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Bringing it all back home: The extensification and 'overflowing' of work. The case of San Francisco's new media households.

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The case of San Francisco's new media households**

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Abstract

This paper explores the extensification of work - that is the distribution or exporting of work across different spaces/scales and times - and its impact on individual workers and households. We argue that contracting out and the work life balance debates might be developed more usefully within the holistic framework of extensification. The key process that we follow can be described as overflowing. We contrast the universally positive representations of spillovers and embedding that we are familiar with in economic geographies with the more negatively characterised overflowing of work into and out of the household. The paper is built around a case study of those involved in the new media industry in San Francisco: households, workers and companies.

Introduction

This paper explores the extensification of work and its impact on individual workers and households. Mainstream research on the transformation of work and economies has previously investigated the intensification of work, typically characterising this as part and parcel of the application of Taylorism and Fordism (Thompson 1983). More recently, debates about post-Fordism have started to highlight the processes of what we term extensification – that is the distribution or exporting of work across different spaces/ scales and times (Sayer and Walker 1992). Interestingly, equivalent manifestations of extensification are identified in two separate debates. On the one hand there has been considerable debate about sub-contracting, the out-sourcing of tasks, and the growth of freelance, temporary and part-time labour (Amin 1994). On the other hand, debates concerned with the reconciliation of 'work'

with the rest of 'life' (more popularly known as issues of work-life balance) engage with notions of extensification in the co-ordination of social reproduction tasks (see overviews by Rubery et al., 2000; Webster, 2004). Missing from these debates are important connections to be made between the spillover and embedding of work in the space economy and the consequence of this (including ambiguities over what counts as work) associated with work overflowing into and out of the household economy (English-Lueck 2002).

We argue here that contracting out and the work life balance debates might be developed within the more holistic framework of extensification. The key process can be presented as one of overflowing. We use the concept as Callon (1998) does, rather than in a neo-classical fashion. Thus, we might see work processes as continually escaping the boundaries of the firm. We can point to three classes of overflowing: first, those areas that economists term spill-overs; second, overflows that economic sociologists have termed embedding; and third,,the category that we focus on here, the household and social reproduction. Whilst the first two areas are commonly characterised as positive, we view them here more equivocally. Undoubtedly, overflows are mainly positive for the firm, but not so for the workers. To extend the discussions of sub-contracting, we argue that the process of extensification is one by which risks and costs are shifted to others. Of course, it is never a black and white case as to who benefits; this is always situated. Clearly some of us enjoy the 'freedom' to work all the time; others either do not, or, want to have control over when and where they work. This paper tries to open up issues concerning the consequences of extensification and to explore the negative aspects of 'overflowing' work. We view this as a further extension of excavating the hidden 'ordinary' and 'everyday' processes that are entailed in dealing with new work practices outside of the workplace (Jarvis et al., 2001).

The paper is built around a case study of those involved in the new media industry in San Francisco: households, workers and companies. The choice of new media is deliberate. Debates in the literature have pointed to the particularity of the service sector in general (Hyman et al., 2003), and the

cultural industries in particular (Pratt, 2004b), as a domain within which new 'overflowing' work practices are fast developing. We do not want to explore the reasons here, but clearly they are related to the possibilities of new technologies for 'working at a distance'. However, we should be careful not to take a deterministic view. A significant motivation for the adoption of new work practices is to increase productivity in the service sector where simple technical or mechanical substitution is either not possible or not sufficient: the so called curse of the service sector. Thus, the search for management innovations, an important example of which is extensification that affects the timing and placing of workers in this sector. Whilst we do stress the situatedness of human action, in this paper we try to bracket out the uniqueness of San Francisco as far as possible and see it as another case of new media clustering, examples of which can be found world-wide.

