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Working at home: A study of gender and sociophysical space

Gottlieb, Nina Michèle, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1993

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106

WORKING AT HOME: A STUDY OF GENDER AND SOCIOPHYSICAL SPACE

by

NINA MICHÈLE GOTTLIEB

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1993

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Abstract

Working at Home: A Study of Gender and Sociophysical Space

by

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Adviser: Professor Maxine Wolfe

Home-based work has the potential for altering the production of work, the interface between paid work and domestic life, gender-based roles within households, and connections of households with neighborhoods. This dissertation explores such potential through the examination of three sociophysical aspects of working at home: the location and design of workspaces within the home; the physical and symbolic attributes of the spaces of the home itself; and relationships to the community surrounding the dwelling. These issues are investigated in the context of the economic, political, and social forces that have created gender-based disparities in relation to dwellings, households, and paid and domestic work.

In-depth interviews were conducted with thirty women and men working at home in a variety of white-collar professions and living in various relationships to other people. The functions of spaces within the dwelling and the creation of workspaces were both dependent in large part on

individual priorities concerning paid work and domestic life, and perceived gender roles and social relationships within households -- as well as the nature and amount of space available. The degree of separation or overlap between paid work and household activities was also related to those factors, not to the specific location of the workspace in the dwelling. The hope that home-based work will promote gender equity seems to have little foundation; unless there is a conscious decision to alter gender roles within a heterosexual household, it is likely that existing patterns will continue, albeit in a different context. Design and planning implications and issues related to gender and environments are also discussed.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Harold M. Proshansky, whose confidence, support, and sincere interest in my completing this project sustained me even after his death.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The home has always been a workplace for one or more of the people who live in it, whether they have been paid for this work or not. But a very different kind of home-based work has emerged in the past ten years, facilitated in part by the development and proliferation of the microcomputer. The growing numbers of people engaged in home-based work in the last decade has caught the attention of the media, writers, and social science researchers. New organizations have been created to support efforts of home-based businesses, and furniture and equipment manufacturers are finding new markets in home-based entrepreneurs. Two magazines are targeted at people who work at home. Both these magazines and several popular books dispense advice on everything from designing a home office to establishing good work habits (e.g., Edwards & Edwards, 1985; "Home Office Commuting;" "Home Office"). Futurists have made predictions about the transformation of society through the "electronic cottage" (Nilles, Carlson, Gray, & Hanneman, 1976; Toffler, 1980). They envision a home-centered life, with electronic and telecommunication technologies facilitating both work and social activities. While much of the attention on home-based work has centered on technological issues (primarily computers), there are many people working at home in a variety of professions without the use of computers or any

other advanced technology. They include artists, musicians, knitters, clothing designers, and caterers.

Despite the growing accumulation of material dedicated to working at home, the attention given to the specific physical and social settings in which this work is done has been minimal. This dissertation explores three sociophysical levels of analysis integral to understanding the experience of working at home: 1) the community surrounding the home; 2) the physical and symbolic attributes of the spaces of the home itself; and 3) the location and design of workspaces within the home. These issues are viewed through the perspective that spaces are "gendered" -- that is, the design and use of space reflects and reinforces ideological assumptions about gender roles and relations.

Chapter One discusses the relationship of work and home to gender roles, and the reasons for considering home-based work from a gender perspective. Chapter Two details the methodology used to gather information for this research, and the process of analyzing the data collected. Chapter Three presents an overview of the different ways in which the homeworkers in this study work at home. It briefly explores the relationships between gender roles and the use of time and space for doing paid work.

Chapter Four examines the function and symbolism of spaces within the household, and the interplay between work

and domestic spaces and activities. Specifically, it discusses how the dichotomy of paid work and domestic life is manifested in households containing both activities. Chapter Five explores the creation and meanings of workspaces, and Chapter Six discusses home-based work in the contexts of meanings of home, perceptions of work, and relationships with communities. Finally, Chapter Seven outlines some of the major findings of this study, and suggests avenues for future research in this area.

Why Consider Gender? Gender Roles, Work, and Family

In spite of the clear separation of paid work from domestic activities endorsed by American society since the industrialization of the mid-1800s, there is evidence of an historical tradition of home-based work. Many women in the early 1900s engaged in home-based occupations such as sewing or keeping boardinghouses (Tentler, 1979; Kessler-Harris, 1981). By 1981, the numbers of both women and men estimated to be working at home full-time had grown to ten million (U.S. Department of Labor, 1981). Technological advances have greatly increased opportunities for conducting work at home in a tremendous diversity of professions. This swell in the popularity and viability of home-based work has the potential for altering the production of work, the interface between work and domestic life, gender-based roles within

the household, and connections within neighborhoods.

In order to fully examine the experience of home-based work, we must first recognize the economic, political, social, and environmental factors which have created gender-based disparities in relation to dwellings, households, and work. On one level, what is significant about home-based work is simply that it is conducted in a dwelling place, rather than a workplace. However, it is not enough to examine the physical setting in which home-based work is conducted; a physical environment is necessarily also a social environment, and vice versa (Proshansky, 1976). In one sense, this means that we must consider social interactions occurring in spaces, as well as the physical dimensions of those spaces. On another level, physical spaces also have social functions and symbolic meanings through which places are created from spaces. Relationships between people and places are not simply a matter of personal preference, but also a function of gender-based roles and expectations. Historical associations of gender-based roles with certain types of spaces and places, as well as personal associations with those kinds of places, influence the interactions of people with the built environment. In this way, some types of places themselves (i.e., living spaces) have taken on different meanings for women and men through time, and our relationships to those places are mediated by these meanings. For example, the

separation of paid work from home in the mid-1800s initiated a deep-seated and longstanding identification of men with paid work and women with the home. The history of the separation of work from home, and its effect on women and men will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.

In addition to creating gendered spaces, industrialism encouraged a rigid sexual division of labor which re-defined women's and men's relationships to market production and domestic activities. With increased industrialization, the demands of paid labor conflicted with those of women's domestic activities; paid jobs required specialization, a full-time commitment, and usually were located at some distance from home (Tilly & Scott, 1978). White, married women's domestic duties increasingly tied them to the home, while all able-bodied men were expected to engage in paid work (Kessler-Harris, 1981).

In many ways, the initial effects of industrialization have remained embedded in American society, despite women's increased movement into the workplace. The labor market encourages separation, rather than integration of paid and domestic activities. Those who are most successful at separation -- who historically have been men -- are rewarded in the workplace. Women have continually struggled with balancing their paid work and domestic lives. A large body of literature on the topic of women, work, and family attests that combining paid work and family is perceived as

a problem by women. Many of these books and articles represent an ideology which views women's roles as fundamentally singular (as mothers), and in which women's paid work causes a crisis in both work and family roles. Simply perusing the titles of some of these works reflects women's difficulty in engaging in both paid work and family activities: At odds: Women and the family in America from the revolution to the present (Degler, 1980); Parenting in an unresponsive society: Managing work and family life (Kamerman, 1980); The crisis of the working mother: Resolving the conflict between family and work (Berg, 1986). Indeed, Kessler-Harris (1981: 17) has stated:

The ways in which women have worked involve a constant tension between the two areas of women's lives: the home and the marketplace. This tension is the crux of our understanding of women's working lives.

A central premise in most of the literature on women, work, and family is that women have been universally oppressed, economically, socially, and politically. From this starting point, however, the literature diverges. Some writers attempt to pinpoint the origins of women's oppression, while others are concerned with women as individual victims of this oppression. Other writers regard women as active agents making necessary decisions in their lives in the face of this oppression, and still others consider women, work, and family in a particular social, political, economic, and occasionally geographic or physical context.

Within these broad perspectives, there are still further distinctions among viewpoints. According to one view, women are primarily wives and mothers, and market work is added on to these roles. Earlier work actually viewed women's paid work as somewhat of an aberration (Bernard, 1974; Hoffman & Nye, 1974). More recently, paid work, and more specifically one's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it, has been analyzed in terms of how it affects or "spills over onto" family life (Larwood, Stromberg, & Gutek, 1985; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Feinstein, 1979).

Several academic disciplines have also attempted to examine the interrelationships of women, work, and family within existing conceptual frameworks. Each category (i.e., paid labor, household labor) is fit into an appropriate, specific model. For example, both Sokoloff (1980) and Westwood (1984) assert that the relationship between women's position in the labor market and in the home must be considered in the context of the dynamic relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. Geerken and Gove (1983) explain the dynamics of paid work and housework in families through an economic model of resource allocation. Berch (1982) also uses a political/economic model, while Pleck (1977) examines work and family within a psychological framework of "role-conflict."

Others have researched these issues from an individualistic, psychological perspective, examining

women's decisions and conflicts regarding work and family either in the absence of a larger context (Berg, 1986), or based on personal perceptions within a historical and social structure (Gerson, 1985). Some writers have been concerned with public policy issues impacting women's work and family roles (Adams & Winston, 1980; Giraldo, 1980; Scott, 1974). Finally, some writers have considered women, work, and family within an environmental context, examining the influences of culture, home, community, and transportation (Michelson, 1985; Rubin, 1982; Stack, 1970).

Despite this diversity in the literature on women, work, and family, there are some commonalities as well. Much of this research and analysis is premised on the underlying myth of the unity of the condition of women. White, middle-class, married women form the basis for most of the writing, either implicitly or explicitly, and race is rarely mentioned. "Family" is also a term that is assumed to have a single definition in this literature. Most of the writing on women, work, and family is based on a "family" that involves a heterosexual marriage with one or more children. With a few exceptions, single parents and homosexual parents are not mentioned.

While a relatively large body of literature has emerged on women, work, and family, no comparable set of writing or research exists on men, work, and family. When interactions between work and family have been investigated and analyzed,

men are generally omitted from the discussion. Examining work and family from an exclusively women's perspective, as though there were no men, and often no public policy issues, places the burden of choice (between paid work, children, and marriage/partnership) and attempts at balancing roles on the shoulders of individual women. Traditional research on women's work-family relations is based on the assumption that women raise children alone, without assistance from either a husband/partner or society (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, the task of integrating the roles of partner, mother, and worker still remains largely a personal responsibility for women.

Until recently, men's roles in the family have not been studied at all. According to Pleck (1977), one of the reasons can be traced to analytic models, particularly in economics, which omitted family work for men. Economic models for men included only work and leisure, with family roles analytically invisible. Another reason for the lack of information about the interactions between work and family for men originates from gender-differentiation in the study of work. Feldberg and Glenn (1982) assert that two sociologies of work have been created, a job model for men, and a gender model for women. The gender model ignores job type and working conditions, and views work as derivative of personal characteristics and related to family situations. The job model, on the other hand, uses paid work to explain

workers' behavior on and off the job, and overlooks aspects of life situations outside of work. Men's work, therefore, is seen as unrelated to family life.

Some recent research has investigated the reasons for men's low participation in family work (Pleck, 1985; Pleck, Lamb, & Levine, 1986). These authors point to motivation, skills, social supports, and institutional barriers as factors potentially facilitating or constraining men's family roles. Pleck (1985) notes that men who participate more directly and fully with their families will pay a price in their work roles, by being less productive and ambitious, thus decreasing the family income. A recent study supports that view. Research on men in upper-middle class occupations indicates that these men talked about their wives as though they were without paid employment, and devoted all their time to the husbands and their homes. However, about one-third of the wives worked full-time, and one-third part-time (Weiss, 1990). Although the author does not discuss men's involvement in domestic and child-care work, he concludes from his interviews that these men would not be able to even spend time with their families without paying a price.

Men who want to be with their families evenings and weekends and holidaysmay have to sacrifice some career choices. (p. 262)

The imbalance between literature on women's and men's work and domestic activities is clear. While it is assumed

that women are responsible for domestic and child-care work in addition to any paid work they do, men are expected to engage fully in paid work, and perhaps assist with family work. Women's labor force participation is scrutinized for its effects on domestic and family life, whereas men's participation in family work (and even family time) is viewed as detracting from their careers. More importantly, the relationship between men's paid work and family work is rarely even acknowledged, reinforcing an ideology that accepts the struggle between labor force participation and domestic life as women's burden.

It has been postulated that one of the origins of the conflict between paid work and domestic activities lies in the physical separation of work from home, and the gender-based "separate sphere" ideology that followed. Conducting paid work from one's abode reduces or erases that physical separation. Are the problems of balancing domestic life and paid work eradicated when one works at home? Some members of the federal government of the United States have speculated that home-based work would more easily accommodate both work and childcare in one place (Family Opportunity Act, 1983). However, research on home-based work has indicated that work and childcare activities are incompatible (Ahrentzen, 1987; Christensen, 1985; McLaughlin, 1981). Work and childcare tasks each require different types of attention, which are not always easily

integrated. Although merging two spheres may change their spatial, temporal, and psychological relation to each other, it may not necessarily eradicate all the tensions between them.

In fact, the separate spheres of work and home have never been truly separate, for one has always depended on the other. Market work has always been supported by household labor, and households are in turn dependent on wage work. The differential identification of gender with one realm or the other, and the institutionalization of that policy, has created some of the problems with attempts to be engaged in the realms of both household work and paid work.¹ It may be unreasonable to expect that conducting these two kinds of work in one place would erase the tensions between them. Home-based work, rather than altering a system of gender inequality, may simply change the context of that system.

ENDNOTES

1. Many women, particularly women of color, immigrants, and working class women, have historically engaged in both paid work and domestic activities, although not without difficulty (Kessler-Harris, 1981).

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Based on in-depth interviews with thirty women and men (fifteen each) living in various relationships to other people, this study explored how the sociophysical aspects of living spaces and communities were related to the gendered experiences of working at home. To this end, the participants of the study and the methodology employed were selected to shed light on both the breadth and subtleties of this relationship. This chapter describes the rationale for how the participants for this study were chosen, the process of contacting participants, the interview format and content, and the ways in which the data from the interviews were analyzed. Finally, the characteristics of the participants of the study are described.

Criteria for Selection of Participants

The intention of this dissertation was not to choose a generalizable sample, but to conduct an in-depth exploration of issues related to the use of space within and outside of the household and how those varied by gender. The sample, therefore, was to include equal numbers of women and men living in a variety of household situations. Due to the intensive, qualitative approach used in this study, both the sample size (N=30) and, to some extent, the diversity

within that sample were limited. Several criteria were outlined in order to achieve a sample that was sufficiently diversified to fully explore the various aspects of working at home, yet had certain characteristics in common. Some homogeneity was required so that there were several people in similar situations. The first criterion was that participants were engaged in some kind of home-based work activity. Work activity was defined both as income-producing work and potentially income-producing work, in order to include artists who were not yet supported financially by their art. The tools utilized in one's work were not restricted in any way. Several studies have limited their samples to people using microcomputers in their work at home (i.e., Horwitz, 1986; Christensen, 1986; Gurstein, 1990). However, many people work at home in a variety of professions without the use of microcomputers. Because the issues to be explored in the current study were not specific to any particular technology, the use of microcomputers or any other technology in working at home was not a prerequisite for participation in the study.

The second criterion concerned the proportion of hours actually working at home. The need to define a proportion of hours worked at home out of the total number of working hours arose from the often ambiguous definition of home-based work. Some businesses technically operate from the home, although most of the actual work takes place away from

the home. For example, a construction or plumbing business may have a business phone and bookkeeping information located at home. However, because these services do not have substantial workspace requirements, nor do they interface to any great extent with other household members, they do not have much in common with those businesses in which the actual work is done in the home. At the outset, therefore, one criterion for participation in this study was that approximately 75% of the total paid work engaged in from a home business would be done in the home. While most of the participants in the study clearly met this criterion, for others it proved more problematic to determine than anticipated. Some people simply found it difficult to estimate the percentage of time they spent working in their homes. Others had more complex situations, especially when the work flow was uneven in nature. For example, a salesperson noted that during his busy selling season, he worked at home about one-third of his total working hours. However, during the off-season, he worked at home 100 percent of the time. He was included in the sample because of his experiences working at home full-time, and because the nature of his work at home and the spatial requirements of storing his merchandise made his experience similar to that of other full-time home-based workers.

In order to investigate how the composition of and relationships within households impacted the use and

meanings of space, a variety of household situations was sought. First, the sample was to be equally divided between men and women. Second, because the presence or absence of children (especially those of school age or younger) generally has a substantial impact on all aspects of a household, homeworkers who had children living at home and those who did not, were sought for participation in the study. It was particularly important that the sample include men with school age children living at home, as well as women with children, in order to assess whether the presence of children affected working at home in different ways for each.

In households with adults only, different types of social relationships have implications for the negotiation for and use of space, the expression of gender roles, and the meanings of home. For example, adults sharing a dwelling as "roommates", with no sexual relationships, have a living situation that is quite different from a married couple sharing an abode. Heterosexual relationships are also inherently socially different from homosexual relationships, in that they lack gender stereotypes. Therefore, it was important to include adults living together in a variety of situations in this sample. These included single parents living with an adult child, heterosexual partners without children, adults living together as housemates, and homosexual partners without

children. The sample included only those households in which the rent/mortgage was shared by members of the household; it did not include households in which one person owned the home, and another rented space, due to the possibility of a differential power structure regarding the use of space. Spouses/partners/housemates included those who worked for pay outside the home, inside the home, or did not engage in paid work. No home-based workers living alone were included in this sample, since the factors affecting their use of living spaces and workspaces would clearly be quite different from those homeworkers living with other people.

All participants lived and worked in one of the five boroughs of New York City. Given the wide variety of types of neighborhoods in such a large city, this provided an opportunity to explore diversified neighborhoods within an urban area. A particular effort was made to locate participants who lived in both apartments and private homes. Not only do these housing types differ in size, but usually in physical layout as well. These differences facilitated an examination of the effects of different types of spatial patterns and community patterns on working at home.

Limiting this study to an urban sample did not provide an opportunity for assessing the differences between urban and suburban home-based work experiences. However, even urban areas differ with regard to resources available in and

qualities of the surrounding community. Therefore, comparisons are made between participants in contrasting types of neighborhoods.

Only homeworkers living with others participated in this study, including those living in households either with children or with other adults who had been living together for at least six months. The participants considered their living arrangements to be relatively stable and foresaw remaining in that household in the near future.

A wide variety of home-based workers are represented in this sample, from business owners and lawyers to writers, artists, and pastry chefs. Although most of the homeworkers in this study are self-employed, a few are employed by others. Those who are employed have a high degree of autonomy in their work. Originally, it was stipulated that professionals who traditionally may have worked out of their homes, such as dentists, doctors, and therapists, would not be included in the sample. I anticipated that the nature of their business would dictate the kinds of spaces they must work in, and the kinds of interactions they could have with other household members during working hours. Many professionals who see clients do not have the option of having their workspace in their bedrooms or living rooms. However, when I was given the name of a therapist working from home who was willing to talk with me, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to determine whether her

situation and experience was really so different from other home-based workers. Interestingly, I found that although her spatial requirements were somewhat more stringent than those of other homeworkers, the mechanisms she used to control access of other household members to her workspace were quite similar.

Selection Procedure

Locating potential participants for this study was accomplished primarily through two avenues. Since obtaining a random, stratified sample was not the goal, the most expedient method for gathering names of home-based workers was through colleagues and acquaintances. Additional respondents were located through the "snowball" method -- those people whom I interviewed often referred me to others who also worked at home. This chain sometimes led me quite far, with one participant's referral resulting in two or three additional participants.

I contacted each potential interviewee by telephone to explain the nature of my study and how I obtained their name and phone number. Only four people had strong hesitations about being interviewed. One person felt she had no time to spare and declined. Another was enthusiastic during our first telephone conversation, but ultimately was not interviewed because his wife seemed to feel uncomfortable

with his being interviewed. An artist, with whom I was already acquainted, had a previous negative interview experience, and felt that the subject was too personal. Finally, one person who had received permission from her immediate boss to work at home was concerned that because she was supposed to be on-site, she might get fired if discovered.

The final sample is fairly homogeneous in terms of some demographic characteristics. Almost all of the participants are white, and primarily middle-class. One of the reasons for this is that the methods of referral and "snowballing" tend to result in a sample with similar characteristics. I did make efforts to reach home-based workers engaged in piece-work, who were likely to earn less money and be recent immigrants, particularly women of color. However, many of these women were illegal immigrants, and assurances of confidentiality could not persuade them to speak with a stranger.

Interview Format and Content

In-depth interviews were utilized to investigate people's sociophysical experiences of working at home. This format allows for intensive exploration of each research question, while also providing opportunities for individuals to elaborate on additional issues of particular importance

or relevance. A semi-structured interview guide was used, with additional questions and probes tailored to participants' responses (see Appendix A for the complete interview guide). The interview was structured around the topics of community, home, and workspace. Demographic and background information was also collected on age, personal and household income, number of years working at home, and the number and ages of any children. Although information was gathered for each person on all of the questions in the interview guide, it was often not necessary to ask each question. Some participants simply started talking, without being asked any questions at all. Others started answering the first question, regarding their activities each day, and went on from there to address many other issues. Each interview, therefore, was customized to accommodate varying styles. It was encouraging to discover that those people who "rambled," without the aid of specific questions, addressed many of the same issues covered in the interview guide.

During the initial telephone conversation, after determining that the selection criteria had been met, an appointment was arranged to interview the participant in his or her home. Before the interview, I explained to each participant that I was conducting a study of people who worked at home, and was particularly interested in how people used their homes and neighborhoods. I also assured

participants that their names would be changed in any written work resulting from the interviews, and that the information provided regarding income would be used for aggregate purposes only.

The first section of the interview explored homeworkers' relationships with the community. This included the types of facilities and services used, and whether different services had been used since the participant started working at home. This section also asked about interactions with neighbors, and any changes that may have occurred in the way in which the participant viewed their community since starting to work at home.

The second part of the interview dealt with the physical and social structure of the living space and household. The questions examined feelings about using the home for paid work. This section also explored how spaces within the home were used on a daily basis, using both questions and a guided walking tour through the living space. Physical, social, and symbolic aspects of the spaces, and activities of other household members were discussed. The walking tour, led by the participant, was extremely useful in facilitating discussions about how spaces were used and by whom, how the use of space had changed over time, and the meanings of different spaces for household members.

The final section of the interview guide addressed

workspaces, including the process of choosing a workspace, making changes to that space, and ideas about an ideal workspace at home. Meanings of workspaces were also discussed. A scale floor plan model was originally designed for use in this section of the interview. It was anticipated that utilizing a flexible model would facilitate a more detailed discussion about how spaces in the home could be modified to accommodate working at home. Previous research had indicated that non-designers often experienced some difficulty in visualizing spatial changes (Gottlieb, 1987), and I had hoped that an easily manipulated visual aid would alleviate those problems.

I designed a flexible model, using a wood base with grooves cut in a grid pattern. Foam core "walls" were created to slide into the grooves on the base, to reflect different room sizes. Furniture was made or bought to scale, for a more realistic image of an actual room. The model was successfully piloted before it was used in any interviews.

Although it was available in all interviews, this model was only utilized in one. I found that most participants in this study were quite satisfied with their workspaces, and had little desire to alter them in any substantial way, negating the usefulness of the model. In addition, people who were less than satisfied with their workspaces often had little opportunity to make any changes in their situations,

due to spatial constraints. The model was useful for one participant, who was experiencing problems with maintaining the boundary between his work area and the rest of the bedroom he shared. In his case, simply using the model to rearrange the furniture in the bedroom helped the participant to visualize how the room could be altered to better accommodate his work, as well as other activities within that room. Although the model was carried to all of the subsequent interviews, it was never used again. During the course of each interview, it became clear that using the model would not be appropriate or helpful. Although the usefulness of the model was extremely limited in this particular sample, there is evidence that for home-based workers (or others) experiencing spatial problems, this type of flexible, realistic model could be quite helpful.

The length of each interview varied, from one to three hours. Interviews were all conducted during the week, in daytime hours, and were tape recorded with the participants' approval. Photographs were taken of each person's workspace for documentation. Fieldnotes were also recorded immediately after each interview, detailing the kinds of facilities available in the neighborhood, the predominant type of housing in the community, and specific aspects and impressions of the interview, including comments made after the tape recorder had been turned off and put away. Descriptions of the building in which the participant lived

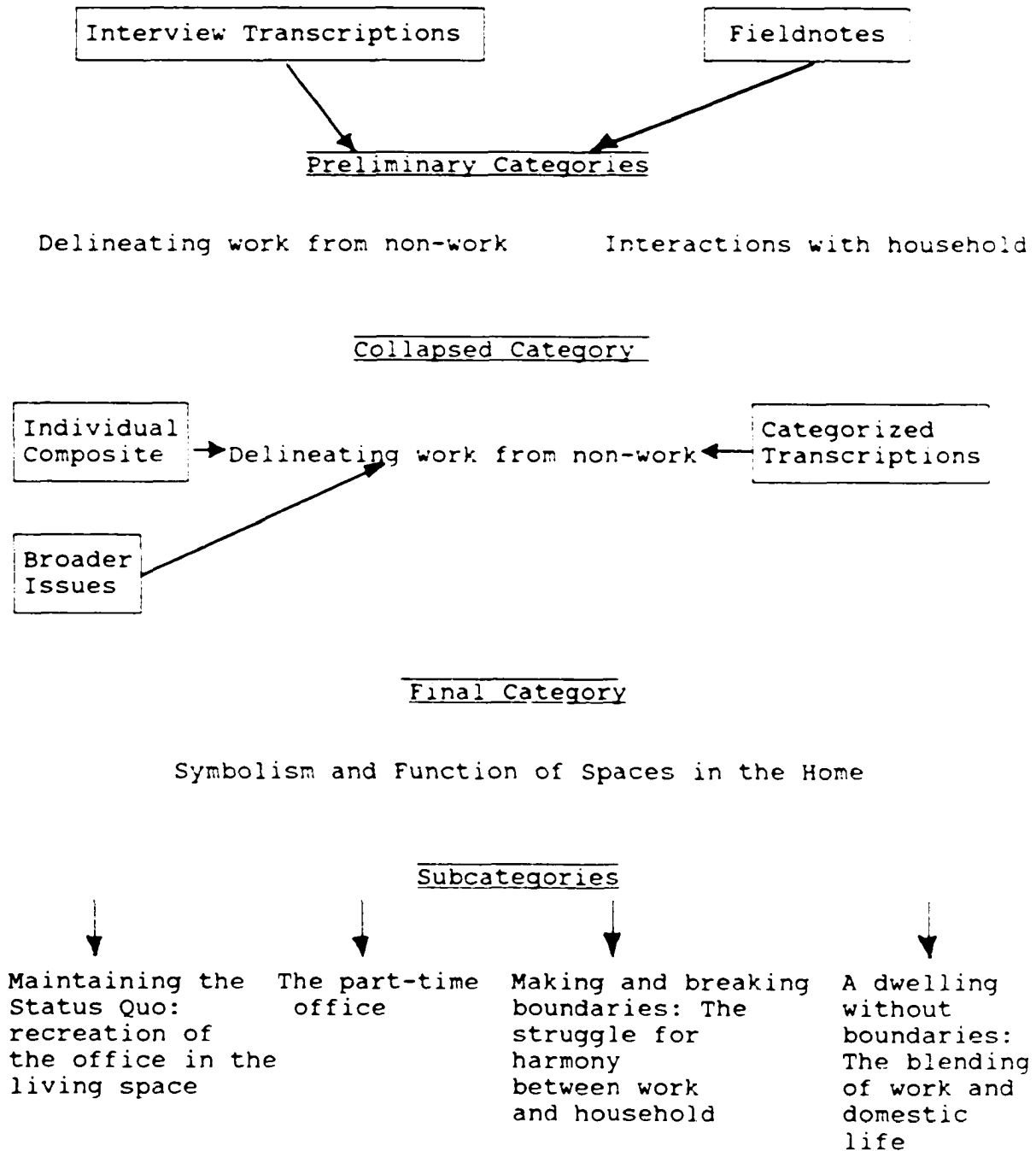
were also noted, and floorplans of the entire living space were sketched.

Data Analysis

There are many possible ways to approach qualitative data analysis, depending on the level of complexity of the phenomenon studied and the nature of what the data is expected to reveal. The specific techniques used for examining the data influence, to some extent, what is ultimately communicated. Analyzing the data gathered from interviews and fieldnotes in the present study involved several tactics. I began by using one approach, advocated by Strauss (1987), among others, and supplemented it with other techniques in an effort to more fully understand and present the complexity of homeworkers' experiences. A chart (on page 27) follows the process of the data analysis using one of the examples outlined below.

