to be male.

In order to explore men's lives, via such a schema a location of enquiry is required. Work and employment provide one site for an empirically based sociological consideration of men. The reason for this is that men and work are inextricably linked in most Western societies. Harris (1995) puts it very well.

Work defines men. When young boys are asked the question 'What do you want to be when you grow up?', the answer is not a general statement like 'a loving person', but rather a job title like 'an engineer', 'a pilot', 'a policeman', or a

‘businessman’. When asked, ‘Who are you ?’ a man will respond, ‘I am a carpenter or.....

(Harris 1995: 73)

The implication here is that the work ethic for men is more fundamental than just an ideology of production based on gender. Work, the propensity to work and the ideology of work are linked with the very nature of men’s identity (Hearn 1986; Pringle 1989; Cockburn 1991; Harris, 1995; Collinson and Hearn 1994, 1996; Christian, 1994; Roper, 1994; Goodwin 1999). For many, the position that men occupy in the labour market is very clear, they are either employed or they are seeking employment. What is definite is that men’s lives seem to be closely tied with work and employment.

One area where men’s working lives can be fruitfully explored is the Republic of Ireland. In most current commentaries on employment trends in Ireland (for example see Tansey 1998), using Collinson and Hearn’s (1994) words, men are both talked about and ignored. Whilst some discussions of Irish male sexuality exist (Mac an Ghaill 1996a; Inglis 1997) men’s working lives are often only implied at within discussions of Irish women and work (for example see Shortall 1997; O’Hara 1987 and 1997). One notable exception to this was the work of Curtin and Varley (1987) on bachelor farmers in the west of Ireland, but good accounts of Irish men’s experiences of work remain few and far between.

In the 1990s, the Republic of Ireland has experienced one of the most dramatic economic transformations in Western Europe. Sweeny (1998) hints at this economic transformation as constituting a ‘miracle’ and for evidence cites facts such as the yearly creation of over 50,000 new jobs since 1990; a growth rate of 7.5 per cent a year; a reduction of the national debt to 69 per cent of GNP; a fall in the dependency ratio; and a rise in living standards. Along with this has come a restructuring of the labour market that has seen a rise in women’s employment and a drive towards flexibility and non-standard forms of working (Tansey 1998). However, whether Ireland’s economic transformation is a miracle or not, problems still remain. For example, one of the defining features of the Irish labour market over the last twenty years has been the structural change that has resulted in a surplus supply of labour, giving rise to higher levels of unemployment, in particular male long-term unemployment. The high rates of growth over the last ten

years have not been fully translated into equal or uniform high levels of employment growth. For example, Mitchel (1997) argues that:

Ireland's remarkable economic performance in recent years has been widely acclaimed abroad and greeted at home with justifiable pride and optimism...But there has been a serious negative side to the generally favourable economic trends of recent years. While knowledge-driven industries have proliferated and flourished, there has been a steady decline in low-skilled sectors, where Ireland has few competitive advantages.

(Mitchel, 1997: 1)

Alongside Sweeny's (1998) optimism, one can also place figures such as, in 1991 data on long-term unemployment suggested that 48,518 would remain unemployed for three or more years, in 1996 this figure was 67,955; 35.2 per cent of the long-term unemployed had no qualifications; 44, 878 men and 38,919 women between the ages of 15 and 34 had completed only basic education or had no formal education; unemployment assistance had increased from IR£788,710 in 1993 to IR£799,001 in 1995. In addition the success of the economy is regional. For example, in Dublin in 1995 there were 382,314 recipients of social welfare; in Galway this figure was 46,266; in Donegal it was 53,262. That represents 37 per cent, 25 per cent and 41 per cent of their respective populations (Department of Social Welfare 1996; Central Statistics Office 1998).

For any research interested in men's employment, such a scene of 'poverty and prosperity', of change and division, Ireland represents a valuable location for enquiry to explore questions such as what are individual men's experiences of employment and unemployment ? What does the change towards flexibility mean for men ? Were men prepared for this change by school or training agencies ? What impact does it have on family life ? Is economic expansion eroding the class system in Ireland ? Do all have access to this wealth and are all aware that this 'boom' is going on ?

The need to explore Irish men's lives has not gone unnoticed at a political level. Brian Hayes TD¹, argued in a recent edition of the Irish Times that men were facing problems that they had never experienced before. He suggested that there is a prevailing feeling of loss of identity and purpose that is leading to disillusionment and disconnection. To remedy this he suggested that in Ireland there have been two Commissions on the Status

of Women, but not one for men. If there was a commission on men it could investigate the disaffection that men have experienced and has often lead to crime and suicide.

Take suicide for example. Though not the biggest killer of young men in Ireland... the statistics are nonetheless grim. Twice as many young men die from suicide as from cancer. And yet, despite painstaking studies, says Dr Michael Kelleher of the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF), there is “no universal explanation” for the phenomenon. “But I have scientific evidence... the rate for Dublin city and county, for example, has barely moved in 25 years; Leinster, the most urbanised province, has the lowest male suicide rate of all. It may be that the necessary psychiatric and other support services are less accessible in less populated areas.

(The Irish Times January 10, 1998)

3. Studying Men in Dublin - Methodology and Location

This paper is based on interviews and questionnaire research carried out in North Dublin during 1998. Dublin's Northside is an interesting area in that it is characterised (unlike the Southside of Dublin) with many of the social problems associated with inner city life such as high levels of unemployment poverty and social housing (Nolan *et al* 1994, 1998), large numbers of unskilled workers (Nolan *et al* 1998), high crime rates (Rottman 1989; CSO 1998) educational disadvantage and early school leaving (NESF 1997). The area is also interesting due to the types of interventions designed to try and tackle these problems. One example of this is the Northside Partnership. Northside Partnership is a 'Local Development Partnership Company', set up in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. Partnerships were set up to tackle the problems of unemployment and social exclusion in designated disadvantaged areas. This model is based on the view that issues such as long term unemployment can be tackled locally though the co-operation of community organisations, Social Partners, Government Departments and Agencies.

