

The Employment of Working-Class

Women in Leeds, 1880-1914

by

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SUMMARY

Between 1880 and 1914 women's industrial employment in Leeds was transformed by the introduction of the factory system in the consumer-goods trades. Women came to predominate in ready-made tailoring, but have been neglected in histories of the city.

Recent studies have argued that a focus on the sex division of labour in social production challenges conventional interpretations of working-class history. This thesis contributes to current debates by examining women's work in Leeds. It argues that the sex division of labour and the tensions between sex and class had a critical impact on the development of the local labour movement. Studies of women's work have shown the importance of regional variations in the pattern of female employment. Leeds provides the opportunity to study a hitherto neglected group, - female factory workers employed outside cotton textiles.

Women's subordinate role within industry and their attitudes to work were structured by the experience of work itself as well as by their early socialisation and role in the family. The first section examines the conditions of women's industrial employment. It suggests that job segregation by sex structured the specific features of women's work in Leeds.

Section two locates the extent and type of women's work in Leeds in the context of the social conditions of family life and contemporary expectations of appropriate sex roles. The varied family backgrounds, age and marital status affected the attitudes of individual women to paid employment and modified its effects.

The final section examines the attitudes of the Leeds labour movement towards women workers and the tensions between sex and class. The labour movement failed to address women's needs and to offer a real challenge to their subordinate industrial position. This weakened union organisation and independent labour politics in the city.

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A B B R E V I A T I O N S

| | |
|--------|--|
| AST&T | Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses |
| AUCO | Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives |
| GUTW | General Union of Textile Workers |
| HPL | Huddersfield Polytechnic Library |
| ILP | Independent Labour Party |
| LCA | Leeds City Archives |
| LDN | Leeds Daily News |
| LM | Leeds Mercury |
| LRC | Labour Representation Committee |
| LWC | Leeds Weekly Citizen |
| NFWW | National Federation of Women Workers |
| NUWSS | National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies |
| SDF | Social Democratic Federation |
| TUC | Trades Union Congress |
| WRPLWA | West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association |
| WCOU | Wholesale Clothiers' Operatives' Union |
| WLL | Women's Labour League |
| WPPL | Women's Protective and Provident League |
| WTUL | Women's Trade Union League |
| WTUPL | Women's Trade Union and Provident League |
| YEN | Yorkshire Evening News |
| YFT | Yorkshire Factory Times |

YLCE Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education

YP Yorkshire Post

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines women's industrial employment in Leeds in the period 1880 to 1914. It argues that an analysis of the sex division of labour in social production is crucial for an understanding of the specific features of male and female work in the city and of the developments which took place within the labour movement.¹ Women made up at least one third of the large labour force in Leeds during the period and formed the bulk of workers in two staple industries, wool and worsted textiles and ready-made tailoring.² And yet their importance in the city's economy and their contribution to the labour movement have received little attention from historians.

It has become commonplace to note the absence of working-class women from historical enquiry, and in particular from the standard texts of labour history.³ Little attention has been paid by historians to the significance of the sex division of labour for an understanding of working-class history or to the ways in which the labour movement confronted sexual inequalities at the workplace and in the home.⁴ When women workers are mentioned at all, they are usually seen as a problem for male workers because they were difficult to organise and could be used as a source of cheap labour.⁵ The reliance on official union and Labour Party records reinforces this problem-oriented approach and institutional developments are seen "through the eyes of committee men" who view outside challenges as "dangerously weakening diversions".⁶

The overall neglect of women workers must be seen as a result of ideas about what is historically significant. Labour historians have

concentrated on the formal organisations of the labour movement in which women rarely assumed leadership positions or were not included at all.⁷ When women did play a greater role in many mixed-sex organisations, their contribution has been underestimated.⁸ Only the struggle for women's suffrage has received sustained attention because it fits in with a more general interest in the achievement of the vote.⁹ As Patricia Hollis notes, this results in "a Whiggish obsession with the origins of the Labour Party on the one hand and with the mesmeric activities of the suffragettes on the other".¹⁰ It does not, however, encourage historical enquiry into the less spectacular and less visible activities of ordinary working-class women in the home or in the workplace.

A more recent interest by social historians in sex roles, family life, popular culture, work and class relations has helped to broaden the base of labour history away from a preoccupation with institutional developments and has drawn attention to the experience and historical significance of unorganised rank and file workers, both male and female.¹¹ This has not necessarily led, however, to a greater interest in the sex division of labour and women's waged work, in particular in the most recent texts of labour history. Hinton and Burgess, for example, focus upon the organised working class and on predominantly male areas of employment such as mining, heavy industry and transport, where workplace struggles are seen as crucial for the development of independent labour politics and a class conscious working class.¹² Consequently, female work, which was largely unorganised and concentrated in the service sector and in the sweated branches of the consumer goods trades, is seen as far less important.¹³

This emphasis stems largely from the theoretical framework most commonly employed to analyse class structure and relationships. As already noted, discussion is focussed upon the direct relationship between economic struggles at the workplace in key male industries, trade union organisation and the growth of class unity.¹⁴ Underpinning this approach is an acceptance that work and family are separate spheres and little attempt is made to analyse the interrelationship between "the work situation and the domestic economy".¹⁵ Women are identified with unpaid labour within the home, which is not accorded the "label and dignity of work", while their role in social production is seen as marginal.¹⁶ Women are thought, therefore, to derive their class position and attitudes from their role in the family and from the occupation of the male head of household.¹⁷ As late as 1978 Hobsbawm was able to write that a woman "aimed to stop work once married ... once married she belonged to the proletariat not as a worker, but as the wife, mother and housekeeper of workers".¹⁸ In recent years emphasis has shifted away from a focus on class unity towards an interest in the fragmentation of the working class.¹⁹ Research has concentrated, however, on the importance of skill in differentiating the working class and divisions based on sex have received far less attention.²⁰

Work by feminist historians, including Alexander, Davin and Taylor, has challenged this neglect of the female worker.²¹ Their studies have reassessed women's contribution to well-known movements and have drawn attention to hitherto unexplored areas such as sexuality, unpaid domestic labour and women's community networks.²² By placing the sex division of labour at the centre of historical enquiry their work not

only fills in gaps in women's history but also implies a new approach to the study of labour history.²³ As Alexander notes, "the history of production under capitalism from a feminist perspective is not simply the class struggle between the producer and the owner of the means of production. It is also a specific form of the sex division of labour in relation to that struggle".²⁴ Labour and social historians have been influenced to include areas such as family life, sex roles and sexuality to the list of topics explored in their studies, but their overall conceptual framework has not always been affected.²⁵ In commenting on a similar process among nineteenth-century socialists Taylor suggests that "it is one thing to add new issues concerning women ... to an already existing class strategy; it is quite another to transform even the most fundamental assumptions of the strategy on the basis of a feminist perspective".²⁶

Feminist historians differ widely among themselves, however, in the concepts and approaches used to examine and explain the sex division of labour and women's subordinate position in the workplace and in the home. The concept of patriarchy is most frequently employed to analyse women's oppression as a sex, but it is used in a variety of ways and has a number of different meanings.²⁷ Radical feminists, such as Rich and Brownmiller, use patriarchy to refer to the power relations by which men seek to dominate women in all societies.²⁸ This can lead to an a-historical approach which fails to distinguish between different economic and social systems and which ignores the way in which women's subordination could have a different meaning in different historical contexts.²⁹ For radical feminists, the motive

force of history lies in the "striving of men for power and domination over women, the dialectic of sex", but this emphasis on the conflict between the sexes denies the importance of other social divisions.³⁰ Competition exists between a range of different groups within industrial capitalism and is not confined to conflict between the sexes, which itself must be rooted in the wider struggle between capital and labour.³¹ Although men and women experience work differently because of their wider social roles, Pollert's study of tobacco workers in Bristol suggests that they also have many characteristics of employment in common which can provide the basis of class solidarity.³² At the same time, women themselves do not always share an identity of interests, but are divided by class differences and by their own occupational hierarchies.³³

Marxist feminists also use the concept of patriarchy in an attempt to account for women's specific subordination, but seek to relate this to the organisation of various modes of production.³⁴ Hartmann, for example, locates patriarchy in the relations of social reproduction in the family and argues that patriarchy has a material base which lies in men's control over women's labour power.³⁵ In her analysis capitalism and patriarchy are viewed as separate systems which come to an accommodation with each other.³⁶ She suggests that the development of industrial capitalism threatened to create a free labour market and therefore to undermine the position of male workers within paid employment and within the family. This raised the possibility of conflict between the interests of capital and those of male workers, but the potential tension was resolved by the development of a male

family wage.³⁷ Hartmann argues that this benefited male workers by confirming women's identification with the family and by ensuring that men would retain the best paid jobs and would continue to receive domestic services. At the same time, women's work within the home served capital by ensuring the reproduction of a healthy labour force and a pool of cheap female workers.³⁸ The central point of Hartmann's argument is that patriarchal relations are crucial in determining the accommodation between capital and labour.³⁹ As Thompson notes, "if capital is sex-blind, then while its interests coincide, the motive force derives from the necessity for men to control women".⁴⁰ By analysing capital and patriarchy as separate spheres and by focussing on the social relations of reproduction, Hartmann tends to neglect the role of female wage labour in production and also divorces the labour process from "the social relations of production as a whole".⁴¹

Alexander, Phillips, Taylor and Beechey, on the other hand, place a far greater emphasis on women's waged work and seek to integrate an analysis which recognises women's subordination to men in all social classes with a more traditional Marxist approach.⁴² Beechey attempts to relate women's paid employment and their position within the family to the process of capital accumulation and to capital's search for ways to lower the value of labour.⁴³ She suggests that women's role within the family in reproducing labour power cannot be divorced from production; since women are not expected to bear the full costs of reproduction, the value of their labour is reduced and, at the same time, they form a specific reserve army of labour for capital.⁴⁴ Beechey argues, however, that women's position as domestic workers and

as waged labourers is a contradictory one, since there are tensions between the tendency of capital to draw women into production while, at the same time, maintaining the family as a unit for the reproduction of labour power.⁴⁵ Beechey's importance for this study lies in her attempt to draw the material links between women's role in social production and their role in family life, and in pointing to the need for feminist research to focus on the sphere of production as well as on questions of "ideology, reproduction and patriarchy".⁴⁶

Alexander, Phillips and Taylor place less emphasis in their studies on the needs of capital and are more concerned to explore the interaction between capital and patriarchy.⁴⁷ They recognise that Marxist analyses of class have not always taken account of women's subordination and seek to "avoid the pitfalls of subsuming gender relations under a pre-defined system of class relations" by arguing that patriarchy as a system cuts across class lines.⁴⁸ They suggest that capital and patriarchy should not be analysed as separate spheres, but that capital should be seen as developing "through existing patterns of social domination and subordination, reinforcing them in the process".⁴⁹

Despite differences in emphasis and approach, all these studies share a common concern to highlight the continuing importance of women's waged work in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to analyse the interrelationship between paid employment and women's wider social role in the family. Their work challenges much of the conventional wisdom of labour history in areas that are crucial for an understanding of women's paid employment, in particular in relation to changes in the labour process, the relationship between work and family

life and class formation. It provides both an inspiration and a conceptual framework for the present study.

Important issues for the examination of women's waged work have been raised by historians interested in the development of the labour process, including the re structuring of work, the division of labour and the struggles for control at the workplace.⁵⁰ Most of their studies continue to employ a male definition of work and focus on occupations which are largely dominated by men.⁵¹ Feminist historians and sociologists, however, have drawn attention to the specific features of women's waged work and, by doing so, have developed a new approach towards the study of the labour process itself, in particular the skill labelling of jobs and the location of workers in different occupations.⁵² Phillips and Taylor, for example, argue that skill labels cannot be divorced from the sex and power of the workers involved.⁵³ They suggest that many skill definitions resulted from struggles by male workers to protect their market position and were not based on the content of the work itself or on the length of training required.⁵⁴ Similarly, they also argue that, although women workers were frequently introduced to tasks which had already been de-skilled, other occupations were defined as unskilled simply because they were identified with female labour.⁵⁵

A focus on the restructuring of work has encouraged historians to attempt to explain why women were located in specific tasks. The sex division of labour in production is too often assumed as something that is given, or as something that reflects women's household tasks, and

therefore women are automatically equated with low paid, less skilled employment.⁵⁶ This does not explain, however, why women were located in only some low skilled, low paid tasks rather than in others, and it also ignores the struggles which took place over any attempts to alter the sex division of labour at the workplace.⁵⁷ Women's entry into specific tasks was usually the result of a complex interaction between their position as unpaid workers in the family, technological changes, management strategies and the bargaining strength and policies of trade unions.⁵⁸ The outcome of this for the sex division of labour in paid employment and the pace and timing of change varied considerably in different historical periods and also in different local contexts.⁵⁹

Any research on women's waged work raises questions concerning the relationship between work and family. The conventional approach within labour history assumes a separation between the spheres of work and family life, with the family being identified with reproduction, socialisation and consumption.⁶⁰ Feminist historians such as Alexander, Davin and Taylor, however, argue that work and family should be seen as closely interrelated, and that the family continued to play a vital economic role within industrial capitalism, despite the gradual withdrawal of production from the home.⁶¹ In her study of women's work in nineteenth century London Alexander argues that, as social production developed outside the home, capital intervened in the existing sex division of labour in the patriarchal family by distinguishing production for use from production for exchange.⁶² By subordinating the former to the latter, and by centering production for use within the family, capital confirmed women's economic subordination within the

home. At the same time, the sex division of labour within the family was transferred to social production, with the result that women had an auxiliary and subordinate role within paid employment.⁶³ She argues that in London, although early industrialisation did not take the form of the introduction of the factory system or new machinery, production was nonetheless revolutionised by the application of subdivisational methods. Alexander suggests that this was only made possible by the existence of a plentiful supply of cheap female labour.⁶⁴ Despite the technical changes which occurred during the nineteenth century and which transformed the nature of work in London, the sex division of labour remained particularly tenacious. Alexander concludes, therefore, that "it is the consistency of this articulation of the capitalist mode of production through a patriarchal family structure which must form a central object of feminist historical research".⁶⁵

The precise way in which the sex division of labour in production related to women's role in the family has provoked considerable controversy among historians. Branca, Scott and Tilly argue that family goals and values remained particularly important in the nineteenth century in affecting the features of women's paid employment and in determining the extent and type of female wage earning.⁶⁶ This approach tends to neglect the importance of work itself in affecting women's attitudes towards employment and family life, although the effects of waged work were not necessarily straightforward. It is suggested in some studies that entry into social production provided women with the opportunity for greater economic independence and that this had the potential to alter their status within the family.⁶⁷

Tentler, however, suggests that the structural features of women's employment, in particular their low pay, confirmed their commitment to the domestic sphere and failed to provide a challenge to their identification with family roles.⁶⁸

An emphasis on the importance of female waged work, on the relationship between work and family life and on the often differing interests of men and women in social production has also drawn the attention of historians towards the tension between sex and class in the labour movement. This in turn has shed new light on the development of trade unionism, socialism and class relations and has encouraged historians to move away from a problem-oriented approach towards the female worker. In her study of the General Union of Textile Workers, for example, Bornat shows how the union itself played a part in reinforcing women's marginal position in waged work by pursuing policies which sustained unequal pay between the sexes.⁶⁹ She argues that the union's difficulties in recruiting members, therefore, cannot simply be explained by women's apathy or disinclination for collective action, but was rooted in their subordination and dependency in the workplace and in the home which the union itself helped to perpetuate.⁷⁰ Bornat and Alexander both point to the importance of early socialisation and sex roles within the family in shaping the attitudes of men and women towards work and trade unionism, and suggest that women's identification with family life could lead them to put forward different demands in disputes from those of male workers.⁷¹

Sex antagonism was a central feature of most trade union and political

struggles, although it has not received sustained attention in the histories of the labour movement.⁷² In her examination of the Owenite Movement and early nineteenth-century attempts to organise trade unions, Taylor shows not only that women played an important part in these activities, but also reveals how their involvement raised questions concerning female subordination and "slavery" to men of their own class which caused tensions in the movement as a whole.⁷³ She concludes that the material interests which divided men and women at the workplace in the early nineteenth century "created antagonisms which were to reverberate down the entire history of the trade union movement ... the development of capitalist production on the basis of gender divisions has meant that no workers' struggle has ever been free of sexual politics".⁷⁴

The relationship between sex and class in the labour movement was a complex one. Women as well as men derived their class position and a sense of class identity directly from their involvement in paid employment.⁷⁵ This applied to a large group of married as well as single women since, contrary to the impression given in census statistics, married women's work for wages remained extensive throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Women, however, experienced their paid work and trade union activity differently from men because "it was impossible for women to leave their sexual roles behind in order to enter struggles on identical terms with men. Sex and class were inescapably interlocked, both in their lives and in their thought".⁷⁷ This could cause tension at the workplace and undermine any sense of solidarity between the sexes based on a common hostility to employers.

Married women who did not engage in paid employment were more indirectly affected by the conditions of social production, since their well-being within the family was determined by men's position in the labour market.⁷⁸ This led many working-class women to identify a common interest with men because of a shared commitment to improving the conditions of a family life which provided an emotional support against the harshness of industrial capitalism.⁷⁹ Family solidarity was particularly strong in areas in which employment opportunities for women were limited.⁸⁰ Women as well as men often accepted the prevailing sex roles within the family and welcomed union demands for a male family wage which, they hoped, would release them from the double burden of wage earning and domestic tasks.⁸¹

On the other hand, women's subordination in the home could be a source of tension within working-class families. A woman's economic dependence on the male breadwinner brought insecurity if she did not receive a large share of his wages, and ensured a privileged position for men within the home which restricted women's freedom of action.⁸² In home-based industries women's dependence was doubly reinforced if they were employed directly by male relatives.⁸³ Their experience of subordination to men of their own class did encourage some working-class women to identify common interests with members of their own sex in other classes.⁸⁴ Interests based on sex, therefore, could cut across solidarities based on class, although working-class women tended to interpret their needs and aspirations differently from those of their middle-class counterparts.⁸⁵

The extent to which working-class women accepted the sex division of labour within the family, the level of their involvement in paid employment and the degree of sex antagonism that they faced within the labour movement was not static or universal, but varied both over time and also between different regions.⁸⁶ Research which has been undertaken into women's waged work reveals a wide variation in the pattern and extent of female employment and in the nature of working-class family life at a local level in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Studies by Alexander, John, Liddington and Norris show that there was a complex relationship between the extent and type of employment undertaken by women, the local patterns of family life and popular culture and the local work opportunities available for both sexes.⁸⁷ They indicate the dangers of too readily making generalisations concerning the characteristics of women's employment and their attitudes towards work and family life without taking account of the regional variations in the pattern of women's work and the changes that took place over time.⁸⁸ It is particularly important, therefore, to examine women's waged work in a local context if the complex interaction between sex and class in the labour movement, changes in the labour process and the differing attitudes of men and women towards work and family life is to be fully understood.

Leeds as a Case Study of Women's Waged Work

The present study focusses upon women's industrial work in the specific context of Leeds between 1880 and 1914 in order to add to our understanding of the importance of the sex division of labour within social

production, and to explore the implications that this had for the labour movement in the city. The first section examines the structural conditions and work experience of female workers in paid employment and argues that job segregation by sex was crucial in structuring the specific features of women's work in the city.⁸⁹ The thesis adopts the view that women's subordinate role within industry, and their attitudes towards paid employment, were not simply derived from their early socialisation or from their role within the family, but were also structured by the experience of work itself.⁹⁰

Particular emphasis is placed on the female factory worker in Leeds because, despite the continued existence of workshop and home-based production, the factory system came to predominate across a range of industries and provided the typical work environment for the majority of women workers in the city.⁹¹ There is a danger that, in compensating for the neglect of the female worker in Leeds, the thesis could be criticised for failing to pay sufficient attention to male employment in the city. It is argued throughout, however, that the sex division of labour in industry affected not only the conditions of female employment, but also had a bearing on the structure and characteristics of male work in the city. It affected the attitudes of male and female workers towards waged work and also towards each other.

It is recognised that women's waged work can only be fully understood in the context of women's wider social position and their role within the family. The second section of the thesis, therefore, examines the extent to which women entered paid employment and the reasons for

their choice of specific occupations in the context of the social conditions of family life in Leeds and contemporary expectations of appropriate sex roles. Attention is drawn to the development of a "cult of motherhood" among social reform groups in the city and the extent to which this influenced the attitudes of working women. Working-class living standards and family structure are also discussed in an attempt to assess their influence on women's decision about whether to enter paid employment and on their choice of occupation. Women workers in Leeds were not an undifferentiated group with a common attitude towards wage earning. They were drawn from a variety of family backgrounds and this, along with age and marital status, played a part in affecting their responses to paid employment and in modifying its effects.⁹² It is argued in the present study, therefore, that women's work could have a varied effect, depending on the type and organisation of production in which they worked, and on the family life that women enjoyed, or were likely to enjoy.

The third section examines the attitudes of organised labour towards women's waged work in Leeds and the tension that existed between sex and class in the labour movement. An attempt is made to assess the extent to which either the industrial or the political wings of the labour movement offered any real solution for women's subordinate position within industry. This final section takes up and explores the tentative suggestion made by one historian that a failure to confront the question of women's position within industry weakened trade unionism in the city and hampered the development of a class conscious working class in Leeds.⁹³ It is suggested that if the sex

division of labour and the conflict of interest between male and female workers are placed at the centre of any analysis of the labour movement in Leeds, then new questions are raised and a different light is cast on the development of socialism, trade unionism and independent labour politics in the city.

The thesis focusses upon women's waged work in Leeds. Women's role in the family and the specific pattern of family life in Leeds are considered, therefore, only in so far as they related to, and influenced, women's position in the workplace. Limitations of space have not made it possible to examine the impact of women's waged work on the structure and relationships in the working-class family in the city. The emphasis on women's waged labour can be justified on the grounds that work was a central and not a peripheral activity in the lives of working-class women in Leeds.⁹⁴ A majority of young girls entered paid employment in early adolescence and experienced several years of wage earning during a formative period of their lives.⁹⁵ The full-time employment of women outside the home declined after the age of 25, but almost one quarter of the female population in the city were occupied up to the age of 55, and this figure does not include many married women who worked for wages on an irregular basis.⁹⁶

The thesis concentrates on women's employment in the manufacturing sector, partly because this was the most important area of female work in the city, and partly because it most clearly reveals the specific local characteristics of their employment. A substantial number of both male and female workers in Leeds were employed in

manufacturing and at least 60 per cent of the female labour force worked in this sector throughout the period.⁹⁷ The sex segregation of labour was particularly rigid in manufacturing, but men and women did share many characteristics of employment. Industrial work, therefore, provides a useful example of the extent to which sex was important in differentiating the experience and conditions of work.⁹⁸ Industrial employment for women was also particularly localised and the type of work available, the predominant methods of production and the conditions of employment varied widely in different local areas.⁹⁹

Domestic service, retailing, "white-blouse" work and professional occupations also provided employment for women in Leeds, but they were far more important as areas of women's work in other parts of the country and the characteristics of such occupations did not show very great regional variations.¹⁰⁰ Women's work in the service sector, in clerical occupations and in the professions is referred to at appropriate points in order to provide an overall picture of female employment in Leeds. The emphasis on industrial employment, however, means that important questions relating to the middle-class status of "white-blouse" work and to professionalisation are not raised, and are seen as falling outside the scope of the present study.¹⁰¹

The decade of the 1880s is taken as the starting point for the thesis. In this period factory work for women developed in a range of consumer-goods industries in Leeds and this brought a radical change in the structure and conditions of female employment. The study ends in 1914 when the outbreak of war introduced a new social, economic and political context in which to examine women's waged work. Historians

have paid less attention to women's employment in this later period than in the period of early industrialisation, when the shift from one system of production to another brought radical economic and social changes.¹⁰² Branca argues, however, that in the late nineteenth century the decline in domestic service and in home-based industries, and the development of opportunities for female work in "white-blouse" occupations and in new factory industries, represented an even more radical turning point in women's work patterns than in the period of early industrialisation.¹⁰³

Cohesion is given to the period 1880 to 1914 by the broad changes which took place in the working-class family and within the labour movement, both of which affected women's position as waged workers. It has been suggested that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries higher male wages, the development of a family based on consumer needs, the declining opportunities for married women to work and a smaller family size all served to increase the importance of the married woman's role within the home and to reduce the significance of her wage earning.¹⁰⁴ The identification of women with family life was then reinforced after 1900 by the development of a "cult of motherhood" among middle-class social reformers and among members of the socialist and trade union movements.¹⁰⁵ The revival of socialism, the organisation of the less skilled and the development of independent labour politics in the period also awakened interest in the position of the woman worker and helped to change the context in which her work took place.¹⁰⁶ This was reinforced by the involvement of labour women in the campaign for woman's suffrage, in particular after 1900.¹⁰⁷

The importance of examining the pattern of women's work in a local context has already been noted, and Leeds provides a particularly illuminating case study. The city can be contrasted with other local areas because of the variety of work available to women. In most towns and cities women were offered employment in one major occupation such as cotton textiles, boot and shoe manufacture or domestic service.¹⁰⁸ Whenever a number of manufacturing occupations were available in the same town they were largely carried out, as in London, in small workshops or in the home.¹⁰⁹ In Leeds, however, women worked in a variety of industries which, after the mid 1880s, were increasingly organised on the basis of factory production.¹¹⁰ The city had two staple trades for women, wool and worsted textiles and ready-made tailoring, and became the centre for the factory production of men's clothing.¹¹¹

Leeds provides the opportunity, therefore, to examine the work conditions of factory workers employed outside the cotton trade who have been generally neglected in secondary literature.¹¹² Detailed studies of female employment in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are still few and far between, but the work which has been done tends to concentrate on only some occupations and local areas. The well paid Lancashire cotton textile worker, the domestic servant and the sweated London homeworker are familiar figures in secondary texts, but the tailoress working in a large factory and the wool and worsted textile worker are far less well known.¹¹³ To some extent this reflects contemporary concern with the extremes of female employment, in particular with the well paid, well organised cotton textile worker on the one hand, and the sweated homework and workshop worker on the other.¹¹⁴

The Leeds factory worker does not fit easily into this common stereotype of the nineteenth-century woman worker, and a study of her employment provides an example of female work which took place in ordinary, rather than in exceptional, circumstances.

Leeds can also be distinguished in terms of the extent of wage éarning among different groups of women and in the prevailing patterns of family life. A wide range of occupations were available for male workers in the city and this ensured considerable variation in the pattern of working-class family life and living standards.¹¹⁵ The high proportion of young women who worked outside the home, therefore, were drawn from different backgrounds and did not necessarily share a common attitude towards wage éarning.¹¹⁶ Married women, on the other hand, were not extensively engaged in full-time work outside the home.¹¹⁷ This must be seen in the context of the widespread skilled and semi-skilled work available to men which reduced the absolute need for married women to work regularly for wages. At the same time, the prevailing conditions of women's employment were not attractive enough to positively induce married women to take on a "double burden".¹¹⁸

Despite its importance in the economic life of a major industrial city, women's waged work in Leeds has not been fully explored by historians. Business histories of the staple female trades in the city tend to see labour as another factor of production, rather than placing it within a broader social context, and they fail to focus upon the experience of work itself.¹¹⁹ The most recent studies of the West Riding wool and worsted industry, for example, give only scant attention to the specific

characteristics and role of the labour force.¹²⁰ A series of articles in the Leeds Journal on the development of specific industries in the city does include valuable information on the conditions of female employment, but the studies are too brief to provide more than a starting point and generally fail to draw attention to the importance and the implications of the sex division of labour.¹²¹

The ready-made tailoring trade still awaits a full-scale history and Thomas's monograph remains the standard text on the industry in Leeds itself.¹²² She includes a chapter on labour, but this provides largely descriptive material on wages, work conditions and trade union organisation.¹²³ Whenever historians do give consideration to ready-made tailoring in Leeds, most attention is paid to the importance of the Jewish immigrant in building up the industry, rather than to the contribution of the female worker.¹²⁴ Studies of Jewish immigrants themselves also tend to focus on the experience of male workers.¹²⁵ Buckman's recent examination of Jewish workers in Leeds, for example, barely mentions the question of female labour, despite the large number of Jewesses employed in the tailoring trade and the fact that women made up over half of the labour force in Jewish workshops.¹²⁶

The neglect of the female worker seriously distorts the picture of the growth of ready-made tailoring in Leeds. The industry developed as part of a more general expansion in the production of consumer goods in the late nineteenth century in response to a rise in living standards.¹²⁷ The consumer-goods trades all relied heavily on female labour.¹²⁸ The ready-made tailoring trade was extremely labour intensive, despite the

increasing use of mechanisation, and its successful development in Leeds depended largely on the ready supply of cheap, efficient female workers.¹²⁹ Women made up the bulk of the labour force in the factory sector and by 1911 two thirds of tailoring workers in Leeds were female.¹³⁰ The segregation of tasks along lines of sex was crucial in determining the way in which work was structured in ready-made tailoring, in the skill labelling of processes and in the creation of an occupational hierarchy. With the exception of Coyle's study of the clothing industry after the Second World War, however, most histories of the industry have failed to consider these crucial questions in any detail.¹³¹

Historians of the Leeds labour movement have also neglected the importance of the female worker. They focus on the development of independent labour politics and union organisation in Leeds and, as in the case of labour history more generally, little account is taken of the contribution of female workers or of the importance of the sex division of labour in affecting these developments.¹³² A recent article by Woodhouse, however, draws attention to the need to study the development of socialism and independent labour politics within a broader context of popular culture, living standards and the sex division of labour.¹³³ He does not, however, explore the implications of female waged work in any depth.

More general trade union histories do contain some discussion of female trade union organisation in the wool and worsted and in the ready-made tailoring trades, but the specific conditions pertaining to Leeds are not fully considered and the information provided on the

Leeds Tailoresses' Union is often incorrect.¹³⁴ Stewart and Hunter's official history of trade unionism in tailoring provides a useful outline of events, but their narrative approach leads to a concentration on tracing the steady growth of organisation in the industry which sidesteps the exploration of more analytical questions.¹³⁵ They draw attention, for example, to the way in which the structural problems posed by competing methods of production hampered trade union developments, but fail to fully examine the extent to which sex and skill divisions also weakened organisation.¹³⁶

Sources

Any study of the work conditions, activities and attitudes of female workers raises problems of source materials. Such problems are common to all historians interested in the work experience and attitudes of rank and file workers or who seek to explore areas such as popular culture and family life.¹³⁷ Working-class women were rarely well organised and left few official records of their activities. They seldom considered that their lives were worth recording for posterity and their absence from leadership roles in many working-class organisations meant that they failed to receive attention from contemporaries.¹³⁸ Working women were rarely asked to speak for themselves in official enquiries. They were usually represented by male members of the organised labour movement who often held a prejudiced view of female workers. In their concern to protect the interests of male workers they created an impression of the woman worker as submissive, as difficult to organise and as uninterested in the

conditions of paid employment which has proved difficult to counteract.¹³⁹ Oral interviews can be used to fill in the gaps left in printed sources, but they have not been extensively used in the present study.¹⁴⁰ The variety of women's occupations in Leeds and the size of the labour force meant that worthwhile generalisations could only have been made if a large and systematic sample of interviews had been undertaken. This would have been difficult to obtain in the 1970s, in particular in view of the early time period involved.¹⁴¹

Investigations carried out by individuals and by the government are an invaluable source of information on women's work and on the conditions of family life. Contemporary investigators, however, viewed women's work through a prevailing ideology which stressed the importance of women's identification with domesticity and motherhood, and therefore tended to see the working woman as a social problem.¹⁴² They studied her conditions of employment largely in relation to their effects on family well-being or on the health of the nation as a whole, and only a limited set of questions were raised and explored.¹⁴³ The increasing identification of women's work with sweated conditions of employment, and the implications that this was thought to have for national efficiency and industrial performance, further reinforced the tendency to adopt a social problem approach towards the female worker.¹⁴⁴ As Alexander notes, "to uncover the real situation of the woman herself in the Victorian period, we have to pick our way through a labyrinth of middle-class moralism and mystification and resolve questions not only that contemporaries did not answer but in many cases did not even ask".¹⁴⁵

Leeds presents particular difficulties for the historian interested in women's work. The contemporary concern with sweated work conditions meant that attention was focussed on areas such as London, where homework and small workshop production predominated, rather than on centres of factory production such as Leeds.¹⁴⁶ There are few business records relating to the staple female trades in Leeds, in particular for the ready-made tailoring industry, where only the papers of Messrs John Barran & Sons provide any details on labour in the pre-war trade.¹⁴⁷ The local press and trade journals, however, are a valuable source for information on conditions of work in the major female trades and also for the attempts that were made to organise women into trade unions.¹⁴⁸ Details of working women's lives can also be obtained from information given incidentally in other contexts such as reports of court cases, charitable records or the reports of local health officials.¹⁴⁹

An overview of the extent and type of female employment in Leeds has been drawn from the occupational tables of the decennial census. The drawbacks of census material have frequently been discussed, in particular the tendency to underestimate the extent of female participation in wage earning.¹⁵⁰ This had a more distorting effect in centres of home work and small workshop production, however, than in areas such as Leeds where factory work predominated.¹⁵¹ The problems of using census data, in particular in relation to married women's employment, are fully discussed in chapter one.

The attitudes of women workers themselves towards work and family life

present the greatest problems of source material. Local female union organisers such as Isabella Ford, who were sympathetic to working women and had a detailed knowledge of their lives, do provide glimpses in their speeches and articles of the attitudes expressed by working women.¹⁵² At times of labour unrest working women also expressed their own views in letters to the press or in interviews with reporters, although it is difficult to assess the representative nature of these individual opinions.

In the absence of substantial manuscript collections or contemporary investigations into women's work and the social conditions of family life in Leeds, the present study has had to rely on drawing together scattered data from a range of sources. It does not lay claim, therefore, to opening up any new source for the study of women's waged work in the city, but its major contribution lies in asking new questions of the existing material on the Leeds working class. By focussing on the female worker and on the importance of the sex division of labour in social production, it hopes to shed new light on the industrial development of Leeds and on the growth of trade unionism and independent labour politics in the city. It also hopes to add to our understanding of the local variations in the pattern and experience of women's waged work in the period under review.

INTRODUCTION FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated)

1. The term sex is used whenever the division of work between men and women or the conflicts between male and female workers are being considered.

The term gender is used whenever reference is made to the way in which the sexes were ascribed particular characteristics which were socially constructed rather than biologically determined.

2. By 1911 66 per cent of wool and worsted workers and 61 per cent of all textile workers in Leeds were female. In the same year 67.6 per cent of tailoring workers and 63.8 per cent of workers in the broad category of dress in Leeds were female: see Appendix 1, Tables 1.9 and 1.11.
3. See, for example, S Alexander and A Davin, "Feminist History", History Workshop Journal, 1 (1976), p 4; S Alexander, A Davin and E Hostettler, "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm", Hist. Workshop J., 8 (1979); J Bornat, "Home and Work: A New Context for Trade Union History", Oral History, V, 2 (1977), especially p 113; J L Newton, M P Ryan and J R Walkowitz, "Introduction", in J R Newton, M P Ryan and J R Walkowitz, eds. Sex and Class in Women's History (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp 2-3; P Branca, Women in Europe since 1750 (Croom Helm, 1978), p 17.
4. Most of the standard texts of labour history fail to address such questions. See, for example, E J Hobsbawm, Labouring Men (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968); A Briggs and J Saville, eds. Essays in Labour History, Vols 1-3 (Macmillan, 1960, 1971; Croom Helm, 1977); H Clegg, A Fox and A F Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889, Vol 1, 1889-1910 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). For a discussion of the neglect of women by labour historians, see A Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", in R Samuel, ed. People's History and Socialist Theory (RKP, 1981), especially pp 177-8.
5. Bornat, "Home and Work", p 113.
6. Ibid., p 101.
7. For a discussion of the question of historical significance, see A D Gordon, M J Buhle and N S Dye, "The Problem of Women's History", in B A Carroll, ed. Liberating Women's History (Urbana:

University of Illinois Press, 1976), pp 75-6, and A Davin, "Women and History", in M Wandor, comp. The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain, 1969-72 (Stage 1, 1972), pp 215-6. The preoccupations of labour historians are discussed in R Johnson, "Culture and the Historians", in J Clarke, C Critcher and R Johnson, eds. Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory (Hutchinson, 1979), especially pp 41-2, 48-65.

8. Women's contribution to late nineteenth-century socialist movements generally receives only a brief mention in standard texts. See, for example, H Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party (Oxford: Oxford Paperback, 1966). Yeo's more recent study discusses the appeal of the Independent Labour Party to women and their role as propagandists in the movement, but it does not explore the tensions that the relationship between sex oppression and class exploitation posed for socialists in the 1880s and 90s: S Yeo, "A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-96", Hist. Workshop J. 4 (1977). Trade union histories tend to focus on well-known female leaders, rather than dealing systematically with the position of rank and file women workers, and this applies equally to general histories of female trade unionism. See, for example, E H Hunt, British Labour History, 1815-1914 (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), pp 258-9, 299-301, and N C Soldon, Women in British Trade Unions, 1874-1976 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977).
9. For example, see H Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (Macmillan, 1968), pp 116, 148, 163-4, and C Rover, Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Great Britain, 1866-1914 (RKP, 1967). The latest text book in labour history, J Hinton, Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement, 1867-1974 (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983), gives very little attention to the female worker, but does devote pp 78-9 to the suffragette movement. For a discussion of the emphasis on the suffrage in political history, see Alexander and Davin, "Feminist History", p 4.
10. P Hollis, "Working Women: A Review Article", History, LXII, 206 (1977), p 439.
11. Examples of this approach include G S Jones, Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976); G S Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Re-making of a Working Class", Journal of Social History, VII, 4 (1974); R Gray, The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Britain, c. 1850-1914 (Macmillan, 1981); S Meacham, A Life Apart: The English Working Class, 1890-1914 (Thames & Hudson, 1978). For a discussion of new approaches in labour history, see J Winter, "Introduction: Labour History and Labour Historians", in J Winter, ed. The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

12. Hinton, Labour and Socialism, and K Burgess, The Challenge of Labour: Shaping British Society, 1850-1930 (Croom Helm, 1980). See also Winter, ed. The Working Class in Modern British History.
13. Alexander and Davin, "Feminist History", p 5, and Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", pp 177-8.
14. For a discussion of this approach, see S Alexander, "Women and Trade Unions: A Review Essay", Capital and Class, 11 (1980), p 141.
15. Bornat, "Home and Work", p 102.
16. Hollis, "Working Women", p 440.
17. Alexander and Davin, "Feminist History", p 4, and Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women", p 175. For a critique of a similar approach within sociology, see J West, "Women, Sex and Class", in A Kuhn and A M Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (RKP 1978), p 223.
18. E J Hobsbawm, "Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography", Hist. Workshop J. 6 (1978), p 131.
19. Gray, The Aristocracy of Labour, pp 9-13, 63-4.
20. Ibid. pp 13, 28-9.
21. B Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem (Virago, 1983); S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976); A Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", Hist. Workshop J. 5 (1978).
22. For further examples of feminist research in these areas, see J R Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State (Cambridge: CUP 1980); S Jeffreys, "'Free From All Uninvited Touch of Man': Women's Campaigns Around Sexuality, 1880-1914", Women's Studies International Forum, V, 6 (1982); E Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War One", Hist. Workshop J. 15 (1983).

23. Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", pp 178-9; Davin, "Women and History", pp 216, 224; Gordon, Buhle and Dye, "The Problem of Women's History".

24. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", pp 58-60.

25. Hunt, British Labour History, for example, includes material on women's employment, birth rates and fertility, living standards and migration patterns. Meacham, A Life Apart, includes chapters on married women's work and relationships between the sexes within working-class families. As Alexander and Davin, "Feminist History", p 4, note, however, social and labour history books tend to tag on topics such as women, the family, religion and education rather than integrating them "into the overall understanding of a society". They suggest that the sex division of labour in the workplace and in the home is taken for granted. Any discussion of the sex division of labour "disappears in the discussion of men and women's different roles", while the empirical material provided is used to "describe the appearance of the world and not to explore its fundamental order".

26. B Taylor, "'The Men are as Bad as Their Masters ...': Socialism, Feminism and Sexual Antagonism in the London Tailoring Trade in the Early 1830s", Feminist Studies, V, 1 (1979), p 16.

27. For a discussion of the various uses of the term patriarchy, see V Beechey, "On Patriarchy", Feminist Review, 3 (1979), and H Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", in L Sargent, ed. Women and Revolution: The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate on Class and Patriarchy (Pluto Press, 1981), pp 13-19.

28. A Rich, Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (Onlywoman Press, 1981); S Brownmiller, Against Our Will. Men, Women and Rape (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978); see also K Millet, Sexual Politics (New York: Avon Books, 1971). Radical in this context relates to a particular set of feminist beliefs and a specific group of feminists.

29. For a discussion of this a-historical approach, see Beechey, "On Patriarchy", pp 68-9, and Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", pp 13-14. Hartmann argues that the greatest weakness of radical feminism "is a focus on the psychological which blinds it to history", p 14.

30. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", p 13.

31. Alexander, "Women and Trade Unions", p 141, and CSE Sex and Class Group, "Sex and Class", Capital and Class, 16 (1982), p 87.
32. A Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives (Macmillan, 1981), pp 73-8.
33. P Thompson, The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process (Macmillan, 1983), pp 208-9.
34. Beechey, "On Patriarchy", p 71.
35. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", p 18.
36. Ibid. pp 19-23; for comments on the way in which Hartmann analyses capital and patriarchy as separate spheres, see Thompson, The Nature of Work, pp 198-9.
37. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", pp 19, 21-2.
38. Ibid. p 22.
39. Ibid. pp 25-7; see also Thompson, The Nature of Work, p 199.
40. Thompson, The Nature of Work, p 199.
41. Beechey, "On Patriarchy", p 78. Jeffreys also provides an example of a feminist historian who concentrates on the importance of social reproduction and sexuality. She suggests that "the power relationship between the sexes is played out on the field of sexuality", and that sexual behaviour has a dynamic effect in its own right in structuring "the power relationships in the world which surrounds the bedroom": Jeffreys, "'Free from all Uninvited Touch of Man'", p 630.
42. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London"; A Phillips and B Taylor, "Sex and Skill: Notes Towards a Feminist Economics", Feminist Review, 6 (1980); V Beechey, "Women and Production: A Critical Analysis of Some Sociological Theories of Women's Work", in Kuhn and Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism; V Beechey, "Some Notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production", Capital and Class, 3 (1977).

43. Beechey, "Some Notes on Female Wage Labour", pp 49-54.
44. Ibid. pp 51-4.
45. Ibid. pp 58-9. For a critique of Beechey's views on the lower value of women's labour power and the use of female labour as a reserve army, see F Anthias, "Women and the Reserve Army of Labour: A Critique of Veronica Beechey", Capital and Class, 10 (1980), and the editors' introduction to Beechey, "Women and Production", p 156; see also I Breugel, "Women as a Reserve Army of Labour: A Note on Recent British Experience", Feminist Review, 3 (1979).
46. Beechey, "On Patriarchy", p 79.
47. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London"; S Alexander and B Taylor, "In Defence of Patriarchy", in Samuel, ed. People's History and Socialist Theory, pp 371-2; Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", pp 80-1.
48. J Lown, "Not So Much a Factory, More a Form of Patriarchy: Gender and Class during Industrialisation", in E Gamarnikow et al, eds. Gender, Class and Work (Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), p 32.
49. Thompson, The Nature of Work, p 200.
50. The main argument in studies of the labour process is that "the degradation of work remains central to an understanding of the functioning of modern capitalist societies ... a labour process perspective locates the basic activity of transforming raw material into products through human labour with a given technology, within the specific dynamics of a mode of production and antagonistic class relations. Work is not just something that a society organises to meet social needs or people carry out in order to survive. It is a framework in which those who own and control economic resources seek to ensure the appropriation of the surplus. The way that economic surplus is appropriated will strongly condition working arrangements": Thompson, The Nature of Work, p 4. Studies of the labour process concentrate on what happened to the experience and structure of work as the capitalist class sought to change the mode of production, by the introduction of a factory system and the application of machinery and scientific management techniques. They analyse the way in which the increasing division of labour was used as a method of controlling the process of production, and explore the resistance of organised labour to the increase of capitalist control: CSE Sex and Class Group, "Sex and Class", p 85.

51. For example, see R Harrison, ed. The Independent Collier (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979); R Price, Masters, Unions and Men: Work Control in Building and the Rise of Labour, 1830-1914 (Cambridge: CUP 1980); W Lazonick, "Industrial Relations and Technical Change: The Case of the Self-Acting Mule", and J Zeitlin, "Craft Control and the Division of Labour: Engineers and Compositors in Britain, 1890-1930", Cambridge Journal of Economics, 111, 3 (1979).
52. Beechey, "On Patriarchy", p 78. For examples of such studies, see Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives; J West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market (RKP 1982); Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill".
53. Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", p 79.
54. Ibid. pp 85-6.
55. Ibid. p 85.
56. The assumption running through L A Tilly and J W Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), is that industrialisation created certain jobs for men and others for women. They note that "the transition from textiles to heavy industry meant fewer jobs in the manufacturing sector for women", p 149, but do not explain why this was the case; see also Branca, Women in Europe, Chapter 2. Her discussion of women's work rests on the assumption that opportunities opened up for women in selected areas. Branca's concern is then to consider how women adjusted to these opportunities. She argues that they tried to accommodate work to their primary goals of marriage and commitment to family life: see in particular pp 49-51.
57. Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", pp 80-1; J West, "Introduction", in West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market, p 4.
58. The labour process debate has raised questions concerning the need to see changes in the organisation of work and the division of labour as the outcome, not only of technological change, but also of strategies employed by workers and employers. See, for example, S Wood, "Introduction", in S Wood, ed. The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process (Hutchinson, 1983), pp 20-2, and Thompson, The Nature of Work, especially Chapter 6.

59. For examples of local variations in the pattern of women's work and in the sex division of labour, see Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women"; Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London"; A John, By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines (Croom Helm, 1980).
60. Bornat, "Home and Work", p 102.
61. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", pp-74-80; Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", pp 178-9; S Taylor, "The Effects of Marriage on the Job Possibilities for Women and the Ideology of the Home: Nottingham, 1890-1930", Oral Hist. V, 2 (1977), pp 46-7. Beechey, "Women and Production", pp 157-65, is particularly critical of sociologists such as Talcott Parsons who separate work and family and who fail to recognise the material basis of women's position in the family. For a discussion of the way in which sociological theories have affected the approach of historians, see H Pleck, "Two Worlds in One: Work and Family", J. Soc. Hist. X, 2 (1976), especially pp 178-81.
62. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", p 77.
63. Ibid. p 78.
64. Ibid. pp 79-80.
65. Ibid. pp 110-11.
66. Branca, Women in Europe, pp 44-6, and Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, pp 6, 104-6.
67. F Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (Panther, 1969. Originally published, 1892), pp 172-7. Engels argued that male authority in the working-class household was undermined by the entry of women into factories during early industrialisation. His views are discussed in Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism", pp 3-4. I Pinchbeck, Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (G Routledge, 1930), p 313, suggests that single working women gained in economic and social independence during the industrial revolution.
68. L Woodcock Tentler, Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-30 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), especially p 57.

69. Bornat, "Home and Work", especially pp 113-14.
70. Ibid. pp 112-14, 118.
71. S Alexander, "Introduction", in M Herzog, From Hand to Mouth: Women and Piecework (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp 30-3, and Bornat, "Home and Work". See also Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives, especially pp 238-9, and Beechey, "On Patriarchy", p 79.
72. Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", p 178. For an attempt to explore the relationship between sex and class in the American labour movement, see M Cantor and B Laurie, eds. Class, Sex and the Woman Worker (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977).
73. Taylor, "'The Men Are as Bad as Their Masters ...'", especially pp 18-23.
74. Ibid. pp 25, 33-4.
75. West, "Women, Sex and Class", pp 246-50.
76. Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women", pp 178-80.
77. Taylor, "'The Men Are as Bad as Their Masters ...'", p 20; see also Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives, Chapter 5.
78. Hollis, "Working Women", p 440.
79. J Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family", Camb. J. Econ. 1, 3 (1977), pp 247-50, argues that the working-class family acted as a popular support system throughout the nineteenth century. She suggests that the battle for a family wage "united families in class endeavours", p 254.
80. For the solidarity of miners' families, see P Stearns, "Working-Class Women in Britain, 1890-1914", in M Vicinus, ed. Suffer and Be Still (Methuen, 1980), pp 106-08, and A John, "Scratching the Surface. Women, Work and Coalmining History in England and Wales", Oral Hist. X, 2 (1982), pp 15-16. John points out, however, that historians have tended to view family life in mining communities through the eyes of male miners, and therefore women's waged work and their recreational activities have been neglected.