Each interview was transcribed and open coding was conducted on several interview transcriptions as well as fieldnotes (Strauss, 1987). In this procedure, transcriptions and notes were read through carefully and categories and subcategories of data were generated from each sentence or paragraph throughout the entire document.

FIGURE 1
SAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS



These categories were labeled and notes were made regarding possible connections among categories. Some preliminary categories included "delineating paid work from non-work," "meanings of home," "transitions to home-based work," and "reasons for working at home." With every additional transcription and fieldnote, categories were expanded upon, and overlapping categories were collapsed. For example, the initial category "interactions with household" was integrated with "delineating work from non-work." This method of coding provided opportunities for additional themes to emerge that did not correspond directly to any question asked in the interviews, but were nonetheless important issues which were raised by all or nearly all participants. "Perceptions of work" was one such theme.

Several criteria were used to select the core categories from these initial categories. First, I used the guidelines of the sociophysical levels of community, home, and workspace outlined in Chapter 1. Second, I included other themes (i.e., "perceptions of work") that seemed to be connected to those categories. Some core categories, such as "delineating work from non-work" incorporated more than one sociophysical level. Several transcriptions were read by the dissertation advisor, and she and other committee members provided feedback in the process of delineating core categories. Categories that were somewhat interesting, but peripheral (such as

"transitions to home-based work") to the core categories were eliminated. Therefore, the data presented in this dissertation represents most, but not all of the information gleaned from the interviews.

After open coding six of the thirty interviews, the refined list of core categories then served as a structure for sorting the remaining transcriptions. Nearly every paragraph of each transcription was placed into one of these categories, and transferred to a computer program designed for handling qualitative data. In this way, each category could be examined separately with the relevant data from all thirty transcriptions.

Subsequently, each category was subjected to intense scrutiny by examining all of the relevant data from each transcription in relation to it, and speculating on and noting dimensions of each theme. For example, everything from each participant's transcription regarding delineating work from non-work was studied; the dimensions emerging from this examination included the use of technological, psychological, and spatial devices. Connections with other categories were elaborated for each theme.

During this stage of the analysis, I attempted to see if experiences were broadly different for men and women. In fact, women sometimes had similar experiences to men. It became clear that people's experiences were not merely a function of gender but of the social relationships and

gender roles within households, philosophies about work and domestic life, and other factors. Each individual needed to be understood in a holistic manner, in relation to the whole textured sociophysical experience of working at home. To this end (and with the advice of my dissertation advisor), I created a composite for each person from their entire interview, outlining their domestic and work situations, and compared and contrasted it with the others. One advantage of this method is the ability to examine specific issues within the overall context of each person's situation. For example, the process of creating workspaces and the meanings of those spaces could be analyzed in relation to the whole sociophysical context of each household -- the social relationships and spatial constraints within the household, the individual's reasons for working at home, and their attitude about the relationship between paid work and household activities. In this way, experiences, decisions, and attitudes are reflected as they occur in life -- within the totality of one's situation, not simply as isolated phenomena.

After the composites of each person were completed and different patterns of working and living were noted, I went back to the themes that had been previously generated. Themes were then re-analyzed using the composite sketches in conjunction with the categorized transcriptions. These categories were sometimes restructured to include broader

issues that were discovered to be closely related to a particular theme. For example, "delineating work from non-work" was expanded to "symbolism and function of spaces in the home," bringing together issues concerning other household members and private and public spaces.

Each person's composite and categorized transcript was compared and contrasted with others in order to see what similarities and differences existed among people. New subcategories emerged from this process which reflected a holistic, contextualized view of experiences. Using the example outlined above (for the theme "symbolism and function of spaces in the home"), the result was subcategories such as "maintaining the status quo: the recreation of the office in the living space." The various dimensions of themes (in this case, psychological, spatial, and temporal devices, among others) were then used to explain the issues involved in each of these subcategories.

Some of these subcategories reflected only women's or only men's experiences; others included both. The new themes went beyond a simple division due to any one factor to explore the complex contexts of working at home. Unlike traditional social science research, in which data is analyzed to determine simple differences between men and women, the analysis used in the present study sought to highlight the contextual factors of any common or different experiences. The distinction between sex and gender is

particularly important in examining the different ways in which people work at home, temporally, spatially, and psychologically. To simply discuss women as separate from men would ignore the distinctions among women and among men (Spelman, 1988).

The validity of the categories and subcategories used in each chapter of this dissertation were determined in consultation with my dissertation advisor, and with occasional feedback from other committee members. Each category was considered to be complete and valid when each participant in the study was represented by at least one subcategory. The extensive use of quotes from the transcribed interviews attests to the legitimacy of the subcategories by providing evidence for the creation of that grouping.

Participant Characteristics

The participants of this study were a diverse group in many ways. The numbers of hours worked per week, the histories of working at home, the types of dwellings they inhabited, and their incomes covered a broad range. This section describes some of the characteristics of the sample in aggregate terms.

Participants included those who worked 15 hours per week and those who worked 60 or more hours per week.

Because the nature of the experience of working at home may be somewhat dependent on types of work commitments, I have categorized participants as either full-time and part-time workers. Although this distinction between different work time has been created and institutionalized by and for the benefit of employers, for the sake of clarity and simplicity, those labels will also be utilized here. Full-time work, for the purposes of this study, is defined as working an average of approximately 30 hours per week or more at home. Most of the participants found it extremely difficult to estimate the number of hours they worked. Even those with fairly rigid work schedules noted that the hours they worked varied considerably from one week to the next, depending on the amount of work they had. People attested to hardly working at all during one week, but working 70 hours the next week. The term "full-time" itself encompasses a wide range of working hours. While some homeworkers consistently worked approximately 30 hours per week, others worked an average of 50 or 60 hours per week. These distinctions between full-time and part-time work, therefore, are somewhat arbitrary, since there is a wide range of hours within each category.

Many of the homeworkers in this study had more than one job. Some people had jobs outside of the home, in addition to their at-home work, and others had multiple jobs within the home. Five of the homeworkers were employed outside of

the home; two of these people worked at home full-time. Eight people were engaged in more than one type of paid work at home. For example, a computer consultant also handled public relations for a few clients. A writer also did nutritional consulting and catering from her home. Working at home full-time, therefore, may entail doing different types of work within the course of a day or a week. Also, those who worked at home part-time may have had one or two jobs outside of the home, which together were equivalent to full-time work. People who fell into this category were considered, for this study, to be part-time homeworkers.

As Table 1 (on page 35) indicates, more men than women in this sample worked at home full-time. In fact, nearly all of the men worked at home full-time, but only half of the women were full-time homeworkers. All of the men who worked at home part-time also had paid employment outside of the home; only one of the women who worked at home part-time had employment outside the home as well.

TABLE 1
HISTORY OF WORKING AT HOME

# of Years Working at Home	Full-Time		Part-Time		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<1	2	0		1	3
1-5	2	5	3	6	16
6-10	2	1			3
11-15	3	1			4
16-20	2		1	1	4
TOTAL	11	7	4	8	30

Most of the people in this sample were relatively new to home-based work, having worked at home for five years or less. However, about one-quarter of the participants had long histories of working at home, ranging from 11 to 20 years.

Table 2 describes the types of living spaces inhabited by the homeworkers in this sample. Although more homeworkers lived in high-rise apartment buildings than in any other housing type, approximately equal numbers of homeworkers in this sample lived in either brownstones or detached homes. The term brownstone is used here not simply to refer to a building material, but rather a type of attached, low-rise housing that was popular, particularly in Brooklyn, around the turn of the century. Those who lived in brownstone-type buildings inhabited one floor, two floors, or the entire building (usually three or occasionally four floors, plus a basement). The type of housing indicated here is not necessarily related to the

amount of space available. Some of the high-rise apartments were larger, for example, than brownstone apartments.

TABLE 2
TYPES OF DWELLINGS

Type of Dwelling	Male	Female	Total
Loft	2	0	2
Hi-rise Apartment	7	6	13
Brownstone	5	3	8
Detached house	1	6	7

Lofts and high-rise apartments were located in Manhattan and the Bronx. Brownstones and detached houses were all found in Brooklyn and Queens. There were approximately equal numbers of people who owned and rented their abodes. Sixteen people rented their dwellings, and fourteen owned them. Those who owned their dwellings included people living in apartments, brownstones, and detached houses.

About twice the number of women as men had children at home. Thirteen women and six men had children under eighteen years old living at home. Seven of the women had children under six years old; three of these women worked at home full-time (and all three had paid caregivers for their children). Three of the men had children under the age of six living at home; two had paid caregivers. Five of the men with children work full-time at home.

TABLE 3
ANNUAL PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Personal Income	Full-time		Part-time		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
less than					
\$5,000	0	1 ¹	0	1	2
\$5,000-14,999	0	0	1	3	4
\$15,000-24,999	3	0	3	1	7
\$25,000-49,999	0	3	0	1	4
\$50,000-74,999	3	1	0	1	5
\$75,000-99,999	2	0	0	0	2
\$100,000 +	1	0	0	0	1
Undeclared	2	2	0	1	5

Household Income	Full-time		Part-time		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
less than					
\$5,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$5000-14,999	0	0	0	0	0
\$15,000-24,999	1	0	2	0	3
\$25,000-49,999	1	1	1	0	3
\$50,000-74,999	0	2	0	3	5
\$75,000-99,999	1	1	0	2	4
\$100,000 +	7	1	0	4	12
Undeclared	1	2	0	0	3

Table 3 indicates annual personal and household incomes of the homeworkers in this study. Personal incomes varied widely, from less than \$5,000 to over \$100,00 per year. Those who provided information regarding personal incomes were distributed fairly evenly, with about half falling below \$25,000, and half earning more than \$25,000 annually. Not surprisingly, part-time homeworkers generally earned

¹ This homemaker, a fiction writer, has not yet been paid for her work.

less than full-time workers. Overall, the men working full-time earned more money than the women working full-time. This was due in part to the more lucrative professions (and additional hours) engaged in by men who earned more than \$50,000 per year.

The following chapter (Three) outlines some overall differences in the ways in which the participants in this study work at home. It introduces these homeworkers through an overview of gender roles and the experience of working at home. The names of all participants in this study have been changed to protect their anonymity. Throughout this dissertation, each subcategory contains descriptions and excerpts from the transcriptions of some, but not necessarily all, of the homeworkers represented by that subcategory.

CHAPTER THREE

AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER ROLES AND WORKING AT HOME

Home-based work takes place in a complex context of social and environmental patterns and interactions, imbued with both historical and individual meanings. Meanings of work and home are socially, politically, economically, and environmentally produced, and interpreted by individuals and households. The home is not only a physical structure set in a particular community; the evolution and significance of the home as we know it today has been shaped by political, economic, and social forces. (These will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four). As a result, the home is a clear example of what would be considered a gendered space.

As Chapter One has documented, relationships between gender, work, and home have also been impacted by societal, as well as individual values. The various ways in which paid work, household, and children are balanced must therefore be seen not simply as individual decisions, but rather as patterns, influenced in part by gender roles. This chapter briefly provides an overview of the relationships between gender roles, paid work, and household activities, as manifested in different patterns of working at home.

One of the primary gender differences found in this study lies in the rationale for working at home. Nearly all

of the women (11 of 15) started working at home at least in part, if not wholly, because of their roles as mothers. Some women wanted to have an active role in the daily care and activities of their children. Others found juggling paid work and child-care responsibilities in two different places to be overwhelming, and decided to use home-based, part-time work as a temporary solution until their children were older. Priorities concerning paid work and family were sometimes altered by particular circumstances. One woman, who had worked away from home full-time, discovered that her infant was being neglected by a caregiver, and immediately starting working at home in order to repair the damage. Another woman noted that since moving to New York, she felt more strongly about overseeing and being involved in her children's activities.

In contrast to the majority of the women in this study, the men's reasons for working at home centered around their work. All of these men work at home because they wanted to have their own businesses and could not afford office space, or because of the nature of their work. Some men wanted their own businesses in order to have control over their work and avoid office politics. Working at home allows them to keep their business overhead quite low. For others -- artists, writers, and composers -- the very nature of their work requires it to be a solitary endeavor. These men work at home primarily because office or studio space is too

expensive, or too far removed from their residences to accommodate creative bursts of energy during "off hours."

It is not surprising that, from these very different starting points, most of the women and the men in this study work at home in disparate ways. Priorities concerning work and household activities, and the ways in which those priorities are manifested, are integrally related to one's reasons for working at home. An examination of the whole experience of working at home for each individual reveals certain patterns. One pattern of working imitates the traditional workplace. The entities of household and paid work activities are clearly separated, and that distinction is maintained spatially and temporally. Another paradigm is generated by those who have created their own individual patterns of working, based on personal preferences. Work and household activities, while not blended, are interwoven according to need. For others, balancing household and work activities is a struggle that is manifested temporally and spatially. Where and when paid work is accomplished often depends on other household members. (See Appendix B for a visual representation of working patterns and types of home workspaces).

Within each of these patterns, several dimensions of work and home are presented. These include work schedules, the interface between paid work and household activities, types of workspaces, and meanings of home and work.

The Intersection of Paid Work and Domestic Life

Strictly Business

Some homeworkers consider work to be of primary importance in their lives, and completely separate from home. For these people there seems to be little difference between working at home and outside the home, except for their proximity to living spaces. They also have the social and environmental supports which are conducive, to varying extents, to a strict separation between work and home. In many ways, the norms of the traditional workplace have been transferred into the home in an organized, well-considered pattern. While most of the people who fall into this category are men, there are two women in the sample whose work patterns are similar to others in this group. Although Karen, a writer, originally started working at home because she wanted to be at home with her child, she has continued to do so (for twelve years) because of the flexibility and autonomy it provides. Beth, a medical transcriber, wanted her own business, and liked the flexibility of working at home.

Work Schedules

Most of these homeworkers have traditional (9am-5pm), consistent work hours, even if they work on occasionally at night and on weekends. The two women specified that they

work at night only after their children are asleep. Paid work schedules tend to be fairly regimented, beginning and ending at the same times every day.

Work and Household Rhythms

Paid work and household activities are completely separate entities for these homeworkers. The mechanisms used to maintain this sharp distinction between work and household vary. In addition to the temporal habits described above, psychological, spatial, and physical methods are utilized. Sam, an attorney, dresses in business clothing when he is working at home. Karen, a writer, has learned to ignore the breakfast dishes until 5:00, when her workday is done. Fred, a computer consultant, uses a multitude of techniques to separate his paid work from other activities.

I've trained myself to be conditioned; when I come in [to my workspace], I come in to work, not play. If I want to play, I play somewhere else. I've very successfully built a boundary between the space we have for work and the space we have for everything else.

All of these home-based workers have the social supports necessary to ensure uninterrupted work time. There are children in each of these households, but there are also caregivers (either a mother or a hired caregiver), who keep the younger children occupied during business hours. Differences exist, however, in the levels of responsibility which the women and the men in this category have in terms

of their children. Although the men briefly discussed the interactions between themselves and their families, it was clear that, particularly during working hours, the two were separate entities, with little overlap. They had the luxury of "gatekeepers" who took responsibility for providing the homemaker with privacy and quiet. The two women, on the other hand, provided specific information about the mechanisms they themselves used to obtain that privacy and quiet. These techniques included putting a latch on an office door to keep a small child from trying to open it, having strict rules about not interrupting work, and using after school programs to occupy children after school hours.

Workspace

These homeworkers all had workspaces that were separate from family uses (during working hours) and were used exclusively by them for that time. Two of the men work in spaces that were originally intended for other purposes or used by others in the household. For all four men, workspaces are seen as a reflection of their professional identities. The women, however, value their workspaces as the only places in the household that are private and exclusively their own.

Meanings of Home and Work

For the most part, attitudes about home were discussed as they related to paid work. These homeworkers viewed their living spaces as comfortable, convenient places in which to work. People generally liked their abodes, and found them conducive to working. Some of the advantages noted included being near the refrigerator and the coffee pot.

Autonomous Creators

Other homeworkers are characterized by being independent in the ways in which they work. The eight men who fall into this category include artists, a writer, composers, independent consultants, and a salesperson. They view themselves primarily as workers, with little responsibility for household tasks.

Work Schedules

All of these men have flexible working hours. While some have more consistent schedules than others, they all vary their working hours according to the nature and amount of work they have at a given time. Ken, a printing consultant, typifies the attitudes of these homeworkers.

I don't have a rigid schedule. I can take some time off during the day, but very often when I come back, I can just keep working through the evening. It's flexible, but it can be long times....I can take time

off. That's a nice thing about working at home. If I'm desperate, I can come in here, have a cup of coffee, lay down, and take a nap. Also if I'm desperate, I can just keep on working.

Work schedules may be not only changeable from one day to the next, but also over a longer period of time. During busy periods, it is not uncommon for these men to work ten or twelve hour days. When there is less work and fewer deadlines, they often take time off and relax. While some of these men work mostly during conventional, daylight hours, others may work through the night, finishing at dawn.

Work and Household Rhythms

For these homeworkers, paid work and household rhythms are interwoven. In contrast to the "strictly business" homeworkers, all of these men intertwine their work with the demands of their households to some extent. Many take care of personal or household errands in the middle of the day, picking up the cleaning, going to the shoe repair shop, and getting haircuts. While there are periods of concentrated work time, there is not a strict separation between work and other activities. Only three of these eight men are living with partners, and none have young children at home. Perhaps the lack of socially defined responsibilities to others in their dwellings (i.e., children, partners) facilitates the ability of these homeworkers to create more personalized work patterns, and to incorporate some household activities into their workdays.

Workspaces

Although they all have designated workspaces, five of the eight men work in multiple spaces in the home, depending on the type of task in which they are engaged. Their workspaces are not always separated from other household uses. For example, four of the men regularly work in their living or dining rooms, sometimes when other household members are present. They do so because those spaces are convenient for particular tasks. Flash, an artist, holds classes in his living room because it is the only room which can hold enough chairs for his students. Charles, a salesperson who has a desk in his bedroom, often works in the dining room because it is more spacious, has a nice view, and provides easy access to the telephone.

Meanings of Home and Work

Home was generally viewed as a place to do work and live, but the more workspaces were physically overlapped with spaces used for "living" functions, the more meanings of home were connected with feelings about work. David, a writer who had trouble articulating his feelings about home, hypothesized about why this was so:

Maybe I'm not doing as many of the home things
 ...entertainment, eating, whatever.....as fully as I
 should be, because the workspace is mixed in.

Others noted similar problems. The style of working in spaces not designated specifically for working, seems to

interfere somewhat with the enjoyment of other "living" activities. Despite the relaxed way in which these men work, their work is generally of primary importance in their lives. Andy, a composer, describes his home:

....like a temple to turning out work. I almost live here incidentally, and this is not quite right. I would say my work interferes with my home life. It's more me, than the nature of the work.....A lot of my home life is created by the way I work.

The lack of a rigid structure for working, both temporally and spatially, has resulted in some discomfort for these men about the meaning of their homes. Those whose attitudes about home are closely tied to their work, clearly express some misgivings about the primacy of work in their lives and their homes.

The Search for Symmetry Between Work and Household

Most of the women I interviewed were in the midst of the struggle to engage in paid work on their own terms. Many were trying to balance their roles as paid workers with their roles as mothers. Some had come into adulthood with the myth of the "supermom" -- that they could have it all, a family and a career. But the traditional work environment was incompatible with their desired ways of working and/or being with their families. Others had been caring for their families and homes and were faced either with a divorce, or

the need for a second income. Still others had been employed, and were ready for a change, and to have more control over their work. For each woman in different ways, the worlds of family, home, and work collided. Rather than challenging the status quo of gender roles, either at work or at home, they looked to themselves for the way to reconcile their responsibilities. Their solution, whether temporary or long-term, was to work at home.

Work Schedules

For most of these twelve women, work schedules are generally structured around other people, in most cases, household members. A few women work around their clients' needs. For women with young children at home, work time is often structured around the children's schedules. This habit may be the basis for a lasting work pattern, even after the children are grown. For Holly, a communications consultant and a single mother of two older children, the habit of writing late at night started when her children were young, and she would work after they were asleep. One routine she described as "typical" was to start working at 10:00pm, stop at 2:00am, take a nap, and wake up again at 4:00am and finish working on the project. Despite the fact that her children are much older now, Holly still works in much the same way.

For women with school-age children who do not have paid

caregivers, work schedules are negotiated around the schedules of the children. For example, two women who both have children ages 6 and 10, do their paid work while their children are in school, and rarely attempt to continue their work after their children are home. Women who share their workspaces with their spouses try to finish their work before their husbands will need to use the workspaces.

Work and Household Rhythms

Support systems within the household are critical factors in how women work at home. There is often a great deal of interface between paid work and household work, particularly for women who are the primary caregivers for their children as well as the caretakers of the household. Cleaning, laundry, and cooking are interspersed with work activities. Unlike the "autonomous creators," who take certain periods of time to attend to household errands, these women accomplish household tasks while they are actually working. Even women with older children sometimes maintain this habit. For women with sole responsibility for the household, the possibility of working and taking care of the household in a shared place and time is one of the advantages of working at home. One woman who started working at home when her children were small, noted that she is still used to integrating everything, even though she only has one 18 year old son at home full-time. Women who

have paid caregivers for their children (and sometimes paid household assistance with cleaning) have more work periods with little interspersions of household tasks.

Workspace

Where most of these women worked was determined by other household members' needs or perceived needs, not necessarily their own. Workspaces tended to be in leftover spaces -- those not used very often by other members of the household -- or in "extra" rooms. Some women specified that they did not want to appropriate space from family use. Others also chose their workspaces based on the needs of family members.

I think I felt the need to be in a place where I could see the children very easily and that was the most logical place. Also because that room was not so in demand at the time....It's interesting that, while there are constraints -- being in the hub of family activities -- that's the reason I chose that space, so that I could have a handle on the family's activities.

Three women use multiple spaces for working, depending partly on the nature of their work tasks, and partly on the needs of other family members.

Two women took over dining rooms for their work, each noting that it was the least-used area in their home. Holly's family now eats at a table in their large entryway, and Beth's family dines on the couch in front of the television, using folding tables.

Four of the twelve women made their decisions on where

to work based solely on what they wanted in a workspace. (One of these women sees clients in the home; therefore, her space requirements were very specific).

Meanings of Home and Work

These women's perceptions about home are related both to their feelings about work and to the spaces in which they work at home. Many women feel some conflict about working at home. While they see many advantages to working at home, particularly in terms of flexibility in caring for their children, they also clearly articulate the tradeoffs. The most pervasive problem is the lack of recognition from others that these women are actually working. Friends, neighbors, family members, and colleagues assume that because they are at home, they are not really working. Previous research on homeworkers also found that when women work at home, they are seen first as being home, and only secondarily as working there (Horwitz, 1986; Gottlieb, 1988).

Many women with children expressed frustration about what they had sacrificed in order to have a more active role in caring for their children. Their careers had been put on hold, and their self-esteem was suffering. Such feelings were exacerbated for those women without separate workspaces of their own with doors. Working around others, physically, and in "public" areas of the home was difficult. Women

noted that their work was ever-present, making home less of a refuge than perhaps it had been before working at home.

Unconventional Ways of Working

Several homeworkers in this study can be considered "unconventional" in their priorities concerning work and household. The three men are in this category because of their lack of emphasis on paid work, and the ways in which they approach work. These attitudes and ways of working might be considered antithetical to the traditional male role as "breadwinner." The specific ways in which they work, however, are quite different from one to another. One woman has also been placed in this category, although her views about work and family are quite traditional in terms of the female model of women as caretakers of the family and home. The way in which she works, however, has little in common with a conventional work ethic.

Work Schedules

Leslie, a word processor, does her work around her children's schedules, and, to a certain extent, when she works may depend on the task to be done (i.e., making telephone calls in the evening). The three men have erratic schedules which depend on personal preferences and, to some extent, on the amount of work they have to accomplish.

Arthur, a freelance advertising writer often works in the middle of the night, primarily because he has a difficult time concentrating on work during the day. Glen, an industrial designer, works about 20-30 hours per week, on average. His work schedule varies wildly, both from week to week and in terms of which hours he works.

Last week I put in 80 hours in 7 days, including the weekend. This week I haven't worked at all. If I'm away for a weekend and I've got a project due Monday morning, I'll be up at 4:00 am Monday, ready for a 9:00 presentation. But there may be times when I have the work there and I just don't feel like doing it and it sits. It's that kind of flexibility that I very much enjoy.

Work and Household Rhythms

For Leslie, work, child care, and household duties are all intertwined, even in the most minute ways. While her memory typewriter is printing letters, she will time each letter, and during that printing time, wash a dish or two. She also has two small children around her while she works, and plays with them while she works. For the men, although there are periods of intense concentration on work, there is also a sense of flow in and out of the work mode. Arthur intersperses work with other activities, such as responding to calls from tenants in the building he owns, and to his children's requests, and picking up the cleaning. However, he resents these intrusions.

In contrast, Bill, an artist who lives with his male partner, enjoys incorporating the laundry, grocery shopping, and cooking into his workday. He notes that:

without the support of a woman...[there are] a lot of things you have to integrate into your life.

Bill also likes the feeling of being able to do things for himself. "That's why I learned to cook. I like to eat."

Glen is also fairly active in his household. He takes care of his two sons in the morning, cooking breakfast and bringing them to school. (His wife teaches, and has to be at school at the same time). He also spends a little time with his sons after school. Sometimes he works all day; on other days he shops, runs errands in the afternoon. When he is not working on either his home renovation or his paid work, he sometimes will take the day to himself, for relaxation.

Workspace

Leslie works in the middle of the living/dining area, so she can monitor her children's activities. The children play around her while she works. Two of the three men have private, exclusive workspaces. They both feel quite strongly about their workspace, but in different ways -- Arthur because it is his only private space, in which to do whatever he wants; Glen, because it is aesthetically pleasing, functional, and an extension of himself. He has been designing and working on the workspace for the last three years. For Bill, work is an integral part of his home, and he has no need for separation between the two. He works in all of the rooms in this apartment.

Meanings of Home and Work

For Leslie, home is equated with her family. She has strong feelings about caring for her children, and enjoys having them with her at home. Work, on the other hand, is something she enjoys, but it is not of primary importance in her life.

All three of the men are different in the ways in which their non-traditional gender roles have been played out in their lives. Bill has a nurturing attitude about his home that is atypical in this society. He sees his work as enjoyable, fitting it into his feelings about his home life.

It's the same as doing things at home, cooking and feeding people. So maybe I view work in terms of what home is like. To bring that same caring and comfort to the job.

When first moving into his living space, Bill concentrated not on finding a place in which to work, but on creating a home for himself and others.

Glen also gets intense pleasure from his home. He enjoys the flexibility of having his own business, but he is not particularly interested in working full-time or making a lot of money. Arthur seems even less interested in working for pay. When asked what he does in his home office, he answered:

Workwise, I write, I think, not necessarily in conjunction with one another. I play music, listen to music, hide, brood. I mess around with the bass, play saxophone....try to figure out what I'm gonna be when I grow up.

Summary

Gender roles and individual perceptions of those roles are clearly related to how people work at home. Work schedules, workspaces, and attitudes about working at home are all reflections of both societal values and individuals' views of themselves and their roles in the household and the world.

The remainder of the dissertation discusses in further detail some of the themes and issues raised in this chapter. The following chapter (Four) explores how the public/private dichotomy of paid work and home has been translated into home-based work. Groupings similar to those outlined in Chapter Three are continued in Chapter Four, with gender differences distinguished within each category.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE FUNCTION AND SYMBOLISM OF SPACES IN THE HOME:
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

The privatized home has long been seen as juxtaposed to the public world of work. Many social scientists have framed their research around the division between private and public, work and home/family (e.g., Okin, 1989; Kamerman, 1979; Tilly & Scott, 1978). Indeed, the separation of these two worlds is pervasive, both conceptually (in popular literature and research) and as a reality in many people's lives (as evidenced by long commutes to places of employment). The phenomenon of home-based work stands as an anomaly in its merging of these two disparate entities. As such, it presents a unique opportunity for examining the symbolic and functional aspects of the joining of public and private, work and domestic life.

