

Pin Money of the Day: Home-Based Women Workers at Gazi Mahallesi

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the ways in which women who produce commodities at home are subjected both to patriarchal operations in society, and to labor exploitation in capitalist relations of production. It also argues that the main characteristic of today's industrial home-based work (HBW), with its increasing importance in the global structure of production, relies upon the spatial and temporal unity of women's domestic and productive labor. In this manner, HBW, as one of new spheres of production developed by contemporary capitalism, opens a new continent for rethinking the theories concerning women's subordination as based on the separation of home and workplace. On the other hand, the notion of working-day, which constitutes the spatial and temporal unity of their productive and reproductive labor, plays a key role not only for understanding the double nature of their subordination in terms both of gender and class, but also for developing an adequate struggle for their emancipation. In that sense, the study proposes a new conceptualization, the gendered working-day based on a qualitative analysis of the data obtained from a fieldwork conducted in Gazi Mahallesi, Turkey, in December 2012.

Keywords: Home-based work, subordination, domestic and productive labor.

¹ This study has been developed on Fulya Alikoç's Master's Thesis, "A Marxist Critique of Homeworking Women's Subordination" at the Middlesex University (the UK), The Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, MA in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory, 2009-2010. It has been revised based on the fieldwork conducted in December 2012. Fulya Alikoç is now studying at Bogazici University (Turkey), MA in Political Science and International Relations.

INTRODUCTION

He is at home when he is not working,
and when he is working he is not at home.

Karl Marx

My first encounter with industrial home-based woman workers actually dates back to six years ago, when I first saw women who embroidered on jeans by the doors of their homes in a neighborhood in Bağcılar. At that moment, there were numbers of questions concerning those women's lives in my mind. How could they be organized in a labor union? How could they manage to organize their domestic works and the works of home-based work (HBW)? How HBW works through operations of gender rules and capitalist exploitation? They were obviously working informally without any social security. They were communicating with the subcontractor who is another woman who was once like them. The labor contract was established verbally and individually. That is, they did not have any collective bargaining power simply because they were not working together under the same roof. When I started to converse with them, they told me that they were doing this in order to "contribute" to the family budget. Furthermore, there were practical advantages of working at home such that they had their time to undertake domestic duties. I derived two immediate conclusions. First, they did not see themselves as workers; they were not aware the fact that they were part of the working class. Second, although they worked almost all day long, they still saw the money they earned as a "contribution", rather than seeing themselves as proper wage-earners like their husbands or fathers. Two big concepts was slapping on their backs at the crossroads of capitalism and patriarchy: class and gender.

Then, I started to question Marxism and feminism(s) deeply within the context of home based production whose workers were predominantly women. This questioning directed me to write my MA thesis at the Middlesex University in London. Among my readings, those words quoted above from Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (74) were one of the most brilliant to depict the estrangement of man's labor under the capitalist mode of production. However, there appears a crisis when it comes to "working at home", and when the subject of the sentence is a "she" rather than a "he". Marxism was mostly dealing with the condition of proletariat, i.e. regular factory workers whereas most feminist theories were based on the separation of home and workplace as the underlying factor for women's subordination. Home based production, on the other hand, was shaking the basic assumptions of both. But, the fact was clear: those women,

as proper surplus value producers, was producing commodities within home as they looked after their children, washed the dishes, cooked, etc. It was a situation in which private and public spheres were spatially and temporally intermingled with each other, production with reproduction, and productive labor with reproductive labor in the Marxist sense of the terms. It was obvious that Marxist conception of labor exploitation should embark upon comprising gender categories in order to explain home working women's situation. The spatial and temporal unity of wage labor and domestic labor provoked me to think about Marxist notion of working-day.

Now, my principal question is whether the notion of working-day can be developed in such a way that women's domestic and care labor can also be included in explaining home working women's subordination and exploitation. What does a working-day mean to them? Or, leisure time, if they even have such a notion? I believe that Marxist notion of working-day endowed with gender categories might be helpful to understand and explain how capitalist exploitation and patriarchal operations intermingle with each other within the context of home based production prevalingly carried out by women. Needless to say, such an attempt to understand homeworking women's conditions will be guidance to one of my very first reactions to home-based woman workers, their problem of political and economic organization in unions, as Marx explains the source of the tension between the capitalist and the worker over the length of the working-day in *Capital*.

A CHALLENGING EFFORT: STUDYING HBW

In examining the existing literature on home-based work (HBW), it is essentially important to outline three categories of challenges to the study of the subject-matter, since those challenges and the efforts to respond them have played a great role in shaping the literature, both ontologically and methodologically. It also helps this research clarify how it undertakes the phenomenon.

