

Is “Place of work” a pertinent and efficient question to better measure and understand the category of homeworkers, and more generally, outworkers in the labour force ?

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Report of an Expert Group Meeting on the Measurement of Place of Work
Geneva, 24-28 August 2000

ILO Project Measurement of the variable Place of work GLO/98/318/B/11/31

Funded by the UNSD/IDRC/UNDP Project on Gender Issues in The Measurement of Paid and Unpaid Work

The question of the “place of work” as an important characteristic of employment to be collected in labour force surveys and population censuses is not new. Many countries, especially in Latin America, have collected information on this topic for a long time and on a continuous basis, but curiously they did not make much use of the results for in-depth analyses, as if the reason for such collection had been forgotten. The issue recently came back under the spotlights, at the occasion of the discussions arising from the new international definition of the informal sector adopted by the XVth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1993, as well as from the discussions for the revision of the International Classification on Status in Employment (ICSE), this same year. The question of “place of work” was then raised in connection with the renewed efforts towards a better measurement of women’s activities. And it seems that time has come now for the preparation of ad hoc recommendations in view of more systematic data collection.

In this report, we will examine, in a first section, why and how the issue was raised, discussed and tackled in various statistical fora. Then, in a second section, we will review several countries’ experiences reviewed for this project. In a third section, we will try to elaborate a conceptual framework for statistics on “place of work” and their use.

1) The issue of “place of work” in the discussions on labour statistics.

The adoption of an international definition of the informal sector as a concept of labour force in 1993 (ILO, 1993 a and b) is a landmark in the long history of statistical labour force concepts and of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in particular. This definition is based on the characteristics of the enterprise or establishment in which the person is working, not on the characteristics of the person or on the characteristics of the work he or she does. The reference to a “sector” and to the economic unit is due to established analytical and descriptive conventions as well as the recognition that the concept would be nested within the household institutional sector in the System of National Accounts (SNA, 1993, 4th revision). This means that the “outworkers” (those paid employees working for a firm but outside the firm’s premises) also called “homeworkers” (when referring to the place where they actually work) will be classified in the informal sector or in the formal sector, depending on the characteristics of the firm which employs them.

The adoption of a convention on homeworkers by the International Labour Conference in 1996 (ILO, 1996), emphasised the need for a measure of the category and for adequate instruments of measurement. A basis for achieving this had been laid already in 1993, when the XVth ICLS examined the proposal for a revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) (ILO, 1993 c) and in this context discussed the definition of this group. The new ICSE refers to the “place of work” in the definition of “outworkers” (or “homeworkers”) at a second level as one of several groups to be considered for “possible treatment of particular groups of workers”.

Presently, the category of “outworker” is defined as follows:

“Outworkers are workers who: a) hold explicit or implicit contracts of employment under which they agree to work for a particular enterprise, or to supply a certain quantity of goods or services to a particular enterprise, by prior arrangement with that enterprise; but b) whose place of work is not within any of the establishments which make up that enterprise

These workers may be classified as being in “paid employment” or in “self-employment” according to the specific terms of their contract; they may be classified as “employers” if they engage other workers (on a continuous basis)”. (par. 14, al. h of the resolution concerning the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), 1993, which specifies that “countries may need and be able to distinguish one or more of these groups; par. 18 of the resolution on statistics of employment in the informal sector, 1993, is practically written in the same terms).

As to the ILO Convention on Homework, it defined the homeworker as follows:

- “the term “homework” means work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homeworker,
 - i) in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer;
 - ii) for remuneration;
 - iii) which results in a product or services as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used,unless this person has the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker under national laws, regulations or court decisions;
- persons with employee status do not become homeworkers within the meaning of this Convention simply by occasionally performing their work as employees at home, rather than at their usual workplaces;
- the term “employer” means a person, natural or legal, who, either directly or through an intermediary, whether or not intermediaries are provided for in national legislation, gives out home work in pursuance of his or her business activity.”

It is thus clear that the term “homeworker” is synonymous of “outworker”, the latter being somewhat more logical as it is required from the worker that he perform his or her activity outside the premises of the enterprise.

Although these definitions have finally been formulated independently from the definition of the informal sector, the discussion on homework or outwork cannot be set out of the conceptual framework of the informal sector for at least two reasons:

- in the common sense, the homeworkers subcontracted by large, medium or even small firms are an illustration of the links relating the formal and the informal sector: it is an example of their articulation,
- and the fact is that there is some difficulty to distinguish these kinds of employees from economic units, as they may themselves employ family workers, or even casual employees.

For informal employment statistics, outwork is a crucial issue for this precise reason and because there lies an important cause of underestimation.

In practise, that is when applying the new definition of the informal sector to concepts and methods used in recent surveys or to the data recently collected, the category of “outworkers” revealed itself not operational for several reasons:

- Neither the informal firms nor the formal ones declare spontaneously and separately these categories of workers and, as a result, the outworkers are either concealed or not included (most commonly) in establishment surveys,
- there is some doubt about the category of status in employment under which the home-based workers declare themselves in the household surveys: a piece-rate pay or a pay per task can be interpreted as a job for own-account as well as a salaried job.
- as usual, the employees are not in a position to know the characteristics of the firm in which they work or for which they work, even the size in number of jobs in the case of home-based workers,
- as far as the outworkers do not constitute independent firms, detailed information is not collected on the firm for which they work,
- consequently, the labour force surveys cannot easily distinguish either between the formal and the informal segments of this category of employees, or between the own-account and the dependent workers: two major issues to be tackled when measuring the homeworkers.

