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MAKING THE BEST OF A BAD JOB:

homeworking in secretarial and clerical occupations

by

Helena Shulamith Pugh

Submitted for PhD

Social Statistics Research Unit

The City University

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

The last two decades have produced much research about women's employment, yet one area which has received relatively little attention is that of homeworking. This thesis begins by considering theories of women's employment and different definitions of homeworking. It continues by using data from the OPCS Longitudinal Study (LS) to examine homeworking and some of the misconceptions surrounding it. A minimal estimate of homeworking in England and Wales is presented together with an examination of homeworking in the two largest occupation groups - clerical and clothing. There is also an analysis of socio-economic and demographic information.

This analysis provides the basis for two surveys of secretarial and clerical homeworkers (the single largest group of homeworkers in the LS). Firstly, employers of homeworkers were interviewed to investigate their policies towards homeworkers, their patterns of recruitment and the conditions of work they provided for them. The advantages to employers of using homeworkers to cope with a flexible workload are described as well as the disadvantages to homeworkers. Although the homeworkers' conditions of work and pay appear to be better than those of homeworkers in other occupations, the homeworkers themselves still have little control over their employment situation.

Secondly, interviews with homeworkers were carried out to examine how homeworking fits into women's work histories, in addition to focussing on their work conditions. The question of whether women see homeworking as desirable or as the only solution available to them is also considered. The evidence suggests that these homeworkers' conditions of employment are as unsatisfactory as those of many other homeworkers, and that they have had to prioritise their domestic responsibilities over any career plans they might have had. Having become mothers the majority of women found working in their homes was the best option available to them.

CHAPTER ONE

WORK FOR WOMEN

Introduction

This thesis investigates homeworking and some of the misconceptions surrounding it. Three topics will be considered in detail:

firstly, issues surrounding the number and identity of homeworkers;

secondly, employers' use of homeworkers, their employment policies and recruitment patterns;

thirdly, homeworkers themselves, how their work fits into women's work histories and how they view their work conditions.

It was decided to focus on secretarial/clerical occupations because of the limited existing research in this area as well as the recent reported increase in homeworking for those doing this kind of work.

What is work?

This study is about paid work commonly done by women in their homes. Such work is often overlooked as it does not completely conform to the image of work that we have. Work is usually equated with employment outside the home and considered to be:

- what you go out to;
- paid;
- involving production or providing services;
- for a guaranteed number of hours per week;
- something people either have or do not have.

Working at home obviously does not require going out to work, and while it is paid and may involve production or the provision of services, the irregularity of hours and income means it can be ignored, including in official statistics.

However this is a very narrow definition of employment and an even narrower definition of work. Employment can be in the home performing services for someone such as typing or cleaning. It can be irregular in that the employee may not know when s/he will be required to work; therefore it often excludes homeworking. As a consequence it is not always possible to classify whether a person is in employment.

Work on the other hand, may include all the above points but need not involve payment. Examples of unwaged work include voluntary and domestic work such as cleaning and caring done in the home.

Women's Employment

This section will briefly consider the literature relating to women's employment. An understanding of why women do the jobs they do is necessary in order to appreciate the current situation for homeworkers. Reference will be made to theories concerning women's labour force participation. Although a detailed discussion of definitions of homeworking is presented in Chapter Two, a "working" definition is needed here. In this thesis homeworking is not simply paid work done in one's home for an employer, as opposed to work done on a self employed basis; the key is whether or not the workers have total control over their conditions of work.

Today there are several important differences between men's and women's participation in the labour force although this has not always been the case. Women's employment was significant both before industrialisation and in the early industrial period. As Scott and Tilley (1982) state:

"Most general works on women and the family assume that the history of women's employment, like the history of women's legal and political rights, can be understood as a gradual evolution from a traditional place at home to a modern position in the world of work." (P.45)

However, in the pre-industrial economy the household was the basic unit of production in which the whole family - men, women and children - were involved, working the land, spinning and weaving cloth, and producing food and clothing. In the early stages of industrialisation many women continued to work in agriculture, at home, as well as in manufacturing workshops, factories and mills.

Despite this, the proportion of married women working appeared to decline in the course of the 19th Century. The 1851 Census recorded 25% of married women with an occupation, whereas by the 1911 Census this figure had dropped to 9.6%. The reasons for this decline are discussed by Hall (1982) and include the removal of certain kinds of work from the home, the exclusion of women from some trades, the growth areas of industrial work such as the railways becoming defined as "men's" work and the prevailing ideology which "decreed that a woman's place was in the home" (see also Beechey 1983).

Since the beginning of the 20th Century and particularly during the two world wars women's participation in the

labour force has been increasing. Martin and Roberts (1984) show that by 1980 it had become the norm for women to work, with two thirds of women of working age (16-59) in the labour force. In particular, married women's economic activity had also increased, as shown clearly in the following table:

Table 1.1 Economic activity of married women of all ages in Great Britain 1911-1981

Census	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981
%	9.6	8.7	10.0	No	21.7	29.7	42.3	48.8

(Taken from the EOC Sixth Annual Report 1981 p.62).

These figures indicate the trend in women's paid employment, although obviously percentages for the whole country obscure differences which exist among women, such as age, race and regional variations.

However, figures like these do not include workers in the informal economy as economically active. Nor do they show the important differences which exist today between men and women's economic activity. This is because:

(1) Women work in a relatively narrow range of jobs regardless of their workplace due in part to the different level of discrimination in the occupational classification of the jobs they do e.g. in semi or unskilled manufacturing work and service work such as catering and typing. Much of

women's work also involves caring for other people, such as work done by nurses, teachers, social workers, home helps and so on. In contrast men work in a wider variety of occupations from stockbrokers to coal miners. This division of employment between men and women was termed occupational segregation by Hakim (1979).

(2) Women often have interrupted work histories. Although women do return to employment outside their homes, this may be after a short or long time depending on their domestic responsibilities, skills and the job opportunities available to them. Many women combine their domestic responsibilities with paid work either by working part-time or at home. Although many married women are in employment outside their homes full-time, responsibility for children and other relatives means that women are more likely to work part-time than men. Rimmer and Popay (1982) show that over 40% of women working do so part-time, with 70% of mothers with dependent children working part-time.

Until recently, there have been many more studies about men and the paid work they do than about the paid and unpaid work done by women. This stems from the currently prevailing view that the work women do is secondary to what are seen as "women's" family responsibilities. Moreover, research about paid work done by women has concentrated on

either the effect such work would have on their families and particularly the children, (Moss and Fonda, 1980, and Yudkin and Holme, 1963) or the effect of women's employment on the relationship between wives and husbands (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971; Young and Wilmot, 1973). Studies about women's work have traditionally started with the question "Why do women work?", (Jephcott et al 1962) usually assuming that the non-working woman is the norm and the woman who works is the exception and not the rule. As Oakley (1982) has pointed out:

"The question 'why do you work?' that the 1950's and 1960's literature on women's employment took as its theme was itself a social product: a response to the pre-existing ideological construction of women as fundamentally incapable of serious activity." (P.148)

In actual fact the majority of women do some kind of paid work. The 1981 Census figures show that 71.6% of women of working age were in the labour force of whom 48% were married. (In addition, as will be discussed below, the census figures are unlikely to be comprehensive, with certain kinds of employment such as homeworking being excluded.)

However, one would not want to deny the fact that it is these domestic responsibilities which strongly influence the type of work a woman does. The age of a woman's youngest

child and the number of children she has, are likely to be major determinants of whether or not she works outside the home, as well as whether she works full- or part-time or indeed at home.

The Women and Employment Survey carried out in 1980 found that the age of the youngest child accounted for more variation in economic activity than the number of children under 16 years. More women whose youngest child was aged between 5 and 10 years were working than those with a child under 5 years (Martin and Roberts 1984).

As a result of these restrictions on a woman's ability to take a permanent full-time job, it is not suprising that many women are concentrated in a few occupations in particular industries often working part-time. These jobs are most often those which require little formal training and reflect the type of work women are traditionally expected to undertake, frequently but not always being extensions of unpaid work usually done by women in the home, such as caring and servicing. In fact many women experience downward occupational mobility on returning to work after child bearing, being unable to fully utilise the training and skills they have (Dex 1987).

This is not to say that this has always been the case for those occupations, as Yeandle (1984) points out:

"Some occupations have witnessed important changes in the sex composition of their labour forces. Clerical work provides the most striking example, changing from an almost exclusively male area of work in the nineteenth century to a predominantly female one in the post war period." (P.9)

Vertical segregation, by which women are generally subordinate to men in their jobs also occurs. It is not uncommon to find hospitals where the majority of ancillary and nursing staff are women, yet those who do the hiring, firing and supervising are men. Women's participation in the labour market is undervalued precisely because it is women doing the jobs, and as shown earlier they are seen as less "serious" members of the labour force. The majority of these jobs are low paid and with no career structure.

In her review of occupational segregation Hakim (1979) points out that while horizontal segregation has increased, the overall result is that:

"...Occupational concentration and occupational segregation have remained relatively unchanged in Britain over seven decades." (P.34)

This suggestion has led to the use of the phrase "women's jobs" or "women's work". However as Mackinnon (1979) points out there is nothing inherent in the jobs which means women

must do them. She draws an analogy to point this out by saying that the use of the term "black people's work" would be unacceptable.

Beechey (1983) identifies four consequences of occupational segregation for women's experience of paid work which she feels are important and which need to be considered when attempting to analyse women's participation in the labour force.

Firstly, reinforcement of the hierarchical relations between men and women, which exist throughout society and particularly in the family and are reproduced within the workforce. Vertical segregation is an example. This is likely to affect a woman's self esteem both in her work and outside it.

Secondly, occupational segregation which constrains young women entering the labour market as they are limited to a small range of occupations easily open to them. In addition women returning to employment after a period of caring for relatives experience a similar lack of suitable job opportunities, often being restricted to part-time work.

Thirdly, in the absence of adequate childcare facilities the choices available to women are limited, often excluding them

from jobs for which they are suitably qualified and leading ultimately, to downward occupational mobility. In addition, for those women without formal training the consequences are even more restricting.

Finally, different traditions in working hours and overtime in different occupations which affect a woman's level of pay both in terms of hourly rates of pay and the hours women are able to work in relation to men. In particular, women earn less than men for the following reasons:

(1) Men are able to work longer basic hours than even those women who are in full-time work, because women are expected to take care of the house, children and often other relatives too.

(2) Men are more often able to work overtime for the same reason.

(3) Women tend to be concentrated in low paying industries in sexually segregated occupations e.g. clerical, nursing and school teaching. The ratio of women's earnings to men's in the UK was 65.4% and in the US it is almost identical -64%. Even in enlightened Sweden it is 81%, still not equal (Hewlett, 1987). In other words, the low financial reward for women's work is a global phenomenon.

Explanations of occupational segregation by sex

This brief description of the employment situation for women shows that despite the existence of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, equality for women at work is far from a reality.

Although occupational segregation accounts for the overall division of jobs by sex, it does not explain the fact that some women have jobs which do not fit into the vertical or horizontal division of labour. Women are managers and builders as well as clerks and caterers.

Explanations of this situation vary according to the view point of the analyst. For example Barron and Norris (1976) discuss it in terms of "Dual Labour Market theory", which focusses on the structure of the labour market; Braverman (1979) starts from a consideration of the labour process under capitalism; Beechey (1978) and Bruegal (1979) discuss the "Industrial Reserve Army of labour " thesis. None of these theories totally account for the degree of centrality which is accorded to labour market structure in explaining women's pattern of work.

Dual Labour Market Theory (DLMT)

DLMT grew up out of attempts to analyse the poverty and underemployment of black people in America, but more recently has been used to analyse the position of women in the occupational structure both in the US and the UK. DLMT states that there is a division of the labour market into two sectors. Firstly, the primary sector which consists of jobs with career structures, higher pay and stable employment. Conversely, the secondary sector is one where the workers have low pay, few opportunities for promotion and the jobs are relatively unstable. DLMT points out that there is a division between the two sectors restricting mobility from one sector to the other.

Barron and Norris (1976) have discussed DLMT in relation to women's participation in the labour market in Britain. They state that workers are assigned to a sector on the basis of ascribed characteristics such as sex and race, with women and black people more often being in the secondary sector. They are likely to remain there all their working lives, having few opportunities for entering the primary sector.

This theory has been criticised by Kenrick (1981) who points out that the two sectors in the labour market are defined by the job structure which creates the characteristics which are then attributed to the workers in those jobs. The

primary sector job structure is considered the norm, (i.e. stable jobs with career ladders, mainly done by white men), while the secondary sector job structure is seen as deviating from the norm, (i.e. the jobs are lower paid and less stable and they are less likely to be done by white men). This distinction implies discrimination against women per se, as women are less able to follow traditional career patterns, as well as that due to the existence of male work norms.

Beechey (1983) also identifies limitations with DLMT by suggesting that as it is mainly concerned with hierarchy and privilege in the labour force, it only addresses vertical occupational segregation and does not consider horizontal occupational segregation. She concludes that DLMT is limited because it only provides a cross-sectional view of the labour market. It does not concern itself with the way certain occupations come to be considered as work for women or work for men.

Whilst agreeing that the secondary sector characteristics of DLMT may be applied to women and black and minority ethnic groups, there is no justifiable reason why these groups should be secondary workers. There is no evidence that they are happy to be dispensed with easily, or different in any visible way which might prevent them doing a job

efficiently, or have little interest in being trained or acquiring experience. On the other hand, there is evidence that women are just as interested as men in earning a decent wage and indeed many are bread winners (Land 1975). It has been remarked that women's low pay is due to their lack of union strength, but as Purcell (1979) suggests, women's lack of unionisation may well be a function of the industries worked in rather than the workers themselves. One example would be the clothing industry where the workers are often located in many small workplaces thereby restricting the possibility of mass unionisation.

In fact one third of all union members affiliated to the TUC are women. The TUC itself points out that there has been:

"...a substantial increase in women's participation in their unions, much of this is due to pressure from women themselves." (TUC Women Worker's Bulletin No. 5 May 1985 P. 1)

On this evidence the above characteristics are determined by the structure of the secondary sector rather than simply being attributes of those working in this sector.

Although DLMT describes certain industries accurately, such as the car industry where men are in skilled and technical jobs and women are in semi or unskilled manufacturing or service jobs, like occupational segregation it does not

account for the many other instances where the jobs women have do not fit into the secondary sector. These include women doing skilled manufacturing work, secretarial work and those employed in professional jobs particularly in the public sector such as social workers, teachers and nurses.

Braverman's view

Braverman (1979) takes another view of the labour market emphasising that labour processes exist in sweat-shops and in the family, as well as in factories and offices. He discusses arguments about the sub-division and the fragmentation of labour under capitalism. His thesis looks at the deskilling which occurred because of the introduction of mass assembly methods and new technology. This notion of deskilling links together different forms of work that are generally considered in isolation from one another such as professional and technical jobs, white collar jobs, manual jobs in the service sectors and manual work in the manufacturing industry.

Braverman's analysis differs significantly from DLMT in that he accounts for changes in the labour market which have occurred over time. This longitudinal analysis is most useful in situations where women have entered the same

industries as men. For example, since the widespread introduction of new technology, its everyday use in various settings has come to be seen as work for women, unlike the early pioneering days of the computer age.

One limitation of Braverman's work is that he only uses the narrow, arbitrary definition of "skill" in common use. He does not deal with the fact that the term "skilled work" is only applied to certain jobs and does not necessarily describe a level of competence to do a particular job. This is shown by Wood (1982) who discusses 'The degradation of work' with reference to Braverman's theory. In addition Cockburn (1983) has stated that Braverman ignores the fact that what counts as skill frequently involves social and ideological constructions which are related to gender.

Jobs become defined as skilled for a number reasons, by the length of time that is taken to learn a job, or through a period of training, or by trade union pressure to get the jobs upgraded to "skilled work". Women have less access to formal training which would enable them to do "skilled work" and, secondly, women have been less active in trade unions than men and so have not had their jobs defined as "skilled" to the same extent as men.

As a result "deskilling" cannot be used to explain those women's jobs which have never been defined as skilled e.g. cleaning. Braverman argues that employers tended to hire women in the service industries because they were an available source of labour in the period when the service sector was expanding and the labour market supply was short, and, also that women's labour was cheaper and considered "unskilled". However Braverman's view ignores the fact that women are also employed in some professional occupations and hence not necessarily unskilled workers. He does not explain why women can be employed as cheap labour, disregarding the family and the way in which the sexual division of labour within the family affects women's position in the labour force.

A further criticism of Braverman is that he neglects to take account of worker organisation. This is by now a standard criticism of his work e.g. Rubery 1980. Like Braverman she believes that the development of monopoly capitalism involves the destruction of old skills. However, Rubery also asserts that this process involves the creation of new ones too. She argues that this process of reconstituting skills has led the trades unions to want to maintain old skill divisions within the labour force, even when there is little or no real basis for maintaining these skill

divisions. Rubery sees the trades unions as having played a crucially important role in perpetuating, though not creating, labour market segmentation. This has led, in some cases, to attempts to restrict the access of women to skilled jobs.

Reserve army of labour thesis

A third theory which attempts to explain women's position within the labour market is that of the "reserve army of labour", Beechey (1978) and Bruegel (1979) discuss this thesis with reference to Britain. They both suggest that women are a "reserve army of labour" who will be drawn into the labour market when there is a shortage and be disposed of in an economic crisis. This theory was originally proposed by Marx (in Capital vol 1 1976).

Bruegel discusses evidence relating to the period 1974-1978 and notes that during this period the number of women in the labour force increased whereas the number of men decreased. She suggests this is a reflection of the long term trend towards an increase in female participation in the labour force. However, another pattern emerges if women's employment in various different industries is considered. Bruegel's (1979) evidence suggests that the reserve army of

labour thesis applies to the manufacturing sector but not to the service sector of industry. It seems that the two sectors have been differently affected initially by the growth period and more recently the recession.

Further evidence for this observation comes from a report by the MSC (Jan 1985) on occupational change between 1971 and 1981. It is clear that there have been changes in the pattern of employment which have had different consequences for men and for women.

Firstly, there has been an overall decline in the male workforce by 7% and overall increase in the number of women in paid work by 10%. This is a result of a decline in low skill, labour intensive manual jobs and although the percentage fall in these categories was greater for women than men, the impact on the overall level of male employment was greater because this category includes 59% of all employed men compared with only 22% of employed women in 1971. Secondly, there has been a rise in the numbers employed in non-manual jobs with the percentage increase being considerably greater for women than men. Finally, although there was no change in the total number of people employed as clerical, secretarial and sales workers, the proportion of women in this category increased from 75% to 79% between 1971 and 1981.

This evidence provides further support for Bruegel's suggestion that the reserve army of labour thesis describes the changes that have taken place in the manufacturing sector but not those that have occurred in the service sector.

Beechey (1978) also takes up this view by suggesting that married women have become a reserve army of labour for low paid, semi and unskilled work. She suggests this is because of the advantages to capital that:

(1) married women can be paid wages below the value of their labour power;

(2) they provide a flexible working population which can be brought into use and dispensed with as conditions of production change.

However, she has been criticised by Anthias (1983) who says that Beechey only considers the economic advantages to capital of women's work. Anthias argues that for a complete explanation of women's position in the labour market other factors such as the legal, ideological, state and family structures, need to be taken into account. This seems a valid criticism in the light of the fact that women's

participation in the labour force at all is highly dependent on their other responsibilities and commitments such as caring for children and the elderly (see Martin and Roberts 1984).

Another view on the issue comes from Hartmann (1976) who places emphasis on the role of male workers in restricting women's employment within the labour market. She feels the relative importance of capitalists and male workers in instituting and maintaining job segregation by sex has varied at different periods of time.

Rubery (1980) has taken up this point and suggested that trades union pressure will also be used to segregate women from men occupationally thereby lessening competition and maintaining skilled status in male dominated industries.

Overall, one must note that there are some fundamental problems with the reserve army of labour thesis. for example, as women have lower pay levels than men (Hewlett 1987, mentioned earlier) it could be expected that they would not be dispensed with in a recession. Secondly, the high concentration of women in certain areas of the work force (note Hakim 1979 writing about occupational segregation) means that they are relatively indispensable. However a combination of DLMT and theories of women's labour

market participation does help us to understand the role of women's employment plays in the economy as a whole. They usefully explain how women come to be doing the jobs they do and work the hours they work. They provide the background for understanding the reasons why homeworking is most commonly done by women, as outlined below.

Understanding Homeworking

All these theories attempt to explain women's waged work in the formal economy but they do not specifically consider the other waged work done by women, which often goes unrecorded in official statistics (as indeed does their unwaged work).

One example of such waged work done almost exclusively by women is homeworking. Irwin realised that homeworking is a problematic topic as long ago as 1906:

"Unlike most other employments, home work does not form a distinct and organised section of the industrial world, but an unknown country without chart or beaten tracks, and in which the boundaries and landmarks are continually shifting, so that the investigator has practically to grope his (sic) way through it." (P.8-9)

Even today, according to Allen (1983b) its absence from sociological literature is because:

"It falls outside the sociology of the family and household as they have been developed, outside the sociology of work and industry and outside theories of the development of capitalism as an economic and political system." (P.650)

Homeworking cannot be understood solely with reference to occupational segregation, DLMT, deskilling or the reserve army of labour thesis. Anthias (1983) has suggested that a comprehensive analysis will have to consider the relationships that exist between the organisation of production, the labour market and family structures which affect the distribution of paid and unpaid work for women.

Consequently, this research aims to consider where working at home fits into women's lives in relation to their domestic commitments as well as their individual work histories. From the discussion of women's paid employment it is clear that it is most likely to be affected by their life cycle positions, particularly in relation to whether or not they are in the role of carer. This thesis will argue that it is women's position within the household which is a major determinant of the allocation of paid work to them.

Separation of home and work

As was described earlier, work is not usually seen as being done at home, but that was not always the case. Up until the mid 19th century women frequently had recognised paid work in the home, such as weaving, agricultural work or as domestic servants. (Farmers' wives, publicans' wives and others still have recognised work, whether or not it is paid but are not considered homeworkers for the purposes of this thesis.)

With the change from an agricultural to an industrial society came the thought that home and work ought to be separated. Davidoff (1979) suggests that this was not so much to do with the emergence of the bourgeoisie and the working class (as Marxist historians have argued) but rather with the definition of masculinity and femininity.

Alexander (1982) sees the division of labour within the family, at the time when the household had been the unit of production as being "demarcated and rigidified" (P.38) by the advent of modern society. It appears that the upper middle class were the most proseletyzing, promoting the separation of home and work, with women being required to maintain the home and children while men were supposed to provide the upkeep of their families. In reality it was a

domestic ideal for women and as a description often inaccurate, as many women had to find ways to earn income in addition to or instead of their male relatives. In fact many women were working throughout the 19th century in jobs such as domestic services, textiles and dress making (Scott and Tilley 1982).

Whatever the exact reasons for the increased separation of home and work, it was often difficult for women to go out to work because of their domestic responsibilities. One option available to them was to work at home. There is much evidence of "sweated labour" in 19th century Britain. Blythell (1978) describes women working in such industries as clothing, fur-pulling and match-making in their homes. Other work which women did at home to earn extra income included providing a service for others such as: washing, childminding and domestic services (cooking and cleaning) for lodgers or boarders. For some women little has changed today and working at home is still the best option available to them.

The separation of home and work helps maintain the "ideal" roles for women and men. Yet, this separation is becoming less fixed. Increasingly there are reports of people choosing to work in their homes, rather than going out to work (The Times 1983 see below). With the increase in new

technology it has become possible for many tasks previously done in an office or factory to be performed at home, such as selling insurance or computer programming.

Developments such as these have also affected the way in which homeworking is viewed.

"The traditional home-worker is no longer a lady badly paid for piecework - knitting jumpers, filling envelopes or cutting out patterns - while she looks after the children. The telephone answering machine and desk-top copier have cleared the way for a more ambitious type of non-commuting person. Mr insurance man works from home, as does a high-powered literary agent friend and very organised woman who manages the professional affairs of several musicians." (Times 31st Oct. 1983).

This report and many other similar ones fail to grasp the subtleties of this issue. They group together all those working at and from home when in reality there are great differences between them.

The man selling insurance mentioned above is likely to be a professional self employed freelance worker, whilst the woman filling envelopes or knitting is more likely to have an employer even if that employer will not admit to it in a court of law. Although it may be difficult to determine a person's employment status (Hakim 1987b) i.e. whether self employed or an employee, it is important to try and

distinguish between them in order to have a full understanding of the role played in a person's life by working in one's home.

Throughout this research the phrase people working from home will be used to indicate those who have some control over when and for whom they work, and working at home to describe those who are subject to strict control from their bosses even if they are technically self employed. Current emphasis (e.g. Handy 1984) on those working from home has obscured the plight of those working at home.

Homeworking is important to consider because it represents an outstanding example of women's oppression. Those women who go out to work suffer the triple burden of housework, domestic responsibilities and paid work. Whereas they at least receive some token recognition from society for their employment, (apart from payment), those working in their own home are unlikely to gain even this.

In addition homeworking is a culturally acceptable form of work for many women (Saifullah-Kahn) 1979); working in this way allows men to be satisfied that they have a wife at home who services them practically, as well as providing them with both the status of a man able to support his family and the so called "extras" which enhance his lifestyle. On the

other hand, working at home provides women with the opportunity to earn much needed money while at the same time caring for their families. A woman need not feel the guilt still commonly associated with being a mother and doing paid work. In this way she can feel able to fulfil the roles of wife and mother while contributing to the family income.

This thesis will concentrate on homeworking and homeworkers: i.e. those working at home. A review of previous research is presented, followed by an attempt to estimate the number and identity of homeworkers in England and Wales, a study of six employers of homeworkers and a case study of 30 secretarial and clerical homeworkers.

CHAPTER TWO

HOMEWORKING: AN INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss homeworking and the surrounding issues in more detail. Previous approaches to the study of homeworking are discussed along with their main findings. Current campaigns working to change the situation are also presented. This review provides a background to the research carried out for this thesis, and references are made to subsequent chapters where appropriate.

Although the last decade has seen an increasing interest in homeworkers' conditions in this country, little progress has been made in changing them for the better. One writer has gone as far as to argue that today's homeworkers are still in the same weak position in the labour market and suffering the same poor conditions as those at the turn of the century (Pepper 1984). This vulnerable position is due to the way in which women are disadvantaged in the labour market for the reasons discussed in Chapter One. As a result the homeworking labour force is predominantly female (Hakim 1987b). Apart from the National Survey of Homeworking (NSHW) which considers all home based work there has been relatively little attention paid to homeworking. The reasons for this include:

a) controversy about the work women do and have done. Even when such issues have been considered, work done at home has tended to be overlooked. For example, the Women and Employment Survey carried out in 1980 collected information on where women worked but did not present the analysis because there were so few homeworkers.

b) Old fashioned ideas about what work is. These include the view that "women don't work at all" and that they work for "pin money". The former implies that what women do is not work, excluding even the caring role they perform for men, young children, the elderly and sick; the latter implies that their work is economically insignificant and does not merit attention. Not only is the work done by women not seen as really important but it is also viewed as non-work.

c) Most often, only going out to paid employment is considered as work. Homeworking does not fit into this category because it is carried out where people live, and where people live does not fit into the popular notion of where people work.

Homeworkers: Problems of definition

Definitions of homeworking may be broad and cover anyone who works where they live, or may be highly specific and include only those working at home in the manufacturing industry. The definition of a homeworker is problematic and includes whether a person's home is their place of work, their employment status (i.e. whether self employed, an employee or freelance), their occupation and whether they work for one or more employers or contractors. Hakim (1987b) defines homeworkers as those who do their work at home and others who work from home as a base but are not tied to working in their homes as homebased workers. Other recent definitions which have been used are listed below.

1) Wages Council Act (1959, readopted 1979)

"...contracts with a person for the purpose of that person's business for the execution of the work to be done in a place not under control or management of the person with whom he contracts and who does not normally make use of the services of more than two persons in the carrying out of the contracts for the execution of work with statutory minimum remuneration."

This definition states that a homeworker is someone who arranges to carry out paid work for another person away from their place of business without involving more than two other people. It does not define homeworkers in terms of their place of work. This definition includes occupations

in manufacturing industries as well as others, e.g. typing, but also includes other occupations which are not usually linked with homeworking e.g. artists.

2) Commission on Industrial Relations (1973)

"Those who receive work and payment directly from a manufacturing establishment and work in their own home."

This definition only considered homeworking in the manufacturing industry.

3) TUC (1978)

The TUC produced a very broad definition which simply stated that homeworking was:

"Work done in the home for another person or for sale to another person."

Although this definition was used by the Low Pay Unit in 1979, theoretically it could also cover writers, musicians, those running their own business from home, general practioners, publicans and so on.

4) Homeworkers Protection Bill (1979)

This bill was introduced into Parliament by Frank White MP and uses the following definition :

"An individual who contracts with a person not being a professional client of his for the purposes of that person's business for the execution of any work (other than the production or creation of any literary, dramatic, artistic or musical work) to be done in domestic premises not under the control of the management of the person with whom he contracts, and who does not normally make use of the services of more than two individuals in the carrying out of that work."

Here a homeworker is someone who works IN rather than FROM domestic premises which are not owned or controlled by the employer for whom the work is done. Although this definition is comprehensive, in excluding for example artists and musicians, it also excludes people who could well be considered homeworkers, like child minders because as Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) state they:

"...provide a personal service to another individual (the parent) in their home, rather than for the purpose of that person's business." (P.50)

Despite their exclusion childminders and other service workers should be considered as homeworkers, as they are working in their homes subject to a boss (or bosses) even

where they may technically be self employed.

The ambiguity over whether someone is a homeworker or not stems in part from the difficulty in determining whether an individual is self employed or an employee. This might well be different for National Insurance and employment protection purposes. Homeworkers tend to be on the boundaries.

If they are considered self employed, they must pay their own tax and National Insurance; as employees they would expect their employer to deal with this aspect of their work. It seems that employers often consider homeworkers as self employed so they have fewer obligations towards them, yet homeworkers often consider themselves as employees (Allen 1981). Whether homeworkers are classified as self employed or employees they almost never get the benefits obtained by in workers e.g. holiday pay, sick pay, statutory tea and meal breaks or benefits of a pension scheme.

For the reasons developed in Chapter One, this study needs a definition of homeworking, which enables distinction between those working FROM home and those working AT home. The Wages Council Act definition covers only those working away from their main sources of business. The CIR definition is too narrow as it only considers homeworking in the

manufacturing industry, whereas the TUC definitions is to broad treat all those working in their homes as homeworkers.

The study uses the Homeworkers' Protection Bill definition because its emphasis is on those working AT home who cannot be considered professional workers or freelancers, i.e. those workers who have a boss. Thus in defining homeworking, both the employment status (aiming to exclude people who employ other to help them with their work) and the occupation of the worker (i.e. excluding those doing certain jobs such as writers, musicians and artists) are incorporated.

The distinction between a homeworker and freelancer working at home can be understood more clearly if the worker's control over her/his work is taken into account. For example, the collection and delivery of work, the keeping to strict deadlines, being given strict instructions on how to do the work, having the quality of their completed work strictly monitored are more frequently conditions of work experienced by homeworkers than by freelancers. In addition the inability to refuse work and the taking on of rush jobs without extra pay are more common amongst homeworkers than freelancers and show homeworkers lack of control over their supply of work.

Homeworking and Women's Employment

Several studies on homeworking show that homeworkers are usually women who have dependents needing care or who have disabilities and who are often black or from a minority ethnic community. (Low Pay Unit 1979, Allen 1981, Shah 1975). These groups of people do not have much power in the labour market and usually have little choice when taking work. They are also often excluded from other jobs because of their sex and/or race. (GLC 1983).

Homeworking can be seen as constituting what Feuchtwang (1982) calls an "occupational ghetto", typified by the following:

"1) occupations which are arduous, repetitive, often ill-paid;

2) traps from which movement to other more varied, better paid occupations is difficult;

3) traps into which a disproportionately high concentration of black workers have fallen."
(P.251)

Homeworkers often do arduous, repetitive, sometimes dangerous and usually ill-paid work which they find hard to replace with other work because of their domestic circumstances. These make them neither able to find and accept other jobs, nor to take up training in order to get other kinds of work.

Whilst agreeing with the above definition that a disproportionate number of black workers are in occupational ghettos, it would seem to follow that women workers (black women workers in particular) should also be specially mentioned.

Although there are no accurate figures of the numbers of black and minority ethnic homeworkers it seems likely that there are proportionately many more black homeworkers than would be expected given the population of black workers as a whole. For example in London, Greenwich Homeworkers Project (1984a), shows that many Asian women are working in their homes, while in London Borough of Haringey (1983) many Cypriot women homeworkers have been identified. Unfortunately no exact figures are available.

Orientations to the study of Homeworking

This section will discuss studies on homeworking which have been carried out in Britain. The most common approach used in the study of homeworking is that of considering homeworkers' pay and employment conditions. An exclusive focus on this area of homeworking overlooks other aspects of homeworkers' situations. These include their socio-economic and demographic characteristics as well as their reasons for

working at home.

In the light of this, there have also been efforts to take into consideration the fact that homeworkers are most likely to be women and the reasons for this. This section will review the two approaches.

Homeworking: low pay and poor conditions

Studies of homeworkers' wages and conditions of employment are common and they provide a fairly depressing picture of the situation. These include studies by the Low Pay Unit 1974, 1976, 1979, 1984b; ACAS 1978a, 1978b. They show that homeworkers are the lowest paid group of workers in the country, compared with all workers and those inworkers in the same occupations. The LPU study by Bisset and Huws (1984) shows that of the 52 homeworkers in traditional industries, 35 earned less than £1.00 per hour and only four earned more than £2.00 in 1983; this should be compared with the Low Pay Unit definition of low pay for 1983 which was £2.25 per hour. Of the homeworkers working with new technology as computer programmers, the lowest paid was 10p per hour, the highest £13.75 - the average was £4.62 which is £2.00 less than the equivalent for inworkers.

Homeworkers are often paid on a piece rate system. In order

to compare their wages with those of other workers an amount paid per hour has to be calculated. This presents many problems when analysing their pay. The most obvious costs of homeworking NOT calculated in the wage rate which do not apply to inworkers are:

1) packing up time e.g. could be as much as five and a half hours per week (Beale 1978);

2) the cost of electricity for machines, lighting and heating (Cragg & Dawson 1981);

3) phone calls concerning the collection and delivery of work (mentioned in most studies);

4) dirt and other health hazards to the homeworker and other members of the household (Low Pay Unit 1979);

5) homeworkers receiving help from other members of their family/household (as many as 41% of Allen's study reported this).

Despite these problems researchers have attempted to calculate homeworkers wages and most often concluded that they are poorly paid. However, Hakim and Dennis (1982) found that homeworkers were not necessarily low paid. A

major problem with this study is that a large group of low paid workers was excluded from the calculations by being defined as 'subordinary'. A 'subordinary worker' is one to whom the Wages Inspectorate does not apply the statutory minimum wage because they are deemed not to be one of 'ordinary' experience, efficiency or skill. By ignoring the fact that 17% of 'subordinary' workers were found to work over 50 hours a week Hakim and Dennis (1982) were able to conclude:

"..homeworkers as a group tend to have slightly better hourly earnings than the inworkers" (p.28)

Hakim and Dennis (1982) also concluded that homeworkers are not low paid, by comparing their wages with those of inworkers in identical jobs working for the same firms i.e. female workers in manual occupations. It seems inappropriate to conclude that some homeworkers are well paid by this comparison without taking the above problems into account, especially as these inworkers are amongst the worst paid in the country.

They did point out that it seems especially contradictory when the existence of the Equal Pay Act is supposed to ensure identical earnings for men and women in the same job. They suggested that the "correct" comparison would be with identical jobs outside the home whether filled by men or

women. However this would be difficult as so many of the jobs homeworkers do are not done by men. It would be better to make a comparison using the notion of equal pay for work of equal value. (In any case the Equal Pay Act was not actually in force at the time of their study.)

One major difference between homeworkers and inworkers which should be considered when comparing these workers' earnings is that inworkers have a guaranteed number of hours of work whereas homeworkers do not. Homeworkers' supply of work may vary considerably and the tasks they required to do may change often, so hindering their ability to build up a fast speed. Some may also have to repair or finish previous work done at home, either their own or that of other workers, in their own time (i.e. without pay), as a way of ensuring their supply of work. These conditions are not usually applied to inworkers.