First, formal and legal challenges in defining HBW as well as the employment status of home-based workers create difficulties in the substance of studies. Main problem revolves around the question of whether home-based workers, or homeworkers, are microentrepreneurs (self-employed, own-account, independent workers), or proper employees (dependent, contract wage earners). For the most part of the 20th century, homeworkers were prevalingly regarded as own-account workers in a formal manner, until the ILO Convention on Homework in 1996 offers a limitation on the definition of HBW in favor of dependent employee status

for male and female workers. According to this definition, people who produce goods and service at home, which are appointed by an employer, are considered as homeworkers as long as their work does not involve in certain degree of autonomy or independence under national laws (ILO, 1996). Although ILO's definition recognizes the dependence of homeworkers on employers, it leaves national regulations some leeway in which they put homeworkers into self-employment or semi-employment categories. For example, teleworking or mobile professionals' work can also be considered as home-based works but with a certain degree of autonomy and independence; they autonomously produce and trade goods or service in and from their properties. This dichotomy and ambiguity of the definition may result in the ignorance of the labor exploitation to which homeworkers are exposed, and of gendered context of the phenomenon (Prügl and Thinker 1997). Most of the critics of neoclassical liberalism which argues that contemporary organization of global economy and production has eliminated class conflicts between employees and employers, have developed their arguments on the basis of the criticism of harmful effects of such a formal and legal dichotomy concerning the definition of HBW on homeworkers, especially on women. They introduced homeworkers as proper wage earners, that is, dependent workers who are suffered from the growth of informal economy and flexible working.

Second challenge to the study of HBW is somewhat practical, which leads many scholars to put effort in developing a methodology for making research on HBW and homeworkers. The fact of increasing informalization and flexibility in labor market since 1970s has made it almost impossible to provide numbers, estimates, and figures for informal sectors, HBW in particular; this, therefore, channeled scholars to develop new conceptualizations and methods. Some of them focus on official statistics devoid of the classification of HBW, and re-evaluate the existing data from this standpoint (Chen, Substad and O'Connell 1999). Some others suggest that while the available data, in both national and global systems, provide limited information based on the household, enterprise or mixed surveys but enable some studies from both "enterprise and worker approach" (Unni 2000), the more surveys and in-depth studies which are disaggregated by sex are needed (Ferran 1998; Charmes 1998 and 2000; Kantor 2001). Despite all difficulties resulted from the informal character of HBW, there are some figures available. For example, HBW constitutes more than 10 percent of non-agricultural workforce (ILO 2002, 48), or in developing countries, garment and textile sectors rely upon home-based labor in a range from 25 to 60 percent (Chen, Sebstad, and O'Connell 606). Also, such sex-disaggregated studies estimate that among more than 100 million

homeworkers all around the world, more than 50% are women (WIEGO 2010); 80% in South Asia (Sinha 2006, 10).

Although these studies give us some clues about the increasing weight of HBW in the global economy, the fact that most of them rely upon statistical data and income-based approaches, rather than focusing on production process itself limits their capability to explain the causal mechanisms in which homeworking women confront both patriarchal operations and capitalist exploitation. Since the 1970s, structural changes in global economy in response to its systemic crisis, such as decentralization and dispersal of production, have entailed increasing labor market flexibility, the weakening (even absence) of the labor contract, rise in income inequality and worker differentiation, institutional questions related to ownership and appropriation of production, and gender-related socially ascribed positions in society and within the household (Beneria and Floro 2004). Taking advantage of those aspects of informalization process, industrial bodies have developed new forms of putting-out systems in which they can hire workers easily and immediately during periods of expansion, who are expendable without any cost during the times of recession (Elson 1196).

Furthermore, the need for establishing the organic relationship between the formal and the informal sectors has been mostly satisfied sub-contracting chains. An immediate outcome of this process in terms of the working class has been the reduction of labor contract to an individual and verbal agreement. In other words, the working class in the informal sectors has been disarmed of the opportunities of collective bargaining power. The supply of cheap labor in the informal economy also created a discrepancy between wages of subcontracted workers and of regular factory workers in the formal economy, therefore, deepened the competition within these sectors of the working class. In this regard, gender-based worker differentiation has become more apparent in such a way that the concentration of female labor force in the informal economy confronted with its male counterpart in the formal, as some define this phenomenon as "feminization of labor-force" (Standing 1989).

HBW appeared to be the major sub-contracting mechanism in terms of women's involvement in this informal labor market. However, in addition to the informalization and flexibilization processes which underpins the large-scale women employment in HBW, two seemingly opposite forces of neoliberal policies, which paved the way for two seemingly opposite movement of female labor should also be stated. Privatization and commercialization of certain social services, such as care for children, the

elderly and infirm which was provided once by the state to a certain extent, led to “housewifization of women” because those services has become unaffordable for the household budget, on the one hand; the deepening of poverty and the sharp decrease in the household income left women no choice but earn money, therefore led to “proletarianization of women” on the other hand (Prügl 1996, 46). HBW appeared as a solution in which these two forces no longer conflicted.

This conclusion brings us to the third challenge, the theoretical one, which constitutes the focus of this research. In the simultaneous processes of “housewifization of female labor power” and “proletarianization of housewives”, HBW represents the spatial and temporal unity of domestic labor practices and wage-labor practices. I agree with the argument that HBW violates the rules of separation between home and work, between the private and the public, on which many feminists base their theories of women’s subordination by criticizing the attributions of femininity to home and masculinity to work; that is rules of global construction of gender rules (Prügl 1999, 19). This requires rethinking the relationship between class and gender, capitalism and patriarchy as well as critically re-evaluating feminist theories and Marxism. It also requires new conceptualizations and methodologies to deal with the dual exploitation of female labor. Since reevaluation of the extraordinarily broad content of feminist thinking is beyond the capacity of this research, I will just present a brief sketch in order to find my own road to deal with the problem. For this purpose I will limit my review to Marxist and materialist feminisms by leaving out main radical feminist theories which undertakes female and male sexes either as supra-class categories (Millet 1970) or as ever-existing and universal antagonist “class” categories (Firestone 1971; Delphy 1977). I also leave aside those who suggest a feminist struggle for remuneration of women’s domestic labor (unpaid “housewife works” and care labor) so that women can be more powerful economically and politically (Edmond and Fleming 1975; Federici 1975), as they have been largely criticized because of their failure in pointing out the relationship between women’s domestic labor and its relation to the capitalist mode of production (Landes 1980) Although all of these theories have significant value on their own part and within their historical context, the absence of an adequate differentiation between women’s productive labor (producing commodities) and reproductive labor (reproducing human species and social life) in their theorization is far from providing us with the tools by which HBW can be questioned at the conjunction of these two types of labor. Marxist and materialist feminisms, on the other hand, give us some reference points of argument.

