

HOME-BASED WORK IN İSTANBUL: Varieties of Organization and Patriarchy

Utku Balaban, SUNY Binghamton
Esra Sarioğlu, SUNY Binghamton

ORGANIZATION AND PATRIARCHY **IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Export-led growth policies in Turkey have yielded a significant transformation in industrial relations since the 1980s. One of the most striking consequences is the normalization of the informal employment relations in industrial production. In as much as firms enjoy this ‘flexibility’ in terms of their hiring-and-firing decisions, they are also under the duress of the uncertainties of the national economy given the fluctuating exchange rates, energy prices, and high interest rates. Similarly, dynamics of the global markets exert significant constraints on the production strategies of individual enterprises: as they are tied more and more with the global commodity chains, their survival depend on their capacity to organizational adaptation.

The same export-led growth policies were temporally coincided with a high pace of population growth in the big cities of Turkey. For instance, İstanbul’s population has at least doubled since 1980. As both export-oriented and domestic industrial capitals strive to satisfy their appetite for organizational flexibility, they set out strategies to segment the increasing population density in big cities as different forms of industrial labor. In this context, women appeared as a new source of industrial labor employed in industrial home-based work (HBW). As a relatively uncommon practice of the 1960s and the 1970s, industrial HBW is now one of the main pillars of industrial coordination in Turkish cities.

However, despite the growing interest on the part of academy in this phenomenon and significant efforts of activists to mobilize homeworkers, the organizational characteristics and the gender dynamics pertaining to the HBW in Turkey is still largely unknown.

This project, in this regard, aims to lay out actual dynamics linking the daily strategies of homemaker women to the organizational characteristics of the HBW. For that reason, we investigated the characteristics of different HBW organizations with a focus on the individual and group strategies of homemaker women in three industrial and residential districts of İstanbul. Our major motivation was to decipher the interaction of the household-related dynamics with the overall organization of the work. The fieldwork generated certain insights about the complexity of the subject matter: a great variety, rather than uniformity, signifies both the organizational characteristics and the gender-dynamics pertaining to the industrial HBW. In July and August 2006, we conducted 120 in-depth interviews with homeworkers, entrepreneurs, HBW jobbers, and factory managers. We focused on the conditions linking women with different organizations of

HBW and investigated the factors facilitating particular organizational arrangements. Accordingly, we carried out our research in urban settings of İstanbul characterized with differential degrees of industrial activities in order to reveal those factors yielding the organizational variety.

Industrial production in different districts of İstanbul is organized in accordance with distinct dynamics pertaining to the demographic and topographic characteristics of those districts. The interaction among them is to some extent shaped as a result of these micro dynamics. Thus, our investigation generated an analysis resting on two analytical vectors:

- i) the characteristics of women's engagement in the industrial HBW
- ii) the characteristics of organization at the level of both individual districts and the interaction among those districts

HBW signifies, by its very nature, an informal relationship of employment. Although this primarily benefits the industrial capital in terms of enormous reduction in compensation of workers, it also generates uncertainties in terms of the organization of the work. Thus, the gender, household, and neighborhood dynamics shape the characteristics of the participation of women to the industrial HBW as much as the organizational strategies of the capital. Our micro-level observations helped us to theorize two ideal types in regard to the gender dynamics affecting the patterns of women's engagement to the industrial HBW: classical and familial patriarchy.

These patterns of engagement characterize the organization of work in tandem with the dynamics pertaining to the individual districts and the interaction among those districts. We deliberately chose three city quarters in order to catch these macro-level effects: Avcılar is primarily a residential area, while the industrial HBW employs a significant number of women. Unfinished materials circulate from sweatshops and factories in different industrial districts to this city quarter for final assembly or further processing. Kıracı is, on the other hand, characterized with more than five hundred factories and has its own industrial basis for HBW: women appear as workers on an invisible conveyor belt reducing the internal organizational rigidities of those factories. Bağcılar, as the third most populated city quarter of İstanbul, houses both factories and sweatshops. As one of the production nodes of the city, Bağcılar both attracts HBW orders and generates HBW operations for other industrial and residential districts of the city. In short, we intended to understand the organizational dynamics of HBW in city quarters housing industrial activities of different intensities and characteristics.

In these city quarters, we reached our interviewees through snowball sampling: by contacting the HBW organizers of various sorts, we could develop a rough understanding of the spatial concentration of their operations. With these initial links, we reached many homeworkers, some of whom helped us to locate other HBW organizers, jobbers, and homeworkers. Our questions to the homeworker women intended to reveal their profile both as women and workers. We also directed questions about the characteristics of interaction among women, their changing bargaining power in their families, and the

content of the labor process. Whenever we could find the lead to the factories and the sweatshops distributing the piecework, we also interviewed with the managers of factories and owners of sweatshops. These interviews aimed to reveal the factors motivating them to utilize the HBW: since their primary goal is apparently to exploit women as the most vulnerable source of labor, we also focused on factors other than ‘wage factor’ such as in-workshop organizational rigidities or fluctuations in demand. This two-dimensional strategy of interviewing both with workers and employers enabled us to see the counter-strategies of capital and labor.

The same strategy also shapes the structure of this paper. After an evaluation of the relevant literature on HBW, the first section of the paper will discuss the organizational dynamics of the HBW in İstanbul: the micro-level variety is visible in the differences between characteristics of the distribution channels. The macro-level variety is mostly related to a semi-chaotic division of labor among different city quarters: HBW jobbers have multiple motivations in their decisions to distribute an individual order to a particular city quarter. Their individual decisions at the aggregate level bring about a pattern of distribution of orders among different parts of the city.

The second section focuses on the motivations of homeworkers: their individual decisions to engage in HBW and the patterns of their engagement shape the organizational characteristics of the HBW. In this part, it is necessary to grasp different dynamics of patriarchy, since it circumscribes the organization of the HBW and accounts for the variety among homeworkers as well. In other words, the analysis of the HBW also helps us to see the contemporary trends in the patriarchal gender orders.

In the last section, the paper will discuss on the factors determining the bargaining power of homemaker women against the capital and the patriarchy: the HBW plays a key role in their strategies in this dual struggle. Their collectivity empowers them vis-à-vis both capital and men. The conditions for the emergence of such a collectivity will be the main focus of this section.

The literature on the HBW provides useful insights of how the work is organized, while the generic problem is to define the work itself. Thus, conceptualizing the variety in terms of organizational and patriarchal dynamics appears as another major difficulty. In this regard, it is necessary to review distinct approaches analyzing the industrial work at homes.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE HOME-BASED WORK

The uneasy relationship of the HBW with the overall industrial dynamics turns this form of industrial labor into a fertile subject for various literatures with distinct concerns: it is industrial production, yet it does not take place under strict surveillance of capitalist management. Thus, to understand the modes of control pertaining to this form of industrial labor requires a different perspective about the capital-labor relationship: the organizational arrangements encompass not only work-related activities, but also distributive mechanisms. Especially with the increasing importance of global commodity

chains in industrial production, HBW emerges out as a structural element of the contemporary industrial relations. Accordingly, the micro-level organizational transformation of this particular form of industrial labor generates a strong impact on the organization of global economy. Thus, analysis of the distributive mechanisms pertaining to the HBW contributes to our understanding of the actual functioning of the global commodity chains.

Besides the increasing importance of the HBW in global industrial relations, household dynamics also constitute an integral part of the organization of the work. Women predominantly account for the work force of contemporary HBW (Tomei 2000). Thus, the analysis of 'household dynamics' requires the theorization of gender dynamics. Furthermore, the examination of patriarchal dynamics calls for an analysis of the role of women in the production relations. Enmeshing the household and industrial dynamics, the analysis of the HBW provides opportunities to understand the everyday realities of the worker women.