Despite attempts to change homeworkers' employment status and demands for better conditions and minimum wage rates, little has actually changed this century with regard to reasons why women work at home, their employment protection and so on. Many homeworkers still believe they are working illegally, but little effort has been made to enforce laws that do exist which might benefits homeworkers such as health and safety legislation which covers work in domestic

premises. Attempts to pass new laws, e.g. Homeworkers' Protection Bill 1979 and 1981, failed due to lack of parliamentary time. These provisions have been inadequate, not least because of the lack of support homeworkers have received from the trades unions who have traditionally seen them as undercutting inworkers. As a group they lack 'muscle power'. Since it was believed that homeworking was on the decrease (Blythell 1978), it has not been seen as an important issue.

Homeworking = work for women

An alternative orientation to the study of homeworking which takes into account these ideas has been developed. In the following studies details of homeworkers' situations are recorded but the emphasis is the research is on how homeworking fits into general theories of women's employment. This orientation will be followed throughout this thesis. Recognition is given to the fact that the majority of homeworkers are women who are taking in such work because there are few alternatives available to them.

Hope et al (1976) aimed to identify characteristics of homeworkers and homeworking because it was thought that this type of work:

"...exploits and reinforces particular aspects of the woman's situation in our society which is indicative of her oppression." (P.88)

Women are often isolated and tied to the home by children and other dependents and have low expectations and few opportunities to enter the labour market.

In another study by Allen (1981) investigated patterns of homeworking in three areas in Yorkshire aiming to analyse the similarities and differences between homeworkers and inworkers. She was also interested in homeworking as a method of production. She shows how homeworkers are a casualised labour force (NOT workers doing casual labour). She shows the part homeworking plays in the production process as a whole and relates homeworking to the segregated labour market, as well as the sexual division of labour in the household.

A third study by Whitehead (1983) aimed to look at the relationship between women's depression and their dual role as paid and unpaid workers, with specific reference to homeworkers. She considered the extent to which homework does or does not offer protection from depression. Her findings show a strong relationship between a woman's role within her family, her paid employment and her mental well being. She states that:

"Outwork [the local term for homeworking] is employment without confronting the socially constructed female role. However, in doing so, outwork, far from providing a solution, actually intensifies the contradictions existing within the accepted female role." (P.30)

Women are not only expected to do the housework, mind the children and be good wives, but do paid work as well. In short, they must be 'superwomen'.

Another study in this area undertaken by Mitter (1983) during 1981-2 showed the international nature of homeworking and women's work. She sees an increase in homeworking worldwide including Britain, as a direct result of the rise of multinationals playing a major role in the world economy aided by new technology which has enabled them multinationals to produce on a worldwide basis. The new technology makes it possible to replace skilled labourers with unskilled ones who are usually women. She identifies the reasons for women being used as simple:

"They are a)cheap, b)easily disposable, and c)supposedly docile." (P.2)

She shows the ideology of the family which expects women to be the main carers for children and households as making it "natural" for women to be able to work at home. Mitter (1986a) shows how the women who are the most vulnerable to

this exploitation in Britain are those who do not have a good knowledge of the dominant language. These women also suffer because of racial prejudice.

These four studies provide a more comprehensive view in that each considers homeworking from several angles. They recognise that even with good wages and better working conditions homeworkers will still be a disadvantaged group; until they have a 'real' choice of whether or not to work at home, such changes in their situation will only be cosmetic and they will still be exploited as women and as workers.

Finally, in recognition of the increasing importance of homeworking to the economy, some academics have shown interest in homeworking from a theoretical viewpoint (Evans and Cooke 1985). They have concentrated on homeworking because it links the usually separate spheres of work and home. They view :

"Homeworking as social form rooted primarily in the ways households choose to live, rather than their [households] strategy towards the sphere of production per se." (P.12)

It appears that they see households as "choosing" that the woman stays at home while the man goes out to work irrespective of the fact that it might be more economically sensible to reverse that choice.

Despite acknowledging that homeworking is almost always done by women, Evans and Cooke do not take account of the fact that households do not 'choose' to live in this way. While it is true that women must bear children, the prevalent view in society that women must be primary carers means that women rarely make a positive choice about their role as homemakers and as a result have little say over the type of employment they take up.

Action research

There have also been attempts to incorporate help for homeworkers to change their situation alongside the collection of information i.e. action research. Examples include work by the following:

- 1) Southwark Employment Unit 1984;
- 2) Leicester Outwork Campaign 1983;
- 3) Greenwich Homeworkers Project 1984;
- 4) London Borough of Haringey 1983;
- 5) Dundee Inner City Action Centre 1984.

The main aim of these studies is to make homeworking visible, as one of the main reasons for the lack of change in homeworkers' situation is their isolation and fear that

admitting to doing homework will hurt them in some way. This might include losing welfare benefits, losing their jobs if employers find out they are trying to change their conditions, losing their tenancy if councils' realise they are working at home (even if some local authorities have recinded this requirement e.g. the London boroughs of Hackney and Haringey). There will be fuller discussion of homeworkers' reluctance to talk about their situation freely when the use of official statistics for looking at homeworking is discussed (Chapter Four).

The first four reports mentioned cover homeworking as defined earlier i.e. as those working for somebody else. However, the Dundee project also includes crafts people, e.g. those making pottery or jewellery, who more precisely should be defined as running their own businesses in domestic premises rather than as homeworkers. These people may have chosen to work in their homes because of the need for premises and in addition may not be constrained because of their domestic situation.

The definition of homeworking used is a clear indication of the emphasis in each report, so while the same four projects point to the exploitation of women as homeworkers, particularly minority ethnic group women, and consider ways in which to help them change their situation the Dundee

project fails to mention the sex or cultural background of the homeworkers included in the study. It concentrates on the possibility of providing grants and other financial assistance to enable those working in their homes to become self sufficient.

Examples of differing recommendations include:

a) Southwark Employment Unit has called for among other things changes in legislation to provide employee status for homeworkers, and trades unions to take up homeworking, as the unit sees the self organisation of homeworkers as fundamental to changing their situation.

b) London Borough of Haringey pointed to the need for adequate childcare facilities, as well as classes in English as a second language for many homeworkers.

c) Greenwich Homeworkers Project has concentrated on anti-racist work including the setting up of a fresh start course to encourage working class Afro-Caribbean and Asian women to explore training and employment possibilities.

d) Leicester Outwork Campaign, among other activities, run advice sessions and a newsletter for local outworkers (the term used in that area to indicate homeworkers).

e) Dundee Homeworkers Project as stated earlier has made

recommendations about legislative changes, welfare rights and benefits, financial assistance and training for homeworkers.

Study design: National and local samples

Homeworkers are considerably under-counted in official statistics about employment. The reasons for this are fully discussed in Chapter Four. As a result, studies of homeworking have tended to pick out a particular geographical area where homeworking is known to be common or is easily accessible to the researcher or in an industry with a known history of homeworking.

This is not to say that there have not been more general approaches e.g. the Low Pay Unit 1979 study included homeworkers from all over the country and many industries. However, as will be seen later the numbers of homeworkers included are often small, in this case 43.

Studies which have restricted themselves to a particular geographical area have undoubtedly done so for time and money reasons as well as because the researcher had a particular knowledge of that area. e.g. Allen - West Yorkshire; Beale - Wiltshire.

Industry specific studies

There have been studies of a certain industry e.g. Hakim looked at the London clothing industry (1982) and the ACAS report on those covered by the Button Manufacturing Council in 1978. These studies have the advantage of being able to go into more depth about that particular industry, which may be more helpful in securing change in that industry, than a description of all homeworking in a geographical area.

These two approaches can of course be combined, e.g. Shah (1975) studied the clothing trade in London's East End. He focussed his study further by only looking at Asian homeworkers. This has the advantage of being able to give a more detailed picture of the situation for those particular workers but enables others to disregard his conclusions by saying that it is not the same in other industries or areas because their workers have different characteristics from those in his study.

Data Collection

Data collection is by far the hardest problem for researchers working on this issue. Finding homeworkers who are willing to take part in a research project is very difficult. As no official records are kept the idea of random sampling is impossible. As a result, however the sample is obtained, there will be some element of bias. This must be recognised and discussed when analysing the results. Different methods of data collection are appropriate depending on the aims of the particular research project. For example for detailed information on a particular group of homeworkers an in depth interview might be appropriate, whilst for a nationwide picture analysis of routinely collected statistics would be suitable.

Various methods of data collection have been used. Beale 1978, considered several different methods of making contact with homeworkers. She compared the following methods:

- 1) attempts to persuade homeworkers to take initiative in making contact by radio, leaflets, acquaintances;

- 2) gaining access to local authority lists;
- 3) a house to house survey.

She was by far the most successful with the first method. Fourteen of the eighteen homeworkers she contacted were reached in this way. The second method proved useless because several of the local authorities' lists were out of date or they would not disclose the names and addresses of homeworkers. The remaining four homeworkers were contacted by a house to house survey on a council estate. No homeworkers were contacted in an area of privately owned housing.

Other methods of contacting homeworkers include: snowball sampling (Shah); advertising through the Low Pay Unit paper Home News; and using information already gathered about homeworkers and inworkers (a survey carried out by the Wages Inspectorate (Hakim and Dennis 1982) which did not have any personal contact with homeworkers) using a combined method of a house to house survey and local advertising along with payment of a sum of £8 for an interview (Cragg and Dawson 1981).

Beale had the most success through her local radio appeal and, contrary to Shah's experience, none with snowball sampling. This could be connected with the group of

homeworkers studied i.e. Shah looked at Asian homeworkers in one small geographical area, whilst Beale's respondents were from a wider area. A danger with snowball sampling noted by Field (1976 see LPU) is the possibility of only a certain type of worker being identified. If the first homeworker is well paid, as in Shah's case, it is likely that she will be part of a circuit of better paid homeworkers. This applies the other way too, of course, as Field pointed out in the LPU studies, which have attracted those who felt particularly unhappy with their level of pay.

The house to house survey method has been used more successfully by the London Borough of Haringey (1983). This method is time-consuming but can be worthwhile in an area where many homeworkers are known to live and yet are unwilling to respond to the other methods. It is more likely that trust can be built up on a small scale than through wider advertising.

The problems of data collection are so enormous that it is worth noting (see Table 2.1), the numbers involved in some of the most recent studies in order not to generalise too much from their conclusions.

Range of information covered

Some of the topics which are commonly included in these studies are: wages, conditions of work, the costs of homeworking, reasons for homeworking, family circumstances and attitudes towards homeworking.

The problems associated with homeworkers' wages, conditions and hidden costs, have already been mentioned, yet further discussion of the difficulty is needed. Often homeworkers do not work for long stretches of time but rather fit their work in between their other commitments. This means that the day is very likely to be fragmented making the number of hours worked hard to establish. Another factor making this task difficult is that in many cases homeworkers have help from other members of the family either in order to finish the work on time, or so that the family can do something else. One homeworker with a disability (interviewed by Beale 1978), found it impossible to finish certain work alone and was frightened to tell her employer this, in case he took away her work altogether. Both factors should be considered when analysing both the number of hours actually worked and calculating whether a homeworker receives high or low wages.

Reasons for homeworking vary considerably from 'the money, of course,' to 'it stops me feeling like a hoover' (Cragg and Dawson 1981). The money earned by the homeworker is usually crucial to her and/or her family's standard of living. However, the major reason cited for working at home is that of having to care for dependent children or sick or elderly parents. The DE 1981 study (carried out by Cragg and Dawson) asked many questions concerning reasons for and attitudes to homeworking. Their answers provide a clear picture of the variety of homeworkers' feelings about their situation, with statements like 'the homeworkers were willing to sacrifice for their families' and 'they tolerated the conditions because they had no alternative.'

This example points to the lack of alternatives open to homeworkers. Whether willingly or not, they had little option but to do this work. If they truly had a choice of alternative work or in some cases, childcare facilities, homeworkers would not have to sacrifice either themselves or their families by tolerating such conditions.

Other studies such as those of Allen, and of Beale, pointed to the inadequacy of the explanation, that women do homework because of their dependents OR because of the money. They both see the explanation as most likely to be a combination of both factors. They need money and the only

way possible to earn it is by working at home, because of their dependents. (In a study in Haringey homeworkers reported difficulty in getting their children into nurseries because they were available to look after them. However this situation is circular because homeworkers cannot get other jobs as they have children to look after.)

As can be seen from this brief review of previous studies, it is clear that homeworkers are badly paid and suffer poor employment conditions some of which may lead to poor health. It is also known that it is usually women with dependents who are working at home, and what needs to be considered is why this situation exists and has continued for so long and ways in which it might radically be changed.

This review also shows how difficult it can be to reach homeworkers as well as pointing to the reasons most commonly expressed for homeworking. These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter three in relation to the research carried out for this thesis about secretarial and clerical homeworkers.

Homeworking and New Technology

The most recent interest in homeworking comes from the rise of new technology and the often expressed likelihood that, in the future, work will be carried out in our homes and not, as it is now, in a building (whether that be a factory or office) which is separate from where we live. (Handy 1984, Communications Studies and Planning LTD 1980)

The most common image which is presented in the literature is that of an office worker, computer programmer or systems analyst working in her/his comfortable owner occupied home. However, while this image is not inaccurate (Huws 1984), other effects of new technology must be considered.

Mitter (1986b) has pointed out that there has also been a direct rise in manufacturing homework as a result of new technology. She shows how the clothing industry has made use of modern equipment to be able to respond to changes in demand quicker than ever before. New clothing firms such as 'Benetton' and 'Next' are able to compete not only on a price basis but on a quality basis too. These developments mean that more and rapid changes in production are required. She demonstrates that these rapid changes are made possible by the use of homeworkers. Even though the employment statistics do not indicate a rise in homeworking

in the clothing industry, Mitter suggests this is the only possible explanation of the discrepancy between employment and output figures (P.70).

Homeworkers working at home with new technology, e.g. computer programmers, were the subject of a recent study by Huws (1984) for the Equal Opportunities Commission. Of the 78 homeworkers who returned questionnaires 95% were women and all but five were parents, generally with preschool children. Of the respondents, 55% were self employed. Although these homeworkers were more highly paid than homeworkers in more traditional industries, 2/3 of them believed that they were earning less than they would for comparable work on site. (This was verified by independent statistics.) The women were also asked where they would most like to work : 35% preferred work at home, 24% in an office, 41% were unprepared to state a preference. This result shows that it is very difficult for many to choose where they would like to work, perhaps because without adequate provision for their children they cannot be expected to make a free choice.

This type of information shows that raising pay and giving employee status to homeworkers does not fundamentally change the situation. Some women may "choose" to work at home but it is not known whether in fact there was a 'real

choice' involved. This is one of the areas to be addressed in this thesis.

A report by the Low Pay Unit (1984b), shows the parallels between homeworking with new technology and homeworking in traditional industries. It points out that:

"..it is a supreme irony that new technology so widely heralded as an instrument for increasing the choices available for office workers, could easily be a means of reducing the options open to them (homeworkers)." (P.39).

Research on new technology homeworking provides further useful background information for investigating secretarial/clerical homeworking.

Homeworking and the Labour Market

A sensible way of integrating information about homeworking is to consider its relationship to the labour market. Its position in the labour market as a whole is often seen as negligible when in actual fact it plays an important role particularly in certain industries and always has done, such as in the clothing industry. Without 'the hidden army' of homeworkers (Low Pay Unit 1979), manufacturers would be unable to cope with the fluctuations in demand. Employers'

ability to pick up and drop homeworkers without notice makes them able to survive in a highly competitive market. It is this treatment of homeworkers that led Allen (1982) to show how homeworkers have been constructed as a marginal group of workers. She points out that the Department of Employment (Cragg and Dawson 1981 preface) has claimed that :

"Homeworkers are clearly a minority group within the labour force and probably a minority among those who work at home..."

This depiction of homeworkers as a minority group within the labour force raises questions about the reliability of official statistics for looking at homeworking. Information is needed to see to what extent such figures can be relied upon to draw an accurate description of the situation before concluding that homeworkers are an insignificant minority and therefore supposedly not worth bothering about. This issue will be discussed fully in Chapter Four, but consideration of the problems has led the Greater London Council (1983) to ponder the usefulness of "playing the numbers game".

Allen describes homework as 'casualised work' (1983b) judged by its conditions:

"The hours, wages, amount of work etc; are casualised by the supplier. The workers, however, are not casual workers. Many work for long periods (our [Allen's] longest homemaker had worked for forty years); others work on a full time or part time basis (officially defined) over many years." (P.664)

She also points out that the ideological construction of work i.e. that we go out to work, means that women working a 50 hour week at home could still be denied as workers.

This view of homeworking and its significant place within the labour market is not endorsed by two government surveys - the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey 1980 (WIRS), and the National Survey of Homeworking 1981 (Hakim 1987b). They have been used to provide national estimates of homeworking, and to consider the industries using homeworkers. The WIRS covers establishments employing more than 25 people and looks at the extent of homework and outwork i.e. work given out by firms to be done somewhere else whether that is another factory or someone's home. The main disadvantage of this survey is the fact that only establishments employing 25 or more people are covered. It is quite probable that many firms employing homeworkers employ fewer than 25 inworkers. They do not need more inworkers because homeworkers are used to cope with fluctuations in demand for the firms' goods or services. However the WIRS does confirm that homeworking is a widespread form of labour in

almost all industries and even among the largest establishments.

The National Survey of Homeworking provides a more, although by no means completely accurate way of estimating the numbers of people homeworking. The main conclusions which can be drawn are:

- 1) Among those whose 'place of work' is their home men are more likely to be working FROM home whereas women are more likely to be working AT home.
- 2) Manufacturing work is considerably less common than other types of homeworking.

This last conclusion led Hakim (1984) to conclude that manufacturing homework is now "a relative rarity." (P.10) This has since been challenged by Mitter (1986a) in a case study of the clothing industry. As well as her evidence, possible reasons why these figures might have limitations need to be discussed and taken into account (see Chapter Four).

A major problem with reaching homeworkers, so as to find out about them and their work, comes from the very way homeworking is organised. The link between the homeworker and the final distributor of the product or service may be a direct or indirect one. If the link is indirect it will involve one or more agents or subcontractors. The chain

which is produced may vary in length and it is possible that none or only a few of a firm's homeworkers will know the person who actually sells their product or service. This structure has been reported in the clothing industry (Ladbury 1979).

Ladbury shows that in the clothing industry manufacturers may give work directly to the homemaker, that one outworking firm may subcontract to other firms, and homeworkers sometimes have more than one employer. Evidence from the Leicester Outwork Campaign suggests that manufacturers, outworkers and homeworkers may even be in different cities, in this case Leicester and London.

Homeworking Abroad

There have been several studies that have considered homeworking in other countries. These provide evidence that homeworking is both a global phenomenon and that it can be an international operation. Four examples are presented below which show the range of work done at home outside Britain as well as highlighting different aspects of the organisation of homeworking and homeworkers' conditions of work.

Daniels (1982), has looked at the history of homeworking in New York with special reference to Italian homeworkers during 1900-1914. She describes the appalling conditions under which they lived and worked and makes the interesting observation that while it was knowledge of these poor conditions which motivated change in homeworkers conditions, it was because of dangers stemming from those conditions, not because the homeworkers themselves were suffering. In her example Daniels describes Italian homeworkers making coats which, because of their own lack of blankets, they used at night to keep themselves warm. This resulted in the increased likelihood of those buying the coats becoming infected by the diseases of poverty that homeworkers had, which because of their poor housing conditions and low wages were many. It was the "rich people's" suffering that alerted the attention of the legislators rather than that of the homeworkers themselves. In relation to the campaigns around the issue of homeworking discussed in this thesis, this point serves to emphasise that change may result from the needs of society rather than from the homeworkers' needs. The encouragement of more women to take part-time work or homeworking is one such example.

In Holland, Luijken (1983) has carried out an action research project with the aim of fighting for better conditions for homeworkers according to the work they do.

She has focussed on two groups of homeworkers, namely: 'skilled' homeworkers and 'nimble finger' homeworkers.

'Skilled' homeworkers are found in traditional industries e.g. shoe and leather, garment and glove making. They are usually 25-40yr old married women. The financial position of most of the families is good even without the woman's income from her homeworking. They work between 20-30 hours a week. All of the women doing this work said they would not accept the low piece rates paid to 'nimble finger' homeworkers. The 'nimble finger' homeworkers produce and pack goods e.g. lampshades, all kinds of household and beauty articles, folding boxes, knitting, mending garments, cleaning vegetables. They receive very low wages which are in fact decreasing. These homeworkers need the money to supplement their family income and to take care of basic needs. All these homeworkers earned below the statutory minimum wage and worked between 40-60 hours a week.

This distinction between 'skilled' and 'nimble' finger homeworkers shows how approaches to homeworking vary according to the economic situation for each homeworker. It provides a model with which to understand why homeworkers accept the conditions and wages that they do, of relevance to the case study of secretarial/clerical homeworkers carried out for this thesis discussed in Chapter Seven.

Lever (1988) has shown how the embroidery industry in Southern Spain relies heavily on women homeworkers in small towns. Homeworkers here are described as highly skilled although poorly paid which Lever sees as a result of the labour intensive nature of the industry and the poor position of the workforce in the labour market. She reports that the labour of homeworkers is especially likely to be classed as 'non work' so although the skill levels may be informally recognised, wages are lower than for 'formal' unskilled work (P.21-22). Such a practice can also be seen in Britain (see Bisset and Huws 1984).

Evidence that homeworking can be an international operation is shown by a report which appeared in the Observer (24th April 1983). The paper describes how a multimillionaire who had recently won a Queen's award for industry is exploiting homeworkers. He ships material to Cyprus where homeworkers are paid sometimes as little as 32p for each dress, then half-sewn clothes are sent back to England to be finished and finally they are exported to the Middle East to be sold.

Current moves on Homeworking

There has been a recent upsurge of attention focussed on homeworking which has been stimulated on the one hand by

employers, who see changes in technology allowing more jobs to be carried out at home, and, on the other, by homeworkers and those representing their interests, who are worried about the implications of changes in technology on work and work possibilities, as well as the long stated aim of changing the situation for all homeworkers.

A clear example of the encouragement of new technology homeworking is shown by Peltu (1980), in an article entitled 'New life at home for office workers'. He described what would become of traditional offices and claimed that 1984 would be the start of the office revolution. The following subtitle of the article shows its emphasis and popular thought:

"Electronic devices can now perform many of the tasks that office workers do. Several companies are trying to go further by linking them so they may be used at home. The trick is to retain the reliability and efficiency of the individual devices while keeping office workers and their bosses happy." (P.1004)

The Workplace Industrial Relations Survey by the Dept. of Employment (1980) has focussed on employers use of homeworkers. Using this survey Hakim (1984) draws a picture of outwork and shows the benefits to employers of using outworkers and homeworkers. These have also been noted by Huws (1984), who discussed them in detail:

- 1) increased productivity;
- 2) low overheads;
- 3) only having to pay workers when they are actually working (no retainer is normally paid for periods without work);
- 4) flexible working hours- work can be done in the evenings, at night and at weekends when the computer is lightly loaded and jobs are run much more quickly;
- 5) with some companies taking on home computer programmers they reported a very high standard of work because they could insist on a certain amount of experience before recruitment. Programmers are therefore highly skilled and yet the company has not had to pay for any training.

Companies which have been successful at this, such as F international stress that such an arrangement is ideal for women as their other commitments can then be fitted around their work (Wilkinson 1983). However there is unsurprisingly no mention by such companies of the part they are playing in allowing women to perform two roles -paid work and domestic work. This arrangement, far from providing a 'real choice' for women about how they want to work, reinforces their existing position, leaving women yet

again not free to organise their own lives.

This approach was also taken by a conference sponsored by the Housing Association Charitable Trust in May 1984, entitled 'Planning for Homework'. Emphasis was placed on the creation of a working environment outside the scope of trades unions. Working at home was seen as a way to provide the basis for 'representation of individual rights'. There was no representation at the conference from the labour movement or from the growing number of homeworking projects and campaigns.

The structure of homeworking is seen as a major problem in the classification of homeworkers by employment status. This issue has been taken up by several parties including the TUC (1978); Homeworkers Protection Bill (1979); and more recently Ewing (1982). These all suggest that homeworkers be given employee status. They also call for proper registration of homeworkers by employers with the local authorities and that trades unions should have access to the registers in order that they might recruit homeworkers.

Ewing (1982), in discussing a framework for reform, pointed to the dangers of too much legislation and its consequent ineffectiveness. Employers are unlikely to start registering their homeworkers. There is some opposition to this among

homeworking groups who fear what might be done with the information about who is homeworking and who is not. At the same time homeworkers will not automatically become members of trades unions simply because they have the access solely as a result of legislation regarding these issues. Some kind of voluntary action is needed as well.

The complicated issue of employment status has been discussed by Leighton (1983), in relation to outwork. She looked at contractual arrangements in the following industries: computing, minicabs, insurance, direct selling, domestic appliances and employment agencies. She showed that among the 25 case studies she carried out, employee status provided NO guarantee of work. So even if homeworkers had a contract of employment they would still suffer from the problems mentioned earlier, (e.g. isolation, irregular work, lack of childcare facilities, and low pay) and would not have a 'choice' about working at home.

This approach to the study of homeworking, i.e. considering it in relation to the wider labour market, is important in order to fully understand the roles it plays in the economy, for the employer and the homeworker. This theme will be taken up during the discussion of secretarial/clerical homeworking in Chapters Six and Seven.

More direct moves on the behalf of homeworkers have come from local homeworking projects and the National Group on Homeworking which organised a conference in June 1984. This conference adopted the Homeworkers' Charter (see Appendix A) which can be used as a basis for action. The group has also offered a submission to the TUC which has produced an updated statement on this issue (1985). The group consists of a wide variety of people working with homeworking and homeworkers' interests in mind e.g ranging from campaigning groups and local authority workers to researchers. This diversity represents the approach believed by the group to be necessary in order to change the current situation.

Attempts to legislate on behalf of homeworkers have in recent years been made by two MPs through private members' bills. In 1979 and 1981 the Homeworkers' Protection Bill was introduced into parliament, its aim was to give employee status to all homeworkers. In December 1983 Jo Richardson MP introduced the Sex Equality Bill which aimed among other things, to achieve equal pay and rights for part-time workers and homeworkers with full-time workers. Both bills failed to become law.

Despite this gloomy picture, some local authorities have introduced measures to help homeworkers. For example, in 1983 the Greater London Council produced a policy statement

on homeworking and also instituted contract compliance to ensure that the companies it used treated all their workers, including homeworkers fairly. Greenwich Homeworkers Project has run training courses specifically for black women to increase their employment opportunities. In Leicester, the Leicester Outwork Campaign has provided advice and produced a newsletter and the first fact pack on homeworkers' rights. The London Wide Homeworking Group has also produced a fact pack on homeworkers' rights translated into 13 community languages aimed at providing information and an opportunity for homeworkers to get together to support each other and work towards changing their situation. In 1987 the National Homeworking Office was set up in Birmingham. This organisation campaigns on the behalf of homeworkers and provides information about the situation for homeworkers in Britain.

Table 2.1 Author. Date and number of homeworkers in recent studies

<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of homeworkers</u>
Brown (LPU)	1974	50
Shah	1975	56
Hope et al	1976	21
Beale	1978	18
Crine (LPU)	1979	43
Allen	1981	90
Cragg & Dawson (DE)	1981	50
Hakim(DE no personal contact)	1982	500
Leicester Outwork Campaign	1982	8
London Borough of Haringey	1983	30
Whitehead (LOC)	1983	10
Bisset & Huws (LPU)	1984	52+78=130*
Dundee Homeworkers Project	1984	56
Huws (EOC postal survey)	1984	78
Southwark Employment Unit	1984	11
Bagilhole	1985	24

* The New Technology homeworkers included here were the same ones interviewed for the EOC project.

LOC = Leicester Outwork Campaign DE = Dept. of
Employment EOC = Equal Opportunities Commission LPU = Low
Pay Unit

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCHING HOMEWORKING : METHODS USED AND PROBLEMS RAISED

Introduction and Research Questions

From the review of studies of homeworking in Chapter Two, it can be seen that there is currently a wide interest in this issue. However, although employers, potential employers, policy makers, local authorities, homeworking groups, researchers and so on are active in this area, there is still a lack of information about some of the issues related to homeworking.

In particular, there is an absence of accurate statistical data; there are no comprehensive statistics which show either the amount or range of homeworking. Where estimates have been made (such as Townsend 1979, Hakim 1982 and Hakim 1987b - these are discussed fully in Chapter Four), there are significant differences in part attributable to the controversy over the definition of homeworking. Consequently, our main research interest is to challenge the stereotypical view of homeworking, using a definition informed by the examples and evidence referred to in Chapter Two.

The first part of this thesis came out of the studentship which linked the researcher to the OPCS Longitudinal Study

(LS), which allows use of 1971 Census data to look in detail at the kind and amount of homeworking in England and Wales.

This part of the study considers the numbers and characteristics of homeworkers. Using official figures to look at homeworking is problematic. However these difficulties are discussed and an attempt at a comprehensive estimate of homeworking is made.

The second part concerns employers' use of secretarial and clerical homeworkers. Employers' policies towards homeworkers in general, as well as recruitment patterns, are considered. Further information about how employers claim to treat homeworkers was also gathered, in order to make comparisons with the homeworkers' own views.

The third part focusses on secretarial and clerical homeworkers themselves. Primarily, the aim is to consider how working at home fits into the women's work histories, as well as how accurate it is that homeworkers do not realise the conditions under which they work. This view is not only insulting to the women concerned, as it assumes their ignorance of their own situations, but also does not explain why women continue to work in these conditions.

From recent research (reported in Chapter Two) and efforts to help change the situation by others, it is clear that homeworkers have varying circumstances which make them unable to work outside their homes. Questions need to be asked such as: Why do women work at home and, conversely, why don't they go out to work? How do they see homeworking as fitting in with their previous work history and future work plans? What does work and specifically homework mean to women, bearing in mind the value attributed to work in our society?

In order to consider these questions a small scale interview survey was carried out based on preliminary results from the LS. These showed that clerical homeworkers made up 57% of homeworkers in 1971, and, as no previous study has been undertaken looking at this area, it became the focus for this research. It was hoped to be able to compare and contrast research on homeworking in industries traditionally using homeworkers with this work, and to point out any parallels and differences.

Reviewing the research in this area led to the hypothesis that homeworking is common in many areas of work, both in traditional manufacturing industries and non-manufacturing ones such as service work e.g. secretarial and clerical work. It also seems most likely that women are not

ignorant of the pressures upon them as women, as workers, as wives and as mothers. Working at home (for many women) represents the best solution available to them.

Reasons for focussing on secretarial and clerical homeworkers

As a result of the LS analysis it was decided to carry out a survey of clerical homeworkers and their employers in order to go beyond the very basic information available in the census.

It seemed appropriate to concentrate on clerical homeworking for the following reasons:

- 1) They were the largest group identified in the LS.
- 2) There have been many previous studies of homeworking in manufacturing industries and more recently one of computer programmers working at home (Huws 1984), yet to our knowledge no previous study of clerical homeworking has been undertaken.
- 3) There is a widely documented increase in clerical homeworking (Ewing 1982, London borough of Lewisham undated, Huws 1984).

4) Secretarial/clerical work is undoubtedly an "occupational ghetto" for women (Feuchtwang, 1982), and is a good site to test out theories of women's work as well as challenging discrimination against women at work.

5) Many homeworkers first language is not English and because the researcher does not speak any other languages in which to communicate with homeworkers, it was necessary to interview homeworkers who speak English. Secretarial/clerical homeworkers have to know English in order to do their work.

6) Finally it is important to recognise that finding homeworkers who wish to take part in a survey is difficult and time consuming. In the event, a contact with an employer of secretarial and clerical homeworkers helped greatly with reaching the sample of homeworkers subsequently interviewed (see Chapter Seven for further discussion of methods of making contact with homeworkers).

Survey methods used

The survey of secretarial /clerical homeworkers was split into two parts, the first stage involving interviewing employers about their use of homeworkers and the second

stage concentrating on the homeworkers themselves.

One major difficulty to be considered when planning an interview survey is the relationship between the researcher and the respondents, in this case with both employers and homeworkers. Some discussion of this issue has come from feminist researchers such as Finch (1984) and McRobbie (1982). Finch specifically addresses the issue of power, noting that women interviewers have little difficulty in getting other women to talk. Obviously this varies according to the status of the researcher in relation to the interviewee.

In this research the interviews with the employers were qualitatively different from those with the homeworkers. The power relationship between the employer and the researcher seemed more precarious in that it was felt that even though the employers had consented to the interview they could change their minds and curtail it. Above all, if the interview did not go smoothly they could prevent the researcher having access to homeworkers (as this was one of the ways of contacting homeworkers). As the employers' interviews involved the use of a structured interview schedule this could be used to focus the proceedings aiming to ensure that as few problems as possible arose. There was in fact some opposition to providing information about how

homeworking is organised and some employers did use the excuse that they were very busy in order to curtail the interview.

As expected, interviewing homeworkers was very different. As a number of the homeworkers had been introduced to the researcher through their employers, some tension was inevitable. However after a very short time the interviewees were relaxed and certainly did not seem inhibited about criticising their bosses! One reaction, which was not fully expected, was that of the totally deferential attitude of the homeworkers towards the interviewer. McRobbie (1982) quotes a respondent's question to her on this issue:

"Why are you interested in me, I'm only a housewife?" (P.56)

The researcher was asked this and similar questions. This difference in power between the two participants in an interview has to be anticipated if the interview is to be successful. With the homeworkers' interviews, an effort was made to establish a more relaxed atmosphere, one of confidentiality and one where the researcher could also be asked questions in order to reduce the power inequalities.

However, this approach can also lead to problems in that the researcher can become very involved in the respondents'

lives. In this case homeworkers might talk about personal crises in their lives which the researcher would be unable to follow through because of a lack of money, time and expertise, let alone traditional ideas of retaining objectivity.

Kelly (1984) discussed the issue of becoming involved with the subject she was studying and how it changed her. She felt that the changes she experienced enabled her to more fully understand the situation she was studying. This feeling was also experienced in this research, as homeworking became an all pervasive issue. (For example, when shopping I frequently wondered if the goods had been made at home, and, as women confided in me, I became more fully aware of the pressures they are under and how homework is organised.)

Concluding Remarks

From this description of the methodology used in this thesis it can be seen that while every effort has been made to prioritise the views of the interviewees, both employers and homeworkers, it was inevitable that the researcher became involved from one perspective. As Becker (1970) suggested,

the researcher has taken the side of the subordinate group, in this case the homeworkers. By recognising this the aim is to help better the situation for the homeworkers interviewed and all homeworkers in general.

As this study aims to as take the homeworkers themselves into account, the researcher became involved with a group of people working at 'grass roots' level with homeworkers (the London-Wide Homeworking Group). This group was also involved in setting up a conference and a National Group on Homeworking. These groups enabled the researcher not only to have a greater understanding of homeworking but also to participate in campaigning work.

This deeper understanding of homeworkers' situations was particularly valuable when developing the interview schedule for employers and the list of topics to be covered by the homeworkers' interviews. It helped ensure that the questions asked were more relevant and informed , as opposed to being unnecessarily naive.

Awareness of the various homeworking groups and campaigns informed later analysis and discussion of factors likely to encourage and enable homeworkers to seek alternative employment. In Chapter Nine, it becomes clearer how this is not only relevant to homeworkers' interests but also to

future research examining more closely reasons why some women work at home rather than, for example, doing part-time work outside their home.

Involvement by the researcher in these groups also provided further background information for this research and as such constitutes part of the methodology of it. The information gained varied from reports about other studies, issues of legislation, current campaigns and a deeper understanding of homeworkers' situations.

CHAPTER FOUR

ESTIMATING THE EXTENT OF HOMEWORKING

Introduction

The aim of this chapter to compile a realistic estimate of homeworking in this country. There are two reasons for attempting this:

(1) To point to the problems with the existing attempts at estimating the numbers of homeworkers and show that they have not only produced unreliable figures but may also have provided misleading information about homeworking in general.

(2) The information would be useful in order to help change the situation and conditions of homeworkers. It could be used to add weight to campaigns considering homeworkers' employment status as well as pointing to the importance of the role that homeworking plays in the economy. Quantitative evidence is important if policy implications are to be acknowledged.