Among others, Heidi Hartmann plays a fundamental role on the discussion between feminism and Marxism. Her identification of contemporary world as a binary system, namely patriarchal capitalism is one of the first systematic theories of women's subordination based on the separation of home and work. Men's control over women's labor power, as the material basis of patriarchy, is secured and intensified by men's mass involvement in the labor market and women's confinement to home. Although there seems a conflict between men and capitalists on who will benefit from female labor, since patriarchy and capitalism together has formed a binary system, the conflict is being eliminated by the replacement of women at home in which they reinforce men's superior labor market position and its continuity, in which they give birth to new workers, as observable in the family-wage system by the late 19th century (Hartmann 1981, 22). Accordingly, the effects of capitalist development have always been in the direction of "housewifization"; Marxism, Hartmann argues, failed to anticipate that capitalism's tendency to proletarianize as many people as possible is obscured by patriarchy. HBW alone is sufficient to show how capitalism always finds a way for exploiting productive labor whenever it needs, and separation of home and work does not constitute a challenge in this regard.

Another approach suggests that the social construction of women's biological capacity of fertility as a gender category, which maps itself on the separation of home and work, determines women's movement in and out of the labor market (Armstrong and Armstrong 1986). In this regard, the hierarchical relationship between their productive and reproductive tasks, in which the former is superior over the latter, becomes observable (Alexander 1976). As a result, the privatization of motherhood within home impoverishes women's economic and political power (Rich 1995). Similar arguments can be presented in terms of the separation of public and private sphere, codified as male and female domains respectively. The development of industrial capitalism has not eliminated the sexual division of these social spheres but, on the contrary, reinforced it since household management has increasingly lost its public character and become a private domain to which women were confined as they were excluded from public sphere of production (Imray and Middleton 1983). The specificity of HBW, the spatial and temporal unity of the commodity production and social reproduction at home makes all these theories incapable of explaining the material basis for homeworking women's double exploitation in the capitalist society.

However, it is also not true that the integration of industrial production into the household entails the elimination of the spatial separation. Industrialization and women's mass participation in labor force has made

this separation which was once a material basis for women's oppression during proto-industrialization only refer to the locations where the appropriation of women's both domestic and productive labor takes place (Engels 2010, 104-105), rather than referring to the source of their exploitation. I agree with this Marxist presupposition since regardless of where women work, or whether they produce commodities or service, they cannot escape from being responsible for their domestically defined duties. Then, the question still remains unanswered: what is the material basis for women's exploitation and oppression in contemporary capitalist society?

Drawing from the critique of Marxist feminist approaches mentioned above, it can be said that it must somewhat related to the relationship between women's productive and reproductive activity. Which one pre-determines and conditions the other? According to most of Marxist feminists, limitations drawn by patriarchal operations on capitalist relations of production entail the control of reproductive labor on productive labor. However, HBW is a form of production in which women find a way to produce goods despite all dominant patriarchal relations confining them to home. This shows us that the material basis for the oppression relies upon the distinction and relationship between the relations of reproduction and production, between "the form of the organization of sexual division of labor in the home and production" and "the historical specific form of organization of procreation and sexuality", rather than the separation between home and work (McDonough and Harrison 1978, 39). According to this materialist feminist approach, women's subjection to capitalist relations of production is mediated through men's control over women. Although I agree with materialist feminism's formulation of the material basis of oppression, I believe that the mediation mentioned must be extended beyond men's control, to the familial organization in contemporary capitalism in which women's labor can function as both care workers and industrial workers, as in the case of HBW. Therefore, there emerges a need for new conceptualization, for a concept through which the spatial and temporal unity of production and reproduction relations, and the relationship between those relations which is concretized within home can be explained.

At this point, the existing studies on HBW draw a distinction in terms of power relations in the family unit (between men and women) and in relations of production (between capitalist and homeworking women). On the one hand, the argument that women's confinement to home can be converted into an economic opportunity suggests that women, especially those with someone to look after children, the elderly or infirm, who would stay at home anyways, gain economic power with HBW in face of their husbands or fathers as they enter into labor force (Miraftab 1996).

Furthermore, HBW, by increasing the capitalist control over women's labor, breaks the men power imposed upon women in the household (Weis 1996). This seems essentially true because where some industries are organized seasonally in rural areas, the household income mostly depends on HBW in which the work is organized by women in the household (Susilastuti 1996, 137). Therefore, women's power to organize HBW and their earnings provide a relative autonomy against their husbands; HBW might affect power relations within the family in favor of women's empowerment.