Finally, one can observe that very few formal firms will hire outworkers directly: most of them will do it through intermediary or contractors’ firms or middlemen presenting the usual characteristics of the informal sector. In a firm’s accounts, the outworkers are not usually accounted for in the wage bill, but in the intermediary consumption as outsourced services. Similarly, some informal firms do use this type of workers, but in numbers which are negligible when compared with those employed through the complex sub-contracting chains which go from the home-based worker to the trans-national firms. Consequently, the challenge and the aim of the definitions and surveys are to identify as such this category of the labour force, irrespective of the formal/informal sector to which they may belong.

These reflections brought back the discussion to the “place of work”, as a separate - but related - question in the surveys. As a matter of fact, the question of the “place of work” raises even more issues than the question of homeworkers or outworkers and its scope is far broader. Not only does it play a crucial role in any definition of those two categories of employment, and allow to distinguish more clearly some sub-categories of homeworkers and outworkers, but it can also be used when defining other categories of the labour force which are not working within the premises of the enterprise or of its establishments. For instance, there are outworkers (paid employees of an enterprise) who are not home-based but street-based, or who are mobile; many workers are to-day working from home (and not at home). Furthermore, the use of the question in rural areas makes it more complex to distinguish between home, farm and workshop: an issue which is more and more often relevant for urban areas where households open shops or workshops within the home or its annexes.

Such a diversity of situations has become, from now on, an essential characteristic of employment: the extension and generalisation of the market economy and the massive entry of women into the labour markets as well as the encounter between a wide and large informal sector and the globalisation/delocalisation strategies of transnational firms in search of more labour flexibilisation have given rise to the renewal of old forms of work (such as the revival of the “nutting out system”) which remain hidden or at least hardly captured within the

current concepts, categories and classifications of the labour force. This is why there is an urgent need for refining, adapting and completing some of our usual and widely used instruments for measuring employment.

As a matter of fact, the question of the “place of work” had already been experimented within different ways by quite a lot of countries, sometimes until now, and very often in population censuses. The first revision of the “Principles and Recommendations concerning censuses of population and housing” by the statistics division of the United Nations (UN, 1998b) quotes “place of work” as one of the economic characteristics of the population to be collected, with the main objective of comparing “place of working” with “place of living”. Despite this objective and despite the simple proposed classification (home-based workers, workers without fixed location for work, workers with a fixed location for work outside home), the inclusion of this question in population censuses is of particular importance because only population censuses allow the cross-classification of this variable with the detailed classification of occupations (ISCO) or industries (ISIC).

2) Countries’ experience in data collection on “place of work”

Countries’ experience is interesting to look at and to lean on for two purposes: 1) the variety of classifications they have used in their data collection system; 2) the type of results and tabulations they have published.

Regarding the classifications for “place of work”, it can be noted that establishment censuses and surveys have generated such classifications at least as often as household surveys. The reason is that in the field, the interviewers are confronted with the actual variety and diversity of places of work, even when they only deal with establishments. And these kinds of classifications can be used to complete those developed in household surveys, especially labour force surveys.

There are several categories of classifications or typologies (generally precoded in the questionnaires) for “place of work”. One category defines “place of work” by reference to the enterprise or economic unit as such. Another category defines “place of work” by reference to the actual place where the person perform the work.

2.1. Classifications referring to the place of economic unit

Among the classifications used for economic units, some are mixing up the criteria for “place of work”, with those for the industrial sectors, and the size and legal status of the enterprise. The classification used in the Mexican national survey on urban employment as well as in the survey on micro-enterprises is an example which is typical of this kind of mixing (Gonzalez Gutierrez T., 2000). It divides the enterprises into two main categories: without premises and with premises, with sub-categories:

i) “Without premises”

- In cultivated land, launch, wells, etc.: refers to persons working in agricultural, fishing, forest and gathering activities without fixed premises or equipment for automated operation.

- Door-to-door or street: refers to persons whose enterprises lack a physical location and who develop their activities walking in the streets or visiting their customers door-to-door.
- In a vehicle, bicycle, car, etc.: includes persons carrying out their activities in some type of vehicle such as a motorcycle, bicycle, car, etc., except for cargo or passenger transportation services.
- Improvised stand in public streets: includes economic entities or persons who use improvised stands in public places. Some of these stands include stands set weekly on a specific location.
- In his/her own household: includes persons working in their own households, using their own homes as the place of work.
- In his/her employer or customer's household: the activities are carried out in the employer or customer's household, whenever the business lacks a physical location.
- In vehicles for transportation of persons or goods (taxi, truck, etc.): includes businesses providing transportation services, both for persons and for goods, provided the company, the employer, or the self-employed worker has only one unit with which to work.
- Semi-fixed stand in a public street: includes businesses that use a semi-fixed stand in a public street, regardless of the economic activity. These stands are generally of a tubular nature, are set daily and sometimes have a license or an operational permit.

ii) With premises

Small: Refers to workshops and locations not belonging to a chain (and with 5 workers or less).

- Fixed premises in a public street. Includes economic entities that have fixed premises in the street for carrying out their activities, regardless of type of activity. A fixed premises means a permanent structure with an assigned location, generally having a license or an operational permit.
- Commercial location, grocery store, hardware store, shoe shop, bakery, etc. Includes small enterprises not part of a chain, whose purpose is trading of goods.
- Production workshop, pastry, bakery, press, carpentry, etc. Means small enterprises not part of a chain, carrying out production activities.
- Repair, mechanical, electrical, electronic, etc. shop. Includes small enterprises not part of a chain where various types of repair services are provided.
- Services: restaurant, bar, boarding house, etc. Includes businesses with small premises, not part of a chain and only recognised in the location where the food or boarding services are provided.
- Services: professional, specialised technical, personal, educational, assistance, etc. Includes businesses with limited premises, not part of a chain and providing professional, technical, etc. services.