Limitations of estimates of homeworking

There are several problems with estimates of homeworking, the two of greatest importance being the scope of the definition and the reliability of the sources on which these estimates are based. It is clear that both employment status and occupation must be taken into account when considering homeworking. Although it is possible to work at home and be either self employed or an employee, as well as work from home and be either self employed or an employee, by considering a person's employment status it is possible to distinguish those who are employers themselves working in their homes from those who are not. The occupation of the worker distinguishes those more likely to be employees rather than freelancers e.g. machinists from artists.

However, even if this is done, estimates of homeworking may still be inaccurate due to the understandable reluctance of homeworkers to admit to their work. There are several possible reasons for expecting this.

(1) Homeworkers may have a real and justified fear of losing their jobs if they are known to talk about their work, conditions, and pay. Even if they themselves are not working illegally the employer/contractor for whom they are working might not welcome any investigation by an outsider.

To ensure that this does not happen homeworkers may be kept quiet by the threat of no further work.

(2) Many homeworkers may not admit to doing their work either because they are working illegally or because they think they are working illegally. They may not wish to admit to working at home in order to avoid paying tax and National Insurance contributions. (Evidence from the London borough of Haringey (1983) shows that in fact many homeworkers do not have to pay tax as they earn too little.)

(3) It is widely believed by homeworkers that they need their local council's permission in order to be able to use industrial machines in their homes. Although this used to be the case, as stated earlier, certain London Boroughs such as Hackney and Haringey have dropped this requirement and in practice so have some others. Nevertheless the belief remains strong enough to make some homeworkers deny their work.

(4) As the vast majority of homeworkers are women, admission of homework is also affected by the social acceptability of women working. Some women may deny working because they feel that it is not desirable for them to do so. In particular, for some women, who need to work in order to support their families, homeworking may be the only possible kind of work they are able to do. This does

not mean that this work is socially acceptable, rather that these women have no other option available to them. For such women their unwillingness to admit to homeworking might come from a fear of revealing that their husband (or partner) is unable to support his family (Saifullah-Kahn 1979). Other women feel themselves to be bad mothers if they work when their children are young and as a result may not want to admit to themselves and/or others that they are homeworkers. Even though they are at home, they may feel guilty about not giving their children enough attention.

(5) Homeworkers' reluctance to admit to doing their work may also stem from the fact that many homeworkers are black or from minority ethnic groups. Some of whom may be worried about their official status in this country and so are understandably very reticent when talking about their work to anyone who appears to represent the government. The probability of being more open about homeworking may be affected by how settled or how threatened the particular community feels at the time of a census.

(6) A further possible reason for the absence of homeworking in official figures is that women who are homeworking and claiming State Benefits are often worried about losing their allowance if they do so. This fear may be real in that some women may be earning over the specified

limit, but very likely others may be worried unnecessarily because they earn so little and because of a general lack of knowledge about how much can be earned before deductions are made.

Evidence of this from Italy has been provided by De Grazia (1980) who noted that :

"In Milan there are only 5,000 homeworkers listed on the city's commercial register, while fewer than 1,000 homework enterprises carrying on business in the surrounding province are registered: the true numbers are estimated at about 100,000 and 50,000 respectively." (P.550)

He goes on to say that in Italy as a whole there are thought to be over a milion homeworkers, yet fewer than 10 per cent of them are legally registered. (He does not discuss how he reaches these conclusions or how reliable his estimates are.)

(7) The final reason why some homeworking does not appear in the census results from the way in which 'work' is viewed. This has been discussed fully in Chapter One, but it is important to reiterate that work done by women is often seen as 'non work' i.e. not important.

As there is no clear question about homeworking on the census in this country, but only one which has a possible

answer 'works mainly at home', it seems likely that whoever is filling in the census form might not consider what some members of the household are doing as 'work' and therefore not mention it. Recording of homework will therefore be affected by both men's and women's perception of work. It is also possible that the person filling in the census form may not know that another person in the household is homeworking.

Why attempt to obtain estimates?

If there are such inherent problems in compiling accurate statistics about the number of homeworkers, is there any point in attempting to do so? Community based homeworking projects have been invaluable in counteracting myths about homeworking and have as Mitter (1986a) described:

"...been directed towards the exposure of the extent of homeworking, the low pay and the level of exploitation, as they felt that this is just as important as pure quantification and playing the numbers game. They thought understandably, that establishing solidarity with homeworkers was the necessary precondition for a valid quantification. The absence of a precise figure for the rise in manufacturing homeworking, however makes it easy for officials to dismiss concern over the spread of homeworking as probably exaggerated." (P.131)

As a result of this attitude Mitter in another paper (1986b) was forced to conclude:

"Even a rough calculation may, therefore, be an improvement over anecdotal evidence." (P.65)

An accurate estimate of homeworking would aid a campaign in its efforts not only to show the extent of homeworking but also to demonstrate its occupational distribution. Such evidence could be used to support any publicity about the numbers of workers that would be affected if any legal changes were introduced. As the possibility of obtaining an accurate estimate is highly unlikely and some kind of estimate is often called for, it seems appropriate to compile a "minimal" estimate. This could be used as suggested above, in situations where general background information about homeworking is needed, and in order to better the current situation for homeworkers.

Previous estimates of homeworking

The most frequently quoted attempt to derive an estimate is that by Peter Townsend in his study of 'Poverty in the United Kingdom' in 1971, (1979, p.463). He estimated that there were 1,150,000 homeworkers by his definition (see below). (This figure is based on a sample survey of interviews and as a consequence is more likely to be accurate than estimates based on self completion questionnaires, such

as those used in the census. In self administered questionnaires it is easier for people to avoid answering directly, whereas in an interview general statements can be followed up, so providing more detailed and hopefully more accurate information).

However, Townsend (1979) used a very broad definition of homeworking which makes it difficult to compare with other estimates. He included own account workers running businesses adjoining their homes, such as shopkeepers and publicans. He estimated the breakdown of homeworkers by employment status as follows:

	<u>Self Employed</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Men	390,000	150,000	540,000
Women	330,000	280,000	610,000
Total	720,000	430,000	1,150,000

He also noted that about 150,000 of these people working at home were doing so as a second job.

It is extremely difficult to gauge the number of homeworkers nationally and as a result, this has led to disagreement about the importance of homeworking.

As Allen (1983a) states:

"Homeworkers are not numerically marginal to the labour force. They constitute on the basis of the most conservative estimates, a larger labour force than miners, railway workers and many professional groups, including academics, who they outnumber ten to one." (P.12)

The Department of Employment (Hakim 1980) has also quoted a figure of 1.5 million home based workers from the 1971 Census. This includes professional people, those working on their own account, those whose home is tied to their workplace and so on. N.B. These figures include all people working at or from home, such as those running their own businesses, farmers, and artists; using the Homeworkers' Protection Bill definition they would not all be homeworkers.

Figures from the last two censuses (Table 4.1) suggest that, although the percentage of people doing homebased work has remained approximately constant, from 1971 to 1981 the actual number of homebased workers has fallen. The number of men in employment has fallen between 1971 and 1981 while at the same time the number of women in employment has risen leaving the total number in employment constant. It seems that although more women have taken on jobs, this is not reflected in a rise in the numbers working at or from their homes (this issue will be considered in more detail later).

There has also been a more recent attempt by the Department

of Employment to consider the extent of homeworking. Hakim (1984, 1987b) discusses national estimates of homeworking from the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey - WIRS (1980) and the National Survey of Homeworking - NSHW (1981). As the WIRS covers only those establishments employing 25 people or more and no questions concerning the homeworkers themselves were asked, such as their sex, it is not possible to consider the results in great detail. This survey considers the extent of outwork as well as homework, i.e. the extent to which firms farm out work to be done somewhere else not under the control of the employer or contractor, such as in someone's home. From Table 4.2 it is clear that home based work is not confined to manufacturing industry.

Interviews carried out for the NSHW provide a more comprehensive way of estimating the numbers of people homeworking. (The NSHW excludes those living at their place of work e.g. publicans.) Table 4.3 shows how estimates of homeworking vary according to the definition used. These figures are for England and Wales - there were no interviews in the rest of the U.K.

As might be expected, more people are working from home as a base than working at home. It seems that men are more likely to be working FROM home whereas women are much more likely to be working AT home. It also appears that

manufacturing work is considerably less common than other types of homework. Before accepting this conclusion the limitations of the above estimates should be considered.

Bearing in mind the problems with estimating the extent of homeworking, the aim is to reach a more accurate estimate of the numbers of people involved. Before describing the process followed to get an estimate of homeworking from the LS, some of the inherent problems which cannot be removed are discussed.

Problems with an LS estimate

(1) There is no reliable way of gauging the numbers of homeworkers who did not admit to homeworking on the 1971 Census. Any conclusions drawn from this estimate must bear in mind that there is no way of knowing how unrepresentative of homeworking this sample is. Any estimate of its unrepresentativeness can only be a guess because of the problems mentioned above.

(2) The census only records a person's main job, which means that some homeworking jobs will not be recorded ie. if homeworking is a person's second job. As stated earlier Townsend (1979) (using a very broad definition of homeworking suggested there are possibly 150,000 people working at or from home as their second job. This will lead to an underestimate of homeworking in England and Wales.

(3) The census asks people to answer questions about their work in one particular week only. A well known feature of homeworking is that it is susceptible to seasonal variations. One week there may be work and another there may not. It is not possible to gauge how many people did not mention homeworking because they were not working in that given week. This could lead to an over or under estimate as

it is not known whether April (when the census was administered) is a good or bad time for homeworking in all industries or not. Seasonal variations in some industries are easier to calculate e.g. the toy industry is busier during the summer months preparing for Christmas.

Method used to obtain an estimate of the range and extent of homeworking

Attempts to consider estimates of homeworking have been few and far between (the notable exception being Hakim 1984, 1987b). Despite this, assumptions exist about increases and decreases in the numbers homeworking. For example Blythell (1978) suggested that:

"Outwork is rightly relegated to one of the darkest chapters of economic history; and now that is virtually dead none should regret its passing."
(P.284)

Ideas such as Blythell's arise not least because of the many problems involved in trying to quantify an area of employment which is often hidden from official statistics. This thesis attempts to consider this issue through the LS. It provides the largest source of information about a certain population of homeworkers i.e. those who reported that they were working at home at census. The definition of

homeworking used is crucial, as discussed earlier, yet it must be borne in mind that only information collected on the census form can be used.

The data set used in this thesis is the OPCS Longitudinal Study which is a one per cent sample of the usually resident population of England and Wales enumerated at the 1971 Census. This source includes statistical information from the 1971 Census, births and deaths recorded after the 1971 Census and cancers registered after the 1971 Census. The aim is to bring together information on the same individuals' characteristics over time, that is longitudinally. Information from the 1981 Census has been added into the existing data base, although homeworking in 1981 has not been coded for the LS. The data used here are derived from the 1971 Census.

Therefore, although the LS has an advantage over other data sets in that it includes a large number of homeworkers, there are many difficulties in defining those workers who should be included. For example, it is important to ensure that certain homebased workers such as writers are not included in the study, for the reasons stated in Chapter Two. In addition certain types of homeworking may be consistently under-reported at census, as well as the possibility that other workers may have been incorrectly included in the data set. For example, errors by the

researcher may have led to the inclusion of occupations as homeworking occupations when in fact they are unlikely to be so e.g. construction workers.

This last possibility may be due to homeworkers' reluctance to admit to their work on an official survey for, among other reasons, fear of losing their work.

Despite this major limitation of the data, estimates of homeworking have been considered by tabulating LS data and trying to refine the definition of homeworking used. As the LS data does not clearly distinguish those working at home from others working from their homes, both employment status and occupation unit have been used as proxy measures.

The LS estimate of homeworking

First, figures based on a sample of people who answered the question "where is your work place"? in the 1971 Census for England and Wales were considered. These figures were derived from a 10% sample which was coded by occupation (see Table 4.1).

This suggested that approximately 819,000 people were working at or from home, e.g. those running their own

business, farmers, artists etc, working from home as a base. In order to accurately consider homeworking a more detailed definition was needed. The Homeworkers' Protection Bill definition (stated in detail in Chapter Two) was suitable because it enabled us to concentrate on those working at home. To recap this definition suggests that a homeworker is someone who works in rather than from domestic premises which are not owned or controlled by the employer or contractor for whom the work is done. (This definition is used throughout to indicate homeworking). This together with information from Table 4.1 led to pinpointing two additional factors to that of place of work when trying to identify homeworkers from official sources of data: 1) employment status and 2) occupation.

Employment Status

The employment status categories used to analyse 1971 Census data were: out of employment, self employed - with and without employees, employees, managers in large and small establishments, foremen (sic) and supervisors - manual and non-manual, apprentices, professional employees, family workers and other employees (excluding professionals). For the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter this analysis

has included those who are self employed without employees and employees not elsewhere classified (nec) as homeworkers.

The choice of which categories of employment status to include in the definition of a homeworker was difficult. Although according to the definition above, homeworkers always have employers, they are often classed as self employed by their employers and therefore, because of the ambiguity around this issue, it was decided simply to include throughout all those who are self employed without employees, as some of them are undoubtedly homeworkers. Thus at this stage own account workers and professional artists are included. Although some family workers may possibly be working at home, for example, women doing secretarial work for their husband's business, this group has not been included as the majority of this category will not be homeworkers, for example, farmers', or publicans' wives.

In addition these figures do not include those homeworkers who did not admit to their work on the census. Local groups working with homeworkers can provide a more comprehensive picture of those people working at home, even if not more detailed estimates of the extent of homeworking. They point to the fact that homeworkers are almost exclusively women sometimes receiving help from their

families too. Such information is not found in the census and points to the importance of working in conjunction with local campaigns about homeworking.

For all the remaining employment status categories, it is likely that where people live and work in the same place, they can be seen to be working from home rather than at home e.g. carpenters, builders. Their business address may well be their home but they are not necessarily working in their domestic premises. Excluding these people on their employment status means that it is possible to distinguish between those who run a business from or in the same place as home e.g. shopkeepers, and those who are working for somebody else in their own homes.

However, it must be remembered that there are some people who are self employed without employees working in their homes who will appear in any estimate of homeworking but who are in fact running a one person business at home. It is not possible to identify the number of workers in this position from the census data available to the researcher. The figures for people working at home with either of these two employment statuses are shown in Table 4.4.

These figures and subsequent ones are taken from the LS, and have been rounded up so that they can be compared easily

with those in previous tables. When the two tables are compared it can be seen that by excluding certain employment statuses the number of homeworkers falls by about 40%.

Occupation

After excluding some employment statuses it became obvious that certain occupation units should also be excluded. While contemplating the lists of occupation units for work which is or might be done at home, it was necessary to bear in mind the Homeworker's Protection Bill which excludes certain occupation units from being homeworking occupation units e.g. miners, farmers; others were more problematic e.g. weavers. Although unsure whether they might be employed at home, there was in fact only one female weaver -working at home in the LS so she was included in the analysis.

Other occupations also excluded were those that the Homeworkers' Protection Bill definition clearly describes as non-homeworking occupations:

(1) Professionals working at home such as computer programmers. This could have been a problem but as the data was for 1971, there was no separate occupational category for them and therefore no way of knowing who were computer professionals working in their homes. However by their exclusion it is not meant to imply that these workers are not homeworkers (they undoubtedly are - see Huws 1984), but rather that there needs to be some clarification of the

Homeworkers Protection Bill definition to ensure that they are included where they can be identified, e.g. in the 1981 Census).

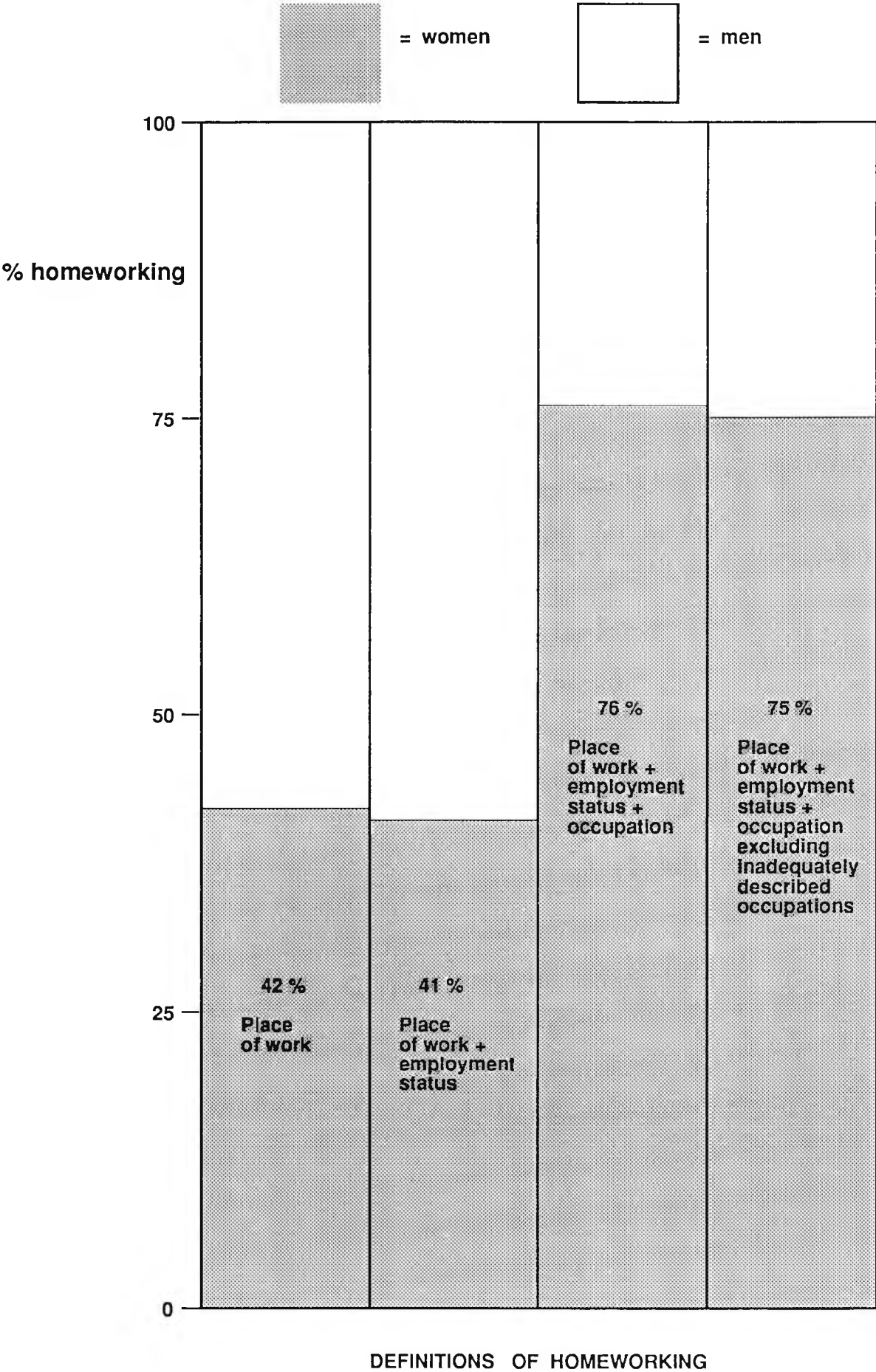
(2) Literary, drama, artistic, or musical work eg. writers, musicians.

(3) Work in domestic premises under the control of the management e.g. housekeepers.

For a list of the occupations units included in this analysis see Appendix H.

By controlling for employment status and occupation unit there are 95,800 homeworkers in the LS (grossed figures) of whom 72,600 are women compared with 23,200 men. i.e. 76% of these homeworkers are women (Table 4.5). The percentage of women doing homework in these occupation units is 1.0%. Although this figure represents mainly those in stated occupations, it was important to find out what those people who fell into the remaining category of inadequately described occupations were doing. (These were people who did not provide enough information at census for their employment to be classified.) Inadequately described occupations was the unit with the third largest number of homeworkers - 16 men and 68 women in the LS. In order to

Figure 4.1 The proportion of women and men using different definitions of homeworking.



get more information about those in inadequately described occupations details were obtained of the type of descriptions written on census forms from a second 1% sample of the 1971 Census, that used by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys to derive the new classification of occupations. This search covered all employment statuses and so the numbers involved are larger than those in the LS (25 men and 112 women). The men were almost exclusively self employed whilst in the main the women were housewives. On the basis of this information it was decided to exclude this occupation unit from the analysis as these people were obviously not homeworkers (Table 4.6).

When considering this figure the problems stated earlier must be taken into account, specifically remembering that this figure for the number of homeworkers is only a minimum estimate of the total number of homeworkers, and may be subject to a number of biases. There is a higher percentage of women homeworking in all occupation units than men. The most striking feature of these tables is the change in the proportion of men to women homeworking as the definition of homeworking was refined (table 4.7).

The higher proportion of women homeworking to men (see Figure 4.1) is accounted for by the occupation units selected, rather than employment status.

Table 4.8 shows the numbers of homeworkers who are self employed without employees (S.E.) compared with those who are employees not elsewhere classified (EMP). There are over five times as many women homeworkers who are employees than men (40,900:7500). However the difference between those S.E. is not so large, with 24,900 women compared with 14,100 men. This table also shows that the percentage of women homeworking of those employed in homeworking occupation units is higher than that of men (0.9:0.2).

Main homeworking occupations

After obtaining this basic information about homeworking the occupations which accounted for the majority of those employed as homeworkers were considered. They were clerical, clothing, and leather. They accounted for 65,200 out of 87,400 homeworkers in the LS (Table 4.9). The remaining, 22,200 were spread among many different occupations. (The next largest group of homeworkers were textile workers-1,800).

Table 4.9 also shows that in the main homeworking occupations while more male homeworkers are self employed than employees the balance is reversed for female

homeworkers. For each occupation there are more men self employed than employees working at home, but for women this is not always the case. However, amongst clerical occupations, irrespective of sex, there are more employee homeworkers than self employed homeworkers.

At the bottom of Table 4.9 the distribution of sex and employment status of the remaining homeworkers is shown. These homeworkers have similar characteristics to those in the main homeworking occupations i.e. there are more women than men (10,000:7,700) and whilst the men are self employed rather than employees (7,300:400) the reverse is true for women (4,100:5,900).

Table 4.10 also shows that the majority of homeworkers in the main homeworking occupations are women (55,800/65,200 = 85.6%). In fact most of these women work as clerical or clothing homeworkers: 53,500/55,800 = 95.9%. In both of these occupations there are substantially more women than men. As a result of this distribution of homeworkers by sex, it was decided that further tables from the LS would only consider women.

The percentage of employment that homeworking accounts for in these three occupations was then considered (Table 4.11).

The highest percentage of homeworkers do clothing work, this is true for both men (4.2%) and women (5.6%). It is also true that in every instance there is a higher percentage of self employed homeworkers than employed homeworkers.

General Discussion

The above figures provide a brief introduction to the sex and occupational distribution of homeworking. They confirm expectations in that there are many more women homeworking than men (75% of homeworkers in the LS are women). Other studies indicate an even higher proportion of women to men (e.g. Low Pay Unit 1984b). This difference is probably due to the inclusion here of those in the category self employed without employees as homeworkers, as exclusion of them would have provided too restrictive a definition.

Discussion of the main homeworking occupations

Of the 65,800 female homeworkers identified from the LS, 37,300 (57%) were working in clerical occupations, 16,200 (25%) in clothing and 2,300 (3%) in leather occupations. The remaining homeworkers were distributed over a wide range of occupations.

Clerical

The figure of 37,300 clerical homeworkers identified by the LS is comparable with the 36,000 secretaries and clerical homeworkers identified by the NSHW (1987). This estimate includes 15,000 typists and secretaries, most of whom were

working for a single employer, and 21,000 non-retail clerks and cashiers which includes proof readers as well as all types of clerical work. Clerical homeworkers were by far the largest group identified in LS. However, it is possible that some of these women were self employed doing clerical work at home but that they were not working for any one employer and so would not be homeworkers using the Homeworkers' Protection Bill definition (i.e. the person wanting the work done would be classified as a professional client of the homemaker).

It is also possible that the number of clerical homeworkers is artificially increased by the inclusion of married women entered on the census form as doing some work for their husband's business whether or not they were actually doing it. Obviously, this is apart from those in the family workers category, which has already been excluded. This possibility can be considered by looking at the numbers of women doing clerical homework who are married to men who are self employed employing others.

There is a further possibility which might account for the marked difference in numbers between clerical and other homeworkers: it is feasible that clerical homeworkers are more willing to admit their work than other kinds of homeworkers. This might be because of the following:

(1) They may have different attitudes towards official surveys from those of other homeworkers, which may mean they are more willing to fill in their work at home on the census.

(2) Clerical homeworkers have to be fluent in English and consequently may therefore be more familiar with the type of language used on the form than other homeworkers for many of whom English is their second language. These homeworkers are more likely to work in other homeworking occupations. This factor may affect who admits to homeworking on the census.

Clothing

The figure of 16,200 female clothing homeworkers is the only figure which can be checked against previous estimates. The National Board for Prices and Incomes (1969) estimated that there were about 14,000 female clothing homeworkers directly employed by firms and appearing on their payrolls in Great Britain. (This figure was from records of firms covered by wages councils). This estimated figure is not greatly different from 16,200 which is the LS estimate of these homeworkers in England and Wales. This evidence leads to the suggestion that the homeworkers in the LS are similar to those in the NBPI estimate i.e. that they

are legally employed (in this case self employed homeworkers would be included as well because they are often legally employed but classified as self employed by their employers) because they are willing to admit to having them. The NBPI survey made no attempt to estimate the numbers of clothing homeworkers who are not directly employed by firms or appearing on their pay rolls. Their estimate of male clothing homeworkers was 1000 compared with the 2600 identified by the LS .

Although the number of clerical homeworkers is greater than the number of clothing workers, homeworkers account for a higher percentage of employment in the clothing occupation than employment in any of the other three main homeworking occupations (5.4% for clothing 1.4% for clerical and 3.5% for leather). It should be noted that the actual percentage of homeworking in each of these occupations would be much greater if all of it could be counted.

Leather

As there were only 2,300 women and 1,400 men leather homeworkers represented, it is not possible to draw any major conclusions about them. However the fact that leather workers are the third largest group of homeworkers reflects the findings of a Leicester Outwork Campaign report (undated) which shows that in 1977, 21% of Leicester City

Council's list of homeworkers were working in the leather and shoe industry alone.

Comparisons of LS results with those from the National Survey of Homeworking(NSHW)

First, it is clear that the difference between the estimates from these two studies comes from the different definitions of homeworking used. In the LS homeworkers are essentially those with a 'boss' whilst this is not true in the NSHW. The NSHW estimate incorporates all homebased workers leading to a majority of male workers, whereas the LS estimate includes only those working for someone else, who are overwhelmingly female. Focussing on the NSHW estimate for those working at home (Table 4.3), it is clear that the proportion of female to male homeworkers is more similar to that found in the LS.

Second, although there is more non-manufacturing homeworking represented in both surveys than manufacturing homework, from the LS it is clear that this was so in 1971, so destroying the idea that this is a new phenomenon.

Third, there may be underrepresentation of manufacturing homework in both official surveys because of inappropriateness of this type of survey for looking at homeworking.

Conclusions

One must be wary of the conclusions which can be drawn from the LS because of the reasons stated earlier about the underrepresentation of many homeworkers in this data set. The researcher does not want to add to the existing misleading information on homeworking. Any estimate of homeworking will be highly dependent on the definition used, in this case the Homeworkers' Protection Bill. It must also be remembered that the information presented here is for 1971 and there have been many suggestions that homeworking has been increasing since that time (eg. Bisset & Huws 1984).

It should be remembered that the definition of homeworking used is not comprehensive and notably excludes childminders (of whom the TUC document on childminding 1975 estimates there are 29,469) and professionals working with computers. Maybe with the recent growth of this area it is time to rethink the definition of homeworking to include them.

In addition the researcher can see no comprehensive way of calculating the extent of homeworking which is not admitted in the census. It is possible to ask any homeworkers who might take part in a research project whether or not they mentioned homeworking on the census. (This question was asked in the survey of homeworkers carried out for this thesis, however the answers are not necessarily reliable or valid.)

Further investigation using data from the LS will inform us about those homeworkers included but information about other homeworkers must come from grass roots level. From involvement in the London-Wide Homeworking Group it seems likely that particular types of homeworking and many homeworkers are excluded from the LS for exactly the reasons stated earlier, particularly those from minority ethnic groups, those claiming state benefits and so on.

The problems associated with the representation of certain groups in the LS are not necessarily restricted to homeworking. The issues raised are relevant to the representation of women's work in official figures in general. However because home and work are usually considered separately, homeworking provides even greater difficulties.

Despite the problems raised the data obtained from the LS is useful. It can be used to estimate the approximate minimum number of homeworkers (using the Homeworkers Protection Bill definition) who are directly employed by firms and appear on their payrolls. This suggests that in 1971 there were at least 870,400 homeworkers, 65,800 of whom were women.

Table 4.1 Home based work in England and Wales in 1971 and 1981 based on census data

1971 Census

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
In employment	13,250,490	7,450,980	20,731,470
Home based work	476,700	342,320	810,020
%	3.6	4.6	4.0

1981 Census

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
In employment	12,514,150	8,285,010	20,799,160
Home based work	441,660	335,510	777,170
%	4.0	4.0	4.0

Table 4.2 National estimates of homework from firms employing 25 or more people based on the WIRS 1980

	Outworkers & Homeworkers	Freelance Workers
All establishments with		
25 or more employees	111,000	281,000
Manufacturing industries	52,000	91,000
Service sector industries	61,000	187,000

Source: Hakim (1984) P.8. (The discrepancies are due to the data being based on two different reference periods, making it possible that there may be some duplication.)

Table 4.3 Homebased workers working at and from home in the NSHW 1981

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
All working AT home	73,190	177,860	251,040
All working FROM home	290,480	166,730	407,210
All homebased workers	363,660	294,590	658,250
Manufacturing home based work	12,000	60,270	72,290
Non manufacturing home based work	-	-	585,970

Source: Hakim (1984) (It should be noted that : "Due to rounding there are small discrepancies between totals for a category and sub divisions of it." P.10)

Table 4.4 'Place of work' question 1% sample LS England and Wales by gender controlling for employment status. (only self employed without employees not elsewhere classified)

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
In employment(a) (All occupation units)	10,505,200	7,276,100	17,781,300
Place of work-home (b) (All occupation units)	291,900	204,200	496,100
(b/a)	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%

Table 4.5 'Place of work' in the LS by gender controlling for occupation unit and employment status

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
In Employment (a)	10,505,200	7,276,100	17,781,300
Working AT Home (b)	23,200	72,600	95,800
% (b/a)	0.2	1.0	0.5

Table 4.6 'Place of work' in the LS by gender controlling for occupation unit and employment status - excluding inadequately described occupations

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
In employment (a)	10,505,200	7,276,100	17,781,300
Working AT Home (b)	21,600	65,800	87,400
% (b/a)	0.2	0.9	0.5

Table 4.7 The summary of numbers of men and women homeworking using different definitions of homeworking

Definition of homeworking	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
'place of work'	476,700	342,320	819,020
'place of work x emp. status'	291,900	204,200	496,100
'place of work x emp. status x occupation'	23,200	72,600	95,800
'place of work x emp. status x occupation excluding inad. des. occ.'	21,600	65,800	87,400

Table 4.8 Homeworking in the LS by gender controlling for detailed occupation unit and employment status

		MEN	
	S.E.	EMP	TOTAL
In Employment (a)	888,900	9,618,300	10,505,200
Working AT Home (b)	14,100	7,500	21,600
% (b/a)	1.6%	0.1%	0.2%

		WOMEN	
	S.E.	EMP	TOTAL
In Employment (a)	216,000	7,060,100	7,276,100
Working AT Home (b)	24,900	40,900	65,800
% (b/a)	11.5%	0.6%	0.9%

TABLE 4.9 HOMEWORKING IN THE L.S. MAIN OCCUPATIONS BY SEX AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

		MEN			WOMEN			ALL		
MAIN OCCUPATIONS		S.E.	EMP**	TOTAL	S.E.*	EMP**	TOTAL	S.E.*	EMP**	TOTAL
CLERICAL	In Employment	5900	848200	854100	19000	2231600	2250600	24900	3079800	3104200
	Homeworking	3000	2400	5400	10500	26800	37300	13500	29200	42700
	%	50.8	0.3	0.6	55.3	1.2	1.7	54.2	0.9	1.4
CLOTHING	In Employment	8100	53600	61700	11000	277300	288300	19100	330900	350000
	Homeworking	2500	100	2600	9300	6900	16200	11800	7000	18800
	%	30.9	0.2	4.2	84.5	2.5	5.6	61.8	2.1	5.4
LEATHER	In Employment	6200	45800	52000	1100	51700	52800	7300	97500	104800
	Homeworking	1300	100	1400	1000	1300	2300	2300	1400	3700
	%	21.0	0.2	2.7	90.9	2.5	4.4	31.5	1.4	3.5
TOTAL OF MAIN HOMEWORKING OCCUPATIONS	In Employment	20200	974600	967800	31100	2560600	2591700	51300	3508200	3559500
	Homeworking	6800	2600	9400	20800	35000	55800	2760	37600	65200
	%	33.7	0.3	1.0	66.9	1.4	2.2	53.8	1.1	1.8
TOTAL OF OTHER HOME- WORKING OCCUPATIONS	In Employment	50100	1704400	1781500	17900	742700	760600	68000	2474100	2542100
	Homeworking	7300	4900	12200	12100	5900	18000	11400	10800	22200
	%	14.6	0.3	0.7	67.6	0.8	2.4	16.8	0.4	0.9
GRAND TOTAL OF HOME- WORKING OCCUPATIONS	In Employment	70300	2679000	2749300	49000	3303300	3352300	119300	5982300	6101600
	Homeworking	14100	7500	21600	24900	40900	65800	39000	48400	87400
	%	20.1	0.3	0.8	50.8	1.2	2.0	32.7	0.8	1.4

* = Self employed without employing others

** = Employee not elsewhere classified

Table 4.10 The sex distribution of the three main homeworking occupations.

<u>Main Occupation</u>	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Clerical	5,400	37,300	42,700
Clothing	2,600	16,200	18,800
Leather	1,400	2,300	3,700
Sub Total	9,400	55,800	65,200
Other Homeworking Occ.	12,200	10,000	22,200
TOTAL	21,600	65,800	87,400

Table 4.11 The percentage of homeworking in these occupations by sex and employment status

Main homeworking Occupations	S.E. (NOT EMPLOY- ING OTHERS)	MEN EMP	TOTAL	S.E. (NOT EMPLOY- ING OTHERS)	WOMEN EMP	TOTAL
Clerical	50.8	0.3	0.6	55.3	1.2	1.7
Clothing	30.9	0.2	4.2	84.5	2.5	5.6
Leather	21.0	0.2	2.7	90.9	2.5	4.4
Other homeworking occupations	14.6	0.0	0.4	22.9	0.8	1.3

CHAPTER FIVE

WHO IS HOMEWORKING ANYWAY?: THE LS PICTURE

Introduction

This chapter furthers the analysis of LS data by examining homeworking in relation to census characteristics. (See appendix I for a copy of the 1971 Census schedule used to gather the information on which this data is based.) It primarily tries to answer the question of who is homeworking.

The stereotypes and myths surrounding homeworking are also considered. These often suggest that homeworkers are either women with children or elderly or sick relatives to care for, or those with a disability themselves, or black or minority ethnic group women. They are usually working class women doing arduous, repetitive manufacturing work such as making circuit boards, painting matchbox cars or other routine assembly work. In addition homeworkers are thought to work extremely long hours for very little money which is seen as "pin money" rather than as important to their household income. A further part of the image of

homeworking is that it is becoming less important in terms of the overall number of people working in this way and therefore not an important issue to consider (Blythell 1978).

Following on from the work in Chapter Four, this chapter attempts to analyse additional information from the LS including the range of occupations carried out at home and a consideration of the personal circumstances of the women who do these jobs. Although the LS data does not provide a representative sample of homeworkers as a whole it does provide the largest sample of homeworkers from which such information has been collated (apart from the NSHW which had not been published at the time of carrying out this survey.)

The aim is to compare existing information about homeworking with that available from the census. A further reason for analysing homeworkers and their census characteristics is to provide background information for an interview study of secretarial/clerical homeworkers carried out as part of this thesis.

