

Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland

Summary Report

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Introduction

The Employment Research Institute of Edinburgh Napier University was commissioned to carry out research on employment inequalities in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The motivation for the research is to inform the work of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in updating the 2007 *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland*, which identified employment as one of the areas where inequalities exist and need to be addressed. The work investigates inequalities in employment across the nine equality grounds defined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: gender, age, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and dependant status.

Aims

The overall aim of the research was:

To provide an up-to-date evidence base alongside identification of new and/or persistent key inequalities in employment in Northern Ireland, including for each of the nine equality grounds.

The specific objectives were to:

1. *Provide a comprehensive and updated picture of patterns and trends in employment and non-employment in Northern Ireland, establishing any key inequalities (data permitting) evident in Northern Ireland for each equality ground identified by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;*
2. *Provide an overview of potential barriers and enablers to labour market participation (entry, retention and progression), including an assessment of any changing dynamics (e.g. the effect of the economic downturn) for each equality ground;*
3. *Involve relevant stakeholders via an expert seminar to explore and refine emerging draft findings of the research, with a view to informing the final report and associated recommendations;*
4. *Distil from the above the most substantive/overarching key employment inequalities/dynamics (across all equality grounds) in Northern Ireland and summarise any relevant wider observations noted during the project.*

Methods

Analysis of survey data

The prime source of data used in the research was the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2006 to 2012 (Office for National Statistics, 2011a). The LFS was utilised for each of the equality grounds, where data permitted¹, additionally, LFS data was utilised to identify multiple inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market (i.e. where an individual is a member of more than one group that experiences disadvantage in the labour market). The data presented here on labour market outcomes, such as economic activity and wages, are shown mainly from Quarter 1 in 2006 to Quarter 1 in 2012, which was the latest data available. Discussion centres on changes over the period Quarter 1 2006 to Quarter 1 2012, but for the purposes of this summary report, discussion simply references 2006 and 2012.

The LFS data was supplemented with data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland, 2012, ASHE 2007-2012), the Census 2011 for Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2012a; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c), the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS) (2006, 2010 and 2012), and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's 2011 Equality Awareness Survey (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2012).

Whilst all nine equality grounds were investigated in the course of the research, paucity of data on political opinion and sexual orientation hindered in depth coverage of these two equality grounds.

Since the focus of the research was on employment inequalities in Northern Ireland, the population from which the data was drawn included only those of working age; 16-59 years old for females and 16-64 years old for males (although in the age chapter of the main report 18-59 years old and 18-64 years old are utilised since 16-17 year olds are largely in transition from statutory education).

Literature review

In conducting the brief literature search, use was made of academic literature databases, libraries, and Northern Ireland and United Kingdom (UK) Government sources. A search was conducted for literature that concerned itself with the inequalities in employment pertaining to the nine equality grounds. Where possible, literature focusing specifically on Northern Ireland was sought but other sources were also used. The literature collected was then synthesised and presented for each group under the key themes that emerged.

In parallel to this, a brief review was conducted of the existing literature (from Northern Ireland and beyond) on the relevant labour market inequalities, and key stakeholders who work with disadvantaged groups were consulted. This allowed the identification of barriers to, and enablers of, labour market participation, and what actions are, or could be, taken to improve or at least sustain labour market participation. Stakeholders were also asked to provide any information they had on the labour market

¹ No information was available in the LFS pertaining to political opinion or sexual orientation.

outcomes of the groups they worked with, particularly those for whom data was limited. For example, a key deficiency in the datasets was the lack of information on differences in labour market outcomes by sexual orientation. Alternative data sources were sought and used where available, but data was not available for all outcomes across all equality grounds.

Stakeholder consultation

Fifteen interviews were carried out with key stakeholders, who represented organisations with an insight into: the employment inequalities facing one or more of the groups of interest; and the responses by policymakers and others to tackling these inequalities. Not all of the equality groups are directly represented in this exercise, as it is not clear who in the case of some areas – such as religion, political opinion or marital status – might have a specific interest in employment inequalities pertaining to these groups. Interviews covered a range of issues: labour market inequalities, the reason for these and the extent to which they reflect long term barriers to employment; inequalities in education and training and the impact on labour market outcomes; how inequality is assessed and monitoring could be improved upon; and responses to employment inequalities by Government and other sectors, and the extent to which these have been effective.

Interim findings from the research were presented to stakeholders, participants and experts via a seminar/workshop that took place on 23rd Mar, 2013 at the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, and the feedback from this enabled some refinement of the final recommendations for policy.

