Gender pay equity and wellbeing: an intersectional study of engineering and caring occupations

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Abstract

This article discusses the complexity of gender pay within the occupations of engineering and caring. Applying an intersectional framework, we examine the role the gender pay gap plays in the perceived wellbeing of women engineers and care workers. The salient identities (micro level) for the two groups were identified through analysis of the professional context (meso) and the socio-political environment (macro). The two participant groups were situated in different class positions. The intersections of identities revealed unexpected advantages and disadvantages for women seeking fair and decent pay, with various implications for perceived wellbeing.

Key Words
Pay gap, women engineers, care workers, intersectionality, wellbeing

Introduction

The call for 'equal pay for equal work' has rung out for decades, yet the gender pay gap remains. Along with early motivational theorists (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959; 2010), we argue that fair pay is foundational for wellbeing at work. While much of the previous wellbeing research have used survey responses, we explore this topic by probing deeper into participants' experiences by using qualitative methodology. Through two linked case studies, we discuss perceptions of women professional engineers and women care workers in aged care facilities, in terms of equal pay and pay equity, respectively. While the two cases are not strictly comparable in sectoral terms, each afforded valuable information on the difficulties of achieving equal pay (engineers) and pay equity (care workers). Equal pay refers to the same pay for the same work. Pay equity refers to equal pay for work of similar value.

Intersectionality theory (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher, & Nkomo, 2016; Weber, 2010) is used to interpret participants' responses by moving between the micro level of identities and the macro socio-political contexts of each occupation. This intersectional study revealed surprising advantages and disadvantages for women in the two occupations. To understand women engineers' apparent lack of agency, we draw on discussions of sex differences and the apparent acceptance of a 'motherhood penalty' (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry for Women, 2017). The socio-political context for care workers

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differs and while they earn less than engineers, they have become increasingly unionised since 2012 and involved in collective legal actions for a fair wage.

Literature Review

Under the New Zealand (NZ) Human Rights Act 1993, it is unlawful to discriminate in employment on specific grounds such as race, sex, or disability. However, if a complainant is discriminated on several grounds, such as sex, ethnicity and age, they must choose just one (McGregor, Bell, & Wilson, 2016a). Critical of this approach, we bring an intersectional analysis to examine a core feature of workplace inequality – pay. We argue that gender alone is insufficient for analysis, theory building and, ultimately, fighting for justice and improved workplace wellbeing. We, thus, focus on the ways that gender and class, in particular, combine to impact the gender pay gap and perceived wellbeing on women in the workplace. In our study, we are interested in aspects of wellbeing that are directly connected to women's perceptions of both equitable pay and characteristics of their work that bring dis/satisfaction.

Wellbeing

Two major streams are identifiable in existing wellbeing research, both using positivist methodologies based on analyses of large data sets (Brown, Gardner, Oswald, & Qian, 2008). One stream comes from industrial relations and economist scholars (ibid) while the other major stream emerged as part of positive psychology. Both streams show a movement away from a direct engagement with power and conflict as central to research.

While power and inequality between employers and employees lies at the heart of the industrial relations research, its study has diminished. Recent employer surveys demonstrate a clear preference for direct discussion with individual employees coupled with a belief that most employees have no interest in collective bargaining (Foster, Rasmussen, & Coetzee, 2012). As Thompson and Smith (2009) note, a relocation in labour process research from sociology to business schools has brought a concomitant change in the nature of that research. What is evident is an "an unshakeable optimism with respect to trends in work and employment…. [with an] optimistic message about a move from command and control to collaborative high trust" (p.919). The power pendulum has moved towards a management view of workplace wellbeing.

Within the second stream of applied psychology, wellbeing is understood as a "combination of life satisfaction and emotional balance" (Hone, 2015: 7). Such wellbeing research involves responses to survey items analysed within higher level constructs, such as engagement, achievement, optimism and psychological flourishing (Hone, 2015; Diener et al., 2010). Satisfaction with pay does not feature. Wellbeing research has also extended into human resource management and performance, where it is associated with common employee measures ,such as job satisfaction, employee voice, enriched jobs (Wood & de Menezes, 2011), and work-life balance (e.g. Macky & Boxall, 2008; Hone, 2015). Missing from this research are gendered analyses and accounts of people's experiences before being transformed into academic constructs.