Changing Work

It is mainstream thinking since the late 1970s that the organisation of work has changed for many companies. There has been a considerable debate about networks of firms and their relationships and the different scales over which such networks may operate and be facilitated by new technologies (Castells, 1996). Likewise there has been much discussion of the changing nature of work both as experienced within companies, and beyond companies as freelance or portfolio workers (Sennett, 1998; Beck, 2000). In between these two extremes a debate about what is termed the project based enterprise has taken place (see Grabher, 2002). Whilst it has been long discussed as a characteristic of the construction industries, and latterly the film industry, the project based enterprise has been proposed as the archetypical form of the emergent new media industries, as well as many others in the cultural sector. Pratt (2002) describes the practice of the project based enterprise, and work within it, as 'bulimic' in character. Project teams are put together with a limited life which expires when the project ends; for some that may mean being re-absorbed into the company, for others – freelancers – it is the start of a new search for employment. Project based enterprises are also characterised by many non-standard work practices too; for some this includes very flexible, and informal, working practices, for many

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the timing and location of this work may be as wide ranging. There are numerous consequences for labour organisation and training that have been identified by others (Christopherson, 2002; Gill, 2002). Debates in the industrial relations literature have explored these issues more generally, however, as Hyman et al (2003) note, analysis by Green (2001) for example is confined to the parameters of the 'working day'. Clearly, such work is not carried out in a vacuum, and workers have a life into which these practices increasingly intrude (Perrons, 2003). It is precisely this 'intrusion' that many of the core debates about the work-life balance have sought to address.

Changing Times

The notion of the work-life balance may be a new one, but its core concern is an old one. In fact, the struggle over the length of the working day has been an issue central to labour relations since the industrial revolution. The most recent phase of work-life balance debates since the 1990s have focused on the intersection of three themes. The first theme is the acknowledgement that people are working long hours (for US studies see Schor, 1991; National_Work-Life_Forum, 1999; for UK studies see Hogarth et al., 2000). Second, the recognition that there are a growing proportion of women in the workplace with full or near full time employment (see Mcdowell, 2004). Third, that we are witnessing the normalisation of a dual-earner structure in couple households (Somerville 2000). Logically, the combination of long hours and dual earners minimizes the time available to a household for social reproduction activities (cleaning, cooking, care; as well as rest and leisure). In the sociological literature this approach has been termed the 'depletion model' of the work-life balance (see Lobel, 1991; Tenbrunsel, 1995), where the quota of 24 hours must be shared between work and home: add to one, and it depletes the other. However, commonly held social assumptions of gender roles and responsibilities result in women still carrying the majority of the social reproduction burden, even when they are (at least) an equal worker (in terms of time and income).

Changing Lives

There has been debate in the sociological literature regarding the shortcomings of the 'balance metaphor' and the 'depletion model' and consequently efforts have been made to engage with the subjective meaning of time (see Gershuny, 2000; Thompson and Bunderson, 2001). To take a popular example, Hochschild's (1989; 1997) focus on the experiential and meaning based aspects of the 'time bind' find a sympathetic echo with those that have written about the increased pressures that result from dealing with the smaller-spans of household time, such as 'quality-time' (ironically this seems to represent a mirroring of the intensification of tasks in the workplace) (Future_Foundation, 2000; Sandberg and Hofferth, 2001). Likewise, from a time-geographical perspective, Davies (2001) argues that the emphasis on time as a quantity based resource (equally available to all as a measure of the calendar or clock) and space as a gender-neutral, fearless dimension, obscures important social processes such as contradiction and power (see also Friberg, 1993). Glucksmann (2000) has recently developed and expanded this as 'total social reproduction'; a concern with experience and situation, as well as the flow across boundaries of all sorts which are precisely what we seek to work with.