On the other hand, some studies focus on power relations at macro levels. The atomization of labor force, individualization and verbalization of labor contract weakens workers' bargaining power against employers. Homeworking women's spatial and temporal isolation from the public sphere of production (where production is carried out outside home, in factories, mills, farms, workshops, etc.) also paves the way for the reduction of the opportunity of organization, unionization, or collective resistance (Mies 1982; Beneria Roldan 1987; Balaban and Sarioğlu 2007). However, there are some studies which show that these two approaches of power relations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that there are some examples in which homeworking women use their economic power that they gain from HBW and transform it into political power by organizing in associations and unions as a result of long-run struggles (Dagg 1996; Lazo 1996).

None of these studies in the existing literature provides a well-defined picture in terms how relations of production and of reproduction interact with each other in their simultaneous practice in the home. Before proceeding to my research question which also proposes a solution to this gap in the literature, I would like to outline my basic premises that I have discussed so far. First, as far as this research is concerned, HBW refers to industrial production carried out by "real workers" (dependent wage earners) who are predominantly women. In other words, it does not include semi-employment or own-account work. Second, although income-based statistical approaches provide us with the weight of HBW in the contemporary global economy, they are limited in terms of delineating the causal mechanisms the oppression and exploitation of homeworking women. Therefore, I adopt a production-based approach. Third, HBW's specific character posing a new question for intra- and inter-relations of class and gender disconfirms any theory (feminist or liberal) of gender rules based on the separation of home and work, of public and private spheres. Rather, it operates through the distinction and relationship between the relations of production and reproduction. Therefore, the object of the study must be the relationship between women's domestic and productive

(waged) labors within their spatial and temporal unity in the household. Fourth, criticizing or evaluating HBW from the stand point of micro and macro relations of power can only point out to the effects of causal mechanisms leading to the expansion and growth of HBW. To see how these causal mechanisms work, one must look at those women's daily practices. Considering all these premises, my main question is whether Marx's concept of working-day might be a tool for understanding and explaining homeworking women's exploitation and oppression, and further, for underpinning the basic arguments and demands in their struggle against capitalist exploitation and patriarchal oppression practices.

GENDERED NOTION OF THE WORKING-DAY

To begin, I must clarify three main difficulties of appropriating the notion of working-day for HBW. First, HBW is widely a piece-work, so working-day does not seem as determining factor of homeworkers' wages. Second, a normal working-day, for a regular factory worker, refers to a certain type of continuity, an unremitting duration of productive activity whose limits are certain (e.g. 8 hours per day). For homeworking women, on the other hand, it is regularly or irregularly interrupted by domestic duties; it does not constitute a continuation. It is highly difficult to measure how many hours they work per day. Third, all these ambiguities also weakens the clarity of what a struggle for a normal working-day would mean to homeworking women.

The first challenge finds its response in Marx's own account of working-day; piece-work (and piece-wage) is just a certain form of converted time-work (time-wage) "just as wages by time are converted form of the value or price of the labor-power" (2003, 1:516) The second challenge is much more worth questioning and deepening of the concept. According to Marx, the value of labor-power is determined by the working time necessary to its production (1:22). At this point, he draws a complicated distinction within the determination process of this duration, between determinable and indeterminable character of the working-day. The physical bounds which refer to the time necessary for human beings to satisfy their physical needs and the social bounds to the satisfaction of their intellectual and social needs put limitations on the duration of the working-day, therefore entail its determinable character. This represents the force in the direction of the limitation on the working-day. The exchange value of labor-power, on the other hand, underlies the capitalist force-vector in the direction of prolongation of the working-day. To make it clear, the working-day comprises of the time necessary for the worker to satisfy his or her needs, the

necessary labor-time on the one hand, and the rest of the working-day during which the worker produces (surplus) value only for the capitalist, the surplus-labor time on the other hand. The capitalist always tries to prolong the working-day so that the surplus-labor time increases, so does the surplus value. This represents the indeterminate character of the working-day (1:223). Within this framework, the labor spent during a working-day is commodified/waged labor, in which the necessary labor-power (spent during the necessary labor-time as described above) is paid whereas the surplus labor-power is unpaid (the material source of capitalist exploitation). Now, it is possible to draw threefold character of homeworking women's labor during a day:

1. Necessary labor: productive, waged, commodified, paid. The source of their economic power.
2. Surplus labor: productive, waged, commodified, unpaid. The source of capitalist exploitation.
3. Domestic labor: reproductive (unproductive in the sense of commodity production) un-waged, un-commodified. The source of their patriarchal oppression.

Therefore, any response to the second challenge as well as any effort to research on operationality of the working-day must examine the contemplative reflections of these three characters of homeworking women's labor on their own perception of labor. In other words, how they relate, for example their child-caring labor and piece-work will be clearer in their organization of time during a day.

The third challenge is also related to the spatial pervasiveness of productive and reproductive activities of women. As already mentioned, the length of the working-day has always been a matter of struggle between capitalists and workers. Historically, workers try to maintain the principle of 8x8x8 (work x leisure-free- time x rest-sleep) division of a day whereas capitalists try to steal from workers' leisure and resting time. For homeworking women, there are no such divisions; at least they are not obvious. Therefore, it is important to show to what extent the separation of working and leisure time makes sense to them. What do they do during their leisure time? Obviously, leisure time must principally exclude domestic duties. Accordingly, if they answer the question as such that they spend their leisure time with caring for their children, this would not be considered as leisure time, but show their perception of leisure time dominated by patriarchal operations. Therefore, hypothetically, the struggle for a normal working-day should refer to the combination of the reduction of the surplus-

labor (therefore surplus time, or surplus piece-work) and emancipation from domestically defined duties imposed upon them. All considered, I suggest that a gendered-revision of Marx's concept of the working-day might be helpful in understanding and explaining homeworking women's exploitation and oppression to the extent of its responsiveness to these three challenges.