Research on New Zealand (NZ) workers revealed that wellbeing is associated with concerns around physicality (regular physical exercise, healthy eating), feeling valued, and work-life balance (Hone, Schofield, & Jarden, 2015). Financial security was less frequently mentioned

and pay equity did not arise from open-ended questions (Hone, 2015). Overall, the inductive (not using pre-existing scales) NZ research illustrated "a lack of alignment between workers' and academics' perspectives" (Hone, 2015: 64). In our study, we move closer to participants' experiences, using material from face-to-face interviews and focus groups enquiring about perceptions of pay and work conditions.

A consistent finding in workplace wellbeing research is the importance of the employee's relationship with their supervisor (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004). Increased demands from supervisors result in dissatisfaction (Macky & Boxall, 2008). Very few organisational researchers consider power relationships in the workplace beyond the supervisor and also fail to include the broader socio-political economic context (an exception being Ravenswood & Harris, 2016).

In our research, we were concerned to take a multi-level view of power by using intersectionality theory to frame our design and the interpretation of research findings.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality arose from Crenshaw's incisive critiques of the US legal system in the late 1980s, analysing how Black female claimants were unsuccessful in attempts to articulate discrimination "both as women who are Black and as Black [people] who are women" (Cho et al., 2013: 790). Intersectionality "captured the inadequacy of legal frameworks to address inequality and discrimination resulting from the ways in which both race and gender intersected" (Rodriquez et al., 2016: 201). This flaw in anti-discrimination legislation provided an impetus for this NZ study.

Intersectionality theory provides a powerful analytic framework to understand inequality and the "vexed dynamics of difference and sameness in the context of antidiscrimination" (Cho et al., 2013: 787). The first emphasis was Black (African American) women (Collins, 1998), but this rich scholarship spread from critical legal studies and race studies to feminist studies, sociology, geography and more recently organisation studies (Cho et al., 2013). Intersectionality combines identities and structural social systems to analyse exploitive power relations (Weber, 2010). Rodriguez et al. (2016) discuss what it means to bring an intersectional lens to the study of power, privilege and subordination at work. They categorise the prolific scholarship into four areas: conceptual meanings of intersectionality, operationalising intersectionality, application into practice, and mapping intersectionality transnationally. The first two areas are of concern to this study.

Theorisation of intersectionality evolved from static representations of dominance and oppression to include the interplay of advantage and disadvantage. There has been a tendency to privilege individual subjectivities and identities (Atewologun, Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2016) over systemic processes and structures, rather than explicitly linking agency with structure. Three themes are germane to our study: discussions around the analytical level at which the concept operates; the choice of the key identities to be investigated; and the place where disadvantage occurs when theorising intersectionality.

Aligned with the early exponents of intersectionality, McCall (2005) focused her enquiry into methodological issues. While she defined intersectionality in similar ways to her predecessors – the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations – she was more concerned with the challenges of actually carrying out research, as

she states in her classic article, "what is restricting … research on intersectionality comes down primarily to methods" (2005: 1772). She classified methodological approaches to intersectionality in terms of anti-categorical, intra-categorical and inter-categorical aspects of identity, but operationalisation was difficult. We used the inter-categorical approach as an epistemological basis for our research design which requires that existing analytical categories are adopted, provisionally, "to document relationships of inequality among social groups…along multiple and conflicting dimensions" (McCall, 2005: 1773).

In operationalising intersectionality, Rodriguez et al. (2016) note the use of qualitative methodologies to focus on identity and subjectivity. They advocate a methodological pluralism, not excluding quantitative analysis of large data sets (Woodhams & Lupton, 2014). Some researchers argue that intersectionality needs to be a deliberate research strategy, rather than appearing as ad hoc explanations at the analysis phase (Mooney, 2016). Rodriquez et al. (2016: 205) also expound the "need for more explicit deliberation about the interrelationship between epistemological/philosophical assumptions and methodological choices". We took these suggestions into account in our research design and choice of social categories. Some categories were pre-determined by our research design (e.g. occupation, gender, ethnicity), while others arose out of the interpretive analysis (e.g. education, immigrant status).