Findings: Key Inequalities

The main findings of the research regarding economic activity highlight noticeable disadvantages and / or key inequalities for three equality groups:

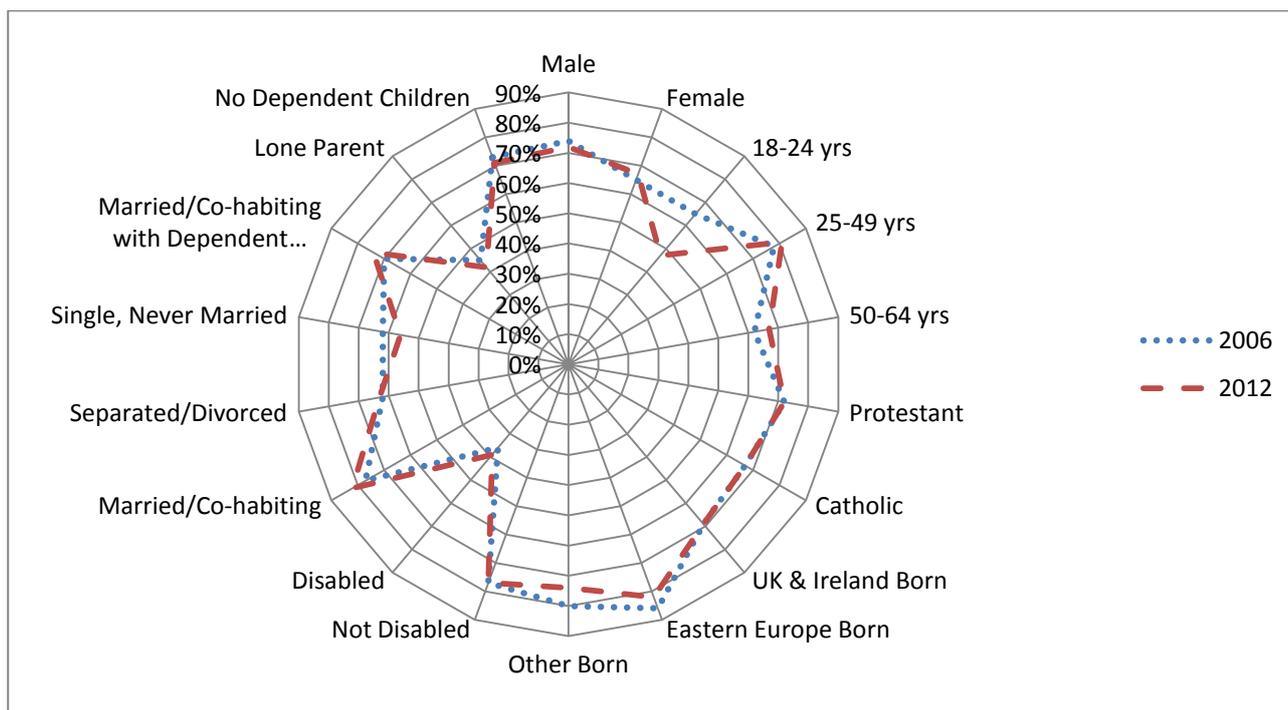
1. For those aged **18-24 years old**, employment rates were low and ILO unemployment rates and economic inactivity rates were high;
2. **Lone parents** continued to have lower employment rates, and higher ILO unemployment rates and economic inactivity rates, than married or cohabiting couples with dependent children or those with no dependent children; and
3. **Disabled people** were much less likely to be employed, and much more likely to be economically inactive, than those without disability.

The evidence presented within this report clearly demonstrates that those aged 18-24 year old, lone parents and those with a disability were subject to key inequalities in terms of labour market participation and outcomes from that participation. The research looked across the main areas of employment, such as ILO unemployment and median gross hourly pay, to highlight the key inequalities, presented in this Summary Report. However, it must be realised that inequalities were exhibited across all nine equality grounds. Within the Full Report 'Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland' these are fully examined

within specific chapters for each equality ground and further summarised within Chapter 13 of the main report: 'Summary of key inequalities in employment'. A brief overview of the inequalities experienced by equality ground is also given at the end of this summary report.

In 2012, people in the 18-24 years old age group were less likely to be in employment than those aged 25-49 years old or 50-64 years old. The employment rate in the 18-24 years old age group fell considerably between 2006 and 2012 whilst those in the 25-49 years old age group maintained consistently higher than average employment rates than the other two age groups. Although the employment rate of those aged 50-64 years old was also lower than average it increased slightly between 2006 and 2012. In conclusion, those 18-24 year olds experienced key inequalities in employment in Northern Ireland.

Employment rates in 2006 and 2012 (Source: LFS 2006 and 2012)



There was considerable disadvantage for disabled people and lone parents; both of these groups had noticeably lower employment rates over the period of interest. The employment situation of these groups was persistently low over the study period; this could therefore be characterised as a persistent inequality, rather than one that has occurred in response to, or been exacerbated by, the economic downturn. Those who were married or co-habiting with dependent children, those with no dependent children, and those without a disability, maintained higher than average employment rates throughout the period of study.

It is worth noting here that the effect of lone parenthood is likely to be confounded to some extent with age; lone parents with young children (who are likely to be out of work) are also likely to be younger, and this group is also less likely to be in employment. A similar effect is likely to occur in the single and have never married group, who have had lower than average employment rates throughout the period of study, but this group were also more likely to be in the 18-24 years old age group with lower employment rates. Those who were separated, divorced or widowed also had lower than average employment rates; this group may be more likely to be in the 50-64 years old age group, which also had a lower employment rate.