On the other hand, geographical debates have sought to turn attention to the spatial arrangements that underpin, or stymie, the work-life balance because the distribution and 'spacing' of jobs, housing and services within a particular area determine the working time arrangements and child-care options actually available to households managing two jobs or careers from a fixed residential location. Yet the emphasis in this literature on the macro-spatial

'rationalisation' of everyday routines fails to recognise the significant micro-compromises that individuals make (for a sense of the latter see Jarvis 2005a). This is particularly true with respect to households with more than one earner and with respect to competing goals and preferences, such as a home in the city and access to 'good' (white, suburban) schools (Jarvis et al., 2001). Duncan and Smith (2001) stress that people do not choose to live where they do simply to co-ordinate jobs, housing and transport. They also consolidate a particular place of residence because it endorses (and in turn shapes and normalises) preferred gender roles, lifestyle and family ideals. Thus 'practical' spatial arrangements and temporal orderings are qualified by discrete 'moral' geographies of community affiliation.

In the remainder of this paper we pick up the themes of the linkages between home and work and explore how they play out in a specific place and industry. Our main objective is to make visible the form and consequence of the practices that sustain the 'overflowing' workplace.

New media in San Francisco

San Francisco is an evocative case study for several reasons. It is popularly viewed as the most European of US cities, with a relaxed, vibrant, walkable character, widely admired by residents and visitors alike (Hartman, 1984). The city maintains a compact form as a consequence of its physical containment between oceans, bays and steep hills. As such we might expect San Francisco to be a city where working families experience little difficulty

co-ordinating everyday activities. Yet today the private and commercial costs of congestion (in terms of time wasted, stress and missed appointments) rank among the highest in the US (California_Government_Datamart, 2000). San Francisco has a notoriously high cost of living. Despite pooling incomes from several sources, many middle class working families are squeezed out of the city. Living in one place and commuting to jobs in another can exacerbate already strained negotiations between working parents in their arrangements for everyday co-ordination. It also generates energy consuming journeys. Being part of one of the world's highest concentrations of ICT infrastructure does not provide the anticipated solution. It is not uncommon to hear technology blamed for further disrupting, rather than relieving, efforts to balance home, work and family (English-Lueck, 2002). Rather than releasing workers from particular locational imperatives, tools such as portable computers, email, mobile phones and fax more often extend already long days by forcing additional business communication into the journeys to and from work and home at weekends (Jarvis et al., 2001; Work_Foundation, 2002). In the following case study, we dispel the myth that San Francisco's compact spatial arrangement and technology saturation reduce private struggles to balance the needs of work and home.

The Growth of San Francisco's new media industry

There is not space here to review the economic history of San Francisco (but see Hartman, 1984; Brook et al., 1998; Walker, 1998). It is sufficient for our current purpose to note the significance of new media industry growth from the mid 1990s. Wealth was created by the combined attraction of artists,

writers, musicians, software developers, venture capital and entrepreneurs to an area of derelict residential and light industrial property at the southernmost limits of the core Financial District. Schematically, the South of the Market area, known as SoMa, is located at the intersection of the bohemia of the Haight, the rainbow politics of the Castro, the financial savvy of the downtown, and the software coding expertise from neighbouring Silicon Valley. SoMa has grown into a unique new media cluster where firms seek out close proximity so that they can trade goods and 'gossip' with one another, and where labour can circulate on a series of sequential employment opportunities (Pratt, 2002). The work patterns and organisation of this industry often meant that local residence was a key resource in order to 'stay in the knowledge loop' of a fast changing labour market. Many chose, or have, to live near by their work as a result of the long, irregular and sometimes continuous working hours when a project is in 'crunch' mode (24 hour working). A map of San Francisco is provided in Figure 1 which locates the high-growth district of Mission/ SoMa (home to the households introduced below). In Figure 2 a second map locates San Francisco within the wider Bay Area, highlighting the Peninsula (including Silicon Valley) where many San Francisco workers are now forced by pressures of growth to live.

Running alongside the clustering of new media firms in the SoMa district has been large-scale urban regeneration, much of it revolving around a hybrid 'live-work' property type designed to fulfil the functions of living (eating, sleeping, socialising) and working. The higher rents that new media companies could afford had the effect of pricing out the artists, previous

residents of SoMa. There is an irony in the fact that by the late 1990s competition for housing from high-income professionals began to force out the new media companies.