There is some debate in feminist writing and theory as to whether using the framework of public versus private/domestic is helpful or harmful. Those who warn of its problems are concerned that by using such a framework, we assume a dichotomy of connections of women and men to different roles, which some might try to explain through biological, not sociological, differences. I would argue, along with others (for an interesting review of this topic,

see Nicholson, 1986), that by examining the historical contexts of the separation of public and private, we can more clearly understand not only how public and private, and work and family, have been related to each other through time, but also what meanings have been associated with both worlds through gender.

Women and men, as a result of clear gender-based family and work role differences in our society, have different experiences and histories regarding home and work, private and public. These divergent experiences and sensibilities are reflected in their expectations and goals for work, the realities of their working lives, and the ways in which they experience the environments in their lives, particularly the home. Therefore, it is critical that home-based work be understood in the context of the historical relationships between gender and both the labor market and the home.

The Historical Separation of Work and Home in the United States

In pre-industrial societies, nearly everyone worked in order to survive, and almost no one worked for wages (Kessler-Harris, 1981). This work was done in or around the home, which was the center of production as well as family life. Since the industrial revolution in the mid 1800s in the United States, as paid work has been distinguished from

unpaid work, perceptions about what constitutes work, as well as who does what kind of work, have shifted (Kessler-Harris, 1981). Industrialization also radically altered the relationship between home and work by separating production from the home. Paid work became structured by forces external to the household, both temporally and spatially. While most white men of all classes did paid work outside of the home in factories, offices and stores, most white middle class women were not employed outside the home and continued to care for the children, clean and cook in the home. There was, however, work which women did in the home, unrelated to their housekeeping chores, that began to command pay. As early as the 1760s the market for knitted goods and homespun yarn began to expand, and home manufacturing of this kind increased with women deriving steady, if small, incomes from this work (Brownlee & Brownlee, 1976). However, the nation's move toward industrialization of production resulted in the emergence of the small factory or industrial plant which all but eliminated the market for the consequently more expensively produced homespun goods.

Although the number of married white women who were wage earners in the 1850s was relatively small, the U.S. census indicated that by the early 1900s the number of these wage-earning women had increased significantly (Kessler-Harris, 1981). Unmarried white women often worked in the factories and mills in the early 1800s, but by the 1850s

most factory work was done by immigrant women and considered to be off-limits to native-born Americans. Because most of the jobs available to women were unenviable (e.g., in "sweatshops"), many opted to work at home. Black women, who generally did not have the option to work only at home, participated in the labor force at a much higher proportion than white women (Kessler-Harris, 1981). The idea of working as a domestic or servant was offensive to Yankee women and some groups of immigrant women. They often preferred working at home, despite the lower pay. According to one source, by 1900, twelve percent of all wage-earning women worked in their homes doing sewing or keeping boardinghouses (Kessler-Harris, 1981). (While these are distinctly different kinds of home-based work, the census did not distinguish between them).

The 1920 U.S. census estimated that between one-fourth and one-third of all married women workers held jobs in their homes (Tentler, 1979). Although home-based work offered advantages in contrast to the sweatshops of the garment industry, the women who worked at home were not only subject to being underpaid, but also had to withstand the uneven flow of the work and piece-rate pay they received (Brownlee & Brownlee, 1976).¹ Despite these problems, home-based employment remained an important source of income for women into the 1930s (Kessler-Harris, 1981).

The harsh working conditions and low wages that

characterized women's employment in factories and sweatshops called public attention to these problems only when the workers themselves began to organize. Protective labor legislation, enacted within the first decade of the 1900s, was aimed at ameliorating working conditions for women in the United States. These laws, however, had mixed results. They did improve the worst of the working environments, and limited the number of hours and kinds of conditions under which women could work. But in recognizing that women had two jobs (in the home, as well as the factory), and by making concessions in an effort to protect them against the severe factory conditions, the legislation placed primary importance on the home (Brownlee & Brownlee, 1976).² The rationale for the protective labor legislation rested on the concept of the "family-wage" and on the assumption that women's primary role was taking care of the home and family. Given the primacy of this role, women could not also be full-fledged members of the labor market. By the early 1900s in the United States, most of the women in the labor force were poor and single (Kessler-Harris, 1981). The outcome of this movement was an additional division of workers along gender lines and the further institutionalization of the separation of work and home, both of which are still deeply embedded in American society (Pleck, 1985; Kamerman, 1979; Eisenstein, 1983; Rothman, 1978; Sokoloff, 1980; Kahn-Hut, Daniels & Colvard, 1982).

Despite the tendency towards a growing number of working women from 1914 until 1950, there was "little sign of an overall environmental support system that acknowledged the dual role of working mothers" (Strong, 1975, p. 464). In fact, the percentage of women participating in the paid labor force increased in the face of efforts against such a trend. Although World War II saw the movement of great numbers of women into the labor force, after the war there was a renewed pressure on women (particularly married women) to retreat to the home while men regained their jobs. Not only did women lose their jobs, but day care centers set up during the war for mothers doing defense work were closed. Those women who remained employed were poorly paid and were in the lowest echelons of the workforce. These efforts to restabilize women's "true" role in the home were supported by the housing patterns of suburbia which blossomed in the 1940s and 50s. Women's labor force participation rate in the U.S. has continued to increase dramatically, growing from 33.9% in 1950 to 57% in 1988 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980; 1988), but the strong separation of paid work from home continues to exist.

In effect, the "public" production of work and the "private" caring for families and home have become increasingly separate endeavors, sociologically (as employers demanded devotion to work, with family commitments being secondary), spatially (particularly with the creation

and promotion of the suburbs as completely domestic enclaves for consumption, rather than production), and according to gender (with men leaving the home to do paid work and women working for no pay in the home). Prevailing ideas about gender, work, and family influence the design and location of the home and workplace. These built environments in turn support and reinforce the ideas that generated them (Franck, 1985; Saegert, 1985). The historical association of women with the home, and the responsibility they have had for its maintenance, reinforces a relationship to it that is quite different for women than for men.

van Vliet (1985) notes that while the built environment can constrain certain activities, it is social norms and political and economic systems that govern the division of labor in the family and the model of the working male and nonemployed housewife. He emphasizes that "efforts to make environments more congruent with women's needs are inextricably linked to conceptions of women's roles in society and to decision-making processes bearing on the provision of opportunities for such roles to materialize" (van Vliet, 1985, p. 76). In the absence of such opportunities, along with environments to support them, individual women and men are struggling to create work and family situations which suit their needs. Working at home is seen as one such alternative. The question remains how environments designed for a distinct separation between work

and family are accommodating those who are erasing that physical separation.

When two worlds previously considered to be quite separate come together, what are the consequences? Doing paid work at home clearly reverses the public nature of work; rather than traveling from one's home to a public workplace, paid work can begin before a shower or breakfast, in the "privacy" of one's own home. In an alternative scenario to portraying the home as an idealized refuge from public life, the media has presented idealized images of women and men working at home within that privatized refuge. The popular media has painted pictures of men and women working at home amidst all the elements of home life. They are sometimes in their bathrobes, in the same room with young children, with little distinction between work and family life. The reality, for most people, is quite different from these images. Most of the people in this study have various techniques for delineating paid work from home activities. For many, the public sphere is defined by the spaces which other household members, as well as guests, use; the private sphere becomes their own workspaces. Ahrentzen (1992), in her research on homeworkers, found a similar reversal of the public/private dichotomy. In my research, home-based workers themselves often used the terms "public" and "private" to describe how spaces were used.

The literature reviewed above documents how the

separations of public and private/work and family are associated with gender. However, this material presents a primarily heterosexual, familial model of living and working, which does not fully reflect the range of social relationships found in households in this study. Some of the participants interviewed for this research are in gendered social relationships in families with children. Others are in gendered social relationships without children or without children living in the household. There are some who share living space with others in an economic relationship only; some who share their living space only with grown children; and some who have social relationships with others of the same sex in their living space. In this chapter, I will tease out what meanings different parts of these relationships have for people working at home, and how those meanings impact how and where they work.

The ways in which people in this study use the space in their homes for working, fall into three broad categories, which are divided somewhat along gender lines. 1) Many people working at home recreate the traditional office at home, with workspaces sharply delineated from home activities. 2) For some, dilemmas about working at home are reflected in the places and spaces in which they work. They often have multiple workspaces or workspaces with permeable boundaries, not clearly separated from the rest of the home. There is a visible, articulated struggle for some kind of

harmony between work and home activities. 3) There are a few people for whom work and home are truly one entity, where there is a blending of spaces and activities, with little or no discernible separation.

Gender Differences in the Use of Space: A Small Case Study

Not surprisingly, gender was an important factor in different experiences of working at home, spatially, as well as emotionally.³ Significantly, the reasons some men and women started working at home, and the ways in which they do so, differ substantially. Only seven of the fifteen women in this study do paid work on a full-time basis. By contrast, eleven of the fifteen men do paid work at home full-time. The households of the participants in this study are quite diverse; however, one couple (both of whom were interviewed) represent a fairly traditional, heterosexual, familial situation. Lisa and Rick, husband and wife who both work at home, best illustrate that even within one household, there can be disparate scenarios of working at home.

In this household, which includes two children, ages seven and ten, each parent has completely different experiences of working at home, particularly in terms of how work and other activities are delineated. Rick and Lisa typify most men and women in this study in terms of their

reasons for working at home. For Lisa, working at home is directly related to her children:

I decided to try this because I was tired of trying to fit my family into a more regular work environment -- it was too hard -- so what I wanted was the flexibility. If a class mother is needed on a trip, I can go. When my kids are off from school, I can do things with them and those days are crossed off my calendar, unless I have a real deadline. From the time I get the kids [from school], I do very little work.

Rick's reasons for working at home were very clearly related to his business. After resigning from a politically appointed position due to a change in the city administration, he decided to try consulting. Since his wife was already using the home for her consulting business, starting his own business from home made financial sense.

While Rick works primarily in an isolated basement with a door, Lisa usually works at the kitchen table or in the living room. According to Rick, a consultant in real estate and economic development, deciding where to work was:

.....kind of natural. The basement was the easiest place to separate files, etc., rather than [to have the workspace in] rooms where the kids had activities. There was never any thought it would be anywhere else.

Lisa, an urban planner/housing development consultant, also pointed out that the basement was the most logical place in which to work:

....it was the only place where there was space -- where you could carve out a place to work. It was also visually separate, so it was a lot easier to leave papers on the floor in the basement and to carry on a normal life....it was easier to segregate work from domestic life and children.

Yet, Lisa is not able to separate her work and domestic

life. She does most of her work in the kitchen; when the children come home from school, she stops working, cleans up her work and stores it in the dining room. Because of Lisa's role in caring for the children and helping them to abide by the rule of not disturbing their father, Rick has the opportunity to continue working undisturbed. When I asked Rick whether his children's activities affected him in terms of how, where, or when he works, he responded:

Not so much me, although this sounds sexist. It's the way we decided to do things. It was also a function of Lisa's decision in terms of what she wanted to do. Her focus was working between the time the kids were dropped off at school and when they came home, so that decision has continued to be followed even though I'm here now...except if she needs to do something or has an appointment. If I'm down here [in the basement workspace], I'll go up and say hello, but they [the children] know that this is the workspace, and they don't disrupt me -- that's primarily a function of the fact that Lisa's around for them.

Clearly, delineating work from home is more than a simple matter of spatial decisions regarding one's workspace. Where a workspace is located reflects and is influenced by a myriad of other factors, including one's role in the household, feelings about work and home, and one's reasons for working at home. And spatial features alone are not sufficient to either separate work from home activities, or to integrate them. Those who prefer to maintain a high degree of separation, for example, often use multiple methods to do so, including the use of spatial, behavioral, temporal, and psychological cues. The

maintenance of boundaries between work activities and home activities is also often aided by other household members, caregivers for children, and technological innovations.

Maintaining the Status Quo: The Recreation of the Office
in the Dwelling

Married, with Children: Full-time Workers

Among some of the men in this study, the distinction between work and family activities is of primary importance. This is particularly true for men who are married and have children living at home. The methods they use to actualize that distinction, however, vary. In some cases, men recreate traditional offices within the privatized home, through both the emulation of office routines at home, and the design features of the workspace itself. Fred, a computer and public relations consultant with a thirteen year-old, whose wife also does part of her work at home, explains:

As you can see, this is an office, not a playroom. It doesn't have a T.V., the chairs are designed, not for lounging, they're designed for working, and when I'm done, I'm done. I've trained myself to be conditioned: When I come in here I come in to work, not play. If I want to play, I play somewhere else. I've very successfully built a boundary between the space we have for work and the space we have for everything else. I put carpet in here - if you look, you'll see most of the carpet in the apartment in back is blue and this [the office] is grey. It defines it even more, like an "industrial grey." I'm not averse to playing any of

these games to define the space.

Psychological methods, as well as spatial features, help Fred to confine work to one place, and to do only work in that space. The "boundary" he refers to between work and "everything else" is behavioral as well as spatial; he works only in that space during certain hours, and when he walks into the workspace, design cues remind him that the area is only for work, not for play. In this way, he has transplanted the conventional office into his home, yet kept the rest of the home insulated from his work. The traditional dichotomy of public/work and private/home has been reversed -- the "public" spaces within the home are those used by household members and their guests, and the "private" area is used for work. Temporal patterns are also transferred from the traditional office to working at home.

A typical day:

It's very regimented. I get up about 6:30, 6:45, and my daughter gets ready for school and she has breakfast, and I watch the news while she's eating. She leaves roughly around 8:00 and about 8:30 I come in here (the office) and work usually until noon. I have lunch and listen to the financial news network. If I'm doing something that involves getting a mailing out, then the day ends roughly when the mail is picked up outside, which is about 4:30 or 5:00, and that's a convenient stopping point. As far as my day goes, it's a very disciplined approach. I stick to it. If you're going to get stuff done, you've gotta do it -- you can't compromise about it.

Fred has accomplished this separation of work from domestic life in a systematic, conscious way, not only to help him concentrate on his work, but also to isolate "work"

to a small section of the home.

First of all, this is our home, it's not our office. This room is [the office], but the apartment is our home and....I really wanted to completely separate work from everything else. The idea was to be able to do what I have to do and not make it the world's most important thing. The concept of separating the work from living space is very important.

In this situation, home and work are still two distinct, separate entities, although they share one physical space; home is still a sacred place, apart from the work that takes place there.

Sam, a real estate developer and attorney, with one-year old twins, also uses multiple methods to maintain a separation between home and work. He works in the former dining room, which he converted into an office by having a door installed to separate it from the kitchen. Sam describes what is important to him in working at home:

The ability to isolate yourself from the rest of the home environment, quiet, and, with respect to either of two scenarios -- either when you're on this side of the door or that side of the door -- the ability to close the door and not see it when you don't want to see it, and the ability to close the door and not hear home activities and not be distracted by home activities when you want to work. It works both ways. So isolation is important, but isolation from the home, not isolation from the outside world.

Despite the reality of work and home being in the same physical space, work is still clearly separated from home. Sam contrasted his present situation with his previous experience working at home in space also used for other activities:

In my old apartment, I took over the dining room, and I

put up shelves that separated that from the living room, and then I had a sort of computer room which was off the kitchen -- and that was fine, no problem during the day when I was working. The flip side is when I wasn't working and trying to relax, there was no escape from the fact that I felt I was back in school again. I was surrounded by "homework" - books, computer, etc., so it was hard to escape mentally from the pressures of work. Now, by contrast, because I'm not sharing space anymore, if I don't want to be working, I just don't go into my office. I make sure the office door is closed.

Sam's previous experience working at home indicated that physically separating work from home made it easier to achieve the psychological separation he needed. Besides using the physical space of the office to contain his work, Sam also uses other techniques to separate work from home.

I have two office numbers and a Fax machine and all that, and they can operate without me. If I'm on the other side of my door, I don't see my things, and I'm more like what most people consider a typical worker in that, when you leave the office, you're not working! Another thing I do, as you notice -- even though I have no appointments and may not go out of the office or have someone come over today, I will still dress in a way that I wouldn't normally dress on weekends. I get dressed to work, not so much that I'm in the right frame of mind when I'm working, but so I'm in the right frame of mind when I'm not working. So I know, hey, I'm not wearing a tie, I guess I'm not working... and that works for me. Getting dressed in the morning is just one example of what I do - and I like to do - to keep up pretty much a regular routine in the office. I like to train my brain - hey, it's 9:15 or 9:30, time to turn on the computer. So, in a lot of ways, I try to emulate the office routines at home.

Using the technology Sam has available in the form of a Fax machine, separate office telephone lines, and an answering machine, assists him in containing his work to certain times of the day; when he is not working, this technology takes over for him. Sam's emulation of office routines, both

temporally and in terms of dress, also help him to "go home" from the office.

Non-physical gate-keepers are also frequently used to separate work from other activities. These may include other people caring for children, and rules for children about not interrupting parents during working hours; spouses or child-caregivers often have the responsibility of ensuring that rules about interrupting are enforced.

Sam, in addition to the physical and behavioral distinctions he uses to separate home from work, also discourages interruptions from his family.

I don't come out and play during the day, and they know that if I do, great, but they also know I don't like distractions, so they'll do their own thing.....it's physically part of the home but, as much as reasonably possible, its psychologically not.

For Sam, the presence of both his wife and a caregiver for his children assists in enforcing his discouragement of disruptions. This policy of family non-interference in his work also extends to Sam's wife, who briefly interrupted our interview. Sam was quick to point out:

That interruption is work-related; she's not coming in to say, "do you like this dress?"

This pattern of men working at home without disruption, despite the presence of children in the household, primarily due to the support of others, corroborates Horwitz's (1986) similar research findings.

All of these men started working at home because they wanted to have their own businesses, and working at home

kept their expenses quite low. Some men, like Sam, had looked for office space, but found it too expensive, and at the same time, became accustomed to the flexibility of working at home.

Strict separations between work and domestic activities are not exclusive to men's experiences in working at home. Some women, too, feel the need to create and enforce distinctions between their work and their home life -- and the results may have much in common with the situations of the men discussed above. However, there are differences from the men in the ways in which the following women discussed how they used the space in their homes, and separated their activities.

Two of the women who work at home full-time have school-age children living at home. These women have rigid work patterns and household rules about not interrupting their work. Karen, a writer with two children, ages five and thirteen, also has a set routine and rules surrounding her work. She starts working after walking her five-year old to school on alternate days. She works until 5:00 every day except Fridays, when she picks up her son at 3:00. Although her thirteen year-old comes home from school at 3:30, Karen does not interact with her, except to call "hello" through the closed door of her small office.

I emerge at 5 o'clock and I'm ready to hear about her day. We're pretty well into a routine. She understands that I'm working. She hears the hum of the computer and the click of the keys and she just does

her thing. My son gets dropped off at 5:00 because he's with a babysitter.

The combination of routines, rules, child-care assistance, and a physical space that is clearly separate from the rest of the home help Karen to work a full day, uninterrupted.

Although Karen first started working at home when her first child was born, her work has evolved into a full-time (though flexible) career that happens to be conducted from her home.

I started working at home in '78 because I had a baby, and I wanted to write some magazine articles. I started sending out query letters when my daughter was an infant, and that's when my career kind of took off. I thought it was the best of both worlds because I would have flexibility. It turned out very well -- to have young children and a free-lance writing career. It was easier than committing myself to full-time work, being beholden to corporate schedules and policies -- and it's worked out. I've been able to give it more or less time, and I've even let it go for a few months here and there.

Karen points out that her ability to shut out "home" things when she is working has improved over time.

I think I managed to overcome most of the pitfalls. I know many people who work at home get sidetracked -- by dishes in the sink and tidying up. I really don't do that anymore. I mean, if you look in the dining room, you'll see that all the breakfast dishes are still on the table and they'll still be there at five o'clock, and that's fine. It doesn't bother me, as long as I'm in here (the office) and the door is closed.

For Karen, separating work from home entails not only controlling interruptions by others, but also making sure that she is not distracted by home-related tasks.

Beth, a medical transcriber with a ten year-old son,

works 60-65 hours per week, including two days outside the home.

Generally, I get up about 6:30 and start right in on the computer. After a couple of hours, I take a shower, have something to eat, get dressed.....My son comes home from school, and I usually tell him to leave me alone, I'm still working. Two days a week he's in an after school program, so he doesn't get home until 5:45. Other days he comes home around 3:30. He does his homework and reads, so he's pretty much out of my hair until 6:00 or 6:30. We usually order out, because nobody feels like cooking. My son goes to bed about 9:00, and we tuck him in and I go back to work ...depending on how much stuff I have to do, I'll continue typing until 11, 12:00 at night.

Although Beth's workspace, in what had previously been the dining area, is not enclosed by either walls or a door, she manages to create, through her work habits and household rules, enough of a separation between work and domestic life to allow her to work so much. Beth started doing extra work at home while she was employed, and it mushroomed into a full-time business. A self-proclaimed workaholic, she notes:

I was hoping I would be able to spend more time with [my son], and it hasn't worked out that way at this point.

Marcia, a therapist, with children ages six and eleven, works part-time outside the home, and sees clients at home in the late afternoon and early evening. Although she started seeing clients at home before she was married, when Marcia had children, she found the flexibility of working at home suited her already busy life.

Once I had children, I was trying to juggle a lot of

things, and the idea of having to be in three places: the workplace, the private office, and home -- and move the car back and forth -- I couldn't have imagined it. There's something about coming home and working that I really like. If I have a cancellation, I can come down and do the laundry.....it just feels much more flexible to me. When we moved I did sort of begin to look at some office space out of the house but, it seemed that, for what it would cost to get office space -- another \$700, say, to put it into rent we'd get so much more apartment, that it seemed the way to go.

Due to the confidential nature of her work, Marcia needs complete visual and aural separation between her workspace, in which she sees clients, and the rest of the home. In order to achieve this, she works in a small room on the second floor of her home, which also contains the bedrooms, a bathroom, and a waiting area for clients. A custom-made sound-board is put over the spiral staircase when clients are expected, which effectively closes off the whole second floor. Marcia has always had strict rules regarding interference with her work, and her children have been cooperative.

[The workspace] is really off-limits. When the kids were little, everybody saw it as very vital that I was around and in the house, and I think that the children -- when I said, "Do you really want me to get an office somewhere else -- it means I won't be here until maybe 7 o'clock?" -- they sort of preferred that I was here and essentially they've always respected my privacy up there with patients. Thank God, because if they hadn't, I really couldn't have done it. I guess I've come across intense enough so they've really respected it.

For Marcia, the combination of spatial separation of the workspace from "public" areas of the home, and firm rules for other household members about interrupting work has

served to effectively allow her to work at home, despite the unusual amount of separation her work requires.

These women and men, who are in gendered relationships, with children living at home, all define themselves in a sense that has something in common -- as full-time workers in the world, who happen to work at home. As such, one of their priorities is to effectively create a level of separation between work and other household activities that allows them to be engaged in productive work within their living spaces.

The Part-Time Home Office

Married, with Young Children: Part-time Workers

A somewhat different pattern emerged for some of the women in this study who have very young children (under four years old); all of these women work at home part-time -- from ten to nearly thirty hours per week. They started working at home because of their young children; however, the specific impetus for working at home varied:

When my first child was born, I didn't want to work full-time and commute to Manhattan. My employer wouldn't take me on part-time, and there were no day care facilities at work. [Amy, illustrator and mother of 3 year old and 2 month old].

I knew I wouldn't go back to my other job and I also knew, being a lawyer, if I started with another firm I'd really have to work very hard to prove myself again and I just felt that with two children, it wasn't

possible. I had clients who wanted to stay with me, so I thought the best thing to do would be to work out of the house for a while and see how that worked out. I didn't want to give up all these years of training. [But] the demands that are put on lawyers I couldn't contend with -- with two little children..... I couldn't work 10 to 15 hours a day again. [Julie, attorney with 2 year-old and 9 month-old].

When [my son] was about nine months we discovered our babysitter was seriously neglecting him and we had some serious problems with him as a result -- and it had been going on for months. At that point we decided it just wasn't worth it to have a child and not be able to know what's going on at home.... and not spend time with him. I immediately got rid of that babysitter, and I closed my office almost that day and completed the rest of the project off the dining room table in our 2-bedroom apartment. [Nancy, architect, with a two year old].

All of these women have assistance in doing their paid work in the form of caregivers (either part-time or full-time) for their young children. They also have separate (though sometimes shared with spouses) workspaces, most with doors. The combination of two gate-keepers -- caregivers who keep the children occupied while their mothers are working, and the physical separation of work areas from the rest of the home -- are used by these women as mechanisms for delineating work from domestic life, at least part-time. The children have also adjusted to their parents being "around", but not available.

In the beginning it was hard because Adam would always come in there (to the office), but now he's gotten so he can leave me alone. (Julie, speaking about her 2 year old son).

While all of these women have used multiple methods to

achieve some separation of their work from their domestic lives, none used the traditional office as a model. Their work patterns are scheduled around their children's activities or their own preferences; their workspaces are not designed to resemble traditional office space; and the existence of domestic tasks, while separated from work tasks, is acknowledged.

Some part-time workers may have a more flexible attitude about the separation of work and home. Nancy seems to enjoy that aspect of working at home.

I have the flexibility....if a meeting is suddenly canceled, and I just don't feel like sitting down at my desk, I might go to the park with [my son and his babysitter].

If he [my son] is with [the babysitter], he'll come in [to the office] and visit and maybe draw, and he's very quiet about it.

In other households, the desire to separating oneself may be present, but is more difficult to achieve, as Julie expresses:

Sometimes it's hard to get things done....You can actually go into an office [outside the home] and shut yourself off -- you can take care of all kinds of things in private. Here, I can't really do that anymore. There are people wandering around the house - - the nanny, the housekeeper who comes today. You can't shut things off all the time and that makes it hard.

Making and Breaking Boundaries: The Struggle for
Harmony Between Work and Household

Married, with School-age Children: Part-time Workers

One fundamental difference among people in the struggle to work at home, is that many women are working at home in order to manage their "double day" more easily. Because they have school-age children who are away from home for part of the day, their situations are quite different from those of many women, as well as men. They work part-time, around their children's schedules, with a somewhat less stringent separation between work and household.

The women in this study who have school-age children and work at home part-time often work delineate work from domestic life in temporal terms, by working around the children's schedules. During the hours when the children are in school, paid work is done; when the children come home, that work ends for the day. These women have chosen to work in this way in order to participate more fully in their children's daily activities.

I decided to try this [working at home] because I was tired of trying to fit my family into a more regular work environment -- it was too hard -- so what I wanted was the flexibility. If a class mother is needed on a trip I can go. I was finding it very difficult. [Lisa, urban planner and mother of two children, seven and ten years old].

We did not feel comfortable with the range of child-care situations that would have been available to us.

We felt we needed a very hands-on approach to child-rearing, particularly in New York. [That factor] has influenced my business development in that it has really served to slow it down. Child-rearing is a very demanding occupation. [Robin, international trade and investment consultant, mother of two children, six and ten years old].

(Before my daughter was born) I was working outside the home. We had kind of decided that I was going to take care of her. Why have kids if someone else is going to take care of them? There were all sorts of implications and complications of that. Obviously, financially it would have been better to keep working, probably. But these are our kids, and the early years are important and this is when all the big things get decided in their lives.....neither of us wanted to have a babysitter. [Joan, graphic designer, mother of five and ten year olds].

Although these women made decisions about child-rearing that had clear implications for their paid work, they still express some frustration at the ways in which work and family are not separated. Robin notes:

I guess the disadvantage is the inability to separate clearly your business from your family -- even in terms of the space, as I defined it. And also in terms of, for example, if my children are home and I get a phone call. Not having that physical space where I can just cut myself off from the family. Even if I had the physical space, I think it would be impossible.

Unlike Karen, who had strict rules about interrupting her work and had the cooperation of her children in following those rules, Robin chose not to impose such restrictions on her children. She describes the times when her children have been home and she has attempted to work:

Once they realize I am working, the tendency is much greater that they will have a question. I would say that it's difficult at best. If I'm there [in my workspace] the likelihood is that my children will be there soon, and I have taken the position that there's

a limit to how much I would discourage them from doing that. I'm not yet prepared to say, "You may not come in here now because I'm doing something."