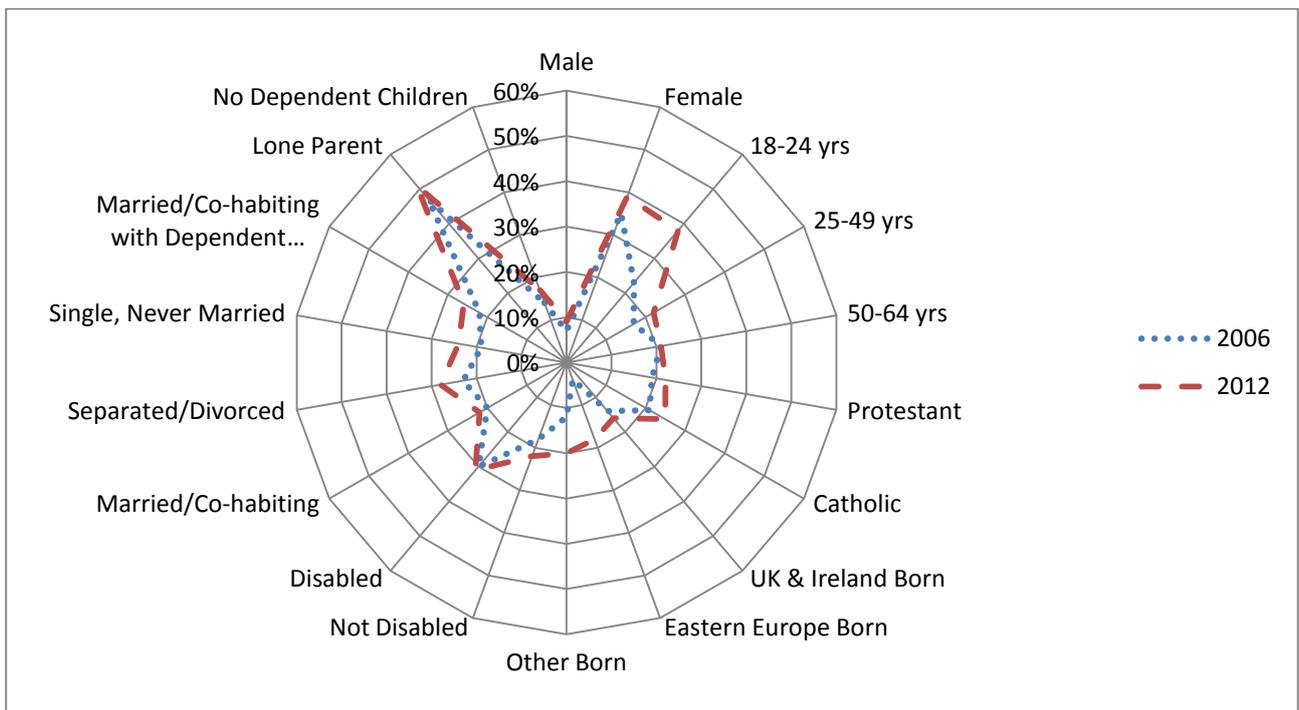
There was no change in the employment rate of those classified as UK and Ireland born, which stayed exactly at the average for the whole period of study (although the fact that they comprised over 98% of the population means that the 'average' employment rate will rarely differ). The picture was different for those born outside the UK and Ireland; employment rates in these groups were higher than the UK and Ireland born group, but both those born in Eastern Europe and those born elsewhere saw a fall in employment rates between 2006 and 2012.

Subtle differences in employment rates can be seen between those of a Protestant and Catholic background, with Protestant employment rates (72.1% and 72.2% in 2006 and 2012, respectively) slightly higher than those of Catholics (65.1% and 67.2% in 2006 and 2012, respectively) at both time periods, but almost no overall change experienced by either group. The differences between the sexes were also very slight, with male employment rates (74.1% and 71.6% in 2006 and 2012, respectively) slightly higher than average², and female employment rates (64.6% and 67.3% in 2006 and 2012, respectively) slightly lower, although this gap was smaller in 2012 than it was in 2006.

² The average rates of employment were 69.6% and 69% in 2006 and 2012 respectively

