

# **NOW THAT THE FUTURE HAS ARRIVED**

## A RETROSPECTIVE REASSESSMENT OF GERSHUNY'S THEORY OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

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Tony Eardley  
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# **NOW THAT THE FUTURE HAS ARRIVED**

## A RETROSPECTIVE REASSESSMENT OF GERSHUNY'S THEORY OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

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### **Abstract**

At the beginning of the 1980s Jonathan Gershuny developed a bold framework for thinking about what kinds of social organisation might come 'after industrial society'. The development of the theory of 'social innovation' coincided with Gershuny's deepening interest in the information provided by time-diaries. At the centre of the theory of social innovation is the relationship between market and non-market provision of services. Gershuny argued that, over time, the relative market prices of durable goods and final services produces a tendency toward 'self-service', where households eschew the purchase of increasingly expensive final services and substitute them with home produced services. On this basis, Gershuny predicted the decline of time devoted to market work, a tendency he calls the 'diminishing marginal utility of income' and an increase in the time spent at home in self-servicing (non-market production) and in leisure consumption. Time spent in non-market production would be in turn diminished by the increasing productivity of domestic technology and the increased sexual equality in the domestic division of labour, producing a society of greater leisure. The beginning of a new century provides a suitable opportunity to reflect on whether the information from the growing body of time use data collected since the publication *Social Innovation and the Division of Labour* supports the central tenets of Gershuny's thesis. This paper argues that Gershuny's predictions have gone awry because they overlooked two key factors – his failure to consider the effect of labour demand on the distribution of hours of paid work and his neglect of bargaining over the domestic division of labour.

## 1 Introduction

Since the middle of this century any reference to the year 2000 has been used as another way of talking about the future. It was the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on the Year 2000 that launched Daniel Bell's (1968) discussion of 'post-industrial' society'. At the Hudson Institute, the futurologists Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener simply called their major work *The Year 2000*. Adding 2000 to the end of any title became an indication of forecast. A search of my university's library catalogue uncovered works entitled *Housing 2000*, *Water 2000*, *Coal 2000*, *Traffic 2000*, *Office Automation 2000* and one unhappily titled work on the *Soviet Union 2000*. Now the talismanic year 2000 has arrived. An obvious, almost irresistible question that arises is how accurately have these forecasts made some decades ago predicted what actually happens today. By comparing the predictions of decades past with the findings of the present, it is possible to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of social change and refine our theories.

## 2 Gershuny's Theory: A Concrete Prediction About Future Trends in Time Use

Alone among those interested in anticipating the kind of social organisation that might come 'after industrial society', Jonathan Gershuny both drew upon the evidence provided by time-diaries and made predictions about the future use of time (Gershuny, 1983, 1985; Gershuny, Godwin and Jones, 1994). The most compact statement of Gershuny's theories can still be found in his *Social Innovation and the Division of Labour*, published in 1983.

At the centre of his theory of social innovation is the relationship between market and non-market provision of services. Gershuny argues that, over time, the relative market prices of durable goods and final services produces a tendency toward 'self-service', where households eschew the purchase of increasingly expensive market services and substitute them with home-produced services. On this basis Gershuny predicts the decline of time devoted to market work, a tendency he calls the 'diminishing marginal utility of income' and an increase in the time spent at home in non-market production and in leisure consumption. Fortunately,

according to Gershuny, the increasing productivity of domestic appliances and a more equitable division of domestic labour is constantly reducing time spent in non-market production. The net result is a society of greater leisure.

## 3 A Decline in Time Devoted to Market Work?

Let us begin with the prediction of a decline in time devoted to market work. On average, individuals do devote less time to paid work in the 1990s. However, this change is a compound of different process that can be analytically separated.

First, while it once made sense for statistics on market work to cover the age range 15 to 65 years, most commentators (including Gershuny) feel that a narrower range is more appropriate today because working life has typically become shorter. It has shrunk at both ends of the life course. There is a marked trend for young people to spend more years in formal education and enter the paid workforce at a later age (i.e. in their mid-twenties). Fewer older people, especially older men, wait until age 65 before retiring. Gershuny offers no explicit reasons for the changes<sup>1</sup> in the length of working life and typically restricts his analysis to the age range 20 to 59 years, the age range common to all the datasets in the Multinational Time Use Archive. The implication is that Gershuny must believe that his theory applies to people of prime working age, among whom there is a decline independent of any changes in working life.

