

division of labour is husband's involvement in child care and housework. Our data indicate that if husbands participate in some conventional female activities, such as feeding children, preparing meals, cleaning up after meals, cleaning the house or doing the washing, ironing or laundry, then women are more satisfied than if their husbands do not participate in these activities. The relative amount of time husbands spend on housework also matters, but time spent overall by husbands is a less important determinant of women's satisfaction than what men actually do. The more men are involved in non-traditional male activities, the more women report higher levels of satisfaction with their domestic labour arrangements.

This finding implies that for most women the key issue is having 'help' with some specific activities rather than an equal division of time on housework.

The results thus suggest that for most women satisfaction with the way household work is organised does not largely depend on an egalitarian domestic division of labour understood as an equal sharing of time on household work. For most women it seems that the benchmark against which their own household arrangements are judged is not some ideal in which men and women contribute equally to domestic labour (and against which almost all households fall short), but a pragmatic assessment of reality, in which men do much less and in which there is a pronounced gender division of labour.

Against the yardstick of a highly traditional gendered division of domestic labour, any consistent participation by husbands in non-traditional male activities is better than none, and hence is associated with increased satisfaction among women.

This interpretation would suggest that most women are prepared to accommodate an inequitable division of domestic labour as long as husbands help with some of 'women's work'. This work may be tasks that women particularly dislike doing, or tasks that are daily activities and require regular commitment and organisation, such as preparing meals.

A *contribution* to housework, rather than *equivalence* in housework responsibility, may be women's main goal because the perceivable alternative is not an equal division of labour but a situation in which men do even less.

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Home Snapshots of

Changes in labour demand and in job security have produced some specific responses on the part of workers and employers. But the magnitude and direction of these changes is not always clearly understood. CHRISTINE KILMARTIN looks at some recent trends in home-based employment, in the over- and under-employed, and in the regional distribution of unemployment.

With the restructuring of the workforce to meet new global demands, changes are occurring to, or are being demanded of, standard ways of working. People are seeing the need to create niche markets for themselves in the wake of downsizing and the offshore movement of traditional jobs. One of those changes is to the split between those who work at home and those who work in a location away from their private lives and families.

Some commentators have suggested that the increase in those working at home has been quite marked, driven by workforce restructuring. The data in Table 1 have captured shifts to home-based employment which have been, for the most part, modest and in ways not quite anticipated.

It is recognised that there may be a reluctance by some groups, such as

-based Work

recent labour market trends

Christine Kilmartin



Picture: Don White

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outworkers, to admit to home-based work, and that such persons may not show up in survey figures. The problem of the gross underpayment of outworkers is one which a coalition of church, community organisations and unions, including the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA), has been raising by means of a 'fair wear' campaign. This campaign seeks to protect women, and the children of these

women, who are working extremely long hours for very low rates of pay.

Considerable attention has been focused upon the plight of outworkers in recent years. The TCFUA has estimated

that there might be 300,000 home-based workers in Australia as a result of the shift from factory to home-based work in order to cut costs in the fashion industry; the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of persons employed at home in late 1995 estimated that 230,000 women worked at home but, of these, only about 16,000 are registered in occupations that might be classified as fashion industry outworkers.

Outwork has been included as one of the 20 allowable matters for negotiation under the new award arrangements; such actions may eventually result in home-based work and the conditions that surround it being better identified in surveys. Certainly reports of TCFUA and others about the conditions under which women and their families are employed give rise to concern for the welfare of such families.

Acknowledging these limitations, the available data show that in 1995 a quarter of both men and women worked some or

Involuntary part-time work is highest among young people seeking workplace-based work.

all of their paid hours at home, a growth between 1989 and 1995 of around 3 per cent for each group. This growth was greatest for men and women in their late forties and early fifties (Table 1).

However, for the group described as *employed at home*, growth was marginal: less than 1 per cent for both women and men. The greatest growth occurred in those who undertook *some* work at home but did fewer hours at home than elsewhere. Again, the major part of that growth was for both men and women in their late forties or older.

It is unlikely that the majority of this home-based work is combined with the care of children, given the age profile of those working at home and the balance of hours worked at home compared with elsewhere. It is unknown whether any of this growth is associated with the growth in involuntary underemployment.

In general, though, women with children are more likely to work at home than women with no children. In 1995, one in nine women with children under 15 worked at home, compared with one in 16 women generally. Men with children under 15 were no more likely to be employed at home than were men generally (around one in forty). However, fathers were more likely than men with no children to have spent *some* time working at home: more than one in four fathers with children under 15 in 1995 had done some, although not most, work at home, compared with around one in five men generally.

Whereas men employed at home are most likely to be either professional workers or tradespersons, women are predominantly registered in clerical occupations. Both groups are most likely to be registered as self employed (now called 'own account workers' or 'contributing family workers').