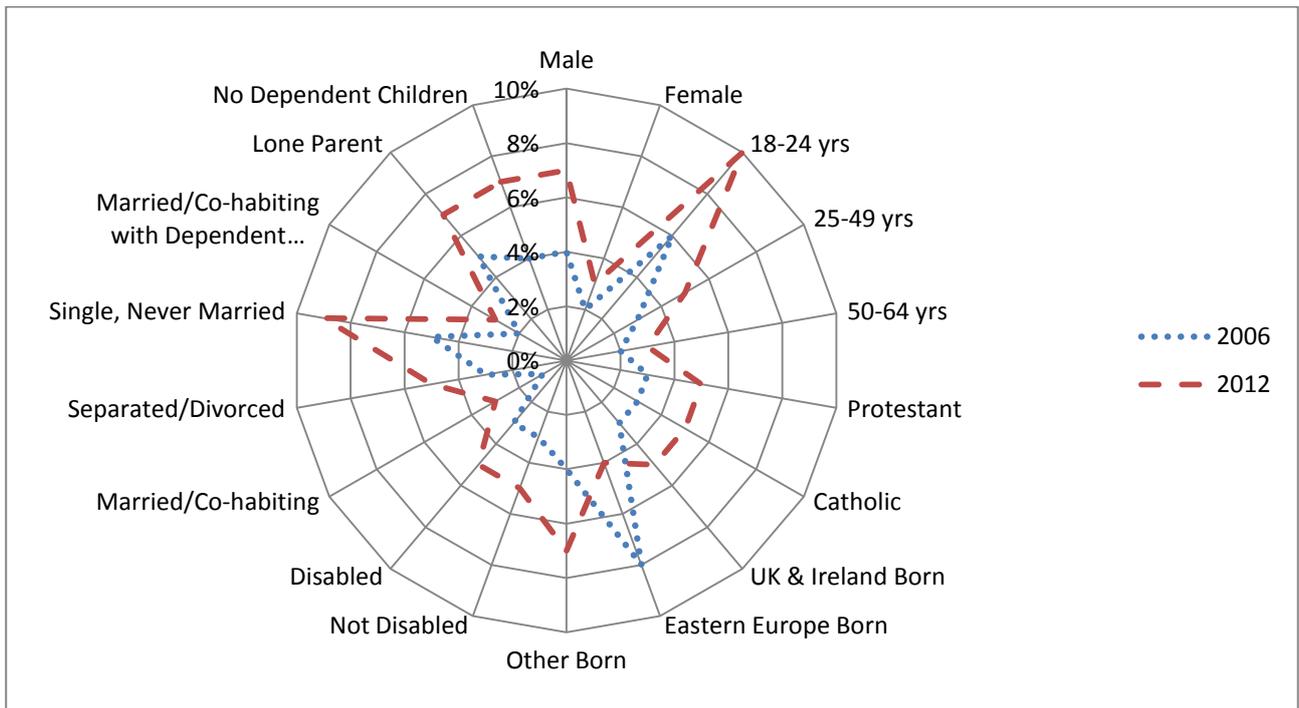
The proportions of those employed who were in part-time employment for each of the equality groups appear to have increased between 2006 and 2012, although to varying extents. For males, part-time employment rose very slightly but was consistently very low; by contrast, although part-time employment was very rare for those born in Eastern Europe in 2006; the proportion in part-time employment had increased by 2012. Part-time employment became considerably more common among 18-24 year olds between 2006 and 2012, and there was also a slight increase among 25-49 year olds, but for those aged 50-64 years old there was little change over this period. Those with a disability were more likely to work part-time than those without, although there was an increase in part-time employment among those without a disability. Most likely to work part-time were lone parents, females, and those aged 18-24 years old; membership between these groups is likely to overlap considerably.

Proportion in part-time employment in 2006 and 2012 (Source: LFS 2006 and 2012)



In general, presumably reflecting the economic downturn, ILO unemployment rates had risen since 2006 for every group apart from those born in Eastern Europe, who saw a fall in ILO unemployment. Those born elsewhere (i.e. not in the UK, Ireland or Eastern Europe) had a relatively high rate of unemployment; a considerable increase was seen between 2006 and 2012. Relatively high ILO unemployment rates were seen among 18-24 year olds, lone parents, and those who were single and have never married; again there is likely to be considerable overlap between these groups. High ILO unemployment was also seen among those who were male and those who had no dependent children. There were differences in the prevalence of ILO unemployment between the sub-groups of most of the equality grounds, but in 2012 there was very little difference between those of a Catholic background and those of a Protestant background, or between those with and without a disability.