1) Understanding the Role of the HBW in the Global Industrial Complex

Modes of control pertaining to the HBW has been a major concern for the literature on the proto-industrialization: studies in this vein investigate the historical predecessors of the modern factory system and the role of merchants in the inchoate modern industry (Mendels 1972; Kriedte, Medick, and Schlumbohm 1981; Coleman 1983; Berg, Hudson, and Sonenscher 1984; Mathias and Davis eds 1985). These works investigate the organizational characteristics of Kaufsystem and Verlagsystem in particular and cottage industry in general in order to generate some insights about the historical conditions for the particular mode of control usually associated with the factory system (Safley and Rosenband eds 1993).

Another literature focuses on the historical role of the HBW in the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. Apparently, the Industrial Revolution in England and European Continent did not signify the cessation of the putting-out system: rather, the whole set of events yielding the Revolution gave rise to a new boom for industrial production at home. The emergence of the factory system actually boosted the putting-out system (Bythell 1978, Jones 1971, Scranton 1984). In short, these historical perspectives argue that industrial production at home and other workplaces were not necessarily mutually exclusive and, specifically in the 19th century, complementary.

The role of the HBW in the contemporary global commodity chains has been the focus of the literature investigating the role of informal economic activities in the global industrial relations. Although the studies on the historical role of the HBW before the 20th century mostly emphasize the structural significance of this form of industrial labor for the innocuous modern industry, they also regard the factory system as the ultimate form of industrial labor eventually replacing other forms. However, with the increasing importance of informal economic activities since the 1970s, this expectation about the prospective disappearance of the HBW was replaced with the alertness for the 'rebirth' of the HBW: industrial production at home has become the focus in order to understand the

characteristics of the vertical structure of the commodity chains (Beneria and Roldan 1987), the extent of the informal economic activities in the national development (Benton 1990, Hsiung 1996, Mehrota and Biggeri 2002), and the role of ‘teleworking’ in high-income countries (Pratt 1984, Coates 1988).

Exploring uncharted dynamics of the HBW through the lens of gender has prompted a number of analyses as well. Studies provide three different vantage points through which complicated links between the HBW, household organization, and family relations are discussed. Early studies contribute to making women’s work visible by accounting for homemaker women’s contribution not only to household economies but also to the capitalist accumulation (Mies 1982, Allen and Wolkowitz 1987, Lordođlu 1990, Çınar 1994). These efforts have largely undermined the myth of women as “idle housewives”. It is established that women are not housewives but income earners, producers, semi-proletarians, and disguised wage workers, whose labor and earnings are essential for the survival of poor families. Another group of studies provide an account of homemaker women’s subordinate and inferior positions both in the labor market and the household. Through the analysis of gendered division of labor in the context of patriarchal dynamics entrenched in the organization of HBW, studies specify the ways in which women’s exploitation and subordination are facilitated and mystified (Mies 1982, Beneria and Roldan 1987, Allen and Wolkowitz 1987, White 1994, Boris and Prugl eds 1996, Hsiung 1996). Other studies focus on the impact of HBW on gender roles and relations within the household. By examining its varying effects on the division of labor in the household, decision making, and women’s status in the family, various studies document the contradictory effects of the HBW on women (Lui 1994, Kümbetođlu 1996, Prugl 1999, Hattatođlu 2001).

2) HBW in the Context of Turkey

The role of HBW in the feminization of labor force has been at the center of the gendered dynamics of export-led growth in Turkey. Studies focusing on newly industrializing countries show that industrial restructuring has created a new female workforce employed in export-oriented factories (Nash and Fernandez-Kelly eds 1982, Ong 1987, Elson and Pearson eds 1989). The phenomenon of heavy concentration of women in export industries referred as the feminization of labor force is associated with the substitution of women for worker men in the industrial production (Standing 1989). It is widely argued that the current phase of capital accumulation is characterized by the feminization phenomenon as women furnish a cheap as well as unorganized source of labor (Jenson, Hagen and Reddy eds 1988; Sparr eds 1994, Chhachhi and Pittin eds 1996). Yet a converse tendency has been recorded in Turkey’s round of export-led growth eroding the appeal of feminization thesis (Çađatay and Berik 1990, 1994, Ansal 1997, 1998). However, by illustrating the significance of HBW for providing employment for women (Lordođlu 1990, Ecevit 1993, Çınar 1994, Erman, Kalaycıođlu and Pittersberger-Tılıç 2002), studies demonstrate that rather than factory work, HBW designates the patterns of feminization in Turkey (Çađatay and Berik 1994, Özar 1998).

Flexible labor practices associated with the HBW has been transforming the organization of production and labor process in Turkey since the 1980s. Paying attention to the production of manufactured commodities, in particular textile and garments, which are Turkey's main current links to the global economy, studies shed light on the changing factory systems, mushrooming small workshops, proliferation of HBW, and informalization of employment relations. These studies are complemented by others that analyze the characteristics of female labor force employed under flexible labor regimes by concentrating on the role of HBW in subcontracting relations (Eraydın and Erendil 1999, 2002; Hattatoğlu and Esim 2000).

Forms of labor control pertaining to the HBW has also been central to the intermeshing of gender and class dynamics within the frame of global industrial relations. Embedded in family, kinship, and community relations, HBW provides a powerful link for two different forms of analysis: one centering on labor control, the other concerned with the subordination of women. Drawing on gender, locally dominant social ideologies as well as community relations shaping the production process, studies designate the ways in which exploitation process is obscured along with the reproduction of gender inequalities (White 1994, Atılgan 2007).

3) Global Production, Local Organization: Understanding the Local Characteristics of the Organization of the HBW

As a result of the overemphasis on the global commodity chains embedding the HBW in the vertical industrial coordination, the mediation between homemaker women and organizers appears as a major intellectual concern (Beneria and Roldan 1987, Dangler 1994, Lui 1994, Hsiung 1996). However, one of the silences in these studies investigating the contemporary rise of the HBW in both Turkey and other regions is about the links organizing the distributive mechanisms (Lui 1994). Since organizers of the HBW have to develop their organizational strategies around the prevalent norms of family (Gringeri 1994), the locally shaped patriarchal relations characterize the organization of the HBW. Thus, the horizontal industrial coordination through various distributive mechanisms should be investigated with a focus on the patriarchal dynamics.

Partially, this relative silence on the horizontal industrial coordination is related with the attempt to conceptualize organizationally distinct activities such as teleworking in the North or industrial HBW in the South as labor practices signifying one singular activity. Attempts for conceptual clarification abound: Prugl and Tinker reach 'from empirical descriptions four categories of home-based work'; industrial homework, crafts production, food producers and vendors, and new homework (or teleworking) (Prugl and Tinker, p. 1472-1473, 1997). 'Homeworker' is accordingly the dependent employee working at home within an industrial division of labor, while 'home-based worker' covers all those who work at home for pay, including industrial homeworkers, the self-employed, crafts producers, and subsistence homeworkers' (Prugl, p. 159, 1999). Pearson, in her summary of the literature, presents the tendency in the literature to make a distinction between 'dependent' or 'subcontracted' workers and 'own-account workers' (Pearson 2004).

In addition to the problems of conceptualization hiding the organizational variety, another reason for the underestimation of HBW's organizational variety stems from under-theorization of patriarchal dynamics. Majority of studies tend to portray monolithic accounts of HBW by focusing on a fixed form of patriarchy determining the parameters of HBW. However, grasping its dynamism requires an analysis of patriarchy based on 'a set of relations embedded within an ongoing process of mediation centered in the economy, household organization, and family relations' (Feldman, p.1101, 2001). Such an analysis allows both to designate the organizational variety, and to understand how it matches with diverse patriarchal dynamics. This, in turn, accounts for the differences among homeworkers, as well as the causes of those differences.