The area covered by the work of the Northside Partnership (the north city suburbs of Priorswood, Darndale, Bonnybrook, Kilmore, Beaumont, Whitehall, Artane, Donnycarney, Harmonstown, Coolock, Edenmore, Donaghmede, Balgriffin, Raheny,

¹ TD or Teachtaí Dála is Gaelic for 'Member of the House', which in this case is member of the Irish Parliament.

Ayrfield, Baldoyle, Kilbarrack, Grange and Killester) provided a distinct and contained location for the research to take place. Map of the area is provided in Figure 1. An outline of the characteristics of this area is provided below in Table 1.

Figure 1. Map of Area



Source: Adapted from Northside Partnership (1996) *From Welfare to Work : Improving Life in Our Community*, Area Action Plan 1996-1999. The Northside Partnership, Dublin p 3.

As suggested the research utilised both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a two-stage design. The first stage of the research involved the dissemination of a short attitudinal type questionnaire to 156 men. It was arranged for the questionnaires to be distributed at a sporting social club in north Dublin. This venue was chosen as men from a variety of backgrounds and from throughout the Northside frequented the bar. Most importantly contacts had been made with the club previously via one of the clubs officials and access was guaranteed. The questionnaires were distributed over a period of around three weeks and were returned to a contact address in the Irish Republic. The questionnaire contained a number of biographical questions on issues such as age, marital status, occupation and perceptions of social class. Along with this, thirty attitudinal questions were used in an attempt to elicit some information on attitudes to work, home and family, politics and social class and finally education. Around 250 questionnaires

were disseminated and 156 were returned complete. Biographical information on the survey sample is presented in Table 2.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Area

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Population	105,984	
Labour Force	46,744	
Registered Unemployed	9,281	19.85
Registered Long Term Unemployed	5,500	
Under age of 20 with Primary Education Only	23,316	22.0
Left School by Age of 15	40,486	38.2
Lone Parent Households	5,178	
Rented Local Authority Homes	-	13.5
Professional Occupation	-	20.3
Semi & Unskilled Manual	-	25.7

Source: Adapted from Northside Partnership (1996) *From Welfare to Work : Improving Life in Our Community*, Area Action Plan 1996-1999. The Northside Partnership, Dublin.

The second stage of the research was a short series of in-depth interviews. However, as other researchers have noted (Pettigrew 1981) one of the main issues with in-depth interviews is access. Indeed as University researcher with an English accent, the problem of gaining interview of access to interview male Dubliners posed a potential problem. This problem was overcome through a contact in a Northside training centre operated by local Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) Dublin North region. FÁS is Ireland's Training and Employment Authority, and it is responsible for the operation of training and employment; the provision of an employment/recruitment service; an advisory service for industry; and support for co-operative and community-based enterprise. Dublin North is the largest region within FÁS, covering a population of 500,000, a labour force of 200,000, and 31,394 are registered as unemployed (FÁS 1995). The interviews took place at the beginning of 1998 and ten were completed.

Table 2
Characteristics of Survey Sample

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Place of Birth		
Dublin	93	59.6
Not Dublin	63	40.4
Age		
16-20	6	3.8
21-30	35	22.4
31-40	29	18.6
41-50	45	28.8
51-60	30	19.2
61+	8	5.1
No response	3	1.9
Marital Status		
Married	105	67.3
Single	42	26.9
Divorced	1	0.6
Widowed	5	3.2
No Response	3	1.9
Does Partner Work		
Yes	57	36.5
No	51	32.7
No Response	48	30.8
Children		
Yes	103	66.0
No	53	33.0
Ever Unemployed		
Yes	91	58.3
No	63	40.4
No Response	2	1.3
N	156	100.0

Source: Own Calculations based on data from the survey of 'Men's Experiences of Working Life in Ireland 1997-1998'.

In order to put the interviewees at their ease the interviews began with a series of more formal questions structured around what they were doing at present, be it working or participating in a course. Along with these more formal questions, it was hoped to cover issues such as attitudes to work, experiences of work, home and family, experiences of school, reflections of social class and aspirations for the future (a full list of the topics covered and questions asked can be seen in the question guide, Appendix one). However, after the more formal questions were asked the interviews became 'looser', reflecting on these broader issues and the themes and issues raised by the respondent themselves and that were generated through the process of interaction between the interviewer and

interviewed along the lines of Christian (1994) and Oakley (1981). The interviews were recorded with the respondent's agreement, and on average lasted for around 50 minutes. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed to develop a thematic account of Irish men's experiences of work and work related issues.

Table 3
Characteristics of Interviewees

Interviewee	Status	Age
1	Unemployed Male	Aged 30
2	Unemployed Male	Aged 19
3	Unemployed Male	Aged 23
4	Unemployed Male	Aged 41
5	Unemployed Male	Aged 27
6	Employed Male	Aged 35
7	Employed Male	Aged 49
8	Employed Male	Aged 28
9	Employed Male	Aged 24
10	Employed Male	Aged 40

Source: Interviews with Irish Men 1997-1998.