There has been some increase in the duration of working at home for women,

Table 1 Employed males and females: per cent working some hours at home by age group, Australia, 1989 and 1995

Age group	Males		Females	
	1989	1995	1989	1995
15-24	8	8	6	7
25-34	22	23	24	23
35-44	32	34	28	32
45-54	30	35	26	31
55-64	27	32	31	34
65+	46	52	49	47

People employed at home (that is, all hours worked at home): per cent of all employed persons in age group

15-24	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.6
25-34	1.1	1.5	6.9	5.8
35-44	2.3	2.5	7.7	8.7
45-54	2.2	3.0	7.8	7.3
55-64	3.2	4.6	11.1	11.8
65+	7.9	10.6	19.5	18.1

People usually working more hours at home than elsewhere*: per cent of all employed persons in age group

15-24	2.4	1.4	0.8	0.5
25-34	2.1	1.4	1.5	1.2
35-44	3.1	2.3	2.8	2.1
45-54	4.6	3.5	4.0	3.9
55-64	6.3	6.2	7.4	6.8
65+	18.1	21.6	19.1	12.3

People working some hours at home, but usually working fewer hours at home than elsewhere*: per cent of all employed persons in age group

15-24	5	6	5	5
25-34	18	20	16	16
35-44	27	29	18	21
45-54	24	29	14	20
55-64	18	21	13	16
65+	21	21	11	17

*Persons taking work home/doing some work at home
Source: ABS, *Persons Employed at Home, 1989 and 1995*, Cat. No.6275.0.

with a rise from 43 per cent in 1989 to 47 per cent in late 1995 for women who have worked at home for more than five years. For men, the last few years have seen a growth in those working at home from 1.8 per cent of all workers in 1989 to 2.4 per cent in 1995; this registers as a slight growth in those who have worked at home for fewer than five years.

Since those data were collected there is likely to have been some growth in both men and women doing teleworking or other home-based work on a full- or part-time basis. Overall, though, the growth in those doing any work at home has been modest and concentrated for people in the over-45 year age group. Much of that growth seems to be in the 'overflow' category: people who work elsewhere but undertake some work at home.

Involuntary part-time work, on the other hand, is highest among young people seeking workplace-based work. Eleven per cent of men and 15 per cent of women under 25 were working part time in September 1996 and looking for more hours of work. One in twelve married women with dependent children, and one in six female lone parents, were in the same position. Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria were the States where women working part time were most likely to be wanting more hours. For men, Tasmania, the ACT and South Australia

In 1995, a quarter of both men and women worked some or all of their paid hours at home.

were the most limited in available extra work.

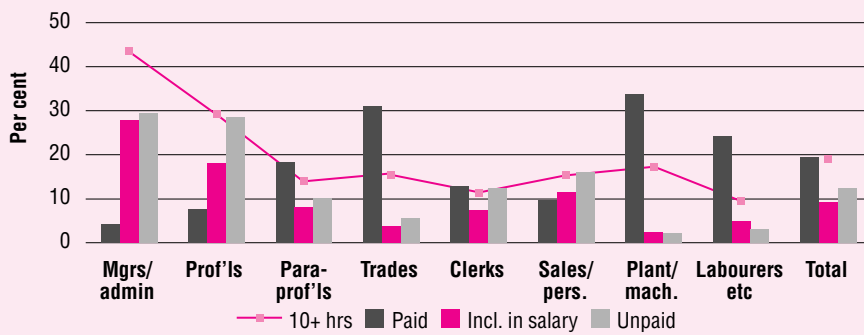
It is easy to juxtapose information about increases in the number of hours worked by full-time workers against the demand for additional work among the involuntary part-timers and the unemployed, but the link is not straightforward. In September 1996, men working full time did an average of nearly 46 hours per week, and women working full time, an average of 41 hours per week. This figure has continued to rise in 1997.

At the same time there were 629,000 unemployed people looking for full-time work, another 170,000 looking for part-time work, and a further 414,000 involuntary part-time workers looking for additional work and ready to start if it became available. Altogether, meeting these demands would add between 11 and 12 per cent to the total pool of required hours of work. However, not all of the hours of 'overwork' are paid hours, and nor are they in the industries or occupations required by those seeking additional work.

For instance, as Figures 1 and 2 show, the major areas of overwork in 1995 were in the professional and managerial areas; within those areas, the majority of hours of overwork, particularly for women, were unpaid. On the other hand, the demand for work among the unemployed is for first jobs, particularly among the young, for labouring and related work, for clerical work at all skills levels, and for tradeswork. Only about 6 per cent of the unemployed who are not looking for a first job are drawn from the ranks of professionals and managers. Almost two-thirds of the additional hours of work required by the underemployed would need to be for those with no post-school qualifications.