81. For example, see Taylor, "'The Men Are as Bad as Their Masters ...'", pp 21, 23-5, 27, and Taylor, "The Effects of Marriage on the Job Possibilities of Women", p 55. Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family", pp 250, 253, argues that the family wage was a way in which the working class could meet the needs of non-labouring members in a way that was not degrading. She also suggests that it provided one of the few sources of working-class control over the supply of labour, namely that of married women. It can be argued, however, that the family wage merely enforced women's economic dependence in the family and that they did not always receive an adequate share of the man's earnings. It also had an adverse effect on the wages of all women workers, whether married or not. For a critique of Humphries' views, see M Barrett and M McIntosh, "The Family Wage", in E Whitelegg et al, eds. The Changing Experience of Women (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982), pp 79-83.
82. For example, see J Liddington and J Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement (Virago, 1978), pp 32-3; Taylor, "The Effect of Marriage on the Job Possibilities of Women", pp 47-8. For examples of the way in which women in working-class families consumed less food than men and rarely controlled the division of income, see L Oren, "The Welfare of Women in Labouring Families: England, 1860-1950", in M Hartman and L Banner, eds. Clio's Consciousness Raised (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp 226-34.
83. Alexander, "Women and Trade Unions", p 141.
84. For examples of such women, see Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, Chapters 11-12; H Mitchell, The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel (Virago, 1977), Pt IV; D Nield Chew, Ada Nield Chew: The Life and Writings of a Working Woman (Virago, 1982), pp 42-4.
85. The different aspirations of working-class women are discussed in Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, Chapter 1; Nield Chew, Ada Nield Chew, pp 46-7; J Gaffin and D Thoms, Caring and Sharing: The Centenary History of the Women's Cooperative Guild (Manchester: Cooperative Union Ltd., 1983), pp 78-81; M Rendel, "The Contribution of the Women's Labour League to the Winning of the Franchise", in L Middleton, ed. Women in the Labour Movement (Croom Helm, 1977), especially pp 61-2.
86. For examples of regional differences in the pattern of women's work and family life, see P Thompson, The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society (Paladin, 1977); Meacham, A Life Apart, Chapter 4; Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women", pp 175-9; P Rushton, "Women and Industrialization: A Critical View" (unpublished paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Social History Society, York, 1980).

87. For example, see Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London"; Taylor, "The Effects of Marriage on the Job Possibilities of Women"; Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, especially Chapters 2-3; Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, pp 105-13.
88. Branca, Women in Europe, tends to make sweeping generalisations about the attitudes of women towards work and family life, despite the fact that she is covering two centuries and several European countries. She notes, for example, that "in cities, formal employment outside the home was not acceptable or feasible to working-class culture. Men, and presumably women, found it inappropriate and degrading for married women to take outside jobs", p 33. Such statements are rarely supported by evidence. See also T McBride, "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization", in R Bridenthal and C Koonz, eds. Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p 290-1, for further generalisations concerning women's attitudes to work in Europe as a whole.
89. For a discussion of the importance of job segregation by sex in structuring the features of women's work, see C Hakim, Occupational Segregation: A Comparative Study of the Degree and Pattern of the Differentiation between Men and Women's Work in Britain, the United States and Other Countries (Department of Employment, Research Paper No 9, 1979), Chapter 4. See also Alexander, "Introduction", pp 13-14. She criticises those who lay the character of women's work at the door of their education, family life and legal codes. She claims that it is never questioned that the structure of advanced capitalism "depends upon the large-scale availability of cheap unskilled labour, and who, therefore, would do 'women's work' if women ceased to do it".
90. For examples of an approach which emphasises the importance of work in structuring women's employment and their views towards waged work, see A Coyle, "Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry", in West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market; F McNally, Women for Hire: A Study of the Female Office Worker (Macmillan, 1979); Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives.
91. See below, pp 98-104.
92. This is more fully discussed below, pp 412-14.
93. T Woodhouse, "The Working Class", in D Fraser, ed. A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p 377.

94. P Branca, "A New Perspective on Women's Work: A Comparative Typology", J. Soc. Hist. IX, 2 (1975), especially p 147, argues that waged work was a peripheral activity for women throughout the nineteenth century.
95. Appendix I, Tables 1.1 and 1.3.
96. Appendix I, Table 1.1. For the extent of married women's wage earning, see below, pp 67-74.
97. For the proportion of women in manufacturing, see p 62 . In 1911 approximately 65 per cent of the male labour force in Leeds were employed in the manufacturing sector: calculated from W G Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds, 1841-1951", Thoresby Society Publications, L (1967), Table 1.
98. This point is made in Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives, p 76.
99. For examples of regional differences, see the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP, 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt 1); G Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War (Croom Helm, 1981), pp 24-9; S Hogg, "The Employment of Women in Great Britain, 1891-1921" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1967), Chapter 4.
100. In 1911 35.9 per cent of occupied women in England and Wales were employed in domestic offices and services, compared with 21.6 per cent in Leeds: for England and Wales, see B L Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (G Bell, 1915), p 84, and for the Leeds figures, see Table 1.8 below, p 59. Regional differences in the extent to which women were employed in domestic service are discussed in Hogg, thesis, p 29. For the importance of clerical occupations in London, see L Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914 (Newton Abbot : David & Charles, 1973), Chapter 7, and A Davin, "Telegraphists and Clerks", Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin, 26 (1973). Statistics on the increased employment of women in "white-blouse" work can be found in C J Maggs, The Origins of General Nursing (Croom Helm, 1983), Appendix to Chapter 1.
101. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, especially pp 18-20, 107; W J Reader, Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), Chapter 11. For a sociological discussion of the class nature of women's "white-blouse" work, see West, "Women, Sex and Class", especially pp 232-46.

102. For example, see I Pinchbeck, Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution; N J Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution (RKP 1959); M Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire (Cambridge: CUP 1971), Chapters 4, 9; C Hall, "The Home Turned Upside Down? The Working-Class Family in Cotton Textiles, 1780-1850", in Whitelegg, et al , eds. The Changing Experience of Women; Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London".
103. Branca, "A New Perspective on Women's Work", pp 142-3.
104. Tilly and Scott, Women, Work and Family, Chapter 8.
105. Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood".
106. For example, see B Drake, Women in Trade Unions (Labour Research Department, 1920), Chapters 3-4.
107. Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, Part 2, and L P Hume, The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), pp 17-20.
108. Hogg, thesis, Chapter 4, and the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP, 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt 1).
109. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", and Jones, Outcast London, pp 86-7. Jones also points to the development of casual work for single women in factories in London, in particular in the manufacture of food, pp 85-6. The variety of irregular employment in workshops and in homework trades in Liverpool is described in the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt 1), pp 67-74.
110. See discussion below, pp 92, ICI-04.
111. In 1911 11.7 per cent of all occupied women in Leeds were employed in the wool and worsted industry and 22.2 per cent in tailoring: see Tables 1.10 and 1.11, below, pp 62, 64.
112. Factory workers in consumer-goods trades at the end of the nineteenth century are often alluded to in secondary texts, but the specific

- characteristics of their employment are not discussed in any detail. For example, see Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War, pp 24-8; Branca, Women in Europe, pp 50-1; Stearns, "Working-Class Women in Britain", pp 109-12.
113. Detailed studies of the cotton textile worker, the domestic servant and the homemaker include Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, Chapters 5, 6; T McBride, The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920 (Croom Helm, 1976); P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1975); L Davidoff, "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England", J. Soc. Hist. VII, 4 (1974); Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London"; D Bythell, The Sweated Trades: Outwork in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Batsford, 1978), Chapter 2. These groups then receive most attention in more general studies of female employment. Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War, pp 26-8, for example, concentrates on tailoresses in small workshops and in the homework sector, rather than on those employed in factories. Information on the West Riding wool and worsted worker, however, can be found in J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980).
114. For example, see the Select Committee on the Sweating System. First Report (PP 1888, XX); B L Hutchins, "Statistics of Women's Life and Employment", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXXII, 2 (1909), pp 223-8; C Black, Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage (Duckworth, 1907), especially pp xix-xx.
115. Table 1.5, below, p 55; see also Woodhouse, "The Working Class", pp 376-9.
116. See below, pp 412-22 for a fuller discussion of their attitudes.
117. Table 1.13 below, p 68.
118. This point is more fully discussed in Chapter 9.
119. Business histories generally neglect the role of labour. For example, see A D Chandler, The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), and B W E Alford, W D & H O Wills and the Development of the United Kingdom Tobacco Industry, 1786-1965 (Methuen, 1973).

120. J G Jenkins, ed. The Wool Textile Industry in Great Britain (RKP 1972), and D T Jenkins and K G Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, 1770-1914 (Heinemann Educational Books, 1982).
121. See, in particular, the following articles by W G Rimmer: "The Flax Industry", Leeds Journal, XXV (1954); "Printing and Printing Machinery, 1 and 2", Leeds Journal, XXIX (1958); "The Woollen Industry in the Nineteenth Century", Leeds Journal, XXX (1959); "Food Processing, 1 and 2", Leeds Journal, XXX (1959).
122. J Thomas, "A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers No 1 (1955).
123. Ibid. Chapter 3.
124. For example, see ibid. p 23; K Laybourn, "The Attitude of Yorkshire Trade Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-96" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1972), p 26; Jenkins and Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, p 171.
125. For example, see L P Gartner, The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1880-1914 (Simon Publications, 2nd ed. 1973); S W Lerner, "The Impact of the Jewish Immigration of 1880-1914 on the London Clothing Industry and Trade Unions", Soc. Study Lab. Hist. Bulletin, 12 (1966); C Holmes, "The Leeds Jewish Tailors' Strikes of 1885 and 1888", Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, XLV (1973); B Gainer, The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905 (Heinemann Educational Books, 1972). An exception to the neglect of women is R Burman, "The Jewish Woman as Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community", Oral Hist. X, 2 (1982).
126. J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: MUP 1983). For the number of women working in Jewish workshops, see below, p 113.
127. W H Fraser, The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914 (Macmillan, 1981), Part III.
128. Ibid.
129. See below, pp 109-12; Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", p 10; Bythell, The Sweated Trades, pp 76-7.

130. Appendix 1, Table 1.8.
131. Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing"; Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", pp 24-36; S P Dobbs, The Clothing Workers of Great Britain (G Routledge, 1928), pp 37-46; M Stewart and L Hunter, The Needle is Threaded (Heinemann & Neame, 1964), pp 128-33, all note the work conditions of women in the industry and the conflicts between male and female workers, but fail to explore the relationship between job segregation by sex and the specific characteristics of work in the tailoring trade.
132. See, for example, E P Thompson, "Homage to Tom Maguire", in Briggs and Saville, eds. Essays in Labour History. Vol 1; J E Williams, "The Leeds Corporation Strike of 1913", in Briggs and Saville, eds. Essays in Labour History. Vol 2; H Hendrick, "The Leeds Gas Strike, 1890", Thoresby Society Miscellany, XVI, 2 (1975).
133. Woodhouse, "The Working Class", pp 377-9.
134. For a discussion of trade unionism in the wool and worsted industry and in the tailoring trade, see Clegg, Fox and Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions, pp 31-6, 181-9; Soldon, Women in British Trade Unions, pp 37-43; S Boston, Women Workers and the Trade Unions (Davis Poynter, 1980), Chapters 2, 3. Incorrect information on the organisation of tailoresses in Leeds is given in Stewart and Hunter, The Needle is Threaded, p 120, in which they assert that the Tailoresses' Union was formed in 1900. S W Lerner, Breakaway Unions and the Small Trade Union (George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p 90, suggests that the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives made the first attempt to organise women factory operatives in Leeds.
135. Stewart and Hunter, The Needle is Threaded, Chapters 12-14.
136. Ibid. p 116.
137. For a discussion of the difficulties involved, see R Samuel, "People's History or Total History", in Samuel, ed. People's History and Socialist Theory, and R Samuel, "General Editor's Introduction: People's History", in R Samuel, ed. Village Life and Labour (RKP 1975).
138. Davin, "Feminism and Labour History", pp 176-7; Liddington and Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us, pp 15-18; Samuel, "General Editor's Introduction", pp xvii-xviii. The absence of female working-class autobiographies is discussed by D Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiography (Methuen, 1982), pp 8-9.

139. The stereotype of the female worker is discussed in K Purcell, "Militancy and Acquiescence amongst Women Workers", in S Burman, ed. Fit Work for Women (Croom Helm, 1979), pp 112-15.
140. For a discussion of the importance of oral interviews, see P Thompson, The Voice of the Past (Oxford: OUP 1978), especially Chapter 2, and John, "Scratching the Surface", pp 13, 24.
141. Use has been made, however, of a series of interviews undertaken by the author in 1973 and 1974 among elderly residents of Radcliffe, Lancashire. Radcliffe was a medium-sized textile town in the early 1900s. Twenty-six men and women, who were all born before 1906, were interviewed about their own work and that of their parents. The main full-time employment for women was in the spinning or in the weaving branches of the cotton textile trade. Married women were extensively employed in domestic work and childminding for other working-class women, and also for professional and business families. Men worked in a variety of occupations including mining, agriculture, building and industrial manufacture in the iron, cotton textile and engineering trades. For further details on those interviewed, see Appendix 6.
142. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", pp 60-3.
143. Ibid. pp 60-1. In the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (PP 1904, XXXII), for example, witnesses were repeatedly asked about whether factory employment disrupted women's family lives and made young girls disinclined to take on domestic responsibilities.
144. See, for example, E P Hennock, "Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-Eighties", Social History, 1, 1 (1976), and Jones, Outcast London, especially Chapters 16,18.
145. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", p 63.
146. For example, no systematic investigations were undertaken into homework in Leeds, and the Lady Commissioners did not make a report on Leeds in their enquiry into women's employment for the Royal Commission on Labour: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt 1). Leeds was, however, extensively covered in the investigations made for the Select Committee on Sweating: Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), and J Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI).

147. A list of business records relating to the clothing and wool and worsted industries in the West Riding can be found in P Hudson, The West Riding Wool Textile Industry: A Catalogue of Business Records from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries (Edington, Wilts: Pasold Research Fund, 1975).
148. See, in particular, the Yorkshire Factory Times, Men's Wear and the Leeds Daily News.
149. Davin, "Women and History", p 218.
150. See, for example, C Hakim, "Census Reports as Documentary Evidence", Sociological Review, XXVIII, 3 (1980), pp 554-62.
151. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", pp 63-5, discusses the drawbacks of using census data for women's work in London.
152. Isabella Ford's insights into the attitudes of working women are discussed below, pp 618-30.

SECTION ONE: WOMEN'S WORK IN LEEDS, 1880-1914CHAPTER 1THE STRUCTURE OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN LEEDS, 1880-1914

The following chapter provides an outline of the pattern of women's employment in Leeds between 1880 and 1914.¹ A central focus for discussion is the segregation of occupations by sex. As Hogg notes, "sex became the most basic factor associated with an individual's work ... although class, geographical location and ability were associated with it, none cut across as many lives at any given moment as the sex differential".² Throughout the period nearly all broad occupational groups and specific tasks within those groups were divided along sex lines. Changes in the sex division of labour did take place, but this did not necessarily mean any reduction in job segregation by sex which could be intensified by such a process.³

The second major concern of this chapter is to differentiate the female workforce itself in terms of age and marital status which materially affected the extent and type of wage earning undertaken by women. Wherever possible comparisons are made with other towns and with England and Wales as a whole in order to draw out the distinctive features of female employment in Leeds.⁴ The pattern of women's work showed far greater local differences than that of male workers, since there were variations not only in the type of employment undertaken, but also in the age structure and marital status of the female labour force.⁵ These differences were closely related to local patterns of family life, the opportunities for female employment, local demographic patterns and class relations.⁶

It is particularly important to identify the way in which work was structured along sex lines in specific local contexts, since this had a crucial bearing on workplace conflicts over how jobs should be allocated, over skill labelling and over levels of pay.⁷ The data presented in this chapter, therefore, provide the basis for a discussion in subsequent chapters of the reasons why the sex division of labour took the particular form that it did in Leeds and the consequences that this had for the characteristics of female waged work in the city.⁸

The statistics provided on the extent and type of female employment in Leeds have been drawn from the occupational tables of decennial census for the period 1881 to 1911.⁹ The shortcomings of the census as a source for determining employment patterns have frequently been noted. The first problem arises at the point at which enumerators transcribed the data they received. They were often faced with a vague job description or with an esoteric local term and therefore had to be arbitrary in assigning an individual to an occupational group.¹⁰ Secondly, census statistics are rarely exactly comparable over time, since the way in which occupations were classified, and also the instructions sent out in the schedules, could change. Occupations separately listed in one census, for example, might be merged with others in a subsequent census following a decline in their labour force.¹¹ As census schedules became more detailed fewer workers were listed in the two general categories of "labourer" and "machinist undefined". It is not possible to assess how far the distribution of such workers to more specific occupations affected the returns.¹² Dealers were often included with makers in industrial occupations in 1881 and in 1891 and therefore the returns are not strictly comparable with those of 1901 and

1911 when they were separately listed.¹³ Overall, however, the changes made in methods of classification between 1881 and 1911 were not fundamental and there are fewer problems in comparing census figures in this period than in comparing the figures provided for earlier and later dates.¹⁴

A more serious weakness of the occupational tables in the census, however, lies in the omissions rather than in the minor changes in classification over time. Workers are placed in occupations such as tailoring, but no details are given about the type of work carried out or the level of skill involved, and it is impossible to determine whether individuals were employed in factories, in workshops or in the home.¹⁵ The census also fails to provide a complete picture of the occupational structure of local areas since the existence of dual occupations is ignored, the first occupation only being included in the tables.¹⁶

These problems are general ones and relate to all workers to a greater or lesser degree, but further difficulties arise in the case of female workers. Data are often lacking on aspects of employment which are crucial for an understanding of women's work, such as marital status and age structure.¹⁷ The age structure of the labour force in local areas was given only in 1851, 1861, 1901 and 1911 and at each census date the figures were broken down in different ways.¹⁸ Marital status was not distinguished until 1901 and even then it is generally agreed that the extent of wage earning by married women was greatly underestimated in census tables.¹⁹ Hakim argues that after 1861 the census authorities moved away from a broad concern with "establishing the main activity of

each adult in the population" towards a narrower concern with the labour force engaged in the market economy.²⁰ This meant that work most associated with women, such as voluntary employment, unpaid domestic work, teaching and nursing relatives, was excluded.²¹

Despite these shortcomings, the census still provides the most important guide to the broad distribution of the female labour force and to changes in the pattern of their work over time. The census has the advantage of providing a continuity of statistics, allowing long-term changes to be measured, and of giving details on local areas which can then be compared. It also provides a more comprehensive picture than other sources which tend to draw on only a sample of the population.²² Bearing in mind some of the difficulties noted earlier, the figures given in subsequent tables must be seen as approximate only, although wherever possible account has been taken of any special problems associated with the shortcomings of the statistics.

a) Sex Segregation of the Labour Force

The first major difference between the employment characteristics of men and women lay in the extent to which they were employed. Women represented roughly one third of the large labour force in Leeds throughout the period from 1881 to 1911, forming a slightly higher proportion in 1891 and in 1911. This was just above the national average for the period but significantly greater than in areas with few opportunities for female employment.

Table 1.1 Proportion of women in the Labour Force in Leeds,²³
Kingston-upon-Hull and England & Wales, 1881-1911

| | <u>1881</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Leeds | 30.5 | 32.7 | 30.4 | 33.0 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull | 25.0 | 25.0 | 24.0 | 25.0 |
| England & Wales | 30.6 | 30.9 | 29.1 | 29.5 |

Although the proportion of women in the Leeds labour force remained fairly constant, the rate and extent to which they entered paid employment varied widely in each ten year period, with two peaks in 1891 and 1911.

Table 1.2 The Percentage Rate of Increase of the Occupied
Population and of the Population over 10 in Leeds,
1881 to 1911²⁴

| <u>Years</u> | <u>Occupied Population</u> | | | <u>Population over 10</u> | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | <u>male</u> | <u>female</u> | <u>total</u> | <u>male</u> | <u>female</u> | <u>total</u> |
| 1881 - 1891 | 22.9 | 36.1 | 26.9 | 21.9 | 23.5 | 22.8 |
| 1891 - 1901 | 19.8 | 7.9 | 15.9 | 19.0 | 20.0 | 19.5 |
| 1901 - 1911 | 5.5 | 18.8 | 9.6 | 5.3 | 7.9 | 6.6 |

The variations are even clearer if expressed in numerical terms.

Between 1881 and 1891, 14,824 extra women entered the labour force compared with 4,410 in the period 1891 to 1901 and 11,307 between 1901 and 1911. The corresponding figures for men were 21,445, 22,745 and 7,630.

The rapid expansion of the ready-made clothing industry largely accounted for the very high rate of increase of the city's occupied population in the 1880s. It provided increased employment for women from Leeds and the surrounding districts as well as for Jewish immigrants who entered Leeds in large numbers in that period.²⁵ The very different rate at which men and women entered employment in the 1890s is a clear indication of the degree to which the labour force was sex specific. In that decade it was the two staple female occupations of clothing and textiles which experienced setbacks and slower growth, thereby reducing the demand for female labour.²⁶ A revival in these two industries, coupled with expansion in other manufacturing sectors and in commerce, contributed towards the greater rate at which women entered the labour force in the decade before World War One.²⁷

Increases in the rate to which men were employed more closely followed changes in the size of the male population aged over ten than in the case of women, since almost all men in the age group 15 to 65 were occupied in each census year.²⁸ There was greater variation in the extent to which women were employed in each age group, both in any one year and also between census dates. This provided a certain flexibility in times of expansion and contraction in the economy which is reflected in the different proportion of women occupied in specific age groups in each census year.²⁹

Table 1.3 Percentage of the Female Population Occupied in Selected Age Groups, 1891, 1901 and 1911³⁰

| <u>Age</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 10 - 14 | 20.9 | 18.5 | 22.3 |
| 15 - 24 | 72.0 | 68.9 | 75.6 |
| 25 - 44 | 29.6 | 27.0 | 32.8 |
| 45 - 64 | 21.1 | 18.1 | 20.8 |
| 65+ | 13.2 | 10.3 | 9.2 |

The overall pattern of female employment in Leeds, therefore, also differed from that of men. The proportion of men employed remained fairly constant between the ages of 15 and 65, but the proportion of occupied women fell sharply over the age of 25. This coincided with a rise in the proportion of married women in the female population.³¹

The general pattern of female employment in Leeds was similar to that of other towns, but the extent to which women were employed in specific age groups varied considerably in different local areas. This can be seen in Table 1.4 which provides a comparison between selected towns for the year 1891.

Such a comparison shows the dangers in too readily generalising about women's employment at different ages. A high proportion of girls aged 10 to 14 were employed in towns offering extensive half-time work, in particular in the wool and worsted and cotton districts.³³ A high proportion of women were also employed in the age group 15 to 25

Table 1.4 Occupied Women per 1,000 Females in Each Age Group, in Selected Towns, in 1891³²

| | <u>10-15</u> | <u>15-20</u> | <u>20-25</u> | <u>25-30</u> | <u>35-45</u> | <u>45-55</u> | <u>55-65</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Leeds | 209 | 816 | 628 | 335 | 244 | 223 | 211 | 132 |
| Sheffield | 131 | 660 | 459 | 225 | 187 | 211 | 213 | 132 |
| Huddersfield | 273 | 852 | 722 | 421 | 273 | 213 | 198 | 125 |
| Bradford | 441 | 879 | 758 | 483 | 345 | 298 | 240 | 148 |
| Hull | 90 | 622 | 446 | 207 | 178 | 207 | 223 | 149 |
| Blackburn | 581 | 953 | 880 | 689 | 499 | 356 | 287 | 197 |
| Bolton | 449 | 918 | 752 | 435 | 314 | 263 | 252 | 184 |
| Wigan | 305 | 865 | 671 | 355 | 215 | 231 | 224 | 155 |
| Barrow | 160 | 779 | 532 | 211 | 147 | 143 | 175 | 181 |
| Bristol | 149 | 736 | 648 | 401 | 313 | 315 | 304 | 173 |
| Nottingham | 232 | 827 | 708 | 439 | 347 | 353 | 335 | 216 |
| Southampton | 108 | 615 | 508 | 258 | 204 | | 225 | 136 |
| West London | 95 | 699 | 695 | 487 | 396 | 395 | 355 | 189 |
| North London | 109 | 705 | 627 | 392 | 318 | 335 | 312 | 181 |
| Central London | 144 | 781 | 674 | 470 | 413 | 459 | 472 | 349 |
| East London | 125 | 744 | 556 | 314 | 293 | 329 | 352 | 246 |
| South London | 88 | 647 | 552 | 299 | 246 | 263 | 266 | 157 |
| England & Wales | 163 | 686 | 578 | 330 | 250 | 253 | 244 | 160 |

in towns with a staple female trade such as textiles or clothing. Female employment over the age of 25 declined in all areas, although at significantly different rates. There was not necessarily a correlation, however, between the proportion of younger and older women employed in any one town. In Bristol and Hull, for example, the proportion of occupied women in younger age groups was below average, but there was an above average employment of older women. This can only be explained if women's work is placed in the social and economic context of particular towns, since the rate to which older women were employed was related not merely to the work opportunities available, but also to the level of male wages, the type of work undertaken by men and to the rate of widowhood.³⁴

Male and female workers can be differentiated not only by the extent and pattern of their employment, but also by the type of work that they did and by the opportunities available to them. Male employment in Leeds can be characterised by its variety. Textiles and trades associated with textiles provided the main work opportunities for both men and women in the mid-nineteenth century, but in the period under review the engineering industry came to predominate as an area of employment for men, accounting for a fifth of all male workers in 1911.³⁵ No other trade employed more than 11 per cent of the male labour force at this date, but men were evenly distributed over a number of occupations including building, clothing, transport, commerce and textiles.

Table 1.5 The Number and Percentage of the Male Labour Force in Selected Occupations in Leeds, 1881-1911³⁶

| <u>Occupations</u> | <u>1881</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Engineering | 16,887 (18.0) | 20,906 (18.2) | 26,338 (19.1) | 31,024 (21.7) |
| Building | 7,866 (8.4) | 9,012 (7.8) | 13,258 (9.6) | 9,288 (6.4) |
| Textiles | 10,427 (11.1) | 9,675 (8.4) | 8,093 (5.9) | 8,725 (6.0) |
| Dress | 7,472 (8.0) | 11,711 (10.2) | 13,093 (9.5) | 14,162 (9.7) |
| Skins & Leather | 3,094 (3.3) | 3,481 (3.0) | 3,331 (2.4) | 3,387 (2.3) |
| Paper | 2,148 (2.3) | 3,248 (2.8) | 4,213 (4.5) | 4,702 (3.2) |
| Wood | 2,335 (2.5) | 2,745 (2.4) | 3,595 (2.6) | 3,298 (2.2) |
| Brick | 3,545 (3.8) | 4,195 (3.6) | 3,365 (2.4) | 3,131 (2.0) |
| Transport | 8,461 (9.0) | 12,346 (10.7) | 15,625 (11.3) | 16,340 (11.2) |
| Commerce | 4,545 (4.9) | 5,998 (5.2) | 8,154 (5.9) | 9,729 (6.7) |

The proportion of the male labour force employed in textiles and building declined between 1881 and 1911, but there was an increase in the proportion employed in transport, commerce and the paper trades.

The occupations which were most important for women differed from those of male workers and the work opportunities available for women were far more restricted. Female workers could be found in a wide range of trades, but the numbers involved were usually small. In 1911, for example, there were two female plumbers, 149 employed in the manufacture of brushes and brooms, 158 curriers, 94 engaged in tobacco manufacture, 280 cabinet makers, upholsterers and french polishers, 68 employed in the manufacture of matches and explosives and 191 making cakes, biscuits and bread.³⁷ The majority of women in Leeds, however, worked in three occupational groups, domestic service, clothing and textiles. These

were also the most important areas of employment for women in England and Wales as a whole, but Leeds does provide a contrast with the national pattern. Firstly, domestic service was far less important, and clothing was far more important, in Leeds than in England and Wales.

Table 1.6 Percentage Distribution of the Female Labour Force in Three Principal Occupations in Leeds and in England and Wales in 1911³⁸

| | <u>Domestic Service</u> | <u>Dress</u> | <u>Textiles</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| England and Wales | 35.9 | 15.6 | 15.5 |
| Leeds | 18.4 | 35.7 | 16.1 |

Secondly, it was unusual to find extensive opportunities for work in all three sectors in the same town.³⁹

The sex segregation of the labour force is apparent when only broad occupational groups are considered. A number of occupations employed largely one sex and were of great importance in the employment structure of that group; for example, domestic service for women, and engineering, building and transport for men.⁴⁰ Other occupations, such as textiles and dress, did employ substantial numbers of both sexes, but were of greater significance in the employment structure of women than that of men and became increasingly so by the end of the period.⁴¹ Once the broad categories of textiles and dress are broken down into particular tasks they are found to be as sex specific as the other occupational groups.⁴²

The extent to which sex was a crucial factor in employment can be further indicated by considering the proportion of each sex in the labour force of specific occupations. If sex played little part then one would expect the proportion of women to men in occupations of appreciable size to be similar to their proportion in the labour force as a whole, that is approximately 32 per cent in 1911.⁴³ The following table, however, shows the very uneven distribution of the sexes within the major occupations in Leeds.

Table 1.7 Percentage of Women in the Labour Force of Selected Occupations in Leeds in 1911⁴⁴

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>% Proportion of Women</u> | <u>Occupation</u> | <u>% Proportion of Women</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Textiles | 61.1 | Paper Box/Bag Manufacture | 84.6 |
| Tailoring | 67.6 | Printing | 32.5 |
| Millinery and Dressmaking | 96.9 | Metals | 5.8 |
| Boot and Show | 23.0 | Indoor Domestic Service | 99.1 |
| Hat and Cap | 91.3 | Dealing | 27.9 |
| Transport | 4.4 | Clerks | 17.7 |
| Building | 0.1 | | |

Even where the distribution does not appear disproportionate a more detailed examination of the processes undertaken by men and women reveals a clear sex segregation of tasks.⁴⁵ This more detailed breakdown allows a greater insight into any changes in the distribution of the male and female labour force over time.

To give a clearer idea of the type of work in which women predominated

and the extent of job segregation by sex, the census categories have been rearranged and to some extent reclassified. Occupations in the census were classified according to the material in which people worked, but this does not necessarily provide the best guide to the type of work undertaken.⁴⁶ Female occupations in Leeds, therefore, have been divided into two categories, the secondary manufacturing sector and the tertiary service sector. The latter has then been split into domestic service, dealing, commerce and the professions. It has been assumed that tasks in the service sector can be defined in terms of meeting the needs of particular individuals, whereas in manufacturing, tasks involve the production of a certain quantity of goods by working at a specific rate.⁴⁷ These categories, therefore, do allow of some differentiation of the female labour force on the grounds of their relationship to the means of production, the general conditions of employment and the predominant location and organisation of work.⁴⁸ It is recognised, however, that certain features of employment are common to all women workers and that in some cases the divisions between categories are arbitrary.⁴⁹ Dressmakers and milliners, for example, have been placed in the manufacturing group, but many were expected to serve in the drapery shop on Saturdays, while a number "lived in" on their employers' premises, thereby sharing features of employment with shop assistants and domestic servants.⁵⁰ In the manufacturing sector women could be found in a variety of settings, including large factories, workshops and home-based manufacture, although factory work came to predominate by the early twentieth century.⁵¹

The Service Sector

1. Domestic Service. Domestic service was an important area of female employment throughout the period, but occupied only a small proportion of the male labour force.⁵² Its significance for female workers did decrease, however, with only 18.4 per cent of the total female labour force employed in domestic service in 1911, compared with 29.7 per cent in 1881.⁵³ Indoor domestic service employed by far the largest number and proportion of women in this sector, but declined both relatively and absolutely between 1881 and 1911. The number employed in inn and hotel service and as charwomen, however, increased over the same period, although improved census returns account for some of the increase in the former.⁵⁴

Table 1.8 Number and Percentage of the Total Female Labour Force in Leeds in Domestic Service, 1881-1911⁵⁵

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>1881</u> | (%) | <u>1891</u> | (%) | <u>1901</u> | (%) | <u>1911</u> | (%) |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|---------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Indoor Domestic Servants | 9,636 | (23.5) | 10,295 ^a | (18.4) | 9,508 | (15.8) | 8,405 | (11.7) |
| Charwomen | 1,247 | (3.0) | 1,579 | (2.8) | 1,763 | (2.9) | 2,043 | (2.9) |
| Laundresses | 838 | (2.0) | 1,008 | (1.8) | 1,367 | (2.3) | 1,226 | (1.7) |
| Inn, Hotel Keepers | 423 | } (1.6) | 723 | } (2.2) | 682 | } (2.7) | 1,452 | } (3.8) |
| Inn, Hotel Servants ^b | 257 | | 490 | | 965 | | 1,236 | |

^a Not comparable. Female relatives engaged in housework were included in indoor domestic service.

^b Includes those workers listed as domestics in inn, hotel service.

There was a decline, therefore, in the extent to which women worked as "live in" domestic servants in individual households and an increase in

the provision of domestic services on a daily basis. The number of domestics employed in institutions such as coffee houses and hotels increased, although some of these still "lived in" on the employers' premises.

2. Dealing, Commerce and the Professions. Compared with domestic service and the manufacturing sector, dealing, commerce and the professions were of only minor importance for female employment, although they were to be significant growth areas in the future.⁵⁶ The census does not provide a satisfactory guide to the extent to which women were employed in dealing. In 1881 and 1891 many dealers were still classed with makers, although this affected women rather less than men.⁵⁷ Of greater significance for women was the fact that the census figures underestimated their employment in dealing. It was only in 1911 that household heads were explicitly instructed to return as occupied all female relatives actively engaged in trade or business. This led to a significant increase in the number of women returned in the category of dealing. The figures given below, therefore, must be used with great caution, since they represent only a partial view of women's employment in dealing, and the increases are often statistical rather than real.

Table 1.9 Number and Percentage of the Total Female and Total Male Labour Force in Leeds, Employed in Dealing 1881-1911⁵⁸

| | <u>1881</u> | (%) | <u>1891</u> | (%) | <u>1901</u> | (%) | <u>1911</u> | (%) |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Females | 1,865 | (4.5) | 3,326 | (6.0) | 4,259 | (7.1) | 6,260 | (8.7) |
| Males | 8,870 | (9.5) | 10,604 | (9.2) | 13,969 | (10.1) | 16,178 | (11.1) |

In 1911 27.9 per cent of all dealers were female, which approximates closely to the proportion of women in the Leeds labour force as a whole. Unfortunately, it is not possible in most cases to determine the proportion of dealers who owned their own shops, who managed a business or who were employed as shop assistants.⁵⁹ In many respects the work of male and female small shopkeepers and shop assistants was very similar in character, although men and women tended to be concentrated in areas of work thought most appropriate to their sex.⁶⁰

Commerce still employed only a small proportion of the female labour force, 2.7 per cent in 1911, but this did represent a significant increase over the 0.4 per cent recorded in 1881. Over 90 per cent of women in this sector were employed as clerks; women as a proportion of all clerks rose from 3.1 per cent to 28.7 per cent over the whole period.⁶¹ The rather diverse professional group on the other hand did not increase its share of the female labour force in the period, although in 1911 women comprised 45.3 per cent of all workers in this category.⁶² This surprisingly high proportion of professional women gives a misleading impression, for men and women were distributed unevenly within the professional group. Women were employed largely in subordinate medical services as nurses and midwives, almost 100 per cent of whom were female, while the bulk of professional men were employed in the clerical and legal professions or as doctors, engineers and surveyors.⁶³ In 1911 there were no female barristers, lawyers, solicitors, engineers or surveyors, and only 3 per cent of doctors were women. The one area open to both sexes was teaching and female

teachers comprised 69 per cent of the profession in 1911.⁶⁴

The categories of dealing, commerce and the professions, therefore, provide some of the few examples of occupations in which men and women could be found engaged on broadly similar work. The conditions of employment, however, still maintained a degree of segregation between the sexes. In school teaching, for example, women predominated in the teaching of younger age groups, received lower levels of pay and found it more difficult to obtain promotion than men.⁶⁵

The Manufacturing Sector

Throughout the period the majority of female workers in Leeds were to be found in the manufacturing sector, although the proportion employed in industry fluctuated from a low point of 58.5 per cent in 1881 to a high point of 61.6 per cent in 1891.⁶⁶ At the beginning of the period the most important industrial employment for women was the textile trade, in particular the manufacture of wool, worsted and flax, but the proportion of the total female labour force employed in this sector had almost halved by 1911.

Table 1.10 Number and Percentage of the Total Female Labour Force in Leeds Employed in the Different Branches of the Textile Trade, 1881-1911⁶⁷

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>1881</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>(%)</u> | <u>1911</u> | <u>(%)</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Wool & Worsted | 7,854 | (18.1) | 9,124 | (16.3) | 7,159 | (11.9) | 8,358 | (11.7) |
| Cotton | 347 | (0.8) | 484 | (0.9) | 757 | (1.3) | 669 | (0.9) |
| Linen & Flax | 2,709 | (6.6) | 1,836 | (3.3) | 837 | (1.4) | 626 | (0.9) |
| Bleaching, Dyeing & Printing | 20 | (0.0) | 49 | (0.1) | 57 | (0.1) | 104 | (0.1) |
| Other | 1,140 | (2.8) | 590 | (1.1) | 715 | (1.2) | 721 | (1.0) |
| All Textiles | 12,704 | (29.4) | 12,083 | (21.6) | 9,525 | (15.8) | 10,478 | (14.6) |

The decline of the linen and flax industries largely accounts for the overall decrease in the numbers employed in textiles. The number of women employed in the wool and worsted industry also fluctuated with the frequent slumps and recoveries in those trades during the period.⁶⁸

As already noted, the textile trade was one area which employed substantial numbers of both male and female workers. As the wool and worsted industry ran into difficulties, however, and opportunities for employment opened up elsewhere, the proportion of the Leeds male labour force employed in textiles declined from 9.3 per cent in 1881 to 4.6 per cent in 1911.⁶⁹ This was particularly marked in the wool and worsted industry, whereas bleaching, dyeing and finishing remained very largely a male preserve.⁷⁰ Within the textile trade men and women were usually engaged in distinct tasks, although they often worked closely together.⁷¹ The only occupation which employed both sexes on similar work was weaving, but this was not a significant area of employment for men in Leeds from as early as 1881.⁷²

The rapid expansion of the ready-made tailoring trade was the most important change for women in the manufacturing sector in the period. The most dramatic growth came in the 1880s, so that by 1891 the broad category of dress was the largest employer of female labour in Leeds. The absolute number of women employed in some form of clothing manufacture continued to increase up to 1911, although there was a slight decline in the proportion of the Leeds female labour force to be found in this sector compared with the peak year of 1901.

Table 1.11 The Number and Percentage of the Total Female Labour Force in Leeds Employed in the Different Branches of the Clothing Trade, 1881-1911*⁷³

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>1881</u> | (%) | <u>1891</u> | (%) | <u>1901</u> | (%) | <u>1911</u> | (%) |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Dressmaking & Millinery | 4,001 | (9.8) | 4,816 | (7.2) | 4,342 | (7.2) | 6,307 | (8.8) |
| Boot & Shoe | 1,136 | (2.8) | 1,508 | (2.7) | 1,570 | (2.6) | 1,279 | (1.8) |
| Tailoring | 2,740 | (6.7) | 10,916 | (19.5) | 14,021 | (23.3) | 15,917 | (22.2) |
| Shirtmakers & Seamstresses | 901 | (2.2) | 413 | (0.7) | 670 | (1.1) | 737 | (0.9) |
| Hat & Cap | 674 | (1.6) | 667 | (1.2) | - | - | 612 | (0.9) |
| Other | 68 | (0.2) | 248 | (0.4) | 612 | (1.0) | 102 | (0.1) |
| All Dress | 9,520 | (23.2) | 18,568 | (33.2) | 21,216 | (35.2) | 24,954 | (34.9) |

* Dealers are excluded wherever possible.

As the above table shows, it was the tailoring trade that was largely responsible for the pre-eminence of clothing as an area of employment for women in Leeds, and by 1891 it was the single most important female occupation in the city. Tailoring and boot and shoe manufacture also provided substantial employment for male workers, although they had less significance in the overall structure of men's work than they did for women.⁷⁴ The tasks performed by each sex were more distinct than in the textile trade and men and women usually worked in separate rooms in the larger factories.⁷⁵ Dressmaking, millinery, shirtmaking and hat and cap manufacture retained a fairly constant share of the female labour force throughout the period and were overwhelmingly female occupations.⁷⁶

Textiles and clothing together employed 90 per cent of all female workers in the manufacturing sector in 1881 and 83.8 per cent in 1911.

This slight reduction reflected the increasing opportunities available for women to work in other industries, notably metals and printing, but the numbers involved in these areas were still small.⁷⁷ The metal trades remained overwhelmingly a male occupation throughout the period and when women entered the industry in larger numbers they were confined to light and subsidiary work.⁷⁸ Women steadily increased as a proportion of the labour force in the paper trades, from 18.5 per cent in 1881 to 43.5 per cent in 1911.⁷⁹ This resulted from a change in production methods, as the use of machinery increased, and from a change in the quality and type of goods produced, and did not represent the direct entry of women into male tasks.⁸⁰

Women workers in Leeds were concentrated in the same three areas of employment at both the beginning and at the end of the period, although the relative importance of the three groups did change over time.

Table 1.12 The Percentage of the Female Labour Force in Leeds in the Three Principal Occupations, 1881-1911⁸¹

| <u>Occupations</u> | <u>1881 (%)</u> | <u>1891 (%)</u> | <u>1901 (%)</u> | <u>1911 (%)</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Domestic Service | 29.7 | 24.7 | 22.6 | 18.4 |
| Textiles | 30.1 | 222.4 | 17.0 | 16.1 |
| Dress | 23.2 | 33.3 | 35.9 | 35.7 |
| Total | 83.0 | 80.4 | 75.5 | 70.2 |

^a 1891 figures for domestic service include female relatives if returned as helping in the house and therefore are not strictly comparable with other census dates.

^b Figures for textiles and dress are based on broad census categories and therefore include dealers.

Between 1881 and 1911 domestic service declined as an area of employment

for women which reflected a substantial decrease in the numbers entering indoor domestic service. In the manufacturing sector clothing overtook textiles as the most important area of industrial work for women, and the tailoress replaced the mill worker as the most typical representative of Leeds women workers. One further change lay in the broadening of opportunities for women in commerce and in the newer manufacturing industries, although the number of workers involved was small, and a corresponding decline in the proportion of the female labour force employed in textiles and in indoor domestic service.

The sex segregation of the labour force remained a key feature of the occupational structure of Leeds throughout the period. Although changes took place in the way in which work was allocated to a particular sex, such changes did not basically alter the extent to which work remained sex specific.⁸² Only a handful of occupations were carried out by both sexes and these were found largely in the "white-collar" and service sectors. In manufacturing the most important task which employed both sexes on similar work was weaving, and the decline of textiles as an area of employment for men meant that the sex segregation of the labour force was even more pronounced in 1911 than it had been in 1881. This can be seen not only in terms of the tasks involved, but also in the extent to which men and women worked closely together. In the clothing factories, for example, work was organised in such a way that the sexes were physically separated as well as performing different tasks.⁸³

b) Differentiation of the Female Labour Force by Age and Marital Status

Although sex provided the most basic way of differentiating the work force in this period, the female labour force itself can be differentiated by marital status and by age. Marital status affected both the extent and also the type of work undertaken by women, but this could be further complicated by age. Young single and young married women, for example, might be found in similar areas of employment which differed from those of older married women and widows.

The extent to which young girls were employed approximated most closely to the pattern of male employment and over 80 per cent of girls aged 16 to 19 were occupied in 1911. Between the ages of 20 and 24 the proportion of women employed declined to 69.7 per cent and fell sharply again to 38.6 per cent between the ages of 25 and 34.⁸⁴ This fall can clearly be correlated with an increase in the proportion of the female population who were married.⁸⁵

Marital status affected the extent to which women were employed, at least in full-time wage earning outside the home. Unfortunately, the census did not classify women on the basis of marital status until 1901 when single women were distinguished from married women and widows. Only in 1911 were all three groups separately listed. The 1911 census figures do provide an indication of the importance of marital status in affecting the extent to which women were employed: 64.3 per cent of single women in Leeds were occupied compared with 13.0 per cent of

married women and 29.6 per cent of widows. The extent to which marital status affected women's participation in wage earning varied markedly between different local areas.

Table 1.13 The Percentage of Unmarried, Married and Widowed Women Employed in Selected Towns in 1911⁸⁶

| | <u>Unmarried</u> | <u>Married</u> | <u>Widowed</u> |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Leeds | 64.3 | 13.0 | 29.6 |
| Bradford | 73.2 | 19.5 | 29.1 |
| Huddersfield | 71.2 | 13.2 | 26.7 |
| Blackburn | 78.0 | 44.5 | 33.1 |
| Burnley | 76.6 | 44.4 | 32.3 |
| Oldham | 73.8 | 23.7 | 28.0 |
| Liverpool | 52.0 | 8.9 | 34.8 |
| Bristol | 60.2 | 12.0 | 31.1 |
| Newcastle | 47.8 | 5.3 | 27.3 |
| Southampton | 48.5 | 6.5 | 28.2 |
| Halifax | 73.9 | 13.5 | 25.3 |

In general, where the proportion of occupied single women was low then so too was the proportion of occupied married women. Where the employment of single women was extensive, however, that is over 70 per cent, the extent of married women's employment showed considerable variations, ranging from 44.5 per cent in Blackburn to 13.2 per cent in Huddersfield. The extent to which widows were employed showed a greater degree of uniformity between all the towns, varying only between 24 per cent and 34 per cent. Surprisingly, the extent of the employment of widows was often greatest in towns where the proportion of occupied single women was well below the average. There does not appear, therefore, to be any clear pattern in the extent to which single, married and widowed women were employed in local areas, and differences can only be explained in the context of a complex of local factors which

are more fully examined in a subsequent chapter.⁸⁷

The census data alone do not provide a reliable guide to the extent to which married women and widows participated in wage earning.

Contemporary observers and more recent historians have noted how the census figures underestimated the extent of wage earning by these groups.⁸⁸ Male heads of household were not always willing to admit that their wives worked and, given the part-time domestic character of much married women's work, both sexes may not have considered it important enough to have entered it on the census forms, or even perceived that it constituted "going out to work".⁸⁹ And yet autobiographies, social surveys of the period and oral interviews all indicate that wage earning, in particular of an irregular kind, was widespread among married working-class women.⁹⁰ In Leeds, for example, 1,500 homeworkers were recorded on lists sent by employers to the local medical officer of health in 1914, whereas in the census figures for 1911 only 2,000 women were returned as working at home in the whole of the North, East and West Ridings of Yorkshire.⁹¹ The census figures, therefore, give a useful indication of the extent to which married women and widows were engaged in full-time paid employment outside the home, but do not provide a complete picture of the overall importance of their wage earning.

The absence of separate statistics before 1901 also makes it difficult to use the census to assess changes over time in the extent to which married, widowed and single women were employed. Contemporaries were particularly concerned with changes in the extent of married women's

employment, since they viewed the married woman worker as a social problem. It was feared that the number of married women wage earners was growing and that this was undermining their prime responsibility for domestic duties, leading to the neglect of homes and children.⁹²

Faced with these growing fears, research workers in government departments set out to measure the precise extent and character of married women's work so that its consequences could be more accurately assessed.

Given the lack of data on marital status in the printed census tables before 1901, research workers made use of statistics on the age structure of the occupied population to make inferences concerning the rate of married women's employment. Clara Collet of the Board of Trade found that in the decade 1881 to 1891 the proportion of women occupied under the age of 25 increased, while those occupied over the age of 45 decreased. Although there was an increase of six per 1,000 women occupied in the age group 25 to 44, this was less than the population increase in this group of 25 per 1,000. Collet concluded from this that, since married women predominated in age groups above 25, the decreased employment of women in these age groups represented a decrease in the employment of married women.⁹³ The Registrar General made a similar analysis for the period 1891 to 1901 and noted a substitution of younger for older women in all occupations except domestic service.⁹⁴

At first glance this apparent decline in the employment of married women appears to have been reversed between 1901 and 1911, when the proportion of occupied married women and widows in England and Wales increased from 13.2 per cent to 13.6 per cent. The Registrar

General was quick to point out, however, that this was due to the clearer instructions in the census schedules relating to the employment of female relatives, and that once the occupations most subject to error were excluded, the proportion of married women and widows occupied fell from 11.2 per cent to 10.8 per cent.⁹⁵ The impression given by contemporaries, therefore, is one of a steady decline in the extent of married women's employment over the whole period 1881 to 1911, and this was attributed to changes in the structure of industry, including an increase in regular factory work in new industries, a decline in older industries and a decline in the importance of homework.⁹⁶

This view has been readily accepted by many historians and incorporated in a number of standard texts. Stearns, for example, stresses that married women's employment in the period was not extensive and that it declined between 1881 and 1911. He agrees with contemporaries that the decline can be explained by structural changes within industry, but further argues that it revealed that the working class had come to accept a middle-class model of family life in which married women worked only if destitute.⁹⁷ Tilly and Scott also point to a decline in married women's employment and link this firmly both to industrial changes and also to changes in family life, in particular higher male wages, fewer children and an increasing emphasis on household skills.⁹⁸ The question of the extent to which married women worked for wages and whether this declined is a crucial one, therefore, since it can be used to underpin arguments concerning the role that paid work played in the lives of women, the views that women held towards their role in the family and their motivations for working.⁹⁹

In Leeds the evidence for a steady decline in married women's work, even on the basis of the census figures, appears less convincing. The proportion of occupied married women and widows increased from 13 per cent in 1901 to 15.9 per cent in 1911, and not all of this can be accounted for by the changes in census instructions. If those occupations which were most affected are removed, the proportion of married and widowed women who were employed still showed an increase from 11.2 per cent to 13.6 per cent between 1901 and 1911.¹⁰⁰ It is not intended to argue on the basis of these figures that the employment of married women and widows increased significantly, but rather to suggest that there is very little evidence that there was a linear decline in the employment of married women and widows in Leeds from 1881 to 1911. It seems more likely that the extent to which married women were employed fluctuated in a similar way to that of single women. It has already been noted that women did not enter the labour force evenly in each decennial period. There was a large increase in the number of women workers in the 1880s, but a much smaller one in the 1890s.¹⁰¹ It is likely that the lower demand for female workers in the latter decade would have discouraged married women from seeking full-time paid employment outside the home.