Secondly, Gershuny's theory, with its trade-off between time spent in market work and time spent in home production, is mostly directed at labour supply. However, time spent in paid work can also be affected by the demand for labour. This is plain when you think about the effects of

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<sup>1</sup> Labour economics suggests that the hours of paid work an individual supplies to the market can be explained as the outcome of two countervailing tendencies. The first tendency flows from relative prices and the second tendency results from income effects. Mostly Gershuny emphasises relative price effects, explaining the decline in (paid) working time as a trade-off against greater home production time. However, early retirement might be explained as the outcome of an income effect; the individual may have accumulated enough savings (paid off a housing mortgage, built up their superannuation entitlements) and no longer need paid employment.

the business cycle. During recessions, the average time spent in paid work diminishes because fewer people manage to find paid work. The difficulty is that the period for which time use evidence is readily available, 1965 to 1999, coincides with the end of full employment in most of the industrialised world. Clearly it would be a mistake to attribute a decline in time devoted to paid work to changes in the relative attractiveness (price) of market work, when it is simply due to the higher levels of unemployment. At a minimum it is useful to control for unemployment.

Thirdly, while Gershuny often writes as though households make labour supply decisions (Gershuny, Bittman and Brice, 1997), most of his data relates to individuals. While recognising that households have some structured organisation, namely a domestic division of labour based on gender, Gershuny tends to assume what Lundberg and Pollak (1996a) have called a consensual or 'common preference' model. In other words, Gershuny assumes that individuals in households cooperate to maximise their collective household utility. The defining characteristic of a common preference model is that the optimal solution for the household is also the best solution for any one individual, so that an increase in household utility is an increase in the individual's utility. Using this logic it follows that if women increase their weekly hours of paid work it is because this is the best way of maximising household utility.

The alternative is to use the framework of bargaining (Lundberg and Pollak, 1996b). A bargaining framework assumes that within a household, what is optimal for one individual is not automatically optimal for the other individuals in the household. Under the presumption of bargaining, women's increased weekly hours of paid work is explained by reference to their own utility, for example, they may be seeking greater independence through possessing their own income. The common preference framework also has implications for consumption and intra-household distribution. The consensual framework presumes household members pool their income and distribute it optimally. The bargaining framework presumes that consumption and distribution are the outcome of a negotiation between household members on the basis of their relative power. According to some versions of bargaining theory, power in

marriage-like relationships depends on each partner's 'threat points' - the point at which that person's benefits would be greater if they separated.

This choice of framework matters because when the trends in time spent in paid work are decomposed by gender, it becomes obvious that the aggregate decline results from a sharp decline in men's hours, which mask a similarly steep increase in women's hours.

Time-diary estimates of the working hours of metropolitan prime-working-aged Australians can be assembled for most of the last quarter of this century, using information drawn from the analysis of four separate time use surveys, conducted in 1974, 1987, 1992 and 1997.<sup>2</sup> These data show the length of the working day down to the nearest five minutes.

Average time spent in paid work<sup>3</sup> per capita provides a snapshot of societal trends in the distribution of paid work over the last quarter of a century. During this historical period, the per capita hours of paid work contributed by every prime-working-aged member of Australian society has remained stable at just under four hours per day (about 27 hours per week). However, this unchanging per capita average masks a dramatic sexual redistribution of paid work. The hours that prime-aged women contribute to the labour market have significantly increased and the contribution of prime-aged men has significantly declined.

**Table 1: Mean Length of the Working Day Among Metropolitan Prime Aged Employed Persons by Sex**

	1974		1987		1992		1997	
	Mean	Std error	Mean	Std error	Mean	Std error	Mean	Std error
Men	6.45	0.28	5.21	0.15	5.12	0.09	5.16	0.09
Women	1.75	0.21	2.39	0.12	2.56	0.07	2.70	0.07
Persons	3.89	0.22	3.81	0.10	3.83	0.06	3.91	0.06

2 The 1974 survey was conducted by the Cities Commission, and 1987, 1992 and 1997 surveys were conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The material presented here is based on the author's analysis of Confidential Unit Record Files supplied by the ABS under its agreement with the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee.

3 To ensure the greatest comparability, this analysis employs the narrowest definition of paid work, excluding travel to and from work, breaks at work and job search activities.