Participants were able to clearly identify their gender, age, ethnicity, and immigrant and motherhood status. However in this study, we also gave a central place to class, partly because class is not a justiciable inequality in NZ, nor in similar jurisdictions (Australia, United Kingdom, the European Union). Theories of class are acknowledged to be 'fuzzy' (Anthias, 2013), although most denote differential access to resources (Acker, 2006). In the United Kingdom, class is theorised as historically generated, unconsciously using patriarchal and heteronormative benchmarks (Fredman, 2010; Iqbal, 2011). Class has been conceptualised variously as pertaining to occupational levels (Acker, 2006) and also choice of 'style' such as dress, manners, and speech (Scully & Blake-Beard, 2006). Although largely disavowed in NZ European society, class status provides a foundation for social structure in Māori and Pacific Island cultures. Given the overall reticence about class in NZ, we deliberately chose two cases from contrasting class positions and included questions on participants' beliefs around class. Following Ravenswood and Harris (2016), we define class in terms of professional status, wages, work conditions and educational attainment.

A strong theme in the research literature connects intersectionality with disadvantage, but this may obscure the role of the powerful within sets of unequal social relations (Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012). Our research is not confined to a discourse of oppression (Collins, 1998), nor is it specific to an ethnic minority (Nash, 2008). We align with theorists who argue that we all have multiple identities which interact in dynamic ways "to construct multiple and uneven socio-economic patterns of domination and subordination" (Anthias, 2013: 131). Accordingly, intersectional identities may derive from positions of privilege as much as from oppression. We follow Walby and colleagues (2012) in our analysis as we consider the privilege and disadvantage that women engineers and women care workers embody through their intersecting identities and how this impacts on their perceived wellbeing.

Contexts

The three broad contexts germane to this study are: the NZ gender pay gap, the professional environment for women engineers, and women care workers' campaign for pay equity.

Equal Pay

Equal pay in NZ has been part of legislation since 1960 for government organisations and from 1972 for the private sector. The Equal Pay Act 1972 requires employers to pay women and men the same when they have the same or substantially similar qualifications and are employed in the same or substantially similar work. In spite of legislation, the gender pay gap has been static for more than a decade, hovering around 12 per cent (Ministry of Women, 2015). This gap is relatively modest in comparison to similar countries (e.g. Australia overall gender pay gap 17.5 per cent 2015; private sector 21 per cent 2015; UK 19.7 per cent public sector 2013; 16.6 per cent private sector 2016). The gender pay gap is a key reporting item to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other international human rights treaty bodies (McGregor, Davis, Giddings, & Pringle, 2016b). The Committee has admonished NZ in past reports (McGregor, 2013), urging the government to pass specific legislation, develop policies and actively monitor the situation. When data from the major ethnic groups (Māori, Pacific lsland, Asian, NZ European) are analysed, considerable variability is revealed (Hyman, 2011). European (White) women have a smaller gender pay gap (11 per cent) than 'all' men, compared to Māori women (22 per cent), Pacific Island women (27 per cent), and Asian women (18 per cent). When ethnicity is included with gender, a more nuanced understanding of the gender pay gap is revealed. Recent research also demonstrates that the gender pay gap for parents was larger (17 per cent) than the gender pay gap for non-parents (five per cent) revealing that there is a 'motherhood penalty' of just under 12 per cent (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry for Women, 2017).

The National conservative government, in power since 2008, consistently reinforced a non-interventionist policy with respect to pay equity until 2016-2017. To avoid further court action on pay equity, it engaged in tripartite negotiations around aged care, resulting in the agreement of a set of Joint Working Group Principles and settlement of the TerraNova case, involving aged care workers. The 21 new principles include a new bargaining process, which allows women to file equal pay claims with their employers rather than the courts. This final decision occurred after our study.

The Ministry for Women, a policy agency, advocates addressing the gender pay gap through three priorities: promoting trades and removing barriers for women in an effort to reduce occupational segregation, the development of career pathways for women in low-paid occupations, and emphasising the business case for more flexible work arrangements. The first two priorities are relevant to our research: increasing and retaining women in the male-dominated profession of engineering, and the career pathways for women in the low-paid occupation of caring.

Engineering

The engineering profession in NZ is male-dominated, and has been slow to encourage women into engineering degrees, and to keep them in the workforce. Research into the culture of engineering firms internationally consistently report a 'chilly climate' for women (Bilimoria, Lord, & Marinelli, 2014). In a NZ study (Ayre, 2011), women engineers reported workplace cultures that included: harassment, discrimination and disadvantage, a lack of management support to balance family commitments, and too few networks or role models for women. Some male colleagues and clients were also uncomfortable with women as professional engineers and perceived them as less capable (ibid).