These conceptual interventions clarify the complexity of our subject matter: the organizational variety pertains to the HBW as a result of the role of patriarchal dynamics and characterizes the working conditions of worker women. In this regard, rather than the literature treating the HBW as a 'satellite' activity and as an extension of the global value chains, we focused on the organizational ingenuities deriving from the initiatives of the local organizers and homeworker women. Although we aimed to decipher certain patterns in this paper, our overall conclusion is that constant change and variety characterizes the nature of the organization of the HBW, rather than static principles.

Many researchers underestimate the dynamism of the HBW: observations motivated by 'the dual-market theory' (e.g. Lui 1994) or 'the global value chain debate' (e.g. Carr, Chen, and Tate 2000) usually fail to theorize the potentiality for change and, hence, causes for variety. One of the concerns to focus on the organizational variety is to observe the possibilities for political and organizational cooperation among homeworkers. The organizational mediation is not necessarily structured by the firms: homeworker women use their creativity to establish networks and resort to their knowledge of the local. Thus, the analysis of the conditions leading to the local organizational differences is also the key to understand the conditions of political cooperation among homeworker women: one of the concerns of this project was to delineate the factors yielding these differences.

HBW IN İSTANBUL: FINDINGS; VARIETIES OF ORGANIZATION

1) Organization of the Workplace: Home and Street

HBW is for its very nature organized through the fuzzy link of homeworkers suffering from a very limited physical mobility with various sorts of jobbers. This relationship is concretized in distribution channels for the realization of particular tasks. Thus, to understand the workplace of the HBW requires clarifying the micro-level organization of the HBW, the nature of tasks, and the daily practices of homeworkers. Micro-level organizational characteristics of the HBW are closely enmeshed with the daily practices

of homeworkers and these two elements cannot be understood as separate dynamics. The nature of tasks also characterizes this interaction.

a) Micro-organizational characteristics of the HBW in İstanbul

Our focus regarding the micro-level organizational characteristics of the HBW was on the characteristics of distribution channels providing the materials for homeworkers. There are two major mechanisms of distribution in İstanbul; street networks and HBW-shops:

- i) Street networks are organized as sub-networks of city-wide HBW organizations: a group leader organizing her neighbors on the same street connect the jobbers with those homeworkers. Jobbers with their motor vehicles distribute the pieces to the women with the help of these group leaders. City-wide organizations utilizing many such street networks are capable of employing up to 1,000 homeworkers. Though this form generates flexibility, it is not suitable for training. Orders that require processing bulky materials also create problems of storage. The control is assured mostly through the heads of street-networks operating as ‘foremen’ of their streets.
- ii) HBW-shops provide orders for homeworkers in the same neighborhood and operate as both storage and training facilities. Jobbers organizing city-wide networks cooperate with the owners of these places and HBW-shops distribute the pieces to the women of their neighborhood. Employment capacity of an individual HBW-shop is limited, yet it assures more direct control on homeworkers thanks to the face-to-face relationship between HBW-shop owners and homeworkers. Successful HBW-shop owners open branches in other city-quarters and enlarge their networks. The gist of success in this business is to manage to organize the largest pool of homeworkers possible. This enhances the organizational complexity. Enlargement of the network for this form signifies a slower process than organizations controlling street networks. We interviewed with eighteen HBW-shop owners. In other words, in all neighborhoods of the target districts for the project, we encountered with HBW-shops, each of which organize various operations of HBW and provide employment for hundreds of women. Generally, these shops are spatially distant from each other organizing women within a radius of approximately one kilometer. Thus, each of them covers a certain segment of women in its neighborhood.

b) Characteristics of the tasks

Another dimension determining the characteristics of the ‘workplace’ for the HBW is the nature of the tasks. Two categories characterize different HBW orders:

- i) Tasks increasing the market price of already finished goods. Embroidery on finished garments is a good example. One of the major concerns for operations generating such tasks is product differentiation.

- ii) Tasks related to the assembly of semi-finished products. Various manufactured goods such as electrical appliances fall under this category. Such tasks are more bound to the location: proximity to the industrial area/factory/sweatshop is certainly an advantage for homeworkers.

This bifurcation derives from the differences in technical characteristics of production between capital- and labor-intensive industries. In labor-intensive sectors such as textile sector, global competition yields a constant tendency of the profit rate to fall. Thus, skilled labor is used for product differentiation. Through the HBW, skilled labor is utilized in a flexible manner. In capital-intensive sectors, the tendency to use the HBW is related to the reluctance of management to keep processes of different productivity under the same roof: the spatial co-existence of processes of different productivity increases the organizational rigidity in the factory due to time losses for transfer of workers among departments. In such an environment, flexible management strategies are difficult to implement. Under these circumstances, HBW signifies the use of unskilled labor for routine processes. This distinction in the characteristics of tasks impacts the methods of distribution, training, and storage. Since there is a generic difference in skill requirements, the first kind of tasks implies a closer supervision. Thus, HBW-shops usually organize tasks requiring skilled labor, while street networks fulfill more routine tasks.

On the one hand, the first kind of tasks requires skilled labor. The traditional skills are of utmost importance, usually unnoticed by the conventional organizational theory (Rothman 1987, Watson 1987, Erikson and Vallas 1990, Howard 1995). On the other hand, the second form of tasks signifies ultimate deskilling: child labor plays an important role and homeworker women, who can incorporate their children into homework, tend to take such orders.

In regard to the control, however, the paradoxical outcome is that homeworkers taking either skill-requiring or simple tasks do not have any motivation to implement further division of labor among themselves: as noted above, skill-requiring tasks are too complex to be broken into simpler processes, while simple tasks are already structured as individual processes in an imaginary 'conveyor belt' of a larger framework. Thus, not only piece-wage, but also the nature of processes signifies an in-built mechanism to isolate homeworkers from each other.

In other words, HBW-related tasks are either too simple or too complex: 'too simple' tasks cannot be further divided into simpler ones. In such cases, a simple division of labor does not provide efficiency gains. 'Too complex' tasks necessitate artisanship. For instance, embroidery or bead-job requires the intensive effort of an individual worker. The completion of one particular item signifies a continuous process, very difficult to disintegrate into repetitive tasks. Also, for such tasks, each individual order has its own characteristics, since patterns do constantly change. Hence, it is practically impossible to establish a division of labor among homeworkers in such cases.

c) Daily practices of homemaker women

This micro-level organizational framework shapes the characteristics of daily productive activities of homemaker women. As will be elaborated below, women are in a complex net of negotiations as homeworkers, wives, or daughters in this particular labor process. Thus, the organizational motivations of jobbers or managers only partially determine 'where women actually work'. Furthermore, non-HBW dynamics affecting the conditions of homeworkers have in return a direct impact on the micro-level organizational characteristics of the HBW. In this regard, one of our motivations was to see the interaction of these 'extra-work' effects with the daily activities of homemaker women. In this limited scope, we focused on the conditions of division of labor and on the extent of information- and skill-sharing among homemaker women.

i) Division of labor

Our primary strategy in order to have a solid grasp of these complex dynamics was to understand the collective use of apartments, buildings, and streets by homemaker women. As the organizational framework of the HBW at the neighborhood level is established through the direct contact with jobbers or the interaction with the HBW-shops, the place of actual work is of utmost importance. Our questions in this regard focus on where homeworkers process the materials. Our rough expectation was to see intensive division of labor among homemaker women in their apartment buildings and streets. To this end, we asked them whether they gathered at their apartments and implemented strategies dividing the overall process into simpler tasks. Similarly, homemaker women are under tremendous pressure of house chores. In this sense, we also asked them if they collectively did the cooking, cleaning, or childcare.