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES: HBW IN GAZI MAHALLESI

In the light of these conclusions, I first decided to follow qualitative methods and conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews since I thought that it was the most adequate way to have a comprehensive understanding of how those women organize their time and work, both domestic works and HBW, and of what their tactics are in handling this organization. In other words, the main aim of the fieldwork was to understand how they organize a working-day as I described above; what time they deal with domestic works, such as cleaning the house, caring for their children, preparing breakfast and dinner, etc, on the one hand, what time they deal with HBW, on the other hand. What are their motives in organizing their time? Under what circumstances they limit their domestically defined duties or HBW?

The second step was to decide where to conduct the interviews. Since I am a member of a socialist party which has local organizations in 22 districts in Istanbul and whose main purpose is to be active in the working-class neighborhoods, I had a chance to obtain knowledge about in what districts HBW is mostly common among women. As a result of deep discussions and exchange of ideas, I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Gazi Mahallesi where I lived for three months in the past. During the time I lived in Gazi, I was a member of a local women's association whose active members were prevalingly housewives. This was also a good opportunity to get access to my possible interviewees.

Apart from those personal opportunities, Gazi Mahallesi is one of the famous neighborhoods all around the country due to its historically political reputation in terms of having mostly left-wing and Alevi residents. In 1995, five coffee houses in the neighborhood were attacked by armed people. Then, the residents started protesting the state and police forces at the station because they thought that it was counter-guerilla forces who attacked them. This resulted in violent conflict between police forces and the residents for 3-4 days. 17 residents were killed by the police, some of whom were members of different revolutionary organizations. During the past 17 years following these events, the neighborhood has been punished in

different ways. For example, what we call Gazi Mahallesi today was divided into four new neighborhoods. Although there is no neighborhood whose name is Gazi Mahallesi today, people keep calling their neighborhood as Gazi Mahallesi. Furthermore, the most decrepit public transportation means was allocated for the neighborhood due to the security reasons. The middle and large-sized entrepreneurs have refused to establish their enterprises in the neighborhood or any area nearby it. Today, the nearest factory is at least one-hour distance to Gazi Mahallesi by transportation means. For this reason, most of the employees living in Gazi have to cover a distance from one hour to two hours to get to their workplaces. This draws a picture of a neighborhood in which only shopkeepers, elders, the disabled and "housewives" are available in the neighborhood during a factory working-day, from approximately 6am to 8pm. This provides me a plausible access to those "housewives" who carry out piece-works at their home. Therefore Gazi Mahallesi was one of the best options for me to find homeworking women and conduct my interviews.

Additionally, I had three female key-introducers whom I know from the association. Two of them used to work in the HBW sector, so they were closely familiar with the processes as well as the networks that I needed. During the two days (6-7 December 2012) I spent in the neighborhood, I stayed at one of these key-introducers' place. The third introducer was also very helpful because she has been living in Gazi Mahallesi for the last 30 years. In these two days, I conducted six recorded interviews with seven homeworking women, and two interviews with female end-subcontractors one of which is unrecorded. This end-subcontractor did not allow me to record the interview because she was afraid of legal enforcements about informal employment. But she gave me some clues about the women who rejected to do interview with me because they were concealing their work from their husbands. All interviews take approximately 10 to 45 minutes. And, all women are married with children.

At this point there are some points to be clarified. The reason why I use the term "end" subcontractor for women who distribute piece-work to homeworking women is that they are the last link in the subcontracting chains composed of an unknown number of intermediary subcontractors. They are the last distributors who have face-to-face contact with homeworking women. They have their office-like (as they call) places which I call distribution points. Some homeworking women sometimes prefer coming to these distribution points and carrying out their work there, especially those who do not want their house to get dirty as well as those who avoid leaving any clues for their husband to find out that they get piece-work. There are few women who see these distribution points as a

place for socialization. Distribution points were also helpful for me to get access to them. I conducted three recorded interviews with three homeworking women, and one recorded and one unrecorded interviews with two end subcontractors at their distribution points. However, the presence of the end subcontractors during the interviews with these homeworking women, I observed, had a negative effect; they were uncomfortable especially when they were supposed to talk about their incomes. Whether the use of distribution points as workplaces affects the nature of HBW, i.e. unitary structure of domestic and waged labor, will be discussed in the next section.

On the other hand, the interviews in the household were conducted in the presence of my key-introducers. It provides an advantage because I observed that when there is someone who knows me better than they do, women speak more comfortably. However, I needed to be careful when the introducers tried to interrupt with their comments. Before the interview processes, I told all the interviewees that they could cut it out whenever they wanted and use pseudonyms (only one interviewee preferred), I got their permissions for tape-recording.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AT THE DISTRIBUTION POINTS

To caricaturize, one might say that HBW has a viral effect. Women, the daylight residents of the neighborhood, introduce the HBW networks to each other. Good neighbors tell what type of HBW they carry out and where to find the sources. Mothers discuss which type is more profitable, or which type is more time-consuming, or needs more effort when they take their children to the school. For end-subcontractors, it is as easy as pie to find employees. As a matter of fact, the employees find their end-subcontractors. In my research, the interviewees mostly engage with scarf-tassel knotting, yard cleaning and embroidering.