4. Findings and Themes

This section of the paper is based around a number themes that were evident both in the questionnaire survey and which emerged from the interviews. As suggested above the changing nature of the Irish economy raises the possibility of a wide variety of research questions. As suspected the data collected, both in terms of the survey and the interviews, generated a large amount of information all reflecting and touching upon an array of themes. So much was this the case that it, given the limitations of space it is only possible to scratch the surface and report on only two of a possible large themes - Working Life and Social Class. What is presented here are some basic data generated by the survey, followed by a range of extracts from the interviews. In the presentation of the

findings, the discussion attempts to follow Christian's (1994) approach of not offering a great deal of commentary with the responses, but instead let the interviewees 'speak for themselves'.

Working Life

The first theme covered by both the questionnaire and the interview was 'Working Life'. The data from the survey is presented in table four. This data represents the percentage of men who agreed with the attitude statements contained within the survey relating to themes of work. To try and disaggregate the data a little more in an attempt to identify different the data are presented for all men and by the men's own *perceived* social class groupings.

In examining the responses, the data imply that amongst all men there is a majority who agreed with the statements that having any job was better than being unemployed and that work gives men a sense of purpose. The majority also agreed that work is an important part of being an Irish male. Likewise there seems to be a uniform agreement amongst the men in the survey that all men should have an opportunity to work full-time and that they were happy if they had money to do the things they enjoyed. However, the data suggested that those who identified themselves as working class were more willing to give up a job if they did not like it.

More class differences were hinted at (although not statistically significant) when gender and work, or more specifically, women and work issues were introduced into the questions. For example, a higher percentage of men who perceived themselves as working class agreed with the view that men gain more from work than women and that men should get more training and work opportunities. Likewise this group of men were more likely to think that it was less important for a woman to go out to work and that they should not do so if they did not want to. A larger proportion of this group of men thought that they should be paid more than women.

Table 4
Working Life - Attitude Survey Answers, % Agreed

Question	All	Working Class	Middle Class
Having any job is better than being unemployed.	66.0	61.3	69.2
If I didn't like a job I'd pack it in, even if there was no other job to go to.	26.3	35.5	20.5
Work gives men a sense of purpose.	73.1	72.6	73.1
Men gain more from work than women.	19.2	27.4	12.8
More men than women should get training or work	13.5	21.0	10.3
Men should earn more money than women.	21.2	40.3	10.3
There are some jobs women cannot do as well as men.	59.0	59.7	62.8
All men should have the opportunity to work full-time.	77.6	80.6	79.5
It is less important for a woman to go out to work than a man	19.2	33.9	10.3
Women who do not have to work should not do so.	27.6	38.7	23.1
Part-time work is mainly for women.	18.6	25.8	16.7
Working is an important part of being an Irish male.	63.5	67.7	65.4
I am happy enough if I have money to do the things I enjoy	76.3	74.2	76.9
N	156	62	78

Source: Own Calculations based on data from the survey of 'Men's Experiences of Working Life in Ireland 1997-1998'.

Some of these themes were also addressed within the interviews and the respondents were asked whether or not it was important for men to work. Generally speaking the majority of men interviewed thought that it was important for men to work regardless of whether or not they were employed at the present time. However, there seemed to be some differences in the justifications for why men should work depending on whether or not the interviewees were currently employed or not. For example, some of the unemployed men, justification was offered in terms of the traditional breadwinner model.

Well if you had a family or you had someone to support you'd have to make sure you can provide for them...that's the importance of work in my opinion you know...for me?... not necessarily no....er I'd.... I don't want to be sittin around you know what I mean either, you know what I mean ...if go work I can take it...decent...that's the way I look at it... I wouldn't work for peanuts either you know what I mean ...9-5 or 8-10...

(Unemployed Male)

.....er...its...you've got me there.. er....yeah...yes and no, I mean if its not , say like people, like er some fellas might turn around and say right 'I'll do the housework' yu know...the woman go and working he'd look after the kids...and then yu know the way it goes...then erm... I'd think it is yeah...for the man to bring home the wages like

(Unemployed Male)

....in a sense no because.....yu could always do without work cos it makes no difference like...nobody wants to work but if you have to work you have to work....if you want to treat your family right you should have to work like....

(Unemployed Male)

..er.....people's attitudes now have changed yu know... its like... er.. I don't know maybe it was back then like maybe the husband goes 'I'll go out and get a job you stay at home minding the kids' ...nowadays it more or less the woman wants a job and the man wants a job....two separate wages...like they do... they want the.. I think woman they want their independence a bit yu know...but erm I reckon....yeah ...I'd say if two people were in the house working I'd say it would be good...but I wouldn't like...if I was married and if I did have children I wouldn't like them to be away from me wife or the whole day yu know...like you don't know these days who your leaving you kids with yu know.. I don't know

(Unemployed Male)

....of course the longer you a unemployed and you see your friends and there all doing well and kinda they're getting married and they're having kids and they're buying a house and they are changing their house...they are gaining each year ...but each year you feel you are using more..more and more so each year tends to be a negative coming down on you again.

(Unemployed Male)

Interestingly when asked whether or not it was important for men to work a discussion took place as to whether he should answer the question from his own perspective or from that of his wife's. The rational for this was that, whilst he was not that concerned with, he thought his wife and other women felt that men should work.

erm..no...but I think women do... think it's more important for men to work than women. I think definitely in Ireland it is the man who is perceived to be the wage earner, well...erm I see myself as fairly...I am a father of two year old and new baby, I take a reasonably active role as a father..change the nappies whatever..but it does not mean the more I do at home the less I have to work I would see it that way. Now my wife has worked, after the first child was born she went onto a three day week... which was grand and now she may or may not give up work completely...now ideally for her if money didn't come into it she wouldn't be working...the money is handy.....I'd say that women would rather be at home generally speaking now there are a lot of exceptions to this and it is changing but my wife, her friends and a lot of women I would know, in their late twenties early thirties who have started their families, are wanting to give up work. Whereas me as a man I

want to work regardless, kids or no kids, er yes I don't want to work day and night but I definitely want to do a weeks work for the non-financial side of it.

