EWERC's distinctive strengths

EWERC's reputation is founded on its contributions to empirical enquiry, policy development and theory. Through new international comparative research and UK focused research, EWERC has established distinctive strengths in six key areas:

- Cross-national comparative employment and welfare systems
- Case studies of organizations and employment
- Working time
- Pay
- Gender and employment
- Skill and tacit knowledge

EWERC research in these areas has contributed to ideas and debates in the worlds of both policy-making and theory-building:

Theory-building
- Internal labour markets
- Inter-organisational contracting and the employment relationship
- International comparisons of employment organisation and of welfare state systems
- Gender relations and inequalities

Policy-making
- Closing the gender pay gap
- Gender mainstreaming
- EU employment and inclusion indicators
- Minimum wage regulation
- Public private partnerships
- Working time and work-life balance
- International comparison of employment regulations

Further information on this and other events is available at www.mbs.ac.uk/ewerc
### Current projects include:

#### Reconciling work and welfare in Europe (RECWOWE)

**Contact:** Colette Fagan (colette.fagan@manchester.ac.uk)

**Duration:** 2006 – 2011

**Funding:** European Commission, Framework 6

EWERC is one of 29 partner institutions from 17 countries (over 180 researchers) in this network, co-ordinated by Denis Bouget and Bruno Pallier (Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Nanterre, France). EWERC will research the theme of ‘reconciling employment and family life’, using company-level and employee-level European data. As the network develops, EWERC will research other themes encompassing flexibility and security, job quality and ‘employment friendly’ welfare states. The team includes Colette Fagan, Damian Grimshaw, Jill Rubery, Mark Smith and Claire Annesley.

#### Embedding the provision of information and consultation in the workplace: a longitudinal analysis of employee outcomes (WERS98 and 2004)

**Contact:** Annette Cox (annette.cox@mbs.ac.uk)

**Duration:** March – September 2006

**Funding:** Department of Trade and Industry

This project maps change and continuity in the ‘embeddedness’ of employee involvement and participation practices in UK workplaces. The team of Annette Cox, Nick Machinngton and Jane Soter aimed to analyse statistical associations between the embeddedness of employee involvement practices and employee outcomes, using WERS98 and WERS04 panel survey data sets.

#### A comparison between assembly line workers and low skilled service sector jobs: the same but different?

**Contact:** Gail Hobson and Marilyn Carroll

**Duration:** 2006 – 2007

**Funding:** Manchester Business School

Research on ‘bad jobs’ in the service sector often draws parallels with assembly line work in manufacturing to illustrate continuities with the past. This project involves a detailed comparison of low skilled service sector jobs and assembly line jobs to explore differences in these two worlds of low skill work. It re-evaluates the skill content of jobs and contributes to debates on ‘good’ and ‘bad’ jobs.

#### The undervaluation of women’s work

**Contact:** Damian Grimshaw and Jill Rubery

**Duration:** 2004 – 2007

**Funding:** Russell Sage Foundation

EWERC is part of a coordinated network in Europe which seeks to learn how different institutions shape low wage work. Five sectors are included across five countries. EWERC researched the UK public hospitals sector issues included job design and skill mix, as well as new institutional arrangements (agenda for change, NHS professionals, trade union campaigns, etc.) shape management practices.

### Highlights of research findings from some EWERC projects

#### Synchronising work and family lives in Germany and the UK: the price of long working hours

**Contact:** Mark Smith (mark.smith@mbs.ac.uk)

This Anglo-German foundation-funded project was a collaboration between EWERC, SFI Dortmund and IAB Nordrhein-Westfalen. Using time use surveys we showed how working couples in both countries face work-life balance difficulties, even those households where the mother works part-time hours.

- While all working families face problems in synchronising and organising their work and family lives, it is families where both parents work full-time who face the greatest pressures.
- Dual full-time households are more common in the UK and, although there are similarities across countries between households with the same working arrangements, the impact of the long-hours culture in the UK is significant.
- Families in the UK spend more time at work and less time at home together, on average dual-earning couples with children under four years of age in Germany spend 84 minutes more together at home each working day than their UK counterparts. In the UK we also found a greater spread of hours across the day and the week.
- In Germany half the working population has started work by 7am and although in the UK this threshold is not reached until 7.40am, more than half of employees are still working until 5.30pm while in Germany, half of employees have stopped work by 4.30pm.
- The long hours culture in the UK also extends to a greater propensity to work at weekends and bank holidays, for both women and men. To mitigate these pressures families in the UK draw on more paid help than in Germany but, as our results for family time show, this does not necessarily provide for a more synchronised family life.

#### Embedding the provision of information and consultation in the workplace: a longitudinal analysis of employee outcomes

This study documents diverse areas of ‘vulnerable work’ in the UK and contrast these with evidence from old and new EU member states. UK case studies focus on key aspects of work vulnerability - low pay, long working hours, undervaluation, job insecurity and limited voice. Interviews target part-time workers, care workers, migrant workers and IT workers.

#### Improving health through human resource management

**Contact:** Paula Hyde (paula.hyde@manchester.ac.uk)

**Duration:** 2004 – 2007

**Funding:** Department of Health, CIPD and Healthcare People Management Association

This large project team (Paula Hyde, Ruth Boaden, Nick Machinngton, Paul Sparrow, Claire Harris, Penny Cortiekind, Sarah Pass, Marilyn Carroll and Bonita Sibbald) are investigating how HRM interventions in the NHS can contribute to positive employee behaviour and to improved organisational performance. The study involves a detailed synthesis of the links between HRM and performance, an empirical assessment of past interventions within NHS organisations, and the development of policy guidance.

The first reports of the project are available at: [www.mbs.ac.uk/research/improving-health/project-output.htm](http://www.mbs.ac.uk/research/improving-health/project-output.htm)

#### The evolving world of work: progress and uncertainties in working and employment conditions in Europe

**Contact:** Damian Grimshaw and Lorrie Marchington

**Duration:** 2005 – 2006

**Funding:** International Labour Organisation

This study documents diverse areas of ‘vulnerable work’ in the UK and contracts these with evidence from old and new EU member states. UK case studies focus on key aspects of work vulnerability - low pay, long working hours, undervaluation, job insecurity and limited voice. Interviews target part-time workers, care workers, migrant workers and IT workers.

#### Dynamics of national employment models (DYNAMO)

**Contact:** Jill Rubery, Damian Grimshaw, Marcolia Miszko, Rory Donnelly, Peter Urwin (rory.donnelly@manchester.ac.uk)

**Duration:** 2004 – 2007

**Funding:** European Commission, 6th Framework Programme, Priority 7

In response to the Lisbon goals, this European network is researching the forms of socio-economic development required to develop comparative advantage in the world economy while maintaining social cohesion. Questions include the viability of a European Social Model, the nature of change in national institutions and the role of sector specific conditions in shaping change in country employment models.

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For more details, please visit [www.mbs.ac.uk/research/improving-health](http://www.mbs.ac.uk/research/improving-health).