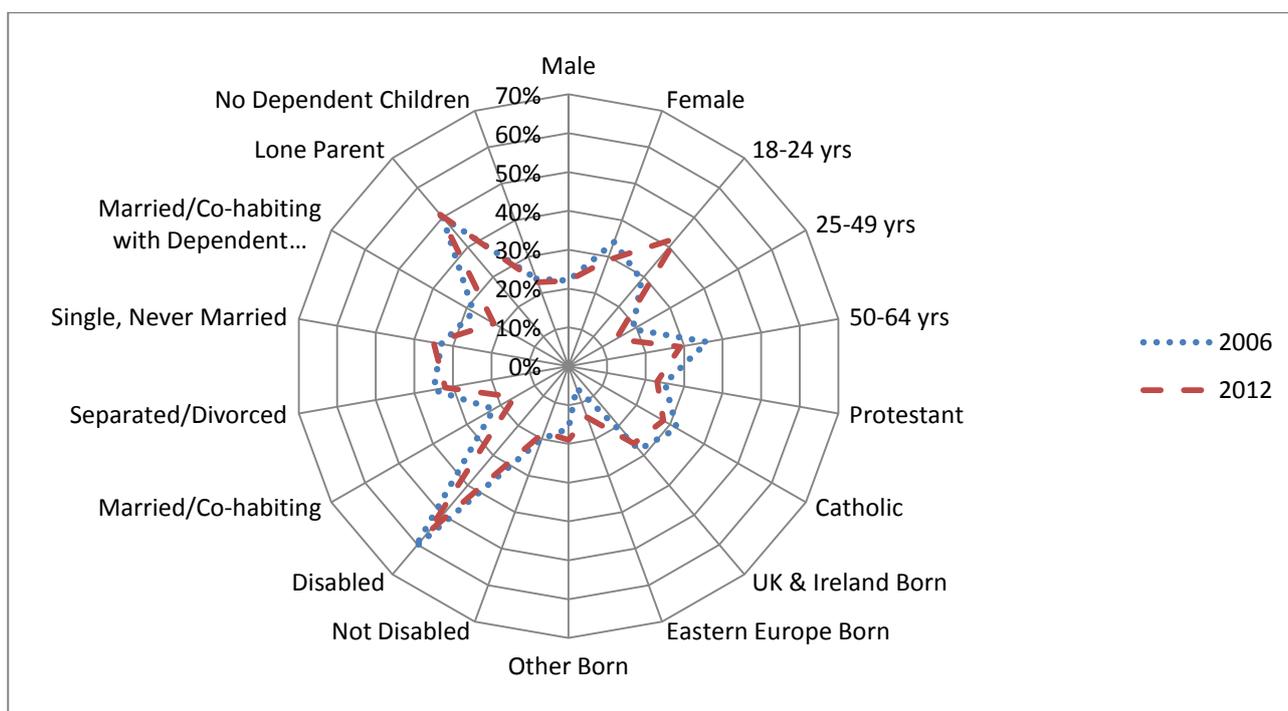
ILO unemployment rates in 2006 and 2012 (Source: LFS 2006 and 2012)



Particularly high economic inactivity rates were evident for those aged 18-24 years old, those with a disability, and lone parents. The high economic inactivity rate of those aged 18-24 years old will be to some extent due to the fact that many were in education, either still at school, or in further or higher education. However, the 18-24 years old age group also had high ILO unemployment rates, and therefore the low employment rates and high economic inactivity rates cannot be merely attributed to this group's participation in education. Indeed, as Chapter 4 will explore in more detail, a high proportion of this group are classified as Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET); 20.5% of 16-24 year olds in Northern Ireland are classified as such, which represents an increase of 59% since the year 2000 (Northern Ireland Executive, 2012). The research confirmed the trend towards even higher economic inactivity rates among the 18-24 years old age group. Therefore, this is an issue of considerable policy concern in Northern Ireland, and indeed across Europe, with many other countries faring as badly or even worse. In the 50-64 years old age group, a trend away from retirement amongst this group can be seen, with lower economic inactivity rates in 2012 than in 2006.

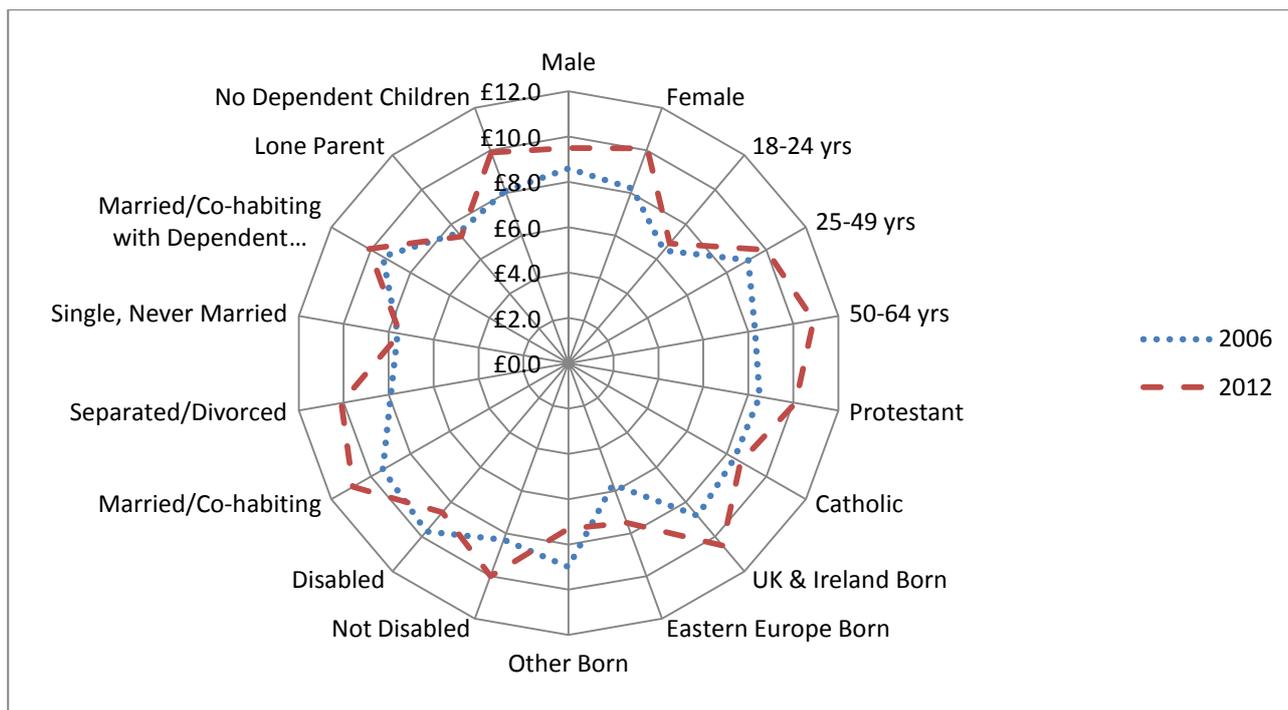
High economic inactivity rates among those with a disability and lone parents also point to important policy issues. Although economic inactivity among those with a disability fell slightly between the two time points, it remained high at 61.2% and 56.3% respectively in 2006 and 2012, respectively; they were the most disadvantaged group in this respect. The economic inactivity rate of lone parents was 49.6% in 2006 and increased slightly to 51.1% in 2012.

