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The gendered well-being of the home-based self-employed

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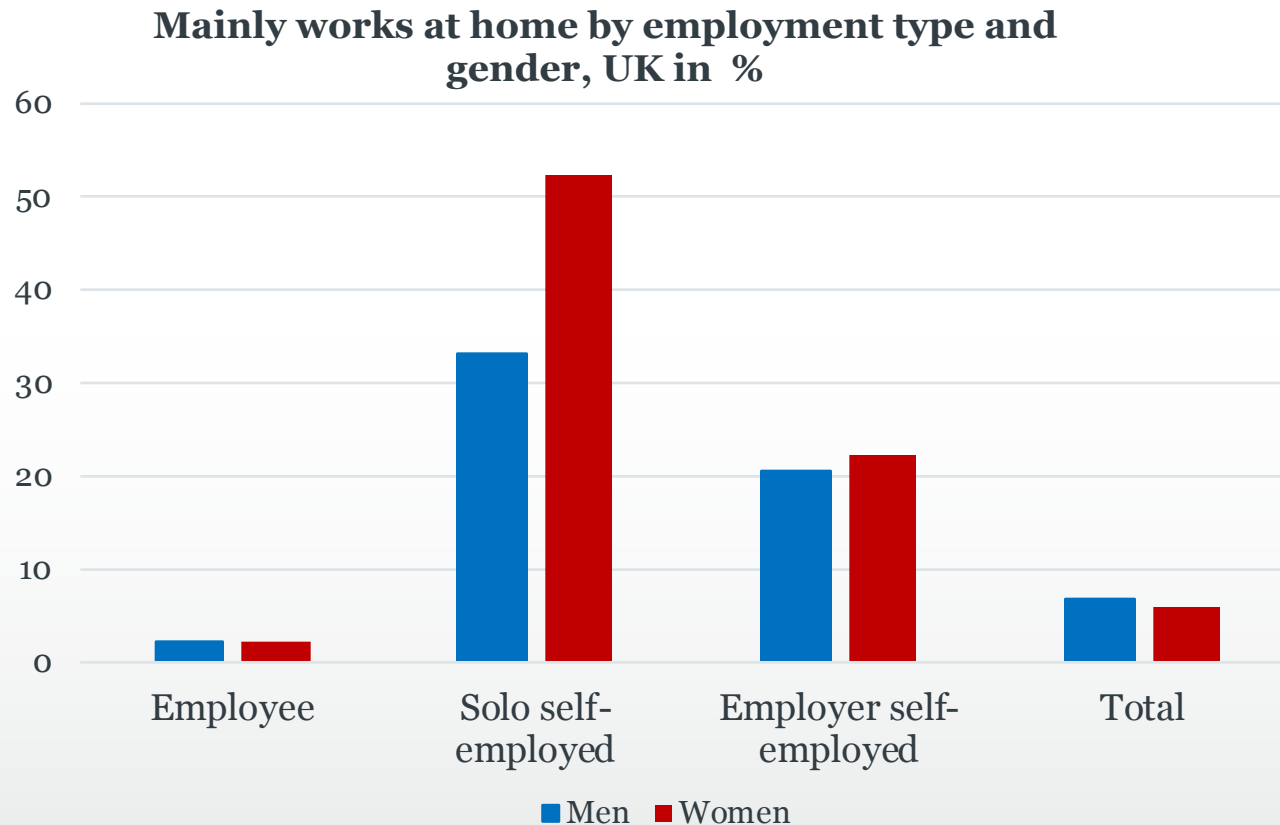
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Background

- Contemporary contradictions of work
 - Flexible work arrangements
 - Work intensity
 - Individualisation and risk (Beck, 1992)
- What is good work? Good Work. The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices (2017)
- What is ‘job quality’? (Budd and Spencer, 2015; Findlay et al., 2013)
- Positive and negative affect of work but little on cognitive well-being of different types of work (Dolan et al., 2008)

Homeworking - UK



Source: UKHLS 2010-16, cross-sectional individual weights applied, own calculations

Research objective and questions

- Subjective well-being of workers who work in their home on own accounts
- Is this 'good' or 'bad' work?
- Debate on who to promote to become self-employed (e.g. Shane, 2009)
- Wider concept of 'good work' beyond job characteristics
 - How do people evaluate their life overall as home-based self-employed compared to when they were not home-based self-employed?
 - Gender differences?

Home as multi-scalar concept

- Geographical perspective on home as a *place* (Blunt and Dowling, 2006)
- Home as a site in which people *live* and their everyday experiences, feelings and cultural meanings (Brickell, 2012; Blunt, 2005)
- Home as a place of paid work
 - Physical and social dimension
 - Distance and proximity
 - Multiple life domains

‘Mixed blessing’ of homeworking & self-employed work

- Work-life balance and work-life conflict
 - Overlapping of home and work space (spillover)
 - More time for family vs rescheduling of working time
- Self-employment & work-life conflict (König and Cesinger, 2015; Parasuraman, 2001)
 - Highly individualised work -> social and professional isolation (Hislop et al., 2015)
 - Uncertainty, work demand
 - Low income, particularly amongst women