Our expectations regarding such particular forms of division of labor were not verified. Except for a few cases, our interviewees emphasized that they tended to separate the daily chores from their HBW-related activities. Thus, we did not see collective efforts to ease this burden. Similarly, although they gather occasionally at homes to process the materials and this practically decreases the burden of childcare, our interviewees did not perceive this as a strategy alleviating the problems about their work conditions.

ii) Information- and Skill-Sharing

However, these observations do not signify the absence of intense interaction among homeworkers: first, with the summer season, women use the street as their work environments, since most of the HBW-related tasks dirty their apartments. Similarly, if their alleged tendency to separate their household responsibilities from the HBW reflects the reality, then it can be argued that working on their streets establish a 'buffer zone' between homes and the HBW. In other words, although we call our subject matter 'home-based work', this does not necessarily mean that women actually want to work 'at' their homes. As an unintended consequence, the collective use of the streets provides many chances for sharing the skills and utilizing some division of labor, whenever it is feasible.

Second, HBW-shops compensate the absence of collective action among homeworkers sharing the same apartment building or the street. HBW-shops have been mushrooming for the last five years: any neighborhood in our investigation has at least one HBW-shop. We believe that these shops act not only as media of distribution between firms, jobbers, and workers, but also places substituting for the would-be collective mentality among homeworkers: homemaker women go and take their orders from these shops. HBW-shops are not only places for storage and training, but also media of communication among homeworkers. At these shops, homeworkers come together, chat about the conditions of the current order, and check the number of pieces that other homeworkers take. These exchanges inform them about the content of the order and their relative speed vis-à-vis others. If the HBW-shop has ample space and the owner/organizer works within short terms, some homeworkers work at these shops. This collective work primarily generates information- and skill-sharing. All of these exchanges, however, take place under the surveillance of the owner of the shop.

d) Income differentials among homeworkers

Homeworkers were asked about their average income. Since most of them cannot secure a regular flow of orders, they usually calculate their earnings on the basis of individual orders. Thus, a significant portion of our interviewees were unable to figure out their monthly income. Since both piece-rates and the regularity of orders have an effect on the average income, characteristics of engagement of women in the distribution networks account for the income differentials among individual homeworkers.

Three thresholds of income coincide with different modes of engagement of women in the HBW: the majority of homeworkers is not incorporated in well-functioning networks and depends on the haphazard flow of orders organized by mobile jobbers and HBW-shops. Some others act with motivations related to gain some bargaining power vis-à-vis the men of their households rather than primarily with subsistence concerns. The average income of these homeworkers ranges between 50 YTL¹ and 100 YTL, while the frequency for 100 YTL is by far the highest in our entire sample.

Another significant group of homeworkers establish relatively successful relations with mobile jobbers or they are sufficiently mobile to get piecework from multiple HBW-shops and jobbers. These women implement composite strategies to circumvent the duress of patriarchal domination and to eliminate the disadvantage of their relative immobility against the organizers of HBW. Accordingly, they can increase their monthly incomes up to 300 YTL. In fact, there is a significant gap of income among homeworkers processing the same material under similar circumstances. These differences mostly derive from the relative mobility of women and their willingness of engagement in the HBW. However, these relatively well-earning women still depend on the haphazard conditions of distribution: jobbers and HBW-shops have their idle periods and even the most agile homeworkers in terms of locating the most favorable orders cannot guarantee a regular flow of orders.

¹ 1YTL is approximately .75 USD.

As a third category, some homeworkers secure direct relations with factories and sweatshops: although the employment relationship is, as in other cases, informal, the connection is more clear-cut. These homeworkers do not get piecework from other sources and comply with the rhythm of work of these factories and sweatshops. Such factories and sweatshops have various motivations to outsource particular processes to these homeworkers and the regularity of returns in terms of timing and quality is a significant concern for the coordination on the shop floor. Thus, these homeworkers enjoy higher earnings ranging from 300 YTL to 600 YTL. However, this category seems to account for a small portion of the labor pool.

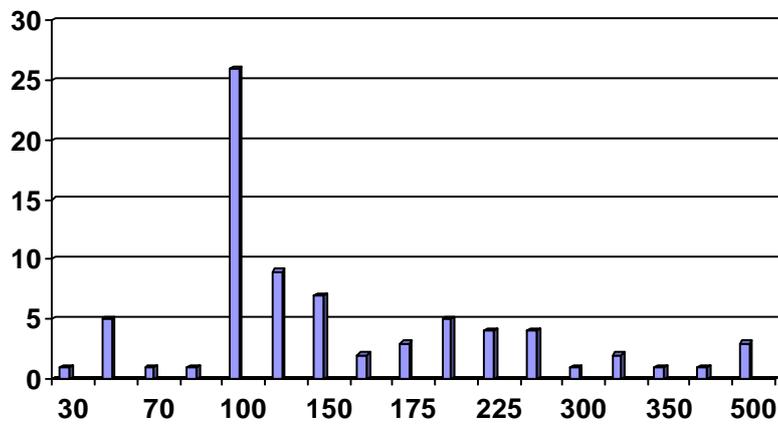
Income Thresholds	Frequency	Mean (YTL)	Standard Deviation (YTL)
0-100 TL	34	89,411	21
100-300 TL	34	173,97	43,8
300-500 TL	7	400	87,62
Sample	75	159,93	101,23

Although our sample is not large enough to reach generalizable conclusions and our sampling method does not let us process the data with statistical methods, it provides some insights about the income differentials: first, the income distribution has a great variation. Homeworkers able to gain close to the minimum wage (currently 585 YTL) constitute only a small minority. If we exclude this group out of the calculation, the mean becomes 131, 69 YTL and the standard deviation becomes 54, 57 YTL. In fact, wages in this sample accumulate within the range of 77 YTL and 186 YTL: the differential of individual physical mobility corresponds to significant differences in earnings accounting for variations of more than hundred per cent. All in all, the majority of our interviewees earn far less than minimum wage. This supports our intuitive conclusion about the variety in the modes of engagement of women in the HBW.

Second, the highest single frequency is 100 YTL in the entire sample: most of the interviewees reporting this particular figure are the ones not closely connected with the HBW networks and organizers, while the one earning between 100 YTL and 300 YTL are distributed more evenly and these homeworkers are either more mobile or able to secure closer links with HBW jobbers and networks. Isolated homeworkers generally cannot earn more than 100 YTL, yet to reach this figure seems to be relatively easy. On the other hand, homeworkers, who enjoy some mobility and do not have special connections with sweatshops and factories, can increase their incomes up to 300 YTL, while there is significant variation within this group: various factors including the intensity of flows of HBW orders and their personal success to bargain with jobbers and HBW-shop owners seem to account for this variety.

Third, homeworkers earning close to the minimum wage accounted for a relatively small portion of our sample (.093): this particularly clarifies the overexploitation of homemaker. None of our interviewees works less than four hours a day. 56% of the interviewees work ‘all day’, i.e. no less than eight hours up to sixteen hours. Thus, apparently the alleged ‘emancipatory’ nature of the HBW is a myth.

Frequency



Income (YTL)

2) Organization of the City

Although the micro-level organizational characteristics of the HBW are our main focus, our research design also provided certain insights about the organizational characteristics at the urban level. For instance, HBW-shops are not homogeneously distributed in İstanbul. Nor is it possible to see mobile jobbers in every city quarter with the same frequency. Since we predicted to see some neighborhood-based patterns in terms of macro-level organizational characteristics, we picked three city quarters of different characteristics in terms of industrial activities. Kiraç was a village ten years ago and it has now a population more than 100,000: five hundred factories, which have mushroomed within the last decade, characterize the industrial scene here. Bağcılar, on the other hand, houses both factories and sweatshops. Thus, informal labor practices related with sweatshop labor are prevalent. Avcılar is mostly a residential district exempt from a major bulk of factories or sweatshops.