The dawn of the 21st century has seen the fortunes of the Internet industry falter and likewise with it the development plans of San Francisco: this is another story. In this paper, however, we are concerned only with the period of the boom and how the temporal and spatial articulation of this circumscribes individual household strategies to combine home, work and family life. Specifically, we are concerned with the way new media workers and their families construct their daily lives, often in relation to close cultural affiliation with the SoMa district. We make no claims to discuss the wider region and its fortunes, nor the Peninsula (including Silicon Valley), nor the whole urban area. Nevertheless, as will become evident, the daily lives of residents living in this one neighbourhood are by no means restricted to this local area. Indeed it is a true irony that, despite the co-presence of new media workers and new media firms, many new media workers who live in this creative industry cluster commute elsewhere to work.

The buzz of the city, the buzz of work

Recent economic geographies have struggled to move beyond the traded interdependencies of economic transactions to the untraded interdependencies that are social in character (Storper, 1997). Moreover, these un-traded interdependencies have been characterised as occurring both inside and outside the workplace and work time (Pratt, 2004a). This has

led to a sub-debate about the nature of face to face interactions and buzz (see Bathelt et al., 2004; Storper and Venables, 2004). Generally, such spillovers are regarded as an unusual, but beneficial, 'free goods' that add to the competitiveness of clusters and regions. This overflowing is a clear consequence of the project based work organisation and practices; and it is particularly marked in the cultural industries and new media in particular.

However, such a view ignores the huge investment of time and energy by individuals in 'networking'. Being at the right parties, bars and events ensures making the right contacts: learning the best gossip regarding the new product, new job, or latest company failure. Workers that we spoke to pointed out that this was a 'young person's game'; that it was difficult to sustain such 'after hours socialising' when one got older, and/or had dependents. The choice appeared to be lose out, or to be an absent partner/parent: the gain of firms is the loss of household socialisation. In order to examine the nature and character of this impact we carried out twenty interviews with dual-earner households where at least one member was involved in the new media industry, all were located in the gentrifying areas of Mission and SoMa. We have chosen to highlight what are broadly representative themes through three household vingnettes.

Buzz at home?

There is an implicit price to pay for the 'free goods' of 'buzz' and knowledge transfer in the new media industry. However, as the consequences are quite literally shifted away in both time and space they become invisible. Moreover,

workers take it upon themselves to resolve the difficulties that ensue. The three vignettes that we present variously highlight these issues.

Making up the hours at home

Guy and Greta Florin live in a privately rented two bedroom Victorian apartment with their two sons. Moving to San Francisco from the East Coast as students twelve years ago, Guy and Greta each at first pursued 'established' professional careers in law and publishing, occupations which were relatively ubiquitous. Greta switched to on-line publishing six years ago and has since worked for a series of e-commerce companies. Guy's legal work, though not strictly part of the new economy, involves environmental planning concerns specific to the Bay Area. They maintain a strong attachment to the city as a hub location for two equally demanding careers. This is despite severe lack of affordable housing and the way this effectively 'traps' them in an overcrowded apartment. Greta explains how they have adapted the internal arrangement of their apartment to accommodate their two sons age 4 and 2:

> "This (apartment) is ok for the immediate future (but) it will feel too small when the boys are bigger, I mean, they're both sleeping in the living room now, you know, we've turned the small second bedroom into an office so they're sleeping in ostensibly the living room, this is ostensibly the dining room."

For the Florin's, making space for an office at home is essential to their ability to co-earn and co-parent. Guy explains that the hours he currently works

away from home in a downtown law firm are less than expected of him at this stage in his career. In order not to fall behind in security, pay and promotion, he 'makes up' for short days by undertaking a significant 'second shift' at home at night. He explains:

> "If I have a major project or something, what happens is I end up making a huge number of photocopies at work, spending about an hour preparing to write a brief or a memo at home, the kids go to sleep, and that evening Greta does the dishes and clean up ('yeah' Greta sighs) and I get to work at 9.30 and I work until 2 or 3 (…) but I'm here, and I'm here between 5 and 9 each evening and, you know, I'm not missing dinner and bath time and the kids bed time and so on."