Medium and large-sized. Medium and large-sized enterprises (with more than 5 workers), including the government's offices.

- Enterprises of a medium to large size involved in production, construction and extraction, plants, mines, oil wells, etc. Includes businesses from the transformation, construction, and mining industries, all medium to large size.
- Enterprises of medium and large size, involved in commercial, financial, transportation, health, and educational activities and in other services, grocery stores, banks, bus lines, clinics, schools, hotels, etc. Includes parastatal and decentralised enterprises, as well as some offices from the Secretary of State performing specific activities or services other than public administration, such as public schools, PEMEX, hospitals from the Social Security Service, etc. Includes owners of two or more transportation units, urban or foreign buses, taxis, regardless of whether they own premises or not.
- Administrative offices from the federal, state, or municipal government. Includes government offices with administrative functions. Government entities involved in other activities are classified according to the economic activity performed.

Other. Those that cannot be included in the above categories. ”

In this example survey statisticians have tried to anticipate all cases by building a combination of several classifications which proposes not less than 17 alternatives. Although this instrument had been successfully used in Mexico for several years, it seems difficult to generalise and other countries have preferred a less complicated set of categories. In Chile for instance, 11 categories are distinguished (Pollack M., 2000):

“Where is your activity executed, or where the establishment, enterprise or office where you work, is located:

- in the household as independent worker,
- in the household as employee (specify for other status),
- in another household,
- in a place adjacent to the household,
- in an independent establishment,
- in an agriculture area,
- in a maritime area,
- domestic work,
- in a public area,
- transport (land, air, water, etc.)
- other (specify),”

and 8 categories are distinguished in Bolivia (and even less in other countries):

- in the household,
- in premises adjacent to the household,
- in exclusive premises,
- in the street (street vendor),
- in a kiosk,
- in a vehicle,
- domestic work,
- other (specify).

These few examples show that the design of such classifications, referring to the economic unit, raises several difficulties: 1) the household may be the owner's or the client's (for the self-employed) or the employer's (for paid employees), 2) some economic activities have, by nature, a specific place of work: domestic work, transport, agriculture, and also construction (although this last category is not separately identified by the preceding classifications).

In other countries or other regions, even simpler classifications have been designed, for instance in Tunisia (1997):

- administration and public enterprises,
- private enterprises,
- private establishments,
- home,
- mobile,
- construction or public works sites,
- farms.

Classifications are developed in relation with the economic and social structures in the countries and regions: the usual classification adopted in Mali since 1985 is the following:

- enterprise,
- shop or workshop,
- building sites or road works,
- fixed market,
- mobile market,
- home with specific outfits,
- home without specific outfits,
- street,
- mobile,
- other.

In Africa, the informal sector has often been surveyed through establishment censuses and these operations have sometimes been extended to the street vendors, so that detailed classifications have been designed for these categories of workers: for example Guinea in 1987, Niger in 1982 have further specified street vendors in fixed locations (not mobile) by distinguishing, in their establishment censuses :

- street vendors with only bowls, baskets or mats,
- street vendors with stools,
- street vendors with tables (called table-owners or -dressers in Niger),
- street vendors with porch-roofs or sheds, or window dress,

and, for mobile street vendors (hawkers and peddlers):

- walking street vendors,
- street vendors with cart, bicycle, etc...

In its new labour force survey, South Africa (Budlender D. and Buwembo P., 2000) has used a rather simple classification in 8 categories:

- in the owner's home,
- in someone else's home,
- inside a formal business premises such as a factory or office,
- at a service outlet such as a shop, school, post office, etc.,
- at a market,
- on a footpath, street, street corner, open space or field,
- no fixed location,
- other.

All these examples show that the main difficulty encountered in the development of classifications referring to the place of the economic unit, is that they have to take account of the specific circumstances of some economic activities such as agriculture, construction, transport, administration, etc., which complicate a list of pre-coded categories, the aim of which was to remain as simple and short as possible.

2.2. Classifications referring to the place where the person actually works.

In industrialised countries (Europe and other OECD countries), it is labour force surveys which usually have included a question on the place where the active person actually works.

For instance in the United Kingdom, the related question in the labour force survey is designed as follows for all employees, self-employed and unpaid family workers:

“(In your main job) Do you work mainly...

- in your own home (often part of the living accommodation is set aside for the purpose of work),
- in the same grounds or buildings as home (if the place of work is a separate unit attached to the respondent's home - e.g. a doctor's surgery, or farmers who work in fields or buildings adjacent to their home; this aims to capture tied accommodation, rented or owned, with business premises attached),
- in a different place using home as a base (many self-employed people, such as builders, may use home as a base – e.g. as an office – but mainly work elsewhere; this group also includes mobile workers – e.g. mobile hairdressers and mechanics).
- Or somewhere quite separate from home?”

The same questions are asked for the second job. In the UK, homeworkers are defined on the ground of responses to this single question.

From this example, it is clear that the question does not try to identify and specify all kinds of “place of work”: in particular, when the activity is not carried out at home or from home, no other question is asked to know where this activity takes place.

Can such a methodology fit with the actual situation prevailing in developing countries?

For instance, it implies that street work in particular is carried out using home as a base. And it leaves out the situations which are not of interest for the issues raised by the question of “place of work”, for instance the fact that a policeman works in the streets or outside office for a long time in a day.