Lisa points out the trade-offs in working around her children's schedules, yet trying to maintain some sense of professionalism.

Working at home is directly related to having children. I worked full-time with one child, then worked part-time, and then started to try this option. It's not the most remunerative, but it's the most comfortable in terms of balancing for me -- that's why I'm doing this. It's a trade-off I've made....I'm trying to maintain a professional demeanor while I'm doing this -- not having a FAX number or having someone call me after 3 o'clock and having my kids whining in the background while I'm trying to sound very businesslike!

For Joan, the only separation between work and domestic life is temporal. Simply finding the time to do work, while caring for her children, has been a challenge.

I did a lot of work when she was a baby and she slept a lot. And I thought that would improve, and it did not improve, it did exactly the opposite, as she grew and turned into a person, she required a lot more time, not less time, so I started doing less and less work. It was difficult scheduling anything. But I kind of stayed in it because I wanted some extra money and I didn't want to lose the contacts. So last year I started working more regularly and this year my son is in kindergarten and the kids have started in an after-school program two days a week, which should extend as my work increases. I'll try to go for more work this coming year.

Despite attempting to separate work from domestic life by working when other household members are out of the home, these women still find it difficult, if not impossible, to completely separate the two. Their situation is confounded by the fact that they want to be home for their children,

and therefore are reluctant to enforce strict rules about the separation of home and work. Their choice of workspaces, which are far from private, make this attempt at separation even more difficult.

Robin works in a room without doors, that serves as a thoroughfare between the enclosed back porch (which is also used as the primary entrance to the house) and the rest of the home.

When there's activity [in the house] it impacts on my ability to work very much. One of the bad things about the design of this house is the number of throughways through two rooms which are critical to me: one is the kitchen and the other is the room where I work. At the point where people have to pass to get from one spot to another it's disruptive. So I would say that when we're all here it's very difficult for me to work.

Robin explains her decision to use that space for her work:

I think I felt the need to be in a place where I could see the children very easily and that was the most logical place -- it's very easy for me to see them (in the backyard) from that space. It's interesting that, while there are constraints -- being in the hub of family activities -- that's the reason I chose that space, so I could have a handle on the family's activities.

The space in which Robin works quite clearly reflects the conflicting demands of her work and domestic life.

Joan, her husband, and their two children live in a one-bedroom apartment. She and her husband share the bedroom, while the children sleep and play in the living/playroom. Joan works at a drafting table in a corner of this multi-purpose room, or occasionally at a small desk in the front hallway.

It's kind of like time-sharing. I have the room in the day, while they're not there. And when they come home and I stop working, they get the room back, sort of....it's not necessarily true, because I may still keep working. It's really a crunch. If we had more space, and if I had a room that I could have as my workspace and I could close the door on it, it would certainly be nicer. It would be nicer if we all had our own space, if the kids each had their own bedroom, if everything didn't have to work like a submarine. This is very difficult.⁴

Men With Few Family Obligations: Inconsistent Workers

Separating work from the household is not always easy. Some people do not have the luxury of an extra room to use for work and must create workspaces amidst other activities. For others, the presence of other people, the proximity of distractions, can readily disrupt their concentration. Those who think delineating home from work is important, but who have not been able to achieve that separation, express frustration with their situations. Andrew, a freelance writer, explains the importance of having a workspace that is private:

Whether you're in an office building or in an office at home, the door is the delineating element between you and the rest of the world and, lacking a door, you're public, which means your space is violatable and, at least in my mind, means your thoughts are violatable. That's why this room, being very small, is acceptable, because of the door. My wife....has that space [in a large open area] -- but I couldn't deal with it because of its public nature.

In spite of having this private place in which to work, Andrew has found it difficult to do his work at home. Part of that difficulty is due to Andrew's particular interests

and way of working:

....especially for someone like me, who's fairly eclectic in terms of interests and has the attention span of a gnat. I'll pick up the saxophone and play for half an hour, or do woodworking....

Another problem for Andrew is his lack of effective gatekeepers, which leaves him feeling available to everyone because he works at home. Although a babysitter cares for his two children until the evening, interruptions still exist:

I go to my office, but it's not leaving home -- very different, because I'm still home, which means that I'm still, in spite of efforts otherwise, available....You try to minimize [interruptions] as much as possible -- for a long time the kids understood and respected, but lately they haven't been. But even if they're not coming in, kids make noise. They don't make a little noise, it's like Madison Square Garden, and trying to concentrate.....I've never been real good at saying "No."

Because he has not enforced any rules about interruptions or noise, Andrew has experienced problems separating home from work, despite the closed door that is so important to him. Although he clearly is not working at home in order to interact more with his children, their presence is still distracting to him. He admits that his solution is far from ideal:

What I find myself doing is working from, say one o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the morning...and that becomes the only time I can own that's mine....which does not make life particularly easy if you've got kids. They don't understand, "Listen, I just went to sleep twenty minutes ago."

While Andrew has many of the same supports, both physical (a separate workspace with a door) and social (a babysitter for

his two children until 6:00 in the evening) that others who work at home have, he does not use them effectively in order to accomplish his work. The lack of control he feels over his time, and the dissatisfaction he expresses with his solution to that problem, may ultimately lead to a different solution.

In fact, I just said to a friend, that the only way I'm going to finish the stuff I'm working on working at home, is if I get an office outside of home....and it might very well be true.

Andrew is different from many others in this study in terms of his attitude about work. When asked how he would describe the kind of work he does at home, the following dialogue ensued:

A: Work or what I do here?

Q: What you do.

A: Workwise, I write, think, not necessarily in conjunction with one another; play music, listen to music, hide, brood. I mess around with the bass, play saxophone....try to figure out what I'm gonna be when I grow up.

Leading a productive life (in terms of producing income) is not necessarily a priority for Andrew. One gets the sense from what he says that he would rather be left to his music, his woodworking, and his thoughts, without feeling the pressure of earning money.

"My wife thinks I come up here to fuck off and I do, at times, come up here to hide, but I know she resents it. It's been a cause of a tremendous amount of friction. It's conceivable that it may lead to the break-up of a marriage. She's very task-oriented. "What did you do today?" If you didn't create X widgeits, you didn't do anything.

This struggle -- between the desire to live in a way that is

inconsistent with normative expectations of a "productive" life, and the half-hearted attempt at earning a living -- is played out in the ways in which Andrew works at home; the temporal patterns of his work, the lack of structure, and the failure of a separate space to serve as a real separation between work and non-work.

For others, separating domestic life from work is a constant struggle, and can be a source of great frustration. Eric, a writer who lives with his grown daughter, explains the different spatial arrangements he has had for working at home and the impacts they have had on his work:

Productivity is real important. And sometimes I'm productive and sometimes I'm not. And my workspace dictates that a lot, I've discovered that. When my daughter, Katie, was in Spain (she just came back) I used her room and had a desk in there. I had it set up exclusively as an office, really. So when I went in there, that was workspace, that was very clearly workspace, and I definitely worked and was more productive under those circumstances....I did a lot of thinking about that, when I set it up. I thought, "I'll do all my work in there." And that made a big difference. Something rang in me when I walked into the room, that this is for work. And everything else is for something else. Right now, I have a little desk in my bedroom, and I've got everything mixed in, my work mixed in with my personal stuff. And it's just not as productive. Now we've set this little desk in the living room. Katie's a writer, too. And we both use that. I don't think she understands to the whole degree, how important it is to get out, or getting a workspace...how to make yourself productive. I think working at home is real tough and there's a ton of problems associated with it. I find it's a real battle. Space is very important. And I don't have it right now.

One of the solutions Eric has found for this ongoing "battle" is to actually leave the home in order to achieve

that separation between work and home. He varies the workspaces he uses, supplementing his home workspaces with spaces outside the home. He rents a desk in a writer's cooperative about 45 minutes from his apartment. Although he can only use that space part of the time (since his research materials and phone are at home), Eric finds that leaving his home boosts his productivity.

A certain amount of time, I have to leave and go someplace. And then I seem to be energized when I leave and come back. I'm not as productive [at home] as I am when I'm down there [at the writer's cooperative]. It's frustrating.

For Eric, the lack of a separate workspace is coupled with an erratic work schedule.

I tend to be disorganized at home. I don't always follow a real good pattern. I seem to be distracted easily. Often at night, I'll work again. If I'm in a writing mode, I'm sort of writing all the time. Sometimes I'll click the answering machine on and shut the sound off so I'm not interrupted.....It's tougher to keep your discipline at home. And I find it's tough for me to keep that structure. My hours get mixed up.

Alex, an artist, has a specific space in which to do his work, but the permeability of that space has caused problems. He has created a studio space that is situated between the living room he shares with a roommate, and his own bedroom, with no doors to separate the spaces. He finds it somewhat difficult to have his studio space spatially accessible and open to the other rooms in his apartment.

There's that need to separate yourself - I tend to get emotionally attached to my work, and that's not necessarily productive. Having that opportunity to just go in and work at your paintings anytime you like is not necessarily a good thing. It's good to have a

physical distance between you and your work so that you let it sit -- I might have a tendency to overwork things, and that is peculiar to a visual artist. Maybe if I had a long hallway, or the studio on another floor of the building, it might make a difference.

These men seem to be struggling to work at home without clear distinctions between work and domestic life. For two of them, those distinctions are spatial, and to some extent, temporal; Andrew is having difficulty with his own ability to concentrate on work in the absence of the elements of a workplace -- being around others who are working and expect him to work, or being in a place where work is the only thing being done.

Steve, a composer, noted that the distinctions between his paid work and domestic life are beginning to change. After living with other artists and musicians for many years, Steve recently married. Although he continues to live and work in the same abode as before, the evolution of his domestic situation has influenced his use of space. Steve's use of his workspaces continues to evolve as his life, and his household, changes.

I'm private when I'm singing, composing vocally. When I'm just playing (piano) I'll noodle around a little bit [at the piano in the open loft space], but it's rare for me to work in front of [my wife]. I just spent a week coaching someone for an opera, and I do that work out here [in the open loft space] -- I would schedule that when Nancy's not here -- it's nicer to work in the loft than in the cubbyhole of an office.

Things like a living room were on the periphery of our consciousness when we were deciding to divide the loft up. As it turns out, it's more significant to me to make a living room we could sit down in than it was for me to have a workspace. There's a deep shift happening

in me in regard to the kind of life I want - trying to move from an extremely isolated workplace to the workspace that can be a little more public. I can't imagine that there will ever be a point in my working where I don't need a private office, but I don't want it to be the kind of imperative it is right now.

Steve's use of the spaces he has created for working will undoubtedly continue to evolve as both his household composition (i.e., the addition of children) and his priorities concerning work and domestic life change.

A Dwelling Without Boundaries: The Blending of Work and Domestic Life

Same Sex Relationships, No Children

For some, separating work activities from domestic life is either not preferred or not possible. Some people who have little or no delineation between work and domestic activities feel they benefit from a physical and psychological proximity to their work. Bob, an artist and art instructor who lives with his male partner, explains:

If I'm in the middle of a project, I don't have dinner regularly. I'll say, I don't really want to eat tonight, I've got to keep the flow of it. But if you go to a studio, you only put in those hours. It's not that same intimacy with the work.

Bob's feelings about work and home are intertwined, and they have a great influence on the way in which he works. In his life, work is not done as something separate from domestic life -- it is a part of it.

It's not that I take the idea of working and impose it onto my home life. It's like home life gets laid onto what work life is. So that working is an enjoyable thing, it's part of everyday. I don't feel like I work. I just do what I enjoy doing. Even teaching. You're talking about things you love and imparting to people things you know how to do. It's the same as doing things at home, cooking and feeding people. So maybe I view work in terms of what home is like. To bring that same caring and comfort to the job.

Perhaps because Bob is in a gay, rather than heterosexual relationship, traditional male gender roles are not part of his domestic experience. The ways in which he works, and the attitudes he holds about home and work, are not constrained by socially defined relations between men and women. Although Bob has a drawing table in his bedroom, he also works in the living room and the kitchen. While most people in this study who moved into their homes knowing they would work there, thought about where they would place their workspace, this was not Bob's first concern.

It was really primarily thinking about home, and I knew everything else would integrate into it. The kitchen, the hearth, had to come first. And I've also used it for drawing, reading, writing, making up exams. I really use the whole apartment for working. It's a thing that grows out of the home. You make workspace. I don't think so much of the workspace, as the work, finding time to work, is more important than the space.

The blending of work and domestic life is not always welcome. In some cases, however, it is unavoidable. Heidi, a pastry chef who shares a one-bedroom apartment with her lover, starts baking first thing in the morning. The fact that she must use the kitchen, a generally shared space, for her work, has presented special problems.

When it was my own apartment [that I worked in] it was easier. It's more difficult -- I have to be conscious of things, like my refrigerator -- it's piled up with brownies; it's very frustrating for her [lover] to come home with a container of milk and not have anywhere to put it! I understand that, and she's very understanding, but it's difficult. I'm not thrilled about working in my home anymore.

The kitchen is open to the living room, which has its advantages and disadvantages. I can communicate with people if I have friends over or if my girlfriend is herebut there are times I'd like to put up this imaginary door, because I don't want to listen to the music she's listening to, and that I can't do.

Heidi's situation is complicated because she works not only in a "public" part of the home, but also one that is used for domestic purposes. She has attempted to make the kitchen her own workspace when she is using it for her baking.

She [my girlfriend] is here a lot in the mornings when I'm baking. I would prefer her not to be in the kitchen -- so usually I'll make her breakfast. It's my space and I like to keep it the way it is. It's just frustrating for somebody else to be here. When I'm working I just like it to be my space. It's been working out okay; she doesn't have a choice.

Even though the kitchen cannot be closed off from the rest of the apartment, Heidi's rules ensure that it will at least be "her" space while she is working. One way that she has found to separate her work from other domestic activities is to go out to dinner on her "baking" days (as opposed to "delivery" days, when the brownies are brought to clients). In a sense, then, the kitchen is a private workspace on baking days, and a "public" kitchen during other times.

Married, with Children: Part-time Worker

The blending of work and domestic life is sometimes viewed as one of the primary positive aspects of working at home, particularly if working at home is chosen as a way of combining paid work and domestic responsibilities. Leslie, a word processor and fund-raising organizer with two young children (ages one and three), has virtually no delineation between work and domestic life, either spatial or temporal. She works at home in order to be able to care for her children.

I really don't have to work [financially]. It's very important for me to take care of my kids. I don't want to turn them over to a babysitter. A lot of the people I know send their kids out very early, but I'm not into that.

The children are generally around her while she is working in the dining area of the apartment. She feels quite comfortable working this way:

I think it's great for me because I have either one or two squirmers around. I want them here, and it's good for me because I have a diversion right here -- I don't have to turn on the T.V. And they're very cooperative.....they really occupy themselves for large segments of time.

Living with Roommates, No Children

Felix, a fine artist who also teaches, repairs equipment, and provides technical assistance to other artists, lives with two roommates in a large loft. For him, living and working in the same place seems to have distinct

advantages.

I know there are some people who say they need to get away from their work, or they need to relax, but most of what I do is what I want to do. The art work is something I feel compelled to do. I can pretty much pick and choose among my clients, so I only get involved in projects that are of interest to me, and generally bear, in some way, on the art work that I'm doing. I don't have that feeling of wanting to get away from my work. Sometimes I'll say, "today I just want to do art work; I don't want to deal with my clients today." I don't answer my phone; I let the answering machine take it, so I can separate myself that way. Very often when you're working on a project, you'll turn away from it and be doing something else and BINGO! you get an idea. Here, it's not a matter of having to commute back to an office, but to just walk into the other room. That's a big plus -- living and working in the same space.

Felix quite literally lives and works in the same space. The living room, where he holds classes, is also filled with audio-visual equipment. He describes another room as his "shop", admitting that it is the most cluttered area of the loft. After pointing out the equipment covering every available surface, including the walls, he directs my attention to the sleeping loft above it all. Although Felix previously had the large loft to himself, over the years he had rented out space to others for financial reasons. His most recent change had been to get a second roommate, which meant losing his separate sleeping area. However, he felt this spatial tradeoff was justified.

...when you're asleep, it really doesn't matter where you are. Your eyes are closed pretty much. So I decided I would rather have the income from renting that room and be sleeping looking at the ceiling.

Work is a priority in Felix's life -- to the extent

that the domestic activities are minimally evident. The blending of work and domestic life is reflected so completely in the space that the two are barely distinguishable. For Felix, this lack of separation has its costs, but the benefits outweigh them.

I live in my art work. Nobody particularly remembers what an artist's studio looks like -- they remember the artist's work. I haven't put my energy, time, and resources into creating a glorious space to live in. Some of the other lofts in this building are quite spectacular, where the energy has been put more toward the living than the working arrangement. If it were possible, it would be really nice to have the luxury of a room that was just for sleeping, or dining in, but those are luxuries I can do without quite easily.

Summary

The functions of spaces within the home are dependent in part on individual priorities concerning work and domestic life, gender roles within households, the social composition of households, as well as the nature and amount of space available. Participants in this study work in areas which have been labeled as dining rooms, living rooms, bedrooms, butler's pantries, kitchens, hallways, and basements. Regardless of where a workspace is located, people may have distinctly different experiences of working at home. These are based in part on the degree to which the conventional separation of work and home is maintained when paid work is conducted at home. The varying degrees of separation or blending of work and domestic life in turn

seem to be dependent on the type of household, gender roles in the household, and philosophies of work and home/family.

ENDNOTES

1. Similar problems exist today for those who are home-based independent contractors. Although personal computers have replaced sewing machines for some, independent contractors are often underpaid, receive no benefits, and are subject to uneven work flows that often trickle to nothing for weeks at a time (see Christensen, 1985).

2. Whether the intentions behind the protective labor legislation movement were directed toward the expansion of women's opportunities or restricting women from the paid labor force has been debated, but not resolved. At the same time, advocates from both ends of the spectrum seemed to see this legislation as an acceptable compromise (see Brownlee & Brownlee, 1976).

3. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to "gender," "women" and "men" in describing the ways in which people work at home. "Gender" refers to a social construction, and "women" or "men" refers to biological sex; gender differences occur not only between men and women, but among them.

4. It should be noted that Joan and her family own a country home, which they use on weekends. This tradeoff of living in a very small space during the week in order to have another abode, will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

CREATING WORKSPACES: REALITY AND IDEAL

Creating a place in which to work in a living space can be accomplished in many different ways. Regardless of where they are located, all household workspaces must be created, not simply "chosen." Rarely are abodes designed for doing paid work (see Leavitt (1989) for a rare example of a design including provisions for those who work at home); spaces now used for working were once used for some other purpose, or simply did not exist previously.

Space can be created physically, psychologically, and/or temporally -- often through some combination of the three. In physical terms, existing rooms may be used for conducting paid work. Workspaces can also be physically created through the construction of walls and doors. Some people work in spaces that are "leftover" from designated household activities, sometimes with no spatial distinction from other rooms or parts of the same room. People who use such workspaces lacking physical boundaries, or whose workspaces share an area used for a different function, often rely heavily on their conception of the space to distinguish it as a place for working. In this way, a portion of a room may be thought of and referred to as an "office", despite the fact that the remainder of that area may be used as a bedroom. The purposes of these spaces

evolve in the course of one day, functioning as a workspace at one time of day, and a bedroom or living room during other times; other spaces evolve longitudinally from being a child's bedroom to a workspace, after the child has grown and left the household.

Much of the previous research on homeworkers, while documenting the types of spaces in which people work, has provided little analysis of how the creation of workspaces is related to personal and household circumstances.

Christensen (1985), in her interviews with women homeworkers, does not systematically describe or analyze their spatial patterns of working at home. Ahrentzen's (1987) interviews with 104 male and female homeworkers describe only the physical characteristics of their workspaces in aggregate terms, not according to gender.

More revealing is Horwitz's (1986) analysis of interviews with six home-working households. In examining the relationship between the physical location of workspaces and the distribution of spatial resources and labor within the home, Horwitz noted that the way in which work was defined was significant. For example, those who began working at home to restructure their work and family lives described patterns of working around household/family activities. Gurstein (1990) also found that the workspaces of homeworkers in her study reflected their priorities regarding work and family. Similar findings from the

present study will be described below.

This analysis will also examine the creation of workspaces within the context of meanings of work and household/family. The ways in which people in this study created workspaces for themselves was often related to their gendered roles and relationships within the home. The nature of parenting roles, work roles, and the supports available for home-based workers were associated with the formation of workspaces for both women and men.

The kinds of spaces in which homeworkers currently work are often quite different from their ideal workspaces. Examining both their realities and ideals leads to greater insight about the physical and social contexts in which work at home is conducted. In each of following categories, the process of creating individual workspaces is discussed first; subsequently, ideal workspaces for those individuals are examined.

Creating Spaces in Which to Work

Working Around Others

Gender role expectations have historically been different for women and men in heterosexual relationships, with women maintaining primary responsibility for the care of the household and children (regardless of their labor

force status), and men providing financial support for the household. Despite the changes in gender roles in contemporary society, particularly the numbers of women entering the labor force, much has remained the same within households. Notwithstanding the increasing emphasis on "parenting" rather than "mothering", studies indicate that women still retain primary responsibility for household labor and child care, in addition to paid work. Boneparth and Stoper (1983) suggested that the reintroduction of paid work into the household could break down the gender division of labor. Research has indicated, however, that a more flexible and equitable sharing of labor generally occurs only when that was one of the original intentions of working at home (Horwitz, 1986; Gottlieb, 1988). Beach (1989), who interviewed fifteen homeworkers and their families in rural Maine, concluded that for the men in her sample, working at home appeared to encourage task sharing. However, she offers an explanatory note regarding the differences between men's and women's experiences:

Since women are more likely to have younger children at home, children powerfully affect the course of women's workday...The linkage of women, young children, co-existing work and family space, and interrupted workdays is strongly intertwined. Men appear to be slightly more aloof, buffered by being in separated home workspaces and having older children requiring less tending. All men were involved in the daily lives of their children and spouses; no one succeeded in isolating himself completely in an effort to replicate the work model of the world. (Beach, 1989, p. 86).

Beach also notes that only two of the six men in her study

(who all had children under eighteen at home) cited family motivations as their primary rationale for working at home. (In contrast, eight of the nine women participating in Beach's research began working at home for family reasons). When taking into account reasons for working at home, Beach, in fact, found that those parents who wanted to work at home in order to integrate work and family lives did so, while others did not purposefully become more involved with their families, and in fact may have made efforts to discourage the integration of work and family.

Similarly, it was several women in the present study (and none of the men) who decided to work at home explicitly to have a greater role in caring for their school-age children -- without assistance from a paid caregiver or a spouse. They often work around their children (and sometimes spouses), spatially as well as temporally. In some cases, the decision to work in a particular space is explicitly connected to the desire to be with the children or be able to oversee their activities while working.

"I think I felt the need to be in a place where I could see the children very easily and that was the most logical place." (Robin, an international trade and investment consultant).

Lisa, a planner, also works around other household members. She works mostly at the kitchen table because of the convenience of the large workspace and nearby phone, and easy access to her children if she has to work after they

come home from school. Lisa also works around her husband, to some extent. Before Rick started working at home, Lisa's primary workspace was in the basement. When Rick decided to try working at home, he upgraded the basement office, moving walls, painting, and improving the electrical system. Now, when Rick is working in this newly renovated basement office, Lisa works in the kitchen or the living room, and stores papers in the dining room. Rick explains the arrangement:

Mostly, my tendency is, whatever I do, to be downstairs. Lisa will come up here [to the kitchen] if I'm down there, and work. For some reason, we can't work in the same room together. Until the kids come home from school, there's nobody else here [in the kitchen], and so it's used for office activities.

Lisa's perception is slightly different:

I wish I had my own space. The disadvantage is that there's no place of my own. If you share space with the rest of the family, you have to continually clean up and leave space for them. I work on the telephone at the kitchen table because it's very convenient. I use it as a desk, but I can't do that after 3 o'clock. I have to put everything in a pile and put it somewhere else, and that is a little more disorganized, and you lose continuity.....Rick is not difficult -- it's not a question of his imposing on my space, but I prefer to work in private -- if I'm on the phone, not to have somebody else in the room. It's not that he's bothering me, or that he's taking over, it's just the way I would prefer to work.

However, Lisa's preferred way of working has actually been co-opted by her husband. This will be expanded on in the discussion of ideal workspaces.

For others, keeping track of and organizing work around children may not be a concern, but the choice of a workspace

may still be influenced by the consideration of children's spatial needs over one's own. For Christine, whose youngest child is in his last year of high school, a long history of putting the children's needs first still influences where she works. One of her conditions for starting to work at home (eighteen years ago), doing data entry for an accounting firm, was not to let her work physically "infiltrate into other rooms." Familiar with the experience of her father working out of his home, and the problems it caused for her mother, she did not want to repeat their mistakes.

My mother still cries about trying to sleep when the Xerox machine was going. I think that's terrible. Knowing that example, perhaps, I was even more careful not to not to let it my work infringed on my life-- but I didn't want the paperwork all over. Then I could never escape from it.

Christine has moved her workspace around according to which child's room could accommodate her computer and what their needs for privacy were. When one of her sons went to college, she moved her computer down to the basement, which had become his bedroom. Although he is away most of the year, she does not consider the space to be hers:

.....because he's here for Christmas for five weeks, and January is my around the clock working time for taxes. So it's tough, he's down there sleeping late and I can't get to the computer. I still don't have my own space, I still have to climb over the kids. My space is determined by where my kids are.

Christine explains her attitude about her workspace as part of her personal history, and perhaps her role in her

household:

I guess I compensate for everybody. I just work around everybody else's schedule. Because I'm not as important as everybody. That's how women tend to feel. My work comes after the kids' school work and my husband's work and I fit it in when I can. In the early days, my life was totally centered on juggling kids, household responsibilities, and work. That was my whole day. My whole life.

Ideal Workspaces

For these women, the ideal of how they wanted to work at home is different from the reality. Despite Lisa's regular habit of physically working around other family members, she had originally designed a workspace for herself in the basement.

It was easier to segregate work from domestic life and children. It was also visually separate, so it was a lot easier to leave papers on the floor in the basement and carry on a normal life than to use the living room or dining room and carry on a normal life.

Yet, since her husband started working at home, Lisa uses the rest of the home more than ever because she wants some privacy while she works. So, although Lisa's ideal had been to separate work and family life, she is in the midst of the domestic space, while her husband experiences the benefits of that separation.

For Robin, her choice of workspaces has become problematic because of its central location and use as a thoroughway between the most heavily used entrance to the home and the kitchen. The actual design of the home (and use of this workroom as a thoroughfare), as well as the

family's activities, adversely affect Robin's ability to work when other household members are around. She recognizes the conflict between her desire to be in the center of her family and her need for privacy in her work.

A disadvantage is the inability to separate clearly your business from your family - even in terms of space, as I defined it - It's interesting that, while there are constraints [to having the workspace in the center of things] -- that's the reason I chose that space, so that I could have a handle on the family's activities.

Although Robin has contemplated other arrangements for working, she has concentrated on trying to make her current situation work.

I've thought about.....actually having an area outside of the house. I'm not really sure how useful it would be to make changes in the work area. For example, I have considered moving the work area to the back porch as a means of facilitating the access of clients, or creating more of a separation between my work space and the family life. And I've also considered -- although this is very remote -- using the shed that we have in the back of the house as a workspace, but I think that it's too remote and also the infrastructure would need to be put into condition where it would be really useable as an office. But my feeling is that I will need to look at some kind of arrangement -- the major concern is where I will meet clients -- and I believe that will probably result in my getting an office situation where I can have meetings in another space.....What I have ended up doing, rather than reaching for ideals, is taking that which works.

Christine yearns for.....

a room of my own, as Virginia Woolf says. One day I'll take one of the bedrooms and actually do that.

But her priorities are still focused on the needs of others.

But I can't [take over one of the bedrooms]. I need the room, because with three kids, and all their friends, and people from out of town, I usually run a

hotel here. I probably will never designate a space for myself.