Women constitute approximately a quarter of graduating engineering students and 13 per cent of professional engineers (IPENZ, 2013). These statistics are similar to many western countries where women make up 15 per cent or less of professional engineers (Arye, Mills, & Gill, 2014). In response to internal and external pressures, the professional association first reported a gender breakdown in its 2010 annual salary survey. Subsequent reports demonstrate a disparity of up to 13 per cent between male and female salaries. The annual salary report has had a positive impact in raising awareness of gender pay inequality for women engineers, although awareness alone is insufficient for change.

Aged Care

An analysis of pay rates of aged care workers revealed they are one of the lowest paid groups in NZ, near to minimum wage ($14.75 per hour) and significantly below the average wage for women ($22.15 per hour) (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2012). A national human rights inquiry into the aged care workforce identified three aspects of pay discrimination: absence of pay for travel time between clients; unequal pay between residential care workers and care-workers doing comparable jobs in hospitals, both paid by public health funds; and the gross under-valuation of the work (ibid). This report described NZ's reliance on low paid care work as a form of modern day slavery.

The report was followed, in 2012, by the Service and Food Workers Union (now E tū) making a claim on behalf of Kristine Bartlett, a long term residential aged care worker at TerraNova, and others. This TerraNova case was novel in that it addressed pay equity, not equal pay, and that Kristine Bartlett claimed the company underpaid her and other women because aged care work was mostly performed by women (Service and Food Workers Union Nga Ringa Tota Inc v Terranova Homes and Care Ltd [2013]). There were no gender differences involved because the few men in aged care were also underpaid and undervalued. In brief, the case was twice appealed (by the company TerraNova) with the Supreme Court declining the right of appeal and upholding the claim (Terranova Homes and Care Ltd v Service and Food Workers Union Nga Ringa Tota [2014]). Following the court cases, the government established a tripartite Joint Working Group on Pay Equity Principles (employer, union, government) to provide practical guidance to employers and employees. In May 2016, the report recommended principles for pay negotiations based on the existing Employment Relations Act (2000). In April 2017 (after our study), the Government announced a $2 billion pay equity settlement for 55,000 aged and disability residential care and home and community support services to take effect from July 1st (Coleman, 2017). For approximately 20,000 workers on the minimum wage, it will mean a 21 per cent pay rise to $19 an hour.

In relating these sectoral cases to the broader socio-legal context, our research into the gender pay gap was conceptualised in two different but related ways: pay equality for engineers and gender pay equity for care workers. These two ways of measuring the gender pay gap provide comparisons between men and women and also among women. Both measures are fundamental to women's pay and underpin women's economic participation and wellbeing.

Research Design

In Mooney's (2016) discussion of what it takes to be a 'nimble' intersectionality researcher, she stresses the need to "make early decisions about the theoretical framing" rather than

limiting intersectionality to the analysis stage (2016: 716). We proposed an intersectional study at the outset, choosing ascribed class position as a key dimension. We argue for the importance of context for the research question, and for context to include the macro (societal), meso (organisational), and micro (personal) levels (Pringle & Ryan, 2015).

The two occupational groups formed separate cases (Yin, 2014). We argue that the use of linked case studies directed towards a single research question has the potential to enhance the information gathered. As a result, the consistency of the methods was less of a driver than exploring the research question. The analysis was qualitative descriptive (Smythe, 2012) as we sought to describe the main features of our participants' experiences. The second part of the analysis moved to interpretive description (Thorne, 2016) where we were guided by intersectional theory.

Methods

The case studies were situated in two different occupational groups: one male-dominated and the other female-dominated. The call for volunteers was made for each sample through their respective associations, the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ), and the Service & Food Workers' Union for the care workers.

Engineering participants were recruited through the IPENZ newsletter. Women in Auckland were also invited to be part of an initial focus group; nine women attended, five of whom were later interviewed individually. A further 16 women volunteered from other areas of the country and were also interviewed. A total of 21 individual interviews were carried out.

The 34 care workers were interviewed in four focus groups, varying between eight and 11 participants. Each group discussion was facilitated by two researchers. We asked about work roles, work experiences, and perceptions of pay. As pay rates were well discussed in the media, we asked the women care workers directly about their hourly rate. These questions evoked lively and forthright discussion. This direct approach was not replicated with engineers where we anticipated that such questions would not be well received. In the engineers' interviews, their pay rate was addressed through comparison with male colleagues with commensurate education and work experience. In the case of care workers, there were very few men to offer a point of comparison. As a result we asked them for their aspirational pay rates.

Analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. Two levels of analysis were carried out. First, a set of interview questions guided a descriptive content analysis. Codes were developed to create categories of shared meaning from the data. Second, an intersectional framework was applied to interpret the salient identities of participants within occupational contexts. In our intersectional analysis, we were guided by McCall's inter-categorical analysis of the "relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups" (2005: 1785). She used a Table format (see Table 1, McCall, 2005: 1790) to show class/race/gender inequality in four different US geographic locations. Based on our philosophic and theoretical underpinning for the research, we describe both positive and negative contributions to the class position of our two occupations using a Figure (see Figure 1). In the following section, we describe our findings. These include the broad demographics of our two cases, the responses of engineers and care workers to questions on pay equity, discussions around change, things they liked about

their job, and their main sources of dissatisfaction. We then link our findings with the wellbeing literature.

Case of Women Engineers

Women in our study came from a variety of engineering disciplines. Of the 21 women interviewed, approximately half (11) graduated in civil engineering, with three graduating in environmental engineering and two in process engineering. All women obtained their Bachelor of Engineering between 1974 and 2012; nine had completed or were currently undertaking postgraduate study. Most of the women (90 per cent) identified as European New Zealanders while two women were immigrants from non-western backgrounds. Women's ages ranged from late 20s to early 60s, with two-thirds between 25 and 39. Fourteen women were married or in a civil union, five were in a relationship and three were single. Ten women had no children.

Perceptions of Pay

Engineers were asked about annual salary in bands as part of a demographic questionnaire completed in advance of the interview. Two-thirds (14) earned an annual income of between NZ$50,000 and NZ$99,999, with only two women earning less. (The full-time workers average rate was approximately equivalent to $36 per hour.) Half (11) of the women stated they worked between 40 and 50 hours per week, with a quarter working part-time (fewer than 25 hours per week).

To explore perceptions of equal pay, engineers were asked, "Do you think you get paid the same as men in your position?" There were a variety of responses and many of these could be grouped into three categories: Yes I assume I am; I have no idea; I know I am not paid the same (McGregor et al., 2016b). However, women also talked about their belief that they were being paid what they were worth, putting trust in their employers to pay them equitably:

> *So yeah, I do think I have been treated fairly. I do wonder about salary, but like I said, I do think that's because I'm a very – I'm more of a passive person when it comes to money. I've always said --- Well, you pay me what you think I'm worth because you know what everyone else gets paid* (Grace).

The IPENZ annual survey enabled women to find out they were being paid less in a national sense: "*Recently the IPENZ remuneration survey came out and I started up a full conversation with my manager about it*" (Sarah). However, to find out pay relativities they needed open disclosure from a colleague, or male engineer partner. Within the sample there were three women whose male partner was also an engineer. One participant noted that she and her husband both graduated with the same degree from the same university and subsequently worked at the same firm. They had both worked part-time as they had two children:

> *So it's quite a neat comparison as to how our careers have progressed because we started off on the same pay rate…. There's definitely been a divergence, and that's even with my husband going down to part time for the in-between years. He's ahead in seniority and in pay as well* (Brenda).

Reponses to Pay Inequity

When women found out they were being paid less than male colleagues, a common response was acceptance. When we asked why woman accepted pay inequity, the women gave justifications invoking a feminine stereotype of naturalised sex differences (Davies, McGregor, Pringle, Giddings, 2017). Women responded that they were prepared to receive lower pay in order to be considered a 'good girl'. They also said they were happy with lower remuneration in return for flexible and fewer hours.

> *Because when you go and have children and come back part time, you can't expect to have the same pay jumps as someone who is working full time. You aren't working as hard as the others, you are not bringing in as much work because you are simply working less* (Roslyn).

Women also said that they were high paid professionals and did not need extra money. Indeed, the women tended to compare themselves with other women generally, rather than male equivalents. They made comments such as "*Women don't put themselves out there as much. That's something that we're fundamentally not good at*" (Jean). This sentiment is encapsulated in the following illustrative quote:

> *…women are very bad at negotiating pay packages when they take a new job… we tend to be more accepting of what is offered. …and you don't question, are you worth more. …And that's something I've seen a lot across the women – especially the younger women – that I work with. They're just not very interested in discussing pay or trying to have any conflict with their bosses about money…..I think generally men are a lot better at asking, just naturally* (Diane).