The Jordan 1999 national labour force survey addressed these issues by designing a question and a classification as follows (Nour F., 2000):

“Where do you work:

- an exclusive workplace such as: ministry, department, commercial store, office, factory, school, hospital, hotel restaurant, etc.
- an exclusive residence such as: households that produce or process certain items (dairy products, oil, olives, jam, etc.),
- a bi-purpose place (for both work and residence) such as: doctor’s clinic, lawyer’s office, cloth sewer, etc.
- open or semi-open place assigned for work such as: construction worker, pipe-fitter, painter, stands, vegetable markets, occasional markets, gas station, quarrying, open farm workers,
- public open space such as: taxi driver, garbage collector, traffic police, pilot, street extension workers, hunter, interviewer, sales representative, etc.
- open space not assigned for work such as: cleaner, cigarette salesman, vendor, shoe shiner, knock-door salesman, etc.
- other, not elsewhere classified.”

Here, the attempt is to classify places of work, by distinguishing close and open space, public and private, assigned and not assigned for work. Because this kind of classification was experimental and quite unusual and also because female activity rates are very low in Jordan, the survey did not result into reliable figures for work in “exclusive residence” nor for work in “bi-purpose places”. It was actually expected that the number and proportion of people working at home and in open places would be much larger.

Other attempts have also been made by adapting the classification of status in employment. But then the adaptation was often limited to the category of own-account workers, for instance in the 1982 population census of Morocco or the 1984 population census of Tunisia where 3 sub-categories of independent or own-account workers were distinguished:

- independent with business premises,
- independent at home,
- independent with mobile location.

Such simple and easy-to-apply classifications gave interesting and reliable results, but they should have been extended to the other categories of statuses (paid employees and family workers in particular) and this was actually done in the following censuses and surveys.

Finally, what measures of homeworkers or home-based workers have resulted from these experiences?

2.3. Statistics of homeworkers and street vendors.

There is much anecdotal information about the situation and conditions of work of homeworkers, but few reliable statistics from representative surveys on their actual number: this is why it is a major issue for labour statisticians, in a period when it is obvious that this form of work is the main means by which labour costs are cut and social protection is got round on a competitive market that is world-wide. The lack of data prevents such an assumption to become an empirical evidence, although some examples can be given, for instance about the unexpected pro-cyclical trends of the informal sector during the Asian financial crisis, likely due to home-based work (Charmes J. 2000c).

The Eurostat survey on labour force provides some information which proves that definitions and legislation are widely varying among countries. Table 1 below presents the statistics of homeworkers in Europe (defined as spending more than half of their working hours at or from home).

Table 1: Homeworkers in Europe, 1992-96 (in % of total employment).

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
EU 12	4.9	4.2	4.6	4.6	4.6
Belgium	11.6	11.3	11.1	10.8	10.1
Denmark	11.0	10.3	11.8	11.0	11.0
France	0.8	2.6	5.5	5.4	5.0
Germany	5.2	5.1	5.1	4.1	5.0
Greece	1.7	2.3	1.8	1.6	1.4
Ireland	20.6	19.5	18.6	18.2	7.1
Italy	5.5	5.1	4.5	4.6	4.6
Luxembourg	5.5	6.9	6.3	6.9	6.1
Netherlands	5.6	6.4	6.8	6.8	6.8
Portugal	4.4	3.9	4.0	3.7	3.5
Spain	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6
UK	7.6	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6

Source: Eurostat, 1992-1997. From Felstead and Jewson (2000), **In Work at Home**.

The highest rate was found in Ireland until 1995 when a new law made the category shrink by means of definition or/and sending underground. The results of the 1998 UK Labour Force Survey (autumn) show a drop to 2.3% of total employment (and 2.4% in comparison with non-agricultural employment) with 625,000 people working as homeworkers in their main job, to whom could be added 168,000 people working as homeworkers in their second job.

In other OECD countries, the share of homeworkers culminates in Australia with 25.8% in 1995, against 6% in Canada (1996) and 3.8% in New Zealand (1991) (see Felstead and Jewson, 2000).

From the few developing countries for which it has been possible to obtain data (table 2), there is some evidence that home-based workers are mainly women. Their share in the non-agricultural labour force is around 5%, but it may be as high as 15% where, as in the Philippines this category of the labour force is surveyed independently from the main

activity undertaken by the person: the calculation of this indicator is then made possible by the comparison with non-agricultural employment, since these home-based activities are undertaken as a second job mainly by farmers. For Thailand where an ad hoc survey was designed and carried out in 1998, the low figure (2%) can be explained by the fact that the scope of the survey was essentially limited to the wage-earners (and the family workers who help them).

Benin is rather particular in this respect, as the home-based workers were defined as those who were not working in establishments: consequently most non-agricultural workers in rural areas have been classified as home-based.

It should be kept in mind that, for a correct interpretation of the number of persons engaged in home-based work and street-based work, (as well as in the informal sector), the figures need to be compared with total non-agricultural employment and to exclude agricultural or primary activities. For most descriptive and analytical purposes figures on home-based and street-based work also need not to be comprised of:

- domestic workers (who are home-based workers, but working in the homes of their employers),
- workers in transport activities, who, by nature undertake their activities in the streets (but in a way which is not comparable to street vending),
- workers in construction activities, who are undertaking their work on building sites or road works sites and cannot be assimilated to street vending as well.

The exclusion of domestic workers lowers women's incidence of home-based work, while the exclusion of transport and construction activities lowers men's incidence of street-based work. Overall, the exclusion of these three types of activities considerably reduces the number of workers engaged in home-based and street-based work, but the final figures are much more relevant for studies of the phenomena that are supposed to be tackled with when addressing the issue of home-based work and street-based work.