The Florin's have mixed feelings about San Francisco's meteoric creative industry growth. On the one hand, Greta acknowledges that her shift to the new economy has brought significant material advantage and increased the commitment she holds to her paid career. On the other hand she highlights a frustrating treadmill effect whereby, despite improved earnings in a dual career household, a yawning gap remains with respect to opportunities to improve their housing situation. Moreover, the advantages of Internet employment are tempered by increased personal risk. Though she refuses to contemplate working with the most volatile 'start-up' companies (those working toward an Initial Public Offering) – Greta has experienced high job turnover through Internet firm failure.

By accepting this level of risk the Florin's effectively tie themselves to the constraints of the long hours and intrusion of work into home associated with Guy's more secure legal career. For instance, when the Florin's second child was born both wished to reduce their working hours. Guy recognised he had "always worked short hours for a litigator and every once in a while heard something about 'well, he does good work but his hours are a little short', because the hours (in law) are a little excessive". He worked a minimum of 50 hours of which 40 were billable. The only way he was able to break out of this requirement was to become an hourly paid employee, a move which, as Greta explains, "lost (him) all his benefits, all his vacation time and a considerable amount of his seniority in the workplace". The experiment was short-lived because his job satisfaction eroded as he was "taken off all the interesting projects". Guy is now back working 'normal' long hours. Greta, on the other hand, has been far more successful in negotiating an upper limit to her full time working week as well as the ability to work occasionally from home.

Lone freelancer to corporate culture

Ross and Tilly Fabien live in a neighbouring block. Until recently they both worked full time from home, Ross as a freelance graphic designer and Tilly as a fine art painter. Then Ross took up his first salaried position as artistic director of an Internet search engine. For Ross this move introduced a whole new routine: commuting to an East Bay office each day, participating in a 'corporate' culture and regularly travelling away from home on business. The shift from two precarious, home-based, open-ended modes of working to a combination of one fixed (though typically 'demand led') plus one autonomous

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schedule provided this couple with scope to sustain two careers and raise a family in the city. Tilly explains that 'having one steady income' for the first time means she is able to pursue her painting career without needing to supplement her income with 'commercial work'. It provided important financial security just as Tilly was expecting their first child.

The shift Ross has made from working as a lone freelancer at home, to close interaction with other designers in an open-plan "shed", neatly illustrates the diverse modes of working which underpin the length, intensity, location and flexibility of the working day in San Francisco's new economy. When he worked freelance from a computer terminal at home, just like many software developers, Ross found himself so interested and absorbed and at the same time isolated that he was overtaken by a 'fugue-like' concentration. Tilly describes how working this way effectively removed him from his environment so that he was emotionally unavailable to meet a domestic crisis or practical concern:

> "He would roll out of bed in his pyjama's, walk to his studio, sit down at the computer and start working (…) (several hours later) I'd go in to his studio and he'd still be in his pyjamas, just totally immersed in the work like he's completely focused."

Now, like many high status creative workers, Ross spends long hours interacting with fellow workers in a relatively unstructured and fuzzy work process deemed to incubate creative thinking. The former mode involved introspection, the latter high levels of interaction. Each mode imposes quite

different constraints on Tilly's working life and the opportunities Ross has to manage his working hours, times and availability (emotionally and physically) for parenting. This resonates with English-Lueck's (2002) observation that 'the presence of a networked computer at home simultaneously grants an adult the privilege of working near family, and distracts that person's attention from the people in the home environment' (51).