> Only two women, in the face of evidence of inequitable pay, reported taking action. After the interview, one woman raised the issue of unequal pay with her boss: *"I asked the question, and found that my colleagues earn more than me. I was outraged! I asked for a salary review, but it hasn't happened yet"* (Sybil). The other woman asked human resources for information to clarify how much less she was being paid: *"I don't know what other people are earning…We asked our HR people if they could provide us pay equity data and they didn't, they couldn't, they didn't want to"* (Isabel).

Likes and Dislikes about Work

Near the end of the interview, we asked the women engineers what they liked about their job. The prevalent responses were around the positive nature of the work, the challenge of the job, variety, and the opportunities to work outside. Flexible hours for child care was also seen as a positive factor, when they were able to get it. Some participants mentioned the relatively 'high salary'. The lack of transparency around pay rates (McGregor et al., 2016) and probable pay inequality were not important factors in job dissatisfaction. Rather, sources of dissatisfaction were mostly examples of sexism, such as 'the blokey environment' and instances such as 'not getting contracts because they were women'. Often the ability to bring in work was affected more subtlety, for example, by being excluded from golfing with potential clients. Subtle sexism also occurred through informal employment conditions.

> Christine: *They said…Well, we'll put you on trial. So it was a bit weird.*
> Interviewer: And I guess you were the only one on trial, were you?

Christine: *Oh yeah. Because the other guys who came in, they went straight into a job. So yeah, and it was almost like a sense of relief or surprise or something, I don't know, but then they go --- Oh, wow, yeah actually you're alright. You actually know what you're doing.*

Case of Women Care Workers

All care workers in the study worked in residential homes for older citizens. They worked a variety of hours, generally around 35 hours per week, with shifts decided and allocated by management. The number of allocated shifts often varied from week to week.

Most of the 34 care workers were immigrants (27) encompassing 17 different ethnicities. For all but one of these women, English was a second language. A fifth of the women were from New Zealand (6 European/New Zealanders, 1 Māori). Over a third (13 per cent) were from the Pacific Islands: Tonga, (5), Samoa (3), Fiji (2), Cook Islands (1), Tuvalu (1), and Tokalau (1). A fifth were from Asia (India 2, Philippines 2, Nepal 2), and two were from European countries (Scotland, Poland). The remaining six were from the Statistics (NZ) category of MELAA: Middle East, Latin America and Africa. The discussion elicited by the question of 'where they were from', demonstrated intersections of immigration, English speaking fluency, and ethnicity. The majority of care workers were over 50 years old, but the age range was wide; from 20s to the late 60s. Approximately half had financial dependents.

As noted earlier, samples were chosen on the basis of class differentiated occupational contexts; engineers situated in the professional middle classes and the care workers in the working class. One carer noted the gendered nature of class: *Down the bottom…It's a woman's job.* While another reflected*, and there's the working class, and there is under the working class, where we are*. In contrast, class was invisible to the engineers, their response encapsulated by one participant, *I'd struggle to answer that one* [question on class].

Perception around Pay

The care workers provided animated discussion about low and inequitable rates of pay, with high agreement that their pay rate was *unfair*. As a group, they received between $14.50 - $19.50 per hour, which translated to an average rate of $16.24 per hour (median $15). As one woman commented, *I think we are taken for granted.* When we asked for suggestions on what they should be paid, requests were modest, ranging from $19 to $22 per hour. One participant suggested, *Oh...I think the starting rate should be at least $22 an hour, to be honest*; $22 per hour being the average rate for NZ women workers. Yet, in one focus group discussion there was grateful acknowledgement that at least they had a job.

Molly: *I enjoy the wages that... when the money comes into my bank.*
Sophia: *Like what we do for everyone, even though they moan and groan about the wages, but at least we have money coming into the family to pay the rent and...*
Jan: *As long as you get a job.*

Strategies for Achieving Pay Equity

Low pay impacted directly on carers' wellbeing and ability to care for families and dependents. They were adamant that changes in pay would come from Union actions, although it is important to note that study participants were recruited through the Union.