This is also suggested to some extent if the age structure of the occupied population is compared for 1891, 1901 and 1911.¹⁰² There was a fall in the extent to which women over 45 were occupied between 1891 and 1901, but the proportion of women employed increased in all age groups between 25 and 64 if 1911 is compared with 1891.¹⁰³ The renewed demand for female labour in the decade 1901 to 1911 appears to have been

met, therefore, by an increase in the employment of women aged above 25. This partly reflects the increasing importance of these age groups within the population of Leeds, but the rate of increase of occupied women over the age of 25 exceeded the rate of population growth in the older age groups.¹⁰⁴

There was a close relationship between the extent to which married and single women were employed. In Leeds the majority of young, single working-class women were already fully employed and therefore any increased demand for female labour had to be met from older single women, widows or married women. As opportunities opened up in newer areas of employment for young single women, so the older industries had to recruit a higher proportion of their workforce from married women and widows.¹⁰⁵

The census material that is available on married women's employment in Leeds suggests caution in too readily drawing the general conclusion from nationally based statistics that married women's work uniformly declined in the period. It indicates the dangers of making generalisations about women's role as wage earners and their perceptions of the importance of waged work in their own lives. It is necessary to look beyond the census figures for a more realistic assessment of the extent of married women's paid employment and regional variations must be taken into account.¹⁰⁶ The Leeds data suggest that it is more fruitful to see married women's employment as fluctuating over time rather than undergoing a steady linear decline, and that explanations for the extent and type of their wage earning should be sought in the

context of changing patterns of work and family life at a local level, rather than in the more general adoption of a "pedestal image" of women among the working class.¹⁰⁷

Single, married and widowed women can be further differentiated by the type of work that they did, although age again cut across marital status. A number of occupations drew their workforce largely from specific female groups. Single women under the age of 20 predominated in the newer factory industries and also in specific tasks in older industries, such as worsted spinning.¹⁰⁸ Indoor domestic service recruited largely from single women, but a high proportion of these were drawn from older age groups. In 1911 approximately 50 per cent of indoor domestic servants were aged over 25 and a quarter of these were married or widowed.¹⁰⁹ Other occupations recruited largely from married women or widows. Midwifery, charring and dealing drew an above average proportion of their labour force from married and widowed women.¹¹⁰ Irregular home-based work such as child minding, washing, taking in lodgers and home work, which rarely reached the census tables, was also largely undertaken by the married and the widowed.¹¹¹

The labour force of the two key occupations of textiles and clothing, however, more closely reflected the proportion of single, married and widowed women in the Leeds female workforce as a whole. In all textile manufacture in 1911 a quarter of female workers were married or widowed, and this proportion rose to 28 per cent in the wool and worsted trade and to 30 per cent in linen and flax manufacture. In tailoring and boot and shoe making married women and widows accounted for 21 per cent

of the female labour force, but made up only 12.4 per cent of milliners and dressmakers.¹¹²

The significance of particular occupations for the work patterns of women also varied according to their marital status and age. Textiles and clothing were important areas of work for young single and for young married women, but were less important for widows who were concentrated in older age groups.¹¹³ The main occupation for widows was charring, although along with older single women they were extensively employed in indoor domestic service, an occupation which had few married women workers.¹¹⁴

A consideration of the changes which took place in the distribution of the female labour force in particular occupations by marital status and by age between 1901 and 1911 illustrates the close interrelationship between the two. The proportion of female workers drawn from age groups over 25 was greater in 1911 than in 1901, and this was particularly marked in wool and worsted weaving, in tailoring and in boot and shoe manufacture. In these occupations the increased proportion of workers aged over 25 paralleled a rise in the proportion of married women and widows in the trade.

Table 1.14 Percentage of the Female Labour Force Aged over 25 and the Percentage of Married and Widowed Women in the Labour Force of Selected Occupations in Leeds in 1901 and 1911¹¹⁵

| Occupation | 1901 | | 1911 | |
|--------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| | Over 25 | Married & Widowed | Over 25 | Married & Widowed |
| All Wool & Worsted | 39.1 | 21.1 | 41.2 | 24.8 |
| Wool & Worsted | | | | |
| Weaving | 43.1 | 21.3 | 48.9 | 28.0 |
| Tailoring | 31.0 | 16.3 | 40.6 | 21.6 |
| Boot & Shoe | 26.5 | 15.4 | 34.6 | 21.0 |

This suggests that a widening of opportunities for single women in newer occupations meant that clothing and textiles had to recruit from older age groups. This was further encouraged by the slower rate of growth of the female population aged under 25 in Leeds between 1901 and 1911.¹¹⁶ A similar trend can be noted in domestic service, although the workforce was increasingly drawn from older single, rather than married, women.¹¹⁷ As opportunities opened for older women in textiles and clothing, some trades found it difficult to obtain adult workers and were forced to recruit very young women, in particular in dressmaking.¹¹⁸ A more detailed discussion of the relationship between married and single women's employment, and the more general factors affecting the choice and extent of their employment, can be found in a later section.¹¹⁹

In summary, it is necessary to distinguish between single, married and widowed women when describing female employment patterns and also to take account of differences based on age. In 1911 a number of occupations had only a small proportion of married or widowed women workers, in particular the newer factory industries, indoor domestic service, teaching and commerce. Charing, dealing and homework, on the other hand, employed few single women. The two most significant areas of employment for women in Leeds, however, textiles and clothing, drew a high proportion of their female workers from both married and single women, although the proportion of widows was below average.

This chapter has provided a broad outline of the distribution of the female labour force in Leeds, paying particular attention to the importance of the sex segregation of occupations and to the ways in

which the extent and type of women's employment varied according to age and to marital status. In the following chapters other important characteristics of women's work, such as the specific tasks that they performed, the location of their employment and the general conditions of their work, are examined. Consideration is also given to the particular form that the sex division of labour took in Leeds and the consequences of this for the features of women's work to be found in the city.

CHAPTER 1, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. The census figures were compiled for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911, and therefore these dates will be compared throughout the text.
2. S Hogg, "The Employment of Women in Great Britain, 1891-1921" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1967), p 1. In some circumstances the sex differential was less important. The initial work experience of young people, for example, was often very similar, although they had different expectations of their adult work roles. For a discussion of this point, see J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980), Chapters 3, 4.
3. E Gross, "Plus ça Change ... ? The Sexual Structure of Occupations Over Time", Social Problems, XVI, 3 (1968), p 207. Gross argues that the tendency in twentieth-century America has been for men to enter female occupations, whereas male jobs have remained sex specific. If women do enter male jobs then men start to leave and they become just as sex segregated.
4. The towns included in the tables have been chosen either because they illustrate differences in work opportunities available to women - for example, Blackburn with a high demand and Hull with a low demand for female labour - or because they illustrate the differences in the extent to which women were employed, even where there were staple trades for female workers. The towns included also cover the main occupations and methods of production in which women were to be found in the period.
5. For a discussion of the varied pattern of women's employment in different local regions, see S Alexander, A Davin and E Hostettler, "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop Journal, 8 (1979), pp 175-6.
6. See, for example, P Rushton, "Women and Industrialization: A Critical View" (unpublished paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Social History Society, York, 1980), especially pp 6-8.
7. L Murgatroyd, "Gender and Occupational Stratification", Sociological Review, XXX, 4 (1982), p 575.

8. See, in particular, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
9. Statistics relating to the employment of women in Leeds have been taken from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 (PP 1883, LXXX), Leeds Occupations, Table 10; Census of England and Wales, 1891 (PP 1893, CVI), Leeds Occupations, Table 7; Census of England and Wales, 1901 (PP 1902, CXXI), Leeds Occupations, Table 35; Census of England and Wales, 1911 (PP 1913, LXXIX), Leeds Occupations, Table 13 (hereafter Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.)
10. Colloquial terms such as "baubler", "crowder" and "fluker" were put down in the schedules. Reference was also made to an individual's position in the occupational hierarchy, such as foreman, but there was frequently no mention of the industry in which he or she was employed: W A Armstrong, "The Census Enumerators' Books: A Commentary", in R Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure (Frank Cass, 1978), pp 37-8.
11. In 1881, for example, wool and worsted workers were listed separately in the occupational tables, but in 1901 they were added together.
12. Women placed in the general category of "machinist" in the Leeds occupational tables were likely to have been employed in the clothing industry, but the numbers were too small to have affected the returns substantially - there were 281 in 1881, 231 in 1891, 221 in 1901 and 215 in 1911.
13. The majority of female dealers were to be found in clothing, food, drink and tobacco, general shopkeeping and textiles. Dealers were not separately listed from makers in the first two categories until 1901, but general shopkeepers and textile dealers were separately listed from 1881.
14. It is difficult, for example, to compare the census figures for 1871 with those of later years because only men and women aged over 20 were included in the occupational tables of local areas. In 1881 clerks were no longer assigned to a particular branch of industry, but were separately listed under the general heading of clerks. In the same year the retired were no longer placed in their former occupations, but were grouped under a special category for the retired. For a full discussion of these changes, see J M Bellamy, "Occupational Statistics in the Nineteenth-Century Censuses", in Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure, pp 168-72. In 1921 there was a major change in the way in which

- occupations were classified which makes it very difficult to compare the figures with those of previous census years. Details of these changes are given in J M Bellamy, "Occupations in Kingston-upon-Hull, 1841-1948", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, IV, 1 (1952), Appendix 1 and p 43. In the case of Leeds boundary changes in 1912, which doubled the city's area, make it particularly difficult to compare census figures for the period up to 1911 with later censuses: see W G Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds, 1841-1951", Thoresby Society Publications, L (1967), p 168.
15. Bellamy, "Occupation Statistics", pp 170, 172. Hogg, thesis, pp 4-5, notes how the census showed only the broad distribution of men and women in occupations, but not the job content which divided the sexes.
 16. Bellamy, "Occupation Statistics", pp 172-3, notes that the census enumerators' schedules reveal how individuals frequently had more than one job in the course of a year. Other sources also suggest that the practice of individuals carrying out more than one job, either simultaneously or at different times of the year, was widespread; see, for example, R Samuel, "Quarry Roughts: Life and Labour in Headington Quarry, 1860-1920: An Essay in Oral History", in R Samuel, ed. Village Life and Labour (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), sections 2 and 3. Job changing was most likely to occur in areas of casual employment, although there were limits to the extent to which workers could transfer between occupations: see, for example, G S Jones, Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp 79-87, and S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp 107-10.
 17. For a general discussion of the difficulties involved in using census data for women's work, see Hogg, thesis, pp 10-20, and E Bridge, "Women's Employment: Problems of Research", Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin, 26 (1973), p 6.
 18. There was a far more detailed age breakdown of the occupied population, in particular in the younger age groups, in 1911 than in 1901. If the 1911 figures are added together, however, it is possible to compare the age structure of the occupied population in Leeds in 1901 and 1911.
 19. For a more detailed discussion of the under-representation of married women and widows in the census figures, see below, p 69.

20. C Hakim, "Social Monitors: Population Censuses as Social Surveys" (unpublished paper presented to the 150th Anniversary Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, August/September, 1981), p 14.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. p 3.
23. Figures for Leeds have been calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations. ~~Those for Kingston-upon-Hull~~ have been taken from Bellamy, "Occupations in Kingston-upon-Hull", p 39, and those for England and Wales have been calculated from the figures in B R Mitchell and P Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p 60.
24. The rate of increase of the occupied population has been calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations. The rate of population growth between 1881 and 1891 has been calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 (PP 1883, LXXX), Table 6, Ages of Males and Females in Sanitary Districts, and from the Census of England and Wales, 1891 (PP 1893-4, CVI), Table 3, Ages of Males and Females in Sanitary Districts. The rate of population growth between 1891 and 1901 and 1901 and 1911 has been calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
25. It is not entirely clear from the evidence of contemporaries exactly how many Jewish immigrants entered Leeds in the 1880s. The 1891 census noted 4,540 foreigners of Russian/Polish origin in the Urban Sanitary District of Leeds, 2,477 of whom were male and 2,063 female; see the Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration from Eastern Europe into the United Kingdom (PP 1894, LXVIII), Appendix 1. William Clayton, secretary of the Leeds Board of Guardians, claimed that there were 10,000 Jews in the city in 1889, but considered that 4,000 of these were a floating population. He based his figures on an enquiry by Mr Newhouse, the sanitary officer, who thought that the increase in numbers had come largely in the previous ten years: see Clayton's evidence to the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) (PP 1889, X), QQ 1109, 1118-19. By 1891 the Chief Constable put the alien population of Leeds at 11,000: J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p 1.

26. For a discussion of the difficulties faced by these industries, see M F Ward, "Industrial Development and Location in Leeds North of the River Aire, 1790-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1972), pp 102-10, and D T Jenkins and K G Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, 1770-1914 (Heinemann Educational Books, 1982), pp 243-7.
27. J Buckman, "Later Phases of Industrialisation to 1918", in M W Beresford and G R J Jones, eds. Leeds and its Region (Leeds: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1967), pp 157-8, and Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds", pp 165-8.
28. Appendix 1, Table 1.3.
29. Women's usefulness to capital as a "reserve army of labour" is discussed in V Beechey, "Women and Production: A Critical Analysis of Some Sociological Theories of Women's Work", in A Kuhn and A M Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (RKP 1978), pp 186-95.
30. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
31. Appendix 1, Tables 1.3 and 1.16.
32. Taken from the Board of Trade, Report by Miss Collet on the Statistics of Employment of Women and Girls (PP 1894, LXXXI), Appendix 1, Table B.
33. For the proportion of young people employed in selected towns, see Table 9.I below, p 437.
34. Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women", p 178, and Rushton, "Women and Industrialization", p 13.
35. Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds", pp 165-8.
36. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations. The occupational groups in the table relate to the broad census orders introduced in 1901. Where necessary, figures from earlier censuses have been adjusted to conform with the 1901 classification. Dealers are included in the figures.

37. Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.

38. The Leeds figures have been calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations. Those for England and Wales have been taken from B L Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (G Bell, 1915), p 84.

39. In Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire most towns offered women employment in a branch of the textile trades. Other areas, such as Bristol, Colchester and Glasgow, specialised in clothing manufacture. Domestic service predominated wherever there were few opportunities for women to work in industry. For a detailed description of women's work in different local areas, see the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix 111. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXV).

40. In Leeds over 98 per cent of indoor domestic servants were female and over 95 per cent of the workforce in engineering and in transport were male. In the building trade at least 99 per cent of the labour force were male. These percentages applied to the whole period from 1881 to 1911. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.

41. The proportion of women in the labour force of textiles and clothing increased between 1881 and 1911. See Appendix 1, Tables 1.6 and 1.8. For the importance of these two industries in the occupational structure of men and women in Leeds, see Appendix 1, Table 1.4.

42. The different tasks undertaken by men and women are discussed below, pp 110-12, 115-18.

43. This point is made in Hogg, thesis, p 9.

44. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.

45. The different tasks undertaken by men and women are discussed below, pp 108-21.

46. Occupations were grouped, for example, according to whether mineral or vegetable substances were used.

47. Murgatroyd, "Gender and Occupational Stratification", p 593.

48. Bridge, "Women's Employment", p 6, makes the point that it is important to ask what type of work women do, so that it is easier to assess whether there is a correlation between type of work and type of worker.
49. All women workers, for example, were paid low wages if their earnings were compared to those of male workers.
50. The work conditions of dressmakers and milliners are discussed in the Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. Report on the Employment of Females in Certain Trades in Leeds and Other Towns in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), and the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), pp xxiv, xxvii.
51. See the discussion below, pp 98-104.
52. Domestic service employed 1.6 per cent of the male labour force in Leeds in 1881 and 1.4 per cent in 1911. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.
53. Appendix 1, Table 1.4.
54. In 1911 household heads were instructed in the census schedules to return as occupied all female relatives who assisted in trade and business. This led to an increase in the number of women returned as employed in inn and hotel service.
55. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.
56. Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds", section 5.
57. This is mainly because the textile category, in which a large proportion of female dealers were to be found, did list makers and dealers separately between 1881 and 1911.
58. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.

59. In 1901 and 1911 details were given of the number of women who worked for employers, but the figures related to large areas of the country. In the administrative counties of the East, North and West Ridings, with their associated county boroughs, 75 per cent of women returned as dealers in textiles, 88.5 per cent of those returned as dealers in dress and 35 per cent of those returned as dealers in food worked for employers: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911 (PP 1913, LXXVIII), Table 22A. In England and Wales 87.7 per cent of women returned as dealers in textiles, 77.2 per cent of those returned as dealers in dress and 58.6 per cent of those returned as dealers in food worked for employers: L Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914 (Newton Abbot : David & Charles, 1973), Table 3D, p 208.
60. Men tended to be employed in areas of dealing where training was needed, for example as chemists and druggists, or where the stock was expensive, for example as jewellers and sellers of high quality books. Men were also employed in work that was thought to be too heavy for women, as grocers, ironmongers, fishmongers and butchers. Women were usually employed in trades which catered for female customers: Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, p 107. A A Bulley and M Whitley, Women's Work (Methuen, 1894), pp 48-50, noted that women predominated as shop assistants. However, whereas four fifths of drapery assistants were female, only one tenth of grocery assistants were women. See also Hogg, thesis, pp 49-54.
61. In 1891 women formed 6.2 per cent of all clerks in Leeds. By 1901 the proportion had increased to 16.5 per cent. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.
62. Appendix 1, Tables 1.11 and 1.12.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Bulley and Whitley, Women's Work, Chapter 1, and Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, pp 40-2.
66. The number and proportion of those employed in manufacturing must be seen as approximate only. They have been obtained by adding together all those working in industrial production, although in many cases it has not been possible to separate makers and dealers. Details of the occupational groups included in manufacturing are given in Appendix 2.

67. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.
68. C Collet, "Women's Work in Leeds", Economic Journal, 1, 3 (1891), pp 462-4, and Ward, thesis, pp 102-9.
69. Appendix 1, Table 1.5.
70. Appendix 1, Table 1.6.
71. The tasks undertaken by men and women in the textile trade are discussed below, pp 116-18.
72. Yorkshire Factory Times, 26 July 1889.
73. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations. The figures are based on the census orders introduced in 1901, but dealers have been excluded wherever possible along with hosiers and haberdashers.
74. Appendix 1, Table 1.7.
75. The tasks performed by men and women in the clothing trades are discussed below, pp 110-12.
76. In 1911 women comprised 91.3 per cent of the labour force in hat and cap making, 93.9 per cent in shirt making and 96.9 per cent in dressmaking and millinery: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.
77. Appendix 1, Table 1.9.
78. Men formed 97.9 per cent of the labour force in the metal trades in 1881 and 94.2 per cent in 1911. Of the 1,733 women employed in this sector in 1911, 1,390 were returned in the mixed category of tools, dies, arms and miscellaneous metals. 159 of these female workers were employed as bolt, nut, rivet and screw makers and 724 as gas fitting makers: Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.
79. Appendix 1, Table 1.10.

80. J R MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades (P S King, 1904), pp 44-7.
81. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881-1911, Leeds Occupations.
82. Conflicts frequently occurred over attempts to introduce women into male tasks, but once this had been accomplished men tended to leave the occupation. See the discussion of this point below, pp 173-76.
83. Physical separation between the sexes became pronounced with the development of the factory sector, since men and women worked more closely together in workshops and in domestic-based production.
84. Appendix 1, Table 1.3.
85. Appendix 1, Table 1.16.
86. Taken from the Census of England and Wales, 1911 (PP 1913, LXXVIII), Table 21.
87. These local differences are discussed in Chapter 9.
88. See, for example, D Haynes, "A Comparative Study of the Occupations of Men and Women, 1851-1911: With Special Reference to Their Mutual Displacement", Women's Industrial News, October (1915), pp 366-7, and Alexander, Davin and Hostettler, "Labouring Women", pp 175-9.
89. From his study of the census enumerators' returns for 1851, 1861 and 1871, Rushton found that women were often returned as an appendage to their husbands, for example as broker's wife or tailor's wife. In some cases they might have been helping in their husbands' work, but this was unlikely in occupational groups such as blacksmith's wife. Rushton suggests, therefore, that the practice of recording women as an appendage reflected the husband's view of domesticity and the "proper sphere of wives": P Rushton, "Anomalies as Evidence in Nineteenth-Century Censuses", Local Historian, XIII, 8 (1979), pp 485-6. Many of those interviewed in Radcliffe, Lancashire, replied in the negative when asked if their mothers had "gone out to work", but it became clear in the course of the interviews that their mothers had worked for money in casual domestic employment: J Hannam, "Radcliffe Interviews" (unpublished interviews undertaken in 1973 and 1974).

90. See, for example, the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), pp 483-4; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. Appendix XVII. Report by Miss C Williams and Mr T Jones on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment in Certain Unions in England (PP 1909, XVII), pp 128-37; M L Davies, ed. Life as We Have Known It (Virago, 1977, originally published, 1931), pp 7-8; E Roberts, "Working-Class Standards of Living in Barrow and Lancaster, 1890-1914", Economic History Review, 2nd ser, XXX, 2 (1977), p 311, shows the way in which oral interviews can reveal the extent of married women's casual wage earning.
91. Leeds Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report for 1914, p 51, and the Census of England and Wales, 1911 (PP 1913, LXXVIII), Table 22A.
92. For example, see the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), pp 507-10; E Cadbury, M C Matheson and G Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City (T Fisher Unwin, 1906), Chapter 8.
93. Board of Trade, Report by Miss Collet on the Statistics of Employment of Women and Girls (PP 1894, LXXXI), Pt 2, p 9.
94. Census of England and Wales, 1901. General Report (PP 1901, CVIII), p 78.
95. Census of England and Wales, 1911. General Report (PP 1917, XXXV), p 151.
96. See, for example, the Board of Trade, Report by Miss Collet on the Statistics of Employment of Women and Girls (PP 1894, LXXXI), Pt 1, p 7.
97. P Stearns, "Working-Class Women in England, 1890-1914", in M Vicinus, ed. Suffer and Be Still (Methuen, 1980), p 113.
98. L A Tilly and J W Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), pp 194-205; see also T M McBride, "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization", in R Bridenthal and C Koonz, eds. Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp 290-3.
99. Stearns argues, for example, that "the working-class wife was not

supposed to work, at least outside the home ... to do so would offend her husband's manhood": Stearns, "Working-Class Women", p 113. See also P Branca, Women in Europe since 1750 (Croom Helm, 1978), p 51.

100. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
101. See Table 1.2 above, p 50. In the 1890s only 3,000 women were added to the labour force working in dress, and the number of women in textiles fell by 2,000.
102. See Table 1.3 above, p 52.
103. Appendix 1, Table 1.1.
104. Appendix 1, Table 1.17.
105. Appendix 1, Table 1.14.
106. For a more detailed discussion of local variations, see below, pp 428-38.
107. Contemporaries also recognised the need to analyse the extent and type of married women's work in its local context. For example, see B L Hutchins, "Statistics of Women's Life and Employment", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXXII, 2 (1909), p 222.
108. Appendix 1, Table 1.13.
109. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.
110. Appendix 1, Table 1.14.
111. Single women could be found as homeworkers in Leeds. But there were usually special reasons for this, such as ill health or the need to care for elderly relatives. For examples of such workers, see I O Ford, "Women Workers in the Wholesale Clothing Trade", Englishwoman, 11, 6 (1909), p 640, and Y.F.T., 25 October 1889.

112. Appendix 1, Table 1.14.
113. Appendix 1, Tables 1.14 and 1.16.
114. Appendix 1, Tables 1.14 and 1.15.
115. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
116. Appendix 1, Table 1.17.
117. In indoor domestic service 90.6 per cent of female workers were unmarried in 1901 and 88.7 per cent in 1911. In 1901 44.1 per cent of indoor domestic servants were aged over 25 and this had risen to 48.5 per cent by 1911: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
118. The proportion of milliners and dressmakers aged under 25 rose from 53.6 per cent in 1901 to 60.6 per cent in 1911: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
119. See the discussion in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 2THE ORGANISATION OF WOMEN'S WORK AND THE SEX DIVISION
OF LABOUR IN LEEDS, 1880-1914

This chapter examines the changes which took place in the way in which work was organised and in the sex division of labour in Leeds between 1880 and 1914. The first part of the chapter discusses the way in which women's industrial work in Leeds was organised and the changes which took place over time. It suggests that this had important implications for the conditions under which women were employed, for their experience of work and for the age and sex structure of the labour force in specific industries.¹ The second part describes the way in which tasks were divided along lines of sex in those occupations which were important for female employment. The sex division of labour in broad occupational groups in Leeds has already been described in Chapter 1. The present chapter seeks to demonstrate further the extent of the sex division of labour by looking in greater detail at the tasks performed by men and women in specific industries and by placing this in the context of changes in the organisation of work.

The Organisation of Women's Work

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, with the exception of those employed in the textile trade, the majority of female workers in England and Wales worked for wages in a domestic setting.² They were largely employed in domestic service or in industrial work which was carried out in small workshops and in the home.³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century, opportunities for women's work developed in new

factory industries and in "white-blouse" occupations which meant a slight reduction in the importance of indoor domestic service and domestic manufacture as areas of female employment.⁴

By 1880, the majority of female workers in Leeds were employed in some form of industrial work, in particular in the textile and clothing trades, and the manufacturing sector remained the most important area of women's work up to 1914.⁵ From the mid-1880s, however, significant changes took place in the way in which this work was organised as factory methods of production were adopted across a range of industries. By the outbreak of war, therefore, the majority of women employed in industry in Leeds worked outside the home in factories and in large workshops.⁶

At the beginning of the period there was considerable variation in the organisation and location of women's work. Factory employment was available for women in the textile trade which employed 12,000 female workers by 1881.⁷ Flax and linen manufacture were important branches of the textile trade in the 1860s and 1870s and the units of production were particularly large. The average flax spinning mill had 630 workers in the 1860s, although the famous Marshall mill had 2,700 workpeople.⁸ By 1880, however, flax spinning was in decline and its demise was symbolised by the closure of Marshall's mill in 1886.⁹ By 1913, only 749 workers were employed in the flax and linen trade and they were largely engaged in the spinning and manufacture of the heavier types of linen goods such as canvas and sheetings.¹⁰

The wool and worsted trades, however, were the most important branches of textile manufacture in Leeds, both before and after 1880.¹¹ They are usually bracketed together in accounts of the development of the industry, but each branch had its own distinct processes and the mills were organised according to different principles. The finished product of the two trades had a distinct appearance. Woollen cloth showed no web or woven character but appeared as a fine fur, whereas in worsted cloth the threads were clearly visible.¹² This varied end product resulted from differences in the preparatory stages. Yarn for woollens was spun from short lengths of wool which had to be carded, whereas worsted material was spun from longer wool which had to be combed.¹³

Mills engaged in wool production usually combined all processes, from the preparation of the yarn to the production of the finished cloth, under one roof. Dyeing tended to be a specialised area and only the largest firms had their own dyehouses.¹⁴ Firms in the worsted trade, however, tended to specialise in either spinning or weaving.¹⁵ Worsted mills were larger than their counterparts in the woollen trade. Taking very general returns from the West Riding, J H Clapham estimated that the average number of people in a woollen spinning department was only 22 in 1901 compared with 140 in a worsted spinning department, while in weaving the numbers were 50 and 196 respectively. He concluded that the "typical woollen mill which both spins and weaves employs about half as many hands in these processes as the average worsted spinning mill or department."¹⁶

It must be emphasised, however, that these are generalisations about

the trade as a whole in the West Riding and that there were variations both over time and in different localities in the type of goods produced and in the size and organisation of mills. Bradford, for example, was the centre for the production of worsted cloth for women's clothing and for the associated processes of wool combing and yarn spinning, whereas Huddersfield produced fine quality woollens and some fine worsteds for men's suitings.¹⁷ These variations make it particularly misleading to use evidence from one area as if it applied to all districts in the West Riding, since the sex division of labour, wages and conditions of work varied extensively from one town to another.

At the beginning of the period it was the woollen trade that predominated in Leeds and the worsted industry was almost non-existent.¹⁸ Leeds specialised in plain cloth weaving in the 1880s, but, faced with tariff barriers and foreign competition, employers turned increasingly to the production of cheap cloths for the home or protected imperial markets.¹⁹ In Leeds manufacturers had a particular incentive to change because of the growing demand from the expanding ready-made clothing industry.²⁰ At the same time, the worsted trade also experienced a revival in the 1890s with the demand for light worsted cloth for men's suits. Leeds concentrated at first on the weaving branch of the industry, but by the late 1890s yarn spinning "had developed on a large scale".²¹ The revival in the wool and worsted trade was largely carried out by a new generation of employers and by 1900 only one firm had survived from the first generation of cloth manufacturers.²² Before the outbreak of war Leeds had come to excel in the manufacture of plain wool dyed cloth, pure new wool for expensive bespoke suitings, serges (worsted)

for wholesale clothing and union cloths made from the cheapest materials, usually reconstituted wool (shoddy and mungo). This in turn increased the number of rag sorting and grinding mills in the city.²³

A particular feature of the wool and worsted industry as it developed in Leeds during this period was the increased combination of all processes within the same mill in both branches of the trade and the growing size of the average concern. In the early twentieth century Leeds had a higher proportion of firms combining both weaving and spinning than in other local areas.

Table 2.1 Wool and Worsted Firms in Selected Yorkshire Towns²⁴

| | <u>Spinning</u> | <u>% of Total</u> in each Town | <u>Weaving</u> | <u>% of Total</u> in each Town | <u>Combined</u> | <u>% of Total</u> in each Town | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Bradford | 65 | 30.4 | 127 | 59.3 | 22 | 10.3 | 214 |
| Halifax | 22 | 48.0 | 20 | 43.4 | 4 | 8.6 | 46 |
| Huddersfield | 42 | 30.4 | 39 | 28.3 | 57 | 41.3 | 138 |
| Leeds | 17 | 9.3 | 51 | 27.9 | 115 | 62.8 | 183 |
| Other Towns | 99 | 31.2 | 95 | 30.0 | 125 | 38.8 | 317 |
| Total | 245 | 27.3 | 332 | 36.9 | 321 | 35.8 | 898 |

As the clothing trade increasingly demanded mixed cloths, more firms in Leeds combined wool and worsted manufacture within the same mill.²⁵

Female textile workers, therefore, could be found in very large mills employing over 1,000 workpeople, notably in worsted manufacture, or in

very small wool commission shops with between 50 and 60 workers.²⁶ Overall, however, the number of individual firms declined during the period, while the average size of mills in Leeds grew and was higher than for the West Riding as a whole.²⁷ A smaller number of mills employing a relatively stable workforce still produced more yarn and cloth in 1914 than in the mid-nineteenth century with the aid of improved machinery.²⁸ Few major innovations were introduced, however, except in the subsidiary processes, and increased production was largely achieved by the speeding up of existing machinery and by the attempts to make the workforce take on more tasks.²⁹

Outside the textile trade the majority of female industrial workers were employed in small workshops or in home-based manufacture in some branch of the clothing industry.³⁰ The largest number of female clothing workers in the early 1880s were employed in dressmaking and millinery and they worked in small workshops attached to retail outlets or in the homes of private dressmakers.³¹ A proportion of the workforce "lived in" on the employer's premises, but the majority obtained work on a daily basis according to seasonal demand.³² A smaller number of women worked in boot and shoe making or in tailoring, where they frequently assisted male relatives in the manufacture of bespoke goods.³³ Women who worked for male relatives were not always fully listed in the census returns and therefore it is likely that the occupational tables underestimated the extent to which women were already employed in tailoring and in boot and shoe making in this early period.³⁴ Male tailors working in first class shops, for example, frequently complained that skilled men used cheap female labour to complete the less skilled

processes. Later in the period, however, their complaints were directed more forcefully against the competition of Jewish immigrants.³⁵

Most of the clothing produced before the 1880s was made to order for individual customers and linked to specific retail outlets, but as early as the 1860s a number of firms were established to produce men's clothing, footwear and hats for wholesale.³⁶ In this period firms laid down the basic organisation of production that came to predominate in the ready-made clothing trade in Leeds during and after the expansion of the mid 1880s.³⁷ Material was cut out on the employer's premises, machined by inside workers and then the finishing and some machining was given to outworkers employed either in workshops or in their own homes.

Messrs Hyam & Co, for example, wholesale tailors, employed 30 workers on the premises in the 1860s and a further 200 male, female and child outworkers.³⁸ John Barran, wholesale clothier, had 50 females on the premises as well as 300 female outworkers and established the link between wholesale clothiers and Jewish workshops which formed an important feature of the Leeds ready-made tailoring trade in later years.³⁹ Although the size of most of these units was small, and they were still largely run on workshop lines, 21 wholesale clothiers were already listed in the Leeds Directory for 1881 and among them were the firms that were to lead the trade, both locally and nationally, in subsequent years.⁴⁰

The greatest change in female employment in Leeds came after the mid 1880s, with the introduction of factory methods of production in a range of consumer-goods industries. Ready-made tailoring was by far

the most important of these in offering increased employment to women workers.⁴¹ The most rapid growth in the trade occurred in the late 1880s and early 1890s when large factories using steam power to run the bandknives and the sewing machines were established.⁴² They were characterised by an extreme subdivision of labour and made extensive use of workshop and home workers as well as women employed on the premises. This pattern of work was also common in hat and cap making and, in a slightly later period, in boot and shoe manufacture.⁴³

Although different methods of production existed side by side in the ready-made clothing industry, it was the factory which came to predominate, and which characterised the industry in Leeds. In the late 1880s the boom in ready-made tailoring took a number of forms. Existing workshops were transformed into factories by the application of steam power or wholesale clothiers took over existing textile mills.⁴⁴ The most famous example of this was when Messrs Rhodes & Co acquired Marshall's flax spinning mill.⁴⁵ Smaller concerns leased space in older mills and factories and one local newspaper noted that "repainted signs, newly furnished warehouse facades, tell of smaller ventures helping to swell the increasing volume of trade".⁴⁶ The most important development, however, was the extension of existing premises and the building of new factories. Joseph Hepworth started with six sewing machines in Wortley in 1867, took larger premises for 300 workers in 1884 and by 1891 had built a new factory with a capacity for 2,000 workpeople.⁴⁷ Capital was attracted from outside Leeds and many Glasgow firms set up branches in the city in the 1880s.⁴⁸ Between 1887 and 1891 35 new factories were established, making a total of 54

factories by the latter date.⁴⁹

The purpose-built factories were five or six storeys high and were usually designed in a distinctive style termed "Renaissance" or Italian in the local press. One local newspaper wrote in typical prose that, "built in the Italian style and towering to the extent of six storeys, the premises of Messrs Arthur & Co are at once commodious and attractive ... anyone must be forgiven if he mistook the building for the palatial residence of some plutocrat who had found life worth living in the midst of a densely crowded population".⁵⁰ The size of these firms varied considerably, but the trade was dominated by a handful of large concerns which employed over 1,000 workpeople. By 1888 there were already 25 firms with between 100 and 1,500 workers.⁵¹ The pace of expansion slowed after the early 1890s, but new factories continued to be built and older ones extended, so that by 1914 there were 100 wholesale clothiers and 15 clothing manufacturers.⁵²

Most of the earlier factories were clustered in the central Park Lane area of the city, but after the mid 1890s it became more common for firms to build one storey factories in the suburbs to take advantage of greater space, new methods of layout and organisation and increased automation.⁵³ The later building of new premises did not always mean that a firm was expanding, however, but could reflect new ways of arranging production. As factory owners produced a wider range of goods to cater for specific orders from retailers, whether for ready-made or wholesale bespoke goods, so the need for large warehouses with storage space declined, and therefore manufacturers sought a

different type of premises.⁵⁴

Leeds firms specialised in the manufacture of men's and boys' clothing and shared similar methods of production, but the leading firms had their own characteristics in the ways in which work was subdivided, the style and quality of clothing produced and the type of market that they aimed for.⁵⁵ Marketing methods, for example, were diverse. Joseph Hepworth was nationally famous for setting up a chain of retail shops and for the inventive use of advertising, whereas John Barran and David Little obtained orders through travellers who took samples to retailers as well as having showrooms on their premises.⁵⁶

In ready-made tailoring factories only a small number of processes were mechanised in the first few years and the extent to which new machinery was introduced varied between different firms. Most firms used power-driven cutting and sewing machines, but the finishing work was mainly completed by hand, with only the largest firms installing buttonholing machines.⁵⁷ By the early twentieth century, however, the finishing process was highly mechanised in the larger firms which used the latest quilting, collar padding, fine quality buttonholing and buttoning machines.⁵⁸ In the 1880s gas irons were used for pressing and these enabled workers to regulate the heat more easily. During the course of the period the larger firms introduced the Hoffman press, which considerably lightened the work.⁵⁹ Apart from the introduction of new or faster machinery, the other major change in the period was the development of wholesale bespoke production within the factories. "Specials", the making up of individual orders for retailers within the factories, formed an increasingly important part of the Leeds trade

after 1900 as the demand grew for better quality, well fitting clothes. Although ready-mades continued to be important for the export and cheaper domestic trade, the growth of "specials" was described as "at a peak" in 1911 and the leading firms combined both ready-made and wholesale bespoke departments in their factories.⁶⁰

Men's tailoring remained at the centre of the Leeds ready-made clothing trade, but a number of firms established factories in the early twentieth century to produce women's costumes and mantles and men's shirts.⁶¹ In the years preceding the First World War there was some reduction in the demand for heavy winter coats, which had always been a speciality of the Leeds trade, and therefore manufacturers turned to the production of motoring and travelling coats as well as to sportswear in order to fill the gap.⁶²

After the early 1880s other branches of clothing manufacture also adopted factory methods of production, although they employed a smaller number and proportion of the female labour force than the tailoring trade. The system of production in hat and cap manufacture was similar to that used in ready-made tailoring, with materials being cut by a handknife and then machine-sewn in the factory.⁶³ A minority of firms in boot and shoe making produced ready-made footwear for wholesale as early as the 1870s. They employed men to cut, trim and finish boots, girls to operate the sewing machines and boys to operate the rivetting machines on the premises, but the bulk of the work was still completed in small workshops or in the workers' own homes.⁶⁴ During the 1880s more processes became mechanised and were completed in factories, although

half the workforce employed in the trade were thought to be outside workers.⁶⁵ It was only in the 1900s, following a period of prosperity in the trade, that the majority of boot and shoe workers in Leeds were finally employed within factories.⁶⁶ Leeds specialised in the manufacture of heavy work boots for the industrial working class, but many firms were bankrupted in the early twentieth century as the nature of working-class demand changed.⁶⁷ Firms which did try to adapt by catering for the demand for lighter footwear faced fierce competition from long-established centres of the trade, and by 1911 the labour force employed in boot and shoe making in Leeds had dropped to just over 5,500.⁶⁸

Factory employment for women also increased in a variety of trades outside the clothing industry, in particular in paper bag and box making, printing, bookbinding, light engineering and food production. The number of women employed in these trades was small, however, compared with the clothing and textile industries.⁶⁹ Large printing firms using the latest machinery were established in the 1880s to produce standardised goods for a mass market. The Crown Point printing works specialised in wallpapers and E J Arnold achieved a national reputation for school stationery.⁷⁰ The Whitehall Printeries, run by Messrs Petty & Son, were already mechanised by 1888 and used machines for letterpressing, cutting, power punching, power stitching, eyeletting, ruling, paging, perforating and varnishing.⁷¹ They came to specialise in fashion printing, posters, catalogues, books and leaflets to advertise Leeds clothing and were described as "equipped with the latest labour saving, quick running machinery".⁷² Cardboard boxes and paper bags were also increasingly made by machinery which accounted for 75 per cent of

the production of paper bags by 1913.⁷³

Large factories were also established for food production in the 1880s. Messrs Brownhill & Sons factory occupied 10,000 square feet and produced sweets, dry soap, baking power, blues and various types of feculina, while Messrs Goodhall, Backhouse & Co employed 400 workers in the 1890s and were famous for their Yorkshire relish.⁷⁴ Again, most processes were extensively mechanised; Septimus Smith, a jam manufacturer of Bramley, had a three storey factory with eight sets of boiling pans, cutting and straining machines which were capable of producing 15 tons of jam a day.⁷⁵ A more traditional area of female employment, laundry work, was also increasingly organised on a factory basis during the 1890s and the size of the average unit of production grew larger.⁷⁶

From the 1880s, therefore, factory methods of production developed in all the manufacturing areas in which women were employed in Leeds. This led to an increase in the size of the work unit in which women were involved and to a tendency for young female workers to be employed outside the home, rather than in domestic workshop production or in their own homes. It also led to a change in the number and proportion of women employed in specific industries which in itself affected the age and marital status of the female labour force.⁷⁷ In the tailoring trade the number and proportion of women in the labour force increased and there was a decisive shift from home to factory production. Similarly, in the paper, printing and light engineering trades the establishment of large factories using the latest machinery tended to expand the number and proportion of women in these trades, often

introducing them to these areas of work for the first time. In boot and shoe manufacture, however, mechanisation and factory methods of production did not necessarily mean an expansion of female employment or an increase in the proportion of women in the labour force, but provided a new setting for their work.⁷⁸ Where a trade was already largely in female hands, for example laundry work and dressmaking, the introduction of factory methods could increase both the number and the proportion of male workers in the trade.⁷⁹ The relationship between mechanisation and the sex and age structure of the labour force, along with the consequences of increased factory methods of production for conditions of employment, are fully discussed later in the study.⁸⁰

Emphasis has been given so far to the increasing prevalence of factory work for women in Leeds, but the clothing industry in particular was still characterised by the variety of its production methods, and both workshop production and homework remained widespread in 1914. Indeed, the initial growth of factories in ready-made tailoring stimulated the expansion of outworking with factory, workshop and home workers all specialising to some degree in different branches of the trade.⁸¹

Garments were normally cut out within the factories and trousers, juvenile clothing and some waistcoats were machined and finished by inside workers. Surplus work, in particular in finishing, was also given out to women working in their own homes. Coatmaking, however, was largely subcontracted to Jewish workshops, but, by the twentieth century, some factories employed women inside the premises on the simpler and lighter coats.⁸²

The Jews, who entered Leeds in large numbers in the mid 1880s and early 1890s, were mainly employed in men's tailoring and monopolised the making of coats. Jewish workshops developed a system of sub-division for coat making which cheapened production costs, despite the use of a high proportion of male labour.⁸³ It is difficult to determine the precise number and size of Jewish workshops, since the smaller ones, often based on an employer's own bedroom, were constantly changing hands and remained undetected by inspectors. R H Rickards, the local factory inspector, estimated that there were at least 1,000 workers in such domestic establishments who rarely appeared in official statistics.⁸⁴ The numbers employed also varied according to the seasons, which again affected returns to local authorities. Bearing these difficulties in mind, however, there appear to have been at least 64 Jewish workshops in 1888 employing between 2,000 and 3,000 workpeople.⁸⁵ By 1891, Clara Collet estimated that there were 2,000 women alone in Jewish workshops and, by 1893, found 2,600 workpeople in 98 Jewish workshops, 1,155 of whom were female.⁸⁶ This suggests that the number of women had declined from the peak years of 1888-91, reflecting the increasing opportunities for factory employment, but it may also have been due to the slackness of trade which was reported at the time of the investigation.⁸⁷

It does not appear that the number of workers employed in Jewish workshops declined over the period, despite the attempts by some employers to establish coat making departments within the factories.⁸⁸ By 1903 the secretary of the Jewish Tailors' Union estimated that there were 1,700 alien workmen in the trade, and if the ratio of men to women were

equivalent to that of the 1890s there must have been approximately 3,500 workers in the Jewish sector.⁸⁹ On the other hand, the improved quality of machine work in the factories meant a decreased demand for the services of the Jewish workshop in the early twentieth century.⁹⁰ Those workshops which survived were increasingly used to bear the brunt of the slack seasons and many turned to the bespoke sector in order to make a living, where they competed with the English tailor.⁹¹

An important characteristic of the Leeds Jewish workshop was its size which contemporaries agreed was larger than in the other centres of Jewish tailoring such as Manchester and London. It was estimated that, in the late 1880s, a workshop with 10 or 12 machines was considered large in London, whereas the average was 20 to 30 in Leeds.⁹² Clara Collet confirmed this impression for, after omitting workshops with less than 10 employees, she found that out of 44 workshops, 18 employed over 40 workers, 14 had 25 - 40 workpeople, while 10 had between 10 and 25 employees.⁹³ The large size of Jewish workshops should not, however, be overstressed. Using the list of 57 workshops compiled by the Leeds local authority, Buckman suggests that the mean size of the workforce in each shop fell between 22.96 and 33.4 workers and that the list itself should not be seen as comprehensive.⁹⁴ Collet's figures also give a misleading impression, since they omitted workshops with less than 10 workers, and it has already been noted that the large number of small "bedroom" workshops were rarely included in any official lists.⁹⁵

The prevalence of the factory system in Leeds has led many secondary sources to dismiss homework as unimportant in the city. A J Taylor

asserts that by the 1880s and 1890s factory owners had dispensed with outwork, while Joan Thomas claims that "the outworker had virtually disappeared by 1914".⁹⁶ A cursory glance at the sources, however, indicates that homework, while not the basis of the trade in Leeds, was still important for the growth of the ready-made tailoring industry and remained widespread up to 1914.

Homeworkers were not separately listed in census figures and therefore it is difficult to give an accurate picture of the numbers involved, in particular as they fluctuated throughout the year.⁹⁷ It is clear, however, that they were vital for the development of ready-made tailoring in the years of most rapid expansion between 1888 and 1891, since manufacturers needed homeworkers to enable them to keep pace with the increased production from the power-driven sewing machines at a time when finishing was still largely done by hand.⁹⁸ Homeworkers were convenient for employers who were waiting to enlarge their premises or for those who did not wish to do so, since they could be used at the busy season, or at times of strike action, and then dispensed with at little cost once the work was completed.⁹⁹

In 1889 Messrs Arthur & Co had 150 female homeworkers who represented one tenth of the total labour force, and it was estimated in the local press that one seventh to one eighth of all ready-made tailoring workers in the late 1880s were employed at home.¹⁰⁰ Once the heady expansion was over and the quality of factory produced clothing improved, the larger firms concentrated their work inside the factory so that it could be more closely supervised and also in order to take advantage of

the increased productivity of new finishing machinery.¹⁰¹ Smaller firms continued, however, to use homeworkers extensively, since they still relied on being able to expand and to contract their labour force at the least possible expense.¹⁰² The returns sent by employers to the Leeds medical officer of health listed 2,120 homeworkers in 1914.¹⁰³ Some of these workers were listed twice, because employers had to send in returns on two occasions in the year, but overall the lists tended to underestimate the number of homeworkers in the city. A large number of small employers failed to complete the lists and one name could represent the work of several family members.¹⁰⁴ It can be suggested, therefore, that while the number of homeworkers may have declined from the peak demand of the 1880s, they had not "virtually disappeared" by 1914.