(Employed Male)

However, whilst there was some evidence of this 'traditional type' view, those respondents currently employed, tended to view work as less of a 'means to an end' and more as 'an end in itself'. Work could offer more than money.

..yeah, well if I didn't work...Id crack up within six months. If I had the same money to stay at home..I couldn't stay at home..if I had to give up work I'd have to get twice the money, I'd have to have the same money to pay the bills and have the same money again to keep me occupied.

(Employed Male)

work is a social thing, you're meeting people all the time, if your at home...the easiest trap you can fall into is to switch on the telly and sit there and you will not see anyone for the day, the other thing is that it keeps you mind active there's always change

(Employed Male)

Other interviewees took a much harder and moralistic tone, suggesting that those who do not work are simply lazy.

At the moment anyone can get a job so yeah it is important for men to work.. there's no excuse for men not to.

(Employed Male)

....important for anyone to work..... not just men like , everyone has to work these days like...like if the mans married or whatever he should work he shouldn't be just scrounging off everybody else on the dole or whatever, if its a reason of his own his age of or something he cant get a job..... but its his own luck that happens to everyone like it happens everybody..... if its just being lazy and he doesn't want to work and he can scrounge off the dole I don't think that's right even if you try you can get any kind of job even a back hander kind of job and do that like...there is loads of jobs out there but even if people don't want to pay tax to governments like....there's loads of jobs like that.....it wouldn't bother me at all if someone was doin that....once he weren't scrounging off everyone else...

(Unemployed Male)

In all of the interviews the discussion seemed to come around to money and the question was asked whether or not money was the most important thing in a job.

well..erm... in a job...depends what job your doin yu know what I mean, if you earning money for someone else you want to be earning yu know what I mean you don't want to go up there for nothin...yu know . ..in that sense money is important in my opinion

(Unemployed Male)

..if you find a job you like you stick with it but if there's another job....the way I see it is if you find a job you likeerm and its not paying well and then you get an offer of something else.. alright you mightn't like it...but....and its paying better money...I'd take the one with the better money but...cos you never know after a while you might get....you might break into it yu know you might get used to it.

(Unemployed Male)

yeah...cos I have a good social life and can go out every weekend with me mates...I wasn't working I would have to be bummin off me da or something and me da just hasn't got the money to give it to me so...I would be short of money all the time and I just wouldn't like it....I like to have a few pound in me pocket so I can buy whatever I want..I feel better when I spend it out of me own pocket than somebody else's

(Unemployed Male)

well I... yeah I can see your point but it all depends on your social background er...certain people would say wealth is first and certain people would say health is first so after seeing my dad and his lifestyle I would say health is first. Health is...which is means of course being happy even at your work...because I guarantee you it doesn't count the pay after forty hours of a job that you hate after a certain time you will just...freak out or you will just throw in the towel even if the bread is good...so I would think first of all is job satisfaction whereas all the people who would be who would have bills paying bills to come in like rent to pay or whatever those of course would need bread first

(Unemployed Male)

Everybody here....you wouldn't come here just for the money....some might think fair play to him he's happy. The thing is with me now that I say I feel the pinch with money its too late to take chances....if money stops coming in for a month there's the mortgage not paid the bills not paid.

(Employed Male)

A number of the interviewees during the course of the interviews referred to getting good jobs now that the economy had changed for the better and that there were more opportunities. The definition of a good job was explored

A good job in my opinion is a job that yu like....not just a job that you go in 9-5 and you don't like it yu know...you have to learn the job before you like it, before you think its a good job...its nothing to do with money in that sense, yu know what I mean ..a jobs a job that you can do with your eyes closed even so that's what I thinks a good jo

(Unemployed Male)

.....anything that erm I enjoy, pay half-decent.....and as long as your treated half-decent and as long as you enjoy it

(Unemployed Male)

However, getting a good job according to the unemployed males was not as straightforward as applying and turning up for an interview. What follows is an exchange in which the unemployed interviewee describes a process call the 'pull', and although he suggests it is not right, he did try to utilise this method of finding a job himself.

R: *....nowadays, in the....in the er.. in the electrical game I reckon it is..I have never got a job by just goin up and asking people for jobs my er...the way I first started off in the er.. apprenticeship my da new a couple of fellas he knew like...there's a fella in here that my da knows very well and everyone thinks he's my uncle, but er he kinda had word with him and that's the way I got in...I reckon if that didn't happen Id probably.... be working in a factory on a production line of something*

JG: *Do you think that happens in a majority of cases ?*

R: *yeah..I know every interview when I've gone for a job...its always been, like I've always known people in the company...and they have always come back 'aah you didn't get it someone else's nephew someone else's niece got it'..that's.. it always is, it always comes down to the pull yu know....*