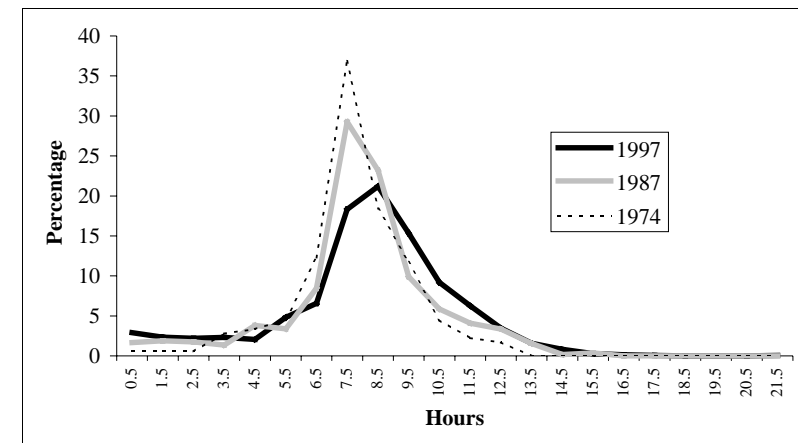
When controls for changes to working life (by concentrating on prime-aged workers) and for changes to the gender composition of the workforce are introduced, the decline in the average time spent in paid work disappears.

Moreover, stability in average hours of market work can be associated with significant distributional changes. In the absence of a self-evident trend toward longer average hours of work, debate has shifted to issues connected with the polarisation of working hours. Polarisation of working hours implies very long hours, or overwork, for some and few or no hours for others.

In 1974, the proportion of metropolitan prime-aged men who were in employment approached 100 per cent. By 1997 the proportion of prime-aged metropolitan men who were not employed increased to more than 13 per cent. Women's employment over this period grew steadily, by almost 19 percentage points, defying labour market cycles. The net result of these opposing trends for each sex is that there has been a small increase in the labour participation of metropolitan prime aged persons.

A study of the diaries of prime-aged metropolitan men shows that the length of their working days has become longer and less standard. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the working day of different lengths for this group of workers for three of the survey years. The increasing dispersion of working hours over this period is evident as a flattened peak and increased proportion in the tails of the distribution in the 1990s compared with earlier decades. There is also a discernible shift in each successive distribution towards the right hand side of the diagram, indicating a progressive tendency towards longer working days. In 1974, working hours are arranged relatively tightly around a peak in the range of seven to eight hours a day – more than 55 per cent of the observations fall within this narrow range, with a marked preponderance of working days being of less than eight hours duration. In 1997, by contrast, less than 40 per cent of working days were between seven and eight hours in length and there was a preponderance of working days of eight hours or more. In 1997, more than a third of the working days of this group lasted longer than nine hours, more than one in five male metropolitan prime-aged

**Figure 1: Length of the (Paid) Working Day: Male Metropolitan Prime-Aged Workers**

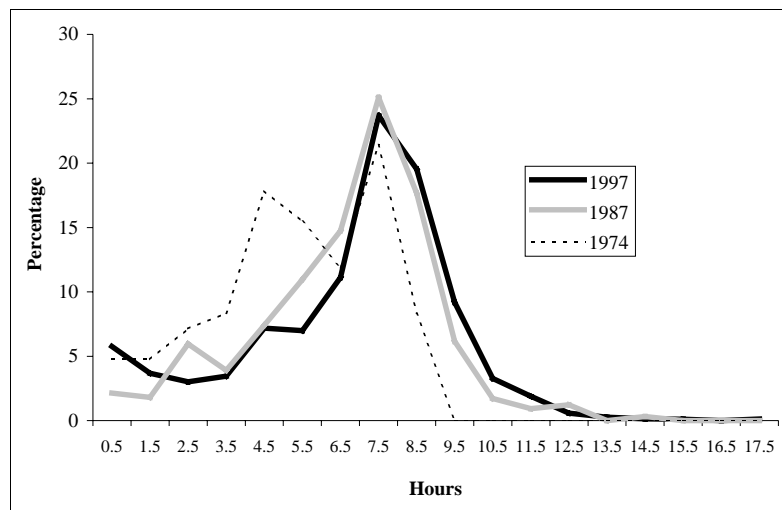


workers worked more than ten hours a day, and one in eight worked longer than 11 hours a day. The proportions with such long working days in 1974 were markedly lower. For example, less than one in 18 prime-aged male metropolitan workers worked more than 11 hours a day.

Growing proportions of men describe themselves as part-time workers. There have been some increases in the incidence of short working days (those less than four hours in duration) over the last 23 years, but a stable proportion (about a quarter) of male metropolitan prime-aged workers worked less than seven hours per day in each of the survey years. The story of changes in the length of the male working day is primarily a story about the changes in the length of the full-timer's working day.