The Sex Division of Labour

Most tasks within industry were divided along lines of sex during the period 1880 to 1914. Men and women not only worked in distinct tasks, but were also divided by their position within the occupational hierarchy, with men predominating in skilled or supervisory work. There is little evidence that the degree of job segregation by sex was any less in 1914 than it had been in 1880, but the growth of mechanisation and changes in the organisation of work led to a shift in the distribution of labour power and skill and to a re-arrangement of the subdivision of labour.¹⁰⁵ The development of factory methods of production in particular had important implications for the sex division of labour within industry and for the extent and type of work in which women were employed, although the effects were complex. The simplification

of tasks by the introduction of machinery or subdivisional methods did lead to an expansion of work opportunities for women in some industries, although it could mean the displacement of female hand workers in others.¹⁰⁶ In the predominantly female trades of dressmaking and laundry work mechanisation tended to increase the number and proportion of men in the occupation.¹⁰⁷

There were constant shifts, therefore, in the type of work carried out by both sexes in the period under review. In a number of processes the lines between the sexes were not precisely drawn and there was often a blurring of tasks between women workers and boys and between female workers and male immigrants.¹⁰⁸ The sex segregation of tasks in manufacturing tended to conform to a common pattern throughout the country, but there were a number of local variations in the way in which tasks were divided by sex, in particular in more mixed-sex occupations, and also in the pace at which change was introduced over time.¹⁰⁹ It is important, therefore, to examine the degree of job segregation by sex, and the effects of mechanisation and factory production on the sex division of labour, in the context of the specific features of individual industries in particular local areas.¹¹⁰

In Leeds the development of ready-made tailoring and the growth of factory production went hand in hand with an increased employment of women, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the local labour force.¹¹¹ Only some processes of production were mechanised, but tasks were also simplified by an extreme subdivision of labour which opened up work for women. Female workers predominated in the factories. In

the early 1890s Barran's had 320 male and 1,120 female workers, Gaunt & Hudson's had 50 men and 450 women and Bainbridge's had 60 male and 240 female workers.¹¹² Men and women usually worked in distinct tasks and were physically separated in the larger factories within their own departments.¹¹³

Men predominated in supervisory work as foremen or passers of inside and outside work and were employed in a number of miscellaneous tasks which included matching up suits, labouring in the warehouse, office work and travelling to obtain orders.¹¹⁴ The most important areas of male employment, however, were cutting and pressing. Cutting was revolutionised in the 1860s by the use of bandknives which could cut through several layers of cloth at once.¹¹⁵ Skill was still needed for many tasks in the cutting room, including measuring out the patterns and laying them on the cloth, but the work was more subdivided than in the bespoke section of the trade and many men were only competent in one aspect of cutting.¹¹⁶ There were also many simple tasks to be carried out, including dividing the cuttings as they came from the machines, trimming the edges and cutting out small items such as collars, and these were usually completed by boys and lads.¹¹⁷ Women were not introduced to the simpler processes until there was a shortage of male labour during the First World War and the cutting room remained a male stronghold throughout the period.¹¹⁸

Pressing, on the other hand, did not remain a male monopoly. Hand pressing was considered to be heavy and laborious rather than skilled work and women were often used to operate the gas irons or to complete

part of a garment, such as the flattening of obtrusive seams, while men pressed the finished product.¹¹⁹ The introduction of the Hoffman press, which made the work far lighter, increased the number and proportion of women employed in pressing and by 1914, 90 per cent of the pressers working for John Barran were female.¹²⁰

Most female factory workers were employed either as sewing machinists or as finishers, with machinists slightly in the majority.¹²¹ Both processes were extremely subdivided, although the extent of this varied between firms. Tasks involved in finishing trousers and vests, for example, could include pocket making, canvassing, seaming, paring, binding and felling.¹²² Women sat at long tables to carry out these tasks, which were usually completed by hand, and they were often trained in only one process.¹²³ Larger firms increasingly employed a small number of women to pack the finished goods, to write and affix ticket labels and to do secretarial work in the general office.¹²⁴

In contrast to the factories, Jewish workshops employed a more equal proportion of the sexes.¹²⁵ Men and women worked closely together in workshops which ranged in size from less than 10 to over 60 workpeople.¹²⁶ Jewish workshops specialised in making up coats which had already been cut out by the wholesaler and tasks could be as subdivided as in the factories.¹²⁷ A single coat could pass through the hands of a machinist, an underpresser, a tailor and a further machinist to be pieced up before being handed on to the lining maker. The lining was completed before it was put into the garment which was then stitched together and made ready to go to the presser. The final process was

the finishing, which was carried out by female workers such as fellers, buttonholers and binders, before the completed garment was ready for the warehouse.¹²⁸ All these tasks could be further subdivided; for example, there were separate machinists for sleeves, linings and collars, while pressing involved under-pressers and pressers off.¹²⁹

The sex division of labour was more complex in the workshops than in the factories. Men worked as fitters, pressers and tailors, who had sometimes served an apprenticeship.¹³⁰ Pressers frequently hired their own assistants, who tended to be poorly trained recent immigrants, and worked in several different workshops.¹³¹ Women monopolised the finishing processes as buttoners, fellers and buttonholers and were employed as machinists. In contrast to the factories, men also worked as machinists, but rarely carried out exactly the same work as women. Female workers were given the lighter and simpler work to machine, while men did the heavier machining that was a feature of the coat making section of the trade.¹³² There was some blurring of work between the sexes when male "greeners" took on low paid machining or pressing tasks, but men saw this as a way to learn the trade and hoped to progress to better paid employment.¹³³ In some processes of hand tailoring, however, employers constantly attempted to introduce female labour which was a cause of conflict between the sexes during the period.¹³⁴

There was also a division of labour between Jewish and non-Jewish women in the workshops, although this was less rigid than in the case of sex divisions. Although few Christian men were employed in Jewish workshops, the employment of non-Jewish women was extensive, and Clara Collet found

that they monopolised machining and general finishing.

Table 2.2 The Number of Jewish and Non-Jewish Women Employed in Selected Tasks in 52 Leeds Jewish Workshops in 1892¹³⁵

| <u>Occupations</u> | <u>Jewish Women</u> | <u>Non-Jewish Women</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Buttonholers | 257 | 42 |
| Fellers | 238 | 64 |
| Finishers | 15 | 109 |
| Machinists | 1 | 118 |

John Burnett, labour correspondent for the Board of Trade, explained this division on the grounds that Jewesses could not afford to enter work which required lengthy training and therefore had to take up sections of the trade where they could earn reasonable wages immediately.¹³⁶

The introduction of mechanisation and factory production into boot and shoe manufacture did not substantially alter the proportion of women in the Leeds trade and the number of male workers remained high, both inside and outside the factory.¹³⁷ Men worked as "clickers" in the factories, hand cutting leather to the correct shape for the uppers, as sole cutters, using machinery, as rivetters who put the sole and uppers together and as finishers, cutting away superfluties and blackening and polishing the edges. Boys operated machines for cutting out eyelets, while girls were used to machine the uppers together.¹³⁸ Many of these processes required hand labour, skill and strength to manipulate the material, and the predominance of men can be related to the fact that

Leeds specialised in the heaviest kind of work boot.¹³⁹ Women were most frequently employed in footwear which used lighter materials, such as slippers, where they completed all the processes including cutting out, pasting the material on to linings, machining the patterns and decorating them with beads.¹⁴⁰

The number and proportion of women employed in newer areas of industrial work expanded during the period. This was usually related to a change in the type of goods produced which was often accompanied by the introduction of machinery. The biggest factories established in printing, food production and light engineering used machinery so extensively, however, that the number of workers employed was not necessarily large. In 1888 E J Arnold, one of the leading stationery firms, employed 130 workers, while the four or five jam factories in Leeds employed only 300 to 400 workers between them.¹⁴¹ In the printing trade new machines could initially mean the displacement of female hand workers, but the demand for cheap printed material was so great that, overall, there was more work for women in the trade.¹⁴² In all these industries women were most frequently employed in tasks that were ancillary to the main productive process, such as packing, sorting and folding the finished materials, or else in feeding largely self-acting machinery.¹⁴³

In the printing trade the sex division of labour was a rigid one, but was always subject to change, since many processes were light, did not require a long apprenticeship and were therefore considered to be suitable for women.¹⁴⁴ The tasks carried out by women varied

considerably according to the size of the firm and the type of goods produced, but they invariably folded and packed the finished product and were employed on feeding machinery.¹⁴⁵ In one firm of printers and bookbinders in Leeds women folded paper by hand, carried out hand and machine sewing, fed the perforating machine and put covers on cheap novels. Small girls were employed to feed the ruling machines, to punch labels and to do packing.¹⁴⁶ Women could be found in the same work as boys in the paper and printing trades, but, as in textiles, boys expected to progress to more interesting and better paid work, whereas women did not.¹⁴⁷ Overall, women's jobs in the newer industries were light, often monotonous and the trades provided few opportunities for an advance in skill, in interest or in wages.¹⁴⁸

Of all the industries employing women in Leeds, the textile trade had the most complex division of labour between the sexes which could vary according to the type of cloth produced, the range of skill necessary and the locality. Some tasks were invariably carried out by one sex throughout the West Riding, but others were male jobs in one area and female jobs in another, or else were carried out by both sexes simultaneously.¹⁴⁹ The textile trade was already organised along factory lines at the start of the period. The further mechanisation of some subsidiary processes after 1880 did affect the employment of women, but the increase in the proportion of women employed during the period was related more to the reorganisation of work, or direct substitution for male labour, than to the introduction of new machinery.¹⁵⁰ The shifts in the proportion of women employed and in the tasks that they performed took place, however, at a different pace according to

locality and met with a varied response from the labour force.¹⁵¹

In Leeds the proportion of women employed in the wool and worsted labour force did increase through the period. This was partly affected by changes in the type of work carried out; the growth of the worsted trade meant more work for women, since they were extensively employed in the spinning as well as in the weaving departments, while the development of more rag sorting and shoddy mills, which relied heavily on female labour, also increased the opportunities for women's work.¹⁵² The growing proportion of women in the textile labour force was also affected, however, by the disinclination of men to enter weaving. The number of male weavers was already declining by the early 1880s, but this was related more closely to the expanding work opportunities for men (in building, transport and engineering) than to cheap female competition.¹⁵³ This contrasted with towns such as Huddersfield where weaving remained an important occupation for men, and where the substitution of female labour became a point of bitter conflict between the sexes in the 1890s.¹⁵⁴

Many tasks within the textile trade remained sex specific throughout the period, but in a minority of occupations the sex lines became increasingly blurred, in particular between female and boy labour, while a number of tasks were carried out by women in one area and by men in another.

When they first started work, girls and boys might be employed on separate tasks, such as winding for girls and reaching-in for boys, or they might be employed in the same work, for example as doffers in the worsted trade.¹⁵⁵ Female labour was also increasingly used in tasks

such as piecing which had formerly been carried out largely by boys.¹⁵⁶ There was a difference, however, in the expectations of both sexes. Boys intended to progress to higher paid and more skilled work in the mill. Girls also hoped to move out of low paid work, but their adult occupations were different from, and narrower in scope than, those available to boys who would leave the trade rather than remain on low wages.¹⁵⁷

In the manufacture of woollen cloth men were largely involved in preparing the wool for the spinners. They sorted the raw wool into different qualities, cleaned it by scouring and willeying, carried out the dyeing and then teased and carded the fibres ready for spinning.¹⁵⁸ Only a small number of women were employed at this stage, either as rag sorters, as assistants to male workers or as machine minders. In the carding and condensing process, for example, the introduction of machinery reduced the number of women needed and changed the character of their work. According to G H Wood:

One woman tends two or three of these machines, her work being to feed the scribblers and mind the condensers, and sweep the floor which gets rapidly covered with fluff. In charge of a group of these machines are two men, the scribblers and fettlers, whose work is from time to time to clean off the cylinders the large quantities of fluff which are entangled and to do any other jobs requiring strength.¹⁵⁹

Wool spinning was carried out by men with the help of female or boy piecers. In the subsequent preparation of the yarn for warp, which involved twisting and doubling for added strength, women could be

found as doublers, fancy twistlers, warpers and winders, while men did the more skilled work of beaming, although they also worked as warpers in some districts.¹⁶⁰ Most of the finishing processes were in male hands, although women were employed as burlers and knotters to remove the lumps and knots, or as menders to repair flaws in the cloth. Mending was one of the more skilled tasks open to women and paid higher wages than other female work.¹⁶¹

The processes of manufacture and the sex division of labour in the making of worsted cloth were similar to that in the woollen trade, although there were differences in the preparatory stages which affected the way in which tasks were divided along sex lines. Wool combing was distinctive to the worsted trade and was largely confined to Bradford, employing women during the day and men at night.¹⁶² Worsted spinning was carried out on lighter frames than in the woollen trade and employed largely young girls.¹⁶³ Weaving was the one occupation in which men and women could be found in similar work in the same mill, although the extent to which men were employed depended on the locality and the type of goods produced. Women predominated in worsted weaving, for example, with its lighter materials and narrow looms, although men were employed in the fine worsted trade of Huddersfield.¹⁶⁴

The structure of employment in particular mills depended largely on the type of work being carried out and the size of the concern. The largest number of female workers were found in weaving, followed by the various spinning processes, with much smaller numbers involved in the preparatory and finishing work. This was reflected in the

proportion of a firm's workforce engaged in each process.¹⁶⁵ Firms which concentrated on bleaching, dyeing, finishing or wool spinning employed few female workers. One Leeds firm of woollen spinners, for example, had 90 male workers, but only 5 females who were employed as burlers.¹⁶⁶ Wherever firms concentrated on weaving or worsted spinning the proportion of women employed was high, and in these establishments men and women came into much closer and more regular working contact than in the ready-made clothing industry, in particular where women were employed as assistants to male workers.¹⁶⁷ Every firm varied, however, in size and in the extent of machinery used which affected the relative numbers of each sex employed.¹⁶⁸

Men and women were not simply employed in different tasks in industrial work, but also had a different position within the occupational hierarchy. The position of women at work was unequal to that of all male workers by virtue of their low pay, but they were also subordinate to a minority of male workers who filled most of the supervisory positions.¹⁶⁹ In sociological literature the subordination of female workers has been explained by relating it to the patriarchal relations existing within the family, where married women are "doubly dependent on their husbands as owners of their labour power and as wage earners".¹⁷⁰ It is then argued that these patriarchal relations were extended into the non-familial labour process.¹⁷¹

It can be suggested, however, that this view is too simplistic and does not fully explain the different types of hierarchical structures to be found in various industries or the place held by some women

within these authority structures. In the textile trade men were invariably employed in positions of authority as managers, overlookers, foremen of the different departments and as passers of the finished cloth. Even in work which was not inherently of a supervisory nature, male workers were in control of the process. Women frequently worked as assistants to men in the preparatory processes or else were unable to control fully their own work because they had to wait for male help. Weavers, for example, were not allowed to tune their own looms, while women woolcombers needed men to look after the machinery and to clean it.¹⁷² It may have been seen as natural for men to assume these positions because they held authority within the home and within society in general, but it was also related to the material conditions of male employment. Men had longer working lives than women and were trained to be familiar with all aspects of mill work, while boys often entered the trade because it provided the possibility of rising to supervisory posts.¹⁷³

It is usually suggested that the absence of women from supervisory work can be accounted for by their primary identification with marriage and children which meant that they were unwilling to take on responsibility, although women did express a wish to train as tuners if they had been permitted to do so.¹⁷⁴ Women's position within the family did not deter them from supervisory work in other industries, however, and it would appear that the most important barrier to female promotion in textiles was the mixed-sex character of many of the departments which would have given women authority over male workers.¹⁷⁵ Thus women did act as supervisors in textile departments where only women were

employed, such as burling and rag sorting, although forewomen did not necessarily receive high wages.¹⁷⁶

The pattern of employing women as supervisors in all-female departments was also common in predominantly male trades such as printing and engineering, and most supervisory work in the largely female trades of dressmaking and millinery was carried out by women.¹⁷⁷ In ready-made tailoring forewomen were employed in the machining and finishing departments, but male supervisors were far more common, despite the high proportion of women in the trade.¹⁷⁸ Female supervisors derived their authority from their location in the structure of work, and the power that they could gain from it, in the same way as their male counterparts. The ability to affect weekly wages, for example by giving best quality or extra work to favourites, helped forewomen to exercise control.¹⁷⁹ Both male and female supervisors had favourites among the workforce, but in the case of foremen there was the added dimension of sexual exploitation. Girls were encouraged to give sexual favours in return for more privileged treatment and female workers often took advantage of their own attractiveness to compete with other girls for the foreman's attention.¹⁸⁰

Throughout the period 1880 to 1914 women's industrial employment in Leeds was transformed by the introduction of factory methods to the manufacture of consumer goods, in particular in the clothing, printing, food and engineering trades. This led to an increase in the number and proportion of women employed in these industries as well as opening up new areas of work for women in traditionally male trades. Factory

employment meant a change in the character of women's work; some women had to operate new machines, but for others, factory work entailed familiar hand labour in a new environment, carried out under a strict work discipline. The development of widespread factory work did enable young single women to take up employment outside a domestic setting, although small workshops and homework remained as areas of industrial work for women.

Changes in the organisation of work and in the methods of production used led to shifts in the sex division of labour in specific industries, but jobs were still largely segregated by sex at the end of the period. It is not always immediately obvious why women were to be found in some tasks rather than in others in Leeds between 1880 and 1914. There were variations in the sex division of labour between local areas as well as a difference in the pace at which changes occurred in specific industries. The following chapter, therefore, attempts to explain the division of labour between the sexes in different industries, and to examine the reasons for the changes which took place over time.

CHAPTER 2, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. The conditions under which women were employed are more fully discussed in Chapter 4.
2. P Branca, Women in Europe since 1750 (Croom Helm, 1978), pp 31-46, and T M McBride, "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization", in R Bridenthal and C Koonz, eds. Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp 284-90.
3. Ibid. See also G Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War (Croom Helm, 1981), pp 26-8.
4. L A Tilly and J W Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), pp 149-62; Branca, Women in Europe, pp 46-57; Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War, pp 24-9.
5. See above, pp 62-63.
6. The extent to which work was still available to women in small workshops and in the home is discussed below, pp 136-40.
7. Census of England and Wales, 1881 (PP 1883, LXXX), Leeds Occupations, Table 10 (hereafter Census of England and Wales, 1881, Leeds Occupations).
8. For the size of flax spinning mills, see E J Connell, "Industrial Development in South Leeds, 1790-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1975), p 103. He notes that nine flax spinners, including Marshall's, employed 8,376 workers in the 1860s.
9. In 1881 there were 792 men and 2,709 women recorded as working in the Leeds flax and linen trades. In 1891 there were 414 men and 1,836 women and in 1901 138 men and 837 women. By 1911 the numbers had fallen further, to 123 men and 626 women. See Table 1.10, above, p 62 and Appendix 1, Table 1.5. Only two major flax spinners were recorded in Leeds in 1890, Messrs Briggs & Co and Messrs Titley & Co. The latter had 400 workers: L C Miall, ed. Handbook for Leeds and Airedale, prepared for the British Association (Leeds: McCorquodale, 1890), p 119.

10. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913 (Leeds: Leeds Chamber of Commerce, 1913), p 69.
11. In 1881 65 per cent of female and 71.2 per cent of male textile workers were employed in the wool and worsted trades. By 1911 the proportions were 64.4 per cent and 79.7 per cent respectively: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881, Leeds Occupations, and the Census of England and Wales, 1911 (PP 1913, LXXIX), Leeds Occupations, Table 13 (hereafter Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations).
12. Miall, ed. Handbook, p 110.
13. Ibid. pp 110-12.
14. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913, p 66.
15. J H Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries (Methuen, 1907), pp 131, 135-9.
16. Ibid. p 132. The figures do not include enginemens, packers, office workers and dyers. For an explanation of the greater specialisation in the worsted trade and the large size of firms, see D T Jenkins and K G Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, 1770-1914 (Heinemann Educational Books, 1982), pp 175-82.
17. For details of local specialisation, see Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, p 170, and The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, pp 47-8. The low-class woollen trade, which used mungo and shoddy, was concentrated in Dewsbury, Batley and Ossett. Carpets and rugs were the speciality of Halifax and Liversedge.

Shoddy: Woollen material recovered from soft wool rags such as knitted goods. It can be spun with pure woollen fibres to make yarn.

Mungo: Woollen material recovered from hard wool rags such as tailors' clippings. It can be added to yarn.

Mungo is shorter than shoddy, which comes from unfelted cloth. Felted cloth is fabric made by matting or felting together the fibres with no warp or weft: Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, p 339.
18. In Leeds only 1,600 workers were listed in worsted manufacture

- in 1881 and the number had fallen to 269 by 1891: Census of England and Wales, 1881, Leeds Occupations, and Census of England and Wales, 1891 (PP 1893-4, CVI), Leeds Occupations, Table 7 (hereafter Census of England and Wales, 1891, Leeds Occupations). Thirteen worsted manufacturers and three worsted spinners were listed in Kelly's Directory of Leeds (1881).
19. E M Sigsworth, "A History of John Foster & Son Ltd, 1819-91" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1972), Chapter 3, and Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, pp 241-1.
 20. W G Rimmer, "The Woollen Industry in the Nineteenth Century", Leeds Journal, XXX (1959), p 11, and Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, p 171.
 21. Miall, ed. Handbook, p 109, and Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 142.
 22. M F Ward, "Industrial Development and Location in Leeds North of the River Aire, 1775-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1972), p 109.
 23. For the different types of cloth produced in Leeds, see The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 40. A further speciality of Leeds was unshrinkable flannel for tennis and cricket clothes: Rimmer, "The Woollen Industry", p 11. Rag grinding machines tripled between 1858 and 1904 and the number of mills increased by 50 per cent. In 1858 there were 12 shoddy factories in Leeds and these had increased to 18 by 1904: Ward, thesis, pp 103, 109.
 24. S J Chapman and T S Ashton, "The Sizes of Businesses, Mainly in the Textile Industries", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXXVII, 5 (1914), p 506.
 25. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913, p 66.
 26. Messrs Joshua Wilson & Sons Ltd, worsted coating manufacturers, for example, combined all processes from spinning to the production of the finished cloth in the same mill, and even had a dyehouse on the premises. In 1913 the firm employed 1,000 workpeople and had 300 power looms: The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 59. Commission weavers rented looms and then paid for room and power: see the evidence of Alan Gee, secretary of the West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association, to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C, Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 4845-50, and Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 129-30.

27. The average number of workers in United Kingdom woollen mills increased from 53 in 1856 to 80 in 1907, but in Leeds the increase was from 100 to 160: Ward, thesis, p 104.

28. The number of spindles in Leeds mills increased by 25 per cent between 1855 and 1904 and the production of yarn was up by 50 per cent. The output of manufactured cloth increased by 10 per cent in the same period. Ward suggests, however, that Leeds was losing ground to other areas of woollen manufacture in the late nineteenth century: Ward, thesis, pp 102-3.

29. The speeding up of machinery is discussed in Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, pp 206-10.

30. In 1881 23.2 per cent of the female labour force in Leeds were employed in the clothing industry, 30.1 per cent in textiles and less than 5.0 per cent in other areas of industrial work: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881, Leeds Occupations.

31. In 1881 there were 2,740 tailoresses, 1,136 female boot and shoe workers and 4,001 dressmakers and milliners in Leeds: Census of England and Wales, 1881, Leeds Occupations. The conditions of employment of dressmakers and milliners are discussed in the Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. Report on the Employment of Females in Certain Trades in Leeds and Other Towns in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII).

32. Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. The Employment of Females in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), pp 3-4.

33. Ibid. pp 6-7. For a further discussion of the conditions of work in bespoke tailoring, see S P Dobbs, The Clothing Workers of Great Britain (G Routledge, 1928), pp 11-14.

34. C Collet, "Women's Work in Leeds", Economic Journal, I, 3 (1891), p 467, makes the point that the increased output from the cutting machines, which was made up in the workers' own homes, did not appear to be reflected in census figures.

35. William Marston, the secretary of the Leeds branch of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, frequently voiced complaints against the use of cheap female labour and immigrants in bespoke work. See, for example, the portrait of Marston in the Journal of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, November (1898), and Marston's evidence to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), especially QQ 14320-1, 14359-60.

36. Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. The Employment of Females in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), pp 5-6.
37. J Thomas, "A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers No 1 (1955), Chapter 1.
38. Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. The Employment of Females in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), p 6. Messrs Scolefield & Rice, mantle manufacturers, employed 30 women on the premises and 20 in their own homes, p 5.
39. Ibid. p 6. John Barran worked closely with one Jewish workshop owner, Herman Friend, who was important in the application of subdivisional methods to the workshops. Barran was quick to make use of the latest machinery and suggested that the band saw, which was used to cut wood, could be adapted into a bandknife for cutting cloth. The bandknife was used in his firm after 1858. For a discussion of the early years of John Barran's firm, see Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", pp 8-10.
40. Kelly's Directory of Leeds (1881). The list included Messrs Arthur & Co, J Rhodes & Co, Buckley & Sons, J Barran & Sons, J Hepworth and W Blackburn.
41. In 1881 2,740 women worked in the tailoring trade in Leeds and this represented 6.7 per cent of the total female labour force in the city. By 1891 10,916 women, or 19.5 per cent of the Leeds female labour force, worked in tailoring: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 and 1891, Leeds Occupations. For a discussion of the growth of the consumer-goods trades, see W H Fraser, The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914 (Macmillan, 1981), Pt III.
42. Miall, ed. Handbook, pp 117-18, and Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", pp 19-20.
43. For the structure of work in hat and cap making, see Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913, p 68. The boot and shoe industry is discussed in W G Rimmer, "Leeds Leather Industry in the Nineteenth Century", Thoresby Society Publications, XLVI (1960), pp 148-51.
44. Yorkshire Post, 23 February 1887. Some manufacturers, such as Messrs Gaunt & Hudson, combined ready-made tailoring with an already established hat and cap trade: Leeds Express, 6 January 1883.

45. Leeds Mercury, 24 July 1889.
46. Y.P. 23 February 1887.
47. L.M. 14 January 1891.
48. Y.P. 23 February 1887. The most well-known firms with head offices in Glasgow were Messrs Arthur & Co and Messrs J & W Campbell & Co.
49. Report by Mr Hine, the Leeds factory inspector, in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX), p 16.
50. L.M. 10 January 1889. The larger factories were designed by the architect Ambler.
51. J Buckman, "The Economic and Social History of Alien Immigration to Leeds, 1880-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1968), p 56. In 1888 Messrs J Barran & Sons had 1,500 to 2,000 workpeople: Y.P. 14 June 1888. In 1889 Messrs Arthur & Co had 1,500 workpeople, including outside workers, Messrs Bainbridge & Co and Messrs J & W Campbell & Co both had 1,000 workers and William Blackburn had 75 employees: Y.F.T. 19 July 1889.
52. Kelly's Directory of Leeds (1914).
53. Ward, thesis, p 191.
54. Men's Wear, 9 August 1902.
55. Messrs Arthur & Co and Messrs Stewart & MacDonald had a large trade with South Africa and manufactured lower quality goods: British Trade Journal, 1 November 1890; Messrs J Barran & Sons made high quality clothing for the home market, but also had agents in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Scandinavia. The firm tried to gain a foothold in the American market, but had no success: Dobbs, Clothing Workers, pp 38-40; Messrs Peacock & Co specialised in producing a "bespoke finish" for ready-mades: Men's Wear, 17 February 1912. Messrs Barker & Moody made overcoats, paddock vests and flannel clothing: Men's Wear, 7 January 1911.

56. Dobbs, Clothing Workers, pp 40-1.
57. Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", p 39, notes that buttonholes were made by hand well into the twentieth century except on the very cheapest garments. Most of the larger firms, however, used buttonhole machines from the late 1880s onwards. In 1889 Messrs Arthur & Co had a buttonhole machine which could do 700 buttonholes a day compared with the 10 dozen which could be completed by a skilful girl working by hand: L.M. 10 January 1889; J W Denton, a wholesale clothier, also had a buttonholing machine in the late 1880s: see Denton's evidence to the Select Committee on the Sweating System. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), Q. 30743.
58. For a description of the machinery used, see Men's Wear, 7 January 1911, 20 May 1911, 13 January 1912, 31 May 1913. Machinery was used, for example, to stretch trousers and to mould the shoulders, breasts, collars and sleeve-heads of coats. See also Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", pp 38-40.
59. Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", p 38. For the introduction of the Hoffman Press, see M Wray, The Women's Outerwear Industry (Duckworth, 1957), p 17, and the evidence of J Young, secretary of the United Garment Workers' Union, to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 102.
60. J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p 21. For further information on the growth of wholesale bespoke, see The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 40, and Men's Wear, 13 January . and 25 May 1912.
61. Dobbs, Clothing Workers, pp 42-3. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913, p 68, noted the increase in the manufacture of ladies' mantles, costumes, coats and skirts. Messrs Barker & Moody's factory was described as a high-grade shirt factory, although it also produced overcoats, vests and ties: Men's Wear, 7 January 1911. Messrs Hepton Bros had 1,996 workers in two factories manufacturing costumes and mantles before 1914, and Messrs Heaton Ltd employed 400 females and 75 males in the manufacture of costumes and mantles before the outbreak of war: P.R.O. Evidence to the War Cabinet Committee's Enquiry into Women in Industry from Women's Costume Makers in Leeds, Lab 2/276, X/P 02172.
62. Men's Wear, 29 June and 10 August 1912.

63. 674 women were employed in hat and cap manufacture in 1881 and 612 in 1911: Census of England and Wales, 1881 and 1911, Leeds Occupations. For a description of the processes involved in hat and cap manufacture, see the article on Messrs Gaunt & Hudson in the Leeds Express, 6 January 1883.
64. Rimmer, "Leeds Leather Industry"; p 148.
65. Ward, thesis, p 118.
66. Rimmer, "Leeds Leather Industry", pp 150-1.
67. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1910 (Leeds: Leeds Chamber of Commerce, 1910), p 71. The bankruptcies are noted in Ward, thesis, p 119.
68. The number of workers in boot and shoe manufacture in Leeds reached a peak in 1891 when 6,154 men and 1,508 women were employed. By 1911, however, the labour force had fallen to 4,297 men and 1,279 women: Census of England and Wales, 1891 and 1911, Leeds Occupations. Rimmer, "Leeds Leather Industry", pp 162-3, claims that Leeds firms failed to compete successfully because they remained small in scale and were slow to mechanise. When the use of machinery did increase, the improved productivity did not offset the fall in manpower.
69. For the number of women employed in the newer factory trades, see Appendix 1, Table 1.9. A description of some of the newer trades can be found in Miall, ed. Handbook, pp 101, 135.
70. Industries of Yorkshire, Pt I. Leeds and Bradford (Historical Publishing Co 1888), p 126, noted that E J Arnold's first factory was established in 1883, and then enlarged in 1887 to accommodate new machinery and 130 workers. The Crown Point Works-owned by Alf Cooke, specialised in printing tickets, bills, wall-paper and serial literature: W G Rimmer, "Printing and Printing Machinery, 2", Leeds Journal, XXIX (1958), p 354.
71. Industries of Yorkshire, p 107.
72. Men's Wear, 17 February 1912.
73. Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Year Book for 1913, p 77.

By 1913, 800 people were employed in paper bag making and kindred industries. Each machine could produce ten times more bags than a hand worker.

74. Industries of Yorkshire, and W G Rimmer, "Food Processing, 2", Leeds Journal, XXX (1959), p 174.
75. Rimmer, "Food Processing, 2", p 177.
76. In 1901 there were 23 factory laundries in Leeds city and these employed 85.7 per cent of all laundry workers. This meant an average of 26 workers in each factory compared with an average of 5 or 6 workers in the 17 workshops: Supplement to the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1903. Returns of Employment in Laundries in 1901 (PP 1904, X), p 25. In 1907 89 per cent of laundry workers were employed in the Leeds District which covered a wider area than Leeds city: Supplement to the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910. Returns of Persons Employed in Non-Textile Factories (PP 1911, XXV), p 8. For a discussion of the more general increase in factory laundries, see the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour. Drawn up by A L Bowley (Southport, 1903), pp 352-3 (hereafter British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour).
77. This is more fully discussed below, pp 425-26.
78. Appendix 1, Table 1.8, 1.9, 1.10.
79. For the increased proportion of men in the dressmaking and millinery trades, see Appendix 1, Table 1.8. In laundry work in Leeds women formed 97 per cent of the labour force in 1881 and 91.5 per cent in 1911. The number of men employed increased from 26 to 114 over the same period: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 and 1911, Leeds Occupations. Male workers in these pre-dominantly female trades were largely employed to tend the machinery: British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour, pp 334, 353.
80. See the discussion below, pp 413-16, 419-23.
81. Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", Chapter 1.
82. Men's Wear, 20 May 1911.

83. Evidence of S Freedman, secretary of the Leeds Jewish Tailors' Machinists' and Pressers' Union to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), Q 20327.
84. Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30925-32.
85. Returns to the Leeds Sanitary Authority suggested that 2,128 people were employed in 64 Jewish tailoring workshops: Labour Gazette, May 1893. During the strike of Jewish tailors in 1888, press reports suggested that 1,200 males and 1,800 females were affected: L.M. 8 May 1888. James Sweeney, a member of the Socialist League who was active in assisting the strikers, claimed that there were 3,000 to 4,000 people in Jewish workshops in his evidence to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30302-5. The differences in the figures given above show the difficulties of assessing the numbers employed in a trade which was seasonal and in which small workshops were constantly opening up and closing down.
86. Collet, "Women's Work", p 468. In 1893 Collet found that 6 of the 98 Jewish workshops listed by the Sanitary Department no longer existed. She visited 75 workshops which employed 1,130 males and 990 females. She then added in the young people who were employed to run errands, as well as the Sanitary Department's returns for those workshops that she was unable to visit, in order to reach her final total: see Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration from Eastern Europe into the United Kingdom. Pt III. Foreign Immigration in Relation to Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 116-22. Collet relied on the officially listed, and therefore larger, workshops for her figures.
87. Collet's figures were higher than those returned to the Sanitary Department because, finding only a small number of workers in some workshops as trade was slack, she asked employers to give her the full number that were normally employed: Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 116.
88. J W Akers, foreman of the outside hands at Messrs Arthur & Co, noted that the firm had started a coatmaking department. This was not done, he claimed, in order to get the coats made cheaply, but partly to bring the work under the Factory Acts and partly to give the firm more independence. The owners had objected to the interruption to production caused by the strike of Jewish tailors in 1888: see evidence of Akers to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30779-82. Whenever production was disrupted by strike action in the Jewish workshops, factory owners threatened to do the work inside and to employ the workers who were in dispute. For example, see the reaction of

employers to the lock-out of Jewish tailors in 1911, reported in the Yorkshire Evening News, 13 March 1911.

89. See the evidence of S Freedman to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), Q 20372. Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle, p 2, also argues that an increase in the number of workers in the Jewish workshop sector would have been consistent with the rise which took place in the Jewish population in Leeds.
90. Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle, p 27.
91. Ibid. pp 22, 26-9; see also the evidence of William Marston to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), QQ 14314-26.
92. J Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 4.
93. Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour. (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 117.
94. Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle, p 18.
95. For a critical discussion of the contemporary statistics relating to the size of Jewish workshops, see ibid. pp 17-20.
96. A J Taylor, "Leeds and the Victorian Economy", University of Leeds Review, XVII, 2 (1974), p 298; Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", p 19.
97. It has already been suggested in Chapter 1 that homeworkers were rarely recorded in the census tables. See above, pp 69-74.
98. "A Visit to a Leeds Clothing Factory", Y.F.T. 9 August 1889. The article noted that, although the firm had machines for putting buttons on trousers and for buttonholing, the other finishing processes were completed by hand, and therefore outside workers were employed in order to keep the machinists busy.
99. Collet, "Women's Work", p 468, suggested that homeworkers were useful for firms that were expanding but had not yet enlarged

their premises. During the strike at Messrs Arthur & Co in 1889, outside workers wrote to the press to complain about their conditions of work. One outside finisher claimed that, "as soon as the push is over they are not needed", and referred to the way in which homeworkers had been used to defeat the strikers: Y.F.T. 27 December 1889; see also Leeds Daily News, 16 October 1889.

100. See the evidence of Mr Akers to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30758-75. For the more general figures, see Y.P. 23 February 1887, 12 July 1888.

101. Collet, "Women's Work", pp 467-8, noted that once an employer's premises were enlarged, less work tended to be given out. Rowland Barran claimed that his firm stopped using homeworkers before 1907: see his evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7087. Men's Wear, 9 August 1902, reported that "the tendency is to do away with homeworkers and to complete the work in the factories where there is more efficient control and the work is better organised". Some large firms, however, did continue to use homeworkers. Mr Wright, the factory inspector for Leeds, reported in 1910 that large firms might have as many as 100 homeworkers: Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910 (PP 1911, XX), p 68.

102. For the way in which homeworkers were frequently employed by smaller factories, see I O Ford, "Women Workers in the Wholesale Clothing Trade", Englishwoman, II, 6 (1909), pp 639-40.

103. Leeds Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report for 1914, p 51. After 1900 female sanitary inspectors began to visit homeworkers whose names appeared on the lists. In 1900 they called on 424 homeworkers and in 1901 714 homes were visited. These were usually different from the year before. In 1902 and 1903, the peak years for the number of visits carried out, over 1,000 homeworkers were called on: Leeds Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report for 1901, p 90, and Annual Report for 1903, p 139.

104. Approximately one half of the employers who should have sent in lists of homeworkers failed to do so in 1914: Leeds Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report for 1914, p 51.

105. J R MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades (P S King, 1904), p 48.

106. For the varying effects of mechanisation on female employment, see

C Hakim, "Census Reports as Documentary Evidence: The Census Commentaries, 1801-1951", Sociological Review, XXVIII, 3 (1980), p 568, and MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, pp 94-7.

107. British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour, pp 333-5.
108. Although the emphasis of this study is on the sex division of labour, it is recognised that the labour force was also differentiated by age and ethnic background. Skilled male workers felt threatened by boys and by Jewish immigrants as well as by female workers. Young male and female workers could have more in common with each other than with older workers of their own sex, while women without dependants may have experienced work in ways that were more similar to those of men than to married women. The extent to which sex was the main differentiating factor in the labour force is discussed in more detail below, pp 108-22.
109. Thus, dressmakers and milliners were invariably female, and transport workers and builders were male, throughout the country. In the textile trade, however, there was a greater variation in the sex division of labour in different local areas.
110. For a discussion of local variations in the wool and worsted trades, see Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 175-6. For variations in the clothing trade, see the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, pp 97-103.
111. The number of women employed in tailoring in Leeds increased from 2,740 in 1881 to 15,917 in 1911. The proportion of women in the tailoring labour force rose from 56.0 per cent to 67.6 per cent in the same period: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 and 1911, Leeds Occupations.
112. Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), pp 402-3.
113. "A Visit to a Leeds Clothing Factory", Y.F.T. 9 August 1889. The male pressers, however, did work in the same room as female finishers in many firms.
114. Ibid.
115. Thomas, "Leeds Clothing Industry", p 10.
116. Men's Wear, 13 September 1913, noted that evening classes were being provided at the Leeds Technical College so that stock cutters, whose

experience was limited to particular sections of the trade, could get a "practical knowledge of making up" and therefore qualify as managers and foremen.

117. See the evidence of H Albrecht, a clothing manufacturer, and J Young to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 101.

118. Ibid. pp 101-2.

119. See the evidence of J Young to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, pp 101-2. He noted that women, men and youths did seam pressing, but men did the pressing off. He thought that because pressing was heavy and laborious it was unsuitable for women. C Black, "London's Tailloresses", Econ. J. XIV, 4 (1904), p 562, suggested that in London men did the pressing with hand irons, but women were often used to work gas irons. In Leeds pressing was the one occupation in the factories which employed male Jewish workers in the 1880s and early 1890s; see the speech made by Tom Maguire, a member of the Socialist League, reported in the L.D.N. 29 October 1889.

120. See the evidence of G Crampton, an employee of Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd, to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 100.

121. Messrs Barnes & Co employed 200 workers in 1888 and almost 100 of these were machinists: Industries of Yorkshire; Messrs Arthur & Co employed approximately 700 machinists out of a labour force of 1,500 inside and outside workers: Y.F.T. 25 October 1889.

122. Men's Wear, 28 January 1911.

123. Dobbs, Clothing Workers, p 45. Advertisements for factory workers tended to be very specific in their requirements and asked for stitch hands, coat machinists, cloth machinists and so on: for example, see Men's Wear, 10 September 1911.

124. Leeds City Archives, Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Reference Books 1-4, Notes on New Employees, 1886-1914. Several references can be found in these papers to the employment of girls in office work and in writing out labels, in particular after 1900.

125. Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 117. Collet found 1,130 men and 990 women working in 75 workshops. J Newhouse's report on Jewish tailoring workshops, however, suggests that the proportion of men and women employed in individual workshops varied widely and did not appear to be related to the size of the establishment; for example, one workshop had 6 male and 40 female workers, another employed 30 male and 22 female workers, while a third had 12 male and 4 female workers. Many workshops had roughly equal numbers of both sexes: Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), Appendix G, paper by J Newhouse, superintendent of the Leeds Sanitary Department, Report on the Sanitary Conditions of Tailors' Workshops in 1888.
126. Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 117.
127. S Freedman, "Condition of the Jewish Workers of Leeds", Trade Unionist, August (1899), p 523.
128. See the evidence of J Sweeney to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30207-10.
129. Burnett, The Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 5.
130. Ibid pp 5-6. Sweeney claimed that the majority of Jewish middlemen were not practical tailors in his evidence to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30255-6. M Sclare, secretary of the Leeds Jewish Tailors', Machinists' and Pressers' Union, claimed that out of six or eight men working with a needle in the workshops, only one would be a proper tailor: see his evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 5893.
131. See the evidence of M Sclare to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 5895-7.
132. In his evidence to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. Vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), Q 4415, William Marston suggested that the best machining work went to immigrants and not to women. One Jewish subcontractor stated that " we do the high class work which cannot be done by girls on the machines in the factories. They may be able to make tweed coats, but they cannot do much good with worsted and serge garments that are difficult to handle": Men's Wear, 20 May 1911. Collet also noted that women were employed on the less skilled work in her report in the Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 122.

133. For the use of "greeners" in tailoring, see the evidence of J Sweeney and J Abraham, a plain machinist, to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30270-2, 30295-9, 30123-31.
134. Y.E.N. 3 March 1911.
135. Board of Trade, Report on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 117. In 64 workshops there were 380 non-Jewish women, but only 2 non-Jewish men.
136. Burnett, The Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 5.
137. The census recorded only a slight increase in the proportion of women employed in boot and shoe manufacture. They formed 19.3 per cent of the labour force in 1881 and 23.0 per cent in 1911: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1881 and 1911, Leeds Occupations. One of the earliest boot and shoe factories, Messrs Stead & Simpson, employed 130-40 males and 70 females in 1883: Leeds Express, 2 June 1883.
138. Leeds Express, 2 June 1883. Messrs E Blakey & Sons employed 140 girls to put boot protectors on to cards and to pack them in boxes: Industries of Yorkshire, p 74.
139. Miall, ed. Handbook, p 128. In the J.A.S.T. & T. December (1907), p 567, it was suggested that mechanisation and factory production had led to an increase of women in the light footwear trade of Leicester.
140. Leeds Express, 2 June 1883.
141. For the number of workers employed by E J Arnold, see Industries of Yorkshire, p 126, and for those employed in food production, see Rimmer, "Food Processing, 2", p 178.
142. MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, Appendix 2, firm No 26. Printers and Bookbinders in Leeds. When E J Arnold introduced a luggage label machine, only 2 girls were needed compared with the ten employed before. Arnold claimed, however, that the expansion of trade had meant an overall increase in the number of girls employed by the firm: Industries of Yorkshire, p 126.

143. For example, see B L Hutchins, "The Employment of Women in Paper Mills", Econ. J. XIV, 2 (1904), p 242; MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, pp 1-23; Rimmer, "Food Processing, 2". In the engineering industry women were employed in the production of "light" goods such as cycles, locks, nails and tools. For the growth of machine tool and nail making, see Miall, ed. Handbook, pp 93-101.
144. For a discussion of the changes in the sex division of labour in printing, see MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, Chapter 4.
145. Ibid. Chapter 1.
146. Ibid. Appendix 2, firm 26.
147. Hutchins, "Women in Paper Mills", pp 241-2; MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, p 15; evidence of the Federation of Master Printers for Leeds to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 117.
148. MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, Chapter 1.
149. Huddersfield Polytechnic Library, G H Wood Collection, Wages Books, CB 84, Notes for the Introduction to the Textile Section of the Board of Trade Wages Enquiry of 1906. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, and Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, Introduction and pp 178-9.
150. K Laybourn, "The Attitude of Yorkshire Trade Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-96" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1972), p 10, and Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, p 206.
151. H.P.L. Wood Coll. Wages Books, CB 84, Notes for the 1906 Wages Enquiry. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 929. Wood noted, for example, that the sex of piecers in wool spinning varied from district to district.
152. Ibid. p 926, and Collet, "Women's Work", p 466.
153. For the decline of men in weaving, see Y.F.T. 26 July 1889 and 18 March 1904. It was claimed that only one twentieth of

Leeds weavers were men in the 1880s, and that there were "hardly any left" in 1904. In 1911 857 men and 5,636 women were recorded in the census tables as working in the weaving section of the textile trade in Leeds. It is not clear, however, whether the men were employed as weavers or in other branches of the weaving process, for example as tuners: Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations.

154. The grievances of male weavers in Huddersfield were described by J Downing and A Gee, officials of the West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association, in their evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5019-28. It was suggested that women were preferred, partly because they were cheap and partly because they were easier to handle.
155. J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980), p 138.
156. Ibid. p 24, and Y.F.T. 17 January 1890.
157. Bornat, thesis, p 102. See also Y.F.T. 6 September 1889, in which it was noted that young men preferred to be labourers, rather than to work in the mill, because the wages were higher.
158. H.P.L. Wood Coll. Wages Books, CB 84, Notes for the 1906 Wages Enquiry. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 928-9.
159. Ibid. p 929.
160. Ibid. p 930.
161. Ibid. pp 931-2. For the skill involved in mending, see Bornat, thesis, p 25.
162. H.P.L. Wood Coll. Wages Books, CB 84, Notes for the 1906 Wages Enquiry. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 923. Wood claimed that "there is very little skill and not much experience needed in woolcombing", and that the work was seasonal and irregular.
163. Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 178.
164. Ibid. p 179. The heaviest and most complex looms were tended by men. In Huddersfield the proportion of male weavers was particularly high, whereas in Bradford it was low. This reflected

the quality and type of cloth produced in each town.

165. In 1911 25 per cent of female wool and worsted workers in Leeds were employed in spinning processes and 67.0 per cent in weaving: calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1911, Leeds Occupations. 3,107 women were included in the returns from Leeds textile employers to the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. Textiles in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89. 2,897 of the women were weavers, 785 were spinners or piecers, 211 were burlers and knotters, 175 were drawers and 64 were menders.
166. Brotherton Library, Leeds University, A W Boyd Papers, Wages Book, 1913. A W Boyd was a Leeds woollen spinner. See also Messrs Airedale & Co Papers, Wages Books, 1913-14. The company were commission scribblers, spinners and finishers of Leeds and employed women only as machine minders.
167. L.C.A. Messrs T & M Bairstow Papers, Wages Books, 1912-13. T & M Bairstow were worsted spinners and manufacturers. The firm employed a high proportion of women in the twisting, warping, burling, spinning and weaving departments. In 1912 there were 26 workers, who were largely female, in No. 12 twisting room, 20 workers, of whom 11 were male, in No. 2 spinning room and there were 27 men and 10 women in the combing room.
168. In 1888 Peter Laycock, woollen manufacturer, had 79 looms, 2,184 spindles and employed 160 workers. Messrs G Garnett & Sons, spinners and wool and worsted manufacturers, had 200 looms, 1,500 wool and worsted spindles, 11 scribbling and warping machines and employed 500 workers; Messrs Hargreave & Nussey, manufacturers of wool and worsted cloth, had 2,000 spindles, 205 looms, 40 knitting frames, 12 gigs, 12 cutting machines, 14 milling machines and employed 400 workers; J Wilson, manufacturer of worsted coatings, had 350 looms and employed a regular 1,000 workers: Industries of Leeds. In Leeds one worker was employed on each loom.
169. Details of male and female wages in Leeds are given in Chapter 5.
170. For example, see E Gamarnikow, "Sexual Division of Labour: The Case of Nursing", in A Kuhn and A M Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p 100. She defines patriarchy as "an autonomous system of social relations between men and women in which men are dominant" and argues that it "inscribes the sexual division of labour as a social division and not a natural one", p 99.

171. Ibid. p 100.
172. For the extent to which women had to wait for tuners and the way in which the men were often abusive to female workers, see the evidence of A Gee to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 4833, 4890-5; see also the evidence of S Shaftoe, secretary of the Machine Woolcombers' Association, ibid. QQ 5955-9, 61445.
173. Bornat, thesis, pp 21, 27-8. In Bradford, however, boys found it difficult to obtain adult employment in the worsted trade; The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 21.
174. For examples of historians who suggest that women were unwilling to train and take posts of responsibility, see P Branca, Women in Europe Since 1750 (Croom Helm, 1978), p 45, and L Woodcock Tentler, Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-30 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp 29-35. Similar views were expressed by contemporaries. For example, see E Cadbury, M C Matheson and G Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City (T Fisher Unwin, 1906), pp 46, 138, and Mrs F W Hubback, "Women's Wages", New Statesman, Special Supplement on Women in Industry, 21 February 1914, p v. The willingness of women to become tuners is noted in B Drake, Women in Trade Unions (Labour Research Department, 1920), p 121. Her evidence refers to Lancashire.
175. As already noted, departments in textiles were more often composed of workers of both sexes than in other industries.
176. Collet, "Women's Work", p 466, noted that forewomen in ragsorting received only 10/- a week.
177. Examples of female supervisors in departments employing all women in printing and boot and shoe making can be found in Industries of Yorkshire, p 74, and MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, p 58.
178. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), p 102. 18 forewomen and 109 Foremen were included in the returns for the Leeds ready-made tailoring trade.
179. See, for example, Y.F.T. 13 December 1889, where it is recorded that a forewoman sent girls home because trade was slack, but kept two back to do the small amount of work which was left. A more detailed discussion of favouritism can be found below, pp 215-16.