The Fabien's offer a discretely different account of the moral and institutional constraints they experience balancing home, work, family and community. They exemplify the predicament of those 'crossing over' to the new economy, as freelance artists now also benefiting from dot-com, digital art, employment. Yet the crossing remains incomplete. They now effectively live and work at one and the same time with a foot in both worlds. They maintain close links with their former experience of San Francisco as a world of artist colonies and political activism. Yet at the same time, engagement with the new economy has brought with it altered household arrangements and elevated status in the competition for housing and thus opportunity to remain in the city, able to shape its future.

City dormitory

Three blocks further downtown, Mark and Zoe Fraser permit access to their visitors via video intercom. Walking into their fourth floor loft space it feels as though here, at last, exists a strangely abundant amount of light and space. Indeed, explaining how they chose to live (but not work) in the city, Mark claims, pointing at the large windows overlooking the street: "it's about access

to San Francisco, to the physical space".   Both Mark and Zoe commute to

Silicon Valley jobs, each driving for over an hour a day.   They stagger their

schedules to maximise their hours at work while (from their perspective)

minimising the time their three year old daughter Polly spends at day-care.

Zoe leaves the loft at 6.30am, before the others are awake.   She generally

misses the worst of the traffic at this time and can be at her desk by 7am.

Mark gets Polly ready for day-care and drops her off just before 8 before he

drives 30 miles south to his office in Redwood City.   Zoe leaves work at

4.45pm so she can get back to San Francisco to collect her daughter by 5.30.

This way Polly averages between nine and ten hours day-care.   Mark usually

comes home from work sometime after 7pm.

Both parents are regularly required to fly to the East Coast on business,

sometimes for several days at a stretch.   It is only by virtue of their relative

seniority that they are each generally able to schedule their business travel so

as not to overlap time away from home overnight. Their jobs require "a lot of

interaction with the people (they) work for".   Moreover, Zoe claims that she

would "hate to work at home" in their live-work loft. They observe that few of

their neighbours work from home in this particular live-work development.

They openly admit to "exploiting the loophole" in regulations providing them

the opportunity to become owner-occupiers in the heart of the city, though this

type of development was "intended for (other) people" not those like

themselves who buy live-work lofts simply to live in. They experience long

combined hours working away from home (a total of 122 hours per week

between them on average including travel). It is of little relevance to them they both commute to Silicon Valley as it would never appeal to them to live there.

The hidden costs of overflowing work

These vignettes illustrate the interwoven nature of 'life' and work; home is not simply 'external' to work, for workers it is profoundly 'internal' and interconnected. As we know from the literature reviewed earlier in the paper, overflowing is experienced both in terms of *the nature of work* (a temporal overflowing) and *the location of work* (spatial overflowing). While we see evidence of both in the vignettes, they are mitigated or managed by households in a variety of ways. The extent to which overflowing is perceived as either enabling or constraining varies markedly according to household structure and social context. All six parents experience the effects of 'bringing work home', whether physically (in Guy's case and with Tilly's home-working) or mentally. When the need to generate ideas means they are 'always on' it is impossible to define when they are at work or at rest. In this context of course 'work' spans the whole economy: work-work, family-work, domestic-work and life-work. Any one or all of these might be conducted at home (either in an office which duplicates 'the office' or simply on a mobile phone), in a remote work-place or in transit. Inevitably, home also intrudes into work with parents having to make new arrangements 'on the fly', or to cope with home and school problems remotely. This, in turn, adds to stress and inefficiency at work (see Cooper et al., 2001). What we see from the vignettes is that the overflowing of different aspects of work is profoundly asymmetric.

The extension of work (time) only captures one dimension of the issue. A further dimension is the pressure on individuals and companies to network strategically in order to remain competitive. This implies an extra work burden: the pressure to take part in the buzz of office, or post-office activity, or, the need to have 'face-time' with clients or remote co-workers. All of these activities place considerable burdens on individuals' time and invariably that of their household too. It may be argued that many workers are compensated for such work. This is by no means common for workers in new media who are invariably precarious freelance workers, or employed on a project by project basis. Even those who are monetarily compensated lose out on time off in an environment, or with people, of their choosing. Commonly, it means household tasks are shifted to a spouse. Moreover, there is the emotional cost of separation from children and partners.