Working in Leftover Spaces

Another way of creating space is to work in "leftover" spaces -- those areas or rooms that would otherwise be underutilized. Ahrentzen (1987) found that 38% of the 104 homeworkers in her sample chose their workspaces because of availability -- displacement of others was not necessary. Those people in this study who worked in such spaces often expressed a desire to avoid using those spaces deemed to be "family spaces." As Karen, a writer, said:

I wouldn't have wanted to devote any of the large rooms to the office because I felt they would be better used as family spaces - so this was really the only option.

Holly, a communications consultant, noted:

The dining area was the place that was used least frequently. It used to be that I had a small portable typewriter and I set it up on the big dining room table, because that was where the most space was. So it's just kind of grown over the years...with filing cabinets, my computer, [my son] built that bookcase for me.

Beth, a medical transcriber and word processor, also works in what had been designated as the dining room.

That was basically an empty room that we never used. And it just seemed like a perfect place. It was kind of a junk room. You know, the mail got plopped there, and it just grew and grew. We rarely ate in there, if ever.

Felicia, a writer, nutritional consultant, and caterer, has many rooms in her housing space. However, before she

started working at home, she never had a space of her own. She explained that the process of choosing where to work was relatively simple.

That was the only totally empty space. Before I had the kids, I rented that space [on the third floor of the home]. When we had the first kid, we got rid of the tenants, because I felt uncomfortable. Then one room [on that floor] became the guest room and my husband's study right away. When I had the second kid [and started working at home], I had my study upstairs.

Felicia's explanation of why she chose a room facing the back of the home, instead of another room (which is now a "junk room") facing the front yard, makes it clear that she is truly working in a leftover space:

It's really simple. We thought the kids might have separate rooms at some time, and then we would move the TV room into the front room, which is bigger, and that way I would have the smaller room. Also, at the time I was moving in, there was junk in the one room and not in the other, which made moving into that room easier.

In Felicia's decision about choosing a workspace, she even considered the potential future spatial requirements of her household, making certain that her space would be the smallest and least desirable.

Ideal Workspaces

While "leftover" spaces were used by all of these women to create spaces in which they could work in their homes, their ideal workspaces are quite different from their current realities. Karen describes a workspace which contrasts with the small room in which she now works:

What would be really nice would be if I could have a

gazebo or studio out in the back garden so that I would be home and yet I would be out of the house. I'd have a little washroom in there, and just hear the birds chirping and sit out on the patio -- that would be ideal. I'd like to get a little more separate. That would be quieter space... It might also be nice to have a studio -- a separate studio -- psychologically, to feel more like an artist.

Felicia would also like greater separation from the home:

I would build office spaces in houses on the ground floor. I think it's a much better space to work at. It's more professional if you see people, and you could have a separate entrance. In other words, you could enter from your part of the house to work, but you could see clients, and they could come in right to your office, which I think is much more professional...also with your own little bathroom, so you could use it dually -- personally, and if people need to use it who come to see you -- kind of like a doctor's office if it's attached to the house. It would be your office and you would close the rest of the house behind you.

For those who lived in apartments, rather than houses, ideal workspaces were somewhat less elaborate. Beth, for example, would like a separate room of her own, which she does not have now.

I would like to get a third bedroom, so it could be just a regular office room, basically. It would be nice to have a door to close...if my husband's aggravating me, or my son is asking me a zillion questions, it would be nice to be able to close the door and say "Leave me alone." That would definitely be nice.

Holly is quite satisfied with her workspace, and her ideal would not be much different. Her only debate was whether or not she would have a door.

I really like having the archways, and I like not having doors because when I sit at my desk it's got a great view. I can see four rooms from my desk, I can see into the hall, and into the living room and into the kitchen -- I feel like a mogul! I like the openness. If there were more people around during the

day I might feel differently. I might want a door....I guess I would choose to have a door, if I were redesigning it.

The categorization of these workspaces as "leftover" does not necessarily mean that they are insubstantial, either in size or significance. Holly's workspace is a very large room -- one of the largest rooms devoted solely to work in this group of homeworkers. Although Beth's creation of a workspace in the dining room did not displace any family members, there are no longer any eating surfaces available in that household. Karen's and Felicia's workspaces, on the other hand, are in small rooms.

What these women have in common (in addition to the presence of children in their households) is the meaning of paid work in their lives. They all strongly identify themselves with their work roles, and they all have instituted supports in the form of paid child-care, household rules, and/or physical barriers to facilitate their working. Even Beth and Holly, who do not have "extra" rooms in their housing space, managed to create workspaces used exclusively by them for working. When they started working at home, however, they were all unsure of their earning potential, and only recently have begun to feel more confident about their careers. Perhaps the location of their workspaces would have been different if the context of their work was different; the choices they made regarding workspaces were related to the gendered physical,

psychological, and social contexts in which their work was defined.

The Evolution and Appropriation of Space

One of the basic tenets of environment-behavior research is that environments and our use of them change over time. The use of space in any household is no exception. Household members may move in and out of the housing space, and activities within that space change constantly as the needs of the members of the household change. As children grow up and move away from the household, the spaces previously used by them may be altered to fit the needs of those remaining in the living space. In this way, the evolution of spaces often includes the appropriation of spaces as well. This is especially true of those interviewed for this study whose children have left home.

Yvette, a planning consultant, and her husband, who is in the music business, and also does some of his work at home, have gradually begun to work in many areas of the living space.

It's been quite evolutionary and improvised. Originally, I always had a desk and files in our bedroom (when I was teaching) and my husband always worked in a closet. When my daughter was old enough to move out, gradually the room no longer looks like her room, and about three years ago I definitely set out to design a space -- until then, space was improvised. This is where we had our daughter's toys, but now it

has records, books, etc..... We bought a studio couch so that my daughter and her friend can stay here.....but this is definitely the media center.

We did a very gradual shifting out of our daughter, but she still has some stuff there. And now I need room -- now I absolutely need that closet! Over the years, my work expanded into other rooms. I'm sensitive to the changing light in the apartment. I'm aware of any light that comes in and I will move from one room to another.

Martin, a computer consultant whose two grown children have been living away from this household for many years, has also appropriated a former bedroom for his work. Like Yvette, he already had a workspace within the living space, in a former pantry off of a large kitchen. The process of his taking over his son's bedroom as an additional workspace was gradual.

It [the pantry/workspace] worked very satisfactorily until personal computers came along and equipment like copying machines -- because I never had that equipment here. I don't even remember when I formally took over that room. He [my son] must have already been to college and gone -- and at that point we took his bed and put it in here [a second bedroom] and I took over that [room]. It must have been in the early 1980s.

Sometimes there are multiple reasons for taking over more space, and over time, with growing businesses and technological advances, there may be an increasing number of requirements for additional space. Martin explains the evolution of his needs for expansion:

Partially [it was because of] equipment, but, more than that, I wanted to look out the window occasionally, and get a little light and air. Probably the first thing I picked up was a copier. Now where the hell am I going to put the damn thing? That little office -- there really is no surplus space in it. I remember early on I moved one big steel bookcase into there, and I guess

the copier was the next thing. At that point, we threw the bed out.....so I began to gradually take over in there. Then, when the personal computer really started to come along, I needed space for that. Then I semi-moved in. Then, when the decorator lady said it was time to get that desk out of the front hall, where I had it three years, that went in there, too. It just gradually happened -- there was no plan.

The appropriation of space can also change with the particular circumstances within a household at any given time. Eric explained how his workspace has shifted:

It probably evolved haphazardly. At one point I had a desk by the window....it was nice to have some sun. Then I did the thing in my daughter's room, I set up a desk in her room, and a lot of thought was given to that -- I mean, just a special space for work. Where here [in the living room] it mixes in with the television, eating, entertaining. It's not good. I think it's better to separate it.

The composition of Eric's household at a particular time has a direct impact on where and how he works. The appropriation of and giving up of space flows according to whether or not other people are sharing the living space. This is also true in Eric's other household, a place in the countryside in another state, where he grew up. He sometimes packs a big box of materials, and works there.

It's not a big house, it's sort of an old rickety farmhouse, but there's space in the house and on the land. So I'll get going sometimes, and I have papers all over the place. In the country, I can spread them, because I have to go from one thing to another. I use the kitchen, this great big, huge room with counters, and I just work in the kitchen. And I also work in the family room. It depends on whether there are people around. If there's people around, I go in the family room. If I'm there by myself, I'll work in the kitchen.

Steve, a composer/writer, also lives and works in a

household which has seen many changes in its composition. After several years of living in a loft with different roommates, Steve got married, the roommates left, and his wife moved in. His workspace changed and evolved over the years, depending on how many people (and who they were) shared the space. After Steve married, he and his wife were faced with many possibilities for using the space.

It was torture -- it was months of every possibility: do we have the money to tear down the rooms we have and do them the way we want them? Finally, we took the cheapest solution, which was to leave the sound studio intact. We could have a small back bedroom, and I could have a workroom. I guess we thought the essential elements of a solution for us was for each of us to have different bedrooms -- a sleeping place that either of us could use if the other were making sound out here.....this is the best we came up with in the circumstances. Paramount was getting me a workspace that I could retreat to -- that probably came before any other factor in deciding how we were going to divide the house up.

For others, the most desirable space is appropriated for working at home. Sam, an attorney/real estate developer living with his wife and year-old twins, explained in detail how he chose his workspace.

It wasn't the only choice. The lower level is three bedrooms and a number of bathrooms. One is obviously a master bedroom. The other two would be a room for the children, and the other room could have been my office. The middle level is a large living room and kitchen and a separate dining room.....The kitchen's obviously a bad choice, so that left the dining room, which was not sealed off - it was a separate area on the other side of the kitchen. So, the two candidates were the dining room and the third bedroom, and my wife also does some work in the home (less now with the babies than before) and she felt that she needed an office as well. That office would also be a guest room and also maybe a playroom for the kids. The third bedroom was carpeted, the dining room wasn't. It was away from where the

kids would be napping during the day -- the third bedroom wasn't, and the dining room had access to a balcony -- the third bedroom didn't. So, for those reasons, the dining room made more sense, except for the fact that it didn't have a door and the third bedroom had a door. It didn't have a closet or its own bathroom, which the third bedroom had. I had a solid core door put in, bought shelves and managed to store stuff upstairs as well, and I use the hall bathroom, so it turned out fine -- and this is the former dining room [and current office] we're sitting in.

Sam clearly chose for his workspace the room with the amenities most desirable to him -- away from the children's play and nap area, with access to a balcony, and a space that would be used exclusively as his office.

Gary, an industrial designer, also chose what he deemed to be the most desirable space in household for his workspace. His reasons, however, were quite different from Sam's.

I've worked professionally in a lot of the spaces [in this house], but I always knew which space would be the final space which was going to be my office. But as we worked on [renovating] the house, you had to kind of phase yourself into different areas. From the minute I walked into the room, that was the room I knew was going to be my studio. Just like that. Even when the house was being renovated, I used to go into that room and write poetry because there was something in the room....What we found out later was that was a room specifically designed for dining, entertaining, and music. There's an alcove where people used to play music from. And literally, that's where my work surface is. And there's just good vibes there.

People who knew they would be working at home before they moved into a living space had the advantage of being able to choose that space based on their needs (within varying constraints), deciding on where their workspace would be even before the space was inhabited. For the two

people who were living with other unrelated adults in the same household, being the first person in the household allowed them to choose the most suitable spatial arrangement possible. Alan, for example, a composer and musician, lives with two roommates.

I was the first person here. I didn't have any problem finding roommates. I looked at the place and knew this was my room. There was only one question about it, which was the noise. The noise on the street is bad. The room overlooking the garden is smaller, only one room. This is almost a suite here. I decided to take this because there was more space, and because of the fireplace.

Alan's solution to the noise problem was to build soundproofing shutters for the windows, which help to cut down on outside noise.

Nancy, an architect who lives with her husband and two-year old child, knew which room would be her workspace from the outset.

Well, my husband would never have given up the master bedroom and I would never have taken the other bedroom, which faces the back of the building, so this was ideal. I also wanted a view of the river.

Kevin, a printing representative and consultant, also chose his living space with working at home in mind.

This layout was perfect. That's why I decided to run the risk of being a little bit further away [from downtown]. Because I like light and my work involves looking at things, I definitely wanted to take the room with the best light, which this was. Also, in this case, I wanted to try to keep it [the workspace] as private as possible, so that if there were other people in the apartment, like right now, I close this door and I do my work; I don't bother them, and they don't bother me. So [choosing this arrangement] was definitely to keep it separate from the rest of the apartment.

Ideal Workspaces

Regardless of the kinds of spaces the home-based workers discussed above currently work in, there were some common themes when they talked about their ideal workspaces. The most striking was the desire for greater separation of household and work spaces.

The first thing I thought of was the word "wing", which would be more isolated. What's ironic is that I would be increasing the quality that most bothers me, which is that of isolation. Certainly I'd like the capacity to work with silence, comfort, and a beautiful view... I'd just want to get the sound-making space at quite a distance from the living space. [Steve]

I like having something closed off. The best thing would be if there was enough space that it could be closed off and still have enough to it that it would be open all by itself. Not like a closet is closed off. It would have access to the outdoors. [Alan]

.....the ability to isolate yourself from the rest of the home environment, quiet...the ability to close the door and not hear home activities and not be distracted by home activities when you want to work. So isolation is important, but isolation from the home, not isolation from the outside world. Ideally, you need to be able to go out, breathe fresh air, see things. [Sam]

Something that looked like an office. Something that when I walked into, makes me feel as though this is a work area, this is for work, this is an office. If it could be isolated, either up or down a flight of stairs. Something that gets it away from everything else. Not something that's a big effort to get to, but something that you have to make a very clear act or move to get to. A private bathroom would be important. Because otherwise you're suddenly back in the house again. That's how I would set it up. As we talk, it seems to be increasingly clear to me that by leaving your living, eating, sleeping, entertainment area, and going to a work area, the more you can do that and be distinct. Now, the best thing of all is to get on the subway and go to some office. [Eric]

My own workspace -- or renting someplace in the

neighborhood. It's hard, sometimes, to have no differentiation. There are many writers we know who rent a little space. It is important to go to another place. There's so much more connection between work and home now, based on the technology. [Yvette]

In one sense, it is ironic that all of these people who work at home express a desire for a more distinct spatial separation between household activities and work activities, in some cases suggesting that an office outside the home is the ideal. All of those quoted above, however, work at home primarily due to financial considerations and convenience. Many had at one time or another contemplated renting an office space, but decided against it. Within this context, and in light of some people's extensive experience working at home, often with less than ideal spatial arrangements, the desire for a more isolated, separate workspace is congruous.

Most of the homeworkers who have appropriated space for working have no children living at home, or have adult children in their households. For those whose children had left home, this meant having more spatial resources within the household from which to demarcate a workspace; for those with no children, there was more flexibility in allocating space. All of the homeworkers with children who appropriated space knew before moving into their current living spaces that they would need a space in which to work. For them, the process of negotiating for a workspace was conducted before the space was inhabited, making the

appropriation minimally disruptive to the rest of the household. The expectations of these households were not based on a situation that later changed, but rather on a previously arranged plan.

In addition, the homeworkers in these households had transferred their businesses either from another home-based site or from an outside office, thereby ensuring (to the extent that is possible in one's own business) some income to justify procuring a separate workspace for themselves. This situation is quite different from that of homeworkers just starting their own businesses, with no guarantee of income.

Type of Work Dictates Workspace

Some types of home-based work require very specific kinds of spaces. It is often difficult to find a living/work space that can accommodate both special needs for working and the needs of the household. Often, the creation of these workspaces involves more than simply finding a suitable physical environment; negotiating with other household members about the use of those specialized spaces may also be necessary.

For example, Marcia, a therapist, needs to have a space with a separate entrance (if possible), a waiting room, easy access to a bathroom, and a private workroom. Looking for

an apartment to rent was difficult because of those requirements, but she found just what she wanted. Because her work time is not scheduled around the times her family uses the living space, a living/work space would have to accommodate both the family and the patients' needs at the same time.

I needed separate space for the patients that didn't mean intruding on family space. My idea was that it would be a room where my family could use the kitchen and eat while I saw patients, and I was really looking for that.

Marcia's goal was achieved, with a compromise made by all household members. The "office suite" consists of a small private room and an open reception area that is also used by the family to play the piano located there, and to read or play chess. Because the office is located on the second floor of the brownstone apartment, along with the bedrooms, family members are restricted from using the second floor during patient hours. Marcia notes that without the cooperation of her children, in particular, working at home would be problematic.

.....essentially, they've always respected my privacy up there with patients. Thank God, because, if they hadn't, I really couldn't have done it.

In order to complete the creation of this workspace, Marcia felt it necessary to soundproof the area, to protect clients' confidentiality. During working hours, the spiral staircase which opens onto the reception area is closed off with a sound-proof board, custom-made for that purpose.

Heidi, a pastry chef, needed to work in a large kitchen, with adequate counter space and specialized equipment.

We looked at twenty-five places, and the first priority for me was the kitchen. This was the best kitchen in terms of space; the island is a great source of counter space, and there's a dishwasher. We were able to get the large refrigerator and stove, and that was important to me.

Ideal Workspaces

Although Heidi has become somewhat disillusioned about working out of her home, other options are fairly limited.

I'm not thrilled about working in my home anymore. Unfortunately, the next step would be one of expansion, which I'm not quite sure if I'm ready for -- emotionally or financially. The next step would be renting a commercial kitchen. I wouldn't make that move solely because I couldn't stand working at home anymore. I would make it really for expansion reasons: I want to do more business, get more clients, more money -- those would have to be the reasons for me to do it.

Ideally, Marcia would like a greater separation of work and home.

It would be nice to have my own floor with my own office/bathroom/waiting room -- nobody else on it and all the family things right above it. Like it was a basement here -- a separate entrance, totally contained, but in the same building.

For both of these women, the process of choosing where to work began with the search for a suitable home. Although neither of these workspaces can be moved within their respective households, and the decisions about where paid work would take place were made before living in the home,

there is still some negotiation with other household members regarding "ownership" of the workspace at certain times. In both of these situations, "public" areas of the home (i.e., those areas used by all household members at some time) are used for work during certain hours.

"Squeezing Into" Spaces

A few homeworkers did not fit into the other categories outlined in this chapter. Three people "squeezed into" spaces already used by others. Calvin and Peter both work in corners of the bedrooms they share with a spouse/partner. Julie shares the former dining room that her husband had already converted to an office for himself. Due to the nature of their work and their households, these three homeworkers felt that no other options existed in their housing spaces.

Obviously it would have to be in the bedroom because the living room is the first room you come into and we wanted to hide the [work] stuff back in that room. We wanted to keep it all in one corner of the bedroom, don't spread it out too much. The thing was to keep it small. We try to make a rule to keep it from going past [my girlfriend's dresser], and it's tough to keep it at that. She recently asked, "Since the selling season's over, can you get rid of these books? Some of these books, at least?" [Calvin, textbook salesperson]

[The bedroom] was really the only logical place to make my office space. The only other possible place I could have done it would be the dining room table, but then we would not have a dining area. You can't pick up the computer and typewriter every night. [Peter, attorney]

That's what the dining room would have been. We took

this apartment knowing we'd have this as an office (my husband works late hours) -- we never had it as a dining room. It was originally planned as an office for him and then, when I stopped working a year later, I started using it as my office. We both work out of there now. At the moment we're both sharing [a desk] and he comes home at night and complains I haven't cleaned up the desk.....The space [in the apartment] is not adequate with two kids and we will be moving in a couple months. [Julie, attorney]

There was no "extra" space in any of these dwellings to be converted into a private workspace. For Julie and Peter, the inconvenience of working in such tight quarters was temporary; both were in the midst of planning to move to other places. While Calvin did not think of his situation as temporary, his girlfriend eventually moved out of the apartment. All three of these homeworkers had been working at home for less than one year.

Ideal Workspaces

Not surprisingly, those who had to squeeze their work into places meant for other purposes or other people wanted a workspace of their own. While Calvin articulated primarily mechanical features that would be important (more outlets, telephone jacks, storage space, etc.), Julie and Peter concentrated on the larger issues. Peter noted that he would still not have his ideal in his new living space, but it would be better than what he had at the present.

I was sick and tired of the apartment before I started working here and I'm still sick and tired of it. It's definitely worse now. It's just very cramped for space, so I can't wait to move out..... Ideally, it would be nice to have a room that was the office. To

have a real office within the house. When we move, I'm going to be working out of an area in the basement, which is where I'm setting up the office, but it would be nice to have a real office with a big desk.

Julie did not yet know the specifics of where she was moving, but she had distinct ideas about what would be ideal.

I would want the office part of a very separate part of the house -- either over the garage or something really separate in an apartment. There's just too much else going on and you really need to feel separate. That would be the most important thing. And then having an adequate enough space so you could have files, books, etc. You need a large space for it. I'd like to have a space that had a small table so you could meet people -- or possibly a suite of rooms. I can't see doing that in an apartment, but it is possible in a house. At one point we thought about renting two apartments, but it would be too much extra money per month.

The ways in which these three homeworkers squeezed their work into existing functions and spaces of their living spaces may be related to other commonalities -- the brief amount of time they have been working at home and, for two of them, their consciousness of the temporary nature of their living situations. Due to the small number of people in this category, only future research will be able to ascertain the validity and strength of this relationship.

The Use of Multiple Workspaces

Many homeworkers in this study, including some of those described in other categories, use multiple workspaces. Thirteen of the thirty participants -- six women and seven men -- use more than one space for working. Six of the thirteen (four men and two women) had exclusive workspaces as well, but used other rooms for different types of work activities. All of the homeworkers who used multiple spaces did so because of the nature of their work tasks; while some work required the use of special equipment located in a particular work area (e.g., a computer or large work surface), other tasks could be done in a more comfortable environment. For example, living rooms and bedrooms were often used for reading and editing.

I might -- around three or four in the afternoon -- go up to my bedroom if I have to read some material, and I also have some of my reference books in my bedroom and also in the living room, so I might read either up there or downstairs. [Karen, a writer]

Special needs also dictates the use of more than one workspace. Felix, an artist, teaches classes in his housing space. The living room is the only room in the loft large enough to accommodate his class. The rest of his work is done in the bedroom/workspace. Steve, a composer, plays his baby grand piano and works with performers in a large open space in his living space, but he writes music in a small, enclosed interior space.

Another reason for working in more than one space is to relieve the feeling of "cabin fever" experienced when working in one place. Alan, a composer, explains why he uses different parts of his housing space:

This is the living room. When [a friend] is here collaborating with me, we sometimes lie on the couches and work. The kitchen I do work at occasionally. Sometimes I trick myself into thinking I've left the apartment, because I mostly live upstairs. So I'll move the typewriter [into the kitchen] and work here, and it's always been great when I've done that. I go down [to the garden] sometimes and work.

Ahrentzen (1987) had similar findings. Seventy-two percent of the homeworkers in her sample worked in multiple spaces, and indicated a preference not to do everything in one room. Bedrooms were often used as quiet places to read and edit. Horwitz (1986) also found that some people liked to work "around the house", moving around to accommodate different kinds of work tasks.

The physical, psychological, and temporal creation and evolution of workspaces within households is clearly related to gendered roles in those households, as well as the spatial and social contexts in which they are embedded. The primary parenting role of some women was expressed in the ways in which they spatially, as well as temporally, worked around their families' needs and activities. For others, tensions between the primacy of work roles and the perceived needs of the household resulted in the delicate balance of procuring exclusive workspaces without displacing family members. Homeworkers with clearly delineated work roles and

relatively stable incomes were more likely to obtain what they perceived to be desirable workspaces within the household. However, these workspaces did not actually displace any household members, since they were all negotiated before moving into a new housing space.

Certain types of work necessitated the use of particular spaces or types of spaces, either as exclusive workspaces, or one of several work areas. Finally, the uses of space for working within housing spaces evolved as the household composition changed.

Despite the myriad of different spatial arrangements created for working at home, ideas about ideal workspaces were strikingly similar. Nearly all the homeworkers in this study wanted at least a room of their own in which to do work exclusively, and for many, a much greater separation of the workspace from the rest of the household. Some people suggested separate entrances directly into workspaces, or even separate structures close to the housing space.

Despite these well-formed expressions about ideal places in which to work, many homeworkers have strong feelings about their current workspaces. The meanings of these workspaces for homeworkers will be explored in the next section.

Meanings of Workspaces

The places in which we work and live often hold particular meanings for us. These feelings may be positive or negative, or somewhere in between. For home-based workers, meanings of workspaces may be related not only to work itself, but also to the importance of work in their lives, their roles in the household, the degree of choice and control they have in their lives, and the characteristics of the space itself.

A Space of One's Own

For some people, having a workspace at home means having a space just for themselves. Karen, who lives with her husband and two children, is quite possessive about her space:

I love the fact the it's just mine. It's the only room in the house that's not shared and I organize it the way I like and I've even gotten to be a real bitch about my husband leaving his papers on my desk. And I like the lock on the door. That little latch is a recent and very beneficial change that I made. If the kids came in to get something to eat or use the bathroom, [the youngest child] would just push right in here and whine. Now he doesn't even try.

For Beth, who lives with her husband and child, "ownership" of her workspace is also most important.

It's my workspace, is pretty much it. It's mine. My husband doesn't work there, my son....once in a great while I'll let him do his homework there, but for the most part, it's my space. And it's nice to have my

space, 'cause it's the only place in the apartment that is mine.

Felicia, who has a husband and two children in the household, echoes these sentiments:

That's my personal space -- nobody else works there. Everyone works in every other room and that's my spot.

For Andrew, who lives with his wife and two children, his workspace is also the only place in the home that is just his.

Well, it's mine. It's the only place (besides the bathroom) I'm not intruded upon. It's ownership of space and time. If I had money, I would certainly not have an office that looked like this, but I'd rather have a place that looked like this (where nothing matched) than not have it at all. Whether I was working here trying to make a living or not, for me a private space is essential.

For all of the people quoted above, the meanings of their workspaces are not associated with specific aspects of work itself. Rather, the meanings are related to their identities within their households, as workers, mothers or fathers, husbands or wives, and as individuals. Having a designated physical space in their households that is reserved just for their use is critical for them. A "room of one's own" as Virginia Woolf attests, is much more than the physical boundaries of which it is made; it is a symbol, to oneself and to others, of one's social identity, separate from, but in relation to the household context.

The critical factor for Karen, Beth, Felicia, and Andrew in their feelings about their workspaces was not necessarily the physical dimensions of that space. Beth,

for example, works in a relatively "public" space between the kitchen and living room. Only a movable partition separates the space from the rest of the room. However, she has made the space her own through her use of it, her rules about it, and the respect of it by the rest of her household, just as effectively as has Karen, who has a private, enclosed office.

Representations of Professional Identity

Workspaces can also represent more than a space of one's own, although that sentiment may be present. For some, professional identities are reflected in their workspaces, no matter where those spaces might be. Felicia, who attested above to feeling strongly about having her own space, also sees her workspace as a kind of documentation of her professionalism, even though she is at home.

I'm glad I have a workspace because it makes my work feel professional -- as opposed to working at the kitchen table. I love the way my son will come home and yell up, "Mommy, are you working on the computer?" For me, that's very important; I want him to see that women work and I like the fact that he realizes I really have a job -- I'm not just in the house. It's wonderful. And my husband knows this is my space, and that's important.

For Felicia, the simple fact of having a workspace that is separate from other functions in the household is a physical representation and reminder to herself and to others in her household that she is actually working, not just being at

home.

Heidi, who lives with her female lover, also feels that her workspace (the kitchen) is associated with her professional identity.

It means it's my space, my business, it's something I'm proud of.

One's workspace may also be a representation of one's accomplishments not only to oneself, or the household, but also to the larger world, particularly if clients visit.

Marcia, a therapist with a husband and two children, explains:

It's important to me to have a room that's private and quiet. I'm not very big on making it particularly fancy.....just a pleasant, comfortable space to be in. In the place [residence/workspace] I hated, part of the issue was how patients would think about me because I was living in that place -- so it was sort of a narcissistic feeling of discomfort. It's like presenting a picture of yourself, not just to your family, but to the professional world. Here and [in another building] I was proud of where I was working.

Kevin, who at various times shares his household with his wife and his grown children, notes that having a designated workspace helps provide a sense of professional identity.