The distribution of the length of the working day among female metropolitan prime-aged workers has also undergone important changes over the last quarter of a century (see Figure 2). However, the pattern of change for women is one of progressive movement away from a short working day (significantly involving hours of work resembling the hours of the school day) towards more 'standard' daily hours. In 1974 more than half of women workers worked less than six hours per day. By 1997 less than a third of women worked less than six hours a day and more than half worked more than the seven hours of the supposedly typical

**Figure 2: Length of the (Paid) Working Day: Female Metropolitan Prime-Aged Workers**



working day (9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a one hour break for lunch). Very long hours of daily work have been uncommon among women in the past but this situation is changing fairly quickly. In 1974, for example, not a single metropolitan prime-aged woman in the survey sample worked longer than nine hours a day, while in 1997 one-sixth of the women in this category had a working day of longer than nine hours. A striking finding is that the working days of women in this group, who describe themselves as working part time, are getting perceptively longer.

Since the 1970s, working life has become drastically shorter and gender differences in paid work are beginning to collapse. In addition, working times have become more dispersed, with higher rates of unemployment, fewer days of work, but longer working days. Standard working hours are now less typical for both men and women workers. Work at unsociable times of the day has also increased over the course of this period.

In summary, after disaggregating the overall trend in (paid) working hours, the prediction of the 'declining marginal utility of income' appears to be restricted principally to males over the age of 54 years. Empirically it has become manifest as a phenomenon which affects the span of working

life. So called 'early retirement' is not a trivial matter but a significant social change. The most benign interpretation of this trend is that workers, with their established preference for large blocks of free time, have chosen to devote more time to non-market production and leisure by shortening the span of their working life. Gershuny's theory, with some minor modifications to accommodate this preference for consolidated leisure time, could account for this outcome.

An alternative interpretation, however, is that the casualties of the process of economic restructuring have been concentrated among males in this age range. Do these workers leave the paid workforce because they have achieved their financial goals by this age or because they have been made redundant? Is 'early retirement' a constrained choice disguised as an apparently free choice? Perhaps these mature male workers have responded to a conscious policy of inducing 'early retirement' as a method of 'downsizing' organisations. Or, in even more complex cases of disguised constraint, perhaps male mature-aged workers have exited from the labour market as a result of anticipating humiliating episodes of 'restructuring' ending in redundancy. The average age of workers made redundant, the high rate of unemployment among males of this age range and the large number of discouraged job seekers all suggest that workers *do not* freely choose to retire (Casey and Wood, 1994: 367; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999: 114-18).

Deciding between Gershuny's interpretation and its alternative involves determining whether males above the age of 55 are victims or beneficiaries of economic development. In other words did these workers jump, or were they pushed? Or did they jump before they were pushed?

The answer to this question determines the extent to which an explanation based on autonomous rational choice might be considered plausible. Otherwise this situation might be more properly treated as a case of labour market failure.

In any case, there does appear to be a distributional issue among men of prime working age. For this category of people, the last few decades of the twentieth century has brought both unemployment and social exclusion for some and a tendency for 'overwork' among others. All this raises the suspicion that the transition to new forms of economic

provision has occurred in such a way as to increase the bargaining power of employers vis à vis the employed. This shift in bargaining power and the polarisation of (paid) working hours was not part of any of the forecasts made in the middle of the century.

However much or however little Gershuny's theory needs some modification to explain the decline in men's supply of hours of paid work, it is the significance of the opposite trend among women, who have been supplying more hours, that has particular significance for Gershuny's theories. The implications of this development is the subject of the next two sections.

#### 4 Trends in the Domestic Division of Labour

In attempting to understand the profound changes in domestic life over the last century, Gershuny has been working with a version of the symmetrical family thesis plus a belief in the increasing productivity of modern domestic technology. The symmetrical family (Young and Wilmott, 1973) is seen as a culmination of processes that began with the dissolution of the pre-industrial family. The pre-industrial family was the basic unit of production. Most individuals depended for their existence upon membership in a household that was broadly self-sustaining. Men were considered more important than women. The patriarch expected and received the submission of wife and children and, where they could be afforded, servants. The brutal exercise of this power was tempered by a common recognition of the economic value of wives and children (Shorter, 1977: 66, 74).

Gradually the factory replaced the cottage as the centre of industry and the family lost its productive function, or so the story goes. Men became breadwinners. This converted wives and children from economic assets (helpmeets) to economic dependants, and indeed from the husbands' point of view, into liabilities. As Young and Wilmott say: 'The husband could exercise his power more despotically even than in the past because, if they had children, the wife needed him more than he needed her. The marriage was asymmetrical' (1973: 75-6). Husbands enforced obedience through beatings and by control of the purse.

The origins of the contemporary symmetrical family are said to lie in the middle-classes of the late nineteenth century. They were affluent enough for wives to be an ornament to a man's property as well as part of it. The comfortable private haven they established weakened what remained of dependence upon extended kin. 'The man's physical comfort, the general good order of the house and the sense of spiritual contentment gained from a consciousness of his own goodness depended upon the circumspection and the affection with which he treated his wife' (Young and Wilmott, 1973: 84). This provided fertile soil for the first feminist movement which began altering the legal status of women, making them persons in their own right and not purely the property of their husbands.