Greta Florin and Mark and Zoe Fraser experience the overflowing work patterns of the portfolio worker: continually updating skills, friendships and knowledge of events to build their careers (and maintain continuous employment). For them, aspects of 'work-work' (however tenuously connected to current employment) dominate the 'rest of life' through a variety of face to face business and social encounters which generally take place outside the home. In contrast, being 'always on' for Ross and Tilly Fabien equates to a 'fugue like' concentration whereby domestic and family concerns are blocked out and unattended even though this work generally occurs in the home.

What we can learn from a more holistic analysis, such as that presented here, is the amount and variety of sources of work, mostly hidden, which overflows into the household (directly through 'stolen time', and indirectly through absent labour). In order to cope with such overflows spousal employment demands have to be compatible. Particular modes of working can alternately represent obstacles or solutions according to household circumstance (see Jarvis, 2002). While for the Florin's the organisation of family life is made easier by the melding and merging of home and work activities and environments, the Fraser's find this blurring problematic. Greta has greater scope in her work-place to make phone calls to check up on day-care or after-school activities whereas Guy brings case-files home to complete in the evenings. In combination these features of spouse employment tend to throw the greater burden of family-work onto Greta's shoulders. The consequence of the Fraser's excluding work from their home is to lengthen their working 'day'. They can only achieve this elongation because both conduct aspects of family-work while away at the office (telephoning each other to co-ordinate late meetings and childcare cover).

Of course, the dual-career households observed here are able to purchase substitute childcare and domestic help to help overcome some of the obstacles to balance described. Yet this perspective amplifies the silence of what originally produced the need to cope: the need to be 'always on'. The scope for reducing the burden of life-work caused by overflowing is limited. In part this is because it has resulted from firms outsourcing these risks and costs. Moreover, people construct their everyday lives on the basis of

emotional as well as material and institutional constraints. More extensive interview analysis beyond the scope of this paper reveals the impact, and thus a further 'cost', of parental guilt, for instance, both in a continuing desire to *be there* in person when a child or spouse are unwell and in speeding up the treadmill of *quality* parenting and busy leisure (see Hochschild, 1989).

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to explore the consequences of the extensification of work. Our notion of extensification focused on the overflow of work into wider social life. We have pointed out that the spill-overs and social embedding that sustain extensification strategies are commonly seen as both positive and 'free goods'. We questioned both assumptions. This paper has sought to explore the hidden costs of extensification. The costs are hidden because they are absorbed by households either directly via the extra (free) hours worked, or indirectly through substituted labour (by spouses, or other helpers). Moreover, there are a number of emotional burdens created as a result of this state of affairs such as absence from the household and social activities (either physically, or mentally absent).

More generally we can see this as an integral part of a whole range of risks and costs being outsourced from firms. There has been much work pointing to the asymmetric relationships between firms in subcontracting networks, there has also been work on the marginalisation of workers. In turn, we have exposed the costs of the absorption of work by households beyond the simple 'work rich' example. The paper has traced the nature and character of such

costs in the new media industry. As the organisation of work and the labour process is different in other industries to varying degrees, simple generalisation is not appropriate. Clearly, the effects on households, even within the same industry or in different locales, may be wide ranging depending upon local conditions of housing and transport. However, it does point to an agenda worth exploring.

What is striking in retrospect from an analysis of the boom industry- in the most developed state in the richest country in the world- is that life is remarkably difficult and of dubious quality. On the surface, this group seem to be doing well. We could be criticised by those that point to the significant social deprivation and social displacement found in San Francisco for focusing on well off, heterosexual couples with children. However, our point is that if you scratch under the surface of even the –apparently- secure workers a number of issues arise. There are then two possibilities: either that one may be tempted to extrapolate and intensify the issues elsewhere in the economy and society, or, maybe these are the particular problems of the aspirant wealthy. Clearly, we will need a number of other industry and household specific studies to understand which of these speculations holds the most insight.