It does give me a structure and a function. I used to have a title, a "vice president." And all of a sudden, I wasn't a vice president anymore. Who are you? What do you do? The workspace also does give me that kind of identity. Yeah, this is me, this is where I do something. If my kids are here, they don't come in and bother me, because I'm doing something important. It does give more identity if you have a separate workspace.

The sense of identification is important. Sometimes you do have a sense that you're not really doing

anything. Having a separate workspace makes me feel better about it. This is what I do.

Kevin's "separate" workspace is part of his bedroom.

Because it is set up as an office, however, with desks and bookshelves devoted solely to work, he considers it to be a workspace. While Kevin mentions his children and their attitudes about his work, the primary emphasis in what he says is about himself, and how he identifies himself. Having a designated workspace is a physical manifestation of work that can sometimes be invisible.

Peter, who lives with his wife and young child, also works in part of his bedroom, yet feels strongly about his workspace.

I feel like it's my area and I don't want anyone messing around here. I feel good about it -- it reminds me that I'm here involved on my own. I feel especially good when the phone rings!

For Peter, who recently started a legal business, even his small work area in the bedroom is a reflection of what he has accomplished.

Others echo similar sentiments:

This is me, this is my personality -- it's comfortable, it's efficient, it's high tech, it's fairly well-organized, well-stocked. I have the supplies I need. It's private. It means all those things. My identity is tied up in this space; I've designed it, I've filled it up with things, and I'm constantly continuing to do that. [Sam, who lives with his wife and year-old twins].

It's important to me because it's where I work, and my work is important to me. It's a certain expression of self. [Amy, who lives with her husband and two young children].

These homeworkers have clearly stated that paid work is important to their self-identities; their workspaces both reflect and remind them of their accomplishments.

All Business: Workspace as a Means to an End

While for some people workspaces are symbols of achievement, professional identity, and reflections of self, for others they are merely places in which to do a job. The following are responses to the question, "What does your workspace mean to you?"

What does it mean to me? A place to work -- that's all. [Nancy, architect]

Money. [Joan, graphic artist]

I gotta do some work!the space I'm working in is not really important. It's just something I have to get done. [Leslie, word processor]

Just a place to get things done. I never made workspaces very homey. I don't care about decorating it, or spending time other than getting the job done. [Julie, attorney]

A place where I can organize my materials. [Robin, international trade and investment consultant]

It's the means to an end -- it's the means to produce the work. [Felix, artist and technician]

Nothing romantic -- it's where I work and what I do. It's where I conduct my profession. [Fred, computer consultant]

The women quoted above have certain commonalities. All work at home part-time, and some have erratic flows in their work. For three of the women, Leslie, Robin, and Joan,

being available for their children when they are home is a high priority, and paid work has not been the focus of their lives since their children were born. Joan explains:

[I started working at home] pretty much after my daughter was born. However, it's only been the last two years that there's been enough work that I've felt like I've been doing anything more than having my hand in it, because my hours were so limited.....It's really just last year and this year that I've felt that I've made anything even resembling a part-time income. Before that it was just not much.

Robin has been trying to get her business off the ground while caring for her two children. Leslie notes:

I really don't have to work. We don't need the money, to be perfectly blunt. It's very important for me to take care of my kids. I like to work, but

Perhaps because these women have given more time to their parenting roles than to their paid work roles, there has not been ample opportunity for their workspaces to become associated with anything other than organizational and financial issues. Indeed, Joan and Robin expressed some frustration with that situation; both indicated that their work roles might grow as their children grow older.

For Julie and Nancy, minimal associations with their workspaces may also be related to their attitudes regarding the present place of paid work in their lives. Both women noted that it was difficult to cut back from working full-time jobs to attend to their children's needs in a more active way. These women had been involved in very demanding careers prior to working at home, and experienced a loss of professional identity when they cut back their working hours

and could no longer handle large projects. The decrease in self-esteem experienced by these two women may be reflected in their lack of identification with their home workspaces, which they seem to see as mere shadows of their former professional selves.

For both Felix and Fred, work is seen as a practical endeavor, and the ways in which they view their workspaces reflect this attitude. Fred noted that he consciously separated his work area as much as possible from the household areas, and rarely mixed the two.

The idea was to be able to do what I have to do and not make it the world's most important thing. This is our home...so there was limited analysis in terms of workspace.

Felix, on the other hand, literally lives in his work, with his bed just above his "shop." Nearly the whole loft (with the exception of his roommates' bedrooms) is used for working.

The workspace is cluttered now -- but you go into some people's shops and the shop itself is like a cathedral to work -- it's like they've got every tool outlined and there's a space on the pegboard for each tool, things are in rows, and it's all so pristine that you wonder if any work gets done there. So my workspace doesn't mean that to me -- it's a means to an end.

Negative Feelings About Workspaces

Doing paid work in a living space, often alone, presents some unique challenges, one of which is how to feel professional in what may not be a professional-looking

space. While for some home-based workers (represented above), workspaces are representative of their accomplishments, for others, they are symbolic of some of the frustrations of working at home.

Calvin, a textbook salesperson who lives with his girlfriend, works in a corner of their bedroom, with textbooks piled almost to the ceiling. Although he often works in other parts of the apartment, Calvin tries to keep his work materials contained in the bedroom.

The boss said that you are going to want to close the door on your work, and you should do that -- keep it all in one room. You can understand that it shouldn't intrude on your personal life.

This arrangement, however, is far from satisfactory.

Calvin explains what his workspace means to him:

I wish my living conditions allowed it to mean more to me. I wish it allowed it to stand for more. I wish I had a nice, big, panelled office. Right now it's kind of scrappy and I sit at the desk a lot, not using it properly. Right now it feels temporary. What it means for me now is almost a hassle, in a sense, because of the way things are. I wish it were more institutionalized, in a sense. Right now I'm always thinking of solutions, always moving things around. I wish it was very stable, so right now it's kind of transient. I don't have too many attachments to it.

Christine, who lives with her husband and her eighteen year old son, also feels that her workspace is temporary and dissatisfying. She works in the basement, which is used as a bedroom during summers and school holidays by another son.

I don't enjoy it, it means clutter. It's not orderly. I like to finish my work and get out of there because my son totally puts it in disarray. In a sense, it's more his computer than mine. It's a transitional

workspace, everybody trods all over it. I do not really have my own designated space. I think I could do a lot more if I did.

Lisa, who lives with her husband and two children, notes the relationship between the lack of physical separation of work from household activities and her feelings about her workspace(s).

Unlike an office, even if I had just a partition around the wall -- I walked in and it was my space. I don't have that here. The house is mine, but in terms of work, no. The computer gives me more of a sense of being mine. Once I get at the computer I'm in control of my files -- they're all in one place. Other than that, I don't have a feeling about my workspace because I have my planning work and my housework in there intermingled in this situation.

For these three homeworkers, the absence of demarcation between work activities and household activities is frustrating and somewhat demoralizing. The lack of spatial and social supports for doing paid work at home were clearly expressed in negative feelings about their workspaces.

The meanings that workspaces held for these homeworkers were associated with their feelings regarding the place of work and household/family roles in their lives, and with the spatial and social supports available in their households. For some, tensions between gendered work and family roles was expressed in the need for and satisfaction with having one's own space in the household. For others, workspaces were reflections and affirmations of work roles and identities. People whose work roles had diminished in importance compared with previous work experiences, or whose

parenting roles had become primary, indicated little attachment and meaning to their workspaces. When the physical and social contexts in which paid work was conducted at home were less than satisfactory, people expressed negative feelings about their workspaces.

Contextual Factors in the Creation and Meanings of Workspaces

The ways in which home workspaces are created and the meanings they hold for those who created them are often related. Several themes can be seen in the associations between the context in which workspaces are formed and what those spaces represent to homeworkers.

Those people who spatially and temporally worked around other household members generally had negative feelings about their workspaces, expressing frustration about their situations. For some, responsibilities for both paid work and family/household roles resulted in the need for, satisfaction with, and procurement of exclusive workspaces - without displacing other household members or activities.

The length of time that people in this study had worked at home ranged from six months to twenty years. Those with less experience working at home and for whom paid work was currently both important and satisfying, indicated that

their workspaces were reflections and reminders of professional identity. These feelings were not necessarily related to how "professional" the workspace appeared, nor its location. In fact, two of the homeworkers for whom workspaces were associated with professionalism worked in their bedrooms. This calls into question the view advocated by other researchers (Christensen, 1988; Ahrentzen, 1990), that clear spatial distinctions and boundaries between domestic and work life were necessary to enhance the credibility of homeworkers as professionals.

There are several explanations for the discrepancy between the findings and conclusions of Christensen and Ahrentzen and those of the present study. First, Christensen's (1988) sample was composed entirely of women. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the present study indicates that issues of credibility and professionalism in relation to family, friends, and neighbors, are more important to women than to men. In addition, neither Christensen nor Ahrentzen have analyzed meanings of workspaces to homeworkers. The conclusions of these researchers seem to be based on "socially acknowledged temporal and physical boundaries between domestic and work life", rather than on the perceptions of homeworkers themselves (Ahrentzen, 1990, p.749). These issues will be discussed further in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
HOUSEHOLDS IN CONTEXT

Meanings of Home

The home¹ has long been a topic of interest for a multitude of scholars from different disciplines. There is no consensus, however, even within disciplines, regarding the definition or meaning of home. One pervasive assumption apparent in the writings of architectural theorists and environment-behavior researchers is that home is a domestic, privatized refuge. Ahrentzen (1992) notes this theme in her critique of the myth of the privatized dwelling.

Home is a place of security within an insecure world, a place of certainty within doubt, a familiar place in a strange world, a sacred place in a profane world (Dovey, 1985, p.45, cited in Ahrentzen, 1992).

Home is a haven in the turbulent seas of urban life. It embodies the familiar, it is the place we feel most comfortable in, where we know better than anywhere what will happen (Appleyard, 1979, p.4, cited in Ahrentzen, 1992).

Rybczynski (1986) also upholds this domestic ideology and attributes it directly to women:

To describe domesticity is to describe a set of felt emotions, not a single attribute. Domesticity has to do with family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying -- not only harboring -- these sentiments. If domesticity was...one of the principal achievements of the Bourgeois Age, it was, above all, a feminine achievement (p.75).

As Ahrentzen (1990, p.5) attests, these statements may characterize "some middle-class, Western conditions for

employed males, but likely misrepresent the majority of North Americans." In reality, residences have been and continue to be places of leisure and work, reproduction and production, particularly for women.

Meanings of home have been conceptualized by other researchers and writers in many ways, including in terms of identity (Cooper, 1974; Goffman 1971), and as a refuge (see Altman, Werner, & Oxley, 1985), among others. Although these categories may have some validity for certain groups of people, and under certain circumstances, they have little in common with the people in the present study. This study documents that the introduction of paid work into living spaces often either reifies the existing meanings of home, or fundamentally changes those meanings. The meanings of home for these homeworkers can be grouped into two broad categories, which are then broken down further. The first is related to the actual physical characteristics of the dwelling; the second refers to the dynamics of the intermeshing of work activities with household activities.

Physical and Spatial Dimensions

Both positive and negative meanings of home were expressed in relation to spatial characteristics of living spaces. While some people discussed the physical features of the space and the opportunities they have to enjoy them,

others expressed frustration about their current living and working conditions.

For several homeworkers, home was described as being aesthetically pleasing; being at home more provided additional opportunities to enjoy their homes.

We looked for this apartment for about four years, and we really love this apartment. It's what we wanted and it's big and spacious and bright. Regardless of whether my office were here, I'd still love this apartment. [Nancy, architect]

I think I spend so much time here because I like the house. There are good vibrations here. All those things are positive things. And that's the feeling in the house. [Gary, industrial designer]

I like our apartment. I liked it when we moved in, and I still like it. I'm glad to be able to spend more time in it, it has a nice view, and the cats like having me home. It bothers me more when it's messy than it used to, because I was never here before. It bothers me more that it's consistently messy. [Beth, medical transcriber and word processor]

I enjoy my house a lot more. I really like my house a lot -- I like the structure of it, I like everything, and I feel I get to take advantage of it a lot and I like that. So I enjoy my house a lot more. Before (I had) the kids, I was hardly ever in the house -- I'd be in the house weekends, and now I enjoy the house virtually every day. I do get a little bit neurotic about keeping it clean -- when I worked (outside the home) I was less concerned about that. [Felicia, writer, nutritional consultant]

Although two of the women quoted above were more concerned about the cleanliness of the home now that they worked there, those stresses seemed to be balanced by the increased enjoyment of the home.

Physical characteristics of the home can also be associated with negative feelings. This was primarily due

to the spatial constraints of the abode, which were exacerbated by working at home.

Peter, an attorney, was blunt about his frustration with his home:

I was sick and tired of the apartment before I started working here, and I'm still sick and tired of it. It's definitely worse now. By the time [my son] turned one we outgrew the apartment and I did not help matters by moving in computer equipment and all my files. It's just very cramped for space so I can't wait to move out.

Julie, also an attorney, has very similar feelings about her home:

When I wasn't here much, I simply closed my eyes to the clutter, and now I find it gets to me and at the end of the day I sometimes feel I can't stand it anymore. It was always easier to shut it off if you only saw it a few hours a day. When I'm with it all the time it drives me crazy, and I feel like I really need more space. It's very hard to share all this with so many people.

When the physical and aesthetic dimensions of the abode are the focus of meanings of home, working at home seems to intensify those feelings that were already present, whether positive or negative.

The Blending of Work and Home

More often, it was not spatial or aesthetic concerns that influenced the meanings of home for these homeworkers, but rather the daily implications of doing paid work in the living space. While some people experience an overlapping

of activities and roles as positive, others find the experience to be somewhat problematic.

Home as a Supportive Structure

Particularly for those who enjoy interspersing work activities with household activities, home may be seen as an all-encompassing place which contains the most important aspects of one's life. Holly expressed her appreciation for the way in which her home has provided a positive context for her work and family roles:

I guess the reason that I've worked here for so many years is that [home] has always been a space both where I do my work and take care of my family -- and it always just felt like a supportive structure that could accommodate both.... I've always worked in a space where I could easily shift to different aspects of myself -- I've just got the set-up where, if I need to cook, I can go cook. I guess what feels right to me, as a woman, is that it supports having a multiple sense of self -- where part of you is being a parent, taking care of your family, and part of who you are is being by yourself.

In a similar way, Bob's living space easily accommodates both household and work activities and roles. The meanings of Bob's home have also influenced his philosophy about work.

All my homes have always been the same way. They have always been a reflection of me. And that hasn't changed. It isn't because I work there, I don't think. It's hard to say, because I haven't lived an alternative life. I've probably integrated my idea of home with being an artist from my experiences of being home in my parents' house. I grew up in a home where my father went to work and my mother stayed home and nurtured. There was a certain security, a continuity, which you become accustomed to and you do it, you expect it.

There's a kind of comfort in the routines. And I share that with anybody who's part of my life. There's a nurturing, a joy in it. We do it for each other. And that, I think, has nothing to do with that I work here. What it might do is make my idea of what working is different because I work at home. It's not that I take the idea of working and impose it onto my home life. It's like home life gets laid onto what work life is. So that working is an enjoyable thing, it's part of everyday. I don't feel like I work. I just do what I enjoy doing. So maybe I view work in terms of what home is like. To bring that same caring and comfort to the job.

For both Bob and Holly, home provides a supportive context for their household and work lives, which are somewhat intertwined temporally, and for Bob, spatially as well.

Although Calvin finds working at home to be somewhat of a strain spatially, he has also found that it has provided an added dimension to the meaning of his home.

Well, it does conflict a lot -- with space particularly. Just piling the books up has taken up a good chunk of space in the bedroom. It means a lot more to me now. It represents a lot more than just a place to put my head down at night.....it's a solid thing now, with the work. It has more reality to it than it did before. It's a homestead.

Rick, who had been working at home for six months at the time of our interview, noted that working at home had altered his perception of both the work and family-related activities taking place within the home.

Home life has changed quite a bit -- I get a better sense of the kids. I see them at different periods of time when I was never here. Coming home from school is a big time for them. When I came home at 8:00 at night and asked them how their day was, they would be too exhausted to even tell me, whereas now I get a better sense of how things went, a better sense of their lives, and I feel a lot closer to the kids than when I was working away from home. I also have a better appreciation of the balancing act that [my wife] Lisa

does. And a better appreciation of both the benefits and difficulties of working alone.

While the home itself supports the same activities as before (his wife has been working at home for about two years), Rick's move to home-based work has changed his understanding of the complex nature of those activities, thereby enhancing his relationships within the household.

Work as an Intrusion into the Home

Some people find working at home to be a mixed blessing. The meaning of home as a place for family, a refuge may still exist; however, added to that is a feeling that work is ever-present. Yvette, a planning consultant, explained the meaning of home to her:

It's both refuge and, sometimes, curse. For us, and especially for my husband [who also does some work at home], there really is no time when work is not going on for him. The weekends are not differentiated. We don't have a country house or anything.....when you're here all the time, you feel stressed out.

Heidi, a pastry chef, also felt the pressure of being surrounded by her work. Her attitudes about working at home and about her home in general changed over the year that she had been working there.

Well, in the beginning I was thrilled.....and it's definitely changed. It's beginning to be a little more difficult. I'm sure that moving here factors into that, because in [my previous neighborhood], I didn't live with my girlfriend. Our move here was our move together -- because it's our home now, I really don't like using it for my business as much. When it was my own apartment it was easier. I have to be conscious of things -- like my refrigerator -- it's piled with brownies; it's very frustrating for her to come home

with a container of milk and not have anywhere to put it.

I used to love coming home at night. I worked long hours and coming home was so special -- to just come home and.....just shut the door. Now I really don't have that here. Even if I'm out for the whole day, I come back and it's all here, and that's frustrating. I never really get away from it because it's right here. I'm always staring at chocolate!

Heidi's new home has taken on different meanings, influenced both by her personal life and her work. Her perception of home has been changed by the fact that she shares it with her lover; their first home together is a symbol of their relationship. The presence of her business in that home has created some practical difficulties for them. In addition, for Heidi home is no longer a refuge and relief from work. Her particular business makes it impossible to "shut the door" on her work.

For others, the fact that work is constantly present and visible has disrupted the conceptions of home they held prior to working there -- or the meanings that they may have traditionally associated with home.

Lisa's feelings about home have changed since she started working there, due to the lack of separation between home and work activities.

It's less of a refuge. It's less of a place where you escape from work and relax because it's always here. It's hard to shut off the work mode. On the weekend, the papers are there on the dining room table. This is the same room the VCR is in and it's also where the computer is, so it's less distinct from work.

Andrew, an advertising consultant, explained similar

feelings in the context of an overlapping of demands, rather than space. When asked how he felt about using his home for working, Andrew replied:

It fucks it up. It redefines home entirely. Home has traditionally been respite, has been away from work. Family has been escape. When you're working at home, family becomes imposition and home becomes indistinguishable. Time becomes completely undefined. Like retired folks who live in Florida, Monday is no different than Tuesday, and working at home is the same thing, for me, anyway. But again, I'm hardly the most disciplined person in the world.

Home is no longer.....one of the things about going home after being at work [outside the home] is that there may still be demands, but they're different kinds of demands. That distinction is lost when you're working at home. You've got this intermeshing of all the demands and they become inseparable.

For Andrew, the role demands of parent, spouse, and worker are indistinct temporally as well as spatially. As such, the notion of home as a refuge and a place for family has become impossible to retain.

Steve, a composer, also feels that work intrudes on his home, partially because of the temporal rhythms of his work.

When [my roommates] lived here, we used to call it the "Music Monastery" because it had nothing to do with home -- it was like a temple to turning out work. I almost live here incidentally and this is not quite right. I would say my work interferes with my home life. A lot of my home life is created by the way I work.

Ahrentzen (1987) also found that for many homeworkers in her sample, home was no longer the refuge it once was. It is interesting to note that the same qualities of intermeshing home activities and work activities are viewed by some (e.g., Steve, Andrew, and Lisa) quite negatively,

while for others (e.g., Calvin, Bob, and Holly) this quality enhances their meanings of home.

Home as Confining

For others, it is not only the constant presence of work, but also simply being at home for extended periods of time, that can be frustrating. Several people expressed the need to physically get away from the home as important. Karen, a writer, has been particularly conscious of this recently.

I like the self-containedness of [working at home]. Recently I have found it confining, so it's had kind of a negative effect. After working at home all day, I like to go out in the evening, and I've tried to do that more, because I found that I'm sort of dreading the evenings -- the next five or six hours at home -- especially with the knowledge that I'd wake up in the morning and I'd be in again all day. I'm making a concerted effort to line up evening activities to kind of break the monotony of being at home so much.

However, working at home also has positive aspects for Karen:

On a daily basis, I kind of enjoy being here -- it's just not wanting to be in the house from 9:00 in the morning until midnight.

Kevin, a printing consultant, also notes the necessity to leaving the home for periods of time:

I don't think my attitude [about home] has changed. I like a comfortable place, which I hope this is. I don't think I feel any more or less related to it. I don't think I can answer that. Sometimes I definitely feel the need to get out. Staying at home all day and night (before I was married) gave one more of a sense of isolation, a more lonely feeling, alienation. You can hide more when things aren't going well. You have to get out and network, make contacts.

Alan, a composer, expressed the need to separate oneself from the home in a somewhat different way:

I think that we crave change. And to sleep here, eat here, and work here....its just refreshing to leave. And it would probably be a really good step for me, because it would mean that I could think of my home as a place to relax, and do the things that are involved with living.

The perpetual presence of work in Alan's abode has prevented him from conceptualizing it as a place for "living" that is separate from work. Despite having generally positive feelings about his apartment, his long-term view of what a home should be is not embodied by his present living space.

I get more attached to the place [the longer I live here]. I still really like the place. I think of it as a home, but I don't really think of it as home, you know, the final resting place. I know that it's an apartment in a city I don't want to live in forever. I think about leaving a lot. I'd like to have a real home.

What is a Home? Spatial Tradeoffs in Working at Home

From the testimony of the homeworkers in this study, it is clear that meanings of home are much more complex than sometimes assumed. Furthermore, meanings of home are not static; they change not only according to the actual place in which one lives, but also depending on the context of that place and the activities that take place there. The picture painted is primarily not one of the home as a place of refuge, an escape from the "rat race", a private place for family and friends, for entertaining and relaxing. This

image of "home" certainly exists for some people. However, many people do not live with that romanticized notion of what a home is.

One of the most striking aspects of doing this research was discovering the kinds of spatial tradeoffs people make in the process of working at home. Even in the best of circumstances, people trade advantages in one aspect of their lives for disadvantages in another. Many of the homeworkers in this study perceived tradeoffs in working in the home versus outside the home -- in terms of a financial savings in not renting an office, the convenience of being at home, not having to dress professionally every day, etc. For many homeworkers in this study, however, there were also ways in which working at home created spatial difficulties that were compensated for through various means.

Architects, designers, home furnishing manufacturers, and advertisers create living spaces and present images of what a home is. These realities and ideals are packaged complete with labels such as "master bedroom" and "dining room." These labels are derived from assumptions that are made regarding who will use the abode and how they will do so. Despite the fact that society has changed in several important ways since the 1950s (e.g., far greater numbers of women in the labor force, fewer households made up of two heterosexual parents and their children, and substantially greater numbers of people working at home), the ways in

which living spaces are designed and furnished has changed very little. The question remains whether people really use living spaces in such circumscribed ways. Many of the homeworkers in this study had different ideas about how to best utilize their abodes.

Most of the people who participated in this research had fairly substantial incomes,² which, even in New York City, would allow some flexibility in their living situations, depending on their housing choices (i.e., living Manhattan vs. one of the boroughs, or in particular neighborhoods). Yet, several people in this study, for many different reasons, chose to live in situations which have little in common with the idealized versions of home presented in academic literature, by design professionals, and in the media.

In some cases, the accommodations people made to create home workspaces might seem costly, although not in the financial sense. Despite the sacrifices people make in terms of space, they perceive certain tradeoffs that balance those deficits. Those tradeoffs are related to finances, other spaces (such as weekend homes), expectations about the future, or simply the convenience of working at home.

Dining Room Offices

Beth works in what was originally designed as a dining area for the apartment. She noted that it was an

underutilized area.

Three quarters of my work is done in the dining area. We never ate in there anyway, so we just set up my computer there.

As a result of Beth's using that area for her work, there are no eating surfaces in the apartment. The galley kitchen is not large enough for a table, so the family eats on folding trays on the couch in front of the television. Beth explained that this was not really a hardship, since the dining area was only used for entertaining guests:

We're not very big on entertaining because the house is never clean enough that I feel comfortable having someone come over to actually entertain. And I work too many hours to do it all myself. And my husband doesn't help.

As a self-proclaimed workaholic, Beth's priorities do not include providing a specialized place in which to eat, either as a household or with others.

This type of situation is not as unusual as it may seem. Sam also works in what was intended as a dining room. In fact, it was never used for eating; before Sam and his family moved into the apartment, he arranged to use that room for his work. As a result, the large kitchen was divided into food preparation and eating areas. Holly's office also used to be her dining room. The large front hall now serves as a dining space.

Julie lives with her husband, son, and daughter in a two-bedroom apartment. She shares a workspace with her husband in what was intended to be a dining room.

We took this apartment knowing we'd have this as an office (my husband works late hours). We never had it as a dining room. It was originally planned as an office for him, and then, when I stopped working a year later, I started using it as my office. We both work out of there now. We have a small area where everyone eats [in the kitchen].....We would have liked to have found a three-bedroom with a convertible dining room, but that wasn't available.

Julie finds sharing the modest apartment with the other members of her household to be difficult; however, she was planning to move to another city soon. Her comment about a "convertible" dining room attests to the importance of designing rooms for multiple uses, rather than expecting all households to use space in similar ways. This issue will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

Multi-Purpose Spaces

While homeworkers often use one space for different purposes (i.e., using bedrooms as offices, kitchens as work tables), there are wide variations in the spatial tradeoffs involved in such situations. Joan, a graphic artist, lives with her husband and two children in a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan. She and her husband share the bedroom, while the children sleep in the living/play room. One small part of this medium-size room has a drafting table, and serves as Joan's workspace. This admittedly cramped apartment is manageable in part because the family has a country house in which they spend most of their weekends.

Due to the size of the apartment and the multiple uses

of each space, the "traditional" uses of living space are virtually non-existent in Joan's situation.

I sometimes take over this [dining area] table as well. And when that happens, we just don't use the table, I use the table. I mean, the kids can eat in front of the T.V. or at the counter.

It's a peculiar thing.... because we go away weekends and because friends visit us where we go, we've essentially been able to eliminate anything like a living room. This is just bedroom and workspace. It's just very strange not to have that. But for right now, that's the way it is.

Joan feels that the tradeoff is worth it; she would rather keep the country home than get a bigger apartment in the city and give up that escape from the city.

If we had more space, and if I had a room that I could have as my workspace and I could close the door on it, it would certainly be nicer. It would be nicer if we all had our own space, if the kids each had their own bedroom, if everything didn't have to work like a submarine. This is very difficult. On the other hand, there's not the possibility of moving sometime soon. Probably to get one extra bedroom, we'd have to give up the place in the country and this, and trade everything in for one extra bedroom..... it wouldn't make a significant difference to have one extra room. We really need five extra rooms. So we just have to bumble along with this and try to make it work..... I like going to the country on weekends and being right here during the week.

Felix, an artist living in a loft in Manhattan, is also living in cramped quarters. Although he uses part of the living area as his workspace, a substantial part of his work is done in what has become his bedroom. When I entered this workroom, I had to look around, amidst innumerable pieces of mechanical and electronic equipment, to find the bed; it was above me, quite close to the ceiling. Although Felix

previously had the large loft to himself, over the years he has rented out space to others for financial reasons. His most recent change had been to get a second roommate, which meant losing his separate sleeping area. Felix has made the decision to live and work as he does for a number of other reasons.

I like to tell people my commute is about 30 seconds. I feel very good about not having to commute. The fact that I'm in the middle of Manhattan provides easy access for the students who come to my classes, for clients who come from the art world, or people who come with their audio problems. For business purposes, this location is ideal..... If property were cheap, I'd like to own a house, and be able to spread out. It would be nice to have a...fabulous looking house, to have a space like that to walk into, but that's a trade-off for being able to live in Manhattan. The other advantage that ties in with the lack of commute is that, very often when you're working on a project you'll turn away from it and be doing something else and BINGO! you get an idea. Here it's not a matter of having to commute back to an office, but to just walk into the other room. That's a big plus -- living and working in the same place.