According to this view, once a man's wife had become his companion, and he began to centre leisure upon his home, then it became a natural extension that he should 'help' his wife with her tasks. Thus the rigid segregation of domestic roles began to be undermined. When wives are also employed, they shed their former dependence on their husbands. The norm of this new form of domestic organisation is equality:

All major decisions should be made together, and even in minor household matters they should help one another as much as possible. This norm is carried out in practice. In their division of labour, many tasks were shared or inter-changeable. The husband often did the cooking and sometimes the washing and ironing. The wife did the gardening and often the household repairs as well. Much of their leisure time was spent together, and they shared similar interests in politics, music, literature, and in entertainment. (Bott, quoted in Young and Wilmott, 1973: 30)

The symmetrical family thesis appears to be a *good description of a change in culture* – a significant shift in marital norms – but a *poor description of change in domestic practices*. According to opinion polls, there has been a distinct change in men's and women's values concerning the sexual division of domestic labour. In Australia, as elsewhere in the English-speaking world, a large majority of both men and women believe that child care, housework and shopping should be shared equally

between men and women (Bittman and Pixley, 1997: 147-9). Researchers in this field of study talk about the diffusion of 'egalitarian attitudes'. However, actual behaviour tells a different story. In Australia, over the last decade, women's average share of time spent in unpaid work was 66 per cent (Bittman and Pixley, 1997; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998: 19). The ratio is similarly unequal in all OECD countries for which there is information (Bittman, 1998).

A simple test of the rigidity of sex roles is the degree of segregation of domestic tasks. Segregation refers to the fact that a task is sex-stereotyped by being viewed as the exclusive responsibility of one sex, creating a division between 'women's work' and 'men's work'. In 1992, Australian men continued to specialise in mowing the lawn and polishing the car, while women still did an overwhelming proportion of laundry, physical care of children, cleaning and cooking. Perhaps more disappointingly, even when both partners are in full-time employment, that is, when the 'breadwinning' role is shared, the sex segregation in unpaid work tasks does not diminish, with both men and women conforming to stereotype (Bittman and Pixley, 1997: 113; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999: 119-21).

Summarising briefly the history of the sexual division of labour in Australia between 1974 and 1992, change has taken an unexpected form (Bittman, 1995). Although the gap between men's and women's average time spent in unpaid work has decreased, this has come about because of an *unexpected sharp reduction in women's hours of unpaid work* rather than any large change in men's hours. The most dramatic change can be seen in the diminishing hours women spend in the kitchen, and in laundry, ironing and clothes care. Women have also increased their activity in home maintenance and car care, both classically masculine areas of responsibility. In other words women's hours of unpaid work have become more like men's hours. Let us call this the 'masculinisation of women's domestic labour'. While men have increased the hours they devote to child care their share of this responsibility has not grown because women's time spent in child care has increased at the same rate.

Why has change in the organisation of domestic work taken the form of the masculinisation of women's hours? After all, one might expect that since men are as equally committed as women to the new values of

domestic egalitarianism, these new attitudes would result in an increased participation in unpaid work by men. How can individuals reconcile a strong commitment to egalitarian sharing of housework with the actual inequality in the division of domestic tasks (i.e. a ratio of 2:1)? Researchers so far have proposed two solutions to this paradox: Gershuny's theory of 'lagged adaptation' and something that might be called 'pseudomutuality' (Bittman and Pixley, 1997; Hochschild, 1989).

Jonathan Gershuny and his co-workers (Gershuny, Godwin and Jones, 1994) propose the theory of lagged adaptation. It presupposes that men need more or better socialisation if they are to perform the more equitable roles of husband and father which have been newly demanded of them. Due to a traditional upbringing, the theory goes, men lack domestic competence and appropriate role models. Sooner or later, however, they will adjust. Adding a time delay for 'lagged adaptation' protects the theory of the symmetrical family from contradiction by current findings and postpones the evaluation of the theory until some time in the future.

However, an investigation of longitudinal data, together with cohort analysis of the Australian data, offers only relatively weak evidence of a process of lagged adaptation by men compared with the strong evidence of rapid adjustment by women (Gershuny, Bittman and Brice, 1997; Bittman and Matheson, 1996). There is some evidence for a very small short-term lagged adaptation (i.e. after five years men work out how to use the washing machine). But the sons of women influenced by second wave feminism are no more 'housework ready' than the generation before them. Tracking individuals over time confirms that women's adaptations are far greater than those of men, and that they are immediate. The changes in the pipeline appear, once again, to be chiefly in the behaviour of women, with only marginal changes being apparent in the behaviour of men from the current or future generations.