Figure 1: San Francisco study areas and districts experiencing 'gentrification' associated with the new economy
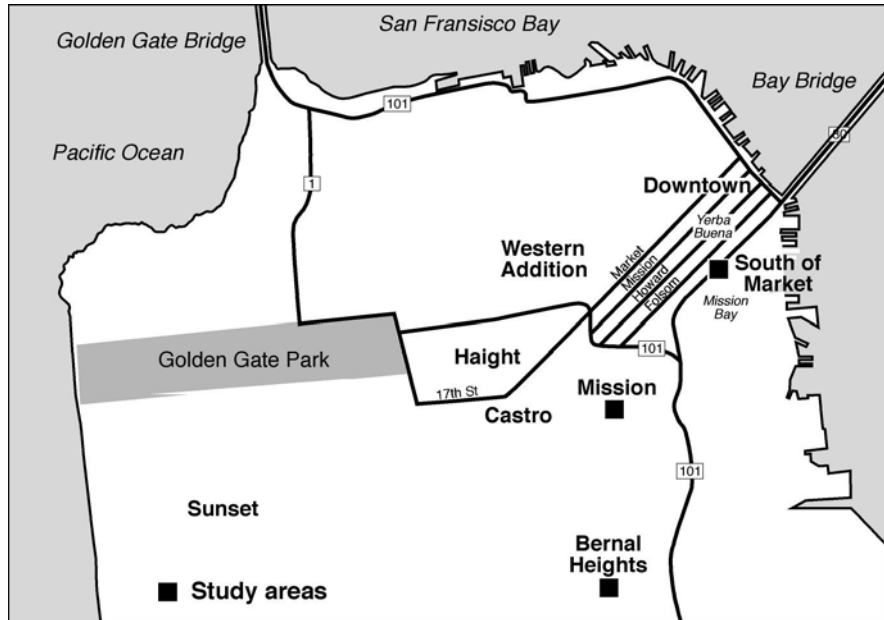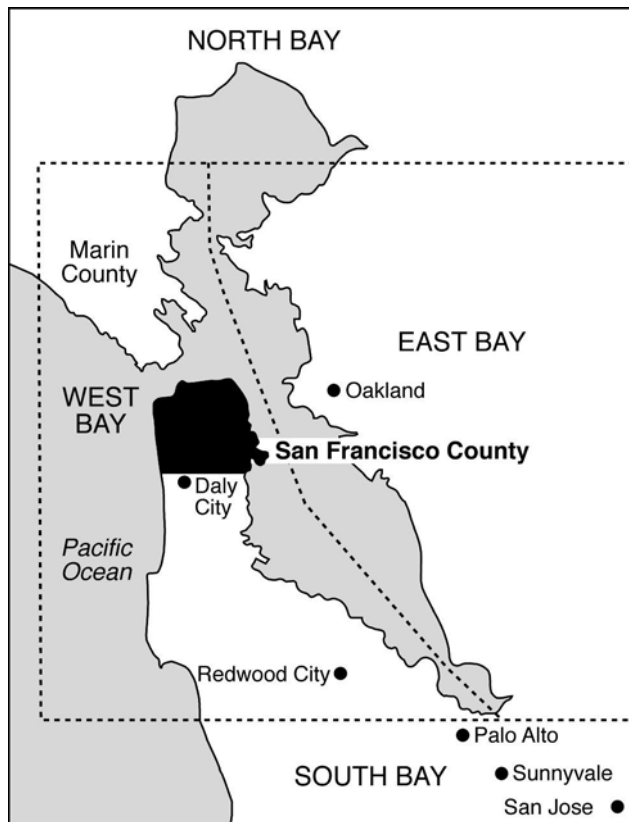

Figure 2: San Francisco in relation to the wider Bay Area

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