Economic inactivity rates in 2006 and 2012 (Source: LFS 2006 and 2012)



For most groups, median gross hourly pay had increased between the two time points. However, for some groups, pay had fallen or remained stable, and inequalities had widened or even reversed. Those aged 18-24 years old, who already had lower pay in 2006 than the other two age groups, saw only a small increase by 2012, and the inequalities between the age groups widened as a result. Those with a disability had a higher average wage in 2006, but this situation had reversed by 2012. The disparity between those of Protestant and Catholic backgrounds was very small in 2006, but by 2012 it had widened. Those who were single and have never married had also fallen further behind those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership and those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced.

Median gross hourly pay in 2006 and 2012 (Source: LFS 2006 and 2012)



Summary of inequalities for each of the nine equality grounds

The report found that both persistent and emergent inequalities were existent in the Northern Ireland labour market between 2006 and 2012.

Gender inequalities

The inequalities that were experienced by females, when compared to males, were persistent over time. Females experienced: lower employment rates; higher economic inactivity rates; higher rates of part-time employment; horizontal segregation in respect to the industry sectors; and vertical segregation in respect to the occupation groups employed in. The finding that females had lower employment rates than males remained remarkably stable over the period 2006 to 2012. However, differences were more marked when trends in ILO unemployment rates were examined – these rates increased for both males and females over the period, but the level and rate of increase was much higher for males than females.

Gender inequalities: industry sectors and occupation groups

When the industry sectors and occupation groups in which males and females were employed in were considered both horizontal and vertical segregation was evident. A high level of horizontal segregation along gender lines was found in the present study; in 2012, 51.4% of females were employed in the 'Public Administration, Education and Health' industry sector and an additional 22.0% in 'Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants' (22.0% at Q1 2012). This finding is supported by NISRA (2012b) which reported that in 2012 92% of female employees worked in the service sector³, compared to 65% of males; a total of 54% of female full-time employees were employed in the public administration, education and health sectors compared to 26% of male full-time employees (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2012b).

Research from the UK and across Europe suggests that there are more opportunities to achieve the better-paid managerial roles in the more male-dominated private sector (Schroeder et al., 2008). Therefore, it is possible that the identified existence of horizontal segregation in the Northern Ireland labour market may also be a driver of vertical segregation; where working in the public sector protects employees from downward occupational mobility, but restricts their upward mobility.

Horizontal segregation may also create gender inequalities in employment outcomes if sectors are differently affected by cyclical economic fluctuations. As evidenced in gender chapter of the main report the recession had a particularly large impact on the male-dominated construction industry in Northern Ireland, and the job losses incurred by males were larger than those incurred by females, as the public sector seemed to remain relatively sheltered (Hinds, 2011). That is not to say that females were not affected by the recession; the issue of gender inequalities in the labour market is complex, and the impact of the recession on males and females reflects this in different ways. For example, females may have left jobs that no longer allowed them to balance their work and care responsibilities (ibid.).

With regard to vertical segregation, the occupation group employed in, the present research found that only 36.8% of those employed in 'Managers and Senior Officials' Occupations were female; a finding supported by NISRA (2012b), who further stated that this percentage (36% in their report) represented only 5% of females compared to 10% of males. Further to this the present report found, in 2012, an over-representation of females in: 'Administrative and Secretarial' occupations (77.4% of those employed in this occupation group were female), 21.4% of females worked in this occupation group compared to only 5.5% of males; 'Personal Service Occupations' (84.7% of those employed in this occupation group were female) which employed 16.8% of the female workforce compared to only 2.7% of the male workforce; and 'Sales and Customer Service' occupations (69.0% of those employed in this occupation group were female) which employed 11.9% of the female workforce, compared to only 4.7% of the male workforce. On the other hand, females were under-represented in 2012 in 'Skilled Trades Occupations' (92.3% of those who worked in this occupation group were male) which employed 24.1% of the male workforce in, compared to only 2.3% of the female workforce; and 'Process, Plant and Machine Operatives' occupations (86.3% of those employed in this occupation group were male) which employed 10.5% of the male workforce, compared to only 1.9% of the female workforce.