In scarf-tassel knotting, the scarfs are delivered by higher links of the subcontracting chain to the end-subcontractor, and the end-subcontractor distributes the scarfs once a day, approximately around four o'clock in the afternoon. The job is to knot each single tassel at the two sides of the scarfs. There are seventy five tassels at each side, therefore one hundred and fifty in one scarf. After distributing the work, they received the products back at around ten o'clock in the morning next day. When they deliver their work, homeworking women register their names to the end-subcontractor's book, and come into line. That is, who comes earlier gets the job since there is a certain number of scarfs in the end-subcontractor's hands. Usually, the end-

subcontractors do not give more than fifty scarfs to one woman. When they first meet a woman who wants to work, they give her maximum ten scarfs so that they can try the woman's speed, and decide whether they can count on her. If they detect an inefficient job, unknotted tassels for example, they follow two ways. First, they make the woman who could not finish the work properly sit and finish it right at the distribution point. Second, if the harm is unrecoverable, or if there is a missing scarf, they charge that woman by the sale-price of one scarf, i.e. 30 TL. Considering that women get 5 TL for every 50 scarf, this is a harsh punishment. This also shows how the end-subcontractors manage to secure continuation and efficiency of the work by dominating over homeworking women.

Yard-cleaning constitutes the most extended type of HBW. Big textile brands distribute the semi-processed garment materials to the small-scale workshops in which regular workers carry out cut-off and sewing works. Then, those small-scale workshops distribute the sewed products to end-subcontractors. There are numbers of links of the subcontracting chain between the first workshop and the end-subcontractor here. One might say that each step is carried out by another sub-contractor. When the products are delivered to the end-subcontractor, they need to be subject to yard-cleaning. Thus, the distribution process passes on to homeworking women. End-subcontractors distribute the work to homes two times a day, once in the morning around nine o'clock and once in the evening around six o'clock. Basically, women get one party in the morning and hand it in in the evening. And if they want, they can get another party in the evening to be delivered in the next morning. However, some women who do not prefer working at their homes, because yard-cleaning is a messy work, can work at the distribution points whenever they are available during the day. This opportunity also necessitates making a distinction between those who do yard-cleaning at their homes and those who work at the distribution points because their time-organization patterns vary. I will discuss this differentiation in the next section. Usually, the end-subcontractor also does yard-cleaning together with her employees. At the first glance, it is really difficult to notice any hierarchical relationship between her and women as in an ordinary relationship between employers and employees. They prepare foods and make tea together in the kitchen-like divisions at the distribution points. It is true that women see these places as an opportunity to socialize, which give them a chance to get out of home. This "a place to socialize" discourse is exactly what enables the end-subcontractor to keep women stick to her.

Embroidering business is the most troublesome and the most irregular work with the lowest payment. It is almost impossible to deduce a general pattern.

Like yarn-cleaning, most of the big textile brands sub-contract their embroidering works. Since embroidering has little to do with wearability, there is no consistent continuation in the distribution process. It mostly relies upon fashion. Therefore employment relations are remittent. Unlike yarn-cleaning, homeworking women can be jobless for weeks while they suddenly become overworking in days. Urgency appears to be the main factor for the end-subcontractor to dominate over homeworking women. This is the very reason why one of my interviewees, the end-subcontractor in the embroidering type could not give an average number when I asked her how many women she employs. The answer changed from twenty to fifty.

Although all three types of HBW show differences, there is an interesting common point in terms of employment relations. It is my own expression when I call homeworking women as employees or the end-subcontractor as employers. Homeworking women, on the other hand, name themselves as “customers” of the end-subcontractors. In other words, they ironically think that they “buy” the opportunity to get paid from the end-subcontractors. This also shapes their perception of employment relations and weakens their bargaining power. All in all, they do not have to “buy” work. Another point that weakens their bargaining power is the labor contract is verbal and individual like many other informal sectors. Women have neither job security nor social security. Social security becomes prominent when they imagine themselves working at an outside job while wage comes after in their priorities. But the lack of job security, on the other hand, provides them with the opportunity move from one type of HBW to another whenever they have access to a more profitable type. To conclude, employment relation in the HBW sectors are irregular, mostly network-based and insecure while workforce is incredible mobile.

TWO PATTERNS OF THE GENDERED WORKING-DAY

All interviewees who previously worked outside home in the past and carry out HBW today clearly stated that they quitted their job when they had children. And, all interviewees, whether former regular factory workers or not, prefer continuing HBW because they think that they can have time for caring their children. How they start a day, on the other hand, varies in accordance with the every-day conditions of their children and husbands. For example, a woman who is supposed to prepare breakfast for her husband gets up very early whereas a woman with a husband who has no such expectations takes her time for a longer sleep. However, all women consider and act in accordance with the needs of their children. At this point,

as I have already mentioned, there is a differentiation between women who mostly work at the distribution points and women who always bring the piece-work to home, depending on the presence of at least one child at home, who is not at his or her school age, i.e. under five.