'Pseudomutuality' or 'faking it' is a miscarried solution to the problem of a disjunction between belief in equality and actual inequality. Relationships can be mutual or non-mutual. Pseudomutuality occurs when the recognition of non-mutuality is forbidden or at least very painful. It consists of ways of denying non-mutuality or, conversely, of affirming mutuality where none exists. In a small-scale qualitative project researching 65 couples in Sydney, Australia (Bittman and Lovejoy,

1993), it emerged that this is a regular and relatively stable outcome. There are two chief mechanisms at work in the creation of pseudomutuality, namely: misapprehension and discursive redefinition of equality. With the aid of these processes, men tend to inflate the size of their own contributions and diminish the significance of their partner's contributions. Women often collude in these processes and usually find it difficult to raise these issues without, at the same time, raising the spectre of the termination of the relationship.

Most importantly, what is common to both the conflicting propositions of lagged adaptation and pseudomutuality is a shared acknowledgment that at the moment there has been little change in the behaviour of men and a great deal of change in the behaviour of women. This has important implications for Gershuny's forecast of increased self-provisioning or self-service by households.

## 5 Self-service: The Substitution of Market Services by Services Produced at Home

The forecast of self-service is the most distinctive element in Gershuny's theory of social innovation. Where others have predicted an increase in the consumption of services (Clark, 1940; Ruthven, 1994), Gershuny points to a mechanism that may limit the growth of service consumption and therefore, employment in the service sector.

This mechanism has a few key moving parts. Gershuny proposes that households have a hierarchy of needs and wants to satisfy: 'food, shelter, domestic services, entertainment, transport, medicine, education, and, more distantly, government services, "law and order" and defence' (1983: 1). As societies get richer they devote a smaller proportion of their national incomes to satisfying basic needs, and a larger share to more sophisticated, luxury categories. Gershuny also assumes productivity differences between different sectors of the economy.

Gershuny also posits a *growing* productivity gap between the manufacturing and services sectors, which affects the *relative prices* of goods and final services. Over time, the gap between the relative costs of durable goods, produced by the manufacturing industry, and final

services, the product of the service sector, has continued to widen. From the point of view of many households, the cost of purchasing anything in the market can be translated into the time spent in paid work to acquire the income equivalent to the purchase price. When a final service can be produced at home with the aid of some capital equipment (durables), households face a choice between purchasing the final service or producing it themselves at home.

Household choices depend on the relative prices of the alternative modes of providing the service. The shadow price for home-produced services depends on the opportunity cost of the labour time devoted to its production and the costs of equipment and raw materials (Gershuny, 1983: 4). Householders also face a time constraint. For the highly paid, purchasing services (outsourcing) instead of using one's own unpaid labour, is cost effective. Thus, some demand for market services is dependent on household income. However, Gershuny argues that because durable goods have tended to become cheaper than market services, households have increasingly chosen at the aggregate level to provide their own services. He lists transport, entertainment, and domestic services as those subject to the 'social innovation' of household self-servicing (Gershuny, 1983: 2-3).

Gershuny's theory generates two predictions. At a single point in time, 'better-off households will spend a larger proportion of their disposable income on services than worse-off' households, and 'over time, households at each particular level will tend to decrease their proportion of income spent on services' (Gershuny, 1983: 5). In other words, Gershuny's theory reverses what has become the conventional wisdom that the demand for final services increases with economic development, and predicts that it may sometimes decline.

Gershuny is correct in proposing that at any one point in time the rich will consume more of these services than the poor. In each *Household Expenditure Survey* between 1984 and 1994, outsourcing of domestic goods and services increases as income increases. However, Gershuny's prediction of a secular *trend* toward self-service is in many cases apparently contradicted by the data. Over the decade 1984-94, net of confounding compositional changes, all forms of food preparation outsourcing increased (Bittman, Matheson and Meagher, 1999).

Expenditure on raw foods as a proportion of grocery purchases declined significantly over the decade, while expenditure on foods requiring less preparation has significantly increased. This pattern of outsourcing food preparation (through outright replacements and partial substitutes) is consistent with analysis of time use changes between 1974 and 1992, which revealed a rapidly accelerating, and astonishingly large, reduction in women's time spent in food preparation (Bittman, 1995). Since food preparation in aggregate occupies more hours of non-market work than any other 'household industry', this represents the largest modification of the boundary between home and market provision.

The second great growth area in outsourcing is child care. The growth in the consumption of extra-household child care remains true after holding constant age, household size and composition, spouse's earnings, and even real income.