Affirming our expectations, we observed two major dynamics in terms of distribution of the orders among different city quarters.

a) Income differentials among city quarters

Homeworkers in İstanbul do not constitute a homogeneous group in terms of income level. The pay rates are usually well below even the minimum income level. Thus, it is generally presumed that homeworkers are poor, which is to a great extent at least an intuitively correct presumption. Our observations also verified it. However, this does not mean that the HBW is ‘a club of the poor’: patriarchal dynamics restrict the mobility of women and de-grade their position in the household. Thus, women without significant subsistence problems are also willing to take some HBW job to earn some ‘pin money’.

On the other hand, jobbers, sweatshop owners, and firms certainly aim to reach the homeworkers willing to accept the lowest piece-wage. Thus, their motivation is to

distribute the items to the poorest families, neighborhoods, and city quarters. In this regard, especially the jobbers have a precise understanding about the income differences among city quarters and attempt to extend the scope of their operations to the poorest city quarters, most of the time the most recently emerging areas of the city. Similarly, we also interviewed with experienced HBW-shop owners, who astutely moved their shops to the poorest sections of the city in order to utilize the amenable pool of labor in those neighborhoods.

In this manner, it is possible to argue that HBW chains in İstanbul is organized around circles enlarging from the poorest to the more well-off quarters of the city. Bağcılar is the second poorest and third mostly populated city quarter of İstanbul (Özbay 1999): various sorts of HBW organizations abounding in Bağcılar employ even for a single operation hundreds of homeworkers. Avcılar, as a residential and relatively well-off city quarter, also houses many HBW-shops, while orders directed to Avcılar most of the time signify small-scale operations and employ only the poor of this city quarter. If large-scale orders are to be processed through HBW-shops of Avcılar, the pay level should be sufficient enough to attract relatively well-off homeworkers. In other words, only a well-paying order can organize a large pool of homeworkers in Avcılar. This would be the case, if the items to be processed have a short deadline for the firm or if there are organizational problems in the poorer city quarters.

Certainly the effect of the differentials of income level in the intra-city division of labor is also contingent upon the nature of the material and the concordant processes: some processes require the use of heavy or expensive machinery such as sewing machines or the use of delicate material such as in electronics. Furthermore, if the management of a factory resorts to the HBW in order to utilize the efficiency gains through the spatial split of the work, closer supervision on the homeworkers becomes necessary. In such cases, the geographical scope for the movement of materials is limited.

b) Characteristics of the agglomeration effects

As the total cost of wages is a primary motivation of the organizers of HBW in their planning, the technical difficulties related with the actual transaction appears as another major concern.

Certainly the effect of the differentials of income level is also contingent upon the nature of the material and the concordant processes. The most prevalent form of HBW in İstanbul is the artistic work on garments: the material is not bulky and the skilled labor is sometimes dispersed in different city quarters. Merged with the concerns about procurement of the cheapest labor available, these circumstances enlarge the geographical scope of distribution. Thus, as the distribution chain covers various districts of the city, the supervision is assured in most cases through HBW-shops.

In this sense, Bağcılar is one of the nodes of various HBW chains: besides the industrial establishments of various sorts located in this district, jobbers working with factories and sweatshops in other city quarters utilize the population density.

On the other hand, some processes require the use of heavy or expensive machinery such as sewing machines or the material is in certain occasions delicate as in the case of electronics. Furthermore, if the management of a factory resorts to the HBW in order to utilize the efficiency gains through the spatial split of the work, HBW-shops might not provide the necessary supervision on the homeworkers. In such cases, the geographical scope for the movement of materials is limited.

Factories in Kıracao utilize the HBW mostly with this concern. Thus, the organization of HBW is limited with this district: for instance, a major house shoe factory in Kıracao distributes the industrial sewing machines to the jobbers, who install them in various homes and establish long-lasting relations with homeworkers. As one of the factory managers of the company clarified, simple labor-intensive tasks are transferred out of the factory to homes and generate efficiency gains in the factory. However, given the value of the sewing machines, their installation at homes not only requires the establishment of trust between jobbers and homeworkers, but also literally ‘fixes’ this relationship spatially. In such cases, the pay is significantly higher than any other HBW-operations. Although the firm still saves the fringe benefits, piece-wages are comparable to the in-factory wages. Moreover, jobbers organizing the distribution also impose costs on the firm. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that concerns about the efficiency gains in such cases are as significant as the concerns regarding wages.

Similar motivations also hold for sweatshops utilizing the HBW: they usually operate with narrow profit-margins. Thus, they have neither the means nor the motivation to work with HBW-jobbers, since jobbers charge for their efforts, even though they are able to find the cheapest labor for HBW in distant districts of İstanbul. Moreover, especially garment sweatshops work with strict deadlines as well. Thus, working with large-scale HBW chains might cause critical time losses, which can sweep their entire profit. All of these concerns urge them to work with homeworkers in their neighborhood.

These two dynamics shape the geographical scope and characteristics of the HBW chains: income differentials act as a factor enlarging the geographical scope with differential rewards for the inhabitants of each district, while characteristics of the agglomeration effects might act as a countervailing dynamic. In regard to the impact of urban dynamics on the overall organization of the HBW, it is possible to argue that the mushrooming of the HBW-shops in İstanbul signifies the response to the transaction costs restricting the geographical scope of the HBW-chains.

HBW IN İSTANBUL: FINDINGS; **VARIETIES OF PATRIARCHY**

1) The Profile of Homeworkers in İstanbul

Given the increasing tendency towards subcontracting in industrial production, enterprises favor resorting to HBW for different reasons. Concurrently, the number of small entrepreneurs opting for jobbing activities has been secularly increasing. Compared to small scale industrial enterprises, jobbing requires neither initial capital nor raw materials. For instance, some of our interviewees were jobbers who had closed down their garment ateliers due to the dear trade opportunities in the HBW. These networks might cover around 1000 homeworkers that enable the jobbers to compete with the organizational complexity of well-established industrial establishments. Given the scope of HBW networks, it is also very likely that women would keep on engaging in industrial production through HBW. Hence, the profile of homeworkers charts socially diverse aspects of feminization of labor force² in manufacturing sector in contemporary Turkey.

Characterized by irregular workloads and low piece-rates, HBW attracts disadvantaged workers in the labor market, such as women lacking childcare assistance and recent Kurdish immigrants from eastern and southeastern regions. The major common denominator cutting across two categories of women is marriage³. In our research, we observed that married women, who are in their Thirties, make up the bulk of homeworkers. Yet, we should note that single daughters and old men in the families sometimes help out finishing the piece works.

We also observed a shift in the migrant status of homemaker women. Early studies on Turkey show that it is predominantly relatively older, first generation migrant women who involved in HBW (Lordođlu 1990, Çınar 1994). Yet, we found that a significant number of homeworkers are recent Kurdish immigrants. In this sense, our findings support the thesis that changing migration patterns in the mid-1990s due to civil war in Turkey created a reserved army of labor force that has been employed by industrial production based on subcontracting techniques (Yörük 2006).

For more than half of the women who participated in our research, the lack of their husbands' consent for working outside home leave HBW as the only viable option for earning some income. One fourth of the women, on the other hand, said that the lack of childcare for their small children, rather than their husbands' permission, prevent them from working outside. For others, old age, disabilities, and lack of any other employment options are main reasons for engaging in the HBW.

²We use the term 'feminization of labor force' to refer both to the increase in women's involvement in invisible work i.e. family labor and HBW, and the changing character of industrial work on the basis of organizational strategies whereby work is decentralized, low-paid, and irregular (Elson 1996).

³ Early studies on HBW in Turkey establish that married women are disproportionately represented in HBW (Lordođlu 1990, Çınar 1994, Eraydın and Erendil 1999, 2002). In this sense, our findings on marriage confirm the earlier studies.

With respect to social security mechanisms, nearly half of the homeworkers are deprived of any sort of social security support. The rest, on the other hand, are covered under their husbands' social security plans as dependants.