What time women with children at school age get up strongly depends on what time the school starts. If their children go to school in the morning, they get up early, prepare breakfast, prepare their children for the school, take them to the school, get back to home, do daily routine cleaning, and go to the distribution point. If the school starts in the noon, they get up around nine to ten o'clock and pursue a similar pattern except for the routine cleaning finished before the school time. In each case, if women do not have other children under the school age, they go to the distribution points during the school time and carry on until they pick up their children, and daily cleaning is always a part of morning routines. Having children at the school age is a great opportunity in the sense that their HBW efforts are not being interrupted by the actions or demands of their children. However, this is not the whole picture. Although those women mostly carry out their piece-work at the distribution points, they often bring some parts to home in order to guarantee or increase their earning. In this case, after they pick up their children, they go back to home, first prepare ("secure") dinner. Sometimes women tactically prefer preparing dinner in the morning so that they can save time before their husbands arrive at home. Then, they usually do a little piece-work if there is time until their husbands come back. When their husbands come back home from work, they have dinner together. This process is followed by washing the dishes and making tea. Then they continue with the last pieces of their daily HBW until they go to bed. Even at night, the process is intermittent due to the wishes of children and husbands.

For women with children under the school age, the scenario is even worse. If they work in yarn-cleaning, they get up around eight o'clock. After the breakfast they go to the distribution point, pick up their piece-work around nine o'clock, come back to home, do their daily cleaning, prepare lunch for their children, then they sit doing yarn-cleaning and rush to be able to deliver the work in due time as well as putting the dinner on the table before their husbands arrive at home. When they go to hand in the finished work around six or seven o'clock, they usually pick up another party to be finished after the tea-time following the dinner, until they go to bed. However, this is not an unremitting process, especially for those with babies. They are always interrupted by their kids. This incredibly slows their speed down. In that case, some women follow another tactic. They resign themselves to their domestic and maternal duties during the day, and wait

for everyone in the household going to bed in the night, and take their time for HBW until morning. Even at this time, babies' night-cries or breast-feeding do not allow them to work non-stop.

In each pattern, their maternal and domestic duties seem to prevail over HBW in their time-organization during a day. However, a more detailed observation reveals that they develop some tactics to facilitate their domestic duties in order to save time for HBW. For example, if they have very limited time to finish their piece-work which is received in the morning and to be delivered to the end-subcontractor afternoon, they do not clean their houses in detail or wash the dishes. The most common tactic is to prepare "easy foods" for the dinner. The only thing that they do not waive is their duties in looking after their children. There are at least two reasons why they do not prefer nursery centers. First, it is almost unaffordable for the family budget. Second, they do not trust anyone else with caring their children; it is like an indication of being a "bad mother".

The two factors, the urgency of HBW and whether their children go to school or not, have opposite pressures on their daily efforts, therefore determine their tactics to manage time. The more urgent HBW, the more they tend to limit their domestic duties to the extent that HBW does not keep them from satisfying their children's need. The younger their children, the more limited their time for HBW and the amount of piece-work that they can undertake. Furthermore, one might say that this double-binding nature of their gendered working-day together with their domestically defined duties such as being "a good wife" or "a good mother" also shapes the meaning that they attribute to leisure time. The formal traditional rules of the division of a day, that is, eight hours for work, eight hours for rest or sleep, and eight hours for free time by no means apply their daily time organization. Here are some examples when I ask my interviewees what they do during their leisure time: "What does it mean?" [sarcastically], "I do lacework.", "I always find myself something to do, so I'm never free.", "I drink a cup of coffee and that's all enough for me.", "I take my daughter to the children's park nearby our home." There is a prominent answer common to all interviewees, which, I think, is a good reflection of their perception of leisure time: "I don't like loafing around." Having leisure time is associated with an unfavorable meaning for them; it does not suit a "good woman".

PIN MONEY OF THE DAY

Despite all challenging pressures on their gendered working-day, women do not tend to give up with doing HBW. Apart from those pressures, all my

homeworking interviewees told me that their husbands or brothers were complaining about HBW. Although all women gave the answer that they would stop if their husbands clearly and strictly told them to do so, they always find a way to deal with those complaints. At this moment, I should clarify how they perceive the money they earn. As I mentioned in the introduction, I was expecting them to name their earning as “a contribution to the family budget.” However, they see it as “pin money”.

One might think that there is a slight difference between “contribution” and “pin money”. However, regardless of for what purposes they spend their pin money, the fact that they do not name their earnings as contribution implies that what they earn is not seen as an essentially integral part of the family budget. They have a relative autonomy in spending. It is autonomous because they are not told by their husbands, or anyone else, how to spend; and, this is relative because they usually spend their pin money for their children. For example, one interviewee who was doing embroidering pays for her daughter’s additional courses which her husband refused to pay. Even when they say that they use their earning for themselves, they usually mean buying some facilitating kitchen items and clothes for both themselves and their children. And, obviously why they prefer the term “pin money” over “wage” is directly related to why they see themselves “housewives” rather than “workers”. However, their relative autonomy in spending is also linked to their economic empowerment against male-domination in the family unit to the extent that they decide where and when to spend.