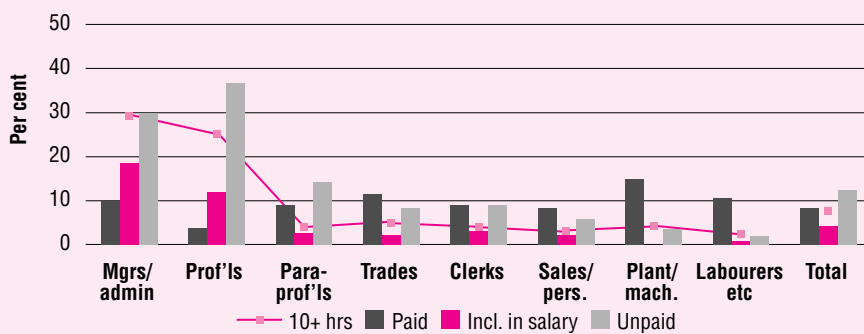
To expect a restructuring of work to meet the demands of the un- or underemployed would most likely be to draw

Figure 1 Males: per cent working paid/unpaid overtime, 1995



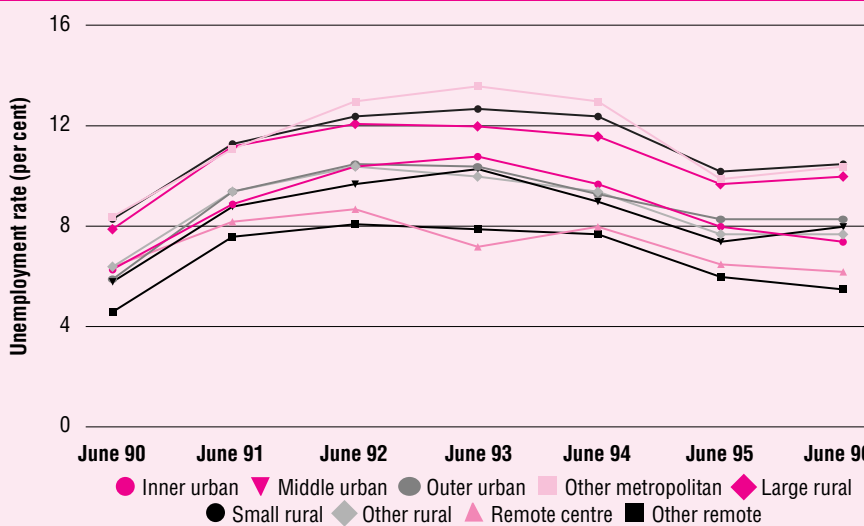
Source: ABS CDATA91 and geographic classification developed by DPIE, HS&H and AIFS

Figure 2 Females: per cent working paid/unpaid overtime, 1995



Source: ABS CDATA91 and geographic classification developed by DPIE, HS&H and AIFS

Figure 3 Unemployment rates, geographic areas, Australia 1991-96



Source: DEETYA small area data and geographic classification developed by DPIE, HS&H and AIFS

from the hours of those working in less well paid occupations already. Average hours have increased across a range of industries but some of the largest growth has been in areas requiring skilled training and education: the finance and property and communications industries, and those rapidly privatising areas of electricity, gas and water. Meanwhile average weekly hours have declined in the retail trade and tourism and entertainment areas.

Further, the distribution of unemployment has maintained a consistent

geographical pattern throughout the nineties (Figure 3). The highest unemployment has been in areas outside the capital cities (excluding the remote areas), and the major professional work has been within the capital cities. The remote areas, where mining plays a major part, have consistently experienced the lowest unemployment. (Mining has had one of the greatest increases in average hours of work over the last decade.) The highest unemployment has been in those urban conurbations stretching out from the major capital cities, mainly along the

eastern seaboard, and in small rural centres with district populations of between 10,000 and 25,000.

Any strategy for redistributing work would have to take this geography into account, as well as the reluctance or inability to relocate of many of those seeking work. Only a third of underemployed men in 1996 said they would move intrastate for further employment, and only a quarter said they would move to another State (ABS 1996). For women, the figures were somewhat lower. The pattern for unemployed persons (as

The distribution of unemployment has maintained a constant geographical pattern throughout the nineties.

distinct from underemployed persons) is similar (ABS 1994). The regional gains experienced between 1994 and 1995 had, in almost all areas, flattened out by mid-1996 (the latest data available for geographic analysis) and in the areas of higher unemployment were again slightly on the rise.

Durations of unemployment have remained high during the nineties, increasing the likely lifelong disadvantage that certain groups will experience, while others will gain the long-term benefits of a two-income household. The issues of duration of opportunity to participate in the labour market and 'jointness', or opportunity, to share in the labour force experience of others, are not well catered for in existing data.

We know something of the cross sectional behaviours of partners in response to the labour market situation of the other partner, but very little about the long-term accumulation of assets which derive from continued joint participation in the labour force. Yet it is important to understand these elements in order to design policies which redress the effects of extended duration of lack of opportunity, either individually or as a family. In the meantime, the existing data would suggest that the small adjustments that are occurring within the labour force are not nearly sufficient to meet demand.

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