JG: *Do you think that's right*

R: *...no. I reckon everyone should have a fair chance..like...if you go in for an interview you should be judged on...what kind of an interview you give what kind of personality you have...these people who are the boss's nephew you know...they could come in and just is there and do nothin 'why aren't working ?' 'oh my da my da's up there..I wont get sacked'... I have had that before in er Tallaght...I was working with a couple of fellas who are then just sitting back 'my uncles the boss you know'...it doesn't matter if your uncles the boss, you're paid to do a job you do your job..but er I reckon it is..it's to do with pullespecially in the sparking game where you got...cos you won't get anywhere..I don't know with the alarm game as this is new to me... but hopefully yu know...I wont be...although I do know a few people working for ***** and a few other places so I can get on to them...but erm yeah it is.... oh but for little jobs like working on a factory line n'all that..you don't need pull anyone can walk in and get them....but even when I was going for the Fire Brigade, when it came up the last time, my da works for them as I said before... he was on to nearly everyone he new 'Oh ***** going for the Fire Brigade***** going for the Fire Brigade.....he's done the aptitude test...' I've done the aptitude test and I went up and there's two fellas from the Fire Brigade there and I went in said am I right for an interview and they said 'right we'll see what we can do'... and next stage..I didn't get the next stage cos its totally up to the corporation and they knew no one doing the actual, its kind of a second aptitude test, they new no one doing that all so that's where I was stuck...I know I*

wouldn't have got though the first aptitude test if it hadn't been for me da goin, giving it a bit of pull..that's how most people get it

Another unemployed male went on

...at certain times..I would feel that why on earth keep on trying ...when you have no chance, bar of course most...well most, there seems to be a situation here that there a terrible percentage of erm of jobs filled byerm or filled up with people who know someone or other person in the firm..word of mouth or erm... what is the term for it ..nepotism ?..it is alive and kicking here I promise

(Unemployed Male)

According to Fields (1997) the process of the 'pull' or as he refers to it 'stroking', is a process through which someone gains advancement or services through having an 'in'. Using the Fire Brigade example above as an illustration, the individual concerned sought to obtain a job by having a family member, friend or work colleague on the inside of the chosen organisation of occupation. In this case his father had informed his colleagues that his son wanted a job in the Fire Brigade and the respondents passage through the selection criteria was smooth until his father no longer had an 'in'. He knew no one, nor could he do anyone a 'favour' in return for aiding his son's progress. Fields (1997) goes on to suggest that another form of this process is 'stroking the state' and exploiting the system and refers explicitly to the overt claiming of state benefits whilst working. This was also raised in the interviews. What follows is an excerpt from an interview with a different male which started on the problems with being unemployed and ended with

JG: *Does being unemployed concern you*

R: *It does but....it doesn't bother me yu know what I mean, cos I know how to get money*

JG: *Could you explain a little bit about that*

R: *Well....If I was only getting the practical amount of money right...now I just wouldn't sit around Id go out and...still make a few bob yu know what I mean... doing anything I can.. so I could survive on that yu know what I mean , and it don't matter if I don't have big wages right...I can come with 60 pound... per week right, plus maybe 30-40-50 pounds per day in other cases yu know what I mean , so in that sense without working...it goes well for you*

JG: *Do you think that kind of informal economy is important in Ireland, for example, getting benefits and earning a few bob....*

R: *...Informal....I don't know now..I'm not into that...er..... oh yeah, right...yer se in that sense the government is trying to screw you left, right and centre right, and if your trying to pull a fast one over them they will cop on right, ...but if they don't it's their tuff shite... cos they'll do you left right and centre every day of the week ...so it's your turn to do them a fuckin favour you know.....get onto them , screw them for... whatever you can for...and that's..I see nothin....every day they are giving it the, like all the refugees comin in, they are getting... 200,000 pound houses, whereas the local paddy can get fuckin squat off them yu know what I mean...*

It also arose in other interviews

Erm...not necessarily going back to the days when I saw the manual work being done, they got reasonably well paid and the guys who were doing less got even more and the guys who did 'fek all' got paid a fortune.

(Employed Male)

...especially here, especially in Dublin..hundreds of people do it cos they can make just as much...lot a companies will give you a backhander but... for jobs that if you were paying tax on them the money would be absolutely shite...when you have got 100 pounds and your now getting another 60 pound of the dole..160 pound cash into your hand no tax more money..it's better than nothin specially if you 19-20 its alright...and your not married or anything no engagements

(Unemployed Male)

Social Class

In Ireland class distinctions are thought of as a typically English phenomenon. The popular impression is that rigid social class demarcation was left behind with the ending of landlordism and the demise of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy.

(Breen and Whelan 1996: 1)

Breen and Whelan (1996) go on to suggest that this view of social class has encouraged the notion of Ireland being a classless society. However they demonstrated that social class in Ireland was far more rigid than suspected and that it was intertwined with the Irish industrialisation. They also suggested that social mobility had not been enhanced or improved due to economic growth. To try and reflect on these ideas and to tests whether or not the interviewees thought social class existed and was important, issue of social class was raised in both the interviews and the questionnaire.

Table 5

Determinant of Social Class by Perceived Social Class - Attitude Survey Answers.

	Working Class	Middle Class	None
Upbringing	44.1	42.3	25.0
Work	18.6	12.8	0.0
Income	18.6	26.9	8.3
Attitudes	18.6	17.9	66.7
N	59	78	12
Missing Cases 7			

Source: Own Calculations based on data from the survey of 'Men's Experiences of Working Life in Ireland 1997-1998'.

Table five contains data from the survey on the determinants of social class by the perceived class of the respondents. Unlike in some commentaries of social class in Ireland (see Breen and Whelan 1996), the men in this survey did not define social class or locate their class position purely in terms of occupation. Regardless of whether or not the men perceived themselves as working class or middle class, over 40 per cent suggested that their class position was determined by their upbringing. On 12.8 per cent of those who defined themselves as middle class thought that work was the main determinant.