Method

The definition of homeworking and the procedure used to identify homeworkers in the LS, described in Chapter Four,

were used as background for this analysis. In considering homeworking by census characteristics it is helpful to distinguish two dimensions. First, the distribution among homeworkers of particular characteristics: e.g. the proportion of homeworkers who are aged between 30 and 34 years. Second, the proportion of employed women with the same characteristics who were homeworkers. This will suggest factors which influence homeworking and can be expressed as the 'prevalence' or 'homeworking rate' (HR):

$$HR = \frac{\text{no. of women homeworkers with characteristic x}}{\text{no. of women employed with characteristic x}} \times 100$$

where characteristic x might be a particular marital status category or age group or housing tenure and so on.

By comparing the 'HRs' of different sub categories of women, a picture may be built up of which groups of women are more likely to be homeworkers. It must be borne in mind that a high homeworking rate does not necessarily mean that most homeworkers have that particular characteristic, but rather that employed women with the characteristic are more likely to report themselves as homeworking at census than employed women in other groups.

This chapter will consider the demographic, cultural, socio-economic, geographic and employment characteristics of homeworkers. Homeworking as a whole will be considered,

although particular attention will be paid to the homeworking in clerical and clothing occupations. The tables are presented at the end of the chapter.

Presentation and discussion of data from the LS

Demographic characteristics

Age

Table 5.1 shows that homeworkers are found in every age group, with more than half of them being over 40 years. This is the case for both clerical and clothing homeworkers. The highest Homeworking Rate is found for women in their early thirties, although it was not much less common for women to be homeworking during their late twenties and thirties (when they are more likely to have young children) and then again after retirement. Similar observations can be made about the distribution of clerical homeworkers as for all homeworkers. However, women in both clerical and clothing occupations were more likely to be homeworkers at each age than were women in all homeworking occupations. The Homeworking Rate for clerical and clothing homeworkers is also highest among those in their early thirties, however it remains high at all ages.

Marital Status and Family Status

Table 5.2 shows the Homeworking Rate by marital status and age, with the highest rate among married women in their early thirties. (Separated women were classified as married at the 1971 Census.) For single women, homeworking did not appear very common until retirement age. While this was also true for widowed and divorced women there is some evidence that homeworking was prevalent from age 30 years. Overall it can be seen that there was little difference in the HRs by marital status once over 60 years.

In line with the previous table, Table 5.3 shows that the majority of LS homeworkers were married; this is the case irrespective of whether they were doing clerical, clothing or some other homework. It can also be seen that more married women with dependent child(ren) (aged <16 years) were homeworking than those without. Of the 396 homeworkers in this category 333 (84%) had dependent children below 11 years of age. Further information from the LS shows that over 5% of married homeworkers with dependent child(ren) (aged <16 years) had a lone ancestor living with them i.e. a parent or parent-in-law. The highest Homeworking Rate (1.8) was for married women with dependent children aged <16 years. (There were only six single mothers with dependent

children in the LS homeworking in 1971.)

The LS data confirm that homeworkers in 1971 were likely to be women with young children, yet this is not always the case as shown by the sharp increase in homeworking amongst those who were widowed or divorced over retirement age. (It might be argued that these women have no other employment option but to work at home.) About 40% of homeworkers did not have dependent children and so must have had other reasons for working at home. Although age and marital status are important factors which are associated with homeworking, these do not necessarily determine a woman's likelihood of being a homemaker. Indeed it seems that age and marital status are important as indicators of domestic responsibilities, thus restricting a woman's choice of work outside the home. With hindsight the section concerning homeworkers' domestic responsibilities could have been more fully explored, for example, by examining the percentage of women married to men classified as 'permanently sick' at census. It is clear such responsibilities play a major role in determining a woman's likelihood of being a homemaker.

It is also interesting to note that a few homeworkers were 14 years or under. This finding could reflect an error either by the person filling in the census or when the

information was coded or it could be seen as support for evidence that homeworking is done by whole families as well as by women alone. (GLC 1983, Allen 1981).

Education

Information about educational background should enable us to know more about homeworkers' characteristics and the likelihood of homeworkers' formal qualifications being relevant to their current work. However, although the census did ask for information about education it did not provide details of any qualifications below that of GCE 'A' level. Table 5.4 indicates that the vast majority (91%) of homeworkers did not have GCE 'A' levels or higher qualifications. This was the case for both clerical and clothing homeworkers. However, clerical homeworkers did have higher qualifications than clothing homeworkers. (This difference was significant at the 5% level.) The highest Homeworking Rates were found for those without any qualifications at 'A' level or above, and those with GCE 'A' level (or equivalent qualifications).

Cultural Background

Evidence of a homeworker's cultural identity is not routinely recorded on the census. However, homeworkers' place of birth and their parents' place of birth is recorded and provides information on their cultural background. The LS (Table 5.5) indicates that although the majority of homeworkers were born in the U.K. (92%), the Homeworking Rate of 0.8 is similar to that for those born outside the U.K. - 0.9. It seems that clerical homeworkers were more likely to be born in the U.K. than clothing homeworkers. (This was significant at the 5% level.) The highest Homeworking Rate occurs for those born outside the U.K. in the Mediterranean Commonwealth, namely those doing clothing work. However, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions from this observation as the number involved is so small (6 out of 7). Table 5.6 provides information similar to that in Table 5.5, and shows that the majority of homeworkers' parents were born in the U.K. (88%). Clerical homeworkers are more likely than clothing homeworkers to have both their parents born in the U.K. - 92% : 78% (this was significant at the 5% level.)

Conversely, clothing homeworkers were more likely than clerical homeworkers to have parents born in the New Commonwealth (7% : 1%) or neither born in the British Isles or Commonwealth (8% : 1%). Yet the numbers involved in these

categories are very small and it is hard to be certain they represent meaningful distinctions. The HRs were higher among those whose parents were born in the New Commonwealth or outside the British Isles and Commonwealth.

Finally, while discussing homeworkers' cultural background it is possible to consider ethnic origin. This information was derived where possible from homeworkers' last names. However, there are doubts about the reliability of this data as 98% fall into the category non-New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCWP), i.e. they were white. The majority of the remaining homeworkers did clothing work. This method of classifying homeworkers meant that fewer than ten could be classified to an ethnic origin.

A superficial glance at this evidence on homeworkers' cultural background would lead to conclusions such as:

- 1) homeworkers' parents are likely to be born in the U.K.;
- 2) homeworkers are overwhelmingly born in the U.K. and of U.K. origin;
- 3) of those born outside the U.K. the largest number (7) were born in the Mediterranean Commonwealth;

4) clothing homeworkers or their parents are more likely to be born outside the U.K. than clerical homeworkers.

However, such conclusions about those working at home would be misleading given other current information about homeworking that is available. There are problems with using last names to identify a person's ethnic origin; some migrants to this country Anglicise their names, or in the case of Afro-Caribbeans taken into slavery many were given (or took on) their owners' names, thus making it very difficult to identify a person's cultural background in this way. The likelihood that the LS is unsuitable to consider this issue is reinforced by the fact that it is a 1% sample of the population of England and Wales and, therefore, the two Muslims represent only 200 Muslims countrywide homeworking; yet findings from other studies and community projects working with homeworkers show that there are many more than 200 Muslims homeworking in London alone.

Other evidence shows that large numbers of homeworkers do not fit into the above categories. (e.g. Greenwich Homeworkers Project 1984a, London borough of Haringey 1983). It seems most likely that there is under reporting of homeworking on the census. Most importantly, not only may women be worried that working at home is illegal but they might also be worried about their authorised status in the

country. These factors are highly likely to influence a woman's admission of homeworking on a government survey and so limit the provision of useful or comprehensive data on this issue in this kind of survey.

Socio-economic circumstances

The measure most usually used in social research to consider socio-economic circumstances is classification of occupation to the Registrar General's social class schema. Women are typically classified by their own occupation until they are married and henceforth by their husband's occupation. However, this has been described as an unsatisfactory method of classifying women (Roberts 1986), with other aspects of their lives having been shown to be important in determining their socio-economic circumstances. In this case, details of husbands' social class have been considered along with information on indicators of household wealth such as housing tenure and household access to cars. These indicators have been successfully used to distinguish groups with different mortality rates (Fox and Goldblatt 1982, Moser et al 1988). Hence it was decided to analyse the data on homeworking using these variables in addition to their husbands' socio-economic group (for married women) to see if they give a better classification of homeworkers' socio-economic circumstances i.e. whether the distribution of

homeworkers amongst the categories is more balanced and that each category is of similar size making it easier to be confident that there is a 'real' difference between the categories. Comparisons were made between clerical and clothing homeworking, however it should be noted that many of the observed socio-economic differences also exist between clerical and clothing on-site workers.

Classification by husband's socio-economic circumstances

Before looking at homeworkers' husbands' occupations it is necessary to consider their economic position. Table 5.7 shows that the majority were in paid employment (97%). There appears to be no difference between clerical and clothing homeworkers according to their husbands' economic position. The highest Homeworking Rate is also found amongst those with employed husbands.

Considering the husband's socio-economic group (Table 5.8), the majority of homeworkers were found among those in the other non-manual and other manual groups. There is a difference by homeworkers' own occupation, with clerical homeworkers more likely to have husbands in non-manual jobs and those doing clothing work more likely to have husbands in manual jobs. However, the Homeworking Rate is highest

for those married to self employed professional workers.

It is possible that women with unemployed husbands would most likely either not be homeworking as it would affect their entitlement to benefits, or be homeworking yet not wish to declare it on official forms such as the census. It is also possible that the high percentage of clerical homeworkers married to students who are likely to enter the skilled, professional or intermediate social classes, reflects the existence of a group of upwardly mobile men being aided by their wives' homeworking. (A further possibility is that some of the clerical homeworkers are wives entered as employed in their husband's business for tax advantages whether or not they are actually doing the work.)

Classification by housing tenure and household amenities

The majority (73%) of homeworkers lived in owner occupied accommodation (Table 5.9). Although this is true for both clerical and clothing homeworkers, a higher proportion of clerical homeworkers than clothing homeworkers owned their homes. Overall the Homeworking Rate is highest amongst owner occupiers.

Table 5.10 shows that almost all homeworkers had three or more rooms in their home, yet clerical homeworkers were more likely to have larger houses than clothing homeworkers (significant at the 5% level). Those with six or more rooms have the highest Homeworking Rate.

Not only were clerical homeworkers' houses larger than those of clothing homeworkers, but they were also more likely to have had sole use of a bath and inside WC, although the majority of homeworkers had both these amenities (Table 5.11). The highest Homeworking Rates are for the same groups of homeworkers.

The high incidence of homeworking amongst owner occupiers may reflect the fact that many councils require permission to use an industrial machine (such as a sewing machine) at home. As stated earlier, this may lead homeworkers to deny their work, particularly on an official form such as the census.

There may also be reporting differences between homeworkers living in owner occupied and local authority accommodation. It is possible that those who can afford to own their homes have better paid jobs, for which they are more likely to have formal qualifications, and therefore are more familiar

with filling in forms such as the census and may feel more secure about legal aspects of their work at home. If so, their answers may more accurately reflect their employment situation.

The number of cars available for use by the household is shown in Table 5.12. Slightly over half of them had use of a car while the remainder are equally likely to have had no car, or two or more cars. Clerical homeworkers were more likely to have a greater number of cars in the household than clothing homeworkers who were more likely not to have use of any cars. The highest Homeworking Rate is for those with at least two cars.

The results concerning homeworkers' households' access to cars, while providing information about socio-economic circumstances for the whole household, do not tell us who uses the car(s) and hence may not be informative about the homeworkers' standard of living. It may be less likely that the homeworker would actually have use of the car herself if other household members require its use. (Married women's less frequent use of cars has been shown using General Household Survey data by Dale, 1986.)

Geographic characteristics

Over 40% of homeworkers lived in the South East region of England and Wales (Table 5.13). The remainder were equally distributed among the Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, East and West Midlands and the South West regions. Clerical and clothing homeworkers were both likely to be living in the South East, although the East Midlands had a greater proportion of clothing homeworkers. The Homeworking Rates were highest amongst those living in the East Midlands and the South West.

Table 5.14 shows the distribution of homeworkers' area of residence (Webber 1977). This classification groups small geographical areas according to their census characteristics. It appears that the largest proportion of homeworkers lived in areas of New or High Status housing, with a sizeable minority living in Older and Poorer housing, possibly due to different family types in different areas. Homeworkers were variedly distributed according to their own occupation, with those doing clerical work more likely to live in High Status areas, while those doing clothing work more likely to live in Inner City areas (significant at the 5% level). Aside from those whose area of residence was

unknown, the highest Homeworking Rate was found amongst those in Rural areas.

Finally, the length of time a homeworker had lived in an area was considered to see if it had any bearing on the distribution and rate of homeworking. It was felt that the longer a period of time a woman had been living in an area the more likely she was to have found work at home. Table 5.15 shows homeworking after one year and five years migration. The majority of homeworkers in the LS had not moved in the year before census, however of those who had the highest proportion were local migrants. Although a higher percentage of homeworkers had moved in the five years previous to the census, the majority were again local migrants or had moved to adjoining Local Authorities. There appeared to be no difference in the proportion of clerical and clothing homeworking after one or five years migration. The HR was constant for all groups of migrants and non-migrants except that those who had moved between distant regions in the previous year had a low HR (0.3).

Employment characteristics

The LS is unable to provide detailed information concerning homeworkers' employment conditions. However there is a record of the number of hours worked per week by each homeworker. From Table 5.16 it can be seen that the highest proportion of homeworkers worked between 0-30 hours per week, with between 10-19 hours most common. Clerical homeworkers worked significantly fewer hours than clothing homeworkers unless they worked over 40 hours a week. The latter were more evenly distributed amongst the hours worked categories. The highest HRs were found amongst those working 0-9 hours and 10-19 hours per week.

These results raise the question of whether homeworkers are similar to another important group of women workers namely part-time workers. Evidence from The Women and Employment Survey (1984) shows that part-time workers have many similar demographic characteristics to homeworkers in that both groups are often women in their 30's with young children in their care. Future research could investigate further the similarities and differences between the two groups in order to understand why women do the jobs they do, particularly as the LS suggests many homeworkers work a similar number of hours i.e. < 20 hours a week.

Conclusion

This chapter considers whether the LS evidence supports the popular stereotype of homeworking stated at the beginning of the chapter. The LS image presented is one of a 30+ year old white middle class woman with dependent school age children to care for, who owns her own house with a car, living in the South East of England doing non-manual work for up to 20 hours a week. Although this image does not conform to the traditional image of a homemaker, presented earlier, it does not mean that the LS characteristics of homeworking are inaccurate but rather that secretarial/clerical work is not generally recognised as a major type of homeworking. The lack of representation of other types of homework points to the overall inaccuracies in census figures on the issue.

This chapter has tried to show that the image of the traditional homemaker is not necessarily a complete picture of homeworking in England and Wales. As long ago as 1971 there were clearly large numbers of 'better off' women working at home who are frequently excluded from discussions about homeworking.

The above data have many limitations, primarily the great likelihood of any figures being underestimates because of the understandable reluctance of homeworkers to admit their work to census enumerators i.e. representatives of authority. This suggests that it is likely that the very homeworkers not represented by this data are those who make up the stereotype, i.e. working class and black and minority ethnic women doing manual work for very long hours each day. The fact that there is no official record of their work does not mean they do not exist, nor are any conclusions about the current picture of homeworking complete without reference to them. Perhaps the picture of homeworking in manual occupations should be widened to include other types of work which have been done by homeworkers from more materially advantaged backgrounds for the past two decades.

**Table 5.1 Number of homeworkers and Homeworking Rate (HR)*
by age and occupation**

Age in years	All Home- workers HR number	Clerical HR number	Clothing HR number
15-19	0.1 (5)	0.1 (3)	0.4 (2)
20-24	0.3 (35)	0.4 (19)	2.9 (10)
25-29	1.2 (77)	2.2 (52)	6.3 (11)
30-34	1.6 (99)	3.4 (55)	10.2 (26)
35-39	1.2 (90)	2.3 (44)	8.7 (23)
40-59	0.8 (278)	2.1 (165)	6.1 (69)
60+	1.1 (74)	3.9 (35)	8.7 (21)
TOTAL	0.8 (658)	1.6 (373)	5.4 (162)

* HR = no. of women homeworkers x 100
no. of employed women

Table 5.2 Number of homeworkers and Homeworking Rate (HR) by age and marital status

Age in years	Single	Married	Wid+Div
	HR number	HR number	HR number
15-19	0.1 (3)	0.4 (2)	-
20-24	0.1 (2)	0.7 (33)	-
25-29	0.4 (5)	1.6 (72)	-
30-34	-	2.0 (97)	0.8 (2)
35-39	-	1.5 (88)	0.7 (2)
40-59	0.4 (14)	1.0 (248)	0.4 (16)
60+	1.2 (10)	1.5 (38)	1.2 (26)
TOTAL	0.2 (34)	1.1 (578)	0.7 (46)

Table 5.3 Number of homeworkers and Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by marital and family status

Family Status	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
	HR	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
Single	0.2	5	34	3	12	9	14
Married	1.1	88	578	92	343	83	134
With Dep. Child(aged <16yrs)	1.8	60	396	65	244	53	92
" " " (aged <11yrs)	1.1	51	333	53	198	44	72
Without Dep. Child	0.6	26	169	26	96	27	44
Dep. Child unknown	0.5	2	13	1	3	3	5
Widowed & Divorced	0.7	7	46	5	18	9	14
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.4 Number of homeworkers and Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by educational qualifications and occupation

Educational Qualifications	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
High Uni Deg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Deg+Equiv	0.3	1	4	1	4	-	-
Other Qual	0.4	4	20	4	16	1	1
GCE 'A'+ Equiv	0.7	4	25	5	19	3	4
None	0.9	91	598	88	331	93	151
Not Stated	0.3	2	11	1	3	4	6
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.5 Number of homeworkers and Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by place of birth and occupation

Place of Birth	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
U.K.	0.8	92	605	95	355	84	136
Outside U.K.	0.9	8	50	5	17	16	26
Not stated	0.0	1	3	1	1	-	-
Mediterranean							
Commonwealth	3.7	1	7	0	1	4	6
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.6 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by parents place of birth, ethnic origin and occupation

Parents place of birth	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
Both born in U.K.	0.8	88	579	92	343	78	126
1-U.K. 1 not stated	0.9	2	16	3	10	3	5
Both New Commonwealth	1.0	2	16	1	3	7	12
None born in							
British Isles	1.2	4	23	1	5	8	13
Other	0.4	4	24	3	12	4	6

Non NCWP	0.8	98	642	99	369	93	151
Other	1.0	2	16	1	4	7	11

Ethnic Origin							
Hindu	1.2	1	3	1	2	1	1
Muslim	3.6	0	2	0	1	1	1
Sikh	1.4	0	2	-	-	1	2
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.7 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of married homeworkers by husband's economic position and own occupation

Husband's	Homeworking	Distribution of homeworkers by					
Economic	Rate	occupation					
Position		All		Clerical		Clothing	
	HR	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
In employment	0.5	97	562	98	335	98	131
Out of emp- sick	0.2	0	2	1	2	-	-
Out of emp- other	0.1	1	3	0	1	1	1
Retired	0.0	1	4	-	-	2	2
Permanently sick	0.2	1	3	0	1	-	-
Student	0.2	1	4	1	4	-	-
Other inactive	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	0.8	100	578	100	343	100	134

Table 5.8 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of married homeworkers by husband's Socio-Economic Group (S.E.G.) and own occupation.

Husband's	Homeworking	Distribution of homeworkers by					
S.E.G.	Rate	occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
	HR	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
Professional							
Workers Self Emp.	1.4	3	18	4	15	1	1
Professional							
Workers Employees	0.8	8	46	13	43	1	1
Own account worker	0.9	10	56	10	34	9	12
Farmers- own account	0.3	1	3	1	2	1	1
Other non-manual	0.6	42	243	51	175	30	40
Other manual	0.3	35	202	20	68	59	79
Armed Forces	0.1	0	2	0	1	-	-
Inadequately Des.							
Occupations	0.0	0	1	-	-	-	-
Not Applicable	0.3	1	7	2	5	-	-
Total	0.8	100	578	100	343	100	134

Table 5.9 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by housing tenure and occupation.

Housing	Homeworking	Distribution of homeworkers by					
Tenure	Rate	occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
	HR	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
Owner Occupier	1.2	73	480	80	300	64	103
Rented Council	0.4	14	93	8	29	19	31
Privately Rented	0.5	13	85	12	44	17	28
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.10 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by the number of rooms in their accomodation and occupation.

Number of rooms	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
1-2	0.2	1	5	-	-	2	3
3-5	0.7	52	336	45	168	63	102
6+	1.1	48	317	55	205	35	57
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.11 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) distribution of homeworkers by their access to a bath and WC and occupation.

<u>Access to</u>	Homeworking	Distribution of homeworkers by					
<u>Bath</u>	Rate	occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
	HR	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
Sole Use	0.8	95	624	98	366	88	143
Shared	0.3	1	7	1	3	2	3
None	0.5	4	27	1	4	10	16
<u>Access to WC</u>							
Inside & Outside	0.8	15	100	16	58	16	26
Inside (sole use)	0.9	78	510	81	303	72	116
Outside (sole use)	0.5	5	34	3	11	7	12
Other	0.4	2	14	0	1	5	8
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.12 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by household access to cars and occupation.

Access to Cars	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
0	0.5	23	150	14	53	36	59
1	0.9	57	373	58	215	55	89
2+	1.4	21	135	28	105	9	14
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.13 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by region of residence and occupation.

Region of residence	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
North	0.6	4	28	6	24	1	2
Yorks+Humberside	0.1	9	57	9	34	6	9
North West	0.6	11	74	12	45	10	16
East Midlands	1.2	10	68	6	22	15	24
West Midlands	0.7	9	62	11	39	6	10
East Anglia	0.8	3	21	4	13	3	5
South East	0.9	42	275	42	156	46	74
South West	1.0	8	55	6	28	12	20
Wales	0.5	3	18	3	12	1	2
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.14 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by area of residence and occupation.

Area of Residence	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
New	0.9	24	156	22	81	24	39
Older+Poorer	0.7	19	126	17	65	21	34
Rural	1.2	7	48	9	34	7	11
Local Authority	0.5	10	67	9	35	11	18
Inner City	0.7	11	70	8	30	20	32
High Status	1.0	29	189	33	126	17	28
Not Known	3.3	0	2	1	2	-	-
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.15 Number of homeworkers, Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers after migration and occupation.

<u>After</u> <u>1 year</u>	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
Local migrants	0.7	5	30	5	17	4	7
Between L.A.	0.4	1	9	2	6	-	-
" Counties	0.6	1	7	2	6	1	2
" Neighbouring Reg	0.5	1	3	1	3	-	-
" Distant Regions	0.3	0	1	0	1	-	-
Total Internal Migs.	0.6	8	50	9	33	6	9
Outside Eng+Wales	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not stated	0.3	0	1	0	1	-	-
Non migrants	0.8	92	607	91	339	94	153
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

<u>After 5 years</u>							
Local migrants	0.8	17	111	15	57	17	28
Between L.A.	0.9	9	62	11	40	8	13
" Counties	0.8	4	26	6	23	-	-
" Neighbouring Reg	0.8	3	17	3	11	3	4
" Distant Regions	0.9	2	11	2	8	2	3
Total Internal Migs.	0.8	35	227	37	139	30	48
Outside Eng+Wales	0.7	2	12	2	7	2	3
Not stated	0.5	1	6	1	4	1	1
Non migrants	0.8	63	413	60	223	68	110
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Table 5.16 Number of homeworkers. Homeworking Rate (HR) and distribution of homeworkers by number of hours worked per week and occupation.

Hours worked per week	Homeworking Rate	Distribution of homeworkers by occupation					
		All		Clerical		Clothing	
		HR	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.	% no.
0-9	2.7	19	127	29	107	6	10
10-19	2.4	30	200	27	102	35	56
20-29	1.0	21	141	16	61	28	46
30-39	0.2	8	52	4	15	15	24
40+	0.5	21	138	24	88	16	26
Total	0.8	100	658	100	373	100	162

Chapter Six

SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS USING CLERICAL AND SECRETARIAL HOMEWORKERS

Introduction

As part of this thesis a survey was carried out of employers' use of homeworkers in the clerical industry. The aim was to begin to draw a picture of employers' policies towards homeworkers, the pattern of recruitment used and the conditions of work enjoyed by the homeworkers themselves. It was hoped that by interviewing several employers an indication of their attitudes towards homeworkers might be gained as well as greater insight into the relationship between them. Although very few employers were interviewed their viewpoint is valuable enabling a comparison with the homeworkers' view.

The Department of Employment (Hakim 1984), has considered employers' use of homework, outwork and freelancers. Hakim used the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (WIRS) carried out in 1980, which covered 2040 establishments employing 25 or more inworkers. It included 110,000 people labelled as outworkers and homeworkers over half (53% -

61,000) being employed in the service sector. A further 281,000 people were identified as freelancers, two thirds of whom were employed in the service sector. There were three predominant types of work for homeworkers and outworkers:

- 1) clothing and leather and similar manufacturing work;
- 2) repetitive assembly work;
- 3) secretarial and clerical work.

Freelancers were used in all manufacturing industries as well as in printing and publishing, educational services and public administration. The WIRS pointed to four advantages to the employer of putting out work:

- 1) Employers avoid overhead costs particularly that of having to provide a workplace.
- 2) Higher productivity levels are recorded when work is not done in the factory or office.
- 3) Homeworkers are paid lower wages than inworkers and only on completion of the work. They do not receive holiday or sick pay, only very occasionally receive an allowance for overheads such as machine maintenance and they do not benefit from a pension scheme.

4) Most importantly it is recognised by employers that they can vary the quantity of work put out according to their requirements, without having to pay homeworkers for periods without work.

Huws (1984), in her survey of new technology homeworkers, also discusses the advantages to employers of using homeworkers. She reports the same advantages as those identified by the WIRS: increased productivity, low overheads, only paying the homeworkers when they are working, and, additionally, flexible working hours (homeworkers will do work in the evening) and a very high standard of work. Estimates of increased productivity were given by two companies:

"...homeworkers produce 30% more than office based workers in the same time"(P.56);

"...claims that 25 hours work at home is equivalent to 40 in an office." (P.56)

No discussion of the reliability of these estimates was given so it may be possible that they are over or under estimates. These advantages are obvious and were kept in mind when considering the focus for this survey. As secretarial/clerical homeworking has not been looked at in depth before, it was also decided to survey the policies

used by employers, how they recruit homeworkers and the conditions of work for homeworkers.

There are few other comprehensive studies of employers of homeworkers. However, Wray (1985) has shown in her study of the hosiery and knitwear industry, that a wide range of factors lead firms to use homeworkers. These included small and short lived bottle necks, shortage of factory space, shortage of inworkers with appropriate skills and a shortage of time to train inworkers. In addition Bagilhole (1986) has interviewed three employers of small firms in the garment industry. However, she does not discuss these interviews in her research report beyond stating that all presented themselves as reasonable and fair employers.

Method used in the employers survey

The aim of this part of the thesis was to get a broad idea of employers' use of secretarial/clerical homeworkers in terms of policies towards homeworkers, the pattern of recruitment used and the conditions of work enjoyed by the homeworkers themselves. This survey covered eight employers and it was hoped that by interviewing them an indication of their attitudes towards homeworkers might be gained as well as greater insight into the relationship between the two in

this area of work. The survey was carried out during October -December 1983.

A further practical outcome of deciding to interview employers was the possibility that the interviews might lead to introductions to homeworkers which, as Harrison (1983) makes clear are to obtain:

"...finding homeworkers who would talk was the hardest task of researching this book." (P.64)

(The homeworkers' reasons for not wanting to talk to strangers are discussed fully in Chapter Four.)

The first step in contacting employers to be interviewed involved sending 40 letters to secretarial and clerical firms taken from the Central London Yellow Pages for 1983. (This publication is a telephone directory of current businesses in the area.) Many of these firms were agencies who themselves acted as contractors for clients who came to them. It was decided to concentrate on these agencies as it was felt that they would be more likely to employ secretarial and clerical homeworkers in large numbers than firms in other areas of employment. However, this does not mean other industries do not employ homeworkers, nor that they do not use secretarial and clerical workers at home, only that they were seen as less likely to employ them.

It should be recognised that by restricting the sample of employers to agencies only a certain type of employer was reached. Ideally, with more time, money and assistance it would have been interesting to survey those employers who used homeworkers for their firms immediate needs. These employers vary a great deal from government departments to small businesses. It would have been possible to include both those whose clerical work is different from that surveyed, such as firms operating large mailouts, as well as those who also employ typists yet have personal contact with the members of their workforce, working in their own homes. Such a sample would have widened the conclusions to be drawn about employers' use of clerical homeworkers and so provided a wider picture of this kind of work.

After the initial letter describing the project, (see Appendix B), employers were contacted by telephone and if possible an interview was arranged. At the interview a schedule (see Appendix C) was used as a basis for asking questions about the company generally and the issue of homeworking. It was decided that it was most suitable to use a schedule when interviewing employers as they might not be prepared to spend much time with the researcher. This would facilitate the interview, making sure that certain topics were covered even if there was a limited time period allotted for the interview. Three main topics were covered

in the following order: policy towards using homeworkers; the conditions of work they provided and their patterns of recruitment.

Two other interview schedules, which could be self completed, were distributed by post. Both resulted from personal contacts, one to an employer of clerical homeworkers on the edge of London and the other in Norwich. Although a total of 42 employers (see Table 6.1) had been contacted, very few of them, only six, agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were taped and took place in the employers' offices and lasted approximately half an hour each. Three further employers admitted on the telephone to having homeworkers but would not take part in the survey nor would they let their homeworkers be interviewed. Fifteen other employers said they did not employ homeworkers. It is not possible to know whether this was in fact the case, as they may have been avoiding taking part in the study. Two claimed that they used to have homeworkers but did not currently use them.

Table 6.1 Initial responses to contact with the employer responses

	<u>no.</u>
Interview	6
Refused interview	3
No homeworkers	15
Returned schedule(post)	2
No return "	1
Employer unobtainable	14
Wrong part of Yell. Pag.	1
TOTAL	42

It was impossible to arrange a convenient interview with three of the employers and, as stated above, two of these filled in and returned the schedule by post. Another 14 of the original 40 letters were either not returned or all the subsequent follow ups went unanswered. This may have been because the firms had ceased to exist, had moved preemises or just wanted to avoid taking part in the study. Finally it transpired that one letter was sent to a firm which had been included in an inappropriate part of the Yellow Pages.

The results for this survey are therefore based on the small sample of eight employers, six of whom were personally interviewed by the researcher.

Results

In order to get an overall picture of the employers taking part in this survey, a brief description of their organisations is presented. All eight of the employers interviewed offered typing and clerical work, while some of them had a wider range of services including photocopying (done in the office), questionnaire coding, word processing, translation and publishing. All the firms had a small number of full time or part time on-site workers ranging from one to five with three or four being the most common. (This figure refers to the office visited by the researcher - some of the firms have other offices with more onsite workers.)

This small number of on site workers means that none of these organisations would have been included in the WIRS. The number of homeworkers employed varied considerably between one and 25, with three of the employers using up to 25 homeworkers at one time. The remainder used between three and five. These numbers vary with the workload and it is unusual for employers to have any idea how many they will employ at any given time. One employer described how they had received a work contract initially for six months from an outside agency and it was still going after four years. The vast majority of homeworkers on their books were

women.

The employers had been using homeworkers for varying lengths of time: three for up to five years, three for between six and ten years and the remaining two for 21 and 27 years respectively.

As will be seen in the following sections, employers' attitudes towards homeworkers varied enormously from being quite dismissive, to having some understanding of the reasons why women work at home. These differing attitudes are reflected in the way in which homeworkers are described, e.g. some employers call their homeworkers 'freelancers' while others call them 'employees'. In fact they are self-employed. These terms conceal the reality of their work conditions. Calling homeworkers 'homeworkers' clearly describes the situation for these workers while use of the term 'freelancers' is not only inaccurate as the vast majority of those working at home have no control over their supply of work, but also helps to give homeworking a higher status than is usually attributed to it. Nor is the term 'employees' always accurate as most often homeworkers are treated as self-employed workers.

Policy towards employing homeworkers

Six of the eight employers said that they began using and continued to use homeworkers because they had a variable workload, e.g.

"... because the work [is] not consistent ... it's pointless having 25 people who are full-time employees if you can't provide work for them."

"... because we don't know how much work is coming, it means we don't have to turn work down."

The remaining two employers said that they had set up in business specifically to provide work for women at home. They both set up as agencies for homeworkers. As one employer put it:

"I had lots of experience in different fields and knew lots of people who had experience who wanted to work in their homes. There were no creches then, so I pioneered homework. I'm not talking about sewing on buttons or the rag trade but freelancers developing the whole field."

She told how she knew many women whose marriages had broken down and they were left with young families to look after and they needed work to support themselves. This employer stressed the importance of the work the firm did as being professional and obviously wanted to make the point that

'their' homeworking was different from traditional forms of homeworking and therefore 'respectable.'

She also recognised that homeworkers' situations are not easy and particularly that they may suffer from isolation. She said she cared about the problem very much and wanted to think of ways of helping homeworkers. She suggested setting up a homeworkers register like the housewives register, as a possible way of homeworkers having contact with each other and sharing their problems. Although she was keen on this idea she would not, however, allow the researcher access to meet and talk to the homeworkers.

Employers were then asked how dependent they were on homeworkers. Six of them felt that they were reliant on them in terms of getting the jobs finished:

"We always get the tape jobs [audio typing] done at home, the office is too noisy."

Other employers mentioned that they were dependent on homeworkers in terms of the total hours that were put in to their work.

"We're dependent in terms of hours especially, we do ask them when we first take them on for a minimum of 20 hours a week and hope that if the work's there they'll do even more. ...We're very dependent on the them."

"We're very dependent on them, our only alternative is to turn work down."

This question brought up the fact that one employer would like to use homeworkers more often and in fact asked if the researcher knew any who could be contacted. This employer was having difficulty finding homeworkers they considered suitable, i.e. who were available and whose work was of a high standard. However another employer responded to this question in an entirely different way:

"It's not how dependent I am on homeworkers because if all the homeworkers I have today aren't available there'll be another lot tomorrow. Homeworkers are fairly easy to come by, especially if I supply a transcription machine [for use with tapes], there would be no shortage of homeworkers."

To this employer homeworkers are important as the majority of the firm's work is done at home, yet, as she pointed out, the firm is not dependent on individual homeworkers. She sees them as easily replaceable and is confident of a never ending supply. This highlights the relationship between a homeworkeer and her employer. A homeworkeer is more dependent on her employer for work than vice versa. Apart from the employer cited above who was looking for more homeworkers, employers do not usually have to worry about finding workers to get their jobs finished on time.

(This agency's difficulty in finding homeworkers may reflect its geographical position - it was situated in the inner city rather than a residential suburb - and as such be an indication of the different labour markets in the two areas.)

Employers were asked if they had considered any alternatives to using homeworkers. All of them felt that there were no real alternatives open to them especially those who said their businesses were designed for homeworkers. However the others mentioned the following alternatives rather half heartedly:

- working harder in the office;
- taking on extra staff;
- using another agency to do the work;
- turning the work down.

One employer said:

"I can't see any need for any alternatives - it's an ideal situation because the work is not consistent."

Not surprisingly all the employers except one saw homeworking as a satisfactory way of getting the work done. The one employer who was unhappy with this arrangement was concerned about her lack of control over the homeworker.

She wanted to be able to supervise all the work personally.

Considering the high level of satisfaction amongst employers, it is logical that six out of the eight saw the level of homeworking in their company remaining constant, while the other two expected an increase in the level. Five out of the eight employers expected homeworking in general to expand. One employer said that there are fluctuations in the service industry all the time. However, with the recession, even though some of the work will disappear, she expects clients would go to their agency rather than employ a full time worker. The other employers pointed to new technological developments which led them to anticipate an increase in working at home.

However, although the above picture of employers being happy with using homeworkers was widespread, the following disadvantages were also mentioned. (Some employers mentioned more than one disadvantage.)