Between 1987 and 1992, both men's and women's time devoted to primary face-to-face child care grew by a small but measurable amount. This continues what appears to be a century-long trend of investing more time in children (Bittman, 1995; Robinson and Godley, 1997; Vanek, 1974). This increase has been maintained in the face of falling family size. Household spending on child care has substantially increased without diminishing the time spent on that care by parents. The growth in both money and time resources devoted to child care show the increasing investment in our children.

Outsourcing of gardening and lawn mowing has grown modestly. Despite the many predictions to the contrary, consumption of paid domestic cleaning services over the decade 1984-94 did not increase. Real expenditure has remained constant. This may help explain why there was no measurable change in the time devoted to cleaning between 1987 and 1992 (Bittman, 1995).

Alone among market substitutes for household labour, laundry is being 'insourced'. Social historian Ruth Schwarz Cowan (1983) drew attention to the fact that more laundry was performed at home after World War II than before it, and the results of this analysis suggest that this process is continuing as we approach the new millennium. This is exactly the kind of self-service that Gershuny had predicted.

The overall pattern of findings about how the production of services have moved between home and market is difficult to interpret using Gershuny's theories as they currently stand. He has not anticipated the spectacular growth in the outsourcing of food preparation and child care or the modest increase on paid gardening services. Only trends in the production of laundry services ambiguously support his theory. Gershuny is inclined to interpret the fall in time devoted to food preparation as an effect of the increasing productivity of domestic appliances but his theory also suggests that over time there would be a tendency toward the insourcing of food preparation. He would tell a similar story about other domestic services.

In large part, because of his attachment to the model of common preference within households, Gershuny has a one-sided emphasis on relative equality in domestic labour. Men's share of housework has increased but their time devoted to housework has, in absolute terms, risen only very slightly. Men's share has increased because women's time has fallen at a relatively rapid rate. Women's falling share is associated with their increasing attachment to paid employment, as both the liberal feminists' and others' theories (even the symmetrical family thesis) have emphasised. Women's contracted time, their time devoted to paid employment, has squeezed the time available for domestic work. However, this time squeeze alone is not sufficient to explain this pattern of domestic outsourcing. Domestic outsourcing is also a response to women's lack of success in bargaining for men to increase their absolute contribution to unpaid work.

In this paper so far, evidence has been accumulating to show that women are following a strategy that is independent of men's strategy. While ever fewer men devote most of their adult life span to paid work, the total supply of hours of paid labour is maintained by the steadily increasing labour market activity of women. Where many have expected men's unpaid activity to rise to reach the same level as women's, the fact is that women have lowered their unpaid activity levels to resemble those of men. Indeed it has proven very difficult to alter men's supply of unpaid labour. Unemployed men's share of time spent in unpaid labour is not much different to that of full-time employed men. Few men have taken advantage of the generous paid parental leave available in some countries,

except in Norway where fathers have been threatened with financial penalties if they do not use this leave. These observations are difficult to interpret within the framework of common preference. They are more consistent with the emerging models of bargaining currently being developed.

There is a body of literature that suggests that households' consumption patterns alter when women's share of household income increases (Lundberg and Pollak, 1997). For example, expenditure on children's goods increases when women have an independent source of income. Knowledge of this tendency has long been the justification for paying family benefits directly to women. Perhaps a similar effect occurs with the purchase of market substitutes for unpaid domestic work. Women faced with the difficulty of negotiating an increase in their husband's unpaid labour supply and in possession of independent income, simply decide to use part of this income to replace their own unpaid labour. Putting this more abstractly, recognising the significant shift in who is supplying paid labour and adopting a bargaining model of household can generate a plausible explanation for the observed phenomena of domestic outsourcing.

An interesting demonstration of the difference between Gershuny's theory and that generated by the assumption of bargaining can be derived from the most recent (1997) Australian Time Use Survey (ABS, 1998). This survey collected, in addition to the usual items, information about the stock of domestic appliances in the household and some crude information about the consumption of outsourced domestic services. A dishwasher is a partial substitute for a restaurant, because restaurants offer meal clean-up as an integral part of their service. Gershuny's theory leads you to anticipate that households owning dishwashers would consume less restaurant meals. Now from the point of view of time use activity classification, a restaurant meal transforms eating from self-care, filling one's physiological requirements, into a leisure activity. In Gershuny's view, the dishwasher brings the household one step closer to mimicking a restaurant. The machine takes the effort out of meal clean-up and eating becomes more leisurely. The self-provisioning household, aided by modern technology, substitutes home-produced services for final services purchased on the market.