Table six presents the survey data relating to those attitudinal questions that reflected on social class and politics. In terms of both class and politics all the men in the sample seemed unanimous in their views. For example over 60 per cent of the respondents thought there was one law for the rich and one for the poor and around 70 per cent thought that ordinary people did not get a share of the nations wealth. However, those men who perceived themselves as working class seemed to be slightly more cynical in terms of politicians, with 69 per cent suggesting that politicians in Ireland were in it for their own benefit. This cynicism is further expressed by the 56.5 per cent of working class men who believe that success is based on who you know rather than what you know. In terms of social class, around 40 per cent identified it as being important in Ireland

Table 6
Social Class and Politics - Attitude Survey Answers, % Agreed

Question	All	Working Class	Middle Class
There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.	64.1	69.4	61.5
Irish working people do not get a fair share of wealth .	70.5	69.4	67.9
Irish Politicians are in politics for their own benefit.	63.5	69.4	60.3
My religion is very important to me.	37.8	40.3	39.7
Social class is important in Ireland.	41.7	45.2	41.0
In society some people will always have more power .	87.8	87.1	85.9
Success is more about who you know rather than what you know.	46.8	56.5	39.7
N	156	62	78

Source: Own Calculations based on data from the survey of 'Men's Experiences of Working Life in Ireland 1997-1998'.

In the interviews the respondents reflected on whether social class existed in Ireland. From the analysis of the transcripts it was clear that those who were unemployed had very different views on social class as compared to these men who were employed at the time of interview. The following extracts were typical.

...yeah big time... a lot of people give out about knackers or whatever...a lot of people give out about the horse people... looking down on other people...working in houses now doing the x's or even working with a company there a while ago I was only doing work experience working in a big 5 bedroom houses...people were asking me to take off me runners before I came in even though me runners were clean...saying they've got a two hundred three hundred pound carpet or whatever.. 'dont walk across there with a pair of runners on' like..that was even to me boss saying things like that to him... I don't know why he didn't just turn round and say I have enough and 'shove it up your hole' and walk out...but er that's the way some people are they look down on you...they think they've got more money than you and..they haven't got a clue what they're fuckin talking about so they should not be telling you what your doin..

(Unemployed Male)

oh yeah.....mmm.....er...well in the sense that the people who haven't got wealth or jobs tend to help each other out whereas the people who have loads of wealth are very hard and they are very slow to pay for any form of work that you do for them...er and that is one thing that I cant stand really cos like these ...like even say Howth...like there is so

much wealth there yet they're so tight with it and yet then and again people from poor areas say if.. of course..kinda say if one of their family dies and there isn't a chance of paying for the funeral people will help by doing some form of function, selling tickets to help pay for the child or the father of the mother or whatever they people bind more in times of crisis and strange but like the older people who have lots of money the.... er they er would find that in a crisis er they of course would do certain things but they still hold on to their money

(Unemployed Male)

Erm...not to the extent as it does England cos if you look at our history, the only rich there were up until the turn of the century and the state was found, were the protestant who were really English people who came over now there was a class thing then and it was nearly on religious grounds..say in 1920 that all stopped.....you still had this ruling class but they were no longer a ruling class but they still had the money...but everybody else had nothing so there was no rich or poor but since them some people have made it and some people haven so maybe its starting to creep in again.

(Employed Male)

I wouldn't see that your born into a class system but it could happen in the future..at the moment I don't think there's much of a class system...er it exists as there are people with loads of money and there are people with none and ordinary people in the middle.

(Employed Male)

The two extracts from unemployed men suggest that class is important in terms of wealth and access to wealth. However, for the employed men social class appeared to be less of a concern and its existence was questioned. The first extract follows very closely the ideas contained within Breen and Whelan (1996).

well...I think so....if you don't erm...the likes of them, these top executives or can put people down you know what I mean, cos where they stand, but if they had to stand in their shoes where we were they wouldn't survive you know ...

(Unemployed Male)

...you mean like lower class, middle class...er yeah...I think er well... I think its important to have money....but like the way people... the upper classes and the amount of money they have...I think people should be judged as they are you know they should not be judged as what their bank account is or anything..they should be judged as what they can do if they can work...alright people who don't want to work then that's different...I know fellas who are coming along, I know this sounds bad but, all the people who come along I know one fella who spent six years doing courses..all he was doing was one course after the other, he was getting all these certs and not doing anything about it, he doesn't want to get a job all he wants to do is stay in..

(Unemployed Male)

....not really no...doesn't bother me who I talk to or...who I work with or anythin once their polite and their not robbin off anyone or doing anythin wrong against me I don't care less.

(Unemployed Male)

.....er.....it is.....it is very important for some and it is a load of rubbish to others..er...I find in the higher up jobs of yeah, of yeah it is all clique and even with TDs who are the same as MPs like er..there's a terrible lot of corruption and of course people vote in some person and.. they of course they promise you the earth moon and stars when they come round to the door canvassing.. 'please give me your number one vote I'll do this and that and whatever' and as soon as they're in they join up with all the rest of them which are...there is a certain way we runs things around here and you can't upset the status quo of things... and that is very ...that's hard

(Unemployed Male)

In terms of their social class, those that identified themselves as middle class tended to be those in employment. They were very definite about their class position and the majority responded when asked 'middle class' without any real hesitation. However, the unemployed males were totally different and very hesitant about their class grouping. For example

.....is it working man class ?.....that's it you know... I earn me money, I have to go out for it, don't get it from ...I have to go out and earn it...so whatever I earn is me own ...that's all

(Unemployed Male)

...just the average person...just a blue collar person yu know

(Unemployed Male)

5. Conclusions

The discussion began with the argument that men's experiences of work need to be explored as they had tended to be made invisible by the feminist critique of sociology. It was suggested that a good site for such an exploration of men's experiences of work was Ireland. Despite the fact that Irelands economy is changing, problems with employment remain, and the continuation of such problems in parts of Ireland imply that there will be varying experiences of work. Anyone with an interest in work and gender could usefully explore the work experiences of the Irish male.