180. See, for example, the interview with Tom Maguire and Tom Paylor, both members of the Socialist League, in the L.D.N. 18 October 1889. Examples of sexual exploitation can also be found in the textile trade. An article in the Y.F.T. 20 September 1889, noted how married tuners encouraged women to treat them to a drink in order to get more favourable treatment at work.

CHAPTER 3THE SEX DIVISION OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN LEEDS:SOME EXPLANATIONS

Social commentators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were concerned to explain the structuring of the labour force along sex lines, generally linked this either to the characteristics of women as a sex or to their position in the family.¹ Women were thought to possess particular attributes as workers which were derived from a mixture of their physical characteristics, their "natural" inclinations and their feminine upbringing. Thus it was assumed that women lacked the physical strength for some tasks, but that their dexterity suited them for others.² It was also assumed that a woman's childbearing capacity and maternal instinct suited her for work which emphasised qualities of caring and sympathy such as nursing, child care and domestic service.³

It was the role of women in the family, however, that was seen as most crucial in affecting their position at work. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the prevailing middle-class model of family life was one in which a male wage earner supported his wife and children, enabling women to give a full-time commitment to domestic duties and child care. This division of labour came to be seen as natural, rather than as one that had been socially constructed.⁴ There is strong evidence that many sections of the working class, in particular skilled workers and trade unionists, increasingly came to accept this view of the proper role of the sexes during the course of the nineteenth

century, although their motives for doing so were more complex than a simple desire to conform to middle-class standards.⁵ The ideal model of the sex division of labour was not necessarily reflected in the material realities of working-class life. Low wages, unemployment and illness meant that men were frequently unable to support a family, even if they were skilled, while many households had no adult male wage earner.⁶ Contemporaries argued, however, that the prevailing stress on the importance of a male breadwinner materially affected the position of women at work whether or not it reflected the realities of their own lives, for it influenced the attitudes of employers, trade unionists and the women themselves.

The identification of women with the domestic sphere was thought to affect their work position in a number of ways. Since women were expected to leave full-time paid employment on marriage they were rarely offered work requiring lengthy training and their secondary status as family wage earners enabled employers to use them as a source of cheap labour.⁷ It was argued, therefore, that women were found in low skilled, low paid work, but that employers only used them where it was thought that their cheapness outweighed the disadvantages of female labour. These included frequent illness, physical weakness and a lack of commitment to waged work.⁸ Finally, it was also argued that women's own attitudes to work were affected by their desire to marry which made them disinclined to take up the few opportunities that were available for supervisory or more skilled work.⁹

More recently, sociologists concerned with the sex division of labour

have also emphasised that women workers are to be found in certain types of work because of the characteristics that they derive from their position within the family.¹⁰ In an influential article Barron and Norris relate the sex division of labour in production to the development of a dual labour market in advanced industrial societies which is composed of a primary and a secondary sector. They argue that employers, largely in an effort to retain skilled workers and to exert control over the workplace, have sought to establish a primary group of workers who are well paid, have stable employment with long-term career prospects and who often act in supervisory capacities. Their services are secured by the provision of favourable conditions of employment which are made possible by the existence of a secondary group of workers. These workers are easily dispensable, they can clearly be differentiated from primary workers, they have a low inclination to acquire training and they are unlikely to see solidarity with other workers as important. It is then suggested that the secondary sector can be equated with women workers, who display all these secondary characteristics which are derived from their identification with family life and which lead to their marginal role in production.¹¹

This approach has been important in demonstrating that women share very specific characteristics of employment, and for showing the structural barriers that lie in the way of any change in their position as industrial workers.¹² It has also been important in countering technological determinism by stressing the role that management plays in structuring changes in the labour process.¹³ Too often, however, the existence of a dual labour market is simply assumed and the weaknesses in the approach

are ignored.¹⁴ Many male workers, for example, can be found along with female workers in the secondary sector and this cannot always be accounted for in terms of their special characteristics, such as ethnic or religious background.¹⁵ More fundamentally, it has been suggested that dualism is not necessarily the best way to characterise the structure of the labour market which can more usefully be seen as segmented, with divisions based on skill or on the power struggles between different groups.¹⁶

A more serious problem lies in the way in which "sex differentiation is seen as largely determined outside the labour market in the sexual division of labour within the household".¹⁷ This criticism can also be applied to the views of contemporaries noted above. Little account is taken, for example, of the way in which male trade unionists actively organise to keep women in certain types of work and the effects of the structure of work itself on female workers is not explored.¹⁸

The very rigid sex division of labour means that women have little choice of which employment to enter, whether or not they look forward to marriage, while low pay and monotonous work conditions can encourage women to see waged work as less important in their lives than marriage and children.¹⁹ Also, it is simply assumed that women have particular characteristics as workers, such as a lack of solidarism, but this merely confirms existing stereotypes and is never empirically tested.²⁰

At the same time, it encourages the view that women workers should be seen as an undifferentiated group.²¹ Dual labour market theorists, as well as contemporaries who stressed the importance of the family position of women, do not explain why women can be found in certain

types of poorly paid, low skilled work and not in others, or why there are changes in the sex division of labour over time.

This chapter approaches the examination of the sex division of labour in Leeds in three main ways. Firstly, it discusses the points raised by contemporaries concerning the specific characteristics of women as a sex and the type of work that they did, and assesses the relevance of these for explanations of the sex division of labour in Leeds.

Secondly, while recognising that women's role in the family had a general effect on their position at work, it is suggested that the way in which the two spheres inter-related should be seen as changing over time and as having a different meaning in different local contexts. Overall social changes could affect the importance attached both by women and by men to paid work and domestic duties, but did not necessarily take place in the same way or at the same time in different local areas.²²

Finally, the chapter suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on the ways in which changes in the labour process affected the sex division of labour. It argues that such changes were not simply related to the prevailing level of new technology, but arose from a complex interaction between the supply of labour, the strategies adopted by employers and the bargaining strength of organised labour, and that it is here that the importance of local patterns of family life can best be explored.²³

The supply of female labour was clearly affected by their actual or potential position in the family and by the decisions taken there about how family members should allocate their time, about the size of the

family unit and the age at which family members should marry. All these decisions were in turn closely related to local work opportunities for both sexes, to local wage levels and to prevailing expectations of local living standards.²⁴ At the workplace, employers developed strategies concerning the structure of labour within their firms. These could be affected by the possible gains to be made by introducing new technology or by the need to control the labour force more effectively. Decisions were made in the light of whether the introduction of innovations and female labour posed an advantage to capital in specific periods.²⁵

The ability of employers to make changes could be restricted by strong trade union opposition, while unions themselves could affect the sex division of labour by the bargains that they came to with employers.²⁶ It is argued in the present chapter that this process can only fully be understood through a study of the sex division of labour in individual industries in specific local areas.

The Characteristics of Women's Work

As already noted, contemporaries explained the employment of women in specific tasks partly through the characteristics of the work - for example, that it was light or low skilled. This was in turn related either to women's position within the family or to their "natural" capabilities as a sex. They also argued that women's industrial work was partly a reflection of tasks that women carried out within the home which were seen as particularly suitable or even "natural" to their

sex.²⁷ It is certainly possible to find many examples of women's work which fitted some or all of these categories, but the identification of female employment with particular characteristics does not provide a satisfactory general explanation for the allocation of tasks between the sexes.

Men and women industrial workers shared many characteristics of employment, including lack of training, monotony, long hours and unhealthy conditions of work, while only some of women's traditional tasks remained in their hands once they were performed outside the home. Baking and brewing, for example, became areas of male employment when removed from a domestic setting.²⁸ When a parallel can be drawn between women's paid work and their household tasks, it does not explain why women were employed in only some parts of these trades or why they were found in work which did not grow out of the domestic sphere, such as bicycle making.²⁹

The definition of female work as light and unskilled is also unsatisfactory, for it implies that women's work is undifferentiated. It begs the question of what was meant by such terms and the extent to which their definition was gendered.³⁰ Many tasks performed by women, such as washing and mangling in laundries or carrying finished cuts in weaving, could, on any objective criteria, be considered as heavy work. Contemporaries, however, either did not view such work as heavy because it was carried out by women, or else thought that it was heavy, but considered it to be suitable for women because of a long identification with female labour. This was not thought to apply to road building,

factory labouring or heavy engineering.³¹ Thus, while women were employed on light work in nearly all trades, they also worked in some of the heaviest and dirtiest tasks such as rag sorting, pressing and mangling.

The description of women's work as low skilled can also be seen as unsatisfactory in the light of recent studies into the process of skill labelling.³² Historians most interested in the content and importance of skill definitions, however, have been concerned almost exclusively with male trades and there has been little attempt to explore in a systematic way the label "low skilled" as applied to women's work.³³ More, in one of the most recent general studies of working-class skill, fails to discuss the position of women in any depth because "it was not possible to fit women's work into the general hypothesis of skill and its acquisition advanced here".³⁴ He argues that women were excluded from nearly every occupation which led to the acquisition of skill and therefore he perpetuates the view that "women formed a vast pool of necessarily unskilled labour which was usually paid less than the minimum wage of an unskilled male".³⁵ It can be suggested, however, that a model which neglects a large minority of the labour force provides only a partial guide to the nature of skill in the period.

It has long been recognised that the definition of work as skilled was not just a matter of the technical content of the task and the amount of training necessary to perform it, but was part of the struggles which took place around the organisation of work. Some workers with superior organisation were able to define their work as skilled and

this meant that they could maintain apprenticeship systems and achieve high wage levels.³⁶ At the same time, employers could also play a part in skill labelling in order to create divisions within the work force and to reduce cohesion.³⁷ More recently, it has been suggested that skill labelling and the conflicts over this must be seen as crucial in creating and sustaining sex divisions, and that gender provided a further way of differentiating the labour force. As Gray notes, the exclusion of women was a way in which male trade unionists could "police the frontiers of craft skill".³⁸ This served to define women's work as unskilled and therefore justified their low pay.

Feminist historians have increasingly argued that the skill content of women's work should be re-defined, and that tasks were often seen as unskilled simply because women did them.³⁹ Phillips and Taylor, for example, suggest that "far from being an objective fact, skill is often an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it".⁴⁰ They accept that there was some basis in job content to justify differences in skill labelling, but argue that the power exerted by the workforce helped to shape and define the jobs that they did.⁴¹ The studies by feminist historians into the relationship between sex and skill highlight the importance that gender divisions played in the struggles of male workers against employers' attempts to undermine skill.⁴²

Even when female work could be defined as unskilled, the way in which women were allocated to specific tasks was not straightforward. It was part of a complex process which involved not only the subdivision

and simplification of tasks, but also conflicts between employers and organised workers for control at the workplace. Phillips and Taylor argue that, as employers attempted to undermine the skill content of work, whether to achieve greater profits or to gain more control over the labour process, so skilled workers battled to exclude women from more skilled work. This reinforced divisions within the workforce and created a contradictory position for male workers. They assisted in the creation of a low paid and weak industrial group who could later be used to undermine their own position.⁴³

Before discussing the skill labelling of female tasks in Leeds and the relationship between skill and the sex division of labour, it is important to establish some definition of the terms skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, and to assess whether such terms are meaningful in the context of women's work. Skilled work is usually defined in an objective sense as work which combines a high knowledge content, requiring a coordination of sensory information and motor activity, with some discretion by the worker over job content.⁴⁴ More emphasises the importance of training in the acquisition of skill, whether by the serving of a formal apprenticeship or by the informal method of learning a variety of tasks by migrating between processes within the factory.⁴⁵ This definition does not take into account, however, the question of control of the labour process. Some tasks, whose job content had been altered, still continued to be defined as skilled, either because the workforce was strongly organised, or because it suited employers, or through a combination of the two.⁴⁶ Workers in these tasks continued to receive the higher wages and job security

associated with skilled labour, even if the objective basis of the skill label had been undermined.

The changes precipitated in the character of work and in the sex division of labour during the First World War stimulated an interest in the question of skill. One government investigation made a distinction relating to skill which had considerable relevance for women's work: that between a skilled worker and skilled work. A skilled worker was defined as a man who "can carry out any given complete job on a particular class of work when furnished only with the requisite drawings" and who, by long apprenticeship, "acquired proficiency, manual and mental dexterity and resourcefulness".⁴⁷ It was also argued that some operations which required intensive training and systematic practice could be called skilled, but a worker engaged in such tasks could not be classed with the all-round skilled worker who was capable of dealing with new situations and emergencies.⁴⁸

Women in Leeds cannot be considered to have been employed in skilled work if a lengthy period of formal training is seen as essential. In dressmaking and millinery, however, women did exercise the same manual skill and discretion as skilled male workers, in particular when compared with male bespoke tailors. One contemporary suggested that a dressmaker needed:

Manual skill, delicate fingers, a good knowledge of fabrics and what can be done with them, the instinct of an artist to grasp the idea of a costume and to work out the details without having everything set out in black and white and a quick perception of, and adaptability to, the frequent changes of style and fashion.⁴⁹

A minority of the more skilled women, working as fitters and cutters in the workshops, could earn wages that were far higher than the average for female workers and that were in some instances comparable to those of a male tailor.⁵⁰ The weekly income of dressmakers working on their own account is more difficult to assess, for this depended on the amount of orders they could procure, the class of their customers and the quality of their work, although they tended to earn higher than average female wages.⁵¹ The majority of dressmakers, however, were no better paid than other female industrial workers, although their skills could range from the ability to complete a variety of difficult tasks to proficiency in only one simple task.⁵²

This indicates a major difficulty in any consideration of more skilled female employment. The lack of union organisation in the trade meant that there were no rules to govern training periods, to regulate apprenticeships or to set a list of prices. Girls could be indentured as apprentices, but might train for only three years, after which they became improvers. On the other hand, they could be taken on as learners when the period of training could vary from a few months to several years.⁵³ There was no guarantee that such girls would learn all aspects of the trade and many were employed only on simple tasks to help individual dressmakers.⁵⁴ In larger establishments there was no automatic progression to the higher paid work of cutting and fitting, for recruits were often drawn from separate groups such as shop walkers.⁵⁵ Thus, while dressmaking offered the possibility of learning an all-round skill, this was available only to a minority, and without strong union organisation no standard rules were applied. The identification

of dressmaking with female labour did at least mean that women were employed both in supervisory and skilled positions which were largely in the hands of men in bespoke tailoring.

Most other female work in Leeds did not require the ability or training associated with all-round skilled workers, although it is clear that not all women's work could simply be subsumed in the general category of unskilled labour. The labels semi-skilled and unskilled do not necessarily, however, provide a satisfactory way of differentiating between female tasks. Semi-skilled work is rarely defined in secondary literature, although it is often equated with machine minding and a period of training.⁵⁶ Both these categories need qualification; some machine processes, such as paper bag making, were so automated that they required less aptitude than many processes that still relied on hand labour.⁵⁷ It is also difficult to draw a dividing line between semi-skilled and unskilled work on the basis of training. Woodward defines semi-skilled work as requiring training of from two to 12 weeks, when a worker acquires the ability to perform the immediate job, while unskilled work "requires no training of any kind".⁵⁸ It seems unlikely that there were many jobs requiring no training at all, while the short period of training allowed for the achievement of semi-skilled status would not have given workers any scarcity value or advantage over others. The United States Department of Labour's definition of semi-skilled work tends to deny the importance of training, which is very brief and performed on the job, but stresses instead the characteristics of individual workers. These include adaptability, the ability to learn new work quickly and a willingness

to handle new machinery; "after a short period of training, they must work at a standard, fast and steady pace".⁵⁹

It is suggested in the following discussion that the labels semi-skilled and unskilled, in particular if they are associated with degree of training, do not provide a useful guide for differentiating the content of women's tasks. Individual aptitude provides one useful guide; as women's work was simplified, for example, the ability to work at a fast pace could itself be seen as a skill.⁶⁰ Individual abilities, however, cannot entirely be divorced from the job content and degree of difficulty of the work. *It appears most useful, therefore,* to discuss women's work in the context of a varied set of criteria relating to the particular tasks and industries in which they were involved, rather than simply to affix the labels unskilled or semi-skilled. It is important to establish whether work was monotonous or had some variety, whether speed, dexterity or experience could prove an advantage in terms of pay and conditions, or whether an industry provided opportunities to progress to work requiring some degree of experience and training and which paid higher wages.

The two most important female trades in Leeds, ready-made tailoring and textiles, did provide some variety in the type of work available, in the range of wages paid and in the aptitude required of female workers. In ready-make tailoring the period of formal training was brief, ranging from two to six weeks, when girls were taught the basic principles of a task by adult workers.⁶¹ Some girls then remained on one task for the rest of their time in the factory, but there were also a number of

opportunities for female workers to increase their earnings or to take on more interesting work. A proportion of finishing tasks in the factory, including the embroidering of slippers, hand buttonholding, braiding and binding, required above average experience and ability. The minority of women who worked in these tasks received higher than average wages.⁶² Machining was not fully automated throughout the period and therefore some ability was needed in guiding the material through the machine, while accuracy became more difficult to achieve as the speed of the machinery increased.⁶³ Again, a minority of machinists were engaged in more complex tasks, such as fixing pockets and collars or in making samples and special orders, and they received higher than average wages.⁶⁴ Even if a process was simple to learn, speed and dexterity increased only with age and experience. For women who were normally paid by the piece, this could prove crucial for earnings. Clementina Black summed up this aspect of skill in her description of making pockets for waistcoats; "it is a good trade for women - it is very skilled but as a result of practice. The principles underlying the making of a pocket can be learnt in a few minutes, but a woman becomes good at making pockets by doing a lot".⁶⁵

Women in the textile trade also needed a range of abilities. Young people were initially employed in *sweeping up dust and fluff, in filling empty bobbins* and generally fetching and carrying for adult workers.⁶⁶ They were also employed in simple repetitive tasks that were associated with the work of young people, such as worsted spinning. This was described as so easy and uninteresting that "only the less intelligent do it as adults".⁶⁷ The peak of productivity was soon reached in

these trades and earnings fell below the average of other adult women.

Girls could only hope to obtain higher wages and more interesting work if they progressed to other tasks, such as warping, mending and weaving, which needed considerable ability.⁶⁸ Only a minority were employed in mending which needed care and experience to spot and repair the flaws in the finished cloth. The work was highly sought after because it paid higher than average wages and could be carried out at home.⁶⁹

Weaving was the most important occupation for women because of the large numbers involved. Clapham claimed that, despite the introduction of the power loom, not all workers had been reduced to the same level of skill, and there was considerable variation in the wages paid.⁷⁰

This resulted partly from the different abilities of individual workers, and partly from the variety of cloths produced, each with its own degree of difficulty.⁷¹ Fine wool and worsted cloth and fancy patterned cloths required judgement and experience. According to one experienced weaver, "if you care for weaving, you've never done learning it".⁷²

Plain cheap worsteds were less difficult to produce, although workers in low grade work needed to exercise great care in case the yarn broke.⁷³

For all the better paid tasks in textiles and ready-made clothing there appears to have been no special training, but women were selected according to experience, individual aptitude or because they were the favourite of a supervisor.⁷⁴

In most of the factory trades outside textiles and clothing women formed a minority of the workforce. They were largely engaged in simple repetitive tasks such as feeding self acting machinery or packaging and

sorting the finished product. In such occupations girls could reach maximum efficiency very quickly, the range of possible earnings was narrow and the workforce was predominantly aged under 20.⁷⁵ In the printing trade, however, some processes carried out by female labour were described as needing considerable ability; laying gold leaf on to covers required dexterity, for the leaf could blow away and break, while show card mounting needed care because the application of too much glue could cause blistering.⁷⁶ The extent of training that girls received varied not only according to the degree of difficulty of the task, but also according to whether they were liked by the forewoman. She could determine whether they were trained in only one process or in a range of processes.⁷⁷

Although the character of women's work was altered by the introduction of factory methods of production in a number of trades in Leeds between 1880 and 1914, this did not necessarily lead to a straightforward reduction in the skill content of their work. Some tasks formerly completed by hand workers, for example in printing or finishing in the ready-made clothing trade, were broken down into less skilled parts or mechanised, but opportunities for more skilled work opened up elsewhere.⁷⁸ In the bespoke tailoring trade many tasks carried out by women had already been subdivided before the growth of the ready-made sector.⁷⁹ A feature of the ready-made trade, however, was the extreme subdivision of tasks, both in the factories and in the workshops, and this took place in the finishing process before the introduction of machinery. The tendency over time was for one worker to repeat the same simple process, rather than completing a variety of tasks, and therefore many

women felt that the work was more monotonous and less skilled.⁸⁰ On the other hand, a number of tasks in the factories continued to need skill and experience and could not easily be mechanised, such as the sewing on of collars and fancy trimmings or the completion of samples and special orders.⁸¹ The development of wholesale bespoke departments after the 1890s, and improvements in the quality of factory-made garments, also increased the demand for experienced and able machinists and finishers to complete the more difficult parts of the work.⁸²

In the textile trade many of the important tasks, such as weaving and warping, did not change in character during the period, although women workers were put under extra strain. They were required to cope with additional tasks and with speeded up machinery as employers sought to cheapen production costs.⁸³ Few new machines were introduced, except in the preparatory processes, where women were employed to feed and fill machines rather than to assist male workers.⁸⁴ The direct substitution of women for men in a number of textile occupations did increase the range of tasks available to female workers, although only a small number were affected and they were paid at a lower rate than the men had received.⁸⁵

Women's work may not have been skilled in the sense of requiring a long apprenticeship or in combining technical ability and discretion over a range of tasks, but it cannot simply be viewed as low skilled. Women's jobs did vary in the degree of difficulty involved. It is important to distinguish between industries where adult women had the chance of progressing to better paid and more interesting work, and those in which

work was monotonous, repetitive and where the peak of efficiency was quickly reached. Even if women did exercise a range of abilities, they did not necessarily receive the benefits which would have accrued to male workers in similar circumstances, such as a degree of job control and higher wages. This must be related to women's characteristics as waged workers, in particular their role as secondary earners, which was derived from their position in the family, rather than to the objective content of the work that they did.

In tasks needing judgement and experience women could not fully control their work since they had to rely on men to tend the machines, an area of work which assumed increasing importance for men as factory production grew.⁸⁶ Since the vast majority of female workers were paid by the piece at very low prices, they had to work at a high speed in order to earn average wages. They were unable, therefore, to control the pace of their work in the same way as men who received time wages.⁸⁷ Of greatest importance was the fact that the wages of all women, regardless of ability, tended to fall below those of the least skilled male labourers.⁸⁸ Where women were thought to have a particular aptitude for a task they did not necessarily receive greater rewards. In worsted spinning, for example, men were described as of "no use because their fingers are too clumsy", but adult women in the trade received below average female wages.⁸⁹ There was also no uniformity in the earnings of women with comparable levels of skill who were employed in different industries. Wool and worsted weavers, for example, were thought to need a wider range of abilities than clothing workers, and yet their average wages in Leeds were lower, and also compared badly with those of

weavers in the Lancashire cotton trade.⁹⁰ If an individual worker possessed a particular aptitude, this did not mean that she would receive higher wages than groups of female workers with less ability. Piece work payment ensured that quick workers on simple tasks could often earn as much as women working on complex processes.⁹¹ Whenever women received above average earnings these tended to fall within the parameters of a "woman's rate". The skill labelling of a task had less relevance for women on many occasions than the economic conditions and structure of their trade, the family context from which they were drawn and the fact that women were seen as secondary workers and therefore could be used as cheap labour.⁹² This was made worse by the weak union organisation of women and the absence of any standard rates of pay and conditions in female occupations.

Skill labelling and the sex division of labour were inextricably linked. Women were excluded from work which could objectively be defined as skilled by a combination of trade union restrictions, the prejudices of employers and women's own disinclination to enter into a lengthy period of training because they defined themselves as secondary workers.⁹³ It was more difficult for women to define their work as skilled. They lacked effective union organisation and faced a male workforce who were keen to use gender differences in order to label their own occupations as skilled. Although the skill content of female work in Leeds can be differentiated, this had less effect on their conditions of employment than the fact that they were women with a specific social position, and therefore could be used as a source of cheap labour.

It has been argued so far that the low skilled, light nature of many female tasks cannot provide a sufficient explanation for the location of women in specific occupations, and that the terms light and low skilled could themselves be gendered. The one consistent characteristic of all female work, however, when compared with that of male workers, was its low pay. This ensured that female industrial employment remained specific to their sex despite constant changes in the organisation of work. Employers did not, however, always choose to use female workers simply because they were cheap. The type and availability of male and female labour could, in itself, affect the decisions of employers about whether to change the organisation of work in the first place.⁹⁴ The sex division of labour in Leeds must be examined, therefore, in the light of the complex interaction between the availability of labour, the strategies of employers and the actions of organised workers in each of the city's major female trades.

Changes in the Labour Process and the Sex Division of Labour

Two general influences on the use of female labour must be noted before turning to specific occupations in Leeds. Employers had to make choices within the parameters of the local availability of labour. In Leeds the opportunities for male employment in a variety of skilled and semi-skilled tasks meant that employers could not draw on a pool of very cheap female workers who were desperate for employment at any price.⁹⁵ This affected the predominant methods of production used. Employers established well-equipped factories and offered above average wages in order to attract female workers from skilled working-class

backgrounds.⁹⁶ The ready-made tailoring trade drew in female workers from the declining flax industry, and young women chose the new, purpose-built factories in preference to domestic service.⁹⁷ It was only in the early twentieth century that employers in the two staple trades of textiles and clothing experienced a labour shortage. This was tackled by the greater use of young girls and older single and married women.⁹⁸ Female workers were also increasingly used instead of boys in many trades in the period. Occupations such as wool piecing and typefounding offered little prospect of advancement and therefore found it difficult to attract boys in a city in which there was a variety of male employment.⁹⁹

Employers also had to consider the extent to which their effective use of female labour would be hampered by protective legislation, notably that relating to the maximum hours of employment. In Leeds protective legislation did not adversely affect the extent of women's work, in particular when there were other advantages for employers in the use of female labour. In ready-made tailoring, for example, the larger firms worked fewer hours than the maximum permitted by law on the grounds of efficiency. They were also able to work overtime on several days in the year which meant that employers could cope with the busy season.¹⁰⁰ The number of hours that women were legally permitted to work were lengthy compared with those achieved by men in well organised trades. The use of female labour in the staple trades of textiles and clothing was so extensive that it tended to regulate the hours of male workers in the industry.¹⁰¹ It was only in a minority of processes

such as woolcombing, where night work was needed, that legal restrictions on female labour could have hampered their employment. In these cases the cheap labour of women was such an advantage that they were employed during the day while men worked at night.¹⁰² Bowley's enquiry into the effects of legislation relating to hours on the extent of female employment came to similar conclusions for trades throughout the whole of England and Wales. He claimed that protective legislation which established maximum hours rarely excluded women from work because the line of demarcation between men and women "is rigidly fixed by physical suitability, relative cheapness and custom".¹⁰³

The sex division of labour in specific occupations did not develop in a vacuum. Employers clearly drew on existing patterns of male and female work in dividing their own tasks between the sexes. The clothing trade had long been seen as a suitable area of female employment since women had always made clothes for family members.¹⁰⁴ When clothing was manufactured for sale, however, women were confined to particular branches or tasks. They monopolised all aspects of millinery and dressmaking which catered for a female market and also predominated in the manufacture of lighter garments such as shirts and underclothing.¹⁰⁵ In the manufacture of men's clothing, in particular bespoke tailoring, they were confined to the less skilled finishing processes of the trade both by union restrictions and also on the grounds that aspects of men's tailoring were too heavy for women.¹⁰⁶

With the development of ready-made tailoring and the growth of factory production, however, women came to form the bulk of the labour force

in Leeds tailoring. Female labour was attractive to employers because tasks in the ready-made sector had been simplified through extreme subdivision and required little training, the work was light and sewing presented no problems of "suitability".¹⁰⁷ The cheapness of labour was a particularly crucial consideration for employers who were under pressure to produce low priced goods for an expanding working-class market. Moreover, while power-driven sewing machines increased productivity, most of the finishing was still completed by hand and was extremely labour intensive. The technology of the trade was so simple that it required little capital to establish a workshop and female workshop and homeworkers could produce garments at very low cost. In these circumstances, factory owners sought cheap but efficient female workers to meet the intense competition from centres of small workshop production and homework.¹⁰⁸ Any alteration in the subdivision of labour and in the use of machinery during the course of the period 1880 to 1914 largely affected tasks which were already monopolised by women and did not lead to any changes in the sex division of labour. The main exception to this was pressing, where the introduction of machinery to lighten the task did lead to a greater use of female labour.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the development of wholesale bespoke departments increased the demand for male tailors within the factories and for Jewish workers who were experienced in coat machining.¹¹⁰

It is more difficult to explain why the less skilled tasks in the cutting room remained in the hands of male workers until after 1914. The cutters continually referred to themselves as skilled workers during

the period and the main aim of their union activity was to enforce apprenticeship regulations, although they were rarely successful in this.¹¹¹ Judgement, experience and discretion were still needed for some areas of cutting within the factories, but the work was more subdivided than in the bespoke trade. The standardised and less well fitting sizes in the ready-made trade required less all-round ability than in the made-to-measure work.¹¹² Expertise was still needed for measuring and drawing out the patterns and for laying the patterns on to the cloth to ensure the minimum of waste, but the simpler tasks of dividing the cuttings, trimming the edges or cutting out smaller items required little ability or training.¹¹³ The differences in skill requirements are indicated by the varied earnings of men in the cutting room which ranged from 20 shillings for a fitter up to over 50 shillings for measure cutters and foremen.¹¹⁴ The growth of wholesale bespoke work within the factories did lead to an increased demand for trained and experienced cutters for clothes which needed a more perfect fit, but the bulk of cutters in the factories were still proficient at only one area of the work rather than possessing an all-round knowledge of the trade.¹¹⁵

When women were introduced into the cutting room during the First World War the work had to be reorganised to some extent. According to one witness:

Before the War, a male cutter "got the lay", that is he laid the cardboard patterns on the cloth to ensure the greatest economy of cloth, then he marked out the patterns. Then he laid up the cloth, that is he laid thickness of cloth upon thickness of cloth, and then he took the lay

to the knife. Then he fetched the lay from the knife, divided it into bundles ready for the machinists and divided up the separate patterns from the bundles so as to avoid confusion. Now one skilled cutter "gets the lay" which is perforated and he uses a stencil. Then unskilled lads stencil the top lay and put it on the thickness of cloth and it goes to the knife. Then a semi-skilled woman gets it from the knife and divides it into bundles, each woman knowing her own garment only.¹¹⁶

This does not explain, however, why employers failed to reorganise work in this way before the outbreak of war in order to obtain the advantages of cheap labour, or why women were not used on the less skilled tasks that already existed. Instead, boys and youths were increasingly introduced into the cutting room before the First World War. This formed the source of growing complaints from adult male workers who felt that the use of boy labour posed a threat to their pay and conditions of work.¹¹⁷ Male cutters were poorly organised until just before the outbreak of war and felt particularly vulnerable to the introduction of female and boy labour into work which required little training. Union officials involved in Trade Boards negotiations after 1909, for example, felt it necessary to pledge themselves to ensure that the work already in the hands of men would stay there.¹¹⁸

Given the weakness of their position, union attitudes could not have been the main influence on the employers' decision not to use women in the cutting room.¹¹⁹ Employers may have been keen to take on boys who could learn the trade and then graduate to more adult positions in the cutting process, although Barran's employment ledgers indicate that a high proportion of male cutters involved in more skilled work were

recruited from the bespoke section of the trade.¹²⁰ In this way employers benefited from training which was available outside the factory sector and could avoid union demands for apprenticeship regulations. They also saved costs by employing men at the peak of their proficiency.¹²¹ The maintenance of an all-male cutting room appears to have been related, therefore, to the desire to have single-sex departments on the grounds of propriety, a factor which was important in the recruitment of girls from more comfortable working-class homes. Of even greater importance was the way in which it enabled employers to keep the labour force divided.

Male cutters in the factories, who were often trained in the bespoke sector and saw themselves as highly skilled workers, had little in common with young unskilled female workers or even with less skilled men such as pressers.¹²² These differences were deepened and broadened to include all men in the cutting room by the privileges that cutters received from employers. They enjoyed the highest rates of pay in the factories and did not have to pay the fines and deductions for the use of facilities which were common for female workers. They also did not suffer from the same indignities as women workers, such as being locked in the factories when there was no work to be done.¹²³ Most of the foremen were drawn from the ranks of the cutters and employers made efforts to cultivate a special relationship with their male employees in the cutting room.¹²⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that cutters rarely supported female workers and male pressers in their conflicts with employers.¹²⁵ The skill content of cutting lessened in the early twentieth century with the increasing use of subdivision and mechanisation. In these circumstances, male cutters attempted to

protect their position in the trade and their higher wages by using gender to differentiate themselves from the rest of the workforce. This is evident in the strategies adopted by the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives in the period before the war. It aimed to restrict work in the cutting room to men and to maintain differentials in pay and conditions.¹²⁶

The more complex division of labour between the sexes in the workshops was related both to the variety of processes carried out and also to the immigrant status of male workers. Jewish men worked both in hand sewing and also in machining, tasks which were never undertaken by male factory workers. They were clearly willing to do this because of their immigrant status and because of their search for secure and remunerative employment.¹²⁷ Coatmaking was also more difficult to standardise than the making of trousers and juvenile clothing and some skilled hand sewing was needed to obtain a good fit.¹²⁸ Male workers machined the coats on the grounds that the work was heavy and they earned higher wages than women who completed the lighter and simpler tasks.¹²⁹ It is difficult to assess whether women could have carried out the coat machining as competently as the men. In the early twentieth century female workers were used to make coats within the factories, but the better class work, in particular for wholesale bespoke, was still given to the Jews both inside and outside the factories.¹³⁰

When Jewish men did enter the factories to produce coats for wholesale bespoke, they demanded higher wages than the female machinists on the

grounds that their work was heavier and more skilled. Birnbaum argues, however, that the difference in pay cannot be accounted for by the content of the work alone.¹³¹ He suggests that male immigrants were attempting to preserve their masculinity by re-defining machining, a task not normally carried out by men, as skilled work.¹³² On the other hand, it seems likely that Jewish workers would have been anxious to establish a "male wage" for their work in the face of cheap female competition, and defining their work as skilled would have helped to preserve jobs.

Jewish workers faced constant threats from wholesale clothiers that they would use female labour to make coats within the factories.¹³³ They were also faced with the attempts by master tailors to introduce women into basting and more difficult machining processes.¹³⁴ Male workshop workers were vulnerable to such threats, since the extreme subdivision of tasks had simplified the work involved, and only a minority of Jewish men were fully trained.¹³⁵ The men claimed that they were content to see women employed in female sectors of the trade, but objected to their introduction into male work because they were invariably employed at a lower rate of pay.¹³⁶ Their arguments were overlaid with references to the suitability of the work for women. The secretary of the East End Tailors' Union claimed that "we do not wish to deprive the tailoresses of their fair share of the work, such as a woman's strength enables them to do".¹³⁷

Many master tailors also shared the view that female workers did not have the skill or strength to complete many of the processes in coat

making.¹³⁸ When they were faced with pressures from wholesale clothiers to cheapen the costs of production, therefore, they tended to drive down the prices paid to both male and female workers, rather than making a sustained attempt to substitute women for men.¹³⁹ They also diversified into other areas of the clothing trade, such as the manufacture of ladies' costumes and mantles, as a way to maintain profit levels.¹⁴⁰

In the textile trade the sex division of labour had already been established by the 1880s and therefore an explanation lies outside the scope of the present study. Tasks tended to be divided according to the characteristics of the work and what was deemed to be most suitable for each sex. Men were usually found in occupations requiring skill and training or in heavy labouring work. Women were employed in low skilled work, in tasks requiring some experience and ability, such as weaving, and jobs where lightness of touch and dexterity were thought to be an advantage, for example mending. Hogg suggests that women were employed in specific tasks for economic reasons.¹⁴¹ She argues that employers used them when cheapness was an advantage and the nature of the work did not offend respectability, rather than because they had any historical association with particular occupations.¹⁴² In textiles, however, many tasks appear to have been carried out by men through custom and practice, rather than because the work needed strength, long training or was deemed to be unsuitable for women. This is borne out by the willingness of employers to take on women for tasks in one district which were carried out by men in another.¹⁴³

Employers increasingly tried to alter the sex division of labour between

1880 and 1914 by directly substituting women for men in tasks that were light and which required little training. They faced considerable pressures on their profit margins during the period from foreign competition which pushed them into ways of cheapening production.¹⁴⁴ In Leeds the substitution of women for men was attempted mainly in tasks employing only a small proportion and number of the workforce. Nevertheless, such attempts were not always successful for, despite the weakness of formal organisation in the trade, both male and female workers were active in resisting change. In 1889 cloth drawers fought against the introduction of female labour and had some success, although they admitted that the work was suitable for women.¹⁴⁵ On other occasions it was women who stood firm against employers. At Yeadon and Guisely female warpers stopped work because they were asked to beam warps which was men's work, but they were forced to return on the employers' terms.¹⁴⁶ Thus, women as well as men could seek to maintain the existing division of labour, either to prevent an increase in their own workload, or to support male relatives, or because they accepted the definition of particular tasks as male and female.¹⁴⁷ In weaving, however, where men and women already worked together, the increased use of female labour was a source of bitter conflict between the sexes. This was most notably the case in districts such as Huddersfield where men had little chance of alternative employment.¹⁴⁸ Union leaders argued that women were used both because they were cheap and also because employers found them easier to handle in times of dispute.¹⁴⁹ Male weavers continued to be employed more extensively in Huddersfield than in other West Riding towns throughout the period. Their union was not strong enough, however, to resist successfully all attempts by employers to

cheapen production by the increased use of female labour. The Yorkshire Factory Times claimed that only a third of weavers in Huddersfield were men in 1904 compared with a half in the 1880s.¹⁵⁰

In industries outside textiles and clothing women were increasingly employed in the ancillary processes of sorting and packing or as machine minders. The work was generally light, repetitive and required little training. Conflicts were frequent when employers tried to introduce women on to tasks formerly carried out by men, either by changing the character of the work or by direct substitution. This was most often the case in printing and bookbinding. In one Leeds bookbinding firm men went on strike against the use of ~~women~~ in the less skilled processes. The response of the employer was to close down the binding department, to dismiss the union members and then to confine the firm exclusively to the kind of work that could be carried out by women.¹⁵¹ Another printing firm introduced girls into "laying-on" and gold blocking for the backs of books. The men "made a fuss" at first but the manager claimed that "it soon passed over". The employer put the girls on to the work because it was "suitable" and "light".¹⁵² In these newer factory trades the boom in demand for cheap standardised consumer goods made employers willing to stand up to male trade union resistance and to change the nature of their work if necessary.

The sex division of labour in Leeds can only be explained by the complex relationship between the content of the work, contemporary definitions of suitability, the type of labour available, the advantageousness of

cheap labour to employers and the attitudes and bargaining strength of capital and labour. Women were not automatically employed when work was light, less skilled or mechanised, for employers made choices based on the local context in which they found themselves. Their decisions were then always open to challenge from both male and female workers.

Although the sex division of labour in industry could be changed, this did not necessarily mean that the degree of job segregation by sex was lessened, in particular in the manufacturing sector.¹⁵³ Once a task became associated with one sex, the tendency over the long term was for that sex to monopolise the occupation. A worker's sex, therefore, was the most crucial factor in the allocation of work. It affected both the type of work carried out and also the conditions of employment. The following chapters discuss the degree to which the characteristics of women's employment were distinctive from those of men and the extent to which the features of their work were gendered. That is, whether the conditions of women's work were related to the nature of the work itself, to women's position in the labour market or to the characteristics that female workers were assumed to have by virtue of their sex and their role in the family. It is argued that the sex division of labour in manufacturing industry not only affected the conditions of employment of female workers, but also had an important bearing on the structure and characteristics of employment of all workers. It also affected the attitudes of male and female workers towards their work and towards each other.

CHAPTER 3, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. See, for example, the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), p 479, and the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 22. Contemporaries differed, however, about the emphasis that should be given to different factors and whether change was possible. See, for example, the views of economists in the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 11, and the evidence of Clementina Black, president of the Women's Industrial Council, in Appendix B, p 17.
2. J R MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades (P S King, 1904), p 50; B Webb, "Women and the Factory Acts", in S and B Webb, Problems of Modern Industry (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1902), pp 94-5, noted that work needing physical strength and endurance was not done by women. A A Bulley and M Whitley, Women's Work (Methuen, 1904), p vii, suggested that the relations of men and women to each other and to the family rested on natural laws.
3. See the evidence of Professor E Cannan, an economist, to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 11, p 174.
4. For a discussion of the middle-class model of family life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see A S Wohl, ed. The Victorian Family (Croom Helm, 1978), especially Introduction; P Branca, Silent Sisterhood: Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Home (Croom Helm, 1975), Chapter 1; C Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), Chapter 1.
5. B Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem (Virago, 1983), Chapter 4, and H Land, "The Family Wage", Feminist Review, 6 (1980), pp 58-9.
6. S Alexander, A Davin and E Hostettler, "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop Journal, 8 (1979).
7. See, for example, S Webb, "Women's Wages", in Webb, Problems of Modern Industry, pp 63-4, 78-80. D Zimmern, "Women's Wages", Women's Industrial News, July (1912), p 58, argued that, because women had other work that could not be assessed by a monetary standard, their waged work was seen as having less value, both by themselves and by employers.

8. For a list of the advantages and disadvantages of female labour for employers, see MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, pp 50-1, and Webb, "Women's Wages", p 63.
9. The reluctance of women to take up training and supervisory work is noted in MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, p 65, and in A Harrison, Women's Industries in Liverpool (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 1904), p 39. Zimmern, "Women's Wages", p 59, noted the reluctance of employers to train women and the latter's disinterest because they expected to marry.
10. For a general discussion of sociological views concerning the importance of the family, see S Walby, "Patriarchal Structures: The Case of Unemployment", in E Gamarnikow et al, eds. Gender, Class and Work (Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), especially pp 149-56.
11. R D Barron and G M Norris, "Sexual Divisions and the Dual Labour Market", in D L Barker and S Allen, eds. Dependence and Exploitation in Marriage (Longman, 1976).
12. These points are made in V Beechey, "Women and Production: A Critical Analysis of Some Sociological Theories of Women's Work", in A Kuhn and A M Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (RKP 1978), pp 172-81.
13. Ibid. Recent studies of the labour process suggest that the motives of management in introducing mechanisation and subdivision in the nineteenth century were complex. It is argued that they sought, not only to create a homogenous workforce, but also to establish "hierarchical divisions of labour" as a way to exert control. It is further suggested that strategic groups of workers played a part in the structuring of these hierarchies as a way to preserve skilled status and wage differentials: see, for example, W Lazonick, "Industrial Relations and Technical Change: The Case of the Self-Acting Mule", Cambridge Journal of Economics, III, 3 (1979), and R Penn, "Skilled Manual Workers in the Labour Process, 1856-1964", in S Wood, ed. The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process (Hutchinson, 1983).
14. The existence of a dual labour market is assumed, for example, in J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980), p 2.

15. In discussing the characteristics of secondary workers Barron and Norris frequently allude to different types of male workers who may fit these criteria. They suggest, for example, that pensioners and young people may be less concerned with pay than other male workers: Barron and Norris, "Sexual Divisions", p 63.
16. Walby, "Patriarchal Structures", pp 155-6.
17. Ibid. p 155.
18. For the argument that male workers deliberately attempted to exclude women in order to better their own position in the workplace and in the home, see H Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex", Signs, 1, 3, Pt 2 (1976).
19. For an example of a study which focusses on the effects of the structure of work on female attitudes, see F McNally, Women for Hire: A Study of the Female Office Worker (Macmillan, 1979), especially pp 4-6.
20. This point is made in Beechey, "Women and Production", p 176.
21. This is discussed in J West, "Introduction", in J West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market (RKP 1982), p 4.
22. P Rushton, "Women and Industrialization: A Critical View" (unpublished paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Social History Society, York, 1980), analyses the interaction between family size, structure and relationships and the opportunities for employment in the local areas, Durham and Lancashire, in the mid nineteenth century. He suggests that there were considerable differences in family structure and the work roles of family members in the two areas, and argues that these differences were based on local work opportunities for both sexes, customary practices and the bargaining strength of trade unions.
23. For a discussion of the complex relationship between the needs of capital, the policies of male trade unions and changes in the division of labour, see West, "Introduction", p 4, and B Elbaum et al, "Symposium: The Labour Process, Market Structure and Marxist Theory", Camb. J. Econ. III, 3 (1979), pp 228-9.
24. This point is developed in L A Tilly and J W Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), Introduction.

25. Beechey, "Women and Production", pp 191-2.

26. Lazonick, "Industrial Relations and Technical Change", pp 257-8, argues that mule spinners in the cotton trade maintained their craft control into the twentieth century, despite technological changes which undermined the basis for such control, by a process of conflict, compromise and even cooperation with employers over the form and content of technical change. This always tended towards the exclusion of women from mule spinning. Similarly, Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation", pp 166-7, argues that the exclusionary practices of male unions joined with "the needs of capital to reinforce women's subordination at work". See also A Coyle, "Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry", in West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market, p 24.

27. When male workers wished to exclude women from a trade, despite their long association with it, they frequently used the arguments that it was too heavy and dangerous: for example, see the comments of chain and nail makers to the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), p 523. For a further discussion of women's suitability for particular tasks, see Bulley and Whitley, Women's Work, pp 109-10.

28. S Hogg, "The Employment of Women in Great Britain, 1891-1921" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1967), pp 156-7.

29. Ibid.

30. The term gendered in this context means that women's work was described in certain ways simply because women carried it out, rather than because of any objective criteria.

31. See the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 21-2.

32. Considerable attention has been paid in recent studies to the issue of the social construction of skill, and the extent to which some tasks are labelled as skilled even though the content of the work is largely unskilled. For a discussion of the social construction of skill, see S Wood, "Introduction", in Wood, ed. The Degradation of Work, p 17. See also P Thompson, The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process (Macmillan, 1983), Chapter 4.

33. See, for example, J Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement (George Allen & Unwin, 1973); R Price, Masters, Unions and Men: Work Control in Building and the Rise of Labour, 1830-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); C More, Skill and the English Working Class, 1870-1914 (Croom Helm, 1980).
34. More, Skill and the Working Class, pp 229-30.
35. Ibid. p 230.
36. For an example of an early study which was concerned to analyse the social construction of skill, see H A Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy: A Study of the Cotton Unions (George Allen & Unwin, 1962).
37. Elbaum et al, "Symposium", p 229.
38. R Gray, The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Britain, c 1850-1914 (Macmillan, 1981), p 28.
39. For example, see A Phillips and B Taylor, "Sex and Skill: Notes Towards a Feminist Economics", Feminist Review, 6 (1980), and Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", pp 13-18.
40. Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", p 79.
41. Ibid. pp 80, 83.
42. In particular, see ibid. p 86; Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", p 22; Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation", pp 51-2. For a discussion of the impact of feminist research on the analysis of skill labelling, see Thompson, The Nature of Work, pp 190-201.
43. Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", pp 86-7. For a similar argument, see Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", pp 15, 23-4.
44. The definition of skill is discussed in More, Skill and the Working Class, Chapter 1, and J H Porter, "Skill and the Struggle for Power at the Workplace", Business History, XXIII, 3 (1981), p 359.
45. More, Skill and the Working Class, Chapters 3, 5, 6.

46. Wood, "Introduction", p 17.
47. Ministry of Reconstruction, Report of the Women's Employment Committee (PP 1918, XIV), p 12.
48. Ibid.
49. F Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", in F W Galton, ed. Workers on Their Industries (Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), p 19.
50. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 52, and Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), p xxiv.
51. For a description of the differing size and nature of workshops run by individual dressmakers, see the Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. Report upon the Manufacture of Wearing Apparel by Mr J E White (PP 1864, XXII), pp 19-41. Miss Sadler, a lady factory inspector, noted that individual dressmakers could build up a profitable business if they were prepared to work hard, but small establishments faced increasing competition from the larger workshops: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1907 (PP 1908, XII), p 48.
52. The range of dressmaking skills is noted in the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt 1), p 236. For the wages of dressmakers, see the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp xxiv-v.
53. Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", pp 15-16.
54. Ibid. p 17.
55. Ibid.
56. For example, see S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p 84, and S Meacham, A Life Apart: The English Working Class, 1890-1914 (Thames & Hudson, 1977), p 99.