Others who work in cramped quarters or less than ideal spaces have different reasons for their apparent tolerance. A few home-based workers were planning to move in the near future -- Peter, an attorney who works in his small bedroom, was looking for a new home in the suburbs; and Leslie, who works in the middle of the living room/dining room with two small children was planning a move overseas.

Summary: Meanings of Home

Working at home seems to either reify existing meanings of home, or change the ways in which people feel about their abodes. People who were pleased with the aesthetic aspects of their homes were pleased to be able to enjoy them even more, since they were home more often. Those who were comfortable blending their paid work and domestic lives found their homes to be supportive structures which allowed them to fulfill all of their roles in one place. Both women and men who were somewhat conflicted about the spatial and/or temporal overlap in work and household activities found that home had been redefined; it was no longer a refuge from paid work, which was now perpetually present.

For some people, home had little in common with an idealized, comfortable refuge, a place in which to entertain family and friends. Dining rooms were used as workspaces, leaving makeshift or cramped eating spaces, or no areas for eating at all. Living rooms were sometimes non-existent, used for sleeping, working, and playing. It was not that the people living and working in those places were experiencing great financial hardship. Rather, trade-offs were made between different aspects of daily living that were deemed important. For some, having places in which to entertain or sit and eat a meal was not a high priority; it was more critical to devote space for working. For others,

being able to own a country home was worth sacrificing a comfortable space in the city to live in what was described as a "submarine." Sometimes, living in cramped quarters, without what many would consider to be basic necessities in terms of use of space, gave people greater financial freedom to choose only work that was of interest, or to devote time to non-paid work endeavors, such as artwork.

While many of these homeworkers felt that living and working in places with greater spatial amenities would be luxurious, it was not worth the trade-offs involved. Despite the fact that these abodes would not fit into conventional expectations of what a "home" is, they functioned in ways that were consistent with their inhabitants' needs and resources.

Perceptions of Work

The experience of home-based work takes place in a context in which both "home" and "work" have deeply embedded cultural associations. A brief examination of society's perception of work can enhance our understanding of the experience of home as a workplace.

The term "work" has been quite narrowly prescribed in the United States since the process of industrialization moved production out of the household and into factories, offices, and stores. This relegation of tasks to different realms shifted the perception of what constituted work. Those who were paid for their jobs away from the household were clearly workers. The remaining household tasks were not so clearly defined as work (Kessler-Harris, 1981). Although many women have historically engaged in paid work in the home as an alternative to working in factories and offices, such work has been seen as marginal, and was often not considered as paid employment in the census (Tentler, 1979).

Work has also been segregated by sex, as well as geographical location, in American society (Margolis, 1984). Occupational sex segregation and women's lower wages have been justified by an ideology which views men as "breadwinners" and women's income as auxiliary to the male wage; therefore, women's paid work has been perceived as

less valuable, both socially and monetarily. In a society dominated by a system of patriarchal market production, women's work, particularly within the home, is often diminished, whether it is paid or unpaid.

Working at home, then, as a cultural anomaly of sorts, presents some interesting issues in terms of examining perceptions of what constitutes "work." The societal attitudes about work outlined above often have a substantial impact on those who are working at home, both through their own perceptions and those of other people.

Professional Identity and Self-Esteem

Work is a source of identity, which helps to locate ourselves within a society and to feel a sense of value for our contributions (Kessler-Harris, 1981). Working for pay outside the home provides a structure which generally enhances these feelings. Going to a workplace, whether on a part-time or full-time basis, is a culturally validated and rewarded activity. One is paid for work accomplished, whether by the piece or by daily, monthly, or yearly salary. Conducting paid work in the home often does not provide similar benefits -- it may be more difficult to achieve a sense of professionalism, to perceive one's work as valid, and to measure productivity.

The women in this study who had full-time careers

outside the home prior to working at home part-time, find their current situations particularly frustrating. Although I never asked directly about these issues, the theme of diminished self-esteem was brought up repeatedly. Nancy, an architect, noted that it was difficult for her to perceive her work in the same way after cutting back on her hours and the complexity of her work.

I miss the relationship with other architects, the relationship with the working community. I came off a very big project and now I'm working on a very small project. Going to this scale was enormously difficult for me -- that decreased scale led to almost a decreased self-esteem because the challenge isn't there. It's like your brain turns off partially until you go back into the full working commitment.

For Julie, an attorney, the severe decrease in income, as well as the change in professional identity, was a difficult adjustment.

I was making \$100,000 per year working four days a week and I gave that up so that was very hard. I was used to having a lot of money and I think a little differently now that I know I don't have all this money coming in. Now I work, I think, partly to keep myself stimulated and partly because I don't want to give it up after all these years of training, but not because I expect to make money at it. The intellectual thing -- and also for self-esteem to prove I can still work and be a lawyer, not because it pays for anything, because it doesn't. It's also funny, after so many years of being self-supporting, to rely on somebody else for money.

Perhaps the most difficult adjustment for Julie was the realization that, at least temporarily, she was unable to satisfactorily juggle all the roles of her life in the way she had expected.

I think in some ways it's just a hard thing to deal with personally because I was of the school where women

could do everything they always wanted to do -- you can be a big success, make a lot of money, you could have a family, and all that -- and you realize you can't and that was really very hard. I did everything quite right, but it really doesn't work like that.

Karen, a writer, feels that working in the "private" sphere has made it more difficult for her to establish a sense of professional identity.

That's also the biggest psychological pitfall, the feeling of working in a vacuum. And....I also find it difficult to sustain my feeling of really having a proper career. I can see all the things I've published and I still have a hard time because it doesn't, somehow, seem validated by not having more public work space and colleagues. It's hard to maintain a good sense of professional identity, especially when things aren't going so well.

The funny thing is that other people often take me more seriously than I take myself. People think I have this fabulous career -- in certain circles I'm well-known. I don't know what they imagine but, very often, the outside perception of what I do and who I am is stronger than my own feelings about it. I'm kind of shaky in that professional self-esteem area no matter how many bylines I have. I think that has to do with working at home. If I had a job as a staff writer on a magazine, I'd have a stronger sense of that.

For all of these women, working at home lacks the external structure and validation that the "public" workplace provides. The issue of one's work being valid when it occurs outside of a conventional workplace is even more pronounced when that work is not immediately rewarded monetarily. Felicia, who is also a writer (among other occupations), noted that she sometimes feels that she was more productive when working in an office. Although she pays someone to care for her children three days per week while she writes, she has not yet been paid for her work.

Her words reflect the uncertainty she feels about her undertaking:

If my book sells, that will be my validity -- that I've been working, not just been home saying I'm working.

Regardless of the fact that she knows she has been working, she feels the need to prove it to herself and to the world by being successful in the public forum.

The issue of how work is measured was also raised by others. In most workplaces, workers are paid either by the piece, or more commonly, in terms of time -- daily, monthly, or yearly. Although a general accounting of how time was spent must often be submitted, when working for a salary (or even on a per diem basis), one is paid for the time spent at the workplace, regardless of one's productivity on a particular day. For those who are self-employed, the way in which time is spent during "working" hours may be re-defined. For example, without organizational or secretarial support, the self-employed person must do his or her own billing of clients, typing of correspondence, etc. The time during which one is engaged in such activities is generally not billable to any client, but is nonetheless necessary. In addition, networking with others may be required to maintain or increase business. Some homeworkers find it difficult to adjust to this manner of working, in which productivity is not always easily ascertained.

Andrew, a free lance advertising writer, expressed the difficulty he has experienced with conventional definitions

and expectations regarding work.

It's very difficult to measure productivity. If you're in an office it's much easier because you have someone measuring it for you.....if you work at home, you don't work. I think that's a fact of life in terms of generalized perception....the person working home is "unemployed" -- especially a writer. A painter, for example, at least can be covered with paint and at least have a physical symbol of doing something, whereas all I'm covered with is radiation from my machine! It's very strange.....it really redefines your social existence.

Andrew feels that this perception of work as always producing some tangible product also comes from his wife.

It's a very tension provoking situation -- she's very task-oriented. "What did you do today?" If you didn't create X widgets, you didn't do anything.

Kevin, a printing consultant, has had similar experiences with his family. He found that although his former spouse had also worked at home, she did not always respect the way in which he worked at home.

With my first wife it was more difficult, even though she was a freelance writer and had to fight for the fact that writers work. That if she is a writer who is a woman who stays at home, that doesn't mean that she is there to be denigrated. Strangely enough, when I stayed at home, it became a bit of an issue with us. There would be times when I would be on the phone, and she would barge in and say, I'm going out, would you do this and that. And I'd say, "For god's sake, I'm on the phone with so and so!" I think that's a problem people have when they work at home, that the spouse or the children don't always understand.

There has to be a lot of mutual respect. And understanding. Including that what people do sometimes doesn't look like work to the other person. Some of my work is just getting on the phone and talking, chatting. That's necessary. Sometimes I have a problem with that--I just spent an hour being charming to five different people. What did I really do? There's still a sense that if I type a message, it's more work than if I talk to somebody. If I get paid

for it, it's definitely work. If I don't get paid for it.In this civilization we still measure things to a great extent by a dollar measure.

Despite Kevin's frustration with the narrow ways in which others define work, he has also been influenced by those definitions.

Perceptions of Others

Perceptions of others about oneself can often be powerful influences. The ways in which we are perceived by neighbors, friends, family, and colleagues may have an impact on the ways in which we view ourselves, present ourselves to the world, and even on the decisions we make. Most of the homeworkers in this study who commented about how others perceive them, spoke about the image of being at home and working at home.

Several women found that clients, neighbors, and family perceived and reacted to them first as being at home, and only second, as working there. Horwitz' (1986) interviews with homeworkers revealed similar patterns. Horwitz noted that "as long as a man is working, he is perceived by his family as not being 'at home'. As long as a woman is in the house, she is perceived by her family as being 'at home'" (Horwitz, 1986, p. 191).

Felicia described the differences between the way in which she would like to be perceived and the ways in which

others view her:

I realize how sexist our society still is and it's very frustrating. The fact that I'm home -- a lot of people think, oh, she's home working, which is really home, so a lot of people think if they need a favor they can ask Felicia because she's home -- what she does is very marginal, as opposed to: I pay babysitters three days a week and want to work 25 hours. I feel they see the role as me as a woman as not having changed, and I find that very frustrating. Now people are saying, "Oh, you just love working at home -- it's so nice" and I find this demoralizing at times.....people perceiving me as being home first and working second, and I would prefer the opposite.

Christine noted that the location of work (i.e., at home versus at a designated workplace) is critical in coloring the perceptions of others.

It's interesting, most people don't really think of me as working, though I'm putting in so many hours, because I'm available. So people think of me in terms of being available, but I really wasn't. In that sense, it's easier to go to an office, because when you disappear each day for a specified number of hours, people know you can't be reached.

Julie has had similar experiences with clients, as well as others.

Working at home also makes people view you differently. When I worked in the office I didn't have to take calls after certain hours. At home, my clients think they can call me at 8 or 9 at night and I really resent that. They call me during dinner time when I'm trying to feed the children. They feel that, if you're working at home, either you are not as serious or you are accessible at odd hours when they're done with their regular jobs, and that I find annoying. I depend on them, so I have to put up with it.

But people have a different perception of you. People don't give you the same degree of regard as they would if you worked in an office -- especially if you are a woman. I always feel the necessity of letting people know about my past work background.....you are seen as more of a dilettante, rather than being a serious lawyer. It makes you feel more like you're a

traditional woman where there is a difference between the sexes and everyone fits in different molds, and I think I try to overcome that. I've had the education, the work experience, and this is a temporary measure in my life. I don't really want to think of myself as a housewife. People tend to think you're kind of dabbling.

It is clear that Christine, Julie, and Felicia feel a lack of respect of their professionalism and commitment from others. Karen, who has experienced similar attitudes, has been able to control the situation in a different way.

As far as what my friends and neighbors think, I really don't care. They take their cues from me. If they suggest having coffee, I'll say I can't because I'm working full-time now. And my aunt, who used to call me every day just to chat, she knows now that I'm not going to pick up the phone.

In Holly's case, it is her children who have had difficulty accepting the way in which she has chosen to work.

I think [the children's] preference would be that I would be working at a 9 to 5 job downtown -- that would be better -- and so, I would say I really had to kind of convince them that the approach I've taken is valid as a way of working, earning a living. I think they would feel it had more status if their mother were working for a larger company, or something like that -- I think they would like that better.

Ironically, one of the reasons Holly started working at home was to have more flexibility to be with her children.

Several homeworkers noted that the nature of their work is a mystery to others, simply because they do not have regular schedules and are not seen leaving for a workplace every day. When Martin started working at home, it was much less common than it is today.

People looked at you real funny, twenty years ago, for doing it at home. You don't go to work, what kind of illegal activity....in those days, of course, they wouldn't accuse you of dealing drugs -- they would accuse you of being a bookie. But that's a long time ago. Now, no one looks twice at it, particularly because you keep a good record in the building, you pay the rent on time, you must be doing something! And they see me going out at weird hours in the morning, with bags -- they don't question me anymore.

A few homeworkers who live in cooperative buildings noted that there was some concern on the part of the co-op board regarding the fact that they worked at home.

You know, years ago, there was something faintly uneasy about people who worked at home. I still remember when I was interviewed about this apartment. That was one of the things they asked me about.....my teenage daughter, who was then about 14 or 15 had more visitors per week than I did. I very rarely have somebody up here. They were concerned that I'd have a lot of people coming to call, and a lot of messengers and deliveries. Of course, over the years I probably have twice as many things delivered here as the average tenant.....once a week the Airborne Express guy comes by....I do require more service in the building, no question about it, so in a way they were right to be concerned. There are also some legal considerations on that in co-ops. [Martin]

Another homeworker chose to live in a condominium building to avoid such problems and questions.

When [I was looking] for a place to live in, I very much avoided going to a co-op. Because there are some people who don't like the idea of someone having a business in the building. And in a condo, no one can tell you what to do (within limits). So I specifically wanted to go for a condo. I think that's one reason why condos are now becoming more popular in New York City. As more people work at home, the co-op boards are going to be less ready to make a fuss. [Kevin]

Summary: Perceptions of Work

Perceptions of what constitutes "work" affects homeworkers as well as "homemakers." By taking paid work out of the workplace and placing it in the dwelling, the conventionally accepted structure for work disappears. This lack of external organization and public validation can result in a loss of professional identity, especially for women who either had worked or are currently working full-time at their careers. The strong cultural identification of the public sphere with work (and men) and the private sphere with family (and women) has created a situation in which the location of one's work is more critical for women than men. Regardless of a woman's commitment to paid work, the fact that she is at home seems to recall the "pin money" ideology, with the assumption that her work is auxiliary. Regardless of where they work, men are generally seen as "breadwinners." At the same time, both men and women are influenced by a cultural emphasis on productivity measurement, by which "work" is an entity that is tangible and rewarded monetarily. Within this narrowly prescribed system, much of the work done by homeworkers is not perceived as work at all.

Home-Based Work in the Context of Community

Thus far in this dissertation, home-based work has been examined in relation to the home itself. However, working at home takes place in a broader context, involving both the community and the cultural milieu in which living and working take place.

Experiences of working at home clearly depend in part on where one is situated. Working at home in a rural community in Maine, for example (see Beach, 1989), is quite different from working at home in the center of a large city. It has been noted that most American neighborhoods, designed around a strong separation of work from both home and from a community/neighborhood, and lacking in public spaces, are not well-suited to home-based work (Calhoun, 1986). However, several studies indicate that rural residents are more likely to work at home than urban dwellers (Kraut & Grambsch, 1987). As Beach points out (1989), rural residence contributes several factors towards decisions to work at home: the lack of zoning controls, the relatively low crime rate (which is a factor for those with publicly oriented home businesses), and the unavailability of attractive jobs with decent incomes. Urban areas present quite different reasons for working at home, and different kinds of supports are available for such work in the community.

Some writers have speculated that bringing paid work into the home will alter neighborhoods, by increasing the use of local services and facilities, and increasing the informal surveillance of the neighborhood by homeworkers (Nilles, 1985). Ahrentzen (1987) found that while certain neighborhood services increased in importance to homeworkers, their surveillance of activities in the community did not change.

The present study explored homeworkers' relationships to their communities along several dimensions: uses of the neighborhood (including services used), interactions with neighbors, and perceptions of community. Finally, the analysis of these issues yields a composite of how neighborhoods function for home-based workers.

The homeworkers interviewed for this study live in a range of different building types and neighborhoods. Despite its image of skyscrapers lining the streets, New York City actually boasts a wide diversity of housing types and locales. The abodes of homeworkers in this study include lofts in downtown business areas, apartments in high-rise buildings in densely populated neighborhoods, and single-family homes in quiet residential neighborhoods. For the most part, housing and neighborhood types did not have an impact on homeworkers' relationships with their neighbors and communities.

Uses of Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are used by homeworkers in many ways -- for the business-related services they offer, for exercise, and for places to go just to leave the dwelling for short periods of time -- in addition to the more basic needs of food, child-care, schools, etc. The way in which neighborhoods were most frequently used by the homeworkers in this study were for business purposes, including copy shops, Fax services, delivery services (i.e., Federal Express, DHL), and the post office. All of these services were used more frequently since work at home commenced. Libraries were also utilized by many homeworkers more frequently since they started working at home. Library users included composers and writers, as well as independent consultants.

Most of the homeworkers in this study used a variety of neighborhood services more frequently since they began working at home. Gurstein (1990), in comparing 45 homeworkers and 9 office workers in northern and central California, found that the homeworkers rarely used their neighborhoods more than office workers. It is difficult to draw comparisons between those results and the present study, however, because Gurstein did not inquire about any changes in the use of neighborhood services. It is possible that the use of services by homeworkers actually did

increase, but was still not any greater than that of office workers.

Several people also indicated that they used the neighborhood for exercise, whether walking, jogging, or ice skating. Nearby parks were frequently the favored sites for exercise. A few people regularly frequented local coffee shops, either as a way of starting the day, or for mid-day breaks. One homemaker noted the lack of a such a place close to his apartment.

Interactions with Neighbors

Working at home has the potential to alter one's relationships with neighbors by creating increased opportunities for informal contact. However, much of the paid work conducted within the home is fairly self-sufficient, assisted by advanced information technologies such as computers, FAX machines, copy machines, and modems; there may be limited contact with the immediate neighborhood. One study found that homeworkers do not have increased contact with neighbors as a result of working at home. Gurstein (1990) found that in general, the 45 urban and suburban homeworkers in her sample did not socialize with neighbors more than the nine office workers interviewed. Homeworkers generally perceived their neighborhoods as lonely places, with few opportunities for

social contact.

Homeworkers in the current study were somewhat evenly divided in terms of their interactions with neighbors. Some homeworkers found that their relationships with neighbors had not changed appreciably since they started working at home. Most of these people indicated that despite the fact that they are around more often now that they work at home, their lack of interactions with neighbors is typical for New York. Christine, who lives in a single-family house in a quiet, residential neighborhood, noted that the physical qualities of her community did not affect the ways in which people interacted.

This community is interesting, it has a very country feeling. But it is not the suburbs. In the city here, it's very impersonal. One of the hardest things for me was when my children were little and I was working at home, I really had no one to call on. Everyone in this area either worked or were elderly. The neighbors here are very affluent and very unfriendly. My neighbors really have been invisible. This is the city, it's as if you lived in an apartment in Manhattan. You basically know them by sight and that's it.

Robin, who lives in the same neighborhood as Christine, also attested to this phenomenon.

I don't have a great deal of interaction with my neighbors, except those who happen to have children the same age as mine. I'd say our interaction is probably typically New York, very restricted. I think that working at home has very little to do with it -- I think the fact that it is New York is what defines to a very large extent how people interrelate.....

Julie, who lives in a high-rise building in a densely populated neighborhood, also feels that the "New York attitude" circumscribes the ways in which neighbors relate

to one another.

I never had much interaction with my neighbors. There are two neighbors I've been friendly with, but [working at home] really hasn't changed the quality. I think part of it is just being in New York.

An equal number of homeworkers had very different experiences in their communities. Some noted an increase in frequency in seeing their neighbors in their daily travels. Martin, who has been working at home for about 20 years, indicated that he sees his neighbors more often because he works at home.

Well, I run into some of them in the street once in a while, at weird times. Yeah, I'm liable to see people more often -- I don't know whether it's better or worse. Probably the same thing in the building, too. I will run into people in the lobby at 12:30 in the afternoon.

Alan also sees more of his neighbors because of the increased time he spends in the community. However, he sees his friendliness with his neighbors as an anomaly for this city.

I interact more with [my neighbors], just from being here.....I also walk my dog a couple times a day, so I'm in the neighborhood a lot, I see people and I'll say hello to them. I know practically everyone on the block. I also have neighbors upstairs and downstairs. I've seen a lot of people come and go. It's actually a really great house here. We all kind of know each other. It's unusual for New York, I think.

Felicia noted that the very sexism that she finds frustrating in her neighborhood has actually improved her relationships with some of her neighbors.

I see [my neighbors] more, and I know they think it's much nicer that I work at home, so I think they have a slightly better affinity to me because of it. I have

really nice neighbors. Most of my neighbors are older, so they think it's nice that the woman is home working.

Felicia, along with two other women, have also found that neighbors will ask favors of them because they are at home. These favors generally involve receiving packages for neighbors when they are away from the home.

Several people indicated that the nature of their work, rather than their simply being at home more often, has altered their relationships in the community. Homeworkers living in apartment buildings that provided full-time support staff noted that their interaction with the building staff had increased due to their special needs in working at home.

The other facility I have in this particular building, which is one of the reasons I chose this building...with a doorman, I can accept deliveries and have pick-ups made all day long. (When other people I'm delivering to don't have a doorman, there can be problems with delivery). I think there's much more interaction also with the service personnel of the building. Because I rely on them much more. They can be very helpful, or they can abuse their power. So I have more of an interaction there. [Kevin]

Peter, who had just recently begun working at home, also indicated that although his interactions with neighbors had not increased, his relationship with the building staff had changed.

Not really with my neighbors, but with help in the building. I've always liked the people who work in the building, but after the second or third week of seeing me around in my shorts and T-shirt, the doorman started saying, "Vacation or something? Working out of the apartment now?" There was kind of a strange point where they finally found out I was working out of the apartment.

While it may be difficult to keep one's business private from apartment building personnel, most homeworkers are able to conduct their work in some privacy, with little evidence of the nature of that work. However, two of the homeworkers interviewed for this study are unable to keep their work private from neighbors, which has made them uncomfortable, albeit for very different reasons. Calvin, a textbook salesperson who conducts much of his work from his home, also makes visits to colleges and universities to market his products. He finds the visibility of his work problematic.

Everybody knows my business now, which is always embarrassing. They see me in the morning, they all see me opening the trunk [of the car] up and huffing and puffing. People walk by in the street and they see this trunk full of books, and they've never seen anything like it before. They all wonder what I do.....unlike other people who commute to work by subway, people know what I do -- I feel that I'm "public" -- I can't keep my privacy.

Heidi's work as a pastry chef is obvious to neighbors both visually and olfactorally. Her concern with the public nature of her work stems from legal, rather than personal issues.

What I'm doing is not completely legal -- it's not totally illegal, but I really should be working out of a certified kitchen. So I've been a little nicer to my neighbors. Here and in my old apartment, which as a co-op where they were really strict, I found that I went out of my way to be a bit nicer to my neighbors because I didn't want them to start complaining. You know, most people smell the smells and they think it's wonderful. Nobody's ever said to me, "I don't like that smell", but.....there's the possibility of somebody saying, "You know, I've noticed more cockroaches in my apartment -- do you think that's

because the smell is so sweet?" That's never happened, but it could happen.

When there's leftovers I give them to the neighbors in a little box, just to be nice, and hopefully they won't complain. Hopefully that will never happen, but the fear is always there. Living in my co-op, I went totally out of my way to be evasive.....but [here] I get huge delivery trucks that pull up in front of my house, so I'm sure people are aware of it.

Gurstein (1990) found that many of the self-employed homeworkers in her study who had computer modems belonged to computer networks, substituting face-to-face contacts with "virtual communities." This did not seem to be the case in the current study; although some people may have belonged to computer networks, no one mentioned them as being of central importance. On the other hand, several homeworkers did mention the importance of having a network of other professionals and homeworkers with whom they had regular contact. Some homeworkers used these colleagues' business equipment on an occasional basis, particularly when those people also worked at home in the same neighborhood. Holly described this system:

On occasion, I'll go to the lady that does desk-top publishing -- she has a Xerox machine. She has a laser printer also. If I'm working on a project with a friend who has a FAX machine, she'll FAX it for me.

Another reason for this network is to combat the feelings of isolation that homeworkers feel -- nearly all the homeworkers interviewed for this study brought up the problem of isolation, although it was never asked about directly. Research on homeworkers by Ahrentzen (1987) and

Gurstein (1990) also documented the social isolation experienced by many people. Gurstein (1990) noted that singles were more apt to feel a sense of isolation than those living with others. Ahrentzen (1987) found that homeworkers reacted to the isolation they felt by making plans to get out of their homes and meet other people. Some of the homeworkers in the current study used the same tactics to combat feelings of isolation. Holly discussed the ways in which she and other homeworkers deal with this problem.

I think one thing people ought to recognize in working at home is that it.....can be very isolating, and you have to find ways to counter feeling isolated. Most of the people I know who work at home in a similar way -- the way they overcome the isolation is through.....some of the time they may work on site with the client, or they may have some clients where they have more meetings or will get together and work on a collaborative project. For example, the desk-top publishing person I work with works about two or three days a week for a client on site in Long Island.

I think that people need to be prepared to find ways to give themselves whatever amount of social/work interaction they need to have. With my friend, we kind of try to take turns. She's about two blocks away and.....maybe she'll have a slow day, and she'll say, "Holly, I need to get out of this house, and I'd like to drop this off" and I'll sit and have a cup of coffee and just kind of talk.

Kevin also pointed out that sometimes this networking is related to work, and at other times, it is used simply to see other people.

I will try to go out during the day, very often just to get out. For example, a colleague and I are kind of telephone buddies. Every once in a while something happens and we feel we want to get some reaction about it or blow off steam, and we'll call each other simply

to chat. It's like going to the water cooler. And then sometimes, if I don't have business appointments, we'll sometimes make it a point to meet and what we do is jog around the park together. Working around here all day long can sometimes be very productive, but it can also give you a combination of claustrophobia and a kind of isolation. There's a sense that you're talking to yourself. You need a sense of interaction with someone else whom you see.

Although not everyone had this type of network with others who work at home, most of the homeworkers in this study had some type of mechanism for ensuring that they would leave their abode and interact with others during the day.

Some homeworkers who did not have such routines for built-in interactions with others indicated that they were not entirely satisfied with that situation. Sam, who has a computer, a FAX machine, and a sophisticated phone system, combines these different technologies in order to accomplish his work. As a result, there are many days during which he never leaves his apartment, except for walking around on his balcony.

I think people are typically social animals, to some extent, and it's a little isolating being here in your own office. There are two or three days in a row where I don't go out. I really am self-sufficient here.

Despite being somewhat proud of his self-sufficiency, Sam had an interesting suggestion for alleviating his feeling of isolation.

From a social point of view it would be nice...in the ideal world there would be an entrepreneurial center that's open for lunch and only attended by people who work at home and you could go there and see what other people are doing, because you have to eat lunch anyway -- a business/social club in the ideal world! That would take the place of the corporate cafeteria. You

could touch base with the same people every day and trade aspects of what you're doing and that kind of thing. There's nothing that's really replaced the office subculture from the neighborhood.

As Sam attests, regardless of the capabilities of the "electronic cottage", there is still a need for human contact and interaction.

Perceptions of Community

Both Ahrentzen (1987) and Gurstein (1990) found that homeworkers were not particularly attached to their neighborhoods. In contrast, the interviews for the current study revealed that nearly half of the homeworkers had become more integrated into their neighborhoods, and felt more a part of them, since they had been working at home. Some people noticed how their neighborhoods changed over the course of a given day, and through different seasons. Steve, who lives in a predominantly residential neighborhood, explains it this way:

I guess I'm a little bit more attuned to the rhythms of the neighborhood than I would be -- just the sounds, when the school kids come and go across the street, and things like that, because I'm here all day.