A bargaining perspective, on the other hand, would acknowledge that women have chiefly borne the responsibility for providing meals at home. Consequently, eating at home is leisurely activity for men but an activity accompanied by the constant responsibility for food preparation and meal clean-up for women. When women have contracted more time to the labour market, and are faced with the fact that they have been unable to persuade any one else at home to take responsibility for meal preparation and clean-up, they spend their independently earned income on all available methods of reducing their unpaid work loads. The bargaining model produces the prediction that such households will purchase both a dishwasher and more restaurant meals.

All the analysis in Table 2 is conducted on a sample of couple households (with and without children) with a household income greater than zero. In Model I the number of restaurant meals purchased in the last fortnight is regressed on the dummy variable indicating whether or not the household owns a dishwasher. Owning a dishwasher, somewhat unexpectedly from Gershuny's perspective, is significantly associated with higher consumption of restaurant meals. Since this association might be a spurious relationship caused by the fact that owning a dishwasher and consuming more restaurant meals might both be the result of having higher household income, Model II, controls for household income. Model II shows that the frequency of purchasing restaurant meals is powerfully associated with income. Adding household income to the equation doubles its explanatory power, as shown by the increase in the value of the adjusted R-squared measure, between Models I and II. Although the increase in meals out associated with ownership of a dishwasher is smaller in Model II than in Model I, the relationship is still positive and predicts that owning this appliance is associated with the equivalent to an extra restaurant meal every six weeks. Entering a series of dummy variables to represent the wife's employment status (Model III), marginally increases the explanatory power of the regression equation but does not change the coefficients for either income or the ownership of a dishwasher. Households in which the wife is employed full time, purchase an extra restaurant meal per month compared with households where the wife is not in the labour force. Even after

**Table 2: Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Number of Times Couple Households<sup>(a)</sup> had a Meal at a Restaurant in the Previous Fortnight**

	Unstandardised coefficients	95 per cent confidence intervals for coefficients	Significance (P)
<b>Model I</b> (Adjusted R square = 0.014)			
Household has a dishwasher	0.819	0.537 - 1.101	0.000
Constant	1.883	1.708 - 2.059	0.000
<b>Model II</b> (Adjusted R square = 0.07)			
\$1000 increase in weekly household income	1.503	0.100 - 0.200	0.000
Household has a dishwasher	0.393	0.103 - 0.693	0.009
Constant	0.633	0.350 - 0.916	0.000
<b>Model III</b> (Adjusted R square = 0.073)			
\$1000 increase in weekly household income	1.313	0.100 - 0.200	0.000
Wife employed full time	0.599	0.225 - 0.972	0.002
Wife employed part time	0.314	-0.038 - 0.665	0.080
Wife unemployed	0.594	-0.243 - 1.432	0.164
Household has a dishwasher	0.398	0.103 - 0.693	0.008
Constant	0.633	0.350 - 0.916	0.000
N = 2108			

Note: a) The base category is couple households without a dishwasher in Model I and Model II. In Model III the base category is couple households without a dishwasher with a wife not in the labour force.

Source: ABS (1997), Confidential Unit Record Files, supplied under an agreement with the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

controlling for household income and the wives' hours of work, owning a dishwasher continues to be associated with greater consumption of restaurant meals.

## 6 Conclusion

Gershuny's bold attempt to forecast the social distribution of time at the end of this century is a remarkable achievement. When his predictions, made more than 16 years ago, are compared with the actual findings of the most recent surveys, they remain surprisingly serviceable in their broad outline. Time devoted to paid work among those that made up the

bulk of the paid workforce in 1983 has reduced. Men's relative share of housework has increased. Despite the widespread perception of greater time pressure, leisure time appears, if anything, to be growing.

However, with the advantage of hindsight, it is clear that some important, if subtle processes have been overlooked. Chief amongst these has been the process of the economic emergence of women and its implication for the relationship between households and markets.

Gershuny may not have paid sufficient attention to the distribution of time spent in paid work and its increasingly polarised character. He has been relatively insensitive to the implications of the changing gender composition of the paid workforce. This has perhaps led him into a benign view of operations of the labour market and led him to overemphasise the voluntary nature of the withdrawal from work. However, the relative neglect of the significance of the economic emergence of women has had more serious effects on the accuracy of his predictions.

This latter weakness and his adherence to cooperative models of household decision-making has significantly affected his most distinctive prediction: the emergence of the self-provisioning household. Gershuny has overlooked the significance of the powerful evidence for the 'masculinisation of women's housework'. And he is not in a good position to explain the flourishing market in services that substitute for women's domestic labour, especially in home cooking and in child care. Some remedial work is required. The basis of a remedy can, in my opinion, be found in the framework being developed by the theorists of bargaining.

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