Home-based workers in Gazi Mahallesi usually get paid biweekly or monthly. In my research, I figure out that the wages vary from 60 TL to 125 TL per month. This solely shows the extent of surplus value production through HBW. In addition to the time-management tactics, women develop tactics to increase their wages, too. They strongly benefit from the networks in which they inform each other and discuss with each other on which HBW provides higher earning. For example, yarn-cleaning is one of the most preferable types whereas almost all women try to avoid embroidering. They often try to move from one type to another, when they hear the latter is more profitable. Or, for example, when there is no distribution for one week or two weeks in a certain type of HBW, they seek for another type and do it during this period. Or, as I mentioned earlier, they do HBW like two shifts in a day; yarn-cleaning workers, for example, receive piece-work twice a day when they think that they need money.

At this point, the difference between Marx’s notion of the working-day and the gendered notion of working-day in HBW, and the relationship between

wages and these two modes of working-day become quite clear, and needs to be analyzed. For the former, the total duration of the working-day is determinate. This also makes the analysis of necessary-labor (and necessary labor-time) and surplus labor (surplus labor-time). Let's assume that the working-day for a regular factory worker is 10 hours. What can this tell us? First of all, what time she starts and ends working is known. Furthermore, her wage per month is certain, so is per hour. For example, if she works for 6 hours to satisfy her needs (necessary labor-power sold), then the remaining 4 hours constitute the surplus labor-time which is the very source of surplus value, so, capitalist exploitation. Accordingly, the struggle between the capitalist and the worker on the length of the working-day occurs in the surplus part. In other words, what the capitalist tends to do is to prolong the surplus labor-time, from 4 to 6 for example, which makes the working-day at least 12 hours when the necessary labor-time and the wage is constant whereas the worker struggles for 8 hour-working-day as historically defended by the working class movements, by reducing the surplus labor-time from 4 to 2 hours.

For home-based woman workers, on the other hand, there is no such thing as certain duration of the working-day. In other words, it is almost impossible to determine how many hours they work per day mostly because their work is interrupted by domestic and maternal duties. This is also directly related to the nature of HBW as piece-work, which means that the wage is calculated over the amount of pieces rather than how many hours they work per day. Simply, the more they process the pieces, the higher they get paid. How does this affect the gendered notion of the working day? Since the piece-wage is a converted form of the time-wage, I will adopt Marx's formulation from a gendered perspective as follows:

- i. Necessary labor-piece: waged and paid labor per piece; the source of homeworking women's empowerment
- ii. Surplus labor-piece: waged but unpaid labor per piece; the source of surplus value production and capitalist exploitation
- iii. Domestic and maternal labor: unwaged, unpaid and reproductive labor; the source of patriarchal oppression

As a result, the absence of certain duration entails that the more they want to earn money, the more they have to be exploited. Furthermore, their maternal and domestic duties always threaten the amount of pieces that produce per day. This is why it is considerably important for them to produce time-management tactics. They usually organize time based on and in accordance with their domestic especially maternal, duties, on the one hand while their

insistence on doing HBW makes inroads into this patriarchal time-organization through time-management tactics mentioned above. Then, one should conclude that HBW appears as a ground on which the win-win situation between “housewifization of woman workers” and “proletarianization of housewives” is ensured while it still provides a certain degree of empowerment for those women who otherwise would not work and earn money.

The challenging question here is how they could increase the degree of their empowerment against such combination of patriarchal pressures and capitalist exploitation. In other words, what does the struggle for a normal working-day mean to them? For regular factory workers, there is always an opportunity, at least potentially, to form collective bargaining power, whether they are unionized or not, so that they can negotiate with their employers. For home-based workers, on the other hand, the atomized and irregular distribution of HBW and the individual and verbal nature of the labor contract makes almost impossible for them to create such power as well as the development of their class consciousness (remember they call themselves “customers” to the end-subcontractors and “housewives” in general, but never “workers”; or, their earnings as “pin money” rather than “wage”).

CONCLUSION

Is it a matter of question whether they should, or even they can, struggle for working outside home? Is it even possible, to rewind the process, considering the explosive growth and expansion of the HBW industry? These are incredibly difficult questions, but there is at least one point to be clarified. Any trade union or any type of labor organization cannot survive the growth of HBW industry without proposing and mobilizing a struggle against patriarchal oppression as well as capitalism.

This also challenges feminist theories prevalently based on the separation of home and work which mostly focuses on the home and the private sphere as the source of patriarchal relations. Can feminists manage to build up a struggle against patriarchy without rising up against capitalism? Or, can Marxism(s) develop a proper critique of and effective struggle against capitalism without rethinking its certain categories and concepts from a gendered point of view? The main intention embedded in these questions is not simply to build a bridge between feminism and Marxism. I rather try to warn how HBW as a social reality cannot be analyzed without understanding the gendered character of relations of production. In that

sense, this study can be read as an attempt to develop a gendered Marxist perspective which accordingly needs re-conceptualizations of existing realities.

In that sense, it proposes the concept of the gendered working-day for HBW in which women's wage-labor and domestic-maternal labor are inseparably intermingled with each other through spatial and temporal unitary structure of commodity-production and social reproduction. As my fieldwork reveal, although patriarchal operations seem to constantly shape homeworking women's time-organization during a gendered working-day, the tactics that they develop in order to increase their "pin money" maybe not eliminate but evidently weaken the absolute patriarchal control over their labor, both productive (waged) and reproductive (domestic) labor. In other words, the pin money of the day as the wage of the gendered working-day is both source and way-out of their double exploitation.

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