57. For the unskilled nature of paper bag making in Leeds, see the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. Appendix XVII. Report by C Williams and T Jones on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment in Certain Unions in England (PP 1909, XLIII), p 129.
58. J Woodward, Industrial Organisation: Theory and Practice (1968), quoted in H Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), pp 431-2.
59. United States State Department of Labour, Occupational Handbook, 1968-9, Bulletin 1550, quoted in Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital, p 431.
60. Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", p 15.
61. C Collet, "Women's Work in Leeds", Economic Journal, 1, 3 (1891), p 469, and Rowland Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7140.
62. For embroidering, see the article on Messrs Stead & Simpson, boot and shoe manufacturers, in the Leeds Express, 2 June 1883; for the wages received by 43 experienced workers, including braiders and binders, employed by Messrs Arthur & Co, wholesale clothiers, see the Leeds Daily News, 28 October 1889. Complaints that such well paid workers were in a minority were published in the same issue.
63. Power-driven sewing machines could complete approximately 1,300 stitches in a minute in the 1880s compared with 500 by treadle, L.D.N. 30 October 1889. By the first decade of the twentieth century speeds had increased to over 3,000 stitches a minute: Report by the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1907 (PP 1908, XII), p 166.
64. For example, J W Denton, a wholesale clothier, employed two good machinists on time wages to make new designs: see his evidence to the Select Committee on the Sweating System. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30693-701. Employers frequently stated that experienced girls in their firms could earn over twenty shillings a week: see, for example, L.D.N. 19 July 1889, and Yorkshire Factory Times, 24 October 1890.
65. C Black, "London's Tailoresses", Econ. J. XIV, 4 (1904), pp 566-7.

66. J H Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries (Methuen, 1907), pp 218-20, and Bornat, thesis, pp 138-40.
67. The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 21.
68. Ibid. See also Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 219.
69. William Drew, a union representative from Bradford, noted that burling and mending were often completed at home, and that many women took such work home after a full day in the mill: evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour . Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5449-50. See also Bornat, thesis, p 110. She notes that the fines taken from weavers were often given to menders as a bonus.
70. Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 196-7. Young girls could be trained as weavers as soon as they entered the mill, but they were often not given the sole charge of a loom until they were eighteen because of the heavy lifting involved: The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 21. Weaving, therefore, tended to employ a high proportion of adult women who benefited from strength and experience. In 1911 72.3 per cent of weavers in Leeds were aged over 20 compared with 39.9 per cent of spinners and 65.7 per cent of tailoresses: Appendix 1, Table 1.13.
71. Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 196-7.
72. Quoted in I O Ford, "Women Workers in the Wholesale Clothing Trade", Englishwoman, II, 6 (1909), p 637.
73. Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 197-8.
74. There were numerous reports in the local press about the way in which foremen and forewomen could influence the type of work that women were given to do: see, for example, the report that some weavers always agreed with the tuners in order to get the best work in the Y.F.T. 11 October 1889; see also Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 219.
75. The wages paid in these occupations are discussed below, pp 262-63. In 1911 the proportion of women aged under 20 in the female labour force in engineering, printing and paper manufacture in Leeds was 61.1, 64.1 and 58.1 per cent respectively: Appendix 1, Table 1.13.

76. MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, pp 6, 13.
77. Ibid. p 58. Forewomen were often influenced by the way in which girls were dressed.
78. Ibid. pp 48-9, and Collet, "Women's Work", p 468. In tailoring the demand for skilled workers increased with the development of wholesale bespoke departments: Men's Wear, 23 November 1912 and 28 December 1912. For a discussion of the way in which new skills can be created as other tasks are simplified, see V Beechey, "The Sexual Division of Labour and the Labour Process: A Critical Assessment of Braverman", in Wood, ed. The Degradation of Work, pp 65-7.
79. "Portrait of William Marston", Journal of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses, November (1898), and the evidence of R Burnett, president of the Leeds branch of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt 1), QQ 30481-8, 30548-9.
80. See the letter from "A Spider", Y.F.T. 25 October 1889. The letter noted that the best work was kept for inside finishers which meant lower wages for homeworkers. During the controversy over wages in ready-made clothing in 1889, it was suggested that many tasks once carried out by finishers at home were now undertaken in the factories, and therefore the prices paid to outside workers had been greatly reduced: Leeds Evening Express, 16, 19, 22 July 1889.
81. M Wray, The Women's Outerwear Industry (Duckworth, 1957), p 17.
82. There were frequent references in Men's Wear in the period 1911 to 1913 to the shortage of skilled labour in the factories. See, for example, Men's Wear, 23 March 1912 and 22 February 1913.
83. D T Jenkins and K G Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, 1770-1914 (Heinemann Educational Books, 1982), p 209, and K Laybourn, "The Attitude of Yorkshire Trade Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-96" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1972), pp 10-13. There were frequent references to the speed up of machinery and to workers taking on extra tasks in the local press: for example, see Y.F.T. 26 July and 4 October 1889.
84. Jenkins and Ponting, British Wool Textile Industry, p 206, and Huddersfield Polytechnic Library, G H Wood Collection, Wages Books, CB84, Notes for the Introduction to the Textile Section of the Board of Trade Wages Enquiry of 1906. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, pp 922-3, 925.

85. Attempts were made to substitute women for men in processes such as cloth drawing, twisting-in and beaming warps: Y.F.T. 6 September 1889, 1 August 1890, 1 December 1893.
86. In woolcombing and weaving men and women did similar work, but in both cases it was the men who "tuned" the machinery. This was often given as the reason why women received lower wages: see, for example, B L Hutchins, "Yorkshire", in C Black, ed. Married Women's Work (G Bell, 1915), pp 130-1.
87. This point is made by Coyle, "Sex and Skill in Clothing", p 15. The widespread practice of paying women by piece rates is indicated in the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 33-69.
88. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 33-69.
89. For the description of men's clumsiness in worsted spinning, see London School of Economics, Webb Collection E, Section A, vol XLVII, item 68, Statement of the General Union of Textile Workers, 20 January 1914. For women's wages in worsted spinning, see Appendix 4, Table 4.8.
90. The wages of women in different branches of the textile and ready-made tailoring trades in Leeds are given in Appendix 4, Tables 4.6 and 4.8. For a comparison of the wages paid in the wool and worsted and cotton industries, see L W Papworth and D M Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades: Summary Tables (Women's Industrial Council, 1912), Table VII.
91. J J Mallon, "Women's Wages in the Wage Census of 1906", in B L Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (G Bell, 1915), p 220.
92. Ibid., pp 231-2; Papworth and Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades, p 4; War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 266-7.
93. Mrs F W Hubback, "Women's Wages", New Statesman, Special Supplement on Women in Industry, 21 February 1914, pp xiv-vi, and MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, Chapter 4, discuss the complex reasons why women were excluded from more skilled employment. The implications of job segregation by sex for the conditions of female employment are discussed in C Hakim, Occupational Segregation: A Comparative Study of the Degree and Pattern of the Differentiation between Men and Women's Work in Britain, The United States and other Countries (Department of Employment, Research Paper 9, 1979), Chapter 4.

94. Gray, The Aristocracy of Labour, Chapter 3, discusses the way in which changes in the organisation of work did not simply depend on what was technically possible.
95. This point is more fully discussed in Chapter 8.
96. The attempts of factory owners to attract female labour from more skilled working-class backgrounds were frequently noted in the local press: see, for example, Yorkshire Post, 23 February 1887, and Leeds Mercury, 25 August 1888.
97. For the recruitment of flax workers into ready-made tailoring, see the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7033, and Collet, "Women's Work", p 467. Collet also noted that "young girls all prefer the factory", ibid. p 468.
98. This point is discussed in Chapter 1, especially above, pp 75-6.
99. MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, p 15, and Y.F.T. 6 September 1889.
100. Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), pp 517-8. Before 1895 overtime could be worked on 48 evenings in the year. In 1895 this was reduced to 30 evenings in the year.
101. British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour. Drawn up by A L Bowley (Southport, 1903), p 322 (hereafter British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour).
102. See the evidence of S Shaftoe, secretary of the Bradford Woolcombers' Association, to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 6125-6.
103. British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour, p 324.
104. Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London", pp 73, 83-5.
105. Ibid, pp 84-8, and S P Dobbs, The Clothing Workers of Great Britain (G Routledge, 1928), pp 27-32.

106. Dobbs, Clothing Workers, pp 11-17; B Drake, Women in Trade Unions (Labour Research Department, 1920), pp 31-2; E P Thompson and E Yeo, eds. The Unknown Mayhew (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp 217-74. For complaints of the way in which men working at home used women from their own families to assist in making better class bespoke garments, see the evidence of R Burnett to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30548-9.
107. For the extent of subdivision and mechanisation in the Leeds ready-made tailoring trade, see Collet, "Women's Work", pp 467-8; L.M. 29 December 1888; J Thomas, "A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers No 1 (1955), Chapter 1.
108. The extent of competition from different centres of production is discussed in the Select Committee on Sweating. Fifth Report (PP 1890, XVII), pp xcvi-xcvi. The increasing difficulties that factory owners encountered in maintaining profit levels on cheaper ready-made garments encouraged them to develop wholesale bespoke departments in their firms: for example, see Men's Wear, 17 February 1912.
109. The increasing use of female labour in pressing is discussed above, pp 110-11.
110. Men's Wear, 11 January 1913 and 20 May 1911.
111. See, for example, the speeches made concerning apprenticeship regulations at the meeting to form a union for male factory workers: Y.F.T. 1 November 1889.
112. H Crilly, secretary of the Leeds and District Foremen Tailors' Association, claimed that the workmanship required to produce first-class bespoke goods could not be compared with that needed for factory-produced garments: H Crilly, "Life and Labour in Leeds", Tailor and Cutter, 7 September 1899, pp 439-40. H Withey, secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives, noted that cutters in the factories were used to carrying out the foreman's instructions on cutting to stock sizes and therefore could not do bespoke cutting: Y.F.T. 20 May 1904.
113. See the evidence of H Albrecht and J Young to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 101.

114. Leeds City Archives, Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Reference Book 4, Notes on New Employees, July 1907 - May 1914.
115. Men's Wear, 13 September 1913, noted that evening classes were being offered at the Leeds Technical College so that stock cutters, whose experience was limited to particular sections of the trade, could obtain an all-round knowledge of making up. This would enable them to become managers and foremen. Many tailors, who had been trained in bespoke workshops, entered the wholesale bespoke departments of factories in the early twentieth century because they were offered more regular employment: Men's Wear, 11 January 1913.
116. Evidence of H Albrecht to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 101.
117. For example, see the series of letters from cutters to the local press in 1889: L.D.N. 24, 25, 26, 27 October 1889. In 1896 the Leeds branch of the AUCO led two deputations to employers to complain about the employment of too many youths in pressing and cutting: Half-Yearly Report of the AUCO July 1st to December 31st 1896.
118. Leeds Weekly Citizen, 21 October 1911.
119. The weakness of the AUCO throughout most of the period is more fully discussed in Chapter 11, especially below, pp 513-15.
120. L.C.A. Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Reference Book 4, Notes on New Employees, July 1907-May 1914.
121. As already noted, tailors trained in the bespoke sector entered the factories in the early twentieth century: Men's Wear, 11 January 1913.
122. The backgrounds of cutters employed by Messrs J Barran & Sons indicate the gulf that existed between them and many of the women employed by the firm. For example, Mr Moortown, aged 35, was apprenticed for two years to a bespoke tailor at St Austell and spent a year at the York Cooperative Society. He then worked for a year at Messrs Shelton & Rhodes making liveries all round. He was engaged by Barran's as a collar maker in the cutting room in 1913 at 28 shillings a week. Alexander Ross, aged 29, was apprenticed for four years in Inverness and for three years in London. He worked for two years as a second cutter for Mr Roberts, high class ladies' and gentlemen's tailor, and was subsequently employed as a general cutter in London for four years. He then spent two years with a Glasgow tailor. His father had been a partner in Messrs

Ross & Sons. Alexander Ross was described as a Presbyterian and an abstainer. He was taken on by Barran's in 1909 at 50 shillings a week: L.C.A. Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Reference Book 4, Notes on New Employees, 1913 and 1909.

123. See the discussion below, pp 562-63.
124. For the promotion of cutters to the rank of foreman, see the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7120, and J Denton's evidence to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30715-6. Denton claimed that his foremen received weekly wages and were paid whether there was work to be done or not. They also sometimes received a bonus. Rowland Barran celebrated with men in the cutting room when he was elected an MP: Y.F.T. 27 January 1910.
125. See the discussion below, pp 560-61, and Chapter 12, footnote 73.
126. See the speech by J Young to a meeting of the AUCO: L.W.C. 21 October 1911, and M Sclare, "Female versus Male Labour", Garment Worker, December (1926), p 5.
127. See "Shortage of Labour in Leeds Clothing Trade", J.A.S.T.&T. July (1911), and the evidence of S Freedman to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), Q 20372.
128. See the evidence of M Sclare to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5893.
129. Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration from Eastern Europe into the United Kingdom, Pt III. Foreign Immigration in Relation to Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 122.
130. Rowland Barran claimed that the heavy class of work was better dealt with by the Jews, for they had been "specially engaged in it at all times": see Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7086. A Jewish sub-contractor also noted that "we do the high-class work which cannot be done by girls on the machines in the factories ... machinery is all very well for certain classes of juvenile and cheaper clothes, but where special skill is required, that is where the needlemen come in": Men's Wear, 20 May 1911. J Young claimed that nearly all machinists in wholesale bespoke tailoring were men before World War I: War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, p 101.

131. B Birnbaum, "Women, Skill and Automation: A Study of Women's Employment in the Clothing Industry, 1946-72" (unpublished paper), quoted in Phillips and Taylor, "Sex and Skill", pp 84-5.
132. Ibid., p 85.
133. Report by Mr Hine in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX), p 17. A number of firms threatened to establish their own coatmaking departments during the Jewish workshop dispute of 1911: Yorkshire Evening News, 9 March 1911 and 13 March 1911.
134. Tailor and Cutter, 11 April 1912.
135. For the extent of subdivision in coatmaking, see the evidence of S Freedman to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, vol 2 (PP 1903, IX), Q 20372. He claimed that machinists and pressers learned the trade in Leeds, but tailors were already trained before they came, ibid. Q 20367.
136. See the letter from M Hyam, a workshop worker, during the dispute in the Jewish workshops in 1911: Y.E.N. 3 March 1911.
137. J.A.S.T. & T. February (1901).
138. See the views of a Leeds Jewish sub-contractor reported in Men's Wear, 20 May 1911, and those of J Davis, secretary of the Leeds Master Tailors' Trade Association, in the J.A.S.T. & T. July (1911), p 164.
139. J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp 27-9.
140. Men's Wear, 20 May 1911.
141. S Hogg, thesis, p 279.
142. Ibid. pp 277-9.
143. H.P.L. Wood Coll. Wages Books, CB 84, Notes for the 1906 Wages Enquiry. The Woollen and Worsted Industries, p 929.

144. Jenkins and Ponting, The British Wool Textile Industry, pp 109-12, 229-40.
145. Y.F.T. 6 September 1889.
146. Ibid. 1 December 1893.
147. As late as 1910 female weavers employed by Messrs J Wilson & Co, worsted coating manufacturers, struck in sympathy with 17 male workers who were in dispute with the employers over the introduction of female workers in the warp dressing and twisting department: Y.F.T. 14 April 1910.
148. Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), p 479.
149. See the speeches of union officials reported in the Y.F.T. 9 August 1889 and 21 February 1890, and the evidence of J Downing, president of the Huddersfield branch of the West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association, to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5023-8. In another answer, however, Downing suggested that, if women were paid the same as men, then men would be preferred by employers, ibid. Q 5019.
150. Y.F.T. 18 March 1904.
151. Evidence relating to Leeds of the Federation of Master Printers to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, pp 116-7.
152. MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades, Appendix 2, Firm No 26, Leeds Printers and Bookbinders.
153. Men and women were more likely to be found in similar work in the professions, in particular teaching, in artistic and literary pursuits, in dealing and in commerce. For a more detailed discussion of this, see Webb, "Women's Wages", pp 64-74; War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 122; Hogg, thesis, pp 38-71.

CHAPTER 4CONDITIONS OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, 1880-1914

Female industrial work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is frequently described in general terms as low skilled, low paid and monotonous, which creates the impression that all women had a similar experience of work.¹ This chapter seeks to describe the working conditions of women in the most important female trades in Leeds. It attempts to assess the extent to which women's work could be differentiated according to the tasks and industry in which they were involved and whether the characteristics of their employment had anything in common with those of male workers. It emphasises the need to examine the conditions of women's work in a local context. The way in which work was organised, coupled with the broader social and economic structure of a particular region, could have a considerable effect on the characteristics of women's work in different local areas.² The way in which the type and conditions of work available to women in Leeds affected their attitudes towards work and family will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.³

During the 1880s and 90s, the Leeds female factory worker was seen by the local press as enjoying superior working conditions to those found in the homework and workshop sectors and was compared favourably to women workers in many other regions. The conditions provided by the ready-made clothing factories came in for greatest praise and they were most frequently described as "palaces of industry".⁴ The welfare facilities found in the newer factories, the attention paid to

sanitation and ventilation and the shorter working hours exerted a particularly powerful influence on local opinion, since they contrasted so starkly with the "sweated" conditions of work which were the focus of national public attention and alarm in the period.⁵

There was considerable disagreement in the period about the causes of sweating and whether or not it was associated with particular methods of work. After the House of Lords investigation, it was generally agreed that excessively long hours of employment, very low pay and insanitary conditions constituted sweated work.⁶ At the same time, sweating was closely associated with immigrant and female labour, in particular in trades where small workshops and homework predominated.⁷ Faced with the difficulties of organising women, contemporaries saw the development of large scale factories, using the latest machinery, as the best way to improve the general conditions of women's work, in particular if this was combined with protective legislation, a view repeated in more recent general studies of female employment.⁸ It was suggested that factory owners positively welcomed protective legislation, since it confirmed existing practices in their own firms but undermined any advantages which accrued to their less well organised competitors from long hours and low pay.⁹ The effects of legislation were complex, however, and varied between different industries and between different methods of production. In the rest of this chapter the working conditions of women in Leeds are examined in the context of the different methods of production in which they were found and in the light of the effects of protective legislation. The image of the typical Leeds

female worker as well paid and as enjoying superior working conditions is also critically assessed.

The long association of the clothing trade with sweated conditions of work, symbolised by Thomas Hood's famous poem the "Song of the Shirt", meant that factory owners in Leeds were particularly anxious to promote a different image for the industry.¹⁰ An air of self congratulation permeated the speeches of local businessmen as they noted how the factory production of ready-made clothing had brought "advancement" to the borough and "prosperity for employees".¹¹ MP Mark Olroyd claimed that it showed "how much an industry, properly conducted, may be able to do in connection with the employment of women".¹² Constant references were made to the differences between the Leeds clothing industry and the recently publicised sweating dens, and outrage was expressed at the publication of two articles in the Lancet which suggested that sweating did exist in Leeds.¹³ John Barran claimed that "everything has been done to remove from the firm the stigma of sweating and to place workers in a position to earn good wages with reasonable hours in healthful surroundings and good moral influences".¹⁴ It was also claimed that the large size of Jewish workshops meant that even they could not be associated with sweating in the same way as their London counterparts.¹⁵ The attempt to promote a favourable image for the industry persisted well into the twentieth century. The president of the Leeds Wholesale Clothiers' Association asserted in 1912 that the Association had been formed "to remove the stigma from a trade scheduled under the Trades Board Act as a sweated industry", and that "female labour had no better

employment in any other part of the whole of England than in Leeds.¹⁶

While the newer factories attracted most of the attention, they employed only a proportion of the large female labour force in Leeds.¹⁷ Other women who worked in smaller or older factories, in the varied types of workshops or in their own homes, were subject to very different general working conditions. Also, by focussing attention on only some aspects of the working conditions found in large new concerns, the local press failed to reveal the difficulties faced by female factory workers and gave a misleading impression of their experience of employment.

Women in the new clothing and printing factories did enjoy shorter working hours than other female workers and these fell well below the maximum allowed by the Factory Acts. In non-textile trades employers were permitted to use women for up to 60 hours a week, but in the late 1880s the larger factories normally worked 52½ hours in a full week.¹⁸ A number of factories had an even shorter working week: Messrs Gaunt and Hudson had a normal week of 50 hours, while Messrs J Hepworth & Son already had a 48 hour week by the early 1890s.¹⁹ In 1906 17 of the leading ready-made clothing factories, including Messrs Barran, Rhodes, Arthur, Blackburn and Bainbridge, reduced their ordinary hours still further from 52½ to 49 hours a week. This came after negotiations with the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives and the agreement reached affected 12,000 workpeople.²⁰ By contrast, most textile mills worked up to the legal maximum of 56½ hours a week which was reduced to 55½ in 1901.²¹

Although contemporaries generally advocated the benefits of factory legislation for female workers, the permitted hours were particularly long in the non-textile trades and were above those achieved by many male workers through trade union action.²² Workshops in ready-made tailoring, in dressmaking and in millinery, along with many of the smaller clothing factories, tended to work the maximum 60 hours available and also made full use of the provision for overtime which could be worked on 48 days each year, although this was reduced to 30 in 1895.²³

A further feature of many female trades was irregularity of employment. In the clothing trade there was considerable seasonal variation in demand which meant irregular working hours, in particular in the workshops. In the Jewish workshops male workers, especially the pressers, worked well over 60 hours a week in the busy season, and these were often crammed into a few days at the end of the week, while women were expected to take work home.²⁴ It was made illegal in 1895 for women to take work home after a full working day, but reference still continued to be made to the practice in later years.²⁵ Despite the long working hours in Jewish workshops, men and women still only averaged between three and four days work a week during the course of a whole year.²⁶

Dressmakers and milliners also worked the full permitted hours in the busy season and then suffered slack trade at other times of the year, but the very sharp seasonal variations to be found in London's West End were less severe in Leeds.²⁷ Milliners were often employed as saleswomen after a day's work in millinery which could keep them at work

until 11pm on Saturdays.²⁸ Hannah Mitchell, later to become well known as a campaigner for women's suffrage, described her own frustration when working as a dressmaker:

We envied the cotton mill workers who streamed out of the mill gates as soon as the buzzer went at half past five. At least they knew when their working day would end. We never did.²⁹

Women working in factories producing food also suffered from the irregularities of seasonal employment, and in one fish canning factory there was virtually no work for six months each year.³⁰

In all these trades attempts were frequently made, both by employers and by the workers themselves, to work beyond the legal limits in busy seasons. "Time cribbing" was common in clothing and in textiles when workers started and finished work just outside the time limits imposed by legislation.³¹ In dressmaking it was common for women to stay until a particular task was completed no matter how long it took.³² Smaller workshops were most likely to break the provisions of the Factory Acts and it was almost impossible for factory inspectors to visit such establishments regularly. Female workers themselves were unwilling to complain in case they were dismissed.³³ Prosecutions were also made, however, against factory owners for keeping girls after hours and for giving them work to take home.³⁴ The long hours worked and the exhaustion accompanying them were made worse by the fact that women were not paid a higher piece rate for overtime, while time workers often received no extra payment at all.³⁵

Female workers in the larger factories appear to have benefited from more regular working hours during the course of the year. The ready-made clothing manufacturers could concentrate on clothes which were less subject to fashion changes and made clothing for stock. This meant that they rarely used the full overtime permitted by legislation. Messrs Gaunt & Hudson, for instance, claimed that they worked only an extra hour each day during the busy season which lasted four months, while Messrs J Barran & Sons and William Blackburn thought that their hours were fairly regular throughout the year.³⁶ On the other hand, girls in the larger firms did suffer from slackness of trade as they waited to start a new season's work. This was exacerbated after 1900 by the introduction of wholesale bespoke. This meant that one group of workers could be fully employed while another was slack and waiting for the next order of "specials".³⁷

Workers in all branches of the clothing and textile trades suffered from slackness and short-time working as the industries ran into difficulties during the early 1890s and the first few years of the twentieth century. The clothing trade was particularly vulnerable to conditions of work in other industries. Lengthy strikes in coal, cotton or iron could severely reduce demand when purchasing power would otherwise have been high.³⁸ In the textile trade weavers in particular suffered from irregularity of employment during trade depressions. Even when work was plentiful, they suffered from a reduction in earnings whenever they had to wait for a new cut or for tuners to adjust the looms.³⁹ Women affected by short-time work had to rely on relatives, friends or, as union organisers often implied, turned to prostitution, in order to

support themselves until trade revived.⁴⁰

The effects of legislation on working hours for women were varied. Legislation did appear to set the standard for the hours worked in textiles but, in the larger clothing factories, employers had already decided that a shorter working week than the maximum allowed by law was of benefit to the trade. The permitted maximum hours for women working in non-textile trades were very lengthy, and were fully used by workshops and smaller factories in the clothing trade when work was plentiful. These could then be compounded by illegal extra work which tended to go undetected by the factory inspector. In trades that were not subject to protective legislation, however, weekly hours of work could be even longer. In non-industrial work domestic servants were on call from early in the morning until late at night, while shop assistants in working-class districts could work over 80 hours a week.⁴¹ Women in laundries were not at first covered by the Factory Acts and they were employed for long and irregular hours, including night work. When their hours were regulated by legislation, in 1895, the effects were varied. Packers and sorters, who had often had to stand for 70 or 80 hours a week, were grateful that this had been reduced to 60 hours. Others, however, claimed that the legislation sanctioned a 14 hour day for busy seasons, whereas before they had worked for 12 hours and then received two hours overtime.⁴² The large laundries in the North of England often worked below the maximum hours permitted by law because women were influenced by the hours prevailing in the textile trade and refused to work for longer. In Leeds and Manchester, however, the industries were so varied that the regulations governing

the textile trade did not have the same effect, and the lady factory inspectors found that hours in laundries were as long and irregular as those to be found in London.⁴³ Despite changes introduced in the 1901 Factory Act, hours of employment in laundries remained long up to the outbreak of war.⁴⁴

Apart from working shorter and to some extent more regular hours, women workers in larger, more recently built factories in clothing, printing and textiles also enjoyed a well laid out and clean working environment. Architects of the ready-made clothing factories paid particular attention to lighting, space and ventilation which could be operated by the workers themselves, while separate and efficient sanitary accommodation was provided for both men and women.⁴⁵ The Whitehall Printeries were "light and airy", while Alf Cooke's printing factory had open galleries, a glass roof and electric arc lights.⁴⁶ It was described as "the largest, cleanest, healthiest and most carefully fitted printing works in the world".⁴⁷ Another feature of the new or extended factories was the provision of rest rooms, cloakrooms and dining rooms for male and female workers.⁴⁸ The Leeds factory inspector described the larger clothing factories as "clean, roomy and well ventilated ... there are large lofty workrooms, dining rooms, kitchens and in one, a piano for the girls to amuse themselves with at the midday meal hour".⁴⁹

Leading individuals played an important role in the movement of large factory owners in Leeds towards a shorter working week and the provision of welfare facilities. In this respect John Barran was a key figure. Regarded as a founder of the ready-made tailoring trade in Leeds,

Barran was already established as a wholesale clothier in the 1850s. He pioneered the use of the handknife, subdivisonal methods and the subcontracting of coatmaking to Jewish workshops.⁵⁰ By the late 1880s he had one of the largest factories in ready-made tailoring, employing over 1,000 workpeople.⁵¹ The firm remained a family concern until his death, when it became a limited liability company, although the family retained control on the Board of Directors.⁵²

John Barran shared several characteristics with other well-known employers interested in industrial and social welfare, such as Rowntree and Cadbury.⁵³ He was a Baptist and an active member of the Liberal Party at both a national and at a local level, being elected as an MP in 1876.⁵⁴ He served as a JP, was appointed Mayor of Leeds in 1870 and acted as president of the Chamber of Commerce. Barran was also drawn to educational and social questions affecting working people in Leeds and acted both as president of the Leeds Working Men's Association and as chairman of the Health and Public Welfare Association.⁵⁵ On receiving a baronetcy in 1895 he was described as "a firm believer in principles of progress and of social and religious activity".⁵⁶ Even union leaders admitted that he employed the best class of workgirl and paid the highest prices to outside workers.⁵⁷

The official historian of Barran's firm suggests that the superior working conditions and welfare facilities to be found there can be explained by the philanthropic attitudes of the founder.⁵⁸ But Barran's motives were far more complex than merely an expression of philanthropic concern for the poor arising from religious and moral

beliefs. As early as the 1860s he was already linking working conditions with the question of efficiency, declaring that he opposed overtime because "I found that a week's overtime of 11½ hours per day affected the vigour of the hands".⁵⁹ Similarly, he linked the provision of good working conditions and the recruitment of girls from more skilled working-class homes who, he thought, were likely to be more efficient and more amenable to discipline.⁶⁰ In this context attention was paid in the firm not only to the physical conditions of work but to the moral atmosphere. One newspaper reported that "in the larger factories the moral character of the applicant is the subject of enquiry ... they provide dining rooms and solicitude for the operatives' comfort ... this leads to better health and assiduity of the workers".⁶¹ Not only were girls employed by John Barran expected to behave "respectably", for example by wearing bonnets on leaving the factory, but managers and foremen were dismissed if they used bad language, practised favouritism or made advances to the workgirls.⁶² By this means it was hoped that families of skilled or white-collar workers would feel confident about sending their daughters to his factory.⁶³

Historians have too often concentrated on the attitudes of particular individuals when dealing with the question of conditions of work and industrial welfare. This cannot provide a sufficient explanation, however, of the more general trend to adopt shorter working hours, better conditions of employment and welfare facilities that were characteristic of most of the newer factories in clothing, printing and food production in Leeds after the 1880s. In ready-made tailoring, for example, the backgrounds of employers and the pattern of ownership and

control varied widely, and yet they all provided similar facilities. There were families such as that of Joseph Hepworth who, like John Barran's family, took an active interest in local social and political affairs. Other wholesale clothiers were not involved in the public life of the town, and a number of leading firms were controlled by directors living in Scotland who employed managers to cope with the day-to-day running of their factories in Leeds.⁶⁴

The actions of some leading employers must have influenced the behaviour of others in similar concerns. It is hard to escape Hay's conclusion, however, that the emphasis on better working conditions can only be explained by reference to the wider social and economic context of the period, in which a greater premium was placed on efficiency.⁶⁵ This led employers from widely diverse industries to take an interest in social welfare, either within their own firms or at the level of state policy.⁶⁶ In Leeds wholesale clothiers had to expand their home market by offering cheap clothing at an acceptable standard in the highly competitive conditions of the late 1880s and early 1890s. They hoped to gain an advantage in terms of productivity and quality of the finished product by increasing the efficiency of the work force. This was related in turn to shorter hours, congenial work conditions and family background.⁶⁷ This was of considerable importance in an industry where the level of technological innovation afforded only a limited advantage to factory owners. They faced competition from centres of low paid workshop and homeworkers, and therefore the way in which work was organised became of crucial importance. The minute subdivision of tasks, a well organised and closely supervised

production flow, coupled with disciplined and efficient workers, all contributed to the success of factory-based production in clothing.⁶⁸

The specific structural features of the clothing industry, however, cannot provide the sole explanation for the adoption of superior working conditions. As already suggested, they were also found in other trades during the period.⁶⁹ Printing and food production did not face the same competition from other methods of production as the ready-made tailoring trade. One must look, therefore, to a more ready acceptance from employers in new factory industries of the latest ideas concerning worker efficiency, in order to explain the adoption of improved conditions of work. With the erection of new factory buildings it was easier to introduce a higher standard of working conditions, while the size of many of the concerns of the 1880s also facilitated the provision of dining and cloakrooms.⁷⁰ It is significant that all these firms employed a high proportion of female workers. Employers tended to explain their policies with reference to this, although their motives were mixed. On the one hand, it was assumed that efficient female workers could only be attracted by "pleasant" working conditions, with some employers believing it to be appropriate for young women to work in such an atmosphere.⁷¹ On the other hand, it was assumed that it would also serve to deflect any discontent, and ensure a loyal, hard working labour force.⁷²

Joseph Melling has argued this point as a way to explain why the provision of welfare policies was widespread in this period, covering a variety of industries as well as both male and female workers.⁷³ He suggests

that the provision of good working conditions and welfare schemes was used as a way to exert managerial control, and as an antidote to socialism and industrial strife. He is specifically concerned with the formal welfare schemes introduced in individual firms. Melling argues that traditional, often authoritarian, paternalism was giving way to more general welfare provisions. These were "more incorporative" and conflict was sublimated within them.⁷⁴ Such schemes were used at a time when managers rather than owners were most in evidence, and he argues against the view that the development of a managerial group necessarily meant the "alienation" of the worker.⁷⁵

Whatever the pattern of ownership and control in Leeds, the day-to-day running of the firm, the hiring and firing of staff and the disciplining of the workforce was largely left to managers or foremen. In family firms the employer did set the tone for the establishment and leading figures such as John Barran and Joseph Hepworth were well known to their workpeople.⁷⁶ They openly expressed the view that good working conditions reduced discontent and organised yearly trips to the seaside, concerts and social gatherings.⁷⁷ Union organisers complained that these were attempts to gain the loyalty of the workforce and to deflect them from collective organisation.⁷⁸

It is difficult, however, to assess the overall effects of employment conditions on the attitudes of female and male workers. Employers were able to divide the small number of male cutters from the bulk of the female labour force by giving them special treatment and this weakened a sense of solidarity in the trade.⁷⁹ Rowland Barran also claimed that

the loyalty of the workforce to his father had prevented any disputes in the firm for 30 years; but the absence of strike action could be accounted for by the type of backgrounds from which the workforce was largely drawn.⁸⁰ The frequent strikes in clothing and textiles in the 1890s indicate that women were willing to take action when wage levels were threatened, and the obligation to pay for the facilities provided could in itself be a cause of discontent.⁸¹ It is also extremely difficult to disentangle the provision of good working conditions from the other factors which led to weak trade unionism.

A concentration on the facilities provided by the leading factory owners, however, gives a one sided and misleading picture of the daily work experiences of many female workers in Leeds. The Yorkshire Factory Times, which had close links with the labour movement, continually referred to sweated conditions in clothing factories and workshops, textile mills, engineering shops and in homework, pointing in particular to insanitary conditions, low pay and long hours.⁸²

The general work environment in many smaller factories and workshops failed to match that of the larger factories. The investigations by the Lancet into Jewish workshops in the Leylands concluded that they were dirty, unhealthy and provided insufficient sanitary accommodation.⁸³ Even the larger establishments were little better. In a workshop employing 80 men and girls there was adequate light, space and ventilation, but:

the floor was abominably dirty ... the closets were of the

trough system and immediately under the workshop windows ... the water was black and gave off offensive odours and the closet seat was filthy. A urinal was placed against the workshop wall and the bricks of the wall, being unprotected, were saturated.⁸⁴

After conducting his own investigations the Leeds factory inspector found that the report was not exaggerated.⁸⁵ In smaller clothing factories Isabella Ford noted that it could be very cold in winter and women had to use umbrellas to keep off drips from the skylight.⁸⁶ Workrooms containing gas irons for pressing could be poorly ventilated, causing inflamed eyes, and this was particularly prevalent in smaller workshops where the atmosphere was hot and stuffy.⁸⁷ The lack of adequate ventilation and the absence of suitable sanitary accommodation was not confined to the clothing trade. Laundry workers suffered from excessive heat and a stuffy atmosphere, while in the older textile mills it was reported that "men and women have to use the same sanitary accommodation ... a stream passes through the closets and this creates a fearful stench".⁸⁸

Many female tasks were associated in themselves with unpleasant working conditions. In the weaving sheds the noise of the machinery was deafening and few seats were provided, either in this department or in spinning.⁸⁹ One female factory inspector reported an incidence of prolonged standing in another Leeds factory which employed mainly young girls, most of whom were aged between 13 and 15. They said that they got very tired before the end of the morning and afternoon spells of work from standing for five hours at a time, and some had swollen legs. After the inspector's complaints, the firm provided stools for

37 out of 300 girls.⁹⁰ The feeders of scribbling machines worked in considerable dust and fluff which settled on their chests.⁹¹ Rag sorting was "offensive and laborious", with women receiving internal injuries from carrying the heavy bales.⁹² Factory inspectors complained that young girls were increasingly being used in heavy pressing work in the clothing factories because of a shortage of adult female labour.⁹³ Also, the close work involved in weaving white cloth and in some aspects of finishing work in the clothing trade was thought to lead to weak eyesight.⁹⁴

Although these problems were associated either with specific tasks or with individual factories and workshops, there were other adverse conditions of work which were shared by all female workers, including those employed in the largest, most well appointed factories. Indeed, the focus in the local press on the improved working conditions of selected firms masked the intensive exploitation of a largely unorganised female workforce which lay beneath the surface.

Both the textile and the ready-made tailoring trades faced considerable economic pressures during the period, in particular in the early 1890s and in the first few years of the twentieth century.⁹⁵ In both cases, the large female labour force bore the brunt of the attempts made by employers to become more competitive and to reduce costs. In the larger clothing firms employers did introduce new machinery when it became available, but the industry remained essentially labour intensive during the period. Attention was increasingly focussed, therefore, on ways to reduce labour costs.⁹⁶ It has already been noted that in the

wool and worsted trade employers tended not to introduce innovations, but to speed up and reorganise existing machinery and processes, usually to the detriment of the workers involved. Employers in both industries were assisted in their attempts to cut costs by the fact that they faced a largely unorganised female workforce with little power to resist.

A common method of reducing labour costs was by systematic fining and deductions, although employers often gave other reasons for these practices. Contemporary investigations frequently highlighted the extent to which homeworkers had to bear many of the costs of production, such as finding their own thread, heating their workrooms and paying the firm for pressing.⁹⁷ Such deductions were also made, however, from inside workers in both large and small factories. Regular payments were made for thread, needles and the power used to run the sewing machines. Deductions for power ranged from $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 2d in every shilling earned.⁹⁸ Discontent over the power charge led to a lengthy strike of tailoresses in 1889. As a result of the adverse publicity surrounding the strike, most employers reduced or removed the power charge.⁹⁹ By the early twentieth century the union secretary could think of only one firm that still made such a deduction.¹⁰⁰ The charge for "sewings", however, persisted until the end of the period.

Another charge on earnings, both in the textile and in the tailoring trades, was the requirement to pay for damaged goods, whether or not the individual worker was at fault. Textile workers had to pay 2d for broken picks and were expected to re-do faults for no extra payment,

even if the flaws were caused by poor quality material rather than their own carelessness.¹⁰¹ In tailoring girls were expected to pay for damaged garments and therefore often raffled the goods among their workmates.¹⁰² Employers claimed that charges for sewings and damaged goods ensured that only the best quality cottons would be used and that workers would exercise care, but contemporaries argued that all such deductions meant a great saving in labour costs for employers.¹⁰³ They suggested that by fining workers, employers were insured against all risks and damages in the process of production, whether caused by faulty machinery, poor materials or the carelessness of employees, out of the wages of female workers.¹⁰⁴ In paying for materials and power women were also increasing the profits of employers who had already benefited from the increased productivity of power-driven machinery.¹⁰⁵

While the press praised the benevolence of employers in providing welfare facilities, their reputation became tarnished during the publicity surrounding the tailoresses' strike of 1889, when it was revealed that women had to pay for these facilities out of their own wages. Regular deductions of 1d to 2d a week were made for the use of dining rooms, to pay for the cook or cleaners and for medical charities.¹⁰⁶ Employers argued that such deductions were necessary, for example to pay for the wages of cooks. Mary Macarthur estimated, however, that in one firm with several hundred employees, the deduction of 2d each week would have provided the firm with a profit of £150 a year, since the cook received only 8 shillings a week in wages.¹⁰⁷ One union organiser described this as nothing short of "refined swindling".¹⁰⁸

Letters to the press from female workers, and reports in the Yorkshire Factory Times, indicated that fining and other pressures on women's wages were being intensified in the 1890s. Complaints were frequent that employers expected extra work for no extra pay. In the clothing trade, instead of employing a woman to trim garments as they left the machine, finishers in some factories were expected to do it themselves and yet they received ½d per dozen less because of the time wasted.¹⁰⁹ In textiles weavers were expected to "mend pieces, raise healds, fetch bobbins - they tend to do it at meal times. Formerly twisters-in or tuners drew the warps through and raised the healds, especially for women".¹¹⁰ By these methods employers were able to extract even further labour value from a workforce with already low wages.

Female factory workers were also subject to a harsh work discipline which appears to have been intensified during the 1890s. Discipline was partly imposed by an increase in the pace of machinery which required constant attention. In the 1880s power-driven sewing machines could complete approximately 1,500 stitches in each minute, but by the early twentieth century the newest models could complete 4,000 stitches each minute and accidents in which fingers were punctured by needles became more frequent.¹¹¹ Contemporary descriptions of *factory life repeatedly* noted that female machinists never stopped to look up from their work.¹¹² As late as 1912 complaints were still being made about speeded up machinery and the use of automatic clocks to regulate the worker's every move.¹¹³ The increased speed of looms also caused stress and strain and increased the risks of injury.¹¹⁴ One woman, whose sisters were employed in her old

weaving shed, claimed that the firm had tightened up on discipline. Women were not allowed to make waste or they were fined 1d. When she worked in the firm they had never fined women for being late:

We could speak to the tuner if we wanted time off and if the firm wasn't busy we could take the day off, but now they have to engage another weaver in their place and make sure that she's good enough for the manager.¹¹⁵

Female workers had little control over the pace of their own work or over the way in which they used their time. They had to keep up with the speed of the machinery and payments by the piece ensured that work was carried out as quickly as possible. Employers were continually reducing the prices paid, often on the pretext that work had been reorganised or new machinery introduced, but female workers complained that this usually meant a fall in earnings.¹¹⁶ In the tailoring factories women were locked in even when there was no work to do and therefore they received no wages, although Rowland Barran denied that his firm carried out this practice.¹¹⁷

Work discipline was also imposed by the extensive use of fining and by the close supervision of foremen and forewomen. The most usual fines were for unpunctuality, although they could be imposed for breaches of behaviour and moral conduct, in particular singing and larking.¹¹⁸ The amount of fines levied varied from firm to firm but the following is a typical example: if five minutes late the worker was fined 1d and this rose to 2d at 8.15 and 3d at 8.30. Then the doors were locked until 9 when the fine was 4d.¹¹⁹ Such fines caused great bitterness, for it

was pointed out that not 10 per cent of the girls could earn 1d in five minutes.¹²⁰ Tom Maguire, the socialist poet and union organiser, who sympathised with the plight of female workers, and had a keen eye for the details of their day-to-day working lives, captured the relentless pressure of factory life in his poems. An "Underpaid Agitator" cried:

It's shameful to put us on piece
And fine us at times if we're late,
When the work in the shop has come to a stop,
And there's nothing to do but to wait.
And it's worse to be fined for a stitch
That a minute or two would set right
But they drop on us hot, if a fault they can spot
And, as often as not, out of spite.¹²¹

It is difficult to establish whether employers in the period actually had a problem of labour discipline and whether fining had the desired result. The textile trade was so long established that it is doubtful that the female workforce would have been unaccustomed to factory discipline, although fining was widespread.¹²² The ready-made tailoring trade did require a new labour force. Some women were initially recruited from the declining flax trade; in Rowland Barran's view this had necessitated a system of fining, for the women were "unruly" and had to be disciplined to cope with the more precise work needed in the clothing factories.¹²³ Employers were divided, however, on whether fining had any results, in particular over the question of unpunctuality.¹²⁴ By the early twentieth century Barran's discontinued fines for lateness on the grounds that they had not proved effective. It was argued that in periods of good trade, the girls' earnings were

high and therefore small fines had not deterred them from arriving late for work.¹²⁵ This accorded with the views of union organisers and factory inspectors who also saw fines as degrading and often unjust. They urged instead that persistent offenders should be dismissed or made to work extra time.¹²⁶ Overall, employers stood to gain financially from fines. Contemporaries recognised this but directed their accusations at unscrupulous employers who dragged the others down with them.¹²⁷ In Leeds, however, fining was so widespread in all the factory trades that the label unscrupulous would have had to be applied very widely.

The discipline exerted by male and female supervisors was at once more effective and also the source of bitter complaints from workpeople and union organisers. Supervisors derived their power from a variety of sources. In textiles male workers often directly employed other workpeople, usually women, girls or youths, while foremen in ready-made tailoring had the power to hire and fire workers, to set the level of their wages and to levy fines.¹²⁸ They also derived authority from their ability to affect weekly wages by giving selected women the most remunerative work or keeping them employed during the slack season. This led to the practice of favouritism which encouraged workers to always agree with the foreman or to buy him drinks in order to obtain the best work.¹²⁹ One Leeds overlooker sold boots and if the employees dealt with him, they were likely to achieve promotion or better wages.¹³⁰ The powers of foremen not only left girls afraid to disobey but could make working conditions unpleasant, for many individuals were abusive in the way in which they spoke to women.¹³¹ When male supervisors were

involved, favouritism could also lead to sexual exploitation.¹³² Girls competed with each other to gain the foreman's attention, but the consequences could be pregnancy or dismissal. In Maguire's poem "Barbara" this fate befell a tailoress after seeking the favours of the foreman on a firm's seaside trip.

We started in the morning, when
 The foremen flourished bottles,
 And gaily passed the liquor round and round;
 They occupied the time like men -
 Attending to their throttles -
 Who were not really happy till
 Their wits were nearly drowned.
 And fast and free, in giddy glee
 At Scarboro', at Scarboro',
 The foremen and their favourites went jigging up and down,
 For they were out upon a spree;
 And they had taken Barbara
 To treat her, and bewilder her, and show her round the town.

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Barbara took a holiday.
 A letter came next morning
 From Scarboro' - a black line round the rim;
 It told of her who'd passed away
 From reach of human scorning,
 With never a hint concerning the
 Identity of him !
 And O! the sea, the wild blue sea !
 Holds Barbara, hides Barbara,
 And shields her in its shadow from the glances of the sun;
 The mermaids chant her RIP -
 She lost her soul in Scarboro',
 And cast away her body where her sorrow was begun.¹³³

There is some evidence that work discipline in a number of textile firms and clothing workshops was less intense than in the ready-made factories. Cadbury noted the freer atmosphere in smaller factories, while Isabella Ford claimed that singing was common in textile mills, but

discouraged in the larger clothing factories.¹³⁴ Workshop workers were less subject to fines and some described the working atmosphere as relaxed.¹³⁵ There is plenty of other evidence, however, that Jewish master tailors, under pressure themselves from the wholesale factories, drove their workpeople particularly hard.¹³⁶

Female workers in the new, purpose-built factories in Leeds did enjoy better working conditions, higher wages and shorter hours than women employed in older textile factories, in workshops or in their own homes. An over-concentration on these aspects of their employment, however, can distort any understanding of the way in which they experienced their work. Women were subject to a harsh work discipline and to constant pressures on their wage levels throughout the period. The evidence for this does not conform to the impression given by contemporaries that they were paid high wages. Union organisers constantly tried to expose the falsity of such claims and one official of the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives, speaking in 1912, warned that "there is trouble ahead for employers who, while posing as public philanthropists and model employers, are not prepared to give their workers a living wage".¹³⁷ Apart from the shorter hours conceded by the leading clothing firms in 1906, and the virtual disappearance of power charges by the early twentieth century, other working conditions showed little improvement by the end of the period. Deductions for materials and fines for damages remained widespread despite changes in legislation which aimed to reduce such practices.¹³⁸

The weakness of union organisation in Leeds among female factory workers

meant that it was difficult to achieve changes through collective action. Where the practices of large firms changed over time, therefore, this was usually the result of management decisions regarding efficiency and profitability, rather than to pressure from the workforce.¹³⁹ In 1913, however, at a time when trade was brisk, when there was a shortage of experienced female labour and when male factory workers were more fully organised, the union was encouraged to press for a higher minimum wage and the abolition of all fines and deductions. Employers conceded the latter early in 1913, but later in the year the union still included the demand in the list of points for negotiation.¹⁴⁰

A large pool of relatively cheap and unorganised female labour, therefore, played a crucial role in enabling employers in a variety of trades in Leeds to develop their industries and to keep them competitive. Leeds women workers may have had superior working conditions when compared with the more notorious centres of sweating, but they were subject to fines, the speed up of work, a harsh work discipline and still represented a source of cheap labour for employers when compared with male workers.

The same employers who boasted of providing superior working conditions within their factories were also responsible for employing homeworkers at very low rates of pay and for contributing to the competitive conditions in the Jewish workshop sector.¹⁴¹ Frequent references were made to factory owners who gave work to those masters who offered the lowest prices, while accusations were common that foremen had to be bribed if workshop owners were to receive any work.¹⁴² Firms such as

Barran's no longer employed homeworkers by the early twentieth century and had had a long relationship with one or two Jewish workshops. Yet even Rowland Barran could tell the Chamber of Commerce that "the wholesaler could not concern himself with the wages paid by outside contractors to their workers".¹⁴³

Many of the features of female employment in Leeds were not unique to women, in particular if they are compared with men working in less skilled industrial employment rather than with skilled craftsmen. Less skilled men had to labour for long hours in heavy monotonous work which required little training, and they also suffered from seasonal or cyclical short time work.¹⁴⁴ They were subject to increased pressures at work from the speed-up of machinery and a harsher work discipline, they had little control over the pace and content of their work and were forced to curry favour with the foreman if they wanted promotion or better wages.¹⁴⁵ It has also been suggested that women workers themselves must be differentiated. Their conditions of employment could vary according to the tasks they performed, the industry in which they worked and the method of production used.