Table 6.2 Disadvantages of employing homeworkers (cited by employers)

	n
turn around too quick	3
hard to find skill. h.w.	2
unreliability	2
dependent on goodwill	1
h.w. and client in touch	1

The most commonly mentioned disadvantage was that the turn around time for the work is too short to make putting it out viable; the employers complained of having difficulty in contacting the homeworker at the particular time when the work needs to be done. Homeworkers were also seen as unreliable - they were described as not finishing pieces of work on time or making mistakes, both of which are in conflict with employers previous' assertions of them being satisfied with homeworkers and their work.

One of the ways homeworkers are considered unreliable is if they refuse work. One employer distinguished between two different kinds of women homeworking and made it clear which she preferred.

"That's the only thing with freelancers, you do get people who really need the money, therefore they will put themselves out for you and others who will really only treat it as pin money and just pick it up and drop it when they feel like it. And those are the people - really we don't want them [the latter group] but you can't not, well you don't really know until you've started somebody how they're going to be."

Another employer mentioned that because the time scale on a job was often so short, she might have to put the client in contact with the homeworker so making it possible for them to bypass her in the future. However she said this did not happen very often as she only let her 'loyal' homeworkers

have direct contact with the clients.

"She must be 100% tried and tested, otherwise it's not worth the risk to my business as they can deal direct."

However this employer is obviously in a position to deny homeworkers further work if such a situation arises.

Patterns of recruitment of women to homeworking

Seven out of the eight employers said their most common method of recruitment of homeworkers was through friends. This might be their friends or particularly friends of existing homeworkers.

"I don't recruit homeworkers, they come to me. I hold them back, I don't need any more unless they're very, very exceptional. If I need someone to do something I do it through someone, networking, through friends of friends."

Only one employer never used this method, saying it harmed friendships! Other methods were sometimes used, including advertisements in local papers and potential homeworkers calling into the office or telephoning speculatively in their search for work.

The most usual quality looked for when recruiting homeworkers is that of experience (Table 6.3). In fact the employer providing primarily coding work to be done at home was the only one not to mention this. The employers do not ask for a particular length of work experience but rather want to know about each woman's work history. One of the employers said she also likes to know about her homeworkers' hobbies and other activities. She recognised that women at home with children are likely to be good managers and feels this will help them in their work.

Table 6.3 Qualities stated by employers as desirable for homeworkers

	n
experience	7
skill	6
own machine	6
car/live locally	5
commonsense/make own decisions	3
telephone	1

Other characteristics which were mentioned as important were a certain level of skill, particularly spelling, having your own machine and quite often typists needed at least a good quality one, if not electric golfball typewriter, and having their own car or living locally to facilitate the collection and delivery of work. Commonsense and ability to make their own decisions were given as useful qualities. The employers wanted homeworkers who knew how to lay out documents, letters and so on without having to ask for help. Employer

A, dealing mainly in questionnaire coding, was the only one who provided training sessions for the homeworkers. These were for each new topic to be coded. However the homeworkers were still expected to make decisions about coding which the employer felt demanded a certain level of commonsense and skill.

One further desirable attribute which was mentioned by only one employer was that of possessing a telephone. However it is clear that this is essential for all the homeworkers employed by these firms. For the majority of employers it went without saying.

All the employers gave an interview and typing test if applicable before using new homeworkers. Five said they had a trial period lasting anything between the first job to three months when homeworkers' work would be thoroughly inspected. The two employers who said that their businesses were aimed at providing homework for women also required references. One of these felt it was extremely important to take them up to know how the homeworkers would respond in a work situation but the other only followed them up occasionally if she was unsure about a homemaker at the interview.

The existence of tests, probationary periods (not exclusive to secretarial and clerical homeworkers) and the taking up of references formalises the recruitment procedure. It appears to be part of an attempt to make homeworking similar to other jobs outside the home and therefore more 'professional' and 'respectable'. It is consistent with the emphasis on secretarial/clerical homework being different from more traditional forms of homework.

On the other hand, one employer was very worried about the image of her business, she mentioned that:

"It adds nothing to the business to have homeworkers but it could be disastrous if a client calls in to make an alteration to his (sic) script."

It is clear from this statement that homeworking, although beneficial to the employer in terms of work done, is not seen by this employer as a 'respectable' enough image to present to one's clients.

Conditions of work

As mentioned earlier, the employers put out a variety of work to be done at home, yet, the majority of homeworkers had one predominant kind of work they did, such as typing or

coding. It was possible for the employers to vary the work, e.g. a typist might be given a one off report, regular minutes of meetings or envelopes, to type, while a coder might have to draw up sampling lists, code questionnaires, check them or occasionally type envelopes. Only one employer promised a particular kind of work.

All those employers who primarily used home typists expected them to provide their own machines and maintain them. All the employers preferred the home typists to have their own audio machines, although two said they could lend out machines if the need arose. However, Employer A, who employed coders, did in fact provide a typewriter on occasions when homeworkers were asked to do some typing.

As for homeworkers' other equipment, only Employer A provided all that was required including even paper clips and rubber bands. However this was the exception as the remaining employers provided nothing except occasionally paper. (One paid for 50% of the paper.) Usually paper was provided when the work had to be typed on headed note paper, and in this case it would be provided by the client rather than by the employer.

Homeworkers' pay was calculated in a variety of ways. Four employers had an hourly rate only, three a mixture of hourly

and piecework rates and one a piecework rate only. The rates varied with the kind of work done, but for clerical and typing work they ranged from £1.75 per hour to £5.00 per hour. The lower rates related to coding and clerical work while between £3.00 and £5.00 per hour was paid to the typists, with the lower rates being more common. Piecework rates varied from £2.50 -£4.00 per hundred envelopes and 50 pence per page of A4 typing. One employer refused to discuss the rates paid.

The employers who said they paid hourly rates relied on homeworkers' estimates of the length of time taken to do the work. Employer A asked homeworkers to fill in a time sheet for each week they worked. If a homeworker took what the employer considered to be too long (undefined), they were not given any more work. The other employers calculated roughly how long each job should take and if the homeworkers took longer they were less likely to give work to them again.

The majority of homeworkers were paid an hourly rate which is unusual (see research reported in Chapter Two) for those in traditional industries but more usual for those working with New Technology (Huws 1984). It is interesting to speculate as to why homeworkers were paid per hour as in theory their employer cannot know how long they took to do

the work. (This topic was not covered in this interview.) Although this appears to indicate a trusting rather than exploitative attitude on the part of the employer, the homeworkers' evidence in Chapter Seven indicates this is not necessarily the case.

It is possible that pay per hour increased the respectability of the work with the knowledge that the worker has to internalise the norms of the job. The homeworkers are not disciplined directly through the payment system but with the knowledge that their chances of being given work or not were dependent on their reliability and speed. Employers are also well aware that homeworkers are isolated and not very easily able to bargain as a group for their pay.

Employers were asked whether they varied the rates of pay according to the experience of the homeworker. Half of them claimed they did and examples were given of some homeworkers earning £3.00 and others £4.00 per hour for typing similar pieces of work. The remaining employers said their rates did not vary as all the homeworkers they used were experienced.

However, Employer A, after saying that they did not vary their rates, went on to explain that a few homeworkers whom

they call 'assistant supervisors' in fact get 30p an hour more than the other homeworkers.

"They're people who are really reliable. They're here for a while so then you know they can do all aspects of the work- that's the most sensible way of choosing an assistant supervisor. ...They are very reliable people. But overall it doesn't vary to take account of experience, not even if they've been here a long time."

These homeworkers do very little "supervision" in the conventional sense but are sometimes asked to help out more in the office with other homeworkers' queries. None of the employers paid their homeworkers holiday or sick pay, although they all provided these benefits to their inworkers. All the employers treated their homeworkers as self employed.

Occasionally homeworkers telephoned the employers to try and get work but all the employers said they would contact the homeworkers when they wanted them, rather than the other way round.

Six out of the eight employers said that homeworkers were responsible for the collection and delivery of the work when it was completed. Homeworkers were usually required to do this personally unless they were well known to the employer, when occasionally other members of the family have been

asked to help out. Two employers said that they occasionally deliver work to the homeworker, if the work is urgent. One employer in fact used her son as a messenger.

Finally, employers were asked whether they guaranteed their homeworkers a certain amount of work. The answer was always unsurprisingly no.

"No - that's the problem! [with getting good homeworkers]".

"We cannot guarantee them work but when the work's there we're dependent on their goodwill."

The last words on the subject from one employer were:

"Hope. I'll keep you busy if you're any good."

It is clear here that homeworkers have no guarantee of work and that employers have control of the supply of work going to each homeworker. Justifications for the irregularity of the work, when they did exist, mentioned that homeworkers themselves like the flexibility of not always having to work.

Discussion

This interview survey shows very clearly that there are considerable advantages to employers if they put out work to be done at home. Those identified by Hakim (1984) and Huws (1984) included avoidance of overhead costs, high productivity and the flexibility to cope with a varied workload all of which were similarly reported in this survey.

The conditions of work laid down by employers mean that homeworkers bear the brunt of any fluctuations in demand for the product, in this case service, that occur. The almost total lack of responsibility shown by employers to the homeworkers, places the latter at an extreme disadvantage, giving them no bargaining power with which to gain some control over their work and hence their lives. It is clear that these employers rely on homeworkers to do this work; it is not extra work taken on to make more profit. These businesses predominantly generate income through the use of homeworkers.

Homeworkers are a 'casualised labour force' as described by Allen (1983a) and mentioned earlier. The same is true for clerical homeworkers, even though they often have more material advantages than homeworkers doing other kinds of

work. Homeworkers' dependence on this work is known by employers, who not only use it to keep them from complaining, but also, as all employers do, positively seek out those homeworkers they feel will be the best workers, i.e. those most accommodating to their (the employers') needs.

In Carlen et al (1985) an ex-employer of homeworkers described her position.

"...we became experienced at selecting the homeworkers whom we could most exploit. The ideal homemaker was someone who had been very proud of her job, was struggling economically and presently tied down at home with her kids. Men made very poor homeworkers.....We always thought it best to play on the insecurities of those who couldn't get work, such as foreigners or black people, those who were timid and wanted to please, the 'yes' people." (P.117)

As a result, the employer is able to have all the advantages of the factory system without having the need for the factory itself. As this study shows, employers are able to subdivide the work without bringing all the workers under one roof.

Employers' knowledge of the lack of job opportunities for many homeworkers allows them to take liberties which as employers of inworkers they could not get away with, such as not providing a guarantee of work, sick or holiday pay or

even work materials.

The existence of a suitably skilled labour force means that employers are not dependent on individual homeworkers. Employers are usually confident that when they have problems with an individual homemaker they can replace her almost instantly. Although homeworkers might feel exploited by their employers they still introduce their friends as potential homeworkers.

This has also been recorded in Carlen et al (1985) by an employer of homeworkers who said:

"..if the work wasn't returned on the same day it was due, if it wasn't perfectly typed, then no more work and certainly no pay for the faulty batch. After all, there were hundreds more waiting at the gate." (P.115)

Employers' use of skilled workers to work at home may be seen as skill poaching. (This practice is not exclusive to homeworking and in particular applies to secretarial agencies for temporary staff.) Here employers demand a high level of skill before employing someone and they do not usually provide training either for that worker or any other. (Employer A was an exception in providing training for its coders.) In this way homeworking is not an entry to office work but rather previous office work is a

prerequisite for applying for a clerical/secretarial homeworking job.

The employer has complete control over the whole of the work operation, from deciding to whom to give the work, to dictating when it must be finished. Despite this however, employers often suggest that there is some element of choice for homeworkers about when to do the work, (e.g. "We're dependent on their goodwill"). (The ability to do work fitted in around their other commitments is an advantage to homeworkers.) In practice it is most likely that if a homeworker were to refuse work, except under unusual circumstances, she would be considered unreliable and replaced. This can be seen from these interviews and those with the homeworkers themselves reported in Chapter Seven.

Employers' policies towards taking on homeworkers fell into two categories, those who wanted to have a suitable way of coping with a variable workload and those who set up specifically to provide work for women. This second category of employer has been identified by Huws(1984). Here the employer felt she was offering a chance for women to work in order to provide an income as well as enabling them to retain their skills alongside their domestic responsibilities. Although this approach acknowledges that many women spend several periods of time at home caring for

young children and elderly relatives, it can not provide job opportunities for women equal to that of men.

In conclusion it is clear that employers using secretarial and clerical homeworkers follow bad employment practices similar to those used by other employers. Despite the homeworkers' pay being better than those in manufacturing industries, they have the same lack of control as other homeworkers over their employment situation. In the following chapter the relationship is explored further from the homeworkers' point of view.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CASE STUDY OF 30 SECRETARIAL AND CLERICAL HOMEWORKERS

Introduction

Homeworking is prevalent because of the current economic and political situation which makes it difficult for women to find work which can fit in with their other responsibilities. This study aimed to consider whether women see homeworking as a desirable answer to their situation or whether they see it as the only solution available to them.

In order to look at this hypothesis 30 secretarial and clerical homeworkers living in, and around, London were interviewed between January and June 1984. They were asked about their households, qualifications gained at school and college as well as any other training they might have had, the jobs they had done in the past and finally about what they see themselves doing in the future.

Method used in the homeworkers' survey

Making Contact

Several methods of contact were considered as discussed in Chapter Two. These included reaching homeworkers through employers, radio appeals, notice boards in local shops, through community and women's centres, a house to house survey and using a snowball sample.

The method which would have been most suitable, had it been possible to implement, was that of a house to house survey. An intensive approach to reach homeworkers in a specific area would have the advantage that it is more likely that all homeworkers would be represented. However due to lack of time and resources this approach was not considered possible, as well as the fact that it was also recognised that such an approach might be inappropriate for looking at homeworking in a specific industry where no known geographical area has been identified.

Other approaches to recruiting homeworkers, such as through a radio appeal or newspaper or local advertisement were considered. These approaches have been used before (Low Pay Unit 1979), and criticised on the grounds that only those with grievances were included in the survey.

As a result it was decided to try and reach homeworkers through their employers and increase the sample using the snowball sampling technique. Contacting homeworkers through their employers is not ideal, as it was felt that not only would a particular kind of homeworker be represented but also they might be inhibited in how they spoke about their employers in case the information got back to them. Homeworkers might also feel that they 'had' to take part in the study, in order to keep on receiving work. It was also possible that employers would only let certain homeworkers be interviewed, most likely those they trusted and treated well and who would be less likely to complain about their work and conditions of employment. In other words the opposite type of bias to that experienced by those who used advertisements as their main method of recruitment was expected. Although this was not very satisfactory it was felt that the study was not meant to be a comprehensive survey of homeworking but rather an exploratory case study of secretarial and clerical homeworking.

The decision to use this method of contact was made bearing in mind the initial impetus for concentrating on secretarial and clerical homeworking i.e. that this type of homeworking was already recorded in the census, and so it seemed likely that the employers would be more amenable to homeworkers talking to a researcher as their employment was more likely

to be already officially documented.

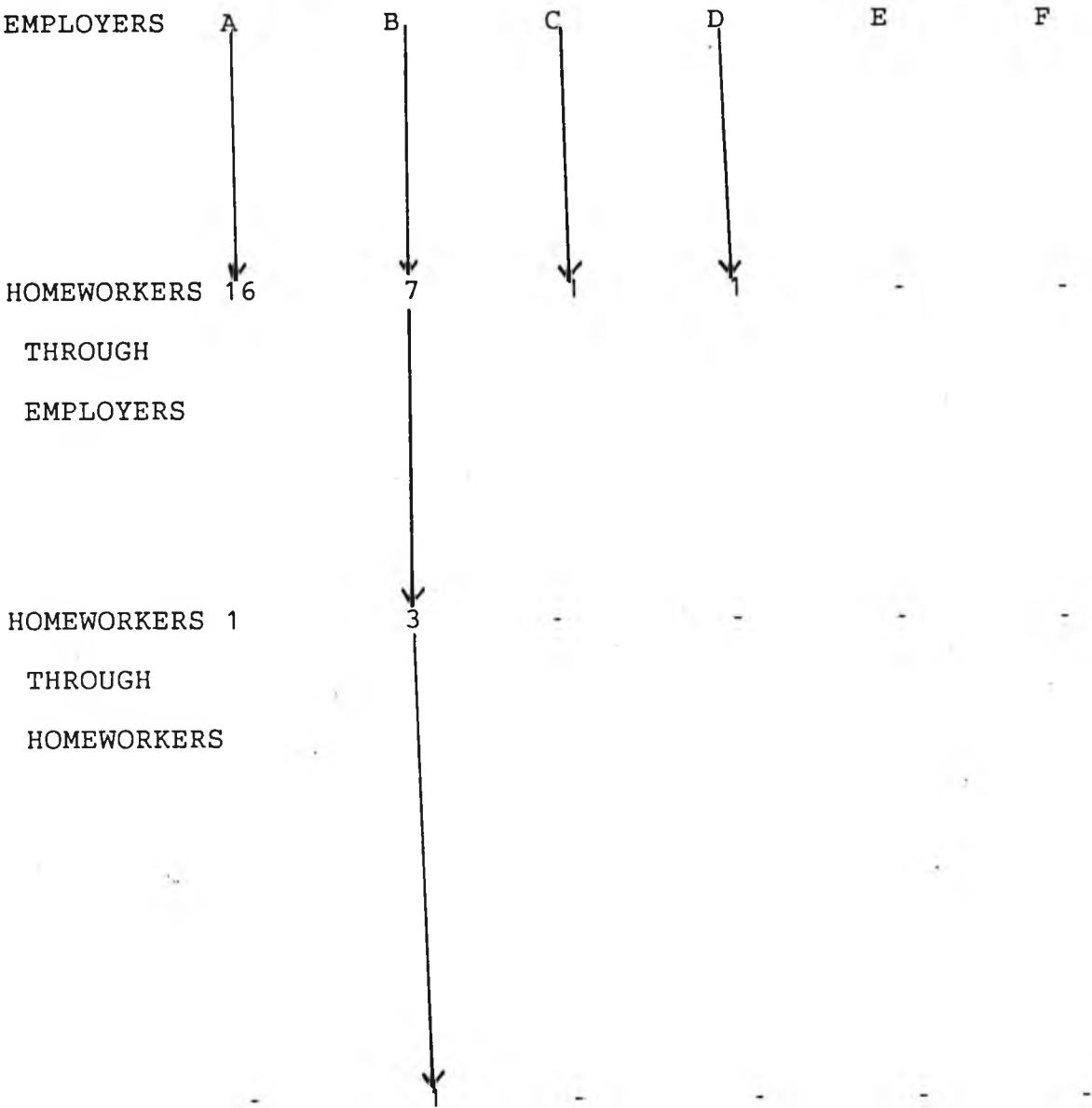
Although the homeworkers were contacted through their employers, they were also asked by the researcher if they would like to take part and not pushed to do so. At this stage, four women preferred not to be interviewed. The homeworkers were also assured that their employers would not know whether or not they had taken part in the study and that the interview was completely confidential.

Overall contact through employers proved to be a reasonably effective method of reaching homeworkers. Only two of the employers interviewed would not allow access to their homeworkers (see Figure 7.1). They put off the enquiries about interviewing their homeworkers with curt statements by putting down the phone. An alternative reaction of those telephoned but not interviewed was to claim that the homeworkers would not want to be interviewed. The researcher has no firm evidence for this statement as the homeworkers themselves were not consulted. Although it is possible that the employers were protecting their homeworkers' privacy, it seems more likely that the employers did not want a researcher looking closely at their organisation.

Employer A - contacted through a friend - was particularly amenable and put the researcher in touch with all its homeworkers, although not all of them wished to be interviewed. Another employer (B in the diagram) was happy to allow access to some but not all of the homeworkers she employed. The researcher was only allowed access to the 'good ones' and was even told that 'Ms X owes me a favour she'll do it.' Overall 25 homeworkers were contacted through employers - 16/25 from Employer A mentioned above. The remaining five homeworkers were contacted by using the snowball sampling method, i.e. at the end of the interview each homeworker was asked if she knew any other women working at home. This does not mean that the other homeworkers interviewed did not know any others working at home only that the researcher could not interview them.

It was decided that the initial method of contact with homeworkers might affect the type of information given. There was concern that it was only possible to interview those homeworkers who were considered 'good' and that they might feel both that they had to take part in the study in

Figure 7.1 Methods of contacting homeworkers



case (as stated earlier) their employers did not give them work if they refused, and that they might not feel free to talk about issues which would reflect badly on their employer. However, even the 'good' homeworkers were immediately prepared to talk about their employers. The experience was similar to that of Finch (1984) who describes how helpful women interviewees are, seeming happy to talk about their experiences to the benefit of the study.

There are certain homeworkers which the sampling method unfortunately excludes from the study. This is a result of, for the most part, employers being situated in suburban areas with homeworkers living near them. This concentration was not intentional, but attempts to contact employers in the inner city were unsuccessful while those in other areas were more successful, perhaps reflecting the distribution of this kind of homeworking. This sampling method would particularly exclude black women and single parents who are less likely to live in the suburbs, yet are groups known to do homeworking. However like Kelly (1984) the researcher felt that as the total number of homeworkers included was so small (30):

"...whatever differences or similarities there are would not be seen by just including a small number of black women." [or single parents.] (P.87)

As a result of snowball sampling and the decision to contact agencies as employers, the majority of homeworkers contacted were living in or around suburban London. The majority owned their homes and had a car for use in their household. These facts seem to contradict the image of homeworkers portrayed in other recent research. Initially, it appears that the homeworkers surveyed for this thesis were unrepresentative of homeworkers as a whole, yet these findings echo those of the LS sample of clerical homeworkers. The similarity between the homeworkers interviewed and those described in the LS supports the findings presented here.

Further information could have been gathered had more resources been available. It would have been possible to understand the position of clerical homeworkers other than those primarily working for agencies. However, the uniformity of responses obtained throughout this project suggests that a larger sample of clerical homeworkers reached by the method used here would most likely not have led to more or better quality information.

Interview Schedule

Each homeworker was contacted by the researcher either by letter (see Appendix D) or telephone and then an appointment

was made. On arrival the homeworkers were told a bit about the study and encouraged to feel free to ask any questions they wanted about the interview and more generally about the research. The interview usually covered all the topics (included in Appendix E) but there was no set sequence.

A formal interview schedule did not seem appropriate for homeworkers. Although an unstructured interview takes longer, and is more open to bias in both the questioning and interpretation of the answers, it is easier to follow up relevant areas which arise during the interview. It is more possible to take account of what the homeworker is actually saying rather than fitting her answer into a prepared response.

At the end of the interview the interviewee was asked if she had anything else she wanted to say or questions she wanted to ask. The decision to try and include homeworkers was taken because the researcher did not want to use homeworkers without trying to give something back. One way to do this is to involve the homeworkers in the research itself. It was decided to answer any questions the homeworkers might have about the research as they arose and also to invite them to comment on a summary (see Appendix F) of the results if they so wished. On the other hand, the aim was not to force homeworkers to take a greater part in the process than

they themselves wished to. (I was grateful enough that they agreed to be interviewed!). Therefore at the end of each interview homeworkers were asked if they would like to receive a summary of the results; they were also asked to comment on it if they so wished. The homeworkers were told that they would not be recontacted unless they replied so leaving them to initiate such contact. It is very possible that homeworkers might have views about the research yet not get in contact with the researcher for a variety of reasons, but at least there was some way in which they could participate if they were able to. In fact no-one responded to the summary. Another way in which the researcher tried to help homeworkers directly was by providing information on topics that arose in the interview such as on the availability of nurseries in their area.

From this description it can be seen that the interview was not very formal, in fact sometimes there were children around, on and off laps, the telephone ringing and almost always the researcher was offered food and/drink by the interviewee.

The majority of the interviews lasted for about an hour (24/30) with 13 of these women working for Employer A, seven for other employers and four working for other employers but contacted through homeworkers). Five lasted

for 90 minutes, three of whom worked for Employer A. This time is an estimate of the time spent asking questions and talking specifically about working at home. Sometimes there were conversations on the door steps and over food and drink, on many topics including holidays, health, fashion and personal information about the interviewer.

Despite reservations about the actual method of contact, the chosen approach to the interviews led to the willing participation of the homeworkers. As mentioned above, they were openly critical of their employers. They were also cooperative when asked whether they had mentioned working at home on the census. The question referred to the 1981 Census. It was hoped that there would be some indication as to whether they were the same group of people homeworking as those included in the 1971 Census and so the LS. In fact only 22 of the 30 were working at home at the time of the 1981 Census. Nine of the 22 were certain that they had mentioned homeworking in 1981 (many said they were sure their husbands' had filled the census form in: of those nine, six were working for Employer A), while seven were sure they had not mentioned homeworking. Five did not remember whether they had mentioned homeworking and one did not recall the census.

This highlights the question of definitions of homeworking as discussed in Chapter Two, and it is important to stress that although the researcher was clear about what she meant by homeworking, this was not necessarily the case for all those interviewed. In other words homeworkers did not necessarily call themselves homeworkers. This proved to be the case among those interviewed, perhaps because they were not working in industries which traditionally employ homeworkers and so did not associate themselves with the image of homeworking most commonly portrayed in the media.

Analysing The Survey

A final consideration when planning a survey is the analysis. The researcher was aware that the ideology implicit in this study may well not be shared by homeworkers. Not only might questions be asked that the homeworkers had not considered (such as what work they would like to do in the future), but also the researcher might misinterpret their answers. This is a problem with all small scale interview surveys and where possible both employers and homeworkers' own words were used to describe their situations and feelings in order to minimise any such misinterpretation.

The interviews were taped and transcribed and the factual information was coded. e.g. age, number of children, housing tenure, years homeworking and so on (see Appendix G). All the information provided by homeworkers was used and if as in certain cases a topic was not mentioned, 'not stated' was recorded for that variable.

The difficulties experienced with this were due to occasional actual or supposed discrepancies between answers to similar questions. For example, some women said that their families did not mind them working at all and yet went on to describe how they made sure that their families had no reason to complain about their work. It is hard to know how much their families did in fact mind. It was even harder to code answers that described difficulties and yet went on to say that "really their families were fine about them working at home".

After the data was coded the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) was used. This enabled simple tables to be run which helped order the information which had been collected. The tables are presented at the end of this chapter.

Results

In order to get an overall picture of the homeworkers included in this study, a description of their socio-demographic and work characteristics is presented.

As over half of the homeworkers were contacted through one Employer - A, it seemed sensible to initially analyse the similarities and differences between these two groups separately. A distinction is also made, where appropriate, between homeworkers contacted directly through their employers and homeworkers contacted via other homeworkers, i.e. through snowball sampling. Table 7.1 shows the current type of homework by the method of recruitment of homeworkers to the sample.

The most common type of homeworking in this sample was coding. Nearly half were doing coding work only; however some of the combination category were also doing coding as well as another type of work, e.g. typing. Those doing only coding all worked for the same employer, i.e. Employer A, while four out of the eight in the combination category were also doing coding, (as all those working for this employer did some coding).

The homeworkers doing this type of work had to code open ended questions from questionnaires used in research on

social issues. The topics they covered included unemployment, transport to work and how people spend their leisure time.

Almost all of the homeworkers doing typing only were contacted through other employers. The homeworkers' work in this group involved typing a variety of things such as letters, reports, students' theses and legal documents. One woman worked at home organising concerts for one employer. This involved typing, telephoning and general administrative work.

The combination category also included more general work which comes under the headings secretarial and book keeping. However there were no homeworkers doing solely secretarial work or book keeping at home. Of the eight homeworkers in this category, four worked for Employer A and three were contacted through other homeworkers.

Demographic characteristics

The majority of homeworkers were married (25/30) (Table 7.2). Of those who were not married, two lived alone and the remaining three with other members of their families. None of these worked for Employer A. (This may have been

because Employer A paid so badly that it was impossible to support one person let alone a family on this income.)

The majority of homeworkers in this sample had children - (Table 7.3). Over half of them had two children; these women were most likely to be working for Employer A. All of the homeworkers working for this employer had children. Homeworkers in the sample were most commonly aged between 30 and 44 years (Table 7.4). On the whole, Employer A's homeworkers tended to be older than the others.

The age of homeworkers' children varied (see Table 7.5), with older homeworkers not suprisingly having older children, i.e. their children were more likely to be aged 5-11 years while the other group more often had children under 5 years. Overall just over half the homeworkers had children under 11 years of age. Four had no children.

Education

As was expected many of the women could type but fewer could do short hand (see Table 7.6). It was most usual to have trained for these skills by means of either a short course or a diploma course rather than be self taught or to have learnt at school. There were eight women who could not type at all, all of whom were working for Employer A. Those women

whose primary work at home involved typing often had to take a proficiency test before being offered any work. However this did not seem to worry them unduly. As one woman said:

"I didn't mind doing it, I mean, if you know you can do it, it doesn't matter."

Cultural Background and Geographic spread

All the homeworkers in this sample were white and only two of them were born outside the U.K. This was expected because of the type of sampling used, i.e. it is likely that the snowball method will produce homeworkers with similar characteristics to the original respondents. The homeworkers who were contacted through their employers were also likely to have been white because of the areas where the employers were situated, i.e. middle class suburban London. It was frequently the case that existing homeworkers told their friends about their work so influencing employers to take on homeworkers similar to the ones they already employed.

All the homeworkers lived in or within 30 miles of London. This was due to time and the financial resources of the research. However it was those working for Employer A who lived further from the centre of London in one of the

adjoining counties and those doing primarily typing who lived within the London postal area.

Socio-economic circumstances

The following factors were considered jointly as measures of socio-economic circumstances in this study:

1. Housing tenure
2. Household amenities
3. Husband's occupation

However, although these aspects of a woman's life are undoubtedly important determinants of her overall circumstances, this list is not exhaustive. It seems likely that some important determinants have been omitted, e.g. that of household income and that of domestic responsibility (Roberts 1986). Women's primary role in caring for children (and men) may influence them to a greater extent than has hitherto been considered. As yet there is no method of categorising women which incorporates their domestic responsibilities, therefore the socio-economic factors above have been used to give an impression of the lives of homeworkers in this sample (Table 7.7). This picture by no means tells the whole story.

The vast majority of the homeworkers in this study lived in owner occupied accommodation. This was not suprising given the method of sampling whereby homeworkers were contacted through employers often situated in suburban areas where the majority of housing was privately owned. All of the homeworkers interviewed had use of a bath and toilet and nearly all of homeworkers' households had use of a car.

Although many of the homeworkers' households had the use of two cars, it was usual that one of the cars was for the husband's work. It seemed to be the case that if one car was out of action, the homeworker did not have free access to a car as either her husband took the other car or she had to ferry him around. Despite working at home, homeworkers often needed the car to collect and deliver their work as well as to take and fetch children from school.

Over half of homeworkers' husbands had jobs which fell into the professional and intermediate social classes. There seems to be little difference between the husbands' jobs, irrespective of how the homeworkers were contacted. Of the remaining husbands, five had a variety of both manual and non-manual jobs. The other five homeworkers were not married so this question was irrelevant to them.

Homeworkers' work histories

" The following information was collected in order to consider both generally and specifically the role of homeworking in women's lives.

Half of the homeworkers interviewed had worked outside the home before homeworking for nine years or more, i.e. nine out of 15 whom worked for Employer A (Table 7.8). While gaining this experience it was usual for homeworkers to have had several different jobs and there seems to be no difference between those working for Employer A and the others in the number of jobs they have had. It was also true that all the women tended to stay in their earlier jobs longer than their later ones, with one exception (Table 7.9).

The most usual type of work that these homeworkers had done before homeworking was not surprisingly secretarial or clerical work. Typing and administrative work was also common. Obviously, there was a greater likelihood of these homeworkers not working for Employer A to have had more experience of secretarial work than the others who have had more experience of clerical and administrative work. This was to be expected as earlier it was stated that those working for Employer A were less likely to know how to type

or do short hand, so one would expect them to be working in jobs other than secretarial ones.

In order to assess women's career progress before they left full time work and began homeworking their first and last job outside their home were compared (Table 7.10). These two jobs were chosen as it was felt that respondents were more likely to remember their first and last job than other changes in between.

There was some upward mobility as some women have shifted from clerical and typing jobs to secretarial and administrative jobs. Other movement included one change from professional and four from the 'other' category to either secretarial or administrative jobs. Given the kind of job they now had the women had on the whole, experienced downward occupational mobility (Dex 1987) on taking on homeworking.

The majority of women left full-time work outside the home to have children, i.e. all those who have children. The others left full-time work outside the home for a variety of reasons including ill-health, redundancy and moving house.

Another aspect of homeworkers' previous work history discussed was that of trades union involvement. The

majority had not been a member of a trades union. Some said they did not know anything about them, while others were strongly anti-union.

"Have you ever been a member of a trades union?"

"I'm allergic to trade unions!"

"Why's that?"

"Well I never knew how to spell vilification until I typed the Sogat '82 conference. You're not a member are you? .. um trade unions I'm afraid - I must be a Tory but definitely not I wouldn't touch it with a barge pole. No. I'm not into trade unions at all."

One woman who had been a member of a union said she was not in the union for political reasons but in order to stand up for her rights.

"When I was at the hospital I was a member of COHSE but that wasn't for political reasons that was for pure self preservation! Because the nursing officer had a habit of victimising people and when he did that the only hope was to get the union behind you and that was purely why I was in the union, no other reason."

Homeworkers were also asked whether they thought trades unions could help homeworkers. Some felt they were irrelevant, others suggested that they might help with conditions and several women felt that they might help homeworkers working in the more traditional homeworking industries.

"Do you think that trades unions could offer anything to people working at home?"

"Not me personally, I don't think, possibly because I feel I'm well looked after by the firm. I don't know what the shop rates are now but I'm sure they're equal to the shop rates but - like other workers who work at home might be able to benefit. The electrical people doing circuits and stuff, I'm sure could, but not me personally. No. I don't know, possibly they could, in that they [the union] might say you really ought to get your electricity paid for, using light bulbs, you could get a supply of light bulbs but I'm sure if it came down to that the firm wouldn't bother. They would just get people into the office to do the work. The same with the telephone -initially there's a lot of telephoning because of queries and stuff and to get an allowance for the telephone."

Homeworkers were also asked whether or not they had done any other kind of homeworking in the past, i.e. for another employer immediately before this one. Table 7.11 shows the types of work undertaken by the method of recruitment to this study.

Nearly one third of the women interviewed had done some kind of homeworking in the past. Not surprisingly two thirds of them had done clerical or typing at home. Those not working for Employer A were more likely to have done so.

Work Characteristics

The majority of homeworkers were introduced to homeworking through a friend who was homeworking at the time they were looking for work (Table 7.13). This was particularly true for those working for Employer A and coincided with their stated method of recruitment. The remaining homeworkers found work through advertisements in a local paper or shop window.

Almost half of the homeworkers in this sample had a six month gap or less between working outside and working at home (Table 7.12). Only two of these worked for Employer A which suggests that these women had a longer break from paid work than the others. As the majority of women left full-time work in order to have children it is not surprising that the shift towards employment at home is associated with the age of the youngest child. If the woman did not begin working at home within six months of leaving full-time work she was most likely to have begun after three years or more of not being in paid employment.

While just over half of the homeworkers had one job, notably those working for Employer A, the other homeworkers were more likely to have had two or more jobs (Table 7.14). A close look at the homeworkers with more than one job showed

that the third or fourth job may have been working for their husband, doing odd bits of typing for friends, or, in four cases, the homeworkers also had part-time work outside their homes.

Clearly this work pattern shows that earning an income is important enough for them to do more than one job and that, for some of them at least, part-time work is an available option. However, it also appears that part-time work alone may not be as attractive financially as the potentially longer and more flexible hours of working at home.

The examples below illustrate the complicated structure of work for some of the women:

a) This woman had 3 jobs:

- 1) she typed up to 5 hours a day, work from the employer interviewed;
- 2) she typed theses for students whenever she could;
- 3) worked in an estate agency every afternoon while her mother looked after the children.

b) This woman had four jobs:

- 1) 5-10 hours a week typing from employer interviewed;
- 2) 2-4 hours a week typing for another employer;
- 3) typing for her husband's firm (unpaid);

4) worked in a friend's office one day a week.

The homeworkers working for Employer A had been homeworking for longer than the other group, more than half had been homeworking for over eight years (Table 7.15). This reflects the fact that many of the homeworkers in this group were older than the others, as well as the likelihood that suitable alternative job opportunities were more limited in this area compared with those in central London. Of the remaining homeworkers 15 had been homeworking up to five years, one third of these were contacted through their employers.

This evidence also shows that although homeworking may be done by some women for a short period of time to 'fill in', many women are homeworking for a substantial length of time not as a 'one off thing.' This finding is verified by that of Allen (1983b) who noted that in some cases homeworkers have been working at home for many years; the maximum length of time she found was 30+ years.