> Louise: *you don't get the pay rise until the Union fights for the rights.*
> Max: *That's right.*
> Cleo: *So I was in direct orders as a new caregiver to come and join the Union. Only the Union can give us a rise. We're just waiting for the Union, yeah.*

What they Love about the Job

The care workers were generally passionate and positive about caring for others. There were a range of values that emerged, including the Christian beliefs from some participants and how others had been brought up to respect and care for elders:

> *I really love the work. And I work from the heart – with my heart. When I treated my residents or patients, I say you need, well, my principle is what you give good things to them, you're going to harvest one day* (Jessie).

Overall, women demonstrated a desire to contribute to the quality of community life:

> *Not because of the money, because I want to see our sector get more funding from the government so that we can pay the people doing the hard work. And I'm doing it for the families really because without us, they'd be in a worse situation and we'd have a worse society* (Sue).

Working Conditions

Women did not necessarily work 40 hour weeks, partly by choice and partly as directed by the management keeping a cap on costs. Management rapidly reduced shifts when there were fewer residents (for example, three vacant beds out of 80), but that speed of action was not replicated when there was increased demand:

> *They don't do it quickly. They're very slow to bring the staff numbers up when you get more and more work, and you keep saying…We need another person. We need another person. And they go…Well, we'll just see how it goes for the next week, shall we? And as soon as we lose a person…Oh well, that's that slashed* (Wendy).

Participants described the difficult and frustrating parts of the work: poor relations with management, shifting rosters without consultation, and hard physical work without timely access to hoists for heavy lifting. Over the years, time with patients, they said, had eroded and the work intensified. As one woman reflected: *"There's nothing wrong with the job, just management and money"* (Lana).

Interpretive Analysis

Drawing on the interpretive level of analysis, we developed the following map of intersectionality. Using a font code we highlight disadvantage in capitals and lower case for advantages for the multiple identities of engineers and care workers.

Figure 1:   Descriptive map of intersectionality: Class differentiated occupational contexts
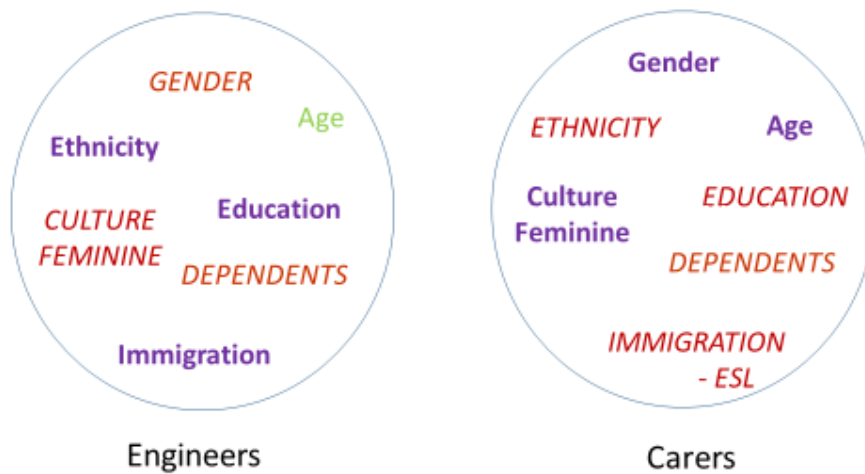
Women engineers working in a male-dominated occupation reported disadvantages which they attribute to gender, working in a masculine culture, and being responsible for dependents. Their education, non-immigrant status and being of the dominant ethnicity provided sources of advantage. In interviews, age did not arise as a discussion point. Conversely, care workers working in a female-dominated occupation found that exhibiting aspects of feminine culture were a benefit, especially if they were older. The women were disadvantaged by low educational levels impacting on their ability to be assertive. In addition, having dependents restricted their work availability. Immigrant status impacted on English speaking ability and they also experienced racism, mainly from White clients.

Discussion

We argue that both equal pay and pay equity contribute to financial security, an identified component of wellbeing (Hone, 2015). While pay is important to wellbeing, it impacts women differently according to class position. Our study found that, for care workers, pay profoundly impacts on their perceived wellbeing as it literally means having enough money to live. For engineers, their pay shapes their self-worth but perceived wellbeing for engineers also revolves around their ability to have flexible working hours.