Martin, who lives in mixed-use neighborhood, also pays more attention to his surroundings.

I know more about what's going on in the neighborhood than I used to. I'm around. Yes, I know more of what's going on than if I went to work at 8:30 in the morning and coming home at 6:00. I know who's in trouble financially in the neighborhood, which stores are cracking up, who went broke, who went out of

business.....you become aware of various things in the neighborhood because you're wandering around. You do see things, you look at buildings differently.

Sometimes this enhanced awareness of what goes on in the neighborhood is carried one step further. Felicia, who lives in a primarily residential neighborhood of single family houses, noted that she feels somewhat protective of the block on which she lives.

I'm much more aware of what goes on during the day here, and I keep my eye on things.

For Joan, a graphic artist who also lives in a mixed-use community, it is the increased contact with people that has changed her sense of community.

I probably am more familiar with people in the neighborhood and what goes on in the neighborhood than I was before I was at home all the time. When you leave in the morning and you come back in the evening a lot of it is eliminated. I walk through the streets and I was noticing that I was saying hello to a lot of people and they were saying hello to me, and my daughter said, "Who's that?" And I don't really know. But they're familiar faces. It's just a familiar face that's there day after day. And my daughter laughed at me, and said this was like "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." And there is a sense of that.

It's not just the physical surroundings, there is a sense of making contact with people everyday, even though you're not talking to them, necessarily. I have made work connections just from being around. I've done flyers, programs for dinners, and the local xerox place which I use a lot has my business card. That occurs just from being around during the day. I think that if you're gone for 8 or 9 hours a day, there's a whole part of what's here that you don't see.

For homeworkers like Joan, being around during the day has contributed to a greater sense of community, fostered by seeing familiar faces every day, and providing informal work

opportunities, with people in the same neighborhood using each other's services.

Other homeworkers also feel that being at home more often has given them a greater sense of attachment to their communities. Calvin, who lives in a primarily residential area, punctuated by stores and shopping streets, appreciates the distinctiveness of his neighborhood.

This neighborhood has actually helped me a lot in my selling. It's a nice name, professors know it. It's given me more of a sense of place than I would have had before, I think. I like it.

Karen, who lives in a neighborhood similar to that of Calvin, notes that her community may hold a different meaning for her because she uses it more fully than office workers.

It's probably a bit different, in the sense that people who work in Manhattan and come home to Brooklyn kind of think of Brooklyn as a bedroom community, and Manhattan is a place they HAVE to go every day. I love this neighborhood for residential purposes -- I think it's great. My kids have both gone to public schools and they play in the park and their friends are all nearby and it's very cozy and convenient, and charming.

Rick, who had been working at home for only six months, had recent first-hand experience of the difference between leaving the neighborhood for the whole day, and being at home during that time.

I was working in Manhattan and putting in really long hours and came home later in the evening, so I never really saw what happened here during the day, in terms of who was on the street, or walking to the stores, or things like that. Now I do that, so the perspective has changed. I'm more involved in what's going on in the area, certainly with the kids -- and I think that if I ever go back to a more traditional work

environment, then my attitude as to how much time I will spend at the office, versus how much time elsewhere, will change. I'm pretty sure of that. I have a greater appreciation of what I missed.

Summary: Neighborhoods as Supports for Home-based Work

For most homeworkers in this study, the neighborhoods in which they live provide the types of supports needed for both their households and work. The services available include copying, faxing, mailing, shopping, business supplies, and recreation. In some cases, however, there was a lack of fit between homeworkers' household or business needs and the resources available in their immediate neighborhoods. This was usually not perceived as a problem. Only a few of these homeworkers found the necessity of traveling some distance to obtain necessary supplies an inconvenience, and desired more services in their neighborhoods. Others either enjoyed the residential quality of their neighborhoods, and considered traveling downtown for supplies a fair tradeoff, or were content to have a reason to go downtown on occasion. Many of the homeworkers who found particular supplies unavailable nearby relied heavily on mail-orders. Interestingly, the one homeworkeer in this study who lived in an industrial neighborhood complained about the lack residential services nearby, such as a laundromat and grocery store.

For many of these homeworkers, being at home more often during the day has clearly changed the ways in which they interact with and feel about their neighborhoods. They are more attuned to the daily life of the community, and some have become more connected with their neighborhoods.

This finding is particularly interesting in light of previous research on homeworkers (i.e., Ahrentzen, 1987; Gurstein, 1990) which found no relationship between working at home and attachments to community. Some of the discrepancy between the findings of previous research and the current study may be attributed to the differences in the geographic location of the homeworkers in each study. Both of the previous studies included homeworkers who lived in a broad range of communities, from rural to urban. While the relative proportions of Ahrentzen's sample (1987) were not reported, Gurstein's (1990) sample was more than one-third urban, one third suburban, and one quarter "mature suburban," which was defined as an area which had been a suburb, but has since added services and denser development due to the growth around it (p. 123). The current study, in contrast, consisted wholly of homeworkers residing and working within the limits of a large urban area.

The experience of working at home for urban versus suburban or rural dwellers may be fundamentally different, due to the divergent physical characteristics of each type of community. While suburban and rural communities have

been planned around the primacy of the automobile, in New York City particularly, neighborhoods are designed primarily for those without private vehicles. In suburban and rural communities, zoning restrictions separate residences from commercial and business areas, necessitating driving some distance for business purposes. In many urban areas, and perhaps particularly in New York City, there is a geographical mix of residential and commercial uses within a few blocks, so that each neighborhood meets a diversity of personal and business needs. For homeworkers, mixed-use settings provide opportunities to conduct business (as well as personal) errands at any time during the day, within close walking distances of their residences. Therefore, the types of relationships that individuals develop with their rural, suburban, and urban communities are qualitatively different.

ENDNOTES

1. The term "home" evokes particular images and associations which may differ widely. Other terms, such as "dwelling place" or "living space", which have been used in other parts of this dissertation, have fewer normative associations attached to them. However, because most of the literature on meanings of home/living space uses the term "home" almost exclusively, that term will be utilized in this section as well.
2. For household incomes, see Table 3 on page 37.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

For some, the recent resurgence of working at home, particularly for white collar workers, has held great hope for altering the structure of work and the sexual division of labor within households, expanding paid work opportunities for women and the physically challenged, and redefining the meaning of community. While such home-based work will continue to have the potential for all of these changes, the participants of this study have contributed to a greater understanding of the benefits and limitations of working at home, and the factors that impinge on its potential. This study has attempted to explore how the dynamics of paid work and domestic life are expressed and reflected in the creation of workspaces, the function and symbolism of spaces in the dwelling, and in relationships to the surrounding community.

Within a culture which subscribes to narrow definitions of work, it can be difficult to find alternative ways of working or balancing one's career and household needs. American corporations have shown little support for family needs. For example, flextime arrangements are far less flexible than anticipated. Only a few employers provide day care facilities. There is little (if any) institutionalized support for the creative arts, and starting an independent business can be a costly endeavor.

Many individuals and households are looking to themselves for alternative ways of working that best suit their needs and resources. These alternatives include split shifts for working parents who cannot afford or do not want to rely on paid child care, part-time work, freelance work, and home-based work. Home-based work is often viewed as a temporary work pattern, either for mothers of young children, or those starting a business. The need for women, in particular, to search for alternative work arrangements in order to accommodate their family responsibilities, reflects the continued inequity in our society which places the burden of both paid work and family responsibilities on women. This burden is not simply a cultural ideology, but is maintained through political and economic means.

This chapter highlights some of the conclusions that can be drawn from this dissertation. This discussion includes a critique of some previous research on home-based work. Subsequently, I outline broader issues related to the dissertation, including theories of gender and environments and sociophysical space. Suggestions for further research are presented within each section.

Separations and Connections Between Home and Work

Working at home alters the relationship between home and work in many ways. The definition of work, when taken outside of the traditional conventions of employment in a workplace, is fundamentally changed. Meanings of home also evolve when home is not juxtaposed to work, but includes work. Within the dwelling, the functions of spaces and the connections and separations among them may change. This section discusses each of these issues.

Meanings of Work

In contemporary society, work is generally defined as paid employment. Other forms of paid work are often qualified by some identifying characteristic, such as "freelance" work, or "independent consulting." Regardless of the type of work engaged in, it is generally agreed that if one is paid for a task, it can then be defined as work. Unpaid tasks may be less easily or clearly designated as work. Is job-hunting, which involves considerable time, effort, activity, and energy, construed as work?

Work is socially, as well as individually, constructed. Political, social, and economic contexts impact whether or not a particular task is considered as work. The place in which these tasks are conducted is also significant. Since

industrialization segregated paid work from unpaid work, men's work from women's work, and the workplace from the home, work conducted in the home has generally been devalued.

Home-based work provides opportunities for restructuring the way in which work is conventionally defined and conducted. This can be seen on both individual and more global levels. While some homeworkers work during "traditional" hours, others prefer to work according to their own preferences and rhythms, whether in small, separated chunks of time, or in the middle of the night. Concentrated periods of engaging in paid work can allow for indulging in unpaid work or leisure. Decisions regarding the restriction of children from the workspace, or encouraging the involvement of children in work tasks, are decidedly personal.

Home-based work also provides opportunities for individuals and households to re-position themselves in relation to the economy. During times of relative economic hardship, when full-time employment options are limited, working at home can allow for a more diversified, yet steady income. In fact, many homeworkers engage in more than one type of work. Having one's own business at home (without the pressure of paying an overhead in additional rent) allows many homeworkers to pursue secondary interests, diversify their businesses, and divide their time among

several different types of tasks. Such diversification of paid work may be more intrinsically rewarding, not just for homeworkers, but for many people who typically engage in one type of paid work.

The meanings of working at home may differ according to gender roles. The meaning and implication of work for women is complicated by different cultural meanings that have been associated with women, women's work, and women's relationship to the home and household responsibilities (Ahrentzen, 1991). Home-based work is often viewed as a means for professional women with children to more easily engage in paid work while also having the primary responsibility for their households and families. This view is problematic for two reasons. First, the present study indicates that married women with children who work at home full-time hire caregivers for their children, and sometimes housekeepers to help maintain their homes. Women who do not have such financial resources, or who want to be more actively involved in their children's activities, often work at home part-time, being primarily supported by someone else's income. Thus, full-time homeworking women generally have the same kinds of support they would need to work outside of the home (and similar supports that men who work full-time have), changing little except the place in which they work. White collar women who work at home part-time (as well as women who work outside the home part-time) must

usually sacrifice critical aspects of their careers, including receiving challenging work, opportunities for advancement, income, and professional self-esteem.

Meanings of Home

Just as home-based work can change the nature of work, it can also alter the nature of dwellings. The term "home" has many strong associations in North American culture, and there are many assumptions about what home is and should be. Common idioms profess that "home is where the heart is" and "there's no place like home." Home is often described as a refuge, a place of comfort, a place for family, a haven in a heartless world. Despite these standard portrayals of home, in reality home has always meant different things to different people, depending on their social and financial circumstances, backgrounds, and personalities.

In a review of literature and research on meanings of home, Depres (1991) documents both selective biases (e.g., types of households and settings studied) and interpretive biases (e.g., overlooking societal influences). Both Depres' review and the findings from this dissertation attest to the importance of investigating meanings and experiences of home in the context of non-traditional households.

The findings from this study reveal a broad spectrum of

meanings and uses of homes. For some, the physical structure of the dwelling was of primary importance, either in a positive or negative way. The existing feelings about the physical features of the dwelling (either as enjoyable or inadequate) were often intensified by working at home. Other homeworkers' meanings of home were influenced by the interplay between paid work and domestic life within their households. Home was seen as a supportive structure for both types of activities, as an intrusion of work into domestic life, or a combination of both, with the home viewed at once as self-sufficient and confining.

Given particular economic, physical, and social circumstances, spatial tradeoffs were often made, sacrificing comfort or convenience in the domestic realm for perceived benefits in other realms, whether financial or in terms of paid work. Whatever meanings of home were expressed, none were reminiscent of the idealized domestic refuge. While some people clearly derived enjoyment from their homes and spending time in them, meanings of home seemed to be complex and sometimes contradictory; meanings were reflective of the current reality of people's lives, which encompassed both work and domesticity in one place.

Workspaces

The functions of spaces within the dwelling and the creation of workspaces were both dependent in large part on individual priorities concerning paid work and domestic life, and perceived gender roles and social relationships within households -- as well as the nature and amount of space available. The degree of separation or overlap between paid work and household activities was also related to those factors (and to specific work needs), not to where a workspace was located. Spatial constraints, interestingly, were not critical factors in the separation or integration of work and household activities. It was possible for a conventional separation of work and home to be maintained even in dwellings with little or no "extra" space. Thus, workspaces located in bedrooms often shared characteristics similar to workspaces located in separate rooms, in terms of their relationship to the rest of the dwelling and to domestic activities. The use and meaning of conventionally labeled spaces (e.g., bedrooms) for other purposes can change not simply the function of that space, but also its relationship to other parts of the housing unit.

Despite the diversity of spatial arrangements for working at home, ideas about ideal workspaces were quite similar. Most of the homeworkers expressed a desire for a

greater separation of paid work from domestic life, ranging from separate rooms with doors to separate structures near or attached to the dwelling. In one sense, this yearning for more distinction between work and domestic activities may seem contradictory to decisions people have made to work at home. However, as noted earlier, home-based work often represents a compromise -- to reconcile conflicting demands of the home and the workplace, or to have autonomy in one's work life without sacrificing income. The desire for the ideal life co-exists with -- and may be the result of -- the social, economic, and spatial constraints of reality.

Perhaps for many people, the separation of paid work and domestic life has been so deeply ingrained, both on individual and cultural levels, that it is difficult to reconcile the two. The desire for greater separation may also reflect the types of work-related tasks represented in this sample. In Beach's (1989) study, for example, homeworkers (particularly the women) wanted a greater degree of integration of work and domestic activities than did homeworkers in the present study. Almost all of the women in Beach's study had jobs that could relatively easily withstand periodic interruptions, such as knitting, sewing, and hairdressing.

Meanings of workspaces in the present study varied, not as a function of the physical characteristics of the spaces, but according to the equilibrium of work and domestic roles

in one's life. An imbalance or tension among roles was expressed in dissatisfaction with workspaces. Those for whom paid work was currently both important and satisfying, found their workspaces to be reflections and reminders of professional identity, regardless of location or appearance. In fact, workspaces associated with professionalism included bedrooms and kitchens, as well as spaces resembling traditional offices. What these workspaces had in common (with one exception) was that they were all separated from domestic activities.

For many of the women with children in this study, working at home was the outcome of a struggle between paid work and domestic roles. In some cases, this struggle was evident in the spatial patterns of working at home, with women working in spaces that were not separated from domestic activities. However, even having separate, exclusive workspaces (and paid caregivers for their children) did not eliminate that struggle. Women who had these supports were still torn between wanting to be involved with their children, and experiencing a loss of professional self-esteem due to working at home part-time. This indicates that physical design elements are not solutions to all of the problems experienced when working at home, although having a separate workspace, as well as non-physical gatekeepers, can facilitate having uninterrupted work time.

Design and Gender Issues in Home Workspaces

Design solutions, however, have been advocated by other researchers (Christensen, 1988; Ahrentzen, 1992; Gurstein, 1990), to alleviate some of the problems with working at home. Working in the "privacy" of one's abode lacks the external structure and public validation of the workplace. Women and men alike periodically struggled with low professional self-esteem, and had difficulty measuring themselves against conventional definitions and expectations regarding work and productivity. Women, however, were also subject to the sexist attitudes of family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and clients, who treated them with a lack of professional regard. As others have also found (Horwitz, 1986; Christensen, 1988; Ahrentzen, 1990), women who work at home are often perceived first as being at home, and only secondarily as working.

Christensen (1988) and Ahrentzen (1990) (and to some extent, Gurstein (1990)) recommend that homeworkers, and particularly women), have separate workspaces with doors, in addition to strict household rules, and rigid work schedules in order to enhance their professional credibility. Their views suggest that by essentially emulating the temporal and physical boundaries between work and domestic life that are found in the workplace, it is possible to alter the perceptions of others towards women working at home. This suggestion is based on two findings: 1) people's responses

regarding "ideal" workspaces, indicating a desire for greater separation of paid work and domestic activities; and 2), outlined above, the perception of women homeworkers as being home first, and only secondarily working.

There are problems with the conclusion that is based on those findings. First, drawing conclusions and design suggestions from responses regarding ideal spaces is inappropriate. People's visions of perfect spaces are more informative when compared with their present situations, than when taken literally. These ideal scenarios may indicate what people envision for the future, or the ways in which people might wish to alter their circumstances, if that were possible. Ideals include not only a vision of a workspace that does not presently exist, but also a household context that does not exist, and generally cannot be individually altered. In some cases, and particularly in households with children and no paid caregivers, a separate, closed-off workspace would not be feasible.

Second, in terms of the perceptions of others toward homeworkers, it is unclear whether having a separate workspace would make any difference in changing those perceptions. Individual priorities concerning paid work and domestic activities, and a shared understanding of those priorities by other household members, friends, and relatives, seems to be most important in impacting perceptions toward homeworkers. While having a clearly

delineated space in which to engage in paid work may help to reinforce the importance of work for some people, it certainly is not necessary, nor does it guarantee the enhancement of homeworkers' professional credibility. The findings of this dissertation have indicated that it is not necessary to have a separate, enclosed workspace in order for others to respect the professionalism of the homemaker. And, in fact, some women with separate workspaces (and paid caregivers for their children) still experience negative perceptions from others.

The hope that home-based work will promote gender equity within households seems to have little foundation. Although the present study did not specifically investigate the sharing of household and childcare tasks, few of the men with children mentioned any engagement in those activities while working. Even Beach (1989), whose findings suggest that men do engage in some household and childcare tasks when working at home, noted that the men were buffered from interruptions by having separate home workspaces.

The gender inequity that is present both in households and in the workplace cannot be erased simply by changing the setting in which paid work is conducted. Unless there is a conscious decision to alter the gender roles within a heterosexual household, it is likely that existing patterns will continue, albeit in a different context.

Gender and Environments

Much of the literature on gender and sociophysical space regards women as a generic category (e.g., Spain, 1992; Wekerle, Peterson, & Morley, 1980), and diminishes the importance of differences among women. The rare distinctions that are made are generally by age, marital status, the presence or absence of children, and occasionally, race and income; other factors, such as ethnicity and sexual orientation, are held to be equal. Heterosexual relationships, for example, are assumed to be the only possible relationship within households, rather than as only one kind of social relationship.

This dissertation has begun to document connections of social relationships to the experience and meanings of space within households. The types of social relationships existing in households, and sometimes perceived gender roles, are an integral part of people's relationships with and experiences in sociophysical space. White, married women may have little in common with white, lesbian women living with partners in terms of normative gender roles within their dwellings and how those roles affect the use and meanings of space. For example, for people in gendered relationships (that is, women and men living in social relationships together), the creation of home workspaces was dependent in part on gender roles within households. For

those living in lesbian and gay relationships with partners, gender roles were less clearly differentiated, and therefore had little impact on the uses and meanings of space. When sexual relations were not the basis for living situations (i.e., adults as roommates), the acquisition of space was largely dependent on who was living in the dwelling first.

There is also great diversity, even among people with similar ethnicities and sexual orientations, in the ways in which gender roles are expressed and reflected spatially. Priorities of paid work and domestic roles are quite varied, both among women and among men. The practice of ignoring the diversity of social relations and perceived gender roles obscures, rather than elucidates, our understanding of the connections between gender and space. As Elizabeth Spelman (1988, p. 187) notes:

though all women are women, no woman is only a woman. Those of us who have engaged in it must give up the hunt for the generic woman -- the one who is all and only woman, who by some miracle of abstraction has no particular identity in terms of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, nationality.

This can also be applied to men. Most studies which purport to study "gender" in actuality have used it as a substitute term for "sex."

Future studies examining relationships among work, households, and family would benefit from the use of gender and gender relations as organizing constructs in their broadest sense, rather than simply contrasting the experiences of women and men. While it is important to

consider the differences between women's and men's histories, circumstances, and experiences, it is also critical to acknowledge differences within gender and gendered relations.

Understanding Person-Environment Relationships

In addition to the implications this dissertation has for research on gender and environments, broader theoretical issues have also been raised. These issues concern the way in which person-environment relations has sometimes been conceptualized, and the limited validity of such concepts. This section does not intend to provide an overview of theoretical issues in the area of person-environment relations, but rather to outline some problems with one type of conceptualization, and to offer support for an alternative theoretical perspective.

Some of the research and theory in the field of person-environment relations has assumed, to varying extents, a rather deterministic relationship between physical settings and behavior. Weisman (1992), for example, stated that social relations among people are shaped by built forms. . This perspective has been echoed in some ways by others, including Dolores Hayden. In her 1980 article "What would a non-sexist city be like?" she calls on architects and

planners to transform the spatial environments that women use, with the underlying assumptions that: 1) transforming space will transform behavior and experience; and 2) space is created only by certain institutions and individuals, and is simply used by others.

More recent theoretical approaches suggest that people transform the sociophysical spaces in which they live and work in daily life, through meanings as well as actions (e.g., Wolfe, 1992). The premise of this approach is that within larger contexts (i.e., political, economic, social, etc.), individuals are active creators of their own identities and environments. While this perspective shares some common ground with certain philosophers and social theorists, it differs in important ways. Giddens, a social theorist, and Pred (1986), a geographer, have both addressed the relationship between the routine practices of everyday life and the production of space. Their focus, however, favors the macro (i.e., political, social, cultural) over the micro (i.e., individual) level of analysis. LeFebvre (1991) also discusses everyday spatial practices through the use and labeling/naming of space, but is concerned primarily with the relationships of space to capitalist modes of production.

The perspective advocated here embraces both the broader, contextual issues of the production of space and the importance of individual daily experience in the making

of space. In this dissertation, work and home are viewed as part of an economic, political, sociocultural, and historical system that attempts to define and circumscribe activities within given settings, and who should be in those settings. Within this context, people work and live in spaces, not simply by using them, but through their individual experiences they create, recreate, and appropriate spaces through meanings and symbols. Bedrooms are recreated into workspaces (where one happens to sleep as well) through the consistent ways in which they are used for work purposes, the perceptions and interpretations by the homemaker and other household members of the space as a workspace, and the way in which the space is labeled as a "workspace," rather than a "bedroom." Work "tools," whether books, computers, fax machines, or other items, symbolize a particular kind of place, with special meanings associated with it. Both physically and conceptually, the space has been transformed, though not through any design attributes or interventions.

The process through which space is created by individuals is related to how those individuals define themselves, not simply on the basis of the kinds of spaces that are available to them. Gender roles and priorities concerning paid work and household/child-related responsibilities are intertwined with the ways in which space is created in dwellings. This study has indicated

that even in households with adequate space to accommodate a place designated only for work purposes, such a space may not be appropriated, or may be given up if another household member has a need for it as well. Gender roles and relations do not change when the nature or amount of space available in a dwelling changes, nor necessarily when the composition of a household changes.

Physical design itself cannot change social relations (Madigan & Munro, 1991). Concepts such as the "gendering of space," therefore, must be conceptualized in a more complex way than simply as the reflection of gender-based assumptions about roles and relations (i.e., Weisman, 1992; Spain, 1992). While the power of sociocultural and political forces (e.g., patriarchy) in creating gendered spaces should not be diminished, the power of individual action and experience should not be dismissed. The making of space by individuals through meanings, words, and symbols, is as important in daily life (particularly for those working at home) as is space designed by "professionals" (Manzo & Wolfe, 1990).

Implications for Design

The making of space by individuals does not imply that design is unimportant. The design of homes can facilitate or constrain the creation of workspaces. Designers should make provisions for maximum flexibility of spaces in

dwellings, anticipating a diversity of needs and temporal changes in household composition. This can be accomplished primarily through the use of a simple design element -- the door. Opportunities should be provided for both separating and connecting spaces with doors, allowing for spaces to serve whatever function is important in a particular household. "Convertible" dining rooms are one example from this study of spaces that can be used for different purposes over time, depending on the needs of the household. The design and labeling of single-purpose spaces inhibits their use, and makes altering the function of that space problematic. New housing design should consider longitudinal changes in household structure and needs, emphasizing flexible spaces that can be used as necessary.

Despite the relatively small sample size of this study, and the homogeneity of its participants in terms of race and class, this dissertation has also outlined several implications for urban planning and design. On a community level, the New York City experience of working at home can serve as a useful model. In order to provide opportunities for informal social contact within neighborhoods, it seems to be important to provide business-related services (and perhaps recreational facilities as well) within walking distance of residences. Working at home in suburban locations which adhere to single-use zoning policies, as Gurstein's (1990) study attests, can be a lonely experience.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it is clear that in order to achieve gender equity in both households and the labor force, alternatives to the conventional separation of paid work from domestic life need to be found. Home-based work represents only one of these alternatives. The integration of housing with workplaces and support services, including business-related, household, and childcare needs, would go a long way towards providing people with more viable options for working and engaging in domestic life.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background Information:

Age

Household income group: less than \$5,000; \$5,000 - 14,999; \$15,000 - 24,999; \$25,000 - 49,999; \$50,000 -75,000; over \$75,000

Partner/Spouse or household members occupation

Type of home-based work

Number of years working at home

Average number of hours worked at home/week

Average number of hours worked outside home/week

Number of children

Ages of children (if any)

I. Community:

a). Tell me about what you do each day, from the time you get up to the time you go to sleep.

(probe: what facilities/services are used for working

what facilities/services are used for recreation)

b). What kinds of facilities/services do you need or want for working or recreation that are unavailable in the community? What about facilities for domestic and/or child-care needs? Have you used different facilities since you've been working at home?

c). Have your interactions with your neighbors changed at all since you've been working at home?

d). Has the way you view your community changed since you've been working at home?

II. Home:

a). How and why did you start working at home?

b). How do you feel about using your home for your business/work?

(probe: advantages/disadvantages)

c). (In conjunction with walking tour of home):
How are the spaces in your home used every day?
Are there any spaces or rooms that have a special significance to someone in the household?

(probe: physical, social and symbolic aspects)

How, if at all, do those activities or uses affect your working at home?

d). Where are other household members when you are working? (probe: how do they affect your working -- in terms of time schedule, place you work in, privacy, etc.)

e). Has your attitude or feeling about your home changed since you've been working here?

III. Workspace:

a). How did you decide where to have your workspace? (probe: were there any other possibilities--unused or under-used spaces; why did you not choose certain spaces)

b). Have you considered making any physical changes in your home to better serve your working here? (probe: how would those changes affect others in the household)

Having worked at home, what changes, if any, would you make if you could design a home with the intention of doing home-based work there?

c). What does your workspace mean to you? To others in your household?

d). (In conjunction with model exercise): What would your ideal workspace be in your current home?

APPENDIX B: HOME WORKSPACES AND WORKING STYLES
PERCEIVED WORK AND DOMESTIC ROLES

	WORK IS ESSENTIAL	AUTONOMOUS CREATORS: INDEPENDENT WORKERS	STRUGGLE BETWEEN WORK AND DOMESTIC ROLES	WORK ROLES BLENDED WITH DOMESTIC
SEPARATED, EXCLUSIVE WORKSPACE	Sam: 2 children Rick: 2 children Fred: 1 child Marcia: 2 children Karen: 2 children	Steve: No children Martin: No children Alan: No children	Amy: 2 children Felicia: 2 children	Andrew: 2 children
SEPARATED, SHARED WORKSPACE		Yvette: No children	Julie: 2 children Nancy: 1 child	
UNBOUNDED WORKSPACE	Beth: 1 child Peter: 1 child	Steve: No children Kevin: No children Alex: No children Eric: Grown child	Robin: 2 children Joan: 2 children Holly: 1 older child Christine: 1 older child	Gary: 2 children Leslie: 2 children Heidi: No children
WORKING "ALL OVER" DWELLING		Felix: No children Calvin: No children Yvette: No children	Lisa: 2 children	Bob: No children

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