On the other hand, there are ways in which the work experience of most women can be differentiated from that of most men, even if the latter were classed as unskilled and lacked strong trade union organisation. Work which could be defined as skilled on the grounds of the length of training needed, the degree of discretion over work content required or the extent of union organisation and control over the workplace was always out of the reach of female workers simply on the grounds of their

sex. Moreover, certain conditions of work, such as systematic fining, were far less common for male workers and could be used by employers as a way to differentiate between the sexes. Women were vulnerable to sexual exploitation by foremen and were constantly made aware of male power over women through the structure of authority at the workplace, in particular in the textile mills and tailoring factories. This is apart from the fact that women, because of their social position within the family, were likely to have brought different expectations to the workplace.¹⁴⁶

The most crucial differentiating feature of male and female work, however, was women's low pay, for their wage rates consistently fell below those of the least skilled male labourer.¹⁴⁷ This was closely related to the segregation of jobs by sex which was both caused by, and contributed towards, women's role in the labour force as cheap labour. The extent of women's low pay, and its relationship to the position of both men and women within the family, are examined more fully in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. L Mackie and P Patullo, Women at Work (Tavistock, 1977), Chapter 3; L Woodcock Tentler, Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-30 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp 19-20, 29-31; G Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War (Croom Helm, 1981), pp 24-7.
2. For examples of the local differences in the characteristics of female employment, see S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1976); A John, By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines (Croom Helm, 1980); J Liddington and J Norris, One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement (Virago, 1978), Chapters 5, 6; E Roberts, "Working-Class Women in the North West", Oral History, V, 2 (1977).
3. See Chapter 9.
4. For examples of the use of the term "palace of industry", see Leeds Mercury, 10 January 1889, and Bradford Observer, 25 June 1888.
5. The contemporary interest in sweating is discussed in E P Hennock, "Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-Eighties", Social History, 1, 1 (1976), especially pp 84-91, and in J A Schmiechen, Sweated Industries and Sweated Labour: The London Clothing Trades, 1860-1914 (Croom Helm, 1984).
6. Select Committee on the Sweating System. Fifth Report (PP 1890, XVII), p xlii.
7. Ibid., p xliii. There was some controversy about the extent to which foreign immigration was responsible for sweating. The main report concluded that it affected only some trades and was not responsible for sweating in general.
8. See the evidence of C Booth to the Select Committee on Sweating. First Report (PP 1888, XX), QQ 307-24, and R H Tawney, The Establishment of Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Industry Under the Trade Boards Act of 1909. Studies in the Minimum Wage, No 2 (G Bell, 1915), especially pp 149-61. Miss Anderson, the chief lady factory inspector after 1897, argued that "it is in the interests of the whole community to have clothing made within a

- regulated factory rather than in the workers' homes": Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1896 (PP 1897, XVII), p 71. Clementina Black, a member of the Women's Industrial Council and the Fabian Women's Group, suggested, however, that sweated conditions could be found in nearly all forms of production, including factories: C Black, Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage (Duckworth, 1907), Chapter 2. For examples of more recent studies which view the development of factory production as a positive benefit for the labour force, see J Thomas, "Later Developments in the Clothing Industry", Leeds Journal, XXV (1954), p 337, and M Stewart and L Hunter, The Needle is Threaded (Heinemann & Neame, 1964), pp 121-3.
9. Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 119-10. See also W Stephen Sanders, The Case for the Legal Minimum Wage, Fabian Tract No 128 (Fabian Society, 1906), pp 18-19.
 10. Henry Mayhew, for example, discussed the sweated conditions in the tailoring trade in the 1840s: see E P Thompson and E Yeo, eds. The Unknown Mayhew (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), especially pp 262-73.
 11. Speech made by Mark Oldroyd, MP, at the opening of Messrs Arthur & Co's new factory: L.M. 12 January 1889.
 12. L.M. 25 August 1888.
 13. A report in the Yorkshire Post, 12 June 1888, suggested that the Lancet articles highlighted only the worst places. It went on to claim that the industry had brought benefits to the town and praised the integrity of men of capital. Similar points were made in the L.M. 12 January 1889. For examples of contrasts being drawn between Leeds tailoring and centres of sweated industry, see L.M. 12 January 1889, and Bradford Observer, 25 June 1888.
 14. Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal, 26 September 1891.
 15. J Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 4.
 16. Men's Wear, 24 February 1912.
 17. Printing, paper manufacture and allied trades employed only 4.2 per cent of the female labour force in Leeds in 1911: Appendix 1, Table 1.9. In 1906 it was noted that the 17 leading firms in ready-made tailoring employed 12,000 workpeople out of a total labour force in the industry of just over 23,000: Yorkshire Factory Times, 11 May 1906.

18. In a normal week of 52½ hours women worked from 8.00am to 6.30pm, with one hour for meals, between Monday and Friday. They worked from 8.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday. Report by Mr Hine in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891. (PP 1892, XX), pp 17-18.

19. Y.F.T. 22 January 1892. Hepworth's worked from 8.30am to 12.15pm on Saturday, and from 8.30am to 6.15pm between Monday and Friday, in the period from October to February. For the rest of the year the hours were from 8.00am to 5.45pm during the week and from 8.00am to 12.15pm on Saturday.

20. Y.F.T. 23 March 1906, 11 May 1906, 25 July 1907.

21. Report by Mr Hine in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX), p 18.

22. British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour: Drawn up by A L Bowley (Southport, 1903), p 318 (hereafter British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour).

23. Ibid., p 317.

24. See the evidence of James Sweeney to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30234-43. G H Rickards, the Leeds factory inspector, claimed, however, that women only took work home for a few weeks before Easter and Whitsun: ibid. QQ 30964-7. For further examples of the practice of taking work home after a day in the factory, see I O Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women of the Working Classes", Y.F.T. 17 March 1893, and the report by Mr Hine in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX) p 17.

25. Miss Anderson found that girls were still taking work home at the end of the day from Leeds Jewish workshops in 1896: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1896 (PP 1897, XVII), p 71.

26. Jewish employers differed among themselves about the regularity of employment in their workshops. They gave figures which ranged from 3½ to 5 days a week. Representatives of the workforce claimed that 3 days a week was a usual average for the year: Burnett, Report on

- the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), pp 5-6. In 1893, a year of trade depression, Clara Collet found that employers were working for only 3 to 4 days a week: Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration from Eastern Europe into the United Kingdom. Pt III. Foreign Immigration in Relation to Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 116.
27. Miss Paterson, a lady factory inspector, reported that in Scotland and the North of England dressmakers worked from 9.00am to 7.00pm during the week, and from 8.00am to 4.00pm on Saturday, for nine months in the year. For three months they worked from 8.00am to 8.00pm between Monday and Wednesday, from 8.00am to 10.00pm on Thursday and Friday and from 8.00am to 4.00pm on Saturday: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1893 (PP 1894, XXI), pp 15-16. For the seasonal variations in different regions, see the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), p 14, and F Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", in F W Galton, ed. Workers on Their Industries (Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), pp 17-18.
 28. Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1894 (PP 1895, XIX), p 23.
 29. H Mitchell, The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel (Virago, 1977), p 76.
 30. W G Rimmer, "Food Processing, 2", Leeds Journal, XXX (1959), p 177. He notes that only a third of the workforce were employed during six months in the year.
 31. Y.F.T. 27 July 1906; British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour, p 318; R Squire, Thirty Years in the Public Service (Nisbet, 1927), p 135.
 32. Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", p 16.
 33. For example, see the list of prosecutions by Mr Hine in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1892 (PP 1893-4, XVII), p 122. For women's fear of dismissal, see the Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1893 (PP 1894, XXI), p 12.
 34. For example, see Men's Wear, 24 May 1913 and 21 October 1911. The Y.F.T. 19 February 1893, reported that the Colonial Clothing Factory was fined 10/- for a breach of regulations.

35. See the letter from Isabella Ford in the Women's Trade Union Review, July (1900). See also Leeds Weekly Citizen, 18 April 1913.
36. See the evidence of Leeds wholesale clothiers to the Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), pp 402-3. Hine claimed that in the busy season a typical firm worked from 8.00am to 8.00pm for two to three months and from 8.00am to 10.00pm for one to two months. He did not think that the majority of Leeds firms used the 48 days overtime allowed under the Factory Acts: Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX), p 18.
37. See the trade reports for Leeds in Men's Wear, in particular 4 May 1912 and 25 May 1912.
38. See, for example, the complaints of Joseph Hepworth that strikes in the North of England were having adverse effects on the ready-made clothing trade: L.M. 5 October 1892. A trade report in Men's Wear claimed that "when working men are crippled for want of funds the powers of spending money on clothes is appreciably lessened, and that is why the wholesale clothiers of Leeds ... are so anxiously watching the development of labour troubles": Men's Wear, 13 January 1912.
39. See the evidence of Ben Turner on behalf of the West Riding of Yorkshire Power Loom Weavers' Association to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5673-9, 5823-8; see also Y.F.T. 11 October 1889, for a report on the way in which tuners kept female weavers waiting.
40. One newspaper editorial noted that "when trade is slack, women go to the streets to get clothes to wear and to look like the others": Y.F.T. 30 January 1891. For further references to the relationship between low pay in tailoring and prostitution, see I O Ford, Industrial Women and How to Help Them (Humanitarian League, c. 1900), p 8, and Y.F.T. 29 May 1891.
41. B L Hutchins and A Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation (Frank Cass, 3rd ed. 1926), p 221. Miss Tynan, Yorkshire organiser for the Shop Assistants' Union, claimed that in one main shop in Leeds girls were employed from 9.00am to 8.00pm for three days and from 9.00am to 11.00pm for two days in the week: L.W.C. 23 May 1913. See also J Hallsworth and R J Davies, The Working Life of Shop Assistants (Manchester: The National Labour Press, 1910), Chapter 3.

42. Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1896 (PP 1897, XVIII), pp 67-8.
43. Ibid, p 68.
44. Mr J J Stark of the National Federation of Laundry Associations and the Launderers' Association Ltd, and Miss S E Butterworth of the Laundry Workers' Union, claimed that laundresses worked an average of 60 hours a week in the pre-war period: War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix D, pp 106-07.
45. The conditions prevailing in leading tailoring factories, including those of Messrs Arthur, Barran, Buckley and Hepworth, are described in the L.M. 22 September 1888.
46. For a description of the Whitehall Printeries, see Industries of Yorkshire, Pt I: Leeds and Bradford (Historical Publishing Co 1888), p 107. Alf Cooke's factory is described in W G Rimmer, "Printing and Printing Machinery, 2", Leeds Journal, XXIX (1958), p 355.
47. Rimmer, "Printing and Printing Machinery, 2", p 355.
48. For a description of Hepworth's clothing factory, see Industries of Yorkshire, p 80. The facilities in the larger clothing firms are described in the L.M. 25 August 1888, and those in the printing trade are detailed in Industries of Yorkshire, p 107. Press reports suggest that all the leading tailoring and printing factories provided similar welfare facilities. Some of the newer textile firms also provided them. For example, when Peter Laycock, a woollen manufacturer, extended his premises to accommodate 200 extra workers, he "provided everything for their comfort": Y.F.T. 26 September 1890. Such facilities were not, however, a feature of the textile trade as a whole. For a discussion of the lack of dining facilities and the inadequate sanitary accommodation in Yorkshire textile mills, see Miss Abraham's report in the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), pp 101, 110-2.
49. Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1891 (PP 1892, XX), p 17.
50. See J Thomas, "A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers No 1

- (1955), pp 8-11, and the evidence of John Barran to the Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. Report on the Employment of Females in Certain Trades in Leeds and other Towns in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), p 6.
51. In 1888 Barran employed 1,200 workpeople, and by 1892 he had 1,120 female and 320 male workers: L.M. 22 September 1888, and Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), p 402.
 52. In 1893 the firm became a private limited company to enable former male employees to become shareholders. The general public were not invited to take shares until 1905: Joint Stock Companies Journal, 1 January 1908.
 53. For a discussion of the backgrounds and ideas of Rowntree and Cadbury, see A Briggs, Social Thought and Social Action: A Study of the Work of Seebohm Rowntree, 1871-1954 (Longman, 1961), Chapter 1; J Child, British Management Thought: A Critical Analysis (George Allen & Unwin, 1969), pp 38-41; J Child, "Quaker Employers and Industrial Relations", Sociological Review, XII, 3 (1964), especially pp 300-05.
 54. Outfitter, January (1895).
 55. Ibid. and L.M. 4 May 1905.
 56. L.M. 1 January 1895.
 57. See the evidence of J Sweeney to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), Q 30355, and the evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 5657-8. He claimed, however, that the girls from "better class" homes were not necessarily the most competent workers because they were less interested in weekly earnings.
 58. D Ryott, John Barran's of Leeds, 1851-1951 (Leeds: E J Arnold, 1951).
 59. Evidence of John Barran to the Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. The Employment of Females in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), p 6.
 60. See the evidence of John Barran's son, Rowland, to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7033, 7139.

61. The newspaper report referred to Barran's factory: L.M. 25 August 1888. The backgrounds of potential employees were scrutinised by the firm. Particular attention was paid to whether a relative was already employed in the firm and to the respectability of the family. Teetotal and church-going families received most approval: Leeds City Archives, Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Reference Books 1-4, Notes on New Employees, 1886-1914.
62. Rowland Barran claimed that girls always wore bonnets when leaving the factory: see his evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7198. Tailoresses employed by Messrs J Barran & Sons had a number of complaints about fines and deductions, but were satisfied with the behaviour of the foremen: L.D.N. 18 October 1889 and 21 October 1889. R Barran claimed that foremen were dismissed if they took fines themselves: Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7119.
63. See Rowland Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7139. John Barran did appear to have had success in recruiting girls from skilled and white-collar homes: see L.C.A. Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Employees, 1883-93.
64. Joseph Hepworth was a member of the City Council, acted as a JP and was Mayor of Leeds, 1906-7. For a biographical sketch of Hepworth, see Men's Wear, 21 October 1911. Messrs Arthur & Co, J & W Campbell & Co and Stewart & MacDonald were all financed by Scottish capital and had their headquarters in Glasgow: Yorkshire Post, 23 February 1887, L.M. 25 August 1888, Y.F.T. 19 July 1889.
65. J R Hay, "Employers and Social Policy in Britain: The Evolution of Welfare Legislation, 1905-14", Social History, IV, 1 (1977), pp 438-9.
66. Ibid.
67. There was an assumption running through reports in the local press that larger factories paid more attention to welfare in order to promote "better health and assiduity" among the workforce: see, for example, L.M. 25 August 1888, Y.P. 12 June 1888, L.M. 14 January 1891. The relationship between welfare provisions and efficiency was developed most fully by Messrs Montague Burton Ltd, whose first Leeds factory was established just before World War One: R Redmayne, ed. Ideals in Industry. Being the Story of Burton, 1900-50 (Leeds: Petty, 1951), especially p xxiii. Manufacturers in other cities expressed similar views. One Birmingham manufacturer, for example, claimed that good wages meant better business and greater efficiency: E Cadbury, M C Matheson and G Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City (T Fisher Unwin, 1906), p 143.

68. A Coyle, "Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry", in J West, ed. Work, Women and The Labour Market (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp 10-11.
69. P Mathias, The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914 (Methuen, 1969), p 20, argues that new industries required better and more efficient labour. He suggests that their labour costs were low, leaving them some leeway, they faced little foreign competition and they sought to increase the level of purchasing power in the home market. Hay, "Employers and Social Policy", p 438, however, suggests that the provision of welfare benefits and attention to efficiency affected a wide range of businessmen who faced different market and labour situations. He claims that welfare facilities were found both in new consumer-goods industries and in the older heavy industries.
70. It was more worthwhile for employers to provide welfare facilities if they had a large workforce. Their profit margins were usually greater and there were more people to cater for.
71. It was suggested that, since the newer clothing factories turned out higher quality work and required skilled workers, tradesmen's daughters were attracted to the industry and this raised the social status of the work: Y.P. 23 February 1887. See also L.M. 14 January 1891.
72. At a political meeting John Barran said that he was proud of his workpeople and had not had a dispute in the firm for 20 years: Y.F.T. 18 December 1891. Messrs W Blackburn & Co claimed that they had avoided strikes by having consideration for their workpeople and by looking after their interests. "Our system works remarkably well as we pay a full week's wages". See the firm's evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), p 688.
73. J Melling, "Industrial Strife and Business Welfare Philosophy: The Case of the South Metropolitan Gas Company from the 1880s to the War", Business History, XXI, 2 (1979), pp 163, 174-6. See also J Melling, "'Non-Commissioned Officers': British Employers and Their Supervisory Workers, 1880-1920", Social History, V, 2 (1980).
74. Melling, "Industrial Strife", p 163.
75. Ibid. p 176.

76. Joseph Hepworth, for example, employed a qualified manager who had assistants for each department: Industries of Yorkshire, p 80. At the opening of his new factory references were repeatedly made to the way in which he was on "good terms" with his workpeople: L.M. 14 January 1891. Messrs J Barran & Sons had a factory manager, but members of the family played an active role in the running of the firm: see the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7029, 7184.
77. See the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7035. The Yorkshire Factory Times frequently referred to the provision of teas, concerts and trips. For example, Peter Laycock, woollen manufacturer, took his workers to Morecambe for the day and they invited him to tea and entertainment in return: Y.F.T. 26 September 1890.
78. The adverse effects of the "tripping season" were pointed out in an article in the Y.F.T. 26 June 1891. It was suggested that, when workers asked for trips, employers used this as an excuse to make wage reductions. The article complained that the dependence on employers for outings undermined the independence of the labour force. For further references to the detrimental effects of tripping, see Y.F.T. 6 September 1889, 12 June 1891, 23 June 1893.
79. For a full discussion of this point, see below, pp 561-63.
80. See the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7035. Many of the girls who worked at Barran's had fathers who were managers, foremen or white-collar workers. Men in such occupations tended to be antagonistic towards trade unionism.
81. The extent of strike action, the causes of disputes and the weakness of female trade unionism are more fully discussed in Chapter 11.
82. For references to sweating in the tailoring industry, see Y.F.T. 6 May 1890 and 17 January 1890. For a later article on sweated conditions in engineering, shirt and blouse making and sackmaking, see Y.F.T. 20 May 1909.
83. "The Sweating System in Leeds", Lancet, 9 June 1888, pp 1146-8.
84. Ibid. p 1147.

85. L.D.N. 11 June 1888. J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), Chapter 2, argues that, despite some contemporary statements to the contrary, conditions in Jewish workshops had not improved by the early twentieth century.
86. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women"; see also the description of an older clothing factory in the L.D.N. 22 October 1889. Miss Sadler found low temperatures of 44 to 50 degrees in Leeds factories. She thought that these were particularly uncomfortable for women who had not had a good breakfast: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1913 (PP 1914, XXIX), p 78.
87. Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1895 (PP 1896, XIX), p 20.
88. For conditions in laundries, see the British Association, The Economic Effect of Legislation Regulating Women's Labour, pp 359-60. For the sanitary conditions in textile mills, see the evidence of Ben Turner to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5440-1. Turner noted that the sanitary accommodation was "extremely injudicious and often leads to immorality".
89. Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1907 (PP 1908, XII), p 173.
90. Ibid.
91. Y.F.T. 17 January 1890.
92. J H Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries (Methuen, 1907), p 189.
93. Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910 (PP 1911, XXIII), p 130. Miss Lovibond reported that, in a Leeds clothing factory, a girl of 15 was employed on pressing seams with an iron weighing 20 lbs. Mr Wright, the Leeds factory inspector, also reported that young girls were used on power presses, and pointed to the dangers that they faced from unguarded machinery: ibid. p 54.

94. Y.F.T. 30 August 1889; Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1908 (PP 1909, XXI), p 147; C Black, "London's Tailoresses", Economic Journal, XIV, 4 (1904), p 565.
95. See the discussion above, pp 166-67, 174.
96. Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle, pp 22-3.
97. In one article on homeworkers it was suggested that 1d was deducted for pressing: L.D.N. 23 October 1889. For more general references to the costs incurred by homeworkers, see Women's Industrial Council, Homework in Liverpool (Liverpool: Northern Publishing Co 1909), pp 5-8, and M H Irwin, The Problem of Homework (Glasgow: K & R Davidson, 5th ed. 1919), pp 9-19.
98. Messrs Arthur & Co charged 1d in the shilling for power, Messrs Schofield & Parkinson charged ½d, while Messrs Barran, Rhodes, Buckley, Hepworth and Bainbridge did not charge for power at all. The charge for dining facilities averaged 1d a week, but Messrs J Barran & Sons charged 2d: L.D.N. 18 October 1889 and 31 October 1889. Tailoresses were charged 5d for an ordinary reel of thread, but claimed that it cost only 3½d in the outside shops: Y.F.T. 25 October 1889.
99. For an account of the strike at Messrs Arthur & Co in 1889, see J Hendrick, "The Tailoresses in the Ready-Made Clothing Industry in Leeds, 1889-99: A Study in Labour Failure" (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Warwick, 1970), Chapter 4. For the comments on the removal of the power charge, see the evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5491.
100. Evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5491.
101. Y.F.T. 13 January 1893. It was frequently reported during the 1890s that weft was rotten and therefore broken pieces were becoming more common: for example, see Y.F.T. 6 June 1890.
102. See the letter from Isabella Ford to the Women's T.U. Rev. December (1896), and the Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1896 (PP 1897, XVII), p 73. Male pressers in Jewish workshops also had to pay for damages: see the evidence of M Sclare to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 5927-9.

103. Rowland Barran, for example, claimed that his firm provided the cotton to ensure that only the best quality was used. He argued that fines for damages were imposed for disciplinary reasons and that the firm did not make a profit from them because they were used to finance workers' trips: Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7218-23. Withey, on the other hand, claimed that many girls tried to reduce the amount they paid for cotton by substituting reels bought from outside their own firms. He argued that in most factories only a small proportion of the fines received were used to finance trips. He estimated that employers received £300-£400 in fines each year, but spent only £110-£120 on trips. Ibid., QQ 5473, 5527-38.
104. A A Bulley and M Whitley, Women's Work (Methuen, 1894), pp 100-1.
105. Reporting on the general nature of power charges in the North of England, Miss Newton, a lady factory inspector, claimed that by this means workers were providing capital for employers. She argued that this enabled employers to gain an even greater share of the profits derived from power-driven machinery: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1908 (PP 1909, XXI), p 161. One newspaper editorial argued that improved machinery had benefited other groups of workers such as weavers and engineers, but they had not been expected to pay for it: L.D.N. 30 October 1889. The Y.F.T. 6 December 1889, also condemned the practice of workers providing any other materials than their labour.
106. "Grievances of the Leeds Tailoresses", Y.F.T. 13 December 1889. At Messrs Arthur & Co girls paid 1d for medical charities, 1d for a sick club and 1d for the dining room: L.D.N. 21 October 1889.
107. L.M. 19 March 1909. Mary Macarthur became general secretary of the National Federation of Women Workers in 1909 and acted as secretary of the Women's Trade Union League from 1903.
108. Interview with Tom Maguire and James Sweeney in the L.D.N. 18 October 1889.
109. Y.F.T. 13 September 1889.
110. Ibid. 30 August 1889. For further examples of employers attempting to give women extra work, see Y.F.T. 27 September 1889, 1 August 1890, 23 November 1890.

111. Differing reports were given of the average speed of power-driven sewing machines in the 1880s which ranged from 800 to 1800 stitches per minute: Y.P. 23 February 1887, and L.D.N. 30 October 1889. For the later speeds, see the Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910 (PP 1911, XX), p 122.
112. Dundee Advertiser, 4 September 1896. Finishers also worked at a relentless pace. It was noted that "the girls were too busy to do more than glance at visitors": L.M. 10 January 1889.
113. L.W.C. 11 October 1912.
114. Evidence of J W Downing and A Gee to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 4990, 5057.
115. Y.F.T. 24 January 1890.
116. For example, see the complaints of the weavers employed by Joshua Wilson, woollen manufacturer, over the changes made in the prices paid for finished cuts: L.M. 18 September 1888. James Sweeney claimed that if a girl was found to be earning 14/- or 15/- she would be watched for a few weeks. Then the manager would either reduce the prices paid or give her extra work which, in turn, affected the wages of women on lower earnings: Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30336-9.
117. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women", Evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7132. He claimed that girls were allowed to go home each hour, on the hour, when there was no work to be done.
118. See the evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5449. Similar fines were reported for the wool and worsted industry in the 1890s: see the evidence of W E Yates, Leeds worsted coating manufacturer, in the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 7722-6.
119. Y.F.T. 13 December 1889.
120. Ibid. H Withey claimed that girls were fined 1d if they were five minutes late, 2d after half an hour and 3d after an hour, which was out of all proportion to the wages that they could earn in that time: Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5448.

121. "The Underpaid Agitator", in T Maguire, Machine Room Chants (Labour Leader, 1895), p 29.
122. There were numerous references in the local press to fining in the textile trade; see, for example, Y.F.T. 30 August 1889 and 24 January 1890. See also the evidence of W H Drew to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), Q 5621.
123. See Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7033.
124. Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, pp 205-9, noted that some employers had found that fines were unnecessarily punitive if girls were late through no fault of their own. They had therefore introduced other methods to ensure punctuality. In Dudley one clothing firm had stopped imposing fines for lateness because "the girls did not mind them in the least, and only paid so much less at home when fined": Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 59. Miss Abraham found a variety of practices with regard to fining in wool and worsted mills in the Leeds district. Some firms did not levy fines, others left them to the discretion of the "percher" who inspected the finished cloth and in other firms the fines were heavy: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), pp 110-2.
125. See the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7047-8.
126. Isabella Ford, president of the Leeds Tailoresses' Union, argued that unjust treatment led to demoralisation. Women resented fines when they were paid by the piece and therefore they did not bother to be punctual. She thought that dismissal for persistent lateness would be more just: I O Ford, "Women Workers in the Wholesale Clothing Trade", Englishwoman, 11, 6 (1909), pp 641-3. The lady factory inspectors also thought that fines for lateness were often arbitrary and unjust. This encouraged workers to be late and caused distress to those accidentally delayed. They advocated other disciplinary measures, in particular the threat of dismissal: see the Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1913 (PP 1914, XXIX), p 107, and Squire, Thirty Years in the Public Service, p 102. Barbara Hutchins, a member of the Fabian Society, claimed that fines permitted less scrupulous employers to make "illicit" profits out of the failings of the workforce. She suggested, therefore, that they made financial as well as disciplinary

- gains. She argued that fines were only "fair and reasonable" if they related to the amount of the worker's wage as well as to the employer's damage. The employer never paid the worker the gross value of her work and therefore Hutchins claimed that he should not be allowed to deduct the gross amount for the losses sustained on damaged goods: B L Hutchins, "Truck, Fines and Deductions", Women's Industrial News, January (1913), p 97.
127. Hutchins, "Truck, Fines and Deductions", p 97. A letter from "Needful" claimed that one firm paid £1 per gross for cotton reels and, by selling them to machinists at 5½d a reel, made a profit of £2.6/- on a gross: L.D.N. 26 October 1889.
128. For the power of supervisors in the textile trade, see the evidence of F W Hadwen, member of a firm of Yorkshire silk spinners, to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), Q 6940. He claimed that head dressers and spinners hired and paid their own assistants. Beamers, twistlers and warpers also paid their own reachers-in: Y.F.T. 25 February 1909. In the clothing trade foremen fixed the wages and piece rates of female workers: see the evidence of J W Denton to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), Q 30715, and L.D.N. 17 October 1889. Relatives of supervisors, in particular of managers, were given favourable working conditions and were called "off shoots": Y.F.T. 22 November 1889.
129. See, for example, Y.F.T. 11 October 1889.
130. Ibid. 18 January 1912.
131. In one firm women went on strike because the foreman used abusive language. This had caused him to lose his job on other occasions. The union managed to get the firm to agree that the foreman would be dismissed if his behaviour did not improve: Y.F.T. 21 January 1909.
132. It was reported in one mill that menders were pursued by the foreman who tried to show them obscene photographs: Y.F.T. 14 February 1890. See also the speech by Tom Maguire reported in the L.D.N. 18 October 1889, and the concerns expressed at a meeting of the Leeds Women's Labour League noted in the L.W.C. 7 July 1912.
133. "Barbara", in Maguire, Machine Room Chants, pp 14-15. An editorial in the Y.F.T. 31 January 1890, warned that girls should not go to balls because they ended up fawning over the foremen and tuners.

134. Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, p 94, and Ford, "Women Workers in the Wholesale Clothing Trade", p 643.
135. A J Taylor, "Leeds and the Victorian Economy", University of Leeds Review, XVII, 2 (1974), p 299, and letter from "Little Sarah" in the L.D.N. 31 October 1889.
136. For example, J Sweeney claimed that day workers were driven hard in the workshops in his evidence to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), Q 30355. See also the letter from M Hyam, a workshop worker, who noted that "the employer has perhaps two or three sons in the shop, walking up and down and never taking their eyes off you for two minutes at a time. It makes the operative's life in the workshop worse than slavery": Yorkshire Evening News, 1 March 1911.
137. L.W.C. 10 February 1912.
138. Ibid. 13 December 1912. The paper suggested that fines, deductions, charges for sewings and the raffling of damaged goods were still widespread.
139. For example, see the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7047-8.
140. It was reported in the L.W.C. 21 March 1913 that employers had agreed to abolish all fines, except those for damages, and all deductions, apart from those for cotton. Later in the year, however, the union's new wage demands included the end of fines, deductions and charges for "sewings": ibid. 11 July 1913.
141. Buckman, Jewish Immigrants and the Class Struggle, pp 54-6. He suggests that the large factories encouraged the growth of bedroom masters in the early 1900s.
142. For example, see the evidence of J Sweeney and D Joseph, a master tailor who had worked for John Barran for 16 years, to the Select Committee on Sweating. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 30207-10, 30560-71.
143. Quoted in Buckman, Jewish Immigrants and the Class Struggle, p 56.

144. A M Anderson, Women in the Factory: An Administrative Adventure, 1893-1921 (John Murray, 1922), pp 25-6. The extent to which men and women shared similar characteristics of employment is discussed in A Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives (Macmillan, 1981), p 5 and Pt 2.
145. Meacham, A Life Apart, Chapter 5.
146. This point is more fully discussed below, pp 412-18, 548-57.
147. Women in regular employment, however, often took home higher weekly wages than men who were casually employed. Also, the most skilful and experienced weavers in the cotton industry averaged higher weekly wages than unskilled male labourers.

CHAPTER 5WOMEN'S WAGES IN LEEDS, 1880-1914

The wage differential between male and female workers was one of the most important aspects of inequalities in production based on sex divisions. It is highlighted most acutely in industrial employment where many men could be found in low skilled, monotonous work of a similar character to that of female workers.¹ Although women workers in Leeds received lower rates of pay than male workers in comparable tasks, it would be misleading to characterise them simply as low paid workers. The wage rates and earnings of women varied according to age, individual aptitude and the type of work in which they were engaged. Moreover, as contemporaries pointed out, there were also regional variations in women's wage rates, earnings and other conditions of employment.² This chapter examines women's wages during the period 1880 to 1914 in the most important industrial occupations for female workers in Leeds, noting the differences in earnings between women workers in specific tasks and industries and between women and girls. It also examines the extent to which wages and earnings changed over the whole period. Finally, there is a discussion of the regional differences in female earnings and of the relationship between male and female wages.

Any examination of the wages of women or other less skilled workers comes up against problems of insufficient data and the difficulties of interpreting the evidence that does exist. Women were largely unorganised and therefore were seldom subject to "log" prices or other wage agreements which could be used as a guide to wage rates.³

Employers and trades unionists made frequent references to women's wages which were reported in the local press. Their statements tended, however, to be put forward during disputes and were therefore often conflicting.⁴ This makes it difficult to assess the accuracy of the wage figures given. The local press rarely presented comprehensive statistics on wages and often failed to point out how many workers could earn the wages given, how regularly the wages were received and whether the way in which work was organised in different firms affected the prices paid and their comparability. The evidence in the local press does, however, provide an important basis for evaluating the more comprehensive statistics which were gathered by the Board of Trade in two wage enquiries conducted in 1886 and 1906.⁵

The main value of these surveys lies in their attempt to be systematic about their findings, although the statistics can therefore carry an air of authority which is misleading. Trade unionists criticised the averages put forward for being too high and for failing to take account of fines, deductions and the effects of seasonal variations in employment.⁶ The 1886 wages census drew its information from Chambers of Commerce which were thought to have sent in the best possible wage figures.⁷ Only a minority of workers in each trade were covered by the returns. Fairly detailed statistics were collected for the different branches of the textile trade, allowing for local comparisons to be made, but too few tailoring workers were covered by the returns to provide a satisfactory basis for determining national and local wage rates.⁸ The 1906 enquiry into wages was far more comprehensive. A wider range of industries was covered, a higher proportion of schedules

were filled in and sent back by employers and more detail was given on the type of processes in which women were engaged.⁹ It was generally agreed at the time, however, that the average wages produced were inflated; 1906 was a year of good trade. Moreover, larger employers, who often paid the highest wages, were more likely to have filled in the schedules, while low paid women working in small workshops or at home were not included at all.¹⁰

The emphasis of government investigations on average wages can also be misleading, for it conveys the impression that there was such a person as an average worker.¹¹ In reality, the use of averaging can conceal the extent to which there was a wide variation in the earnings of individuals in specific tasks. This was related to the quality of the goods produced and to the speed and ability of the women involved. Average wages for women might be similar across different industries, but, in some, a wide range of earnings might be possible, whereas in others women were restricted to far narrower wage bands.¹² The 1906 survey does, however, provide a useful guide to the proportion of women whose earnings fell within specific limits. When used alongside the average wages this enables a more accurate assessment to be made of the differences in women's earnings between specific tasks and whole industries. Despite its many shortcomings, the wages enquiry of 1906 does allow a comparison to be made of women's wages in different trades and regions and also reveals the extent of the wage differential between the sexes.

Women's Wages in Industrial Occupations in Leeds, 1880-1914

The discussion of women's wages in Leeds has been organised into three

sections. The first deals with women's wages in the major factory trades in Leeds, the second considers the workshop sector, while the third deals with low paid female trades. The latter includes homeworkers, women in small workshops and also women in factory trades which paid wages below the average for adult women in the area.¹³ There were individual tasks within the main factory trades in which the wages paid to adult women were low, but these are considered in the first section. A distinction has been made throughout between the wages of adult women, defined in contemporary investigations as aged 18 or above, and girls.

The main factory trades. Employers in the new factory trades in Leeds, in particular in ready-made tailoring, prided themselves on providing women with well paid work. This was contrasted with the conditions prevailing in centres of sweated workshop production and homework, notably in the south of England.¹⁴ Contemporaries interested in social questions also repeatedly made a general contrast throughout the period between well paid factory workers in the north and sweated outworkers in the south.¹⁵ This comparison was primarily based on the method of production which predominated in local areas, but it was also pointed out that even factory workers in the south received lower wages than their counterparts in the north.¹⁶

By focussing on regional differences, however, contemporaries provided a distorted picture of women's wages in the north. They projected an image of the northern working woman as being well paid and working in superior conditions, which has been accepted in more recent studies of female employment before 1914.¹⁷ Such an approach, however, raises

only one set of questions, for it fails to judge women's wages on the basis of any objective criteria. Also, by comparing the wages of one group of women with another it encourages the view that women workers should be considered as a group apart from the rest of the labour force. In this way women's wages and conditions of work are analysed according to a different set of criteria from those applied to male workers. This underestimates the extent to which even better paid factory workers were used as a source of casual and cheap labour.

In the rest of this chapter women's wages in Leeds are compared with those of women workers in other areas. Further questions are also raised concerning the differential between the wages of male and female workers and over the extent to which female earnings were sufficient to enable women to be self-supporting or to provide for dependents. It is hoped that this will provide the basis for a more realistic assessment of the contemporary image of the well paid working woman in Leeds.

The most significant feature of the two staple factory trades for women in Leeds - wool and worsted textiles and ready-made tailoring - was the variety of tasks open to women and the range of possible earnings. The Leeds woollen industry was separately listed in the 1886 wages census, although only approximately 20 per cent of female workers in the trade were covered by the returns.¹⁸ The following table shows the number of women and girls returned for specific tasks and the average wages received by each group for full-time work in one week in October 1886.¹⁹

Table 5.1 Average Wages of Women and Girls in Selected Processes in the Leeds Woollen Trade for One Full Week in October 1886²⁰

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Women</u> | | <u>Girls</u> | |
|--|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Average Wage</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Average Wage</u> |
| Waste Sorters (T)* | 4 | 9/9 | -- | -- |
| Scribblers' Feeders and Condenser Minders (T) | 65 | 10/8 | -- | -- |
| Spinners' Piecers (T) | 35 | 9/5 | 76 | 8/3 |
| Winders (T) | -- | -- | 5 | 6.3 |
| Warpers (T & P) | 12 | 15/2 | -- | -- |
| Healders' Assistants (T) | -- | -- | 12 | 8/4 |
| Weavers (P) | 918 | 13/7 | 44 | 11/11 |
| Burlers & Knotters (T) | 55 | 10/2 | -- | -- |
| Menders & Fine Drawers (T) | 57 | 13/10 | -- | -- |
| Knotters (P) | 57 | 10/- | 34 | 6/6 |
| Others | 9 | 9/10 | 8 | 7/8 |

* T= Time wages; P = Piece wages

Warping, mending and weaving were the best paid occupations for adult women and weaving employed 76.5 per cent of all women in the returns.

The lower paid processes accounted for almost 20 per cent of all women covered by the statistics.²¹ Unfortunately, the 1886 enquiry did not provide separate returns for the Leeds worsted trade which was of minor significance at that date, but Clara Collet's investigation of a number of worsted cloth mills in Leeds in 1891 gives some indication of the proportion of women whose wages fell within particular limits.²²

Table 5.1 The Proportion of Women and Girls Earning the Under-mentioned Wages in Worsted Mills in Leeds in 1883 and 1891²³

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Under</u> <u>10/-</u> | <u>10/-</u> <u>-12/-</u> | <u>12/-</u> <u>-15/-</u> | <u>15/-</u> <u>-18/-</u> | <u>18/-</u> <u>-21/-</u> | <u>21/-</u> <u>plus</u> | <u>Relative</u> <u>No Employed</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <u>All Branches</u> | | | | | | | |
| June 1883 | 34.1 | 11.6 | 10.0 | 21.7 | 18.7 | 2.9 | 100 |
| Feb-March 1891 | 40.5 | 12.3 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 7.6 | 1.6 | 206 |
| <u>Weaving</u> | | | | | | | |
| June 1883 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 12.3 | 37.6 | 43.1 | 6.2 | 100 |
| Feb-March 1891 | 1.2 | 5.3 | 35.2 | 35.5 | 19.0 | 3.8 | 180 |
| <u>Spinning & Drawing</u> | | | | | | | |
| June 1883 | 84.2 | 15.8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 100 |
| Feb- March 1891 | 82.3 | 17.7 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 203 |
| <u>Knotters, Warpors and Winders</u> | | | | | | | |
| June 1883 | 40.5 | 26.2 | 16.65 | 16.65 | -- | -- | 100 |
| Feb-March 1891 | 53.2 | 16.4 | 15.4 | 15.0 | -- | -- | 255 |

Again, the best paid work and the greatest range of earnings were found in the weaving branch of the trade, although some of the high earnings were related to the fact that these mills produced the best quality worsted coatings and their weavers were largely adult women.²⁴ The proportion of women earning wages above 15/- declined between 1883 and 1891. This may have been partly due to the lower proportion of weavers in the second set of returns, although weavers themselves were less able to earn the highest wages.²⁵

A higher proportion of female workers in the Leeds wool and worsted trade,

that is 70 per cent, were covered by the wages enquiry of 1906. This investigation recorded an average wage of 13/9 for adult women and 8/11 for girls working full time in the last pay week of September.²⁶ The largest group of women covered by the survey in Leeds were woollen weavers who averaged 14/-.²⁷ This average conceals a wide range of possible earnings which varied according to the quality of cloth produced and the aptitude of different workers. Weavers' wages ranged from under 10/- to over 30/-, but the largest group, 54 per cent, fell between 10/- and under 15/-.²⁸ Far smaller numbers of women were employed in the other textile processes. These fell into two categories. A small number of workers such as menders and fine drawers were comparatively well paid, averaging 16/1 on time rates, and could earn a wide range of wages. These occupations, however, accounted for only 5.3 per cent of women in the returns.²⁹ The second group of occupations, including worsted spinning, wool piecing, doubling and winding, paid adult women between 10/- and 11/-; wages which fell below the average for adult women in the area.³⁰ The majority of women in these tasks earned between 5/- and 14/-, a far narrower range of wages than in the other processes, for the occupations were particularly associated with the labour of young people.³¹ These low wage occupations also paid time wages to adult women who were therefore unable to increase their weekly earnings on the basis of individual aptitude.

The average wages of women working in ready-made tailoring in the 1880s and 1890s are more difficult to determine because they did not form the subject of any comprehensive official survey. There was great variety, even within the factory sector, in the size of firms, in the extent of

subdivision and mechanisation, in the proportion of learners to more experienced workers and in the quality of the goods produced. This affected the wages paid and makes it difficult to generalise about average earnings. Clara Collet's survey of 2,300 tailoresses working in Leeds factories in 1891 does provide some indication, however, of the percentage who could earn specific groups of wages.

Table 5.3 The Percentage of Women and Girls Earning the Undermentioned Wages in Ready-Made Tailoring in Leeds in 1891³²

| <u>Under 10/-</u> | <u>10/- to 15/-</u> | <u>Over 15/-</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 36.0 | 32.5 | 31.5 |

Collet claimed that those earning below 10/- roughly corresponded to the proportion of learners in the trade. She found that in one large firm the range of earnings for machinists was 10/- to 18/-, for pressers 8/- to 9/-, while suit finishers, trouser finishers and buttonholers averaged 10/4½d, 9/11 and 13/4½d respectively.³³ Her survey covered only two or three of the largest firms in Leeds which were likely to have paid some of the highest wages, and her average figures were criticised by the local labour press for being too high.³⁴

A number of employers also quoted high average wages for their female factory workers.³⁵ When tailoresses employed by Messrs Arthur & Co went on strike in October 1889, the manager of the firm claimed that

binders in his factory could earn 25/1, double stitched hands 20/4, buttonhole hands 20/- and braiders 18/5, and he took his wages books to an accountant to be verified.³⁶ These rates may well have been accurate, but, as he stated himself, they applied to only 43 "experienced and industrious" workers out of a labour force numbering over 1,000. Moreover, there is no indication of how regularly they could be earned.³⁷ Tailoresses involved in the dispute hotly denied that ordinary workers could earn anything like these sums and took their own wages books to union organisers to back up their claims.³⁸

Union organisers did attempt to compare lists of prices in different firms, but the items mentioned varied from place to place, while the content of the work performed also differed. One man claimed that his daughter worked as a best stitcher in a firm which required her to do her own basting and pressing. This represented a reduction of 2d in the shilling in time wasted compared with stitchers at Arthur's where there were separate workers to complete the basting and pressing.³⁹ These variations in work organisation help to explain some of the differences in prices paid. The higher average wages quoted by employers can also be accounted for by the fact that they tended to refer to only a minority of more skilled workers and did not necessarily consider the way in which earnings were reduced in slack seasons.⁴⁰ Isabella Ford, who was active in organising the tailoresses and familiar with their conditions of work, estimated that machinists could average 14/- to 15/- for a full week's work, but that only a minority could earn this regularly. She suggested that in the slack seasons wages were reduced by 3/- to 4/-.⁴¹

A guide to the average wages of tailoresses for a full week's work is provided by the 1906 wage enquiry, although only 28 per cent of Leeds tailoresses were covered by the returns.⁴² The enquiry also makes it possible to compare the average earnings of women engaged in different tasks. 58.6 per cent of adult women in the returns for Leeds worked as machinists and received an average wage on piecework of 14/4. The 30 per cent returned as hand sewers received 11/8.⁴³ Most other female workers in ready-made tailoring received wages which fell between these two groups, but pressers averaged 16/1.⁴⁴ The earnings of machinists ranged more widely than those of finishers or basters. 40 per cent of machinists earned above 15/- compared with 16 per cent of finishers.⁴⁵

The other ready-made clothing industry in Leeds covered by the returns was boot and shoe manufacture. Over a half of the women returned for Leeds were machinists, one third were fitters and the remainder worked as packers and sorters.⁴⁶ The average wage for women was 13/10, although machinists could average 15/1.⁴⁷ Two of the newer areas of female employment, engineering and the paper trades, were also covered in the enquiry, although separate returns were not always given for Leeds itself. Some wage figures were provided for women employed in engineering and boilermaking in Leeds, but the numbers involved were so small that it is difficult to assess how representative their wage rates were.⁴⁸ The tasks on which women were employed were not specified and an average rate of 12/7 was given for women "in all occupations".⁴⁹ In paper manufacture and allied trades the returns related to the broad regional group of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire. The average wage for women in this area was 14/7 in paper manufacture, 10/7 in printing and

11/5 in bookbinding.⁵⁰

The average wages for adult women in the major female trades in Leeds are compared in the table below.

Table 5.4 Average Full-Time Earnings of Women in the Last Pay Week in September 1906 in Selected Trades⁵¹

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Leeds</u> | <u>Yorkshire</u> <u>(West Riding)</u> | <u>Yorkshire,</u> <u>Lancashire, Cheshire</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| Ready-Made Boot and Shoe | 13/10 | -- | |
| Ready-Made Tailoring | 13/8 | | 13/6 |
| Wool and Worsted | 13/9 | | |
| Engineering | 12/7 | | |
| Dressmaking and Millinery | -- | 13/9 | |
| Paper Manufacture | -- | | 14/7 |
| Printing | -- | | 10/7 |
| Bookbinding | -- | | 11/5 |

If the paper trades, which refer to a large area and include only a small number of women, are excluded, then there is a remarkable consistency in the average wages presented, by the enquiry for adult women in the major female trades in Leeds. This disguises the fact, however, that a wide range of earnings was available in some industries and not in others. It has already been suggested that in textiles and clothing a wide range of earnings was available in tasks in which a majority of the workforce were adult women, and there was scope for an individual to earn higher wages. At the same time, an average wage based on one week's work does not necessarily represent the actual earnings of individual women over the course of a year.