Care workers are in a female-dominated occupation where feminine characteristics are an integral part of emotional labour (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016). Salient social identities of care workers are as gendered, ethnic minority, older, poorly paid workers struggling to achieve working class status. They wanted equitable pay, respect for their work from their managers and from their clients. The women perceived major issues to be low wages coupled with lack of power to negotiate conditions. They wished to be included in decisions made about work shifts. A few spoke of trying to negotiate for better shifts directly with managers, but they were aware of potential risks to job security. Their everyday job conditions and perceived wellbeing were also affected by lack of job autonomy and participation in decision-making. It was the combination of these factors, equitable pay, respect in the workforce and participation in decision-making that defined a sense of perceived wellbeing for the women care workers.

Women engineers, in contrast, were privileged by ethnicity, education, and middle class status. Disadvantage arose from intersections of gender and motherhood. They wanted greater flexibility to accommodate child caring responsibilities. Most women assumed they already had equal pay with male colleagues as they had equivalent education and technical expertise. Wellbeing was directly affected by the masculine work environment, for example, women's lack of access to client networks. While subtle, these exclusions impacted on promotion prospects and remuneration. What we found was that for engineers their sense of perceived wellbeing was defined by work-life balance and access to flexibility for childcare

The women's ability to negotiate for what they thought they were worth was curtailed by beliefs in feminine stereotypes from a position of 'naturalised' sex differences (England, 2010). While feminists are rarely satisfied with pay inequality, the 'good woman' may be most accepting of the 'motherhood penalty'. The women engineers have been socialised into the profession and have constructed an individual professional identity that overshadowed their gender identity until they had children. Concerns about gender inequality were not focused on unequal pay (even compared with their engineer husbands), but on their ability to negotiate more flexibility in their working hours to accommodate childcare responsibilities (Davies et al., 2017).

Contributions and Implications

Our research demonstrates that using gender as the key dimension for understanding women's perceptions of pay equity is insufficient. While pay is a common analytic for workplace equality, it is also insufficient on its own for understanding wellbeing. Intersectional analyses of identities are essential to understand the often contradictory experiences of women working in different occupations. Using intersectionality becomes even more fruitful if links are made to the macro (socio-political) and meso (professional) levels. For instance, while care workers had an important sense of purpose, and satisfying relations with residents, the fact that they received low and inequitable rates of pay impacted negatively on their perceived wellbeing.

An intersectional analysis can reveal the experiences of the "sometimes marginalised and the sometimes privileged" (Mooney, 2016: 716). Intersectionality is notoriously difficult to operationalise (Rodrigues et al., 2016; Mooney, 2016); our research into the gender pay gap, provides a start. Understanding the specific context is crucial for an intersectional researcher to analyse the societal power positioning of participants.

Professionals in society are perceived as occupying positions of high status where they have the educational credentials and confidence to argue for good pay and conditions through individual contracts. In addition, a government strategy aims to encourage more women into the higher paid male-dominated professions and trades, to reduce the gender pay gap. From these combined macro influences, we expected a more pro-active approach to pay equality in the engineering profession. Instead, we found a reluctance amongst women engineers to act and change their working conditions which held gender pay inequalities.

Care workers, in contrast, have been part of a poorly paid workforce for many years and denied remuneration commensurate with the rhetorical value given to caring for needy members of society. They have been perceived as being of lower social status and relatively powerless compared with other occupational groups. Yet at a personal level, care workers held an immediate awareness of the need for equitable compensation based on hours, skills and unacknowledged emotional labour. A unionised campaign, based on women's rights principles and involving litigation, has profoundly altered the politics of caring. The pay equity settlement for aged care workers also poses questions for future research. As the pay rises are phased in over the next five years as planned, will the symbolic, implicit and explicit acknowledgement of the 'value' of their work that accompanied the settlement and the wider public reaction see an improvement in care workers' wellbeing?

Our intersectional analysis has been useful in revealing complexity within and between the two cases. Participants shared the experience of gender discrimination. However, the intersectional analysis revealed unexpected advantages and disadvantages for women seeking fair and decent pay in the two occupations. While the wellbeing literature has expanded greatly over the past decade, much of the development has been at the conceptual level and has largely ignored gender issues. In this qualitative study, we have identified that fair pay is foundational for women's perceived wellbeing at work, with its impact affected by class. Perhaps more importantly, by using intersectional analysis we have demonstrated that perceived wellbeing differs between the two groups of women by their class position.

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