³ According to NISRA (2012b) the sub sectors that make up the 'Service Sector' are: 'Public administration, education and health services'; 'Distribution, hotel and restaurants'; 'Banking and finance services'; 'Transport and communications'; and 'Other' services.

There is no definitive answer as to why occupational segregation exists, and the extent to which it is a product of choice. Findings from the Women into Non-Traditional Sectors project in Belfast (Potter and Hill, 2009) suggested that, where constraints exist, they are both practical and cultural. A combination of childcare, transport and mentoring support was shown to help females overcome some of the practical impediments to accessing training and employment in traditionally male-dominated areas. However, without organisational change towards a genuine commitment to diversity and work-family reconciliation across the labour market, females may continue to be effectively excluded from many workplaces. The present research found that the weaker economic labour market position of females was not explained by qualification holding as females were generally better qualified than males (having higher degree or equivalent holding rates and lower no qualification rates than males).

Gender inequalities: transgender

It is important to remember that males and females are not the only groups included under the gender equality ground identified under Section 75. Persons of transgender are also identified under this equality ground. However, little data exists on transgender persons within Northern Ireland; within the present study attitudinal data was utilised and sought to gain a picture of transgender persons within the Northern Ireland labour market. The 2011 Equality Awareness Survey (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2012) found that almost a quarter of respondents had a negative attitude towards transgender persons. When broken down further those negative attitudes increased in respect to social distance. The negative attitudes increased from 35% who would mind having a transgender person as a work colleague to 40% who would mind having a transgender person as a neighbour to over half (53%) who would mind having a transgender person as an in-law.

Age inequalities: younger workers

When age was singularly considered a number of persistent and emergent key inequalities were found in relation to the Northern Ireland labour market. Between 2006 and 2012 those aged 18-24 years old experienced: lower employment rates (emergent); a large decrease in employment rates (emergent); higher part-time employment rates (emergent); consistently higher ILO unemployment rates; higher rates of economic inactivity (emergent); and consistently lower rates of pay when compared to those aged 25 years old and over.

Those aged 18-24 years old also experienced horizontal segregation in respect to the industry employed in to the extent of being under-represented in two thirds of industry sectors (emergent) and vertical segregation in respect to the occupation group employed in (emergent) where those aged 18-24 years old were under-represented in higher level occupation groups such as 'Managers and Senior Officials', 'Professional Occupations' and 'Associate and Technical Occupations'. Additionally, those aged 50-64 years old faced a persistent inequality in the Northern Ireland labour market as they had consistently lower employment rates than those aged 25-49 years old between 2006 and 2012.

When considering part-time employment the present study found that males aged 18-24 years old had consistently higher rates of part-time employment rates than males aged 25 years old and older. However, again it was females who had the highest part-time employment rates of all, and this was true when broken down into age groups; again, females aged 18-24 years old had the highest part-time employment rates of

all the groups in 2012. Females also retained the highest economic inactivity rates when age was considered; females aged 18-24 years old had the highest economic inactivity rates of all the gender and age groups considered.

It is likely that the impact of the recession in Northern Ireland played its part in developing the emergent inequalities found for those aged 18-24 years old. As noted, these inequalities were also evident when another variable such as marital status was considered.

Religious background inequalities

It was found that Catholics experienced persistently lower employment rates than Protestants and persistently higher economic inactivity rates. In addition, Protestant workers were over-represented in most industry sectors at both 2006 and 2012, leading to horizontal segregation with respect to industry sector to the detriment of Catholic workers. However, whilst this horizontal segregation was persistent between 2006 and 2012, there were signs of lessening, as in 2012 Protestants were over-represented in all but three industry sectors. Whilst vertical segregation with respect to the occupation group employed in was also found in the present study, it was experienced by both Catholics and Protestants; whilst Catholics were under-represented at the highest occupation level of 'Managers and Senior Officials' at both 2006 and 2012, Protestants were under-represented at the next highest level 'Professional Occupations' at the same time points. Regarding lower level occupation groups, whilst Protestants were over-represented in the low level occupation groups of 'Process, Plant and Machine Operatives' and 'Elementary Occupations' in 2006, it was Catholics who were over-represented in 2012.

Political opinion inequalities

Whilst data on political opinion in the Northern Ireland labour market is lacking the present study was able to discern two key inequalities related to the broader concept (i.e. not by the political party⁴) of Unionist or Nationalist. At both 2006 and 2012 those who identified as Nationalist had the lowest employment rates and the highest economic inactivity rates (categories were: Nationalist, Unionist and Neither).

Ethnic minority and racial inequalities

Labour Force Survey data with regard to minority ethnic and racial groups and the Northern Ireland labour market was lacking; and the numbers who were not from the UK and Ireland were low. To this end it was decided that analyses using LFS data would be carried out against three 'country of birth' groups would be utilised within the study: UK and Ireland; Eastern Europe and Others.