The data was collected through a survey and interviews from men living in Dublin's Northside and data was presented on men's experiences of work and perceptions of social

class. In terms of work the data demonstrates that, in general, work is important for Irish men and that for some it is closely tied to the 'breadwinner model'. For the unemployed men in the sample, work took on a greater significance if there was a family to support. It was also suggested that women also hold these views and are central to this breadwinner ideology. However work in itself was not important for either the employed men or the unemployed men. For the employed males work was seen more as a set of social experiences and that mental and social well being was gained from work. For the unemployed men, money played more of a central role in defining the features of a good job and the nature of work generally.

Irish men's experiences of, and attitudes of social class are also illuminating, with more men suggesting that class is determined by upbringing rather than work or employment. Following on from this, variations as to whether class existed Ireland was found, with employed men underplaying the importance of class in Irish society.

Overall the data suggested that men's experiences of, and attitudes to work are mediated by a complex mix of social process. In this study of Irish men, men's experiences of, and attitudes to work seemed to vary both in terms of perceived social class and whether or not they were employed at the time of the interview or not. Likewise the extracts also revealed that the importance and existence of social class depended on the interviewee's current status.

More generally, the data presented here really only touches upon the themes and debates raised in the interviews and obviously a great deal more has to be done in terms of reflecting on Irish men's experiences of work and work's centrality to their lives. This also must fall in with a broader project of empirical as well as theoretical considerations of men. Indeed it is important that men's experiences of work and employment (and other areas such as work and sexuality) are (and continue to be) documented and brought back to the attention of the sociological research. The reason for this is that work remains to be of central importance to men despite the fact that the nature of work has changed and continues to change. What sociologists need to do now is further document the nature of this change and the impact that it has on men to ensure that the sociology of gender remains radical.

References

- Brod, H. (1987), A Case For Men's Studies, in Kimmel, M. (ed) (1987), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, Sage, London.
- Breen, R. and Whelan, C. (1996) *Social Mobility and Social Class in Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin.
- Christian, H. (1994), *The Making of Anti-Sexist Men*, Routledge, London.
- Clayton, P. (1996) *Enemies and Passing Friends: Settler Ideologies in Twentieth Century Ulster*, Pluto Press, London.
- Cockburn, C. (1991), In The Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organisations, London, Macmillan.
- Collinson, D. and Hearn, J. (1996), Men at Work: Multiple Masculinities/Multiple Workplaces, in Mac an Ghaill, Máirtín. (ed) (1996), *Understanding Masculinity: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Collinson, D. and Hearn J. (1994), Naming Men as Men: Implications for Work, Organization and Management, *Gender Work and Organisation*, Vol.1, No.1, pp 2-22.
- Connell, R.W. (1995), *Masculinities*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Central Statistics Office (1998), *Statistical Abstract*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.
- Curtin, C, and Varley, A. (1987), Marginal Men ? Bachelor Farmers in A West of Ireland Community. in Curtin, C, Jackson, P, and O'Connor, B. (1987), *Gender in Irish Society*, Galway University Press, Galway.
- Department of Social Welfare (1996), Statistical Report on Social Welfare Services, The Stationary Office, Dublin.
- Foras Áiseanna Saothair (1995), *FÁS Dublin North Region: From Training to Employment*, Foras Áiseanna Saothair, Dublin.
- Fields, B, (1997), *The Development of Vocational Education and Training in Ireland: A Societal Approach*. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, University of Leicester.
- Goodwin, J, (1999), *Men's Work and Male Lives: Men and Work in Britain*, Ashgate, Aldershot.
- Goodwin, J, (1997), Employment Equality in Northern Ireland: An Extended Review. *Work Employment and Society*, Vol.11, No.1 March 1997, pp 167-172.
- Goodwin, J, (1997), The Republic of Ireland and The Singaporean Model of Skill Formation and Economic Development. *The Centre For Labour Market Studies, Leicester University Working Paper No.14*, January 1997.

Goodwin, J. (1996), Towards a Greater Understanding of Economy and Work in Ireland. *Work Employment and Society*, Vol.10, No.2, June, pp 377-385.

Hearn, J. (1988), *The Critique of Men: Current Lessons for the Theory and Practice of Men*, Hallsworth Research Fellowship, University of Manchester Working Paper No.1.

Hearn, J. (1989), *Some Sociological Issues in Researching Men and Masculinities*, Hallsworth Research Fellowship, University of Manchester Working Paper No.2.

Harris, E., Lea, S. and Foster, D. (1995), The Construction of Gender: An Analysis of Men's Talk on Gender, *South African Journal of Psychology*, Vol.25, No.3, pp 175-183.

Inglis, T. (1997) Foucault, Bourdieu and the Field of Irish Sexuality, *Irish Journal of Sociology*, Vol.7, pp5-28.

Jenkins, R. (1983), *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids: Working-Class Youth Life-Styles in Belfast*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

Mac an Ghaill, Máirtín. (1996a), Irish Masculinities and Sexualities in England, in Adkins, L. and Merchant, V. (eds) (1996) *Sexualizing the Social: Power and the Organization of Sexuality*, Macmillan, London.

Mac an Ghaill, Máirtín. (ed) (1996), *Understanding Masculinity: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

MacInnes, J. (1997), Why Capitalism is not Patriarchal and Gender Doesn't Exist, paper from, MacInnes, J. (1997), *The End of Masculinity*, Open University Press, Forthcoming.

MacInnes, J. (1996), Analysing Men, *Gender Work and Organization*, Vol.3, No.1, pp 51-63.

Mason, J. (1996), *Qualitative Researching*. London, Sage.

Maynard, M. (1990), The Re-Shaping of Sociology? Trends in the Study of Gender, *Sociology*, Vol.24, No.2, pp 269-290.