Regardless of differences in the social status of women engaging in the HBW, they all have to confront with pressing working conditions. Deteriorated under tight deadlines, working conditions become more demanding as low piece-rates requires longer working hours for the "pin money" to be earned. The result is the heavy pressure of both waged and unpaid work, since women are expected to fulfill the duties of a full-time housewife in the family. Having weeks or even months without a single break all day long, as women put it in expressing the details of their daily lives; reveal the extent of their concerted efforts in reconciling precarious employment prospects with strenuous demands of frugal housekeeping along with ongoing family tensions sparked by the husband.

2) Varieties of Patriarchy⁴ and Homeworkers

Various scholars regard HBW as a strategic venue, through which women's exploitation and subordination can be analyzed. Two dimensions of HBW guide studies: It represents a low-paid and labor intensive work form primarily conducted by married women and a site, where productive and reproductive activities of women are juxtaposed both spatially and practically (Lui 1994, Miraftab 1996, Abreu and Sorj 1996, Weiss 1996). By paying particular attention to the links between these dimensions, scholars articulate the close cooperation of capitalism and patriarchy in the appropriation and control of women's labor (Mies 1982, Beneria and Roldan 1987, White 1994, Hsiung 1996, Ghavamshahidi 1996). Resolving the potential conflict between the capitalists' interest in having an ample pool of easily disposable work force and the patriarchal demand for the unconditional service of full-time housewives at home, HBW sets out a formidable base for well-balanced operations of both systems: Employers are provided with a pool of cheap casual labor and men maintain their claims to authority in the family as breadwinners by managing women's contribution to the income⁵. The result is the consolidation of both capitalism and patriarchy.

Even though this perspective portrays a plausible scenario of women's role in capitalist industrialization, it cannot provide any strategies for studying either the organizational variations of HBW or the remarkable differences among homemaker women with respect to their mobility, bargaining power, status in the family, and patterns of income spending. The problem arises from implicit assumptions regarding patriarchy: a

⁴ Here, patriarchy is used to denote different forms of male dominated gender orders.

⁵ Mies (1986) articulates the relations of hierarchy between the husband and the wife. She coins the term housewifization to explain the modern form of control over women. According to her, housewifization is a process, by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependent for their sustenance to the income of their husband, irrespective of whether they are de facto housewives or not. The social definition of women as housewives is the counterpart of the social definition of man as breadwinners, irrespective of their actual contribution to their families' subsistence. By this way, women's labor becomes easily available to both husbands and capitalists.

monolithic force posing uniform rules on women's physical and social mobility rights and access to resources. Instead, we propose to explore the diverse dynamics of patriarchy stressing the differences of homemaker women's conditions of dependence for the reproduction of their labor power.

Homemaker women, like all workers, need resources to reproduce their labor power or to perpetually replenish their work capacity, to be sheltered and nourished so as to conduct both productive and reproductive tasks. However, there are some differences in their conditions of dependence for reproducing labor power. These differences in conditions of dependence for the reproduction of women's labor power account for the differences in the dynamics of patriarchy. The latter in return explains the variety among homemaker women in terms of mobility, bargaining power, status in the family, and patterns of income spending. Regarding homemakers in İstanbul, two different specificities in their conditions of dependence uncover differences in patriarchal dynamics. While the first one can be referred to as classical patriarchy, the other could be conceptualized as familial patriarchy.

a) Dynamics of classical patriarchy

Under classical patriarchy⁶, women's conditions of dependence for reproducing labor power are shaped exclusively by their husband's resources. Conditions of full dependence enable the husband to appropriate woman's labor and render her contribution to production invisible (Kandiyoti 1988). Thus, woman's actions in the labor market and employment patterns are circumscribed by the dictate of the husband. As the invisibility of the woman's contribution to production is crucial for the perpetuation of the classical patriarchy, HBW becomes the only viable option for the woman's employment. By this way, the husband's role as the sole economic protector or breadwinner is secured, since the woman is confined to the house under the exclusive authority of the husband.

Within the context of classical patriarchy, homemaker women's conditions of work and life can be described as following: They usually live in large households with their kin and have recently migrated to the city. They are confined to the house and generally isolated from other women in the neighborhood. Drawing on domestically acquired skills, particularly sewing, women involve in HBW. For these reasons, they can utilize street networks solely to find available piece works. Since individual enterprises periodically distribute piece-works by their motor vehicles, women are able to guarantee the flow of HBW materials without leaving home. Be that as it may, what is certain is that the ability of individual firms to promote and maintain favorable conditions for their operations. Efforts by the firms to expand the HBW distribution channels through the

⁶ The concept of classical patriarchy is theorized by Kandiyoti (1996). Her work accounts for the reproduction of peasantry in agrarian societies in the Middle East by focusing on the prominent role of labor of young married women in patrilocally extended households. Kandiyoti argues that the material basis of classical patriarchy dismantles under the impact of new market forces, capital penetration of rural areas, since necessity of every household member's contribution to survival turns men's economic protection into a myth (Kandiyoti p.43, 1996). However, she states that classical patriarchy takes different forms as a result of the migration to urban areas creating new hierarchies between husbands and wives. Here, we attempt to give an account of the specificities of classical patriarchy operating in urban areas.

street networks enable them to perpetually recruit women whose mobility is severely restrained.

Women perform HBW tasks under strict surveillance of their husbands. Especially among recent migrant households, men are likely to have meager earning potentials: they are either unemployed or able to find only casual jobs. In this case, it is usually husbands who undertake the job contracts and bargain over the piece-rates at the delivery and collection of the HBW materials. Women work in the presence of the husband who supervises them by setting the labor time congruent with his demands regarding house chores. In spite of the erosion in the material base of his authority, the husband is able to maintain the claim to authority as breadwinner by managing women's income as well as supervising the work process.

Under classical patriarchy, HBW not only ensures the status of the husband in the family as the breadwinner, but it also generates opportunities for upward mobility for some men. Particularly in large households, husbands are able to set up their own manufacturing workshops and become self-employers drawing on the labor and income of female members of his family. Men who succeed in running the workshops have the chance to escape from proletarianization.

One of the families we interviewed was in the process of establishing a workshop. Nearly one year ago, the husband made a contract with a shoe firm to stitch the upper parts of shoes at home. The firm supplied him small stitching machines in return for a deposit. Since then, the motor vehicles of the factory are coming periodically to the house to deliver and collect the leather works and to make the payments. At home, four female members of the family work around 12 hours a day. The husband told us that during that year, he was able to accumulate enough money to establish a workshop. He placed two industrial sewing machines at the top floor of his apartment where women work under his surveillance.

Another interviewed family had already established a small garment workshop in their own basement. While male members of the family run the workshop and deal with the workers there, female members of the family consisting of three generations of women living in the upper floors of the same building, engage in HBW. Women sew side seams of sweaters which are periodically delivered and collected by the motor vehicles of a factory. The income that women derive from HBW is channeled to the budget of the workshop to supplement its overhead costs.

b) Dynamics of familial patriarchy

Under familial patriarchy⁷, women's conditions of dependence for reproducing their labor power are determined by family circumstances. When a woman gets married, she is expected to accomplish domestic tasks as a housewife and mother, along the lines of the gender division of labor in the family. In return, she is dependent on the incomes of other family members. Thus, the availability of assistance for housework and childcare, rather than exclusive authority of the husband shape woman's behavior in the labor market and employment pattern. Providing an opportunity to fit waged work with housework and childcare for women lacking continuous help for these tasks, HBW emerges out as the only viable option for waged employment. The income deriving from the HBW is constructed as a contribution to family income enhancing family's collective interests rather than underpinning merely the husband's status as breadwinner.

Within the context of familial patriarchy, homemaker's living and working conditions can be described as following: They are usually members of the nuclear families, either born in the city or have been living there for a long time. No longer confined to the house, they make use of their relative mobility in order to utilize both HBW-shops and street networks. They usually go and chat with different jobbers around and learn the specificities of the available piece works and then choose the ones that match their criteria best.