Comparability between countries and between periods is made quite difficult for various reasons:

- in some countries and for certain periods, only own-account workers have been taken into account (Morocco, Tunisia 1984, Peru 1993): this is reflected by a share of 100.0% in the column "own-account",
- where possible, and as mentioned above, the transport and construction industries, as well as the domestic workers, have been taken out of the figures, in order to leave alone the actual home-based workers (Tunisia, 1984 and 1997 and Brazil, 1995 are exceptions to this rule),
- Figures for all countries refer to direct results of national surveys or censuses, except for Benin where the figures result from a comparison of various sources (and consequently all rural activities have been assumed to be home-based – or street- road-based),
- Figures for all countries in table 2 refer to nation-wide results, including rural areas.

Morocco, Tunisia (1994) and Brazil (and Peru) surprisingly have the same share of home-based workers in the non-agricultural labour force: approximately 4 to 5 percent and

women account for more than 78 percent in Morocco and Brazil (1995), 71 percent in Tunisia. Nearly 2/3 of home-based workers are own-account and only 9 percent are employees in Tunisia, compared to more than 90 percent and 6 percent respectively in Brazil (in Morocco, the place of work has been recorded only for own-account). In fact, both countries are quite comparable for their share of females own-account if family workers are taken into account, but they totally diverge as to the sector of industry in which female home-based workers are engaged: manufacturing activities account for more than 90 percent (and 86.4 percent in textiles) in Tunisia and Morocco, against services which are far ahead in Brazil (77.6 percent). For Brazil, the 1995 household survey on homeworkers confirmed the population census results: 5.2 percent of the non-agricultural labour force, of whom 78.5 percent are females, a proportion that brings Brazil in the average of the countries for which data are available. Concentration of these homeworkers in services is also confirmed (83.0 percent), raising many questions.

In Kenya and the Philippines, home-based workers approximately represent 15 percent of the non-agricultural labour force, but only 35 percent are females in Kenya, while they are 79 percent in the Philippines. However, the figures are certainly under-estimated in both countries: own-account workers were excluded in the Philippines survey which focused on homeworkers involved in sub-contracting arrangements (consequently the majority of home-based workers are employees), and in Kenya the National Baseline Micro and Small Enterprise Survey failed (because it was not its objective) to capture those home-based workers (mostly females in services) who were recorded as employees in the labour force.

In 1999, Thailand carried out a national household survey of homeworkers, but the rather low figure reached (2 percent of the non-agricultural labour force) seems to greatly underestimate a phenomenon which was felt as sufficiently important to justify the creation of an Office of Homeworkers at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Like in the Philippines, the own-account home-based workers were excluded of the survey coverage, but one of the main reasons for the underestimation is probably the undercounting of family workers: most surveys focus on sub-contractees who receive the orders and they miss to enumerate the family workers; yet these family workers, if they are not piece-rate workers, are mobilised by the person who got the order and whose interest and obligation is to finish the job as soon as possible: as a matter of fact, this is the main cause of child labour.

On the ground of the results for these two countries which have undertaken the most comprehensive surveys in order to deal with this category of the labour force, and despite the small sample of countries reviewed, it can be taken for granted that, in countries which have reached a certain level of industrialisation, home-based workers (own-account as well as homeworkers) represent between 1/5 to 1/4 of the non-agricultural labour force and 4/5 of them are females.

The case of Benin is different: the high share of home-based workers in this country (65.8 percent) is a characteristic of its huge informal sector (more than 92 percent of the non-agricultural labour force is in the informal sector) and a consequence of their enumeration as non located in an establishment. Therefore this figure must be interpreted simultaneously with the share of street-based vendors (5 percent of the non-agricultural labour force): in this country, street vendors have been enumerated, but only in urban areas; many of the home-based workers in rural areas are probably farm-based workers or vendors, or road-based vendors.

It should be noted that surprisingly, the share of women in home-based work dramatically dropped in Tunisia from the 1994 population census to the 1997 labour force survey, while the total share of home-based work more than doubled: these two estimates have not been generated from the same type of tables, and this probably means that this type of variable is very sensitive to the survey instruments and methods. The reverse can be observed for Brazil where the share of women in home-based work increased between the 1991 population census and the 1995 labour force survey.

Table 2: Proportion and characteristics of home-based workers in various developing countries.

	Number of home-based workers	% of non-agricultural labour force	% females	Females					
				% own-account	% employees	% family workers	% manufacturing (textiles)	% trade	% services
Jordan (1999)	15,000	0.7	66.7	48.0	52.0		70.0		
Morocco (1982)	128,237	4.1	78.8	100.0			95.7	1.4	1.9
Tunisia (1984)	123,060	9.4	75.6	100.0					
Tunisia (1994)	86,267	4.8	71.3	63.8	9.2	27.0	90.2 (86.4)	1.3	2.1
Tunisia (1997)	211,336	10.7	37.9						
Kenya (1999)	777,100	15.0	34.9	62.5	37.5		24.4	67.6	8.0
Benin (1992)	595,544	65.8	74.1				11.9	77.6	10.5
Thailand (1999)	311,790	2.0	80.0		81.2	17.9	90.0		
Philippines (1993-95)	2,025,017	13.7	78.8				100.0		
Chile (1997)	79,740	1.8	82.3				33.5	51.6	14.9
Peru (1993)	128,700	5.2	35.3	100.0			100.0		
Brazil (1991)	2,141,972	5.0	57.1	91.5	5.8	2.0	12.8	10.4	77.6
Brazil (1995)	2,700,000	5.2	78.5				12.0	5.0	83.0

ources : Own calculations on the basis of national sources (1982 Population Census for Morocco; 1984 and 1994 population censuses and 1997 Labour Force Survey for Tunisia; 3rd round of 1999 Employment and Unemployment Survey for Jordan; 1991 population census for Brazil; 1993 NSO Survey of Homeworkers in the Philippines; 1998 NSO Survey of Homeworkers in Thailand; 1999 National Baseline Micro and Small Enterprise Survey in Kenya; 1992 population census and establishment census in Benin) and for Chile, Peru and Brazil 1995 : Manuela Tomei (1999) : El Trabajo a domicilio en países seleccionados de América Latina : una visión comparativa, ILO Geneva. **Notes :** All countries exclude construction, transport and domestic services, except Brazil 1995 and Tunisia 1997. Thailand, Philippines only refer to homeworkers in industries and engaged in sub-contracting arrangements excluding own-account workers, and Peru refers to independent own-account home-based workers only.