Eastern Europeans were found to experience persistent inequalities between 2006 and 2012. The inequalities Eastern Europeans faced were: lower pay rates; a high degree of horizontal segregation with respect to industry sector employed as Eastern Europeans were most often employed in the

⁴ Respondents to the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2006, 2010 and 2012) were asked to indicate which Political Party they supported, if any, for example, the Ulster Unionist Part, Sinn Féin, Democratic Unionist Party etc. In addition, they were asked to indicate if they considered themselves to be: Unionist, Nationalist or neither. It is this broader category of Nationalist, Unionist that is utilised here.

'Manufacturing' industry sector; a high degree of vertical segregation with respect to occupation group employed in, as they were over-represented in the lower level occupation groups, especially 'Elementary Occupations' and under-represented in higher level occupation groups; and prejudiced attitudes – in particular against Polish migrants. In addition, the Others group was found to be under-represented at the higher level occupation groups, they therefore experienced vertical segregation. With regard to attitudes toward migrant workers in general, respondents to the NILTS (2006 and 2010) displayed negative attitudes and did not agree that migrant workers were good for the economy, in fact, positive opinion declined from 52.7% in 2006 to 25.7% in 2010.

Ethnic minority and racial inequalities: Irish Travellers

Data on Irish Travellers and the Northern Ireland labour market was lacking. Therefore, Irish Traveller data as reported in the Census 2011 for Northern Ireland and attitudinal surveys such as the 2011 Equality Awareness Survey (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2012) were utilised. Furthermore, due also to the lack of data a comparison over time was not possible. Therefore, any inequalities identified could not be discerned as either persistent or emergent. It was found in the present study that Irish Travellers experienced: lower employment rates and higher economic inactivity rates than non-Travellers. In addition, Irish Travellers faced a high degree of prejudice when respondents were asked to consider Irish Travellers as a potential work colleague, neighbour or spouse of a close relation.

Disability inequalities

Persistent and emergent inequalities were found within the Northern Ireland labour market for persons with disabilities. These related to: lower employment rates (persistent); higher part-time employment rates (persistent); higher rates of economic inactivity (persistent); lower self employment rates (emergent); a degree of horizontal segregation with respect to industry sector, those with disabilities were under-represented in four industry sectors in 2006 and six industry sectors in 2012 (persistent); a degree of vertical segregation with respect to occupation group, those with disabilities were under-represented in higher level occupation groups such as 'Professional Occupations' (persistent) and prejudice as a potential work colleague (persistent).

Sexual orientation inequalities

Data on sexual orientation and participation in the Northern Ireland labour market was limited. However, it was possible to discern three y inequalities related to sexual orientation: lower hourly wages for males who lived with a same sex partner; prejudice against Lesbian, Gay and Bisexuals (LGBs); and unfair treatment toward LGBs in the labour market.

Marital status inequalities

Between 2006 and 2012, persistent and emergent, inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market were found with regard to marital status. The study looked at three marital status groups: those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership, those who were single and have never married and those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced or widowed. Throughout the study it was those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership who had favourable labour market outcomes.

Those who were single and have never married and those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced or widowed had consistently lower employment rates than those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership (persistent). Whilst consistently higher ILO unemployment rates were found for those who were single and have never married (persistent), long term unemployment rates were highest for those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced or widowed (this group also experienced higher ILO unemployment rates than those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership). However, both those who were single and have never been married and those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced or widowed had higher economic inactivity rates and lower wage rates compared to those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership. In addition, a degree of vertical segregation with respect to the occupation group employed was found in the current research whereby those who were single and have never married were more highly represented in lower level occupations such as 'Sales and Customer Services Occupations' and 'Elementary Occupations' than those who were married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership and those who were previously married but are now separated, divorced or widowed.

The present study found that those who were single and have never married who were aged between 18-24 years old had the lowest employment rates of all the marital status and age group interactions. However, it must be noted that many people in the 18-24 years old age group might still be students and may have indicated in their response to the LFS that they were: unemployed; employed part-time; or economically inactive, thus inflating the figures (although this may not be the sole reason to account for the trends identified in the present study).

Dependency status inequalities: lone parents

The present study found that lone parents fare worse in the Northern Ireland labour market than those who are either married or co-habiting with dependent children and those with no dependent children. Persistent inequalities were experienced by lone parents between 2006 and 2012: lower employment rates; higher economic inactivity rates; lower wage rates; a degree of horizontal segregation in respect to industry sector employed in, at both 2006 and 2012 lone parents were not represented at all in two industry sectors and under-represented in four others; a degree of vertical segregation in respect to occupation groups was also found where lone parents were under-represented at higher level occupation groups in both 2006 and 2012.

Dependency status inequalities: female part-time employment

Unsurprisingly, dependency status and gender were found to interact with one another and may provide an explanation as to the higher part-time employment rates for females. The present study found that females with dependent children consistently had much higher rates of part-time employment than females with no dependent children. In addition, whilst male lone parents had higher rates of part-time employment than those who were married or co-habiting with dependent children and those with no dependent children, the rates of part-time employment for females in the same circumstances (i.e. female lone parents) were still higher than those for males. Female lone parents also experienced higher rates of ILO unemployment than male lone parents.

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