Many of them had worked outside home before they had children. The professional skills and the discipline they acquired in the factory help to enhance their bargaining power vis-à-vis HBW employers. Especially women living in working class neighborhoods have a chance to subcontract with factories relying on local networks. One of our interviewees made plain how that sort of a strategy entails better piece-rates. When she gave birth to her daughter, she had to quit her job due to the absence of daycare. After a while, she subcontracted with a toy factory, where his husband worked as a foreman. Then, she started knitting nets used on basketball hoops at home. Thanks to the skills she acquired during her previous work experience, she has been apt for precisely performing complex details of the tasks in a short time. The factory discipline pervading the HBW ensured a 'decent' income matching with that of an in-factory worker. A year later or so, she asked for an increase in the piece rate, which the employers rejected, thus, she stopped knitting the nets. Nevertheless, two months later, the employers accepted to increase her wage, since they were not able to find another skilled outworker who would substitute her and thereby, she restarted knitting nets at home.

Given the amount of available labor force in the market, success in bargaining for better wages is not always easy to achieve for homeworkers. However, given the precarious

⁷ In explaining familial patriarchy, we make use of the concept of *familialism* developed by C. Kwan Lee (1998). She originally coined the term to shed light on the gendered organization of the local labor market in Hong Kong and shop floor relations in local manufacturing sector. In particular, she explains how gender conditions pertinent to marriage shapes the supply of female labor and how gender norms penetrates to the shop floor forming the relations between management and women workers.

base of HBW, a further dimension of bargaining power is distinguished by the ability of the homeworkers to guarantee the regular flow of HBW materials. In this regard, women with previous work experience are more successful than others. It is a very common practice among jobbers to reserve specific amounts of piece works for them. An interviewee performing embroidery tasks at a HBW-shop on a regular basis explained the benefits of this mechanism. After she quit the factory to take care of his son, she involved in HBW. Of the homeworkers taking piece works from the HBW-shop, she was the most dedicated and disciplined one. Almost every morning she went to the HBW-shop with her son and worked there till it got dark. Over time, she formed a trust relationship with the owner of HBW-shop and began to help out the owner in organizing and allocating the materials besides performing embroidery tasks. In return, she both assured the flow of piece works and expanded her alternatives for waged employment.

Not surprisingly, the income derived from HBW is utilized as a contribution to the income pool of family. That is why some of the homemaker women still regard themselves as housewives who just earn “pin money” instead of workers. Under these circumstances, there is one guiding principle underlying different motivations for women’s involvement in HBW: contribution to the well-being of the family. They work in order to efficiently run the household hit hard by financial crises, cover weekly household expenses, pay bills and rent, and save money for children’s educational costs.

3) Employment Status of Homeworkers

Recently, a new law has been ratified, arranging the terms of HBW in the Turkish income tax law⁸. Besides granting homeworkers with a legal status matching with that of self-employers for the first time, the law designates certain income tax breaks for them. Succeeding the ratification of the law, the disputes over the HBW have resurfaced. Spurred by the range of complexities in the organization of HBW, the debates place both the nature of the HBW and employment status of the homeworkers at the heart of the controversy.

Two major perspectives regarding the nature of HBW has arisen within the debate. While some argue that it is a craft based or artisan activity, for others it represents a single stage or a sub-process of industrial production. Developing this division further, advocates of HBW as a craft activity maintain that homeworkers should be acknowledged as self-employed entrepreneurs or independent contractors trading their own accounts. Yet, for scholars examining diverse dimensions of labor process, homeworkers are to be regarded as an integral part of the working class, since waged labor forms the basis of HBW (Prugl and Tinker 1997). Opposing to the prescription of self-employer on political grounds, they point out that defining HBW as a craft activity operates as a strategy for social control of homeworkers, as it establishes new forms of subordination by denying them labor rights, protections, and access to benefits that arise from legal arrangements designating the relationship between workers and employees (Prugl 1999). In their strive for labor rights of homeworkers, advocates urge the adoption of International Labor

⁸ The latest version of the law has been ratified on 04/04/2007.

Organization's convention of HBW, which promotes equal treatment of homeworkers with other wage earners⁹ (Prugl 1999, EECK 2001).

Informed by this debate, we examined both the nature of work and the working conditions of homeworkers located in İstanbul's diverse neighborhoods:

Nature of HBW: Located at the lowest rung of the subcontracting chain, HBW encompasses industrial tasks related to either increasing the market price of already finished good or assembly of semi-finished goods.

Working Conditions of Homeworkers: Aside from characteristics of HBW tasks, an examination of job contracts as well as working conditions of homeworkers with respect to their control over the means of production and labor process are instructive for figuring out the employment status of homeworkers:

- i) Homeworkers lacking the autonomy of a self-employer are fully dependent on jobbers/employers for the supply and flow of piece works and raw materials.
- ii) It is jobbers who control the work process. The provision of raw materials and the collection of the HBW materials by the jobber prevent homeworkers from controlling the work process. By setting times for both the allocation and collection, jobbers/employers also ascertain working hours along with the pace of production. Most of homeworkers we interviewed complained about the fact that they do not have control over their work time. Especially when they are required to complete an urgent order, they have to work until late, sometimes all night, to deliver finished materials and guarantee payment.
- iii) None of the homeworkers has control over the means of production. In some cases, however, they deposit money to employers and in return they are supplied with specific means of production, such as sewing machines, for a limited period.
- iv) Finally, the income derives from piece-rates and jobbers make payments to homeworkers either weekly or monthly.

Our findings contribute to uncover the dynamics of Turkish law on HBW. Despite the acknowledgement of productive activities of homeworkers for the first time, their legal definition as self-employers can be regarded as a strategy to circumvent labor rights and related protective measures to exclude them from waged-workers.

⁹ In 1996, ILO adopted a convention of HBW. The convention requires ratifying states to adopt, implement, and periodically review a national policy on HBW. It sets as the crucial guiding principles for such a policy "equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners". The convention extends labor rights to those working at home for pay. These include rights of association, rights to protection against discrimination, rights to occupational health and safety, access to training, and maternity protection rights. In Turkey, Home-Based Workers Working Group consisting of activists and scholars, and Avcılar Home Based Working Women's Artisan Cooperative actively promotes ILO's convention on HBW and discusses strategies of implementing the convention in Turkey.

HBW IN İSTANBUL: FINDINGS; PARAMETERS OF BARGAINING POWER

Even though homeworkers are debilitated by controversial legal arrangements, they strive to enhance their bargaining power in various ways. It has been widely argued that homeworkers do not have bargaining powers vis-à-vis the employers, as they are confined to the lowest rungs of the labor market (Chhachi and Pittin eds 1996, Eraydın and Erendil 1999). The processes of subcontracting atomize the labor force along with minimizing the awareness among workers. This atomization retards the chances of collective action and thereby weakens the bargaining power of workers (Eraydın and Erendil 2002). Then, the cheap labor of married women as homeworkers appears as an ample pool at the disposal of employers (Allen and Wolkowitz 1987).

Having certain skills or previous work experience apparently enhances homeworkers' bargaining power. Especially, those women who have previous work experience outside the home are more capable of guaranteeing the flow of piece works. Since they enjoy certain professional skills, are prone to finishing piece works quickly, and work in more disciplined way than those who do not have any work experience, employers/jobbers prioritize them during the process of distribution of the piece works. The differences in skills provide women with differentials in individual bargaining power.

In terms of collective bargaining power, informal work contracts, irregular work loads and isolation of homeworkers from each other retard their capacities to act collectively. Pertinently, unions usually play an unenthusiastic role in relation to homeworkers. With their focus on formal employment, trade unions have a tendency to treat homeworkers as competitors, who pull down the wages of formal workers¹⁰.