Table 3 indicates the share of street workers in the non-agricultural labour force of various developing countries.

Compared with home-based workers, street workers (as recorded on table 3) are far less in number: between 3 and 8 percent of the non-agricultural labour force. Most of them are engaged in trade activities and for own-account.

If the proportion of street vendors seems consistent in the various countries, the share of women in this component of the labour force is quite variable from country to country: very few women are engaged in street vending in Tunisia, an Arabic-islamic country where religion and culture prevent women from undertaking activities in the street. At the opposite

end of the scale, very many women operate in the streets in Benin (contrary to home-based workers, the number of street vendors in Benin has been enumerated through an ad hoc census). Brazil and Kenya have, in the middle, a share of 30 percent of women involved in street vending.

Table 3: Proportion and characteristics of street-based workers in various countries.

	Number of street vendors	% of non-agricultural labour force	% females	Females		
				% own-account	% trade	% under-employed
Tunisia (1984)	59,200	4.5	1.8	100.0		25.0
Tunisia (1994)	132,832	5.2	3.9			54.0
Tunisia (1997)	125,619	6.4	2.1			
Kenya (1999)	416,294	8.1	32.7			
Benin (1992)	45,591	5.0	81.3		98.8	
Brazil (1991)	1,445,806	3.4	30.0	88.8	91.7	

Sources: Own calculations on the basis of national population censuses and household surveys as indicated in sources for table 2.

Finally, homework and street vending would typically represent at least 10 percent of the non-agricultural labour force in the developing countries reviewed, and more probably 20 to 25 percent, of which 3/4 to 4/5 are females. These categories of the labour force are normally characterised by having the worst conditions of work, the lowest wages, often piece-rate, and they do not benefit of any social protection. These labourers are the means by which international competition implements the reduction of labour costs and gets round the labour laws and the systems of labour protection. Consequently, they are not declared by the enterprises which hire many of them through sub-contracting arrangements by the means of middlemen (these are the homeworkers to whom the 1996 ILO Convention refers). The underestimation of this category of the labour force is a real issue for the application of the fundamental labour standards and the extension of social protection systems.

A last example can illustrate the pertinence of data collection on “place of work” in order to size the phenomenon up. It refers to the Egyptian long experience of including this variable in censuses. The statistical Agency CAPMAS has collected data on “place of work”, both in population censuses and in establishment censuses which are carried out in parallel with the population censuses, at national level every ten years. The issue was not to develop a detailed classification of workplaces, but rather to identify whether domestic premises are used for economic activities (population census) or whether economic units are using domestic premises for undertaking their activities (establishment census).

In this country, which is one of the few to have carried out, simultaneously and on a regular basis, both types of censuses, comparisons between the two sources provide significant insights on the relative size of homework, outwork and enterprises in domestic premises. Correspondingly, comparisons facilitate the estimation of informal sector employment, and they are particularly adequate to reveal the importance of work in domestic premises and to refine the assumptions concerning the proportion of outworkers. The population census asks whether homes or dwelling places are used for economic activities, and in the establishment census, the question is raised as to whether the activity is performed in domestic premises. It is then possible, by simple comparison, to measure the size of the

labour force in large, medium and small establishments (in the establishment census), and for these 3 categories, and mainly but non only for the last one, the proportion of workshops and jobs taking place in domestic premises. Furthermore, since the total number of jobs in establishments is always lower than the total number of jobs declared in households (because home-based and street-based work is always more underestimated in establishment censuses and surveys than in household censuses and surveys), and since the underlying difference is larger than independent work carried out within homes, one can evaluate the segment of the labour force “concealed” in the establishment census. Table 4 gives an idea of the size of this component of the informal sector in Cairo.

Table 4 : Estimated number of concealed establishments, and number of establishments in domestic premises - Cairo, 1976-1986.

	1976		1986	
	Cairo Centre	Total Cairo	Cairo Centre	Total Cairo
Number of establishments (census of establishments)	93,939	168,881	104,869	236,371
- of which: in domestic premises (1)	14,277	18,819	15,256	26,237
Number of domestic premises used for economic activity (2) (population census)	21,949	29,210	24,577	45,181
Number of concealed establishments (2) – (1) = (3)	7,672	10,391	9,321	18,944
Total number of establishments (4)	101,611	179,272	114,190	255,315
% domestic premises (2)/(4)	21.6	16.3	21.5	17.7
% concealed among establishments in domestic premises (3)/(2)	35.0	35.6	37.9	41.9

Source : Charmes J. (1990b)

The above review of some of the available statistics has shown how difficult they are to collect, and how highly sensitive the results are (to changes in legislation in particular). But the review also clearly indicates the potential usefulness of such statistics and where are their main shortcomings relative to the users’ needs. Major efforts are still needed to arrive at more appropriate and precise definitions and a better measurement of this component of the labour force. The following section outlines possible orientations for further efforts in data collection and compilation on “place of work” in the perspective of a better enumeration and knowledge of homeworkers and street workers.