Life satisfaction

- Long commutes reduce subjective well-being (Stutzer and Frey, 2008)
- No effect of homeworking on life satisfaction of employees (Wheatley, 2017; Binder, 2016)
 - Some evidence for positive effect on job satisfaction (Wheatley, 2017; Felstead and Henseke, 2017)
- Highest association of life satisfaction with: finance, health, job, leisure (van Praag, 1993 for Germany)

Methods

- Cardinal interpretation of life satisfaction (van Praag, 1991; Holländer, 2001; Ng, 2008)
- Categorical variable for combined labour market and homeworking status
 - **Solo self-employed – home**
 - Solo self-employed – not home
 - Employee – home
 - Employee – not home
 - Employer self-employed – home
 - Employer self-employed – not home
- Incl. and excl. observations out of work/unemployed

Model - 1

- $LS_{it} = f_{it}\gamma + x'_{it}\beta + a_i + \varepsilon_{it},$

LS_{it} Life satisfaction of individual i at time t

$f_{it}\gamma$ categorical variable for combined labour market and homeworking status with respective coefficients

$x_{it}\beta$ a vector of control variables with respective coefficients (personal, work, partner, care, housing, urban/rural, regional economy, year dummies)

a_i unobserved fixed effect which is constant over the study period

ε_{it} the error term

Model - 2

$$LS_{it} = f_{it,T}\gamma_T + f_{it,T+1}\gamma_{T+1} + f_{it,T+2}\gamma_{T+2} + x'_{it}\beta + a_i + \varepsilon_{it},$$

$f_{it,T}\gamma_T$ solo self-employed homemaker for 0-1 year

$f_{it,T+1}\gamma_{T+1}$ solo self-employed homeworking since 1-2 years

$f_{it,T+2}\gamma_{T+2}$ solo self-employed homemaker since 2-3 years

(Clark *et al.*, 2008)

Data

- UK Household Longitudinal Study 2009/10 – 2015/16
- Sample of 115,011 person-years
 - 18 and 64 years old, had finished their first full-time education and were not full-time student or retired
 - 11,603 women and 8,705 men
 - Observations of home-based solo self-employed:
 - 2,040 women
 - 1,847 men

Life satisfaction of women

	Obs. in employment & not in work	Obs. in employment only
<i>(omitted: employee – not home)</i>		
Solo self – in home	0.052 (0.056)	0.143** (0.063)
Solo self – not home	0.079 (0.050)	0.117** (0.057)
Employee – in home	-0.004 (0.053)	0.065 (0.059)
Employer self – in home	-0.078 (0.140)	0.011 (0.155)
Employer self – home	-0.068 (0.091)	-0.027 (0.095)
Unemployed	-0.164*** (0.037)	-
Not working	-0.129*** (0.029)	-

Life satisfaction of men

	Obs. in employment & not in work	Obs. in employment only
<i>(omitted: employee – not home)</i>		
Solo self – in home	0.002 (0.051)	0.026 (0.057)
Solo self – not home	-0.024 (0.045)	-0.018 (0.050)
Employee – in home	0.019 (0.048)	0.045 (0.049)
Employer self – in home	0.151 (0.101)	0.163 (0.106)
Employer self – not home	0.080 (0.066)	0.070 (0.069)
Unemployed	-0.417*** (0.039)	-
Not working	-0.351*** (0.055)	-

Starting solo self-employment from home vs not home with lags, women

	Obs. in employ. & not in work	Obs. in employ. only	Obs. in employ. & not in work	Obs. in employ. only
	M1	M2	M3	M4
<i>Solo self-employed -home</i>			-	-
0-1 years hence	0.089 (0.071)	0.173** (0.078)		
1-2 years hence	0.151 (0.103)	0.232** (0.097)	-	-
2-3 years hence	0.309** (0.126)	0.282** (0.126)	-	-
<i>Solo self-employed – not home</i>				
0-1 years hence	-	-	0.284*** (0.069)	0.212*** (0.079)
1-2 years hence	-	-	0.215** (0.010)	0.129 (0.110)
2-3 years hence	-	-	0.238 (0.161)	0.190 (0.166)

Starting solo self-employment from home vs not home with lags, men

	Obs. in employ. & not in work	Obs. in employ. only	Obs. in employ. & not in work	Obs. in employ. only
	M1	M2	M3	M4
<i>Solo self-employed - home</i>				
0-1 years hence	0.063 (0.095)	0.042 (0.107)	-	-
1-2 years hence	0.109 (0.123)	0.084 (0.124)	-	-
<i>Solo self-employed not home</i>				
0-1 years hence	-	-	0.079 (0.067)	-0.013 (0.073)
1-2 years hence	-	-	0.008 (0.093)	-0.074 (0.094)
2-3 years hence	-	-	0.191 (0.125)	0.113 (0.124)

Summary and conclusions

- 'Flexibility' of solo self-employed work is positive for life satisfaction of women but not men
- No effect of homeworking amongst employee and employer self-employed women (and men)
- Potential benefits for social relations may be only achieved through homeworking when the work affords temporal autonomy and freedom from organisational structures
- No evidence that work-life conflict or isolation has negative effect of life satisfaction of men and women
- Subjective well-being to inform self-employment policies

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