Despite these unfavorable conditions, women pursue particular strategies to ameliorate their exploitation. It is possible to categorize these strategies at three levels: building organizations, establishing street-based solidarity networks, and negotiating with the patriarchal dynamics over the conditions of their mobility.

1) Organizing Organizations

Throughout our research, we came across with two organizations primarily oriented to bargaining with jobbers and firms on behalf of their affiliates. One of the organizations founded by homeworkers is the Avcılar Home Based Working Women's Artisan Cooperative established in 2002. As of now, the cooperative has around forty regular members and within its larger network, there are around two hundred homeworker women living nearby Avcılar neighborhood. The main thrust of the cooperative is to erode homeworkers' social and political isolation by establishing links between them and

¹⁰ However, there is a growing interest among some unions in Turkey towards homeworkers. Some unions established commissions that explore the working conditions of homeworkers. Moreover, union representatives contact with homeworkers' support organizations to discuss the strategies to enhance homeworkers' bargaining power.

different labor and women organizations. The cooperative contracts with companies in upper echelons of production chain and distribute the work orders to its members and homemaker women within the network of the cooperative.

Another organization, İmece (Cooperation), is located in Esenyurt, a city quarter neighboring Kıraç: initiated by socialist political activist women, İmece intends to raise the gender and class consciousness of women in the area through education workshops, literacy courses, and artistic activities. To the same end as the cooperative in Avcılar, they bargain on behalf of women in contact with İmece. Since the organization has a radical political character, the municipality at the hands of a right-wing political party (AKP) took a counter-offensive stance and established an alternative HBW workshop for women. This strategy intending to entice the women to cease their relationship with İmece seems to harm the efforts of this organization.

The major strategy for both organizations to enhance the bargaining power of homeworkers vis-à-vis the employers is to cut the chain of production by removing jobbers from job contracts. This both enables homemaker women to secure the regular flow of HBW materials and increases their wages, since profit of the jobber is funneled to the homemaker.

Besides these micro-level initiatives, Home-Based Workers Working Group founded by activists and academics develops strategies to render HBW visible in Turkey. One major concern of the group is the implementation of ILO's convention on HBW, which extends labor rights to those working at home. In this respect, the group establishes links among different labor organizations and institutions with the aim of applying pressure on the government to adopt ILO's convention of HBW in Turkey.¹¹

2) Street-Based Solidarity

In discussing the bargaining power of homeworkers vis-à-vis the employers, we make a distinction between the collective and individual dynamics of bargaining as well as dynamics of securing the flow of jobs and increasing the piece-rate prices. Given that HBW is characterized by informal and non-periodical contracts between employers/jobbers and homeworkers, irregular workloads result in uncertainty on the part of homeworkers. As a result, most homeworkers in a struggle of daily survival prefer the regularity of orders to higher piece wages.

Certainly, cooperatives and grassroots organizations help women to establish a consensus about the piece-wages in their neighborhoods. However, these initiatives are relatively new and their outreach is for now limited. Thus, women who have no access to such organizations form their own street-based networks. Some of our interviewees were acting in solidarity with their neighbors and bargaining with the jobbers collectively. Yet,

¹¹ ILO's convention of HBW requires ratifying states to adopt, implement, and periodically review a national policy on HBW. This policy includes granting rights of association, rights to protection against discrimination, rights to occupational health and safety, access to training, and maternity protection rights to homeworkers.

women usually cannot put systematic pressure on the jobbers, since their number is most of the time insignificant for the completion of the overall operation. Furthermore, since jobbers are extremely mobile, they are able to move from one neighborhood to another other and find women to work for lower piece wages. Despite all of these adverse conditions, however, the street-based networks seem to establish some regularity at least for the women sharing the same street and to decrease the competition among them. Similarly, in some cases, the orders might have close deadlines which makes time for the firms a more important concern than the wages. Under such circumstances, solidarity among neighbors helps women to have some raise.

Strategic location of homeworkers vis-à-vis the workplaces is also a factor enhancing the bargaining power of such groups of solidarity. Women, who live nearby the locations where firms, factories, or workshops are located, have a chance to contract with the employers. Operating as a subdivision of the factory or the sweatshop, homeworkers not only guarantee the flow of piece works by tapping on a number of available options of piece works distributed from workplaces located nearby, but also channel the commission of the jobbers to themselves.

Kinship and *hemşeri* (fellow countrymen) relations enhance the role of street-based networks as well. In such cases, women both work as homeworkers and also distribute some of the piece work delivered from employers to the women living in the same street: the neighborhood ties between them and their neighbors might put some 'checks-and-balances' on these organizer women and decrease or eliminate their commission.

3) Bargaining against/with the Patriarchy

Since the HBW signifies a context of work connecting home with the paid labor, bargaining power of women is closely linked with their 'bargain' with the male members of their households. The ones effectively skirting the obstacles of the patriarchy gain significant freedom to pursue integrated strategies against the jobbers and the firms. Thus, the struggle of women at home cannot be conceptualized as a dynamic separate from their rift with the capital. Different dynamics of patriarchy have a varying impact upon homeworker women's bargaining powers vis-à-vis the employers/jobbers.

On the one hand, since women, whose conditions are circumscribed by classical patriarchy, are confined within the boundaries of the home, they utilize merely the street networks to secure the flow of HBW materials. Under these circumstances, they are dependent solely on the motor vehicles of firms and have to comply with their time schedules for delivery and collection of the materials. In many cases, it is usually the husband who undertakes the job contracts and bargain over the piece-rates, given that women are under strict surveillance of their husbands. The only advantage of these women is the size of their household: women of the same household work collectively, share the burden of house chores, and organize a rough division of labor providing them with some efficiency gains. As it is more profitable for firms to distribute more piece work to single household at once, these large households emerge as 'gangs' guaranteeing the flow of HBW orders.

On the other hand, women confronting with familial patriarchy enjoy a bigger variety of possible strategies. Since they are relatively mobile in their neighborhoods, they take orders both from street networks and HBW-shops. They are able to secure different sources of HBW. Furthermore, they are more knowledgeable about price differences across neighborhoods and HBW-shops. In the case of intense competition among mobile jobbers and HBW-shops, these women certainly use this information for their benefit.

For Further Discussion

Peculiarities of HBW reflect recent changes in the organization of the industrial production. In this sense, the analysis of HBW provides a powerful conceptual link between different perspectives guiding the study of global industrial relations. One perspective investigates the transformations in the organization of production, the other concentrates on complex realities entrenched in the making of working classes. Where these perspectives establish the HBW as an integral part of the analysis, they provide an opportunity to advance our understanding of class relations under flexible industrial production in urban Turkey.

The organization of the HBW should be regarded as the outcome of varying effects, which can be analyzed at different levels of analytical abstraction: the transformation of the global economy and the consequent restructuring and implementation of the national laws and regulations certainly constitute a framework for the HBW as for any other form of industrial labor. Within this framework, at the meso-level, industrialists of different sorts utilize the HBW with different motivations: reducing the wages, cutting the fringe benefits, or decreasing the organizational rigidities in their factories and sweatshops. At the micro-level, another question is how the HBW is actually organized: the related phenomena can only be understood through studies deciphering the motivations and work-related practices of homeworkers and our research fulfilled this particular task. We observed a great variety in organizational characteristics of the HBW in İstanbul. This variety derives both from the nature of the work and the modes of engagement of homeworkers. At the nexus of these two dynamics, the organizational variety appears as an expected consequence meeting the distinct demands and strategies of employers, jobbers, and homeworkers.

Certainly, HBW is one of the most exploitative forms of industrial labor and homeworkers account for the most vulnerable segment of the working class in Turkey. However, though mostly unutilized, there are some potential means to increase the bargaining power of homeworkers. Our conviction is that, inasmuch as these potentials are realized, the wage differentials between different forms of industrial labor can be reduced and the enormous level of exploitation of homeworker women can be ameliorated.

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