3. Next steps towards the measurement of outwork or homework.

From the few experiences to have been examined, it can be observed that several solutions have been tested: merging the “place of work” variable in other classifications such as: legal status, industries, status in employment, type of enterprise, etc. The pre-coded classifications used have sometimes become lengthy and maybe difficult to apply. It is rather surprising to note that data collected for this variable have rarely been analysed in details in the publications of censuses and surveys, perhaps because the issues to be investigated had not been clearly formulated. A conclusion is that there is a huge need for formulating the issues related to this variable and for showing the rising importance of these categories of the labour force which remain out of any social protection and which need to be made more visible in labour statistics.

It should also be emphasised that greater attention needs to be given to similarity between street workers and outworkers as the tasks of both groups are often sub-contracted from large firms. Street vendors or, more broadly speaking, street-workers might not be as independent as they may seem to be: they may purchase or hire from the same supplier the goods that they sell, or they may be given the goods by the supplier who pays more or less the equivalent of a salary. The employment status of street vendors is not easy to identify. As for outworkers, it is a challenge for data collection because they have always been assumed to work for own-account. Similar issues relating to questionnaire design and data collection methods can be raised for enumerating and surveying street vendors and homeworkers.

The recent and rapid expansion, especially in Africa, of this segment of the informal sector labour force which operates outside an enterprise's premises has also, in many countries, enlarged the concept of street vendors to the category of street workers including, among others, the following: tailors specialised in mending, carrying their sewing machines on their heads, hairdressers carrying their stools, cheap and fast meal sellers, cycles and motor vehicles' repairers and so many other services workers. Such workers for a long time have taken to the pavements and the streets of the towns. More recently manufacturing activities such as furniture's makers or metal workers are leaving the courtyards to work on street. The share of street vendors in the crowd of street workers and outworkers in general has tended to drop. In a sense, the streets have become an annex of the homes, although the necessity of being visible from the clientele is not as important for homeworkers as for street vendors.

Consequently, the measurement of home-based work as a category of the labour force cannot be distinct and should not be distinguished from the measurement of street vendors for three reasons:

- both categories can be measured through the variable "place of work",
- an unknown proportion of "outworkers" may work in the streets as well as in their homes,
- an unknown proportion of street vendors are dependent workers, paid by formal traders.

Two additional issues should be considered relating to the differences between street vendors in rural and in urban areas. First, street vending is not only an urban phenomenon. Perhaps even more than in urban areas, the non-agricultural labour force in rural areas is located outside enterprises' premises. Vendors are particularly numerous along roads that cross villages or at the cross-roads, and many farmers or family workers who are classified in primary activities for their main jobs, are road vendors or market vendors for their second (annual or seasonal) jobs. Second, trade and sales activities may concern goods produced by the same persons on their farms or in their homes and this represents a conceptual and methodological difficulty in rural as well as in urban areas (in terms of classification of the activities and measurement of their value added). To sell self-produced goods should not be considered as a different activity from producing them, except if there is a kind of transformation (such as crushing the grains or cereals, but this will not be the case for fruit or vegetables) or if they have been carried on long distances to be sold in market places. This is not a marginal point concerning the measurement of women's activities. It is probably an important source of underestimation of their contribution as far as this contribution is limited to commercial margins and does not take the value added in the production process into account (see Charmes. 2000b). This is important for a correct enumeration of street vendors:

on the one hand, many (especially men) will have declared themselves as producers in households surveys while they will be registered as vendors in establishments censuses. On the other hand and in the contrary, many female street vendors will spontaneously declare themselves as traders, while they have (invisibly) processed the goods they sell.

Having said that and given the use made of data collected on “place of work” until now, it should be emphasised that this variable be collected for the main purpose of measuring home-based and street-based work. In this regard, there is an urgent need for a clarification of the concepts.

Rather than trying to pursue an exhaustive, coherent and illusory coverage of all encountered situations by mixing up existing classifications with ad hoc various (and internationally-difficult-to-compare) shopping lists of work locations, it can be recommended to start with a classification of work-locations distinguishing:

- Dwellings: 1) own dwellings (at home), 2) attached or adjacent to dwellings, 3) from home; and as clearly separate from the three previous sub-categories 4) clients’ or employer’s home.
- Open spaces: 1) street adjacent to home; 2) street; 3) door to door; 4) building sites; 5) agricultural areas.
- Other permanent structures.

Such a classification could be progressively and empirically built on the basis of the following conclusions of the present study.

Conclusions and recommendations.

Measurement of the “place of work” in labour force surveys, informal sector surveys and population censuses as a tool for identifying homeworkers/outworkers and street vendors emerged as an important issue to tackle at international level as early as the second meeting of the Delhi Group in Ankara (1998). Further to the adoption of the convention on homeworkers by the International Labour Conference in 1996, the international coalition on “Women in Informal Employment : Globalising and Organising” (WIEGO) stressed the existence of two categories of workers which are not clearly identified in the new international definition of the informal sector adopted by the XVth ICLS in 1993, either because they overlap the boundaries of the concept of informal sector (the “outworkers”) or because they are a sub-category which the currently and usually collected variables fail to identify separately (the street vendors or street workers).

The overlap of the “outworkers” category is a consequence of the definition of the informal sector through the characteristics of the economic unit. The 1993 definition splits the outworker category between the informal and the formal sectors, making it difficult to be captured as a single category of the labour force all the more so as employers would not spontaneously declare these workers who must be identified at the household level rather than at the enterprise level. Outwork is nevertheless a major instrument for maintaining the flexibility of labour markets at international level and in the process of globalisation as they are a means by which formal firms get round the labour and social laws. Consequently, it is a major issue for labour statistics.