There was some confusion about employment status (Table 7.16) with many homeworkers initially claiming they did not know what their employment status was, and then assuring the researcher that they were in fact self employed. In all, two thirds said they were self employed and seven that they

were employees. Significantly, those who said they were employees all worked for Employer A. Although the homeworkers considered themselves employees, their employer did not necessarily consider them as such: (for evidence see survey of employers Chapter Six). One homeworker said she was paid cash in hand and therefore had no legal employment status, and another that she did not know what her employment status was. Employment status (as discussed in Chapter Four) is important when operationalising the definition of a homeworker, but as the "working" definition adopted in this thesis is that homeworkers have an employer, those interviewed were considered homeworkers.

Homeworkers working for Employer A were paid noticeably less than the others (Table 7.17). This was unsurprising as coding work is considered less skilled than typing and hence is less well paid even when done in an office. Twelve were paid £1.75 per hour and four £2.05 per hour. One woman earning £1.75 an hour took great care to point out both that:

"This is not a great deal and it is not a regular income. While we were busy - I was getting about - some months I was getting £150."

But she went on to say:

"But then when its not busy you don't, you might get £60 and then nothing for a couple of months - you can't really say."

The other homeworkers pay ranged from £3.00 to £5.00 per hour with the average being £4.00 per hour. One homeworker was paid on a piece rate system and could not say how long it took her to type each piece - which is a common argument among employers for suppressing the wages of those working at home. The homeworkers were only paid for the actual work they did, not for the collection of work or for anyone else who helped them. (Those homeworkers working for Employer A were paid for training sessions for new projects.) None of the homeworkers received any holiday or sick pay, although one woman did report once receiving a Christmas bonus. None of them had a guarantee of work i.e. they did not know in advance how many hours a week or (if any) they would be working. They were telephoned and usually required to start immediately or the following day.

Many of the homeworkers working for Employer A said their earnings were too low to pay tax (Table 7.18). Only one typist said she did not pay tax (she was in fact the same woman admitting to receiving her wages in her hand and so had no legal employment status). The remaining homeworkers said they did pay tax. (No evidence of this was asked for, so it is possible that some women said they paid tax as they did not wish to be seen by an outsider as doing something illegal. In fact none of those working for Employer A were

earning enough to pay tax.) Although many of them, whose wages were too low to pay tax said they would pay tax if they earned more, there is no way of knowing if this is in fact so.

It also seemed to be the case that Employer A was well aware that there is a set amount which it is possible to earn before paying tax and they set the amount paid accordingly:

"There's an allowance for tax that married women can earn, and I think what the firm try and do is on the assumption that you do 20 hours a week - if you do 20 hours! - you can earn just about enough to keep you under that tax bracket. Every time that alters you know our rate seems to alter slightly, so I should think that's what they do - but I don't know, that's only my assumption."

"I don't earn enough to pay tax. They just keep us - I think you're allowed to earn so much a month - I am not sure - and they try and keep us below that and if you earn enough they keep it until the next month. So you don't really pay tax."

The majority of homeworkers worked between 15-24 hours a week, irrespective of whom they worked for (Table 7.19). However, there was a wide range of hours per week worked. Two women who worked more than forty hours a week lived alone with homeworking as their only source of income. (They were not working for Employer A.) The woman who did not say how many hours a week she worked was the only earner in the household. When asked how many hours she worked even approximately, she worked, her comment was:

"This I can't say. Seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. As long as there is work - mug's here!"

"Does the amount you do vary from week to week?"

"No! I do it whenever I've got it - I'm often to be found working at 2 o'clock in the morning. Aren't you glad you don't live next door? I am too!! And weekends, mostly weekends - I get a lot of work at weekends because the office is closed - on the other hand last summer I had 5 weeks without any work - that was the first time that happened."

This description shows very clearly that the supply of work can vary enormously and that although most homeworkers were able to give an approximate number of hours they worked each week, these are far from stable. Many women pointed out that some weeks they have a lot of work and others none at all. No doubt due to the irregularity of the work, 29 homeworkers said they did not have a set work routine and worked at various times of the day and night even if they would like to be able to do the work at a particular time. One woman who does typing for an agency said she worked in the evenings only.

25 out 30 homeworkers worked in a 'living room', whether that was the kitchen, bedroom or lounge, while five had a room which was used primarily for their work. Those homeworkers who had a room to work in were all doing typing and four of them were contacted through their employers, providing further evidence that they were 'good'

homeworkers.

More often the homeworkers had sole responsibility for collecting and delivering the work to be done (Table 7.20). However most of those worked for Employer A. A further third had some of the responsibility while only one homeworker had her work delivered and collected by her employer. One woman received her work by post and so rarely had verbal communication with her employer and never knew when or how much work would arrive. She told me:

"For instance it's been very quiet for two weeks, I hadn't had anything from him and then on Friday he sent through a package, it was two tapes with 69 letters on them!.....because it was a package the postman didn't deliver till lunchtime, I was going out in the afternoon because I didn't know it was coming - I'd made arrangements."

When talking about the collection and delivery of their work some homeworkers described getting help from their families. For example, one woman's father frequently went to and from the office for her because he could travel free on his pensioners' bus pass; two women had help from their husbands - one who collected and delivered the work himself and the other who often gave her lifts, and another woman who suffered from agoraphobia sometimes felt she could not go and collect her work alone and so asked her mother to go with her.

A common cost mentioned in many studies on homeworking is that of the homeworker having to carry the burden of running and maintaining the machines and sometimes paying for materials to do the work. In this study (Table 7.21), those working for Employer A had all their materials provided, including pens, paper, scissors, paperclips and so on. However amongst the remaining 14 homeworkers the burden of costs most commonly fell on them. Paper was the one exception, where some of the employers provided headed notepaper.

All the women doing typing had their own typewriters when they began, apart from one woman who had begun by hiring one until she had enough money to buy one.

Summary

Although this is a small sample survey there appeared to be differences amongst the homeworkers according to their method of recruitment to this study. However the differences between the two groups could also be attributed to the type of work they were doing, their geographical location and hence the job opportunities open to them.

There seemed to be little difference in the socio-demographic and work characteristics of those homeworkers doing primarily typing at home in relation to their method of recruitment to the study. i.e. either through their employers' recommendation or via other homeworkers.

As would be expected those homeworkers working for Employer A had fewer formally acquired qualifications than the other homeworkers in the sample. The typists nearly all had to provide evidence of their skill before being given work whereas the coders often had many years work experience yet were not tested in this way. However they were also on an initial trial period, after which, if they did not come up to the required standard, they were not given any more work, (see Chapter Six).

This categorisation of the homeworkers by their type of work is similar to that used by Luijken (1983). She describes two kinds of homeworkers - 'skilled' and 'nimble finger' homeworkers. In this instance those women doing typing and or secretarial work can be seen as the 'skilled' homeworkers and those doing coding as the 'nimble' finger homeworkers. (This is not to say that those doing coding work are unskilled but rather that they do not need formal skills to obtain the job.)

Luijken describes the 'skilled' homeworkers as being aged 25-40 years, married, in households whose financial position is good even without the woman's income. The 'nimble' finger homeworkers accept very low earnings because they need the money to supplement the family income to take care of basic needs.

It seems that many of the homeworkers in this study had characteristics which are similar to the 'skilled' homeworkers in the above typology. The distinction seems to refer to those doing 'white blouse' work and those doing manual work. Although these homeworkers are all doing 'white blouse' work there are differences between them which are associated with their type of work and as will be seen their attitudes to work.

As it seems likely that the main differences within this sample can be attributed to the type of work being done by the homeworker, i.e. typing or coding, rather than the method of recruitment from now on the two groups will be referred to as typists and coders. The woman who was a concert organiser and those doing primarily typing are classified as typists and those women doing primarily coding work for Employer A as coders.

Social aspects of homeworking

Having described the homeworkers in this study in terms of their socio-demographic and work characteristics, it is possible to consider the social factors involved in homeworking.

Reasons for homeworking

The first question to be asked in this section is why are these women homeworking? Overwhelmingly the most common reason given was that of having to look after children (Table 7.22). In fact 25/30 women said that childcare was a major factor in their decision to work at home. Other reasons included: one woman feeling she was too old to get another job (she was 52); another that her disability prevented her from getting a permanent job outside her home although she said she would like one; two women said that they had positively chosen to work at home and that there were no other factors in their lives which prohibited them from going out to work. Both were typists, lived alone and neither had family commitments such as young children or elderly relatives to look after.

This pattern of reasons was not unexpected and it was clear that, for all but two of the women, homeworking was not

something they would ideally choose to do. Other factors in their lives were important when they were deciding the type of work to undertake, notably having children. The fact of having children makes a substantial difference to women's lives whatever their reasons for working. Be it necessary for their financial or emotional situations or both, often their best available option was to do so at home.

One woman described her ambivalent feelings on the issue in the following way:

"There's a great need in women at times, opportunities arise and they start their careers and they have to decide whether stopping and having a family is worth it - I have doubts on that sometimes, some doubts, you think what are you getting out of life now, that you had a great job, good money and mixed with interesting and intelligent people and here you are with a baby that drains you physically and emotionally, you think what did I give all that up for? And then you have beautiful children that give you a lot of joy - I think it takes a lot of guts really for women who are in good jobs to give them up for children to start a home life, a family life.....But now it's a question of economics when you've got two children and one income, money gets a bit tight."

Although this woman had a 'good job' like her husband, she was the one who gave it up to look after the children rather than continue and pay for childcare facilities. It did not appear to be an option for her husband to do so. She went on to describe how she had looked for jobs which would fit

in with her children and had great difficulty finding one. In fact at the time of the interview she had several jobs including: typing at home in the morning, going out to a part time job in the afternoon while her mother looked after the children (her mother works in the mornings) and typing again in the evening at home. This woman described her life as "hectic" and felt although ideally she would prefer to be in employment outside her home she could not find a suitable job which allowed her to earn enough money to do so as she also had to care for her children. She said she was lucky she had her mother to help with the children:

"...if I had to pay someone to look after the children it wouldn't be worth going out to work - by the time I'd gone out to work, worked the hours and paid the baby minder I'd have made nothing. I don't have to pay my mother, I feed her and keep her warm and the money is mine."

Had she returned to work immediately following maternity leave, paying for childcare facilities would have been an economically viable option. Although she did not feel duty bound to care for her children full-time she had no choice but to work at home. Part-time work alone was not economically viable and she could not find full-time employment outside her home.

It is also interesting to consider what the women who had no domestic responsibilities gave as their reasons for working at home. Here is one woman's response:

"I think really the independence and I was going to say your own time but actually you have less time, because working most peculiar hours but it's nice not to have to think 9-5, or have somebody watching all the time, in fact you do have to work a lot harder. But having your independence and you have your ups and downs but it's far better. But there are other problems, work doesn't end."

This more positive view of working at home was not commonly expressed by the women interviewed for this survey. However it suggests that there are advantages to working at home apart from that of fitting in with other commitments.

How important is the money the homeworkers earn?

Table 7.23 shows that a third of the homeworkers in this study used the money for necessities. These were things like bills, food and clothes for the children. One woman said:

"I always say put it away and I'm after fitted wardrobes in the bedroom, but it's never gone to that, it's always gone to some bill or other."

This woman actually began working at home because she was helping her husband to go to college. The extra fares he needed were paid for out of her wages. Another woman said:

"Before I used to buy the children stuff but recently it's just been going into the household expenses, because we've only recently moved and we're finding it a bit difficult at the moment."

These women had no choice about whether they did paid work or not and homeworking was the best option available to them. Homeworking was seen as an option because of the commonly held view that women should be homemakers. Some homeworkers said they would not use nurseries unless they absolutely had to and pointed out that anyway school holidays and children's illnesses often made it impossible for them to find work other than that which could be done at home. Although many women do fit in paid work outside their homes around their child care responsibilities, for the homeworkers interviewed the disadvantages were paramount.

For three of the typists who said that the money was for necessities, homeworking was their only source of income. Two of these three women were those who had positively chosen to work at home. Two thirds of the homeworkers said the money was spent on a variety of things including luxury items such as holidays and clothes. One woman said the money was not essential to her now but she needed it when

she began for general household expenses. She also used it to buy herself clothes because as she said:

"I don't get a clothes allowance from my husband, just money for the household."

This example of spending money on clothes shows how the same items can either be a luxury or necessity depending on how the individual homemaker sees it. There is clearly a difference between the above homemaker and the following statement made by another one, although they both described using the money for luxuries such as clothes:

"I will just buy things that aren't essential, if the kids want a third sweatshirt and they've already got two, I just say fine, ok, have it."

The other major reason cited for homeworking as with other paid work done by women was that of independence. Many women felt earning their own money, however small, was important. They had been used to earning before having children and although many of them said their husbands did not mind what they spent, they felt better having some money of their own.

"It's nice to have a little bit of money of your own, you know, if you buy a present for your husband and you haven't got to take the money out of your [plural] account for that, you've got

money of your own."

Another woman described how it was important to her that she paid for things she considered extras such as:

"I've got grandchildren who don't live in this country and I like to feel that I pay to go and say hello."

Strictly speaking some of the women had some say in whether or not they took in homework. However one woman described how she felt her husband would like her to work:

"...but I don't think he'd put himself out to have time off to look after the children in the holidays because of my job. I feel he would like me to do something, you know, to contribute in some way, it isn't an awful lot."

Although this woman looked after her husband and two children, one of whom had spent much time in hospital, she was seen and saw herself as not contributing to the household. She said she was not dependent on the money but liked to know she would have it at Christmas time:

"I can spend more money without feeling guilty. And not having to keep asking for money it's nice, but I get the money [from her husband] there might be a few remarks but you know, it works out a few hundred you know, a large family but no not really dependent."

This woman and others emphasised that they spent their money on items that were not strictly necessary, e. g. a new car, a holiday or decorative items for the house. Although the money earned by homeworkers may be seen as a little bit extra in fact these women were raising the standard of living for their whole families. Items which have become common place for many families such as washing machines, cars and holidays abroad, would undoubtedly have been unobtainable without the woman's earnings. It seems that many of the women and their families expected these "extra" things; they have become "necessities", e.g.

"Well at the moment, we could live without it, you know, its for the perks really, it's nice to have."

"What sort of things?"

"Well it means we don't have to worry about holidays, ir we can eat quite well, if we fancy going out for a meal or something we can do that.....if the children want clothes it's no problem. But when we move it will be important, we can just about live when we move on my husband's money, but mine will be needed for the little extras we've become used to, which you do without in theory but will be hard. So once we move I'll have to work."

Advantages and disdvantages of working at home

In order to understand women's reasons for homeworking better, it is important to consider what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of work (Table

7.24).

The most common advantage was unsurprisingly that of flexibility i.e. that the work could be done to fit in with family commitments. In fact only those women without children did NOT mention this as an advantage. Homeworking was seen as better than work outside the home, (even though many homeworkers expressed this as a preference see below) because women could do things for their family as well as work. These included primarily caring for children but also other household duties. (One advantage was not having to deal with the cost and inconvenience of travelling to work from the suburbs.) Homeworkers described how they were able to go on working when their children are ill or on holiday and generally to fit their work in around their other commitments such as running the washing machine, cooking the dinner and so on.

"The advantages are you suit yourself and with a child at school the holidays aren't a problem or if they're ill it's no problem because you just work around them or you can do the work later in the evening, if they need you. So that's the advantage."

The second most common advantage mentioned was that homeworking provides interest and stops women feeling bored. It can be seen from the table, however, that those much more

likely to express this were coders. Several women confided that they did not like being JUST housewives. No recognition was given to the work involved in running a house and looking after children.

One woman said:

"Well, some of it [housework] I enjoy. (laughter). But really mainly it's something to keep me occupied; because I get bored at home. Housework's boring.....Lot's of my friends are bored at home, they don't like doing housework, they need something to do."

The mention of homeworking as preventing boredom throws some light on how caring for children, men and the home is not seen as 'work'. Although these women said that homeworking itself may be tedious, poorly paid and disruptive to family life, it is 'work' and as such seemed to provide some of the status that 'work' is given in our society. They felt they could contribute to the household budget in the way that is socially recognised by bringing money home. Although only one woman in this survey was supporting herself and her child solely with her homeworking, it should be recognised that many women doing homeworking are in this position (Bisset and Huws 1984). It should be acknowledged that homeworking could provide a less boring alternative to the tedium of some on-site work. Although this was not explicitly stated by any of the women interviewed.

Flexibility and avoidance of boredom were the most common advantages, although others mentioned skill maintenance and the fact that working at home meant more varied work. The majority of those homeworkers who felt working at home helped them maintain their skill were, unsurprisingly, typists. These same homeworkers also felt that the work was more varied than they sometimes got in an office because some of them had more than one source of work, and were given items with differing contents to type.

The most commonly stated disadvantages were those of insecurity of work and pressure of time to do the work when they received it. The coders mentioned insecurity slightly more often than the typists, who talked of the pressure they were under to finish the work in a certain time more often than the others. Examples of the insecure nature of the work included:

"...it's not regular money - you can't rely on the work being there, last week I didn't have any work - that's the main disadvantage."

"I'd like to work on a block job, like now, but you can't always do that. I'd like it to be more permanent so that there is a job for us to work on all the time. Last year, I think it was last year, we hardly had any work at all."

"They never guarantee it [work] at all."

"For all I know he [her employer] could decide to emigrate to Australia tomorrow or something. With a job in an office it's permanent but with

home typing it's like casual work. You never know how much you'll earn in a month or when you'll get the work. The biggest problem is the uncertainty."

Pressure to finish the work quickly was seen as inevitable and none of the homeworkers would overstep their deadlines unless something very unusual happened. Many felt that to say that they could not finish the work within the stated time could lead to not getting work in the future such as:

"...invariably with the agency there's a time limit to the work, you haven't got forever to do it. If they give it to you on Monday they invariably want it back Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday it depends what the work is. You've just got to get stuck in and do it.....home typing is irregular."

One woman explained how being unsure of a regular supply of work and having to do the work immediately when it came are linked.

"It's like a circle. You work for a supervisor [at the coding firm] and if you work alot, well they ask for you again so you work more but not otherwise. You often find yourself working for the same person [supervisor]"

It is clear that the more conscientious a worker you are, the more likely you are to be offered work. The uncertainty about the supply of work seems to keep the homeworker from

complaining as 'some work is better than none', thus making it an advantage to employers yet one of the greatest disadvantages to the homeworkers.

Three other common disadvantages mentioned were encroachment on family life, boredom and isolation. While these factors are not exclusive to homeworking, they may well be more problematic where the home is also the workplace. Over half the homeworkers interviewed felt that homeworking seemed to encroach on their family life. They described having to miss family outings, children complaining that their mothers could not play with them and husbands not being happy with piles of work in the sitting room. This applied to all homeworkers whatever work they did.

One woman said her husband sometimes got very annoyed when she was typing because she had to type on the dining room table in the same room where he watched television; he did not want the sound of her typewriter disturbing him. She described how this had led to a few arguments although she said they were not serious. She concluded that he could not really mind as he benefited from her extra money and she does typing for him as well.

Over half the homeworkers also mentioned boredom as a big disadvantage of working at home. The majority of these were

coders suggesting that coding work is more repetitive than typing. One woman said that at least with typing "you were doing different things every day". However, not all the typists had a variety of things to type, e.g. one woman typed house leases, another envelopes and a third short letters none of which can be said to be very stimulating.

Isolation at home was mentioned by just over half the homeworkers.

"It's a bit lonely sometimes, every day sort of working on your own and there's not a lot going on."

"I feel very isolated."

Other women compared working at home to working in an office and said they liked the company in an office and, in particular, that it was nice to have someone to talk to during the day. Homeworkers' isolation often led them to suggest that they worked harder at home; they described working while having their coffee or alternatively not charging their employers for the time they spent having a break which often meant a trip to the toilet.

Homeworkers' isolation is obviously important to the employer because not only does it seem that workers get more work done in any given time, but also they have little or no

opportunities to meet each other and discuss their difficulties which might lead to them demanding better conditions, wages and so on.

The disadvantages mentioned above should not be seen as separate from one another. As the work is irregular the homeworkers are under pressure to do it immediately it arrives to ensure that they will continue to receive work. The pressure they are under to finish in a certain time spills over to their home lives, often affecting not only them but their households as well. Feelings of isolation are likely to arise because of the pressure homeworkers are under from their families not to let the work interfere with their lives and from their employers to finish the work whatever time limit is set. Feeling that the work is boring is likely to be related to the reality of the work as well as the fact of being alone.

Other disadvantages that were talked about included: having to pay the cost of materials, maintenance of machines, 'phone calls and electricity which would all be paid for by the employer if they worked in an office. Others talked of their low pay and how they were sure they could earn more working in offices doing the same jobs.

However several women said they thought that their wages were similar to those of shop workers, cleaners or bar staff which realistically they felt were the only kind of jobs they could get, quite apart from whether this work would fit in with the domestic responsibilities which most of them had.

Another feeling that was expressed by a few homeworkers concerned their husbands' view of women working. One woman explained that although they desperately needed some more money ("money we could always do with"), her husband did not want her to go out to work where she thought she could earn more.

"I don't think anyone [in her family - husband and sons] particularly my husband wouldn't like me to do full time work. He doesn't believe in women working either - well not married women."

This homeworker felt she had enough to do in the house and appeared to accept that it was right that she should do all the housework.

"Well you can't expect men to do it, can you?"

This traditional view of the roles of men and women serves to make it acceptable for women to work at home. This woman felt she could put her family before anything else by

staying at home and yet she needed some extra money to help pay for day-to-day living. Working at home provides the solution to her dilemma of how to get hold of the much needed cash. In reality, she said she sometimes had to postpone essential washing or cleaning for a couple of days until she had more time, as the clerical work she did came erratically and she had to be finished as soon as possible after she got it. Although she did not always put her family first, she felt that she did so by staying at home. In this instance working at home was not seen as 'real' work by her family.

Homeworkers' satisfaction with working at home

Half of the women interviewed said their families felt fine about them homeworking, although some of them did go on to qualify that by saying e.g.

"It doesn't bother them [her family] at all, they've grown up with it. The youngest one is 17 and he's the only one at home now. As long as there's supper on the table and food in the fridge - it's fine."

Of the remaining homeworkers nearly half said their families were not unhappy with them working but that the family complained about such things as the typewriter making a

noise while they watched television and work taking up space in the living room. All of the women said their families benefitted, either directly or indirectly from the money they earned homeworking.

It was felt that possibly knowing other women working at home in the same position as themselves may make women feel less isolated and therefore more satisfied with working at home. Many of the women interviewed did know other homeworkers even if not very well. But this did not seem to make any difference to whether they were happy homeworking themselves.

Overall homeworkers' satisfaction with their work did not seem to detract from the fact that over half of those interviewed would rather go out to work.

Future work plans

In this section homeworkers' future work plans are considered. These are likely to be affected by several factors such as how satisfied a woman is homeworking, the reason why she is homeworking, her household's reaction to her homeworking, whether she knows any other homeworkers and her likelihood of getting work outside the home.

Nearly two thirds of the women interviewed said they would rather go out to work (Table 7.25), irrespective of whether they were typists or coders, e.g.

"I'd rather work [out] than be at home to be honest, as soon as they're both at school all day I'd like a more part time job.....If you work in an office if you're busy then you do your work straight away and then you have to wait for it to come in, but once 5.30 or whatever comes that's it, you don't have to worry about it anymore, but whereas at home you've always got the papers lying around."

"Well ideally I prefer to go to the office say - to work because you've got more going on, company, people it's a bit lonely sometimes every day sort of working on your own and there's not alot going on."

Less than one third of the homeworkers interviewed said they were satisfied working at home and made no mention of wanting to change their situation.

Homeworkers' feelings of satisfaction were not straight forward. Many of the women who said they would rather go out to work would not consider themselves dissatisfied at the moment. They realistically accepted the expectation that because they were women they would carry out the majority of the domestic responsibilities for the family, and, given this assumption, for many women the advantages of homeworking outweighed the disadvantages so making them feel satisfied. The most common reason given for working at home

was young children, and it is clear that children's ages would not only affect a woman's ability to work at home (with older children it seemed to be easier to do the work), but also how satisfied she felt about the job and what her future plans would be. e.g.

"Well the last few months I've been looking for something just a couple of days a week, but you see I only look when I'm not busy, when I'm busy I haven't got time to look. It seemed like a good idea at the time but frankly I can't afford to because I'm well enough paid working at home, because I can work weekends, all the hours God sends sort of thing, I can make far more than I could going out to work. So I can't really afford to go out to work now."

A homemaker's satisfaction is also likely to be affected by her ability to change her situation. If a woman feels she has no alternative but to work at home she may adapt to the situation and hence feel more satisfied. The older women in the study were less sure about wanting to go out to work.

Many homeworkers said they would prefer to go out to work, their future plans did not necessarily incorporate this wish. Of the 19 who would prefer to go out to work 12 said that they would continue homeworking.

A higher proportion of typists wanted to go out to work although a higher proportion of them also thought they were

likely to continue homeworking. Overall only two women thought they would increase their amount of homework and four that they would decrease it. For the majority of homeworkers it was difficult to imagine any change in the work that they were doing.

Homeworkers were also asked which sort of work they preferred. Here more women than before (over two thirds) suggested they would like to work outside their homes. Amongst these women the majority preferred the idea of part-time work saying that it would enable them to combine their commitments and work in the best possible way. e.g.

"I'd like to go back to banking because that's all I really know, because I think they do split - two women can work together can't they?"

"Jobshare?"

"Yes, that's right, that would be rather nice."

"I've been thinking about that [a part time job] lately, but I wouldn't want a job where I had to get ready for work everyday, if I could find something that was perhaps 2 full days - 16 hours let's say, and the rest of the week free, that would be heaven to me and it would all be out the way."

"I always planned to go back to work when the children are settled in school (5-6 years), I can't say yet whether I'd seek a career, I wouldn't do that till the children are much older, but I wouldn't just be a 'lady of leisure'! I couldn't afford to do that, economics don't dictate that you can do that."

Six women wanted to work full-time and four wanted to stay homeworking.

The types of work most preferred by homeworkers were secretarial, clerical and administrative work. Also mentioned were the caring professions with four women suggesting they would like to do nursing, care for children or the elderly. These different jobs can all be classified as jobs more usually done by women. Unsurprisingly, for many of those interviewed the opportunity to get any other kind of training or work experience leading to other less traditional jobs for women had simply not arisen. Overall, women put their family commitments above their career aspirations. One woman summed up her reasons for trying to go out to work like this:

"I'd love to work locally, but I think it would be better off financially to go up to London and that would make a difference, if you're going out to work for money rather than ambition."

Homeworkers were specifically asked about their experience of new office technology. It was thought that this development would affect what work they might do in the future. Five women already had experience of using a word processor in an office and a further eight said they would happily train to enable them to do a job. Several women had not made up their minds about whether they would want to

train to use new machines, others said they had never thought about it. Only two women said definitely that they would not consider using it at all, one of whom was in her 50's and did not expect to be working much longer. It was clear that the coders were less happy with the idea of working with computers and also less likely to have an idea about what they would like to do once they were able to work outside their homes. (At the time of the interviews the coders had not considered the possibility of doing their work using a computer terminal but this is a likely development.)

Discussion

The evidence presented here shows that the women in this study had mostly put their domestic responsibilities before any future work plans and as a consequence were unlikely to have clear career aspirations. There was little questioning of the role they were expected to play in bringing up children and looking after the house; they accepted this as 'normal'. This approach was the most realistic one to take as the majority of their partners would not take time off work to look after the children.

Having become mothers the majority of women had no choice as to the kind of job they could get. As well as insufficient childcare facilities for their children (and some women not wishing to use them anyway), the homeworkers repeatedly told of how full-time work did not accommodate a family. When asked about working part-time most felt that because the school day is so short, school holidays long, and children's illnesses do not always occur when it would be convenient for them to take time off work, it was therefore was not a viable option for them personally. (Some recognised that it suited other women to work part-time.) Homeworking is therefore the best solution open to many women. One woman described how she had given up a 'good' job to have children, and although she said her children gave her a lot of happiness she also felt strongly that:

"Soon after you've had your family you get another feeling you want to go back to work you don't want to be dragged down all the time, you want to be up there and involved in what's going on in the world rather than be trapped basically in your home."

Tables relating to the homeworkers' survey

EMP = through employers

HW = through homeworkers

'A' = through Employer A

Table 7.1 Homeworkers' current type of homework by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Current type of work</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
typing	8	1	-	9
concert organisation	-	1	-	1
coding	-	-	12	12
combination	1	3	4	8
Total	9	5	16	30

Demographic Characteristics

Table 7.2 Homeworkers' marital status by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
married	5	4	16	25
single	1	-	-	1
divorced	2	-	-	2
separated	1	1	-	2
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.3 Homeworkers' number of children by method of recruitment to the study

<u>No. of children</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
0	2	2	-	4
1	2	1	2	5
2	4	1	12	17
3	-	1	2	3
4	1	-	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.4 Homeworkers' age in years by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Age in years</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
20-24	-	-	-	-
25-29	1	-	1	2
30-34	2	4	-	6
35-39	3	1	5	9
40-44	2	-	6	8
45-49	-	-	1	1
50-54	1	-	3	4
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.5 Homeworkers' age of youngest child by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Age in years</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
0-1	2	1	-	3
2-3	1	2	-	3
4-5	-	-	3	3
6-7	-	-	-	-
8-9	-	-	3	3
10-11	1	-	5	6
12-13	1	-	1	2
14-15	1	-	-	1
16-17	-	-	3	3
18+	1	-	1	2
Not App.	2	2	-	4
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.6 Homeworkers' education and training by method of recruitment to the study

Qualifications		Method of recruitment			n
		EMP	HW	'A'	
None		5	1	12	18
Degree		1	1	-	2
Diploma(not sec.)		2	1	1	4
Sec. Diploma		1	1	2	4
Business Stud. Dip.		-	1	1	2

Typing	-Yes	9	5	8	22
	-No	-	-	8	8
Short hand	-Yes	3	4	6	13
	-No	6	1	10	17

<u>Trained</u>					
TYPING					
self		2	1	-	3
school		3	-	1	4
short course		3	3	3	9
diploma course		1	1	4	6
Not applicable		-	-	8	8
SHORT HAND					
self		-	-	-	-
school		1	-	1	2
short course		1	3	2	6
diploma course		1	1	3	5
Not applicable		6	1	10	17
Total		9	5	16	30

Table 7.7 Homeworkers' socio-economic circumstances by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Housing Tenure</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
local authority	1	-	-	1
privately rented	1	1	1	3
owner occupier	7	4	15	26
<u>Access to cars</u>				
0	3	-	1	4
1	4	4	6	14
2	2	1	9	12
<u>Husband's Occupation</u>				
Professional	-	1	3	4
Intermediate	3	2	8	13
Non-manual	1	1	1	3
Manual	-	-	2	2
In Emp. (not stated)	1	-	-	1
Retired	-	-	1	1
Not Applicable	4	1	-	5
Not Stated	-	-	1	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.8 Number of years working outside the home before homeworking by method of recruitment to the study

No. of years	Method of recruitment			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
1	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	1
3	1	-	1	2
4	-	-	-	-
5	-	2	-	2
6	1	-	3	4
7	1	1	2	4
8	-	1	1	2
9+	5	1	9	15
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.9 Mean length of stay in previous jobs in years

Jobs	Mean years	n
1	3.53	30
2	3.37	24
3	2.73	17
4	2.00	8
5	3.00	1

Table 7.10 Kind of work done by homeworkers' in previous jobs

<u>Kind of work</u>	<u>First job</u>	<u>Last job</u>
	n	n
secretarial	7	12
clerical	9	6
typist	4	3
professional	2	1
admin.	2	6
other	6	2
Total	30	30

Table 7.11 Previous kind of work done at home by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Kind of work</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
wig making	-	1	-	1
circuit boards	-	-	1	1
selling Tupperware	-	-	1	1
clerical	1	-	1	2
typing	2	2	-	4
Total	3	3	3	9

Table 7.12 Number of Years in between working outside the home and homeworking by method of recruitment to the study

<u>No. of years</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
0.5	7	4	2	13
1.0	-	-	1	1
1.5	-	-	-	-
2.0	-	-	1	1
2.5	-	-	-	-
3.0	1	-	3	4
3.5	-	-	1	1
4.0	-	-	1	1
4.5	-	-	1	1
5.0+	1	1	6	8
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.13 Homeworkers' introduction to homeworking by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
advert	3	2	4	9
friend	5	2	12	19
prev. employer	1	-	-	1
combination	-	1	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.14 Homeworkers No. of current jobs by method of recruitment to the study

<u>No. of jobs</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
1	1	2	15	18
2	4	1	1	6
3	3	2	-	5
4	1	-	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.15 Homeworkers' length of time homeworking in years by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Time in years</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
0-1	1	2	-	3
2-3	2	2	3	7
4-5	4	-	1	5
6-7	-	-	2	2
8-9	-	-	6	6
10+	2	1	4	7
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.16 Homeworkers' employment status by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Employment Status</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
Employee	-	-	7	7
Self employed	8	5	8	21
Don't know	-	-	1	1
Not Applicable	1	-	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.17 Homeworkers' pay per hour by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Pay per hour</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
1.75	-	-	12	12
2.05	-	-	4	4
3.00	-	1	-	1
3.50	3	-	-	3
4.00	2	4	-	6
4.50	1	-	-	1
5.00	2	-	-	2
Not known	1	-	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.18 Whether homeworkers paid tax by method of recruitment to the study

Tax paid	Method of recruitment			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
Yes	8	5	-	13
No	1	-	-	1
Earnings too low	-	-	16	16
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.19 Number of hours homeworkers worked per week by method of recruitment to study

Hours	Method of recruitment			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
0-4	-	-	-	-
5-9	1	3	-	4
10-14	1	-	3	4
15-19	1	-	7	8
20-24	2	1	4	7
25-29	2	-	2	4
30-39	-	-	-	-
40+	1	1	-	2
Not Stated	1	-	-	1
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.20 Homeworkers' responsibility for collecting and delivering the work by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
Homeworker	3	-	16	19
Employer	-	1	-	1
By post	1	-	-	1
Combination	5	4	-	9
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.21 Maintenance of machines and necessary equipment for those doing primarily typing (i.e. NOT those working for Employer A) by method of recruitment to the study

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Method of recruitment</u>		
<u>of homeworker</u>	EMP	HW	n
ribbons	8	4	12
paper	1	2	3
rubbers	9	4	13
machine maint.	8	4	12

<u>Responsibility</u>			
<u>of employer</u>			
ribbons	1	1	2
paper	3	2	5
rubbers	-	1	1
machine maint.	1	-	1

There were six homeworkers who sometimes had to supply their own paper, yet at other times this was provided by the employer.

Table 7.22 Homeworkers' reasons for working at home by method of recruitment to the study

Reasons	Method of recruitment			
	EMP	HW	'A'	n
child(ren)				
single parent	2	-	-	2
two parents	3	3	12	18
elderly relatives	-	-	1	1
disability	1	-	-	1
positive choice	1	1	-	2
combination of				
reasons	2	1	3	6
Total	9	5	16	30

Table 7.23 How homeworkers' money is spent by type of work done

Money for	Typists	Coders	TOTAL
necessities	4	6	10
other items	9	10	19
Not stated	1	-	1
Total	14	16	30

**Table 7.24 Advantages and disadvantages of working at home
by type of work done**

<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Typists</u>	<u>Coders</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
flexibility/family conven.	10	16	26
interest/stop boredom	4	14	18
skill maintenance	5	1	6
more varied work	4	-	4
other	-	3	3

Total	23	34	57

<u>Disadvantages</u>	<u>Typists</u>	<u>Coders</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
insecurity of work	9	14	23
pressure of time	13	10	23
encroachment on family	9	8	17
boredom	3	14	17
isolation	6	10	16
other	3	-	3

Total	43	56	99

Table 7.25 Homeworkers' future plans and satisfaction
with homeworking by type of work done

Future plans	<u>Satisfaction with homeworking</u>								
	<u>Rather go out</u>			<u>Happy</u>			<u>Don't know</u>		
	T	C	Tot	T	C	Tot	T	C	Tot
Increase in H.W.	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
Decrease in H.W.	1	2	3	-	-	-	1	-	1
Continue as now	6	6	12	2	3	5	-	2	2
Don't know	1	2	3	1	-	1	-	1	1
Total	9	10	19	4	3	7	1	3	4

(T = Typists C = Coders Tot = Total)

CHAPTER EIGHT

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Introduction

This chapter aims to examine further the themes developed in the research carried out for this thesis. The relationship between homeworkers and their employers is explored first, followed by a brief comparison of LS clerical homeworkers with those interviewed for this research. Finally, secretarial and clerical homeworking is compared with other kinds of homeworking.