Mitchel, T. (1997), Tackling the Vicious Cycle of Poverty. *The Irish Times*, Wednesday, July 23, 1997.

Morgan, D. (1981), Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry, in Roberts, H. (1981), *Doing Feminist Research*,. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

National Economic and Social Forum (1997), *Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment: Forum Report No.11*, National Economic and Social Forum Dublin.

Nolan, B, Whelan, C.T, and Williams, J. (1998), *Where are Poor Households ? The Spatial Distribution of Poverty in Ireland*, Oak Tree Press, Dublin.

Nolan, B, Whelan, C.T, and Williams, J, (1994), Spatial Aspects of Poverty and Disadvantage. in Nolan, B., and Callan, T., eds (1994) *Poverty and Policy in Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin.

Northside Partnership (1996), *From Welfare to Work : Improving Life in Our Community, Area Action Plan 1996-1999*. The Northside Partnership, Dublin.

Oakley, A. (1981), Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms, in Robert, H. (ed) (1981) *Doing Feminist Research*, Routledge, London.

Oakley, A. (1974), *The Sociology of Housework*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

O'Connell, P.J, and McGinnity, F, (1997), What Works, Who Works? The Employment and Earnings Effects of Active Labour Market Programmes Young People in Ireland. *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol.11, No.4, pp639-661.

O'Connor, A. (1998), Irish have Highest Male to Female Suicide Ratio, *The Irish Times*, Tuesday September 1, Dublin.

O'Hara, P. (1997), Women on Family Farms: Wives, Workers and Mothers, *Irish Journal of Sociology*, Vol.7, pp124-30.

O'Hara, P. (1987), What Became of Them? West of Ireland Women in the Labour Force, in Curtian, C, Jackson, P, and O'Connor, B. (1987), *Gender in Irish Society*, Galway University Press, Galway.

O'Hare, A, and O'Connor, A. (1987) Gender Differences in Treated Mental Illness in the Republic of Ireland. In Curtian, C, Jackson, P, and O'Connor, B. (1987), *Gender in Irish Society*, Galway University Press, Galway.

Pettigrew, J. (1981) Reminiscences of Fieldwork Among the Sikhs, in Robert, H. (ed) (1981) *Doing Feminist Research*, Routledge, London.

Pringle, K. (1995), *Men, Masculinities and Social Welfare*, London, UCL Press.

Pringle, R. (1989), *Secretaries Talk*, London, Verso.

Roper, M. (1994), *Masculinity and the British Organisation Man Since 1945*, OUP, Oxford.

Rottman, D, (1989), Crime in a Geographical Perspective, in Carter, R.W.G, and Parker, A.J, eds (1989) *Ireland: Contemporary Perspectives on a Land and its People*, Routledge, London.

Seidler, V.J. (1994), *Unreasonable Men: Masculinity and Social Theory*, Routledge, London.

Shortall, S. (1997) Women, Farming and Access to Land, *Irish Journal of Sociology*, Vol.7, pp111-117.

Stacey, M. (1983), *Social Sciences and the State: Fighting Like a Woman*, in Gramscian, E. (1983), *The Public and the Private*, Heinemann, London.

Sweeney, P. (1998), *The Celtic Tiger: Ireland's Economic Miracle Explained*. Oak Tree Press, Dublin.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Alan Felstead and Katharine Hills for their comments on this paper. I would also like to thank Bryan Fields for his assistance and guidance with this research as his efforts ensured that the research actually 'got off the ground'. His comments and insights were also more than welcomed.

Appendix One: Example Question /Topic Guide For Interviews

These were the typical questions asked in an interview based around the themes of work experiences, attitudes to work, family background, school, views on class, politics and the Irish economy.

- Could you start by telling me what you are doing now?
- Do you think it's important for men to work?
- Is money the most important thing in a job?
- Do you think it's more important for men to work than women are?
- What did/do your parents do?
- Have your parents had any kind of influence on your attitude to work?
- What about school did that have any influence on your approach to work?
- Do you think education is important?
- You often hear people say what they think is a good job...what do you think is a good job?
- You have mentioned the jobs that you have had, have you had periods of unemployment was well?
- Does being unemployed concern you?
- Do you think that kind of informal economy is important in Ireland?
- Do you think social class is important?
- What social class would you put yourself in?
- At the moment Irelands economy is doing really well. Do you think everyone is sharing in that?
- Do you think you need money to be happy?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years time?
- Do you think to get a good job is your own responsibility?

Appendix 2: The Attitude Questions Asked in the Survey

- Having any job is better than being unemployed.
- If I didn't like a job I'd pack it in, even if there was no other job to go to.
- Work gives men a sense of purpose.
- Men gain more from work than women.
- Men should earn more money than women.
- There are some jobs women cannot do as well as men.
- All men should have the opportunity to work full-time.
- The head of the household should usually be male.
- It is less important for a woman to go out to work than it is for a man .
- More men than women should get training or work.
- Women who do not have to work should not do so.
- Part-time work is mainly for women.
- Training is a waste of time if there is no job at the end of it.
- Working is an important part of being an Irish male.
- Marriage is for life.
- I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.
- Both men and women should do housework.
- Men should handle family finances.
- A women's place is in the home.
- There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.
- Irish working people do not get a fair share of wealth.
- Irish Politicians are in politics for their own benefit.
- My religion is very important to me.
- I have little control over the things that happen to me.
- Social class is important in Ireland.
- In society some people will always have more power.
- Education is very important for success.
- I am happy enough if I have the money to do the things I enjoy.
- Success is more about who you know rather than what you know.
- It is okay for women to work, but what they really want is a home and family.