In the labour force surveys, the knowledge of the characteristics of the sub-contracting firm by the outworkers is even more uncertain than for the workers employed on the site of the enterprise. On the demand side, in the enterprise surveys, the outworkers are unlikely to be spontaneously declared by the sub-contracting – formal as well as informal –firms. While the 1993 ICSE has defined the category of homemaker/outworker and provide guidelines on how this can be included in household surveys as part of the categories of status in employment, most countries do not try to identify separately the category in their labour force surveys.

As to the street vendors category, although it is a category of the ISCO, they are unlikely to be recorded as such in the labour force surveys unless a specific question on the place of work is asked in the questionnaire. This is so because “street vendor” is at a 3-digit level in the occupational classification while most surveys record occupation only at the 1- or 2-digit level.

Both categories raise gender issues as women represent a majority of these workers, at least in some regions of the world. Both categories are of special interest for socio-economic security, social protection and child labour, because of their vulnerability, their lack of social protection, their potentialities towards putting children to work, their lack and difficulty of organisation.

Annex 1: Conclusions and recommendations of the experts’ group meeting on the Measurement of Place of Work, Geneva, 24-28 August 2000

During the Ankara meeting of the Delhi Group, as well as during the XVth and the XVIth ICLS, were discussed – or at least raised – the opportunity and possibility of a revision of the ICSE for improving the measurement of the category of homeworkers. However, while a revised ICSE which will better reflect contractual forms which are intermediate to the “pure” forms of paid-employment and self-employment will help improve the measurement of these work situations, it is clear that other variables and associated classifications are also needed. One of these additional variables will be the “place of work”. This was re-affirmed at the second annual meeting of WIEGO in Ottawa (1999) where it was decided a proposal be prepared for funding by the UNSD/IDRC/UNDP project on “Gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work”.

Only a few countries have collected the “place of work” variable in their regular labour force survey (Latin America) or in their population censuses (North Africa) and even fewer have analysed the results, and it is difficult, by the time being, to know the extent and the trends of employment in these two categories of the labour force.

International compilations were undertaken and the ILO Project on Measurement of the variable Place of work, funded by the UNSD/IDRC/UNDP Project on “Gender Issues in The Measurement of Paid and Unpaid Work”, was launched in early 2000. Within the project, two pilot studies were undertaken in Jordan and in South Africa, consisting in the inclusion of a question on “place of work” in the regular labour force surveys; in addition analyses of the results from previous surveys were prepared for Colombia, Mexico and Bolivia. This project held an experts’ meeting from 24-25 August 2000 to review the results of these studies and international compilation on homeworkers and street vendors. The observations and conclusions of the meeting may be summarised as follows:

- 1) **Size of home-based and street-based workers.** Based on available statistics and depending on the definitions used and coverage of surveys, and excluding construction, transportation and domestic workers, the home-based workers (including the own-account workers, and piece-rate sub-contracted homeworkers) represent between 5 and 15 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force. The street-based workers represent between 5 and 8 per cent of the non agricultural labour force. Approximately 1/10 to 1/4 of the non-agricultural labour force is working under these conditions. Most of these workers are in the informal sector, although the formal sector is often at one end of complex contracting chains. Home-based and street-based workers are far from being negligible and are assumed to be rapidly increasing.
- 2) **Measurement objectives.** A primary objective of developing a classification for “place of work” is to develop appropriate tools to be used in regular statistical surveys particularly labour force and informal sector surveys. A better measurement of work remains the major goal.
- 3) **Analytical objectives.** A main analytical objective is to identify groups of workers such as homeworkers, street vendors and domestic workers who are particularly vulnerable in relation to the lack and difficulty of organising, the physical risks associated with the place of work, the absence of social protection.
- 4) In household surveys, scope and coverage should carefully consider i) measurement problems associated with women’s work and child labour; ii) recording of multiple activities; and iii) seasonal variations in economic activities which are difficult to measure for a short reference period (such as “past week” in labour force surveys) and which are directly related to the measurement issues of homeworkers.
- 5) The physical place of work – where the worker spends most of the time – rather than the place of the economic unit to which he or she is attached is the appropriate unit of classification for the analytical objectives mentioned above. This point needs to be made because it was observed that sometimes “mixed” responses were obtained to the question on place of work.
- 6) One well-designed single question could be sufficient for the measurement of place of work. However, in order to identify specific types of workers such as home-based

workers, homeworkers and street vendors, the “place of work” variable will have to be cross-classified by industry, occupation and status of employment.

- 7) An appropriate typology of “place of work” should be developed based on a conceptual framework. The above mentioned project provides the starting point for this.
- 8) Countries should be encouraged to conduct similar studies.

Annex 2: Recommendation of the 4th session of the Delhi Group on “place of work”

These conclusions of the study were presented at the 4th session of the Delhi Group, held in Geneva from 27-29 August 2000, which adopted the following recommendation:

“ The Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics recommends that countries include the variable “place of work” in labour force and informal sector surveys and endorses recommendations of the ILO Project on Measurement of Place of Work, as follows:

- The physical place of work - where the worker spends most of the time - rather than the place of the economic unit to which he or she is attached, is the appropriate unit of classification when the unit of analysis is the worker.
- One well-designed single question may be sufficient for the identification of place of work. However, in order to identify specific types of workers such as home-based workers, home workers, and street vendors, data on “place of work” will have to be cross-classified at least by industry, occupation and status in employment.

- An appropriate typology of “place of work” should be developed based on a conceptual framework.

A main analytical objective for inclusion of “place of work” in household surveys is to identify groups of workers such as home workers, street vendors and domestic workers who are particularly vulnerable in relation to the lack and difficulty of organising, the physical risks associated with the place of work, and the absence of social protection.

With respect to informal sector survey methods, the use of “place of work” in the construction of sampling frames may be explored and studied.”

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