Relationship between the homemaker and employer

In order to gain a better understanding of the nature of secretarial/clerical homeworking, the relationship between the homemaker and employer is considered thereby bringing together the two surveys conducted for this research.

The first factor to note is that both the homeworkers and employers in this study were women. (In some cases those who contracted work to the agencies were men, but they did not deal directly with the homeworkers.) Usually studies of homeworking include female homeworkers and male employers.

This is not because they specifically exclude female employers but there are seemingly very few of them. However this study shows that employers of homeworkers can be women. This is likely to be because of the type of work studied - clerical/secretarial - which is well documented as being sexually segregated (McNally 1979).

The employers included in this study provide a service which until recently has not been recognised as part of the wide range of work which is done at home. When the jobs included here are done in an office they are almost exclusively done by women. This fact is borne out by the evidence from these women's own work histories as well as other studies of this kind of work (McNally 1979, West 1982).

The fact that the employers and homeworkers are women seems to make a difference to the relationship between them. Often the employer was characterised by the homeworker as "understanding" (Freeman 1982) when they had problems with completing the work. These included caring for sick children or relatives. As Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) have stated:

"This kind of interaction between supplier and homeworker ensures that production requirements are met, while at the same time fostering the illusion that homeworking permits an unusual degree of autonomy." (P.119)

Uniquely, one woman's employer helped her get home with all her work:

"If I have too much work [for the bus], because we don't have a car - most of the girls have - but we haven't, no they pay for a taxi for me."

"They pay it?"

"Oh yes, they pay it. Oh yes they're very good like that because the work is so heavy. I mean that box today - I sneaked in all my shopping as well!"

This caring attitude is further reinforced by the ideology used by some of the employers to justify having homeworkers. Some saw themselves as helping other women in situations which they had experienced.

This understanding can, and does, lead homeworkers to feel obligated towards their employers. Homeworkers reported that they did not like to say no to any work, as they did not really want to upset their employer who had asked them 'nicely' if they could do the work quickly as a favour to them, e.g. they were 'in a jam'. Another way homeworkers were made to feel respected was by employers placing their trust in them with regard to time keeping. This was rarely if ever abused and made homeworkers feel an important part of the firm for whom they worked.

This approach was successful as it made homeworkers see their work more positively. Some talked about their employers being friendly when they went to collect and deliver work. This usually meant a great deal to them, as often they were stuck at home all day with only young children to talk to. One employer in particular was described as having a really friendly office with all the 'girls' who worked there being very kind.

However this image of the understanding employer was NOT universal. One homeworker described her fear of her employer finding out that she went out to work one day a week or that she occasionally did typing for others.

"She doesn't know I do other work. She's very possessive about her girls and doesn't like them to be shared."

The difference in approach of the two employers may well represent the difference between a firm that is putting out its own work to be done at home and one which is acting as an agent for clients e.g. a secretarial agency. In the latter case the process of subcontracting meant that the agency and therefore the homeworker was not encouraged to take an interest in the subject of the work whereas the coding firm hoped for some commitment on the part of the homeworker to ensure that the coding was done correctly.

(Each coded questionnaire could not be checked in the way typing is routinely checked.)

Both the understanding and the fear are mechanisms by which the employer ensures control of the homeworker. Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) describe how employers make allowances for homeworkers' other commitments in such a way that they see things as privileges which are in fact :

"....commonly provided employment benefits."
(P.120)

In this survey homeworkers described how they went shopping as well as going to collect and deliver work, occasionally kept extra pens or paper, and even more occasionally charged employers for time spent going to the toilet or drinking coffee. All these activities would be taken for granted if they were inworkers and not seen as extras on top of what they are entitled to. Employers use their control whether consciously or otherwise to ensure that homeworkers are dependent on them for work.

The most common employment conditions are, of course, more suitable to employers than homeworkers. They control the supply of work and all the other material conditions, such as the type and amount of work, its regularity and hence the

homeworker's income. (As stated earlier Employer A appears to adjust the homeworkers' wages so that they stay below the tax threshold.) Other wages are also controlled and as one homeworker working for an agency said of her employer:

"I'm sure she gets double what I do. But I suppose she deserves it though, making all those contacts. I couldn't do it."

Throughout there is an acknowledgement from the homeworkers that their situation is far from perfect but that they were not in a position to change it.

"What sort of job could I get with two children to look after?"

Another way in which the homeworker is misled by her employer is in the area of employment status. The consistent confusion about employment status comes in part, from the employer talking about 'distance employment' and 'freelancers'. This creates a situation where homeworkers are perceived to have an elevated status. Homeworkers often do not see themselves as 'homeworkers' ("that's sewing or doing circuit boards") but rather as having a special status. In particular coders described themselves in the following way:

"It's an odd situation, for tax purposes we are self employed. We have no tax deducted from our earnings but for National Insurance contribution purposes we are employees and our National Insurance contributions are deducted from our earnings."

However, many homeworkers were clear that they were self employed and knew exactly what that meant i.e. no holiday or sick pay, pensions and so on. Being classed as self employed absolves the employers from obligations to the homeworkers they would otherwise have to consider, were the women doing the same work and classed as employees.

Homeworkers' view of the coding firm, in particular, was affected by the understanding attitude it projects, one of the homeworkers mentioned her low wages in the following manner:

"Would you say you're satisfied with the pay then?"

"Not really no. I think it warrants really more than what they pay ...I just assume that they pay all they can. That's all there is to it."

Other homeworkers working for the same firm also talked about their feelings of being underpaid and also undervalued.

Below, one of them was talking about her low pay in relation to an experience she had the previous day when she had to go to the office and collect a new lot of work and be briefed about it:

"It struck me yesterday, we had this briefing, there were half a dozen of us, with very intellectual researchers from town, you all sitting around there earnestly discussing trades unions and I thought good grief, what am I doing here for £1.75 an hour! It seemed you know....."

This woman was aware of the irony of her situation but did not foresee any changes in the immediate future.
(Researchers please take note!)

Another woman working for the same firm had strong feelings about the way the homeworkers are treated. She herself was an assistant supervisor and had been working hard for the firm for about 10 years. Sometimes she got up at 6.00 a.m. to finish work on time. However she was leaving in the next few months as her husband had just been moved by his firm.

"I do feel that there's a definite feeling of them and us and with the firm, not the people I work with [the local office] not that at all, but the head office, there's definitely a them and us. When they come they never speak to you or - and in spite of the fact that they know you've been there all the years and they know you, there's never even a good morning or anything and I feel that's oh - a Christmas card or something wouldn't hurt, I mean I know it sounds very twee sort of thing really, but they definitely

don't make you feel that you're part of them and yet without us, the freelancers, the homeworkers there wouldn't be a firm, so I feel that's a disadvantage really, they could integrate us just a little bit more to make you feel a bit more part of the firm.....I shall get fired for this, a good job I'm leaving anyway!...The people in the office here are all smashing and they realise and try and smooth over the ripples."

Overall, it can be seen that the relationship between the homeworker and her employer is not an equal one. Homeworkers are dependent on the employers for their work which is always extremely important to them, whether strictly financially or otherwise.

The evidence from the employers' survey suggested that the homeworkers interviewed would more likely be the 'good' ones i.e. those who are faithful to their employers. Nothing to the contrary was discovered. Seemingly these homeworkers have less to complain about than others their employers did not want interviewed, and yet they still had grievances. This suggests that an even worse picture of the situation for homeworkers could have been painted had all those employed been interviewed. It is also likely that had any information been collected on the employers who refused to be interviewed, then the description of this kind of homeworking would have been even more exploitative than it already appears.

Comparison of the LS homeworkers with those included in the interview study

The purpose of the interview study carried out for this project was to look in greater detail at the homeworkers identified in the LS who had not been previously studied.

Having decided that the most practical way of contacting homeworkers was through their employers and by snowball sampling, it is important to consider whether they were typical of the homeworkers identified in the LS.

A total of 373 women clerical homeworkers were identified in the LS of whom 156 lived in the South East region of England and Wales. This represents 15,600 homeworkers in the region as a whole. In the interview study 30 homeworkers were contacted.

A detailed comparison between the homeworkers interviewed and those in the LS is possible, but as those interviewed are not intended to be a representative sample this would be inappropriate.

Discussion

Inevitably, the homeworkers interviewed represent a small section of homeworkers in the LS. Interestingly, even with this group of homeworkers, who had fewer reasons to 'avoid the census', it is possible that up to 50% of the 22 women working at home did not admit to doing so at census. They are a more homogeneous sample and possibly less representative of homeworkers as a whole than those in the LS, most likely because of the method of sampling used. Many groups of secretarial/clerical homeworkers are unrepresented in the interview study such as envelope fillers. From the evidence in this study it appears that these homeworkers are from 'middle class' upwardly mobile backgrounds and do not conform to the traditional image of a 'working class' migrant homeworker.

However, there are likely to be still more single parents, those with disabilities and those with other reasons for working at home than bringing up children, amongst homeworkers than the LS suggests.

Comparison of clerical homeworking with other studies on homeworking

Is there any evidence that clerical homeworkers are different in any way from homeworkers doing other types of work?

Initially it appears that clerical homeworkers have many characteristics in common with other homeworkers: they were women with pre-school or young children and usually had no control over either the supply or conditions of their work.

However, to equate clerical homeworkers directly with other homeworkers would obscure the differences that do exist between the two groups of workers, such as their actual rates of pay and the material conditions of their lives. As has become obvious in Chapter Seven, clerical homeworkers may be paid on an hourly basis, rarely heard of among homeworkers in other homeworking occupations, and often live in owner occupied housing with access to a car. In this respect these homeworkers are similar to those working as computer programmers (Huws 1984) rather than any others. For example, while Beale (1978) was not able to contact any homeworkers in an area of privately owned housing, the majority of clerical homeworkers interviewed for this study owned their own homes.

This study was similar to others in that it concentrated both on a particular geographic area and on a specific kind of homeworking. The initial method of contacting homeworkers had not been used previously and it did not seem more or less successful in that the final number of homeworkers interviewed -30- is typical of other studies.

In Allen's study of West Yorkshire she found that many homeworkers consider themselves employees of the firms they work for and yet their employers see them as self employed. This difference of opinion about employment status was evident particularly among the coders, whilst the typists seemed clearer about their positions in relation to their employers. It is because of the variable conditions of work that Allen (1983b) called homeworkers 'a casualised labourforce' (P.664). There is evidence from their patterns of work that these homeworkers are also casualised. Clerical homeworkers, like others, sometimes work for long periods of time and then have periods without work. They may work full- or part-time and often for many years, thereby supporting Allen's thesis.

There are two other parallels to be drawn between Allen's study and this one. Both show that homeworkers get help from other family members in order to carry out or collect and deliver their work. In Allen's study over half of those

who helped were paid by the homeworkers. This practice was not observed among these secretarial/clerical homeworkers, possibly reflecting the higher level of formal training involved in this kind of work.

The second factor common to both studies (and presumably this applies to other homeworkers too), is that husbands and whole families benefit materially from the woman's earnings and from the social status that they gain from e.g. owning their own home while at the same time husbands maintain the status men traditionally gain by being able to 'keep' a wife at home (Allen and Wolkowitz 1987). While some of the women have a say in whether or not they go out to work, to do so was apparently incompatible with their other commitments.

Economic constraints can clearly make homeworking preferable to part-time, or even full-time work outside the home once it is recognised that this extra income is not merely "pin money". Domestic commitments, particularly child care, are a hidden cost, avoided through homeworking with its flexible and potentially longer hours. For some homeworkers the availability of cheap child care provision, or after school facilities, might open up other employment possibilities, although some might still continue to do homeworking for other reasons e.g. social constraints, such as commitment to

women's role as primary home maker.

Other conditions of work reported in this study which correspond to other findings (e.g. Cragg and Dawson 1981), include homeworkers having to pay for the cost of their machines, materials, heating, lighting and so on.

In order to look at this study in more detail, it was decided to compare these homeworkers with those working with New Technology (NT). These two sets of workers seem more alike and therefore one would expect similarities between them. The evidence about NT homeworkers is taken from Huws (1984) which concentrated on computer programmers (Table 8.1).

Work Experience

Homeworkers in both groups were in their thirties and had all had many years work experience. Clerical homeworkers were slightly more likely to leave their full-time work because they were pregnant than NT homeworkers. However the latter group were much more likely to have children under five years old. This may be because NT homeworkers have a more marketable skill and so find it easier to go back to work once their children are at school. Secretarial/clerical homeworkers were more likely to have found their work

through an informal network such as friends than through advertisements, whereas NT homeworkers were likely to find work in a variety of ways including working directly for their most recent on-site employer and also other employers. The average length of time for a woman to be homeworking was six years for secretarial/clerical workers and four and a half years for the others. However there was a wide range in the number of years homeworking with some NT homeworkers having worked for up to 20 years at home. The length of time a woman has spent homeworking is likely to be related to the age(s) of her child(ren).

Conditions of work

Both groups of homeworkers were more likely to have one employer, although a significant minority of secretarial/clerical homeworkers did have two or three employers. NT homeworkers, on the other hand, were more likely than the secretarial/clerical homeworkers to have more than four employers. This suggests, as Huws (1984) pointed out, that some of the NT homeworkers may well be genuine freelancers, selling their services to a number of different clients. Two of the secretarial/clerical homeworkers may be in this position too, i.e. the ones working at home through positive choice and with no extraneous reason prohibiting them from going out to work.

Both groups of homeworkers had regular contact with their employers. This involved the collection and delivery of work and occasional discussion about it. This is somewhat different from other homeworking where contact is often through an agent (Ladbury 1979). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.

The likelihood of homeworkers being classified as self-employed was far greater amongst the secretarial/clerical homeworkers than among the computer programmers. From this study, it is clear that even though some of the clerical homeworkers thought they were employees, the interview with their employer showed them all to be self employed. It is not possible to know whether this is the case with NT homeworkers. If it is, then the percentage of those self-employed is likely to increase and may in fact be similar to that for secretarial/clerical homeworkers.

Homeworkers' pay is notoriously low especially when account is taken of the items homeworkers pay for which would normally be paid for by the employer, such as phone calls, machine maintenance, materials and so on. As there have been no previous studies of secretarial/clerical homeworkers it is difficult to know whether the wages recorded in this study are typical or not.

However, the study of NT homeworkers did include some clerical homeworkers and an average hourly pay was calculated for them separately from other professionals. It is not possible to directly compare the rates for the two groups of NT workers with the two groups in this study (Typists and coders). This is because although the coders were doing general clerical work which can be reasonably compared, there is no equivalent for the typists (as those doing word processing only were not separately identified in Huws' study). The latter group need higher formal qualifications and often see themselves as working at home partly in order to maintain their skill so do not fall in the clerical category and yet nor are they equivalent to computer programmers.

It can be seen that the clerical homeworkers interviewed in this study earned less per hour than those included in Huws' study (£1.79 : £2.66). However, this comparison is not necessarily significant as all of these homeworkers in this study worked for one employer. Additionally, it is possible that there would be geographic differences in pay between the two studies with the clerical workers in Huws' study coming from all over the country and the ones in this research coming from in and around London.

Two other easily drawn comparisons are that of the number of hours worked per week and homeworkers' work preferences. Secretarial/clerical homeworkers work slightly fewer hours per week on average, than computer programmers. There is no significant difference between the two groups on this, with both groups working approximately a 20 hour week.

Other studies of homeworking vary in their reporting of the number of hours worked per week by homeworkers. Allen (1981) found that most of the homeworkers in her study worked between 11 and 30 hours per week. Her finding is similar to that in this study although there is still a wide range of hours worked from five to 40+.

Attitudes to work

There are, however, clear differences in the percentages of those who would prefer to work at home and those who would prefer to go out to work in an office. NT homeworkers were more likely to want to work at home than in an office (33% as opposed to 24%), and even more likely not to be able to state a preference (41%). However, secretarial/clerical homeworkers would rather go out to work than work at home (63% as opposed to 23%), and only a few of them were unsure about where they would like to work (13%). The reasons for the different work preferences between the two groups may be

due to the following:

1) the age of their children - in this instance NT homeworkers had children who were younger than the other homeworkers so they may be more reluctant to even consider going out to work;

2) the content of the work i.e. those working with NT might have more interesting work;

3) it may be that the status associated with working with NT is greater thereby providing more job satisfaction for those working with it, even to those working at home.

Overall, the differences between the workers in these studies seem slight. There are more similarities, especially when the advantages and disadvantages of homeworking are discussed. Overwhelmingly the NT homeworkers gave childcare as an advantage associated with working at home yet they also cited having the children around as a disadvantage. Huws (1984) describes one homeworker's situation by stating:

"...the main advantage of her work [is] 'being with the children all day' and then she says that the main disadvantage is 'being with the children all day'." (P.43)

This feeling was also expressed in the secretarial/clerical study, with homeworkers citing convenience with the family and encroachment on family life as an advantage and disadvantage respectively.

Conclusions

Overall, the impression gained from both these studies is that homeworkers are highly responsible workers who can be relied upon to finish work whenever it is required, even if it affects their family lives. This does not mean to say that they are happy with these conditions but rather that there is no alternative available to them.

Bisset and Huws (1984) state that:

"It is sometimes suggested that small scale surveys such as our own attract a particularly disgruntled set of respondents and therefore highlight the less attractive aspects of homeworking." (P.34)

This criticism could not easily be applied to the study of secretarial/clerical homeworkers as it is biased towards non-complainers; yet, as this study clearly shows, even the loyal homeworkers, who were allowed to be interviewed, see disadvantages and are far from happy with the way in which homeworking is organised.

It seems that most homeworkers, whatever their job, have little or no choice about accepting the conditions laid down by their employers. Bisset and Huws (1984) go on to say that homeworking:

"...should be viewed in the context of the choices available to working mothers, inadequate childcare or no paid employment at all." (P.36)

This applies to the secretarial/clerical homeworkers in this study as more of the women had children aged between five and 11 years than the NT homeworkers. This indicates that child care facilities are important even when the child goes to school and that it can be as difficult for a woman with primary school children to work as one with pre-school children.

However many women do combine going out to work with the care of young children suggesting that future research could investigate the differences between these groups of women more closely. At the moment the school day, holidays and children's illnesses all contribute towards not allowing women to participate in the labour market equally with men. As many women need to work, some find their best available option to do so is at home, however unsatisfactory the conditions of that work are: 'they are making the best of a bad job'.

Table 8.1 Comparison of secretarial/clerical homeworkers with computer programmers working at home (evidence is taken from this study and Huws 1984)

	Sec./Cle. (n=30)	Comp.Prog. (n=78)
Age (mean in years)	39	34
Previous work exp.(maj.in yrs)	9+	10
Reason for leaving =prenancy	87%	67%
Age of youngest child under 5yrs	30%	94%
Recruitment informal	63.3%	33%
Length of time homeworking mean	6yrs	4.5yrs
upto 1yr	10%	23%
9yrs+	23.3%	5%
No. of current employers	1 60%	54%
	2-3 40%	12%
	4+ 3%	35%
Regular contact with employer	96%	90%
Employment Status - Self employed	100%	55%
Average pay per hour Clerical	1.79	2.66
Other Prof.	4.00	4.67
Average hours worked per week	19hrs 10min.	22hrs 40min.
Work Preference at home	23%	33%
in office	63%	24%
Don't know	13%	41%

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION: MAKING THE BEST OF A BAD JOB

This thesis describes the position of secretarial/clerical homeworkers in relation to theories about women's work and how homeworking fits in with women's lives. It also provides a picture of homeworkers' socio-demographic characteristics in 1971. It has been shown that homeworking is an important element of many women's working lives which enables them to contribute to their household's standard of living without disrupting their role caring for children, husbands and homes. In particular, secretarial/clerical homework appears to have created a means by which homeworkers are able to raise their household's standard of living to include so called 'extras' such as an occasional meal out, a video or a holiday. It is also clear that this kind of homework is not a new phenomenon, but rather one that has been in evidence over the last two decades. The socio-demographic characteristics of homeworkers described in the LS confirm this picture.

The 'reserve army of labour' thesis, which suggests that homeworkers would be more likely to be employed in times of an economic boom and laid off during a recession, does not appear to explain fully the situation experienced by the homeworkers interviewed for this study. There is no

evidence here to suggest that they have recieved less work in a time of high unemployment - the mid 1980's. This confirms the findings of other researchers, one of whom argues that the reverse is true. She reports an increase in the number of homeworkers in some industries (Mitter 1986ab).

Dual labour Market Theory suggests that homeworking is part of the secondary labour market, predicting that workers would be easily dispensible and have little interest in acquiring training and experience and low economism i.e. little concern for monetary rewards (although in reality this can not be separated from the possibility that women's expectations are restricted by the relatively low pay of the jobs available to them). Homeworking can be seen as part of the secondary labour market, with homeworkers having low pay, irregular work and few opportunities for developing their jobs. This research shows that homeworkers unwillingly accept these work conditions thereby supporting DLMT. In fact as Allen (1983a) has suggested, homeworkers are a "casualised labourforce" and not "casual labour". Many of the homeworkers interviewed were decidedly unhappy with their conditions of work and were certainly reluctant to be dispensed with abruptly, as this theory implies they might be. Despite the poor pay and work conditions, these women are making an important contribution to their family's

living standards.

Another theory discussed in Chapter One, referred to occupational ghettos (Feuchtwang 1982), which were felt might be important when describing the employment situation for women. This thesis confirms the existence of homeworking ghettos containing female secretarial/clerical workers. Both the LS and interview studies show women predominating in secretarial/clerical homeworking while the LS confirms that those working AT home are women whilst those working FROM home are men.

The occupational ghetto is a trap from which it is exceedingly difficult for women to escape, primarily because of their childcare responsibilities, although other factors such as lack of skills, sexism and racism also play a part. This research shows how these factors inhibit women's opportunities of employment outside their homes, making homeworking the best feasible alternative for them.

For other women part-time work is clearly an option, and it is important to note reasons given for doing homeworking. For some homeworkers childcare responsibilities are paramount because of social constraints, but for others they

are simply an economic factor. In the latter case part-time work is only an option where it is well paid or supplements income from homeworking. By implication, homeworking would always be the preferred option for some women (e.g. even if free child care facilities were available) but this whole area merits further research.

As women move into and out of the labour force more frequently than men, primarily as a result of childcare responsibilities, it is possible to see how homeworking fits into their lives more easily than other kinds of paid work. Although this study shows homeworkers using their existing skills in their work, this is not always the case. There is evidence that women often take homeworking jobs more junior to their experience and skills in order to have a job at all. This pattern has also been reported by Dex (1987) who showed downward occupational mobility after childbirth to be so common amongst women that she described it as typical of the industrial profile for women. This kind of work experience does not appear to help women obtain another job at a later date, nor does it keep them in touch with new developments in technology or their occupation in general.

As a result, the future work plans of the homeworkers interviewed here seemed to be no more unaffected by their

experience of homeworking, than those of other women. The lack of choices available to the homeworkers led many of them to see themselves as continuing working at home in the future, rather than being able to take up other employment outside their homes. This finding is in direct conflict with a current popular view on homeworking as creating equal opportunities for women by enabling them to care for their families without losing their position on the career ladder (Handy 1984). No evidence of career progression or even career maintenance was found amongst the homeworkers. The LS could be used further to confirm more generally that secretarial/clerical homeworkers tend to be 'under-using' skills acquired in previous work outside their homes.

The clear gender division observed between people working at and from their homes is reinforced by the kind of work being done, with more women doing traditional non-manual and manual work and more men doing professional work. As Monod (1983) points out:

"A woman loses her professionalism at home whereas a man preserves it." (Mitter 1986a French translation P.137)

This echoes a point made by McLaughlin (1981) who found that a separate permanent workspace was a determinant of women's satisfaction with working in their homes; yet she found that

not very many women had this space while men were much more likely to have it. Similarly, few of the homeworkers interviewed for this thesis had their own workspace, perhaps implying that their work was not seen as very important in terms of their career development. Working at home did not really seem to provide women with a suitable alternative to going out to work, nor as stated earlier did it provide them with real equal opportunities.

Discussion of definition of homeworking used

The definition of homeworking used here was successful in terms of identifying homeworkers for the interview studies, and therefore the researcher suggests that future research on homeworking considers including only those working predominantly for one employer as homeworkers rather than including all those working in their homes. (Although it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish between those homeworkers taking work from more than one employer, from freelancers, taking employment status in conjunction with the worker's occupation, a meaningful distinction can be made.) The key issue is one of the homeworkers' control over the supply of their work. They may be technically self-employed but still be under the control of a 'boss' (or bosses) even though the 'boss' is not technically their employer.

Despite recognising that the overall increase in the number of people working in their homes is important, the situation of those who run their own business, or who are professionals or freelancers, is not directly parallel to that of homeworkers since they have more control over their supply of work. Hence the two groups of workers should not be combined as one for any analysis of employment experiences.

This study has shown that census based figures are not entirely satisfactory for considering homeworking. They can be misleading, with homeworking in the census likely to be underestimated both in terms of the overall numbers involved and the types of work done at home.

The estimate of the number of women homeworking in England and Wales presented here, 65800, should be seen as a minimal one, because as Dex (1986) pointed out:

"...if women and men are asked at interview whether they are 'employed', 'unemployed' or whether they are 'seeking work', it is important to recognise that such concepts may well have different meanings to men and to women... Data sets which have a restricted conception of employment (e.g. main full-time job) often preclude the investigation of activities more commonly found amongst women, which are not so obviously employment in this sense, for example, housework, running mail order catalogues and other informal work." (P.23-4)

Another major drawback with the census figures presented here is that they only present a picture of homeworking at one point in time, in this case in 1971; yet, since then, the situation has changed for all homeworkers including those who were homeworking at that time. Although the 1981 National Survey of Homeworking (Hakim 1987b) describes homeworking in general, it does not show what homeworking means to individual women. In theory this sort of analysis should be possible using 1981 LS data, as it would be possible to see what women who were homeworking in 1971 were doing in terms of their economic activity ten years later, as well as considering what those homeworking in 1981 were doing ten years earlier. Such information would aid the understanding of women's current employment patterns and what needs to be changed in order to increase women's employment choices. As mentioned earlier, it should be possible to demonstrate the lack of career maintenance for many of these women. However, unfortunately data on homeworking in 1981 has not been coded on the LS, therefore only data from the NSHW is available for analysis.

Despite the drawbacks mentioned previously, statistics are informative about certain groups of homeworkers - in this case secretarial/clerical homeworkers. LS data shows that there are many more homeworkers doing clerical work than had previously been imagined. Moreover, it appears that

clerical homeworking is not a new phenomenon, but in fact has represented a large percentage of homeworking recorded in official statistics, at least since 1971.

The 'official' picture shows further discrepancies when compared with the conventional image of homeworking. It indicates that a high proportion of homeworkers own their homes, have a car, and are married to men in non-manual occupations. This finding confirms that of Hakim (1987a). However, although she does describe a similar social distribution of homeworking to that found in the LS, only one of the six photographs accompanying her article shows a so called majority homeworker i.e. a white computer programmer. The remainder (five) show white, black and minority ethnic group homeworkers doing a variety of work including knitting. As a result the message portrayed in the pictures accompanying the article conflicts with that of the text leaving one to speculate about the true nature of homeworking and homeworkers.

The social circumstances of secretarial and clerical homeworkers appear to be more advantageous than those of other homeworkers. Yet this finding does not necessarily mean that the conventional image of homeworking is incorrect, rather that it is likely to reflect the circumstances of manufacturing homeworkers. If

manufacturing homeworkers are largely excluded from the analysis, as it appears they might be in the LS, then the overall picture of homeworking becomes distorted.

Evidence from the LS shows that although a greater number of homeworkers are doing clerical work than any other type of work at home, a higher homeworking rate is found among those doing clothing work. In other words, there is a higher prevalence of clothing workers than clerical workers working at home compared to the numbers of employed women working in those occupations. However, even if the number of non-manual homeworkers exceeds that of manufacturing homeworkers, it does not mean that the latter are less important or might not have the greater need for change in their conditions.

As non-manual work has a higher social status than manual work, secretarial/clerical homeworking can be seen as more prestigious than other sources of income, including full-time manual work as well as other manual homeworking. For some of the women interviewed this was clearly a further factor in leading them to work at home. As one woman said:

"Typing's a lot nicer than doing circuit boards as I did before."

Despite these previously undocumented findings it is important to be aware that not all the long held notions about homeworking are misconceptions. Two of the important and accurate ideas are:

- a) that women stay at home to care for others, and
- b) the lack of suitable job opportunities for women which are able to accommodate the many demands on their time.

These are both important factors determining a woman's likelihood of being a homemaker. However, it is still widely believed that women would rather stay at home caring for their children than go out to work, while in reality many would like the opportunity to work outside their homes.

As stated in Chapter Eight, for many households the extra income from homework is economically important. Given that the characteristics of homeworkers are not significantly different from those of part-time workers it is conceivable that some women would work outside their homes if it were economically viable. Thus, future research could concentrate on establishing which factors determine whether women work at home or not. For example, in this study it would have been interesting to know what other employment

options the women had and why they rejected them. The evidence from the interviews suggests a fundamental conflict is that between domestic commitments and economic constraints, but the resolution of this is complex and subject to individual situations. Presumably for some women social constraints would override even the provision of child care facilities.

One aim of this research was to document some of the conditions for homeworkers in these occupations. In so doing it has been shown that women's reasons for working at home are similar whatever the type of work they do and have therefore widened the existing knowledge about homeworking to cover secretarial and clerical occupations.

This thesis suggests that employers of secretarial and clerical homeworkers have recruitment patterns similar to those of many other employers. Yet, here there is an emphasis on employers being "understanding". Despite the employment conditions of homeworkers being inferior to that of inworkers, the relationship between them and their employers in some cases can be, and is, subtle, with a number of employers in this study expressing a wish to help women make the best of their circumstances. In reality, this help does little to create equal employment

opportunities for women as a whole despite the well-intentioned claims of some employers.

The case studies identify secretarial/clerical homeworking as a clear example of female horizontal segregation, as there were both female employers and homeworkers. (It should be noted that those actually distributing the work were women but it is possible that the suppliers of the work were men.) This finding represents a difference from other kinds of homeworking where it is more usual for there to be vertical segregation with men being in the 'higher up' jobs. The different situation is obviously the result of the type of work covered in the study, i.e. non manual 'white blouse' service work which for many years has been done almost exclusively by women. A wider sample of homeworkers doing this kind of work, including more of those living further afield contacted by other methods might have shown different results.

The organisation of homeworking means that the method of distributing work to be done at home is similar to that described by Ladbury (1979) for the clothing industry, where the work can come either directly from the employer or through an agent, as is the case with the secretarial agencies. This process of putting out the work to agencies, who in turn employ homeworkers, results in deskilling, as

homeworkers are only required to do one part of the job. In this case, homeworkers, who previously had jobs as secretaries, now only carry out one part of their former duties, for example, typing. This finding provides further evidence that homeworkers experience downward occupational mobility.

Future research should clarify the nature of homeworking ensuring that the emphasis on women (and men) working comfortably in their homes does not become the all-prevailing one, or that homeworkers with more disadvantageous circumstances are seen as declining in numbers or non-existent and hence of negligible importance. Even though secretarial homeworkers have better material conditions, on the whole, than manufacturing homeworkers, they are still exploited as women and as workers as comparisons of work conditions with their full- or part-time, in-work counterparts confirm.

Involvement in community based projects focussing on homeworking increased this researcher's understanding of the issues involved. Such projects have given homeworkers information concerning their rights alongside introducing them to the possibilities of training for alternative employment. By monitoring the situation community projects

have demonstrated a need for viable alternatives to homeworking. By providing nurseries, English as a second language classes and further training relating to specific jobs, organisations working on behalf of homeworkers such as Greenwich Homeworkers Project and the Leicester Outwork Campaign are beginning to provide alternatives for women who are currently homeworking, as well as those who do not want to fall into its trap.

This thesis shows that homeworking is not necessarily the answer to the problems facing many women who want/need to have an income. If homeworking were to be presented as the answer, there would most likely be a very dissatisfied workforce. Alternative arrangements, including increased availability of childcare facilities and the sharing of domestic responsibilities with men enabling women to have a real 'choice' about whether they go out to work, are more likely to ensure satisfactory living and working conditions for all.

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Appendix A

1984 Homeworkers' Charter

The demands contained in this Charter are those made by Homeworkers. The vast majority are women who suffer the triple burdens of childcare, housework and paid employment. Homeworkers are caught in the poverty trap and as such provide cheap, unorganised labour, especially for the sectors of industry which perpetuate the worst employment practices. Homeworking, especially in the new technology industries, both in manufacturing and the provision of services, is on the increase; it is now being promoted as the way of working in the future even by multi-national concerns. It is clear that the bad employment practices of traditional industries are being imported into the newer ones to the detriment of worker organisation. Homeworkers, who are particularly vulnerable to racist and sexist exploitation, subsidise their employer's profits and there is no doubt that given better opportunities few Homeworkers would work at home.

This charter therefore demands that:

1. FREE ADEQUATE CARE OF DEPENDANTS IS AVAILABLE FOR HOMEWORKERS

A majority of Homeworkers say that they are forced to work at home in order to look after children, or sick, elderly or disabled dependants, and that if adequate care were freely available this would enable them to work outside the home.

2. RESOURCES ARE PROVIDED TO ENABLE HOMEWORKERS TO MEET TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT, ORGANISATION AND CAMPAIGNING

Homeworkers live and work in isolated conditions with little or no opportunity for exchanging information with each other, or for recreation. If Homeworkers are to improve their economic status these resources must be made available.

3. EMPLOYEE STATUS IS GIVEN TO HOMEWORKERS

Lack of clarity about the employment status of Homeworkers has resulted not only in the casualisation of Homeworkers' labour but also in the loss of other rights and benefits which depend on proof of employment status: e.g. Sick pay, Unemployment Benefit, Maternity Benefit, Family Income Supplement, Pensions etc. In addition, Homeworkers subsidise their employer's business by paying rent, rates, heating, lighting, running and maintaining their machines. The employer also does not pay any staffing costs, thus avoiding capital and revenue outlay.

4. AN END TO RACIST AND SEXIST PRACTICES AND THE REPEAL OF RACIST AND SEXIST LEGISLATION

The isolation and fear Homeworkers suffer are compounded by the laws, attitudes and practices of a society which is essentially racist and which denies the right of all women to participate socially and economically in it. Institutional racism and sexism informs the attitudes and procedures which exclude women and black and minority ethnic people from the benefits of the community to which they contribute.

5. THE ADOPTION OF A NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

The adoption of a national minimum wage for all workers is essential in order to end the super-exploitation of Homeworkers, people with disabilities and other unprotected groups. One national minimum wage will eliminate the problems associated with the complicated Wages Council Orders and their present lack of enforcement.

6. THE AMENDMENT OF RELEVANT REGULATIONS TO ENSURE THAT HOMEWORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES DO NOT SUFFER INJURY, DISEASE OR SICKNESS AS A RESULT OF THEIR WORK

Homeworkers use dangerous substances such as glues, fluxes and solvents, unguarded machinery and VDU's in their homes without the protection afforded all other workers. They carry the responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and their families which by right should be that of their employer. The Health and Safety at Work Act must be amended to include all Homeworkers.

7. COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMEWORKERS

Given the opportunity Homeworkers prefer to work outside the home. Some lack the necessary skills and education to participate in the labour market; some are skilled in one process of production which may well be in a rapidly changing industry; some skilled workers may have been out of paid work while raising children and their skills need upgrading; some have never had the opportunity.

This Charter was adopted at the National Conference on Homeworking on 2nd June 1984.

Appendix B

Letter to Employers

27 October 1983

Dear Sir or Madam,

I run a research group in Social Statistics and one of my researchers, Helena Pugh, is conducting a survey of homeworking in the secretarial and clerical industry. She is looking at the existing arrangements concerning people who work at home with a view to understanding trends in homeworking and also investigating the possible influences of new technology on homeworking in the future.

She would like to ask you a few questions about your company's use of homeworkers, e.g. how many you employ, how often, whether you anticipate any changes in the future and what they might depend on.

I would be grateful if you would allow her to come and talk to you. She will be contacting you in the next few days to try and arrange a convenient time.

Yours faithfully,

A.J.Fox
Professor of Social Statistics

Appendix C

EMPLOYER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name of Company:

Nature of Company:

Policy

1. How many people approximately does your company employ:

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
FULL-TIME?		
PART-TIME		
HOMEWORKER		

2. Does the number of homeworkers you employ vary over the year?

YES/NO

If YES, why?

3. How long have you been employing homeworkers:

Less than 1 year?

Up to 5 years?

Over 5 years?

4. Why did you begin to employ homeworkers?

5. Why do you employ homeworkers now?

6. How dependent would you say you are on homeworkers:

In terms of your total work-in-hours?

In terms of your total work-in-jobs or types of job?

7. What alternatives are available to you?

8. What do you see as the trend in homeworking for the future:

(a) for the company?

(b) generally?

Do you see them as becoming more important?

Why?

9. Do you find employing homeworkers a satisfactory way of getting the work done?

10. What are the disadvantages (if any) of employing homeworkers?

Conditions of Work

11. What kinds of work do your homeworkers do:

- (a) typing?
- (b) addressing envelopes?
- (c) packing (filling envelopes)?
- (d) word processing?
- (e) coding questionnaires?
- (f) other (specify)?

12. Does each homeworker do one type of work?
YES/NO

If NO, what combinations do they do? (e.g. typing and addressing envelopes; theses and company reports)

13. Who supplies the necessary equipment:

Employer Homeworker Contractor

Typewriter?

Paper

Ribbons

Rubbers/Eraser Fluid

Pens?

Other? (Specify):

14. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the machines?

Employer/Homeworker

15. How is the rate of pay calculated?

HOURLY/PIECEWORK?

16. What are the approximate rates of pay for different types of homeworking jobs:

- (a) typing theses?
- (b) typing reports?
- (c) addressing envelopes?
- (d) packing?
- (e) coding questionnaires?
- (f) other? (specify)

17. Do you vary the rates of pay to take account of experience?

YES/NO

18. (i) Do your homeworkers:

- (a) receive holiday pay?
- (b) receive sick pay?
- (c) benefit of pension scheme?

(ii) Do your other workers:

- (a) receive holiday pay?
- (b) receive sick pay?
- (c) benefit of pension scheme?

19. How do your homeworkers find out when there is work:

- (a) they telephone you?
- (b) you telephone them?
- (c) they call in and see?
- (d) other? (specify)

20. How do homeworkers receive their work materials:

- (a) you deliver them?
- (b) they collect them?

21. How do homeworkers return the finished work:

- (a) they deliver it?
- (b) you collect it?

22. Do you guarantee homeworkers a certain amount of work?

YES/NO

If YES, how much? Specify

23. Are your homeworkers

(a) employees?

(b) self employed?

Patterns of Recruitment

24. How you you recruit homeworkers:

(a) place advertisements yourself?

Where?

- 9 -

(b) answer advertisements yourself?

Where?

(c) they telephone and you keep a list?

(d) previous inworkers?

(e) friends of friends?

(f) other? (specify)

25. What qualities do you look for when recruiting homeworkers:

(a) they live locally?

(b) some experience (how much)?

(c) certain level of skills? (specify)

(d) own machine? (which kind?)

(e) Other (specify)

26. Once you have recruited a homeworke~~r~~, do you set a trial period in order to test their work?

YES/NO

If YES, how long is it?

27. Do you ask for any references when recruiting a homeworke~~r~~?

YES/NO

Appendix D

Introduction to homeworkers

My name is Helena Pugh and I am a research student at City University. I am doing a survey of women who do secretarial or clerical work in their homes.

I would like to talk to you about why you are working at home and how you feel about it. I am also interested in how it fits in with other work you have done in the past and what work you see yourself doing in the future.

I would be very grateful if I could come and see you and I would be happy to answer any questions you have about the study.

Appendix E

Topics covered in the homeworkers' interviews

Age, marital status, number and ages of children;

Kind of current homework, previous homework;

Length of time homeworking in this job and generally;

Reasons for working at home;

Would you like to work outside your home?

How would your family feel about it?

Previous work history;

When did you stop working outside your home?

When did you start homeworking?

Formal educational and training qualifications;

How long do you see yourself doing working at home?

Do you think you might work outside your home in the future?

How convenient is the work?

What alternatives have you considered?

Do you know anybody else doing homeworking?

Does anybody help you with your homeworking?

How satisfied are you with the work?

How does it compare with other work you have done?

Were you happier before doing homework or now?

Do you have any health problems associated with your work?

How do you cope when someone at home is ill?

How did you find your job?

Do you always find your work this way?

Hours worked per week;

Do you work for one employer?

How dependent would you say you are on your employer?

What kind of relationship do you have with your employer?

What is your employment status - self employed or employee?

Do you pay tax? Do you get holiday or sick pay?

How do you find out about each piece of work?

Do you collect the work or do they deliver it?

Do they pay for the travelling expenses?

Do they provide any materials?

Are you satisfied with the conditions?

Are you a member of a trades union?

Do you think trades unions can do anything for homeworkers?

How and how much do you get paid?

How often are you paid?

Do you think you could stop taking work without losing your job?

Have you ever been asked to take on a rush job?

What would happen if work not ready when expected?

Disadvantages of homeworking;

Do you do any other paid work? If so what?

Do you have any other income?

Does anybody else in the household work? If so doing what?

Would you mention working at home on the census?

Household circumstances - housing tenure and cars.

Appendix F

SOCIAL STATISTICS RESEARCH UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS
THE CITY UNIVERSITY
NORTHAMPTON SQUARE
LONDON EC4V 3HB

25th June 1985

Dear

At last the summary of the survey of homeworking you participated in. I am sorry it has taken so long to prepare but I had to be sure I didn't leave anything out!

If you would like to know more about the results or query anything please get in touch with me at the above address.

I'd just like to thank you very much again for taking part in the survey, your help was much appreciated.

If you have any questions at all concerning homeworking or alternatives to it, do not hesitate to contact me.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Pugh

Summary of study of 30 women secretarial and clerical homeworkers

Introduction

These are the preliminary results of a survey of 30 women doing secretarial and clerical work in their homes. The women were interviewed during 1984 and all live in and around London. They were asked questions on a variety of topics such as their personal circumstances and work lives.

Twenty five of the women were recruited to the study through their employers and the remaining five through women who had already taken part in the study. Of the 30 women included 12 were coding questionnaires, 9 typing, 8 doing a mixture of different kinds of clerical work and 1 was a concert organiser.

Personal circumstances

25 of the women were married, 3 lived with other members of their family and 2 were single and lived alone. They were most commonly aged between 30 and 44 years and three quarters of them had children, the majority of whom were under 11 years of age. 26 lived in privately owned houses and had use of a car. The majority of homeworkers' husbands had jobs which fell into the professional and intermediate social classes (1 and 2).

Homeworkers work histories

Many of the women had worked outside their homes for a considerable length of time before homeworking (half of them had worked for 9 years or more). This shows that they were experienced workers, many were skilled, having done typing courses and/or learned shorthand. It was common for homeworkers to have had several different jobs while gaining their work experience. Their previous jobs included not suprisingly, secretarial, clerical and administrative work. Few of the women had been involved in a trades union while going out to work.

26/30 women had left their full time jobs to have children. The others had left for a variety of reasons including ill health, redundancy and moving house. 9/30 had done some other kind of work at home before their present homeworking job. These included wig making, soldering circuit boards, selling tupperware and other clerical and typing work.

Work characteristics

Almost half of the homeworkers had a six month gap or less between a full time job and working at home. The majority of women found out about their homeworking jobs through a friend. (19/30) The remaining homeworkers found their jobs in a local paper or shop window.

18/30 have one employer, while others have 2 or more employers. However a homeworkers' second, third or fourth job is likely to be working for her husband, friends or occasionally working outside their homes for a day or afternoon per week. Many of the homeworkers had been working at home for considerable lengths of time such as 8 years. This disputes the commonly held assumption that homeworking is done by women for a short period of time to 'fill in' time, in fact most women do NOT see it as a 'one off thing' but rather as making an important contribution to their lives.

There was some confusion about employment status. The majority (21) said they were self employed, 7 that they were employees, 1 that she was paid in cash and another that she did not know what her employment status was. (However, during interviews with employers it was found that all the homeworkers were in fact self employed.)

Homeworkers wages ranged from £1.75 to £5.00 per hour. The lower rates applied to clerical work while the typists with electric typewriters earned the higher rates. These rates are misleading because often homeworkers had to pay for their own machines and materials so making their actual wage rates a lot lower. The majority earned too little to pay tax. None of the homeworkers received holiday or sick pay or pensions and only one woman reported receiving a Christmas bonus once.

The majority of women worked between 15-24 hours a week. The 2 women living alone worked upto and over 40 hours a week. All but one of the women worked at a variety of times during the day and night. 25/30 worked in a living room i.e. a kitchen or lounge. 5 had a room which was used primarily for their work; these were all typists.

19/30 of the homeworkers had sole responsibility for the collection and delivery of work, 10 shared this responsibility with the employer and only 1 homeworker always had her work collected and delivered. One woman received her work by post.

The majority of women had never been members of Trades Unions, often it was felt that homeworkers doing other kinds of work were more exploited, and that if clerical homeworkers organised themselves into unions the employers would not bother with them and they would loose their work. (This view is common among all homeworkers.) Despite this a few thought that unions might be able to help them better their situation by campaigning for such things as expenses for essential materials and holiday and sick pay.

Reasons for Homeworking

25/30 women said that childcare was a major factor in their decision to work at home. Other reasons included one woman feeling she was too old to get another job, another that her disability prevented her from getting a permanent job outside her home and two women who said they had positively chosen to work at home i.e. that there were NO other factors in their lives which prohibited them from going out to work.

A third of the homeworkers in this study used the money they earned for necessities such as bills, food, and clothes for the children. Two thirds of the women said their wages were spent on luxury items such as holidays, clothes and videos. These and other items are not strictly necessities and were seen as little extras, yet by earning this money these women raise the standard of living of their whole families. Other women said the money made them feel independent, that they did not have to rely on their husbands for money all the time.

Advantages and disadvantages of working at home

These can be seen from the attached table. The most common advantages being flexibility of work, convenience with the family and for interest/to stop boredom. However the same factors which were advantages were also described differently as disadvantages. e.g. the flexibility is also a disadvantage described as uncertainty of work, pressure of time to finish work means that it encroaches on family life and is no longer convenient. Although homework was thought to stop boredom in fact boredom was cited along with isolation as a disadvantage.

Future work plans

Nearly 2/3 of the homeworkers said they would rather go out to work. Only 7 women said they were satisfied working at home and did not want to change their situation. The majority of women accepted their dissatisfaction as they felt that they had total responsibility for the caring of their children. It was because of this that many women said they had the best job they could imagine in their situation.

12/30 said their families were not unhappy with them working but that they sometimes complained about noise and mess, although they all benefitted from the women's wages.

It was thought that knowing other women working at home might make homeworkers feel less isolated and more satisfied. However many of them did know other homeworkers even if not very well and yet it made no difference to their overall level of satisfaction with their work. 19/30 said they would definitely prefer to go out to work.

Most women wanted to do secretarial, clerical or administrative work because it was what they knew, however a few wanted to do caring work such as nursing or looking after children.

Summary

For the majority of women having made the decision to have children, they had no choice when it came to getting a job they would like. Women repeatedly told how conventional work hours do not accommodate a family. They were well aware that the school day is shorter than the average working day, holidays longer and that children's illnesses do not always occur when it is convenient for them to take time off work. These factors make working outside the home difficult and often impossible. All but two of the remaining women also had understandable reasons why it was not possible for them to work outside their homes, making homeworking the only solution open to them. Overall it can be said that 'homeworkers are making the best of a bad job.'

Advantages and disadvantages of working at home

(N.B. Some homeworkers mentioned more than one factor)

<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
flexibility/family conven.	26	86.0
interest/stop boredom	18	60.0
skill maintenance	6	20.0
more varied work	4	13.3
other	3	10.0
TOTAL	57	-

<u>Disadvantages</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
insecurity of work	23	76.7
pressure of time	23	76.7
encroachment on family	17	56.7
boredom	17	56.7
isolation	16	53.3
other	3	10.0
TOTAL	~~89~~ 9	-

Appendix G

PERSONAL

21
Age
20-24*25-29*30-34*35-39*40-44*45-49*50-54*55-59*60-64*
Number of children
none*one child*two children*etc.*
Age youngest child
0-1*2-3*4-5*6-7*8-9*10-11*12-13*14-15*16-17*
A Y C when began H.W.
0.5* 1* 1.5* 2*to 2.5 yrs* 3* 3.5* 4* 4.5* 5*
Years H.W.ing
0-1*2-3*4-5*6-7*8-9*10+*
Yrs W.O. before H.W.
0*1*2*3 etc.*
Yrs between W.O. & H.W.
0.5* 1* 1.5* 2*to 2.5* 3* 3.5* 4* 4.5* 4.5+*
Nb. current jobs
0*1*2*3 etc.*
Marital status
married*single*widowed*divorced*separated*
Husband working
not employed*professional*intermediate*non manual*manual*semi-skilled*unskilled*employed-not stated*
Family reaction
fine*O.K.*not very good*
Evidence of joint Acc..
yes*no*
..or any to contrary
yes*no*
Car
none*1 car*2 cars+*
Tenure
council housing*private rented*owner occupier*
Census declaration
yes*no*Don't remember*
Length of interview
0.5*1.0*1.5 hours*2.0*2.5*
Offer drink
yes*no*
Offer to type thesis
yes*no*
How found?
through employer*another H.W.*women's centre*other*
Know other H.W.ers?
yes*no*

ATTITUDES TO WORK

15
Introduction to H.W.ing
advert in paper*friend*previous employer*combination*
Why work at home?
combination of below*kids(1 parent)* (2 parent)*elderly*sick*disabled*+ve choice*
Reason for H.W...money
independence*luxuries*only income source*needs*0 & 1*0 & 3*1 & 3*0 & 1 & 3*
Reason for H.W...2
skill maintenance*interest/prevent boredom*both*other*
Advantages of H.W...1
flexibility/own boss..yes* no*
Advantages of H.W...2
convenience with family..yes* no*
Advantages of H.W...3
more varied work*better work conditions*both*other*

..and disadvantages..1

insecurity of work*no promotion*both*

Disadvantages..2

encroachment on family /social life..yes*

no*

..and disadvantages..3

isolation*boredom*both*other*

Work sort preferred

full time*part time*H.W.ing*

Work type preferred?

secretarial*caring*admin.*other*

Attitude to New Tech.

happy*not happy*re-train*complete change**

Related future plans

increase in H.W.*decrease in H.W.*continue as now*

Satisfied in H.W.

rather go out*happy*dont mind*

WORKING CONDITIONS-1

15

Payment

hourly*piecework*

Status

employed*self-employed*

Hourly rate

1.75* 1.85* 2.05* 2.50*to 3.00* 3.50* 4.00* 4.50* 5.00*

Piece rate

Insert amount*

Tax

yes*no*earnings too low*

Hours per week

0-4*5-9*10-14*15-19*20-24*25-29*30-34*35-39*40+*

Sick pay

yes*no*

Daily work routine

morning*afternoon*evening*night*various*

Seasonal variations

yes*no*

Work done in..

living room*office*combination*

Getting the work

you collect*they deliver*post*combination**

..and when finished

they collect*you deliver*post*combination**

Pressure of time

yes*no*

Work from where?

agency*other employer*private*combination*

Trade unions

yes*no*

WORKING CONDITIONS-2

7

Maintenance

Responsibility H.W.*

employer*

Own typewriter

yes*no*

Type of machine

IBM golfball*Olivetti*other*

Audio facility

yes*no*

Ribbons

H.W.*employer*

Paper

H.W.*employer*combination*

Rubbers etc

H.W.*employer*

TRAINING/WORK HISTORY

Typing..
yes*no*
trained..?
self-taught*school*short course*diploma course*
Shorthand..
yes*no*
trained..?
self-taught*school*short course*diploma course*
Other education
none*degree*diploma/certificate (not secretarial)*bilingual/secretarial*business studies*
Degree
arts*humanities*law*medicine*social sciences*sciences*engineering*
Past work history
0*1*2 etc. up to 5*3*
Type of work
secretarial*clerical*typist etc.*professional*admin*manual*other*
Yrs. in job
0-6 mths* 1*to 2 yrs etc.* 3*
Reason for leaving
promotion*better job*categories 0 & 1 combined*moving house*pregnancy*'change of scene'*redundancy*ill-health
H.W. at this time..
yes*no*
..At what?
knitting*circuit boards*wigmaking*sewing*typing*clerical*other*

A>

Appendix H

Occupational units included as Homeworking occupation

units

Codes from Census

- IV Glass and ceramic makers
 - 013 ceramic formers
 - 014 glass formers, finishers and decorators
 - 016 ceramic decorators and finishers
 - 017 glass & ceramic productions process workers nec.

- IV Electrical and electronic workers
 - 029 Assemblers

- VII Engineering and allied trades workers n.e.c.
 - 039 machine tool operators
 - 047 press workers and stampers
 - 048 metal workers n.e.c.
 - 054 other metal making, working, jewellery, and electrical production process workers.

- VIII Woodworkers
 - 057 sawyers and woodwork machinists

- IX Leather workers
 - 060 Tanners; leathers, fur dressers, fellmongers
 - 061 shoe makers and shoe repairers
 - 062 cutters, lasters, sewers, footwear & related workers
 - 063 leather productions makers nec.

- X Textile workers
 - 064 fibre preparers
 - 065 spinners, doublers, twistors
 - 066 winders, reelers
 - 067 warpers, sizers, drawers-in
 - 068 weavers
 - 069 knitters
 - 070 bleachers + finishers of textile
 - 071 dyers of textiles
 - 072 textile fabric + related products + examiners nec.
 - 073 textile fabrics etc production process workers nec.

- XI Clothing Workers
 - 074 tailors, dress, light clothing makers
 - 075 upholsters + related workers
 - 076 hand+machine sewers + embroiders, textile + light leather products
 - 077 clothing + related product makers nec.

- XII food, drink and tobacco workers
 - 078 bakers and pastry cooks
 - 081 food processors nec.
 - 082 tobacco preparers + product makers

- XIII Paper and printing workers
 - 083 makers of paper + paper board
 - 084 paper products makers
 - 085 compositors
 - 088 printing workers n.e.c.

- XIV Makers of other products
 - 089 workers in rubber
 - 090 workers in plastic
 - 091 craftsmen nec.
 - 092 other production process workers

- XV Construction Workers
 - 094 masons, stone cutters, slate workers

- XVI111 Labourers n.e.c.
 - 108 labourers and unskilled workers n.e.c. (Engineering and Allied Trades)
 - 114 labourers and unskilled workers n.e.c.

- XX111 168 launders, dry cleaners and pressers

- XIX Transport and telecommunications workers
 - 127 telephone operators

- XX Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers, bottlers
 - 137 packers, labellers + related workers

- XXII Sales Workers
 - 148 commercial travellers, manufacturers agents

- XXI Clerical Workers
 - 139 clerks, cashiers
 - 140 office machine operators
 - 141 typists, shorthand writers, secretaries

- (XXVII Inadequately described occupations
 - 223 Inadequately described occupations)



1971 CENSUS — ENGLAND

H Form For Private Households

To the Head (or Acting Head) of the Household.

Please complete this form and have it ready for collection on Monday 26th April. If you need help, do not hesitate to ask the enumerator.

The enumerator may ask you any questions necessary to help him to complete or correct the form.

The information you give on the form will be treated as **CONFIDENTIAL** and used only for compiling statistics. No information about named individuals will be passed by the Census Office to any other Government Department or any other authority or person. If anyone in the census organisation improperly discloses information you provide, he will be liable to prosecution. Similarly you must not disclose information which anyone (for example, a visitor or boarder) gives you to enable you to complete the form.

The legal obligation to fill in the whole form rests on **YOU**, but each person who has to be included is required to give you the information you need. However, anyone who wishes can ask the enumerator or local Census Officer for a personal form which can be returned direct to the enumerator or local Census Officer and then you need answer only questions B1 and B5 for that person.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

There are penalties of up to £50 for failing to comply with the requirements described above, or for giving false information.

When you have completed the form, please sign the declaration at the foot of the last page.

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys,
Titchfield,
Fareham, Hants.

MICHAEL REED
Director and
Registrar General

A household comprises either one person living alone or a group of persons (who may or may not be related) living at the same address with common housekeeping. Persons staying temporarily with the household are included.

To be completed by enumerator			
C.D. No.	E.D. No.	Form No.	Rel.
If sharing with another household:— Hall, staircase, passage, etc., shared <i>only/not only</i> * for entry to accommodation. *delete whichever is inapplicable.			
Number of rooms shared:			
Name and full postal address:			

**PART
A**

Answer questions A1—A5 about your household's accommodation and then answer questions B1—B24 overleaf and if appropriate answer questions C1—C7.

Where boxes are provided answer by putting a tick in the box against the answer which applies. For example, If the answer is 'YES': ☒ YES ☐ NO

PLEASE WRITE IN INK OR BALLPOINT PEN

A1 How do you and your household occupy your accommodation? 1 ☐ As an owner occupier (including purchase by mortgage) 2 ☐ By renting it from a Council or New Town 3 ☐ As an unfurnished letting from a private landlord or company or Housing Association 4 ☐ As a furnished letting 5 ☐ In some other way (Please give details, including whether furnished or unfurnished) Note: If the accommodation is occupied by lease originally granted for, or since extended to, more than 21 years, tick 'owner occupier'.	A3 How many rooms are there in your household's accommodation? <i>Do not count</i> Small kitchens less than 6ft. wide, bathrooms and toilets, sculleries not used for cooking, closets, pantries and store-rooms, landings, halls, lobbies or recesses, offices or shops used solely for business purposes. Note A large room divided by a sliding or fixed partition should be counted as two rooms. A room divided by curtains or portable screens should be counted as one room. A4 How many cars and vans are normally available for use by you or members of your household (other than visitors)? <i>Include any provided by employers if normally available for use by you or members of your household, but exclude vans used solely for the carriage of goods.</i> If None, write 'NONE'.	A5 Has your household the use of the following amenities on these premises? a A cooker or cooking stove with an oven 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO b A kitchen sink permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO c A fixed bath or shower permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO d A hot water supply (to a washbasin, or kitchen sink, or bath or shower) from a heating appliance or boiler which is connected to a piped water supply 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO e A flush toilet (W.C.) with entrance inside the building 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO f A flush toilet (W.C.) with entrance outside the building 1 ☐ YES — for use only by this household 2 ☐ YES — for use also by another household 3 ☐ NO
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PLEASE TURN OVER TO PART B

AF
C

PART
B

Complete a line in Part B for every person present, that is every person who
a spends Census night 25/26 April 1971 in this household

or b joins this household on Monday 26 April and has not been included as present on a Census form elsewhere.

For any other person who usually lives in this household complete a line in Part C on the back page.

	B1 Fill in this column first for every person present. (see note above) Write name and surname. Begin with the head of the household (if present). For a baby who has not yet been given a name write 'BABY' and the surname.	B2 Write the date of birth of the person. Day Month Year	B3 Write the sex of the person. (M for male, F for female).	B4 If the person usually lives here, write 'HERE'. If not, write the person's usual address. For boarders write 'HERE' only if they consider this their usual address. For students and children who are away from home during term time give their home address. For persons with no settled address write 'NONE'. BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE	B5 Write 'HEAD' for the head of the household and relationship to the head for each of the other persons: for example 'Wife', 'Son', 'Daughter-in-law', 'Visitor', 'Boarder', 'Paying Guest'.	B6 Write 'SINGLE', 'MARRIED', 'WIDOWED' or 'DIVORCED' as appropriate. If separated and not divorced write 'MARRIED'.	B7 Did the person have a job last week (the week ended 24th April 1971)? (see note B7) Tick box 1 if the person had a job even if it was only part-time or if the person was temporarily away from work, on holiday, sick, on strike, or laid off. If the person did not have a job tick whichever of boxes 2, 3, 4 or 5 is appropriate; if box 5 is ticked state the reason: for example 'Housewife', 'Student', 'Permanently sick'. This question need not be answered for children under 15 years of age.
1st person 1st abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely
2nd person 2nd abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely
3rd person 3rd abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely
4th person 4th abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely
5th person 5th abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely
6th person 6th abt a Nam b Rel							1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely

If there are more than six persons present continue on a new form.
(The enumerator will supply you with one if he has not already done so.)

1971 CENSUS FORM

NOTES

These notes are to help you answer some of the questions in Part B (for persons present). In cases where they also apply to Part C (absent persons) this is shown in Part C.

If you have any further difficulty with these, or any other questions, please ask the enumerator about them when he calls to collect your form.

B7 Job last week

A job means any work for payment or profit. In particular it includes:

- (a) work on a person's own account
 - (b) part-time work, even if only for a few hours, such as jobbing gardening or paid domestic work
 - (c) casual or temporary work of any kind (for example seasonal work, week-end work and vacation work by students)
 - (d) unpaid work in a family business, for example a shop or farm.
- Unpaid work, other than in a family business, does not count as a job.

B8 Students

Do not count as full-time students people who are:

- (a) on day release from work to attend school or college
- (b) attending night school only
- (c) attending an educational establishment provided by employers, such as an apprenticeship school.

B15 Employer's name and business

Describe the business fully and try to avoid abbreviations or initials. General terms such as 'manufacturer', 'merchant', 'agent', 'broker', 'factor', 'dealer', 'engineering', are not enough by themselves and further details should be given about the articles manufactured or dealt in.

For civil servants, local government officers and other public officials give the name of the Government department, local authority or public body and the branch in which they are employed.

For people employed solely in private domestic service write 'PRIVATE' in answer to this question.

For members of Armed Forces see special note overleaf.

B16 Occupation

Full and precise details of occupation are required.

If a person's job is known in the trade or industry by a special name use that name.

Terms such as 'scientist', 'technician', 'engineer', 'machinist', 'fitter', 'foreman', 'checker' should not be used by themselves. Greater detail is required as for example:—

woodworking machinist, civil engineer, toolroom foreman.

For civil servants, local government officers and other public officials give their rank or grade.

B17 Self-employed

'Self-employed, employing others' means having one or more employees other than 'family workers'. A 'family worker' is one who lives in the same household as the employer and is related to him. Although 'family workers' are not counted for the purpose of deciding whether an employer has employees, they should themselves be recorded as employees.

B6 Will the person be a student attending full-time at an educational establishment during the term starting April/May 1971? (see note B8) <i>This question need not be answered for children under 15 years of age.</i> ☐ YES ☐ NO	B9 If the person was born in England or Wales or Scotland or Northern Ireland tick the appropriate box. or If the person was born in another country, write the name of the country (using the name by which it is known today) and the year in which the person first entered the United Kingdom (that is England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). a Born in ☐ England 01 ☐ Scotland 02 ☐ Wales (incl. Monmouthshire) 03 ☐ Northern Ireland or b Born in (country) and entered U.K. in (year)	B10 Write the country of birth of: a the person's father b the person's mother <i>This question should be answered even if the person's father or mother is no longer alive. (If country not known, write 'NOT KNOWN'.)</i> Give the name by which the country is known today.
☐ YES ☐ NO	a Born in ☐ England 01 ☐ Scotland 02 ☐ Wales (incl. Monmouthshire) 03 ☐ Northern Ireland or b Born in (country) and entered U.K. in (year)	a Father born in (country) b Mother born in (country)
☐ YES ☐ NO	a Born in ☐ England 01 ☐ Scotland 02 ☐ Wales (incl. Monmouthshire) 03 ☐ Northern Ireland or b Born in (country) and entered U.K. in (year)	a Father born in (country) b Mother born in (country)
☐ YES ☐ NO	a Born in ☐ England 01 ☐ Scotland 02 ☐ Wales (incl. Monmouthshire) 03 ☐ Northern Ireland or b Born in (country) and entered U.K. in (year)	a Father born in (country) b Mother born in (country)
☐ YES ☐ NO	a Born in ☐ England 01 ☐ Scotland 02 ☐ Wales (incl. Monmouthshire) 03 ☐ Northern Ireland or b Born in (country) and entered U.K. in (year)	a Father born in (country) b Mother born in (country)

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE NEXT PAGE →

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PART B

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1st person

2nd person

3rd person

4th person

5th person

6th person

B18 Apprentices, etc.

Answer this question only for a person who is undergoing training for a period fixed in advance and leading to recognition as a skilled worker or technician or to a recognised technical, commercial or professional qualification or managerial post.

Do not answer this question for a young person undergoing probationary training who has not yet entered into formal apprenticeship.

B20 Place of work

For people who do not work regularly at one place or who travel during the course of their work (for example, sales representatives, seamen and some building and transport workers):

- if they report daily to a depot or other fixed address give that address;
- if they do not report daily to a fixed address write 'NO FIXED PLACE'.

For people such as building workers employed on a site for a long period give the address of the site.

For dock workers give the name and address of the dock or wharf at which they are usually employed.

B21 Means of transport

If the person uses different means of transport on different days give the means used most often.

Do not use terms such as 'public transport' or 'private transport' but give the actual means used, for example, 'train', 'bus', 'car', 'bicycle'.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

At B15 (or, if appropriate, C5) give arm and branch of service.

At B16 (or C6) give rank or rating only.

Questions B17 (or C7), B18, B19 and B22 need not be answered.

Answers should be written on the line on which the person's name appears in column B1

B11 Was the person's usual address one year ago (on 26th April 1970) the same as that shown by the answer to question B4?	B12 Was the person's usual address five years ago (on 26th April 1965) the same as that shown by the answer to question B11?	B13 Has the person obtained any of the following? G.C.E. 'A' level Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.) Higher grade of Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) Higher grade of Scottish Certificate (SLC) Ordinary National Certificate Ordinary National Diploma This question need not be answered by children under 15 or retired over 70.
Write 'YES' or 'NO'. If no, write also the usual address on 26th April 1970. For a child now under one year of age, write 'UNDER ONE'.	Write 'YES' or 'NO'. If no, write also the usual address on 26th April 1965. For a child now under five years of age, write 'UNDER FIVE'.	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE	BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE	
1st person	1st person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
2nd person	2nd person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
3rd person	3rd person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
4th person	4th person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
5th person	5th person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these
6th person	6th person	1 ☐ G.C.E. 'A' level or H.S.C. 2 ☐ SCE higher or SLC 3 ☐ O.N.C. or O.N.D. 4 ☐ None of these

TO BE DETACHED BEFORE COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TRAINING COPY

B14

Has the person obtained any of the following qualifications since reaching the age of 18?

- a H.N.C. or H.N.D.
- b Nursing qualifications
- c Teaching qualifications

- d Degrees, diplomas or other educational qualifications
- e Graduate or corporate membership of professional institutions
- f Any other professional or vocational qualifications

If so, give full details of all such qualifications in the order in which they were obtained, even if not relevant to the present job or if the person is not working. If none, write 'NONE'.

Please check these details by asking each person about his qualifications.

This question need not be answered for persons under 18 or retired persons over 70.

Qualification	Major Subject or Subjects	Awarding Institution

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE NEXT PAGE →

The remaining questions in Part B do not apply to children under 15 years of age.

Answer questions B15—B17 in respect of the main employment last week, or of the most recent job if retired or out of work. <i>For persons who have never had a job and for a housewife who did not have a job last week write "NONE" at B15.</i>			
B15 What was the name and business of the person's employer (if self-employed, the name and nature of the person's business)? (see note B15) Give the trading name if one was used.	B16 a What was the person's occupation? Give full details. (see note B16) b Describe the actual work done in that occupation.	B17 Was the person an employee, or self-employed employing others (see note B17), or self-employed without employees?	B18 If the person is an apprentice or trainee, write "Apprentice", "Articled clerk", "Articled pupil", "Student apprentice", "Graduate apprentice", "Management trainee", "Trainee technician", or "Trainee craftsman" as appropriate. (see note B18)
1st person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	
2nd person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	
3rd person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	
4th person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	
5th person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	
6th person a Name of business b Nature of business	a Occupation b Description of work	1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees	

For all persons with a job last week. <i>For persons with more than one job these questions apply to the main employment last week.</i>				For women aged under 60 who are married, widowed or divorced.			
B19 How many hours per week does the person usually work in this job? <i>Exclude overtime and meal breaks.</i>	B20 What is the full address of the person's place of work? (see note B20) <i>If the work is carried on mainly at home write 'AT HOME'.</i> BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE	B21 What means of transport does the person normally use for the longest part, by distance, of the daily journey to work? (see note B21) <i>If the person walks to work, or works mainly at home, write 'NONE'.</i>	B22 Was the person's occupation one year ago the same as last week? <i>If so, write 'SAME'. If not, give details of the occupation one year ago. (see note B18) If none, write 'NONE'.</i>	B23 Enter the month and year of birth of each child born alive to her in marriage; include any who have since died. <i>If none, write 'NONE'. Enter the dates in order of birth, starting with the first born. If she has been married more than once give the dates for the children of all her marriages.</i>		B24 <i>a</i> Write the month and year of marriage (the first marriage if married more than once). <i>b</i> If the first marriage has ended (by the husband's death or by divorce) write the month and year when it ended. If not ended, write 'NOT ENDED'.	
				Month	Year	Month	Year
						<i>a</i> Date of (first) marriage Month Year	
						<i>b</i> Date (first) marriage ended Month Year	
						<i>a</i> Date of (first) marriage Month Year	
						<i>b</i> Date (first) marriage ended Month Year	
						<i>a</i> Date of (first) marriage Month Year	
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						<i>a</i> Date of (first) marriage Month Year	
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FOR
OFFICIAL
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PLEASE TURN OVER TO PART C →

PART C

Complete a line in this part for any person who usually lives in this household but who is not present and for whom, therefore, you have made no entry in Part B.

If no one is absent tick this box ☐

Questions C4-C7 need not be answered for absent persons under 15 years of age.

C1 a Write the name and surname of every person usually living in this household who is absent on Census night. b Write relationship to the head of the household, for example 'Head', 'Wife', 'Son', 'Daughter-in-law'.	C2 Write the sex, (M for male, F for female), and date of birth of the person.	C3 Write 'SINGLE', 'MARRIED', 'WIDOWED' or 'DIVORCED' as appropriate. If separated and not divorced write 'MARRIED'.	C4 Did the person have a job last week (the week ended 24th April 1971)? (see note B7) Tick box 1 if the person had a job even if it was only part-time or if the person was temporarily away from work, on holiday, sick, on strike, or laid off. If the person did not have a job tick whichever of boxes 2, 3, 4 or 5 is appropriate; if box 5 is ticked state the reason; for example 'Housewife', 'Student', 'Permanently sick'.	Answer questions C5-C7 in respect of the main employment last week, or of the most recent job if retired or out of work. For persons who have never had a job and for a housewife who did not have a job last week, write 'NONE' at C5.		
				C5 What was the name and business of the person's employer (if self-employed, the name and nature of the person's business)? (see note B15) Give the trading name if one was used.	C6 What was the person's occupation? (see note B16) Give full details.	C7 Was the person an employee, or self-employed employing others (see note B17), or self-employed without employees?
1st absent person a Name	Sex		1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely	a Name of business		1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed, employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees
b Relationship	Day Month Year			b Nature of business		
2nd absent person a Name	Sex		1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely	a Name of business		1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed, employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees
b Relationship	Day Month Year			b Nature of business		
3rd absent person a Name	Sex		1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely	a Name of business		1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed, employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees
b Relationship	Day Month Year			b Nature of business		
4th absent person a Name	Sex		1 ☐ YES — in a job at some time during the week 2 ☐ NO — seeking work or waiting to take up job 3 ☐ NO — intending to seek work but sick 4 ☐ NO — wholly retired 5 ☐ NO — not seeking work for some other reason, namely	a Name of business		1 ☐ An employee 2 ☐ Self-employed, employing others (see note B17) 3 ☐ Self-employed without employees
b Relationship	Day Month Year			b Nature of business		

Important

If there is anybody that you have not listed in Part B or Part C because you were not sure whether he should be included or because you had no room on the form please ask the enumerator to help you.

Declaration to be made by the head of the household or other person making the return. I declare that this form is correctly completed to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature Date