This point was made frequently by union activists and others interested in the working conditions of women. They criticised official statistics for failing to consider actual earnings over a long period of time.⁵² In both the wool and worsted and the ready-made tailoring trades women's weekly wages continually fell below the average quoted in government statistics. Short-time employment, whether caused by trade depression, seasonal variations, or a combination of both, considerably reduced weekly wages. Both industries suffered from trade depressions in the early 1890s and in the first few years of the twentieth century. The weekly wages of six female machine minders, taken from the wages books of a Leeds firm of wool spinners, scribblers and fullers, illustrate how earnings were affected by variations in trade.⁵³ The women were all paid 11/- time wages for a full week's work in the 1880s, 11/5 in the early 1890s and 12/- in 1900. In the early 1880s there were few fluctuations in weekly earnings, but 1893 to 1895 were particularly poor years. In this period the weekly wages of two representative workers averaged 10/5 instead of the full wage of 11/6. For six weeks in one year they took home only 7/- to 9/- and for a further 12 weeks between 9/- and 10/-.⁵⁴ 1902 was another year of frequent trade depressions and short-time working. One female worker averaged 9/7 during the course of the year, receiving only 3/4 in one week, instead of the full wage of 12/-.⁵⁵ Piece workers, in particular weavers, also suffered great fluctuations in their earnings. Union officials and the labour press constantly referred to the low wages of female weavers in most towns in the West Riding throughout the period.⁵⁶

In the ready-made tailoring trade women suffered from regular seasonal

variations in trade as well as from cyclical depressions. Even in the larger factories where work was more regular throughout the year there were still slack and busy seasons. December to Whitsun was busy, followed by a lull until August when trade picked up, only to fall away again in October and November.⁵⁷ In busy periods women were not paid a higher rate for overtime and therefore it is doubtful whether wages were high enough to compensate for the reductions experienced in slack seasons. When trade was slack women were still expected to come to the factory in case orders came in, but they were not paid for "waiting" time.⁵⁸ In the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century employers in ready-made tailoring faced a reduced demand for their goods as workers in other industries went on strike or suffered unemployment. Competition also intensified between factory owners in Leeds, and between them and employers in centres of the clothing industry which relied heavily on workshop workers and homeworkers.⁵⁹

In the face of difficulties in their industries employers in both textiles and ready-made tailoring attempted to reduce labour costs in order to maintain their profit levels. They tried to lower the prices paid for completed work, although this was often successfully resisted by the workforce. They also attempted to alter the prices paid when changes were made in the organisation of work. This tended to have the effect of reducing weekly wages.⁶⁰ When Joshua Wilson, woollen manufacturer, built a new weaving shed and hired extra tuners, the firm tried to reduce the prices paid for each "piece" woven. It was argued that less time would be wasted and that this would equalise the wages paid. 200 female weavers, however, went on strike on the grounds that

this new system would reduce weekly wages. They returned to work after a compromise was reached on the prices to be paid and with a guarantee that unsatisfactory workers would be dismissed rather than fined.⁶¹

Women were also expected to take on extra tasks for no extra pay. This meant either a reduction in weekly earnings or that they had to work during meal breaks and carry out "time cribbing" if they were to have any chance of taking home their usual wages.⁶²

The piece work system of payment did allow individual women to earn higher wages if they were quick or had a particular aptitude for the work, but it also meant that women were under considerable pressure to achieve a good average wage. Employers constantly adjusted piece rates to the speed of the more able workers. This made it increasingly difficult for them to earn high wages and for other women to achieve their usual average wage.⁶³ Apart from processes which needed care and attention and where quantity was not important, most women paid by time received wages that were less than the average for adult women in factories. These were reduced still further in times of slack trade.⁶⁴

Women's wages were also reduced by a variety of deductions. In ready-made tailoring factories a number of deductions were made each week for the use of power, welfare facilities and for thread.⁶⁵ The deductions made varied from firm to firm, but two wages lists submitted to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts give some indication of how wages could be affected. Case A had to pay a penny each week for the services of the cook, along with varying amounts for thread. During the

period 1902 to 1903 her wages varied from $7/4\frac{1}{2}$, at the lowest point, to $18/3$ at the highest, and deductions amounted to $11\frac{1}{2}d$ and $2/3$ respectively.⁶⁶ In a case in which two girls took Messrs Bainbridge & Co to court for the withholding of wages, it was reported that they had had joint earnings of $20/6\frac{1}{2}d$ which had been reduced to $17/-$ after deductions.⁶⁷

Other deductions were made on a more irregular basis in both textiles and clothing and this had a varied effect on individual earnings. Women were subject to fines for disciplinary offences, in particular for unpunctuality, and also had to pay fines for damaged work.⁶⁸ The payment for damaged goods was widely resented in the textile trade. Employers were constantly introducing poorer quality yarn, which frequently broke, in order to save costs. In these circumstances weavers were doubly disadvantaged. They not only had to waste time in mending broken threads but they also suffered fines for flaws in the finished cloth.⁶⁹ Again, it is difficult to assess how such fines affected average earnings, but individual examples indicate that the effects could be severe.⁷⁰

Taking short time, deductions and fines into account, local labour activists considered that $9/-$ to $10/-$ was a usual average wage for female weavers in the Leeds wool and worsted trade during the 1890s.⁷¹ Isabella Ford, for example, took the wages of 1,700 weavers for the five weeks before January 31st 1893, and found that $9/6\frac{1}{2}d$ was cleared after deductions. A similar range was stated by a correspondent of the

Yorkshire Factory Times, a weaver, who claimed to have taken home 9/6, 10/9, 8/7 and 10/3 in four weeks of full employment in 1891.⁷² These figures were not just put forward by workpeople and their sympathisers, but were also quoted by the statistician A L Bowley. He concluded that weavers who worked short time in the West Riding wool and worsted trade averaged 9/-.⁷³ Machinists in the clothing factories could average more than weavers, although they only took home 10/- or 11/- in times of slack trade. By 1908 the union secretary claimed that tailoresses as a group averaged only 9/- throughout the year once fines and deductions had been taken into account.⁷⁴ Individual workers could of course earn higher average wages, but they were generally employed in better class work. In 1889 Mary Anne Mitchinson stated that she received 14/- to 16/- a week, but she was engaged on special order work as a feller and her sister averaged only 9/- as a machinist.⁷⁵

Although the average wage figures produced by the 1906 enquiry were heavily criticised by union officials for painting too rosy a picture of female earnings, even these were greeted with astonishment by many trade journals and the local press because they were so low.⁷⁶ The Journal of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses argued that although women were paid low wages because of their social and economic position, this did not justify the degree of underpayment revealed by government statistics.⁷⁷ Contemporaries generally agreed that women needed at least 14/- to 15/- a week to pay for board, lodging, clothes, entertainment and to be self-supporting, but the official statistics revealed that only a small proportion of women could earn such a sum, even at a time of good trade.⁷⁸ For example, 63 per cent of female weavers in the wool

and worsted industry in Leeds, 58.6 per cent of tailoring machinists and 82.3 per cent of finishers were recorded in the 1906 wage returns as earning below 15/- in the last pay week of September.⁷⁹

Local pride expressed about the high level of women's wages in Leeds must also be judged in the light of the extent to which young workers on low wages made up a high proportion of the labour force in specific industries. Entire processes such as worsted spinning could be in the hands of young workers, while girls formed an above average proportion of the female labour force in engineering, printing and bookbinding.⁸⁰ In the large tailoring factories at least one third of all workers were classed as learners.⁸¹ In all these trades there were light, simple tasks which could be carried out by young workers as efficiently as by adult women. This produced considerable savings for employers since there was a differential in the wages paid to women and girls, although it was less wide and less rigidly defined than in the case of men and boys.

Table 5.5 Average Wages of Men, Lads, Women and Girls in Selected Industries in Leeds in the Last Pay Week of September 1906⁸²

| <u>Industry</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Lads</u> | <u>Women</u> | <u>Girls</u> |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Engineering and Boilermaking | 29/10 | 8/9 | 12/7 | 7/9 |
| Ready-Made Tailoring | 31/11 | 9/9 | 13/8 | 7/7 |
| Ready-Made Boot and Shoe | 28/4 | 9/6 | 13/10 | 6/6 |
| Wool and Worsted | 29/2 | 10/3 | 13/9 | 8/11 |

The extent of the difference between the wages of adult women and

individual girls depended on the age of the girl and the type of work that was carried out. In most trades outside ready-made tailoring girls were paid by time and their wages increased with age. In the textile trade worsted spinners and wool piecers accounted for 50 per cent of all girls in the returns for Leeds wool and worsted textiles in 1906, and they had an average wage of between 8/- and 8/11. This was similar to the average for the smaller number of doublers and winders. The lowest paid girls, averaging 7/5, were employed as burlers and knotters, and they accounted for 8.3 per cent of all girls in the returns for the Leeds wool and worsted industry.⁸³ These average rates, however, conceal a great variation according to age. When young workers entered the mill they received between 2/6 and 5/- which then rose to 10/- or 11/- by the time they were 16 or 17.⁸⁴

The majority of girls in ready-made tailoring were employed on piece rates, although they received time wages ranging from 2/6 to 5/- when they first started work.⁸⁵ Some girls continued to be paid time wages, which were increased each year, but they were in a minority. Barran's for example, started girls at the age of 14 and paid them 5/- a week. If they remained on time wages this increased to 11/- by the age of 18, although their wages were not necessarily representative of those paid in all firms in the city.⁸⁶ Young machinists and finishers in Leeds who were paid by the piece averaged 8/4 and 7/4 respectively. The small number of machinists and pressers paid by time received only 5/6 and 4/9, although they may have only just started in the work.⁸⁷ When girls were paid by piece in other industries, they had usually entered work commonly associated with adult labour and their average earnings

were higher than those of girls paid by time. In weaving, for example, girls averaged 11/2, and young boot and shoe machinists had average wages of 9/3.⁸⁸ The differences in the earnings of adult women and girls paid by piece were largely due to the experience and speed of the individual workers, or to the fact that girls were usually given the simpler, lower paid tasks to perform.⁸⁹

Overall, girls received lower wages than adult women. Within specific occupations, however, the earnings of the two age groups could be close if the work was so simple and repetitious that maximum efficiency was soon reached. It was only in processes where experience and ability were important that adult women's wages were more clearly differentiated from those of younger workers (although older girls on piece rates could receive similar earnings to those classed as adults).⁹⁰ Since the wages of adult women were low and were clustered in a narrower range than those of male workers, the distance between the wages of women and girls was bound to be smaller than that between the wages of men and lads. There were also no union regulations to define the dividing line.⁹¹ Moreover, the narrower differential between the earnings of women and girls was related to the fact that women were concentrated in occupations which did not require lengthy training or maturity, and therefore peak productivity could soon be attained. This also applied to less skilled industrial work for men.⁹² In the case of women and girls, however, the narrow differential was further related to the view that women were secondary earners and could be paid wages which hardly supported them, let alone any dependants. On the other hand, adult males expected to receive a "family wage".⁹³

Workshop trades. The two most important workshop occupations for women in Leeds were dressmaking and millinery and ready-made tailoring. In the former, most clothing was made in workshops until a small factory sector for women's clothing developed in the early twentieth century. The largest number of tailoresses were employed in Jewish workshops where conditions of work varied widely. They ranged in size from small domestic concerns with a handful of workers to very large units in which tasks were as subdivided as in the factories.

Female workshop workers do not appear to have received lower wage rates than their counterparts in the factories, although they were usually paid by time rather than by piece, but they suffered from greater irregularity of employment. In dressmaking and millinery the larger workshops attached to retail outlets gave regular employment to a number of skilled or experienced women who often lived-in; other workers were taken on only for the busy seasons.⁹⁴ The peaks of employment were in the spring and autumn. There was a greater variation in the maximum and minimum numbers employed throughout the year than in ready-made tailoring, although seasonal fluctuations were not as severe in Leeds as they were in London.⁹⁵

Dressmaking and millinery were unusual in providing work for women in all branches of the trade. Consequently, there was a wide range of earnings with extremes at either end. According to the 1906 wages enquiry, skilled cutters and fitters could command wages of 60/- or more, although they clustered in the range between 20/- and 40/-.⁹⁶ However, only 5.3 per cent of women employed in dressmaking and millinery in the United

Kingdom, and 5.7 percent of those in Yorkshire, who were covered by the returns, were employed in this well paid work.⁹⁷ Other classes of dressmakers were far more numerous and received lower average rates of pay. In Yorkshire bodice makers averaged 12/7, skirt makers 12/3, other dressmakers 11/5 and milliners 14/3.⁹⁸ Young girls formed an important part of the labour force, in particular in the provinces. London workshops, with their high rents and sharp seasonal fluctuations, preferred workers who were already trained.⁹⁹ Apprentices and learners were paid very low wages, averaging 4/6 in Yorkshire.¹⁰⁰ A number of young people included in the returns for the whole of the United Kingdom were paid no wages at all.¹⁰¹ Some women and girls still received part of their payment in kind, being provided with dinner and tea or living-in on the premises, but this applied to only a small number of women and girls in the Yorkshire returns.¹⁰² Overall, the average wages of ordinary dressmakers, excluding cutters and fitters, fell just below those of clothing machinists and weavers in the 1906 returns for Yorkshire, and were above those of hand finishers in ready-made tailoring. Dressmakers did, however, suffer from greater irregularity of employment.

Jewish workshops, while not separately identified in the 1906 wages enquiry, had been subject to numerous investigations in the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁰³ Master tailors and union organisers usually differed in the wage rates that they put forward. Two lists that they provided in 1888 are reproduced below:

Table 5.6 Average Day Wages for Female Workers in Leeds Jewish Workshops in 1888¹⁰⁴

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Masters' List</u> | <u>Union List</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Machinists | 5/- - 6/- | 5/- - 5/2 |
| Machinists (inferior) | --- | 10d - 3/6 |
| Fellers | 2/- - 3/- | 1/9 - 2/3 |
| Button Sewers On | 2/- - 3/- | --- |
| Basters Out | 3/- - 5/- | 2/6 - 4/- |
| Basters Under | 4/6 - 6/6 | 4/8 - 5/6 |
| Buttonholers | 4/- - 5/- | --- |

There was some agreement between the two lists except that the masters gave a wider range of possible daily earnings.

Clara Collet's survey in the early 1890s of 44 Jewish workshops employing over 10 workers each, gave daily wage rates approximating more closely to the union list, and yet she was usually characterised as accepting the rather more generous figures of employers.¹⁰⁵ In her survey fellers received 2/- to 2/4 each day, finishers 2/3 and machinists 3/5, a lower rate than even the union list.¹⁰⁶ These averages, however, conceal the range of earnings that were available for women, in particular for machinists, who, like their counterparts in the factories, were higher paid than finishers.

Table 5.7 The Number of Women in Selected Occupations in Leeds Jewish Workshops Earning the Undermentioned Rates of Wages per Day of 10½ Hours in 1893¹⁰⁸

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Under 2/-</u> | <u>2/- -3/-</u> | <u>3/- -4/-</u> | <u>4/- -5/-</u> | <u>5/- -6/-</u> | <u>6/- -7/-</u> | <u>Average Day Wage</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Machinists</u> | | | | | | | |
| 1* | - | 8 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3/7 |
| 2 | - | 6 | 8 | 3 | 2 | - | 3/3 |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3/4 |
| <u>Finishers</u> | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 1 | 25 | - | | | | 2/4 |
| 2 | 2 | 19 | 2 | | | | 2/2 |
| 3 | 1 | 11 | 1 | | | | 2/2 |

*1 = workshops with over 40 workers; 2 = 25-40; 3 = 10-25.

The daily rates given for the workshops would have compared well with factory workers' wages if they had been earned on a regular basis, but there was general agreement that over the course of a year the average number of days worked fell below a full week. Individual workers gave averages which ranged from two and a half to five and a half days a week, while union organisers claimed that three to three and a half days was the usual average.¹⁰⁹ At the time of her own investigations into Jewish workshops, Collet found that only three to three and a half days were being worked each week, although it was a time of trade depression.¹¹⁰ Later in the period, daily wage rates were squeezed even further as master tailors became increasingly pressurised by wholesale clothiers to reduce their prices and as work became more difficult to obtain.¹¹¹ These pressures on the profits of master tailors meant that wage rates did not rise despite the labour shortage in the trade.¹¹²

Lower paid trades in Leeds. Although contemporaries praised the wages provided in the larger factories in Leeds, it has already been noted that a number of processes in both wool and worsted textiles and in ready-made tailoring paid adult women below 10/- for a full week's work. There were also a number of factory trades which consistently paid low wages to the majority of adult women. These included rag sorting, linen and flax manufacture, stationery manufacture, paper bag making, boot packing and engineering, many of which were associated with the labour of girls.¹¹³ Rag sorting was an expanding occupation throughout the period and according to Clara Collet, who did not tend to exaggerate low wages, adult women were paid 8/- and forewomen 10/- in the 1890s.¹¹⁴ These wages appear to have slightly increased towards the end of the

period, but were still low compared to those of women in other factory trades; in 1907 one firm paid its rag sorters 11/-, and 6/- for beginners, while another paid from 8/- to 13/- to women working on piece rates.¹¹⁵

The poor relations of the textile trade, however, were the linen and flax industries whose role in the city's economy was already in decline in the 1880s.¹¹⁶ In the wages census of 1886 only women in the weaving branch of the linen trade, who accounted for 38 per cent of female linen workers returned for the Leeds district, could earn over 11/-. All other adult women averaged between 7/- and 11/-. Spinners, who accounted for 13 per cent of adult women in the returns, averaged only 7/7.¹¹⁷ Similar rates were put forward for the flax industry in the 1890s; Clara Collet estimated that 10/- was the maximum female wage in flax spinning.¹¹⁸

The lowest and most irregular earnings for women were found in small workshops and in homework trades. In the latter individual earnings varied widely according to the amount and type of work completed, the prices paid and the number of hours worked. In ready-made tailoring employers claimed that they paid homeworkers the same prices as their inside workers, but even if this were the case, the earnings of women working at home still fell below those of factory workers. They were the first to be laid off in the slack season, they had to provide their own heat, light and damp rags for pressing, while they also wasted time taking work to and from the factory where they could be kept waiting for up to three hours.¹¹⁹ As power-driven machinery was introduced into the factories homeworkers were given the lowest paid

finishing work. This entailed the completion of numerous processes for low prices; an example of this practice was recorded in 1889:

Entry for double-breasted reefer coats at 5½d - for this coats are finished throughout. There are ten buttonholes to make - if they are done by a machinist, ¼d is deducted per hole, thus 2½d is deducted. Another ¼d is deducted for sleeving. For the remaining 2½d and the cost of cotton, there are eighteen buttons to be sewn on, a hanger to be sewn on the collar, collar sewn round so that it won't sag, sleeves to fell in, the coat pressed.¹²⁰

As competition between employers became more intense in the early 1890s, there was a tendency to lower the prices paid to homeworkers, and employers also used a variety of other devices to reduce weekly wages.¹²¹ Prices were not always made clear to homeworkers and the rapid changes in the industry meant that they rarely had precedents to go on.¹²² Employers also made sure that they took the advantage from any situation that was not clear. It was found, for example, that outworkers should have received 4d to finish a dozen trousers, but these were given out in bundles of 14 which would have meant a price of four and two thirds pence. Instead of allowing the worker 5d, employers gave them only 4½d and therefore three garments were finished for nothing in every batch of seven dozen trousers.¹²³

Low paid homework was also found outside the clothing trade in sack making, brush making and match making. Women could earn 6/- a week in making sacks "if they were lucky".¹²⁴ Whenever employers' wages books showed 10/- to 12/-, this represented the labour of several family members.¹²⁵ Brushmaking was particularly low paid and only 1d was

given for finishing broom heads which entailed tying them up, fixing in the bristles with pitch and trimming them. This was done by hand with the help of children. If quick, a woman could complete one each hour which meant 10d for a ten hour day.¹²⁶

Low paid casual work for women was less widespread in Leeds than in many other cities, but a considerable number of women were found in such work as well as in the low paid tasks in the staple industries of wool and worsted textiles and ready-make tailoring, and in whole factory industries which paid low wages to adult women.¹²⁷ At the same time, all these industries had a high proportion of young, low-paid women in the labour force who generally received less than 9/- a week, and some of the newer factory trades were particularly dependent on girl labour.¹²⁸

Changes in women's earnings between 1880 and 1914.

Given the problems involved in attempting to determine weekly average wages and the misleading impression that this creates about the actual earnings of individual women, it is extremely difficult to assess changes in wage rates and earnings over time. G H Wood, for example, could only conclude that in the nineteenth century women's wages rose in some industries and fell in others.¹²⁹ Dorothy Barton suggested that female wages rose in the mid nineteenth century, remained stationary until around 1900 and began to rise again in the period preceding the First World War.¹³⁰

In many respects female wages in Leeds followed the pattern outlined by

Barton, although the data available are too patchy to make firm conclusions. The government wage enquiries of 1886 and 1906 do, however, provide some basis for comparing wages paid in the textile trade. The changes in weekly wages are summarised in the following table.

Table 5.8 Weekly Average Wages of Women in Selected Tasks in the Leeds Wool and Worsted Industry in 1886 and 1906 ¹³¹

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>1886</u> <u>Wool</u> | <u>1906</u> <u>Wool and Worsted</u> |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Wool Weavers (P) | 13/7 | 14/- |
| Menders and Fine Drawers (T) | 13/10 | 16/1 |
| (P) | -- | 17/6 |
| Burlers and Knotters (T) | 10/2 | 12/- |
| Scribblers' Feeders and Condenser Minders (T) | 10/8 | 13/1 |
| Warpers (T) | -- | 14/8 |
| (P) | -- | 17/9 |
| (T & P) | 15/2 | -- |
| Winders (T) | -- | 10/1 |

(T) = time wages
(P) = piece wages

Most processes show some increase in weekly wages between 1886 and 1906. Weavers, however, received an increase of only 3 per cent in Leeds, and yet they represented the largest group of female textile workers. ¹³² This increase was comparable to that for Bradford, Halifax and Keighley, but fell well below that for Dewsbury and Huddersfield. It also fell below the 9 to 10 per cent increase recorded for Yorkshire weavers as a whole. ¹³³ At a broad level, women's wages in the wool and worsted trade in the United Kingdom increased by only 10 per cent between 1886 and 1906. This compared badly with the increase for male workers in

the same trade and with both sexes in cotton, as well as falling below the increase in retail prices.¹³⁴

Table 5.9 Percentage Increase in Average Weekly Wages of Men and Women in the Wool and Worsted and in the Cotton Industry¹³⁵

| <u>Industry</u> | <u>All Males</u> | | <u>%age increase</u> | <u>All Females</u> | | <u>%age increase</u> | <u>All Workers</u> | | <u>%age increase</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | <u>1886</u> | <u>1906</u> | | <u>1886</u> | <u>1906</u> | | <u>1886</u> | <u>1906</u> | |
| Cotton | 19/4 | 24/7 | 27.4 | 13/4 | 16/9 | 26.0 | 15/8 | 19/11 | 27.0 |
| Wool & Worsted | 18/7 | 21/10 | 17.0 | 11/7 | 12/9 | 10.0 | 14/4 | 16/2 | 13.0 |

It is debatable whether these figures represent real increases. The 1886 returns were made at a time of trade depression and those for 1906 at a time of good trade. Therefore, the Board of Trade suggested that the percentage increase should be reduced by a fifth to compensate; in the case of Leeds weavers this points to a downward trend between 1886 and 1906.¹³⁶ Such a reduction confirms the impression given by union leaders and by the local press that textile workers' wages, in particular those of weavers in Leeds and Bradford, were constantly being pressurised downwards in a period when the industry faced severe economic problems.¹³⁷ Throughout most of the period the union was too weak to present a consistent challenge to employers' attempts to reduce wages. This weakness made the leadership cautious and unwilling to launch a sustained campaign to obtain a standard list of prices for different processes in the trade.¹³⁸ The only list in existence applied to Huddersfield weavers and had been drawn up by employers after a strike failure in 1883. It institutionalised low pay for women by paying them prices which were 10 per cent below those for men engaged on similar work.¹³⁹ This

contrasted with the cotton trade where workers of both sexes were well organised and where standard wages and prices had been successfully negotiated.¹⁴⁰

Changes in the wages paid in ready-made tailoring are even more difficult to assess because the 1906 wages enquiry was the only comprehensive survey carried out in the period. A comparison of the wages most frequently quoted for the 1880s and 1890s with those provided in the 1906 enquiry provide little evidence that average wages for women had risen, and union leaders constantly complained that wages had been stationary for years.¹⁴¹ One historian claims that wages actually declined between the 1880s and 1906.¹⁴² His assessment rests largely on the fact that he accepts some of the wages quoted by employers in the 1880s, where machinists could earn over 18/-, but it has already been argued that these were not representative of the earnings of the majority of female workers. Many individuals did face wage reductions in the period as employers tried to cut labour costs at a time of trade depression and increased competition. Fines and deductions which also served to reduce wages persisted well into the twentieth century.¹⁴³ By the early 1900s some of the larger firms had discontinued the charge for power as well as a number of disciplinary fines, but the charge for "sewings", fines for damaged goods and deductions for the use of facilities remained widespread.¹⁴⁴

Throughout the period from the early 1890s until the few years preceding World War One, women workers in the wool and worsted and ready-made tailoring trades faced heavy unemployment, persistent short-time working,

an increased workload and reductions in wages. Weekly wages, therefore, fluctuated rather than showing any consistent tendency to rise.¹⁴⁵ Given the downward pressure on weekly wages trade union officials, in particular in the wool and worsted industry, claimed that their members had not benefited from the reduction in prices which is normally associated with a rise in living standards at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ They also pointed out that the fall in prices tended to be exaggerated. In some periods the fall in retail prices was much less than in wholesale prices; thus, between 1887 and 1891 the cost of living was low, but it was comparatively high between 1893 and 1899. After 1900 all prices began to rise, and this further eroded real earnings.¹⁴⁷ During all this time the real wages of textile and clothing workers, as well as their money earnings, were subject to a downward pressure.

Contemporaries faced with the fact of low female earnings across a wide variety of trades put forward two main solutions for low pay. They emphasised the need for greater organisation among both employers and workers. They hoped that this would standardise wages across a trade and reduce unfair competition.¹⁴⁸ Recognising the difficulties of organising low paid workers, however, they also suggested that this should be linked with minimum wage legislation which would aid organisation, raise the wages of the lowest paid and remove homeworkers from ready-made clothing.¹⁴⁹ It was argued that once employers found that it was uneconomical to employ homeworkers the wages of inside hands would rise, for they would no longer face unfair competition.¹⁵⁰

When minimum wage legislation was carried through in 1909, minimum

standard rates were established in the ready-made tailoring trade in Leeds, but this did not necessarily mean an increase in weekly earnings for female workers. The minimum rate of 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d per hour put forward for women was greeted with scorn by union officials. It was assumed that most factory workers in Leeds already earned more than this and therefore it was argued that the legislation merely institutionalised sweating.¹⁵¹ One union official claimed that in the course of a whole year women worked an average of only 40 hours each week, and therefore the minimum rate would yield an average wage of 12/-.¹⁵² Boom conditions in the trade, coupled with indignation over the low minimum rates which had been set, did lead to a concerted effort by the union to negotiate higher minimum rates for both men and women in Leeds. In 1913 the wholesale Clothiers' Association agreed that women should receive 4d an hour, although this was less than the union demand of 5d. Employers were deemed to have complied with the agreement as long as 70 per cent of their female workforce could achieve the minimum rate.¹⁵³ Thus, by 1914 a standard minimum had been achieved for tailoresses in Leeds which was above the minimum laid down by the tailoring Trade Board. Nevertheless, this still yielded an average wage of only just over 13/- once short-time work was taken into account. Moreover, it fell far short of the 6d per hour that union officials thought was necessary to give women a "living wage".¹⁵⁴

In the wool and worsted industry the revival in trade after 1909 led to an increase in women's wages in many individual firms, either as a result of strike action or as part of a general increase for all workers in the mill.¹⁵⁶ The General Union of Textile Workers was also encouraged by

the revival in trade and by a growth in union membership to seek an increase in wages for textile workers and to achieve a standard rate throughout the district.¹⁵⁶ This was finally achieved in the Willyers' and Fettle's Charter which came into effect in 1913.

It was the better organised male workers, however, who benefited most from the agreement, and the more badly organised female weavers received a scale of prices that was lower than union officials would have liked.¹⁵⁷ Overall, therefore, while the wages of textile workers did increase in the few years preceding the outbreak of war, the weak organisation among female workers meant that wage increases were less than they might have hoped for and, again, fell below the minimum wage suggested by union officials.¹⁵⁸

CHAPTER 5, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. For a discussion of this point, see A Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives (Macmillan, 1981), Chapter 5.
2. See, for example, R H Tawney, The Establishment of Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Industry under the Trade Boards Act of 1909. Studies in the Minimum Wage. No 2 (G Bell, 1915), pp 71-2, and the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), especially pp 478-84.
3. For the extent of female organisation, see B Drake, Women in Trade Unions (Labour Research Department, 1920), Table 1.
4. See, for example, the controversy in the local press over the wages paid in ready-made tailoring factories during the strike of tailoresses at Messrs Arthur & Co in October 1889. For a detailed discussion of this, see J Hendrick, "The Tailoresses in the Ready-Made Clothing Industry in Leeds, 1889-99: A Study in Labour Failure" (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Warwick, 1970), Chapter 4.
5. Board of Trade, Return of Wages in the Principal Textile Trades (PP 1889, LXXX), and Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), Textiles in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades in 1906 (PP 1911, LXXXVIII), Paper, Printing etc Trades in 1906 (PP 1912-13, CVIII).
6. See, for example, Yorkshire Factory Times, 21 February 1890 and 27 November 1891. The secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Clothing Operatives refused to accept the accuracy of the 1906 enquiry. He pointed out that only some firms were covered by the returns, and many of the wages given represented a full week's work which had been very scarce in the previous two years: Yorkshire Evening News, 21 October 1909. It was further suggested that the earnings for a year should be divided by 52, rather than by 50, weeks to obtain a more accurate average: Y.F.T. 8 April 1909.
7. Correspondents from the different wool and worsted districts of the West Riding claimed that only the best paying employers filled in the returns: Y.F.T. 21 February 1890.
8. The inadequacies of the 1886 enquiry are discussed in the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 33-4.

9. Even in 1906, however, the returns covered only 29 per cent of factory and workshop workers in the clothing trades: ibid. p 33.
10. Ibid. pp 33, 40. See also B L Hutchins, "Preface", in L W Papworth and D M Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades: Summary Tables (Women's Industrial Council, 1912), pp 7-8.
11. G H Wood criticised the technique, so often used in contemporary surveys, of averaging the wages of cotton workers, who could earn 33/-, with those of match box makers, who earned 3/- to 6/-: G H Wood, The Woman Wage Earner (Church League for Women's Suffrage, 1910), p 1. The distorting effect of seeking an "average" worker or an "average" wage is discussed in E P Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp 233-5.
12. There were differences in the range of earnings available to women for specific tasks within the same industry. In tailoring, for example, machinists not only had a higher average wage than finishers, but also enjoyed the possibility of a wider range of earnings: Appendix 4, Table 4.7.
13. Eleven shillings or less for a full week's work has been taken as low pay for adult women in Leeds.
14. See, for example, the opinions of Leeds wholesale clothiers on the minimum rates proposed by the Tailoring Trade Board: Men's Wear, 4 November 1911.
15. See, for example, the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 33; Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 108-20; B Webb, My Apprenticeship (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, originally published, 1926), pp 177-9, 282-3.
16. Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, p 126.
17. See, for example, J Thomas, "A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers No 1 (1955), p 36. Although she accepts that wages in Leeds were reduced by deductions, Thomas emphasises the differences between the north and the south. She concludes that "clothing workers in Leeds were certainly better paid and worked far shorter hours than anywhere else in the country, with the possible exception of Manchester, and compared with other industries in the West Riding, the clothing industry was no longer the poor relation". See also E H Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), Chapter 1.

18. 1,212 women and 179 girls working in the Leeds and District woollen industry were covered in the 1886 wages census, but 6,782 females were recorded as employed in woollen manufacture in Leeds in the Census of England and Wales, 1891 (PP 1893-4, CVI), Leeds Occupations Table 7.
19. The figures related to workers employed full time in one pay week, rather than to a full week's work.
20. Board of Trade, Return of Wages in the Principal Textile Trades (PP 1889, LXXX), p 71.
21. Ibid.
22. C Collet, "Women's Work in Leeds", Economic Journal, 1, 3 (1891), pp 464-5. Collet pointed out the difficulties of assessing the average wages of cloth weavers. She noted that one manufacturer paid commission to tuners on the wages earned by weavers. This encouraged tuners to dismiss slow workers and therefore average wages in the firm appeared to be high. Another employer who kept on slow workers had lower average wages.
23. Ibid., p 465. Collet does not give the number of mills covered by the table.
24. Ibid., p 466.
25. It also suggests that prices for completed cuts were declining. This fits the picture presented in the local press of a downward pressure on weavers' wages in the period: see, for example, Y.F.T. 20 September 1889 and 26 December 1890.
26. Calculated from the Census of England and Wales, 1901 (PP 1902, CX XI), Leeds Occupations, Table³⁵, and the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89.
27. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89. Approximately 57 per cent of adult women in the returns were weavers.
28. 9.5 per cent of wool weavers in Leeds earned less than 10/- and 32.9 per cent earned between 15/- and 20/-: Appendix 4, Table 4.10.

29. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89. See also Appendix 4, Table 4.10.
30. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89.
31. 94.3 per cent of burlers and knotters, 95 per cent of winders and all doublers and worsted spinners received less than 15/- a week. They were all paid by time: Appendix 4, Table 4.10. Only 243 adult women, averaging 10/3d, were returned as worsted spinners, compared with 257 girls who averaged 8/10d: Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89.
32. Collet, "Women's Work", p 470.
33. Ibid.
34. For a criticism of Collet's article, see Y.F.T. 25 September 1891.
35. Councillor Hepworth, for example, argued that women in the clothing factories could earn wages which ranged from 8/- to 35/-: Y.F.T. 24 October 1890. One manager claimed that his finishers could earn 15/- to 18/-, and his machinists 20/-, in full work, while another gave averages of 12/- to 14/- for his workforce as a whole: Leeds Daily News, 19 July 1889.
36. L.D.N. 28 October 1889. His figures were drawn from wages books covering the period 23 February to 9 October 1889.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Leeds Mercury, 1 November 1889.
40. Joseph Hepworth, for example, admitted that he employed 80 women who failed to average more than between 8/- and 12/- for a full week's work: Y.F.T. 24 October 1890.
41. I O Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women of the Working Classes", Y.F.T. 17 March 1893. It was suggested in the L.D.N. 18 October 1889, that the average wages of machinists and finishers were 12/- and 10/11d respectively. These figures were lower than those given by Isabella Ford, but included the earnings of learners.

42. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p 102.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. Basters averaged 13/7d and "other women" averaged 13/6d.
45. See Appendix 4, Table 4.7.
46. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p 137.
47. Ibid.
48. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding (PP 1911, LXXXVIII), p 69. Only 60 women and 56 girls were included in the returns for Leeds.
49. Ibid.
50. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Paper, Printing etc. (PP 1912-13, CVIII), pp 17, 33, 47.
51. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 23, 102, 137; Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 88-9; Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding (PP 1911, LXXXVIII), p 69; Paper, Printing etc. (PP 1912-13, CVIII), pp 17, 33, 47.
52. Wood concluded that three weeks were lost in an ordinary year through seasonal and other slackness of trade, while sickness accounted for another week. Altogether, he estimated that six weeks were lost each year. This reduced a weekly average of 13/6d in full work to 11/6d over the course of the year: Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, p 8. See also I O Ford, "Wages in the Textile Trade", Standard, 9 November 1911, and H Withey's statement in the Y.E.N. 21 October 1909. They both claimed that a full year was rarely worked.
53. Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Messrs Kellert Brown & Co Papers, Wages Books, August 1880-December 1914.
54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.
56. Alan Gee claimed that Leeds women weavers averaged under 10/- a week: Y.F.T. 17 November 1893. A report in the Y.F.T. 3 April 1891, suggested that weavers, fillers and piecers averaged only 11/- a week once deductions had been taken into account. Officials of the West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association painted a bleak picture of weavers' wages in their evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), especially QQ 4820, 5698. J W Downing claimed that weavers were never fully employed and Ben Turner suggested that both sexes could average only 10/- in weaving in the Batley district. The statements given by workers and employers from wool and worsted mills in the Leeds district to Miss Abraham suggested that weavers' wages varied widely between firms. The averages ranged from 7/6d to 17/-. The majority of firms, however, paid between 11/- and 13/-. These averages were reduced in slack periods. In one mill, for example, weavers earned 11/11d when employed full time and 10/11d when slack: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), pp 110-2.
57. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women", and the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 96-7. The wages bill for Leeds ready-made tailoring was high from January to May and lower for the rest of the year, with a particularly low point in October and November. When wages were above average, they were not high enough to compensate for the lower averages of the slack season.
58. The failure to pay overtime rates to women is noted in the Y.F.T. 25 October 1889, and in the Leeds Weekly Citizen, 18 April 1913. Barran's did not pay an extra rate to piece workers when they were employed on overtime: Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), p 402. For references to the practice of keeping women waiting in the factory when there was no work to be done, see Y.F.T. 13 December 1889, and L.W.C. 24 March 1910. Rowland Barran claimed, however, that girls were not kept waiting without payment in his firm. If girls were asked to wait for the firm's convenience they were paid time wages. See Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7070.
59. The Leeds Wholesale Clothiers' Association claimed that "areas in which lower wages are paid are proving the strongest competitors": Men's Wear, 8 July 1911. The steady growth of wholesale bespoke was also related to the difficulties of competing in the cheap clothing market: Men's Wear, 30 August 1902. See also J Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp 21-2.

60. In the 1890s the local labour press constantly referred to the introduction of faster looms and the lowering of prices: for example, see Y.F.T. 4 April 1890, 3 April 1891, 22 January 1892. Alan Gee claimed that faster looms meant a loss of pay because more time was spent waiting for warps to be joined and there was greater stress and strain for the worker: see Gee's evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5061-72.
61. L.M. 18 September and 26 September 1888.
62. One firm, for example, expected weavers to do their own mending: Y.F.T. 4 October 1889, while another asked weavers to do their own reaching-in: Y.F.T. 1 August 1890. For references to "time cribbing", see Chapter 4, footnote 31. The lowering of prices also encouraged women to clean machinery while it was in motion in order to save time and therefore keep up weekly wages: Y.F.T. 7 March 1890.
63. Interview with J Sweeney in the L.D.N. 17 October 1889. Isabella Ford gave another example of the way in which employers reduced prices. She cited the case of a firm which took on an order for work at such low prices that the workers could not make a proper wage. The employers, therefore, mixed the lower priced work with better priced garments so that wages would be pulled up to a more acceptable level: Women's Trade Union Review, April (1897).
64. G H Wood, "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906: A Review of the Wage Census", Huddersfield Technical College Textile Society Journal (1910), pp 66-7. Wood argued that piece workers' wages were higher than those of time workers in the same occupation and had advanced more rapidly over the period 1886 to 1906.
65. In the 1880s and 1890s deductions made for power ranged from $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1d in each shilling earned, while 1d to 2d was deducted for the use of dining rooms, medical charities and sick clubs: L.D.N. 23 October 1889; Y.F.T. 25 October 1889; Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women". Similar charges for dining facilities were still found later in the period: see, for example, the evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5479, and L.W.C. 13 December 1913. Female workers were also charged for the thread that they used and this practice continued up to 1914. Women objected, both to being asked to pay for the thread at all, and also to having to buy the thread from their employers. They claimed that the prices charged were always greater than in outside shops: L.W.C. 13 December 1912. H Withey, however, was uncertain whether the thread obtained for a lower price in outside shops was always of the same quality as that supplied by the

- manufacturer: see his evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 5523-5, 5473. Rowland Barran claimed that his firm adjusted the prices paid to female workers to take account of the cost of the thread used; ibid. Q 7064. Even if this were the case, in some firms it meant that the already low wages of women and girls were lowered still further.
66. Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Appendix VIII, Exhibit 5. In Case B wages ranged from 5/4½d to 17/6d, with deductions of 5d and 11½d respectively.
67. L.D.N. 14 May 1889.
68. This is more fully discussed above, pp 210-12. The local labour press claimed that fining was increasing in the late 1880s and early 1890s: see, for example, Y.F.T. 30 September 1889 and 13 January 1893.
69. Y.F.T. 6 June 1890. Miss Abraham thought that fines for damaged work caused most complaints in the wool and worsted trade: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 99.
70. At one mill, for example, a weaver was fined 11/6d for damages on a 15/8d piece: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 99. Rowland Barran stated that a learner in his firm was fined 7d from a wage of 3/9d, while H Withey quoted the case of a tailoress who had been fined £2.17/- over the course of two years. Her wages averaged between 8/- to 9/- a week and fines for lateness averaged 6d. See the evidence of Barran and Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7141, 5552.
71. See, for example, the estimate of Alan Gee in the Y.F.T. 17 November 1893.
72. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women", and Y.F.T. 25 December 1891.
73. A L Bowley, "The Statistics of Wages in the United Kingdom during the Last One Hundred Years. Pt IX. Wages in the Worsted and Woollen Manufactures of the West Riding of Yorkshire", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXV, 2 (1902), p 116. He gave the average of 9/- for the year 1893 when there was considerable short-time working.

74. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women", and the evidence of H Withey to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 5716. Withey's figures did not include the wages of girls who had just started work, but did include the wages of other young workers.
75. Select Committee on the Sweating System. Fourth Report (PP 1889, XIV, Pt I), QQ 29947-62.
76. Y.E.N. 21 October 1909.
77. Journal of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses, October (1909), pp 225-6.
78. Dorothy Zimmern claimed that 10/- was just enough for a single woman to exist on, but 15/- was required before she could live: D Zimmern, "Women's Wages", Women's Industrial News, July (1912), p 54; Mrs F W Hubback, "Women's Wages", New Statesman, Special Supplement on Women in Industry, 21 February 1914, p iv, argued that 12/- a week was the very least on which a woman living alone could maintain her health, while 15/- was needed for anything above the basic necessities. Wood thought that 11/- was just enough for women to live on if they were employed for a full 52 weeks, but that 12/- would be needed to compensate for slack periods. His allowances for a woman's expenditure, however, were very meagre: they included 8/- for board and lodging, 1/6d for clothing, 6d for trams, 6d for recreation and 6d for insurance: Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, p 2. Wood made no allowance for extra food, presents and collections which all appeared in the budgets of working women presented in the Board of Trade, Accounts of Expenditure of Wage-Earning Women and Girls (PP 1911, LXXXIX). In these budgets women also spent far more on clothing than had been allowed for by Wood.
79. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 195; and Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 116, 117.
80. See Appendix 1, Table 1.13.
81. Collet, "Women's Work", p 470. One quarter of the female workers employed by Barran's were aged under 18 in the early 1890s: Royal Commission on Labour. Answers to Schedules of Questions in Group C (PP 1892, XXXVI, Pt IV), p 518.
82. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 88-9; Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 102, 137; Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding (PP 1911, LXXXVIII), p 69.

83. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89.
84. W H Drew claimed that half-time workers in Yorkshire wool and worsted mills averaged between 1/11½d and 3/-: Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 5487-96. In Skipton one worsted mill paid half-time workers 2/- to 2/6d, although other mills paid from 3/- to 3/6d: Y.F.T. 7 February 1890. Messrs John G Watson and G Sutcliffe, of the Managers' and Overlookers' Society, Bradford, suggested that half-time workers in spinning received 1/6d to 4/-, doffers received 7/6d to 8/6d, while side winders earned from 9/- to 12/- depending on the number of sides: Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 10332-9. Young girls learning to weave could earn from 7/- to 12/-: The Times, Special Textile Number, 27 June 1913, p 21.
85. Collet, "Women's Work", pp 469-70, claimed that the custom in the tailoring trade was to put a girl on piece work after a month or six weeks. The youngest learners usually earned 5/- within two or three months, but a learner of 17 or 18 would earn 10/- within five or six months. When they first started to work, girls paid a proportion of their wages to the adult woman who taught them: see, for example, the evidence of Rowland Barran to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7140.
86. Leeds City Archives, Messrs J Barran & Sons Ltd Papers, Employees, 1883-93. A Barber, for example, received 5/- at 14 years of age, 7/- at 14½, 8/- at 15, 9/- at 16 and 11/- at 17. Minnie Burton received 5/- at 14 years of age, 7/- at 15, 9/- at 16, 11/- at 17 and 13/- at 18.
87. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p 102.
88. Ibid., p 137, and Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p 89.
89. Rowland Barran suggested, for example, that learners were paid the same prices as older women, but could not complete the work as quickly. He also claimed that young girls were given more simple tasks to perform: Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), QQ 7143, 7179. The lady factory inspectors noted that girls aged 16 to 18 in blouse and skirt machining were given cheap easy work: Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910 (PP 1911, XXII), p 122.

90. In factory trades outside textiles and ready-made tailoring adult women were frequently unable to earn above 11/- a week, and therefore the differential between the wages of women and girls was narrow: see footnote 113.
91. The greatest differential between the wages of adult men and lads was to be found in skilled trades. High adult wages were not necessarily, however, the result of strong trade union organisation, but also related to custom and to the strategies of employers: E J Hobsbawm, "The Labour Aristocracy", in Labouring Men (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp 290-4, and C More, Skill and the English Working Class, 1870-1914 (Croom Helm, 1980), pp 228-30.
92. For the wages of less skilled workers, see H Clegg, A Fox and A F Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889, Vol 1, 1889-1910 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp 479-82. More also notes that apprentices tended to receive lower rates of pay than other young male workers: More, Skill and the Working Class, pp 74-5.
93. E Rathbone, "The Remuneration of Women's Services", Econ. J. XXVII, 1 (1917), pp 60-3.
94. Children's Employment Commission. Appendix to the Second Report. Report on the Employment of Females in Certain Trades in Leeds and Other Towns in Yorkshire (PP 1864, XXII), pp 3-4, and F Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", in F W Galton, ed. Workers on Their Industries (Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), pp 17-18.
95. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 14-17, 94-5, and Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", pp 16-17.
96. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p 41.
97. Ibid. pp xxiv, 23. The figures refer only to those living out.
98. Ibid. p 23.
99. Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", pp 18-19. S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp 84-5.

100. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p 23.
101. Ibid., p xxvi. Several of the dressmakers who gave evidence to Clara Collet for her report on dressmakers, milliners and mantle makers had worked for one or two years without pay when they were apprenticed: Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893, XXXVII, Pt I), pp 89-90.
102. In Yorkshire 29 women, including 10 fitters and cutters, were returned as receiving partial board and living out. 53 women, including 23 fitters and cutters, 18 dressmakers and 12 milliners, were returned as living in and receiving full board.
103. For example, see J Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI); Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) (PP 1889, X); Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration from Eastern Europe into the United Kingdom (PP 1894, LXVIII).
104. Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 6.
105. Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Foreign Immigration in Relation to Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 118.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid. p 119.
109. Burnett, Report on the Sweating System in Leeds (PP 1888, LXXXVI), p 5.
110. Board of Trade, Reports on the Volume and Effects of Recent Immigration. Pt III. Women's Labour (PP 1894, LXVIII), p 116.
111. Buckman, Immigrants and the Class Struggle, pp 14-15, 26-30.

112. For complaints of labour shortages in the Jewish workshop sector, see J.A.S.T. & T. July (1911), pp 162-4.
113. In his investigations into wages for his report to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws T Jones gave the following wage figures for a number of Leeds firms: Firm 13, an iron factory, paid girls and women an average of 10/-, although there were great fluctuations in the year. Firm 14, paper bag makers and bookbinders, employed 350 young girls, who started at 3/6d, and then went on to 10/- for printing and 12/- for bookbinding. Firm 15, a printing establishment, paid girls 5/- when they started and over 8/- at the age of 20. They could, however, earn 12/- if they were quick workers. Firm 16, a shoe shop, started girls on 3/6d. Their wages rose to between 8/- and 9/-, but they rarely received more. Huddersfield Polytechnic Library, G H Wood Collection, Wages Books, CB 87, Confidential letter from T Jones, 21 October 1909.
114. Collet, "Women's Work", p 466.
115. H.P.L. Wood Coll. Wages Books, CB 87, confidential letter from T Jones, 21 October 1909. Firms 10 and 12, rag sorters.
116. L C Miall, ed. Handbook for Leeds and Airedale, prepared for the British Association (Leeds: McCorquodale, 1890), p 119.
117. Board of Trade, Return of Wages in the Principal Textile Trades (PP 1889, LXX), p 150.
118. Collet, "Women's Work", p 464. Dorothy Barton suggested that women's wages in the flax industry in Leeds ranged from 7/- to 13/6d in 1880 depending on the specific task being carried out: Fawcett Library, D Barton Collection, manuscript and papers on wages in the flax industry in Leeds and its neighbourhood.
119. For example, see L.D.N. 19 July 1889, and Y.F.T. 16 August 1889.
120. L.D.N. 23 October 1889.
121. Ibid.
122. Editorial in the Leeds Evening Express, 19 July 1889.

123. Report of Mr White on Leeds outworkers in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1910 (PP 1911, XXII), p 68.
124. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women". See also Y.F.T. 2 May 1909. Matchbox makers received between 2d and 2½d to paste together 288 pieces. They received 1/- after 1,728 pieces and had to find their own hemp and paste: Y.F.T. 28 February 1890.
125. Ford, "Industrial Conditions Affecting Women".
126. See the statement of Mr Fleming, a retired brushmaker, in the Y.F.T. 7 October 1909. The brooms sold for 6d. The cost of materials came to 3½d and employers received 1d profit on each one.
127. See Chapter 1, especially above, pp 62-65.
128. Appendix 1, Table 1.13.
129. H.P.L. Wood Coll. EA 41, "The Wages of Women Workers", draft of an article c. 1903.
130. D Barton, "The Course of Women's Wages", J. Royal Stat. Soc. LXXXII, 4 (1919), p 544.
131. Board of Trade, Return of Wages in the Principal Textile Trades (PP 1889, LXX), p 71, and Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), pp 88-9.
132. See Chapter 2, footnotes 165 and 167.
133. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p xv.
134. For the extent to which retail prices increased over the period, see T R Gourvish, "The Standard of Living, 1890-1914", in A O'Day, ed. The Edwardian Age (Macmillan, 1979), pp 14-15.
135. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 40.
136. Ibid.

137. For example, see Y.F.T. 19 July 1889, 11 October 1889, 28 March 1890, 24 October 1890, 6 November 1891, 12 May 1893.
138. J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980), Chapter 2.
139. See the evidence of A Gee to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 4819-32.
140. Drake, Women in Trade Unions, pp 123-4, 127.
141. At a meeting called to protest against the low minimum rates set by the Trade Board, officials of the AUCO claimed that wages had been stationary for years and yet food and other prices had increased: L.W.C. 24 January 1913. Mallon noted that G H Wood had failed to include the clothing industry in his survey of wages in B L Hutchins and A Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation (P S King, 1903). Mallon argued that if the meagre returns of 1886 were compared with those of 1906 there appeared to have been a fall in the wages paid: J J Mallon, "Women's Wages", in B L Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (G Bell, 1915), p 230.
142. J Buckman, "The Economic and Social History of Alien Immigration to Leeds, 1880-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1968), p 123.
143. See, for example, L.W.C. 13 December 1912. The paper carried an article on the extensive fines and deductions suffered by tailoring workers in this period.
144. Ibid.
145. For a further discussion of the downward pressure on women's wages in the wool and worsted industry and the ready-made tailoring trade, see above, pp 209-12. See also Bowley, "Statistics of Wages. Pt IX. Wages in Worsted and Woollen Manufactures", p 116. He claimed that "we have no definite evidence of either rise or fall since 1886" in the wages of woollen weavers.
146. K Laybourn, "The Attitude of Yorkshire Trade Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-96" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1972), pp 52-6.

147. Ibid.
148. For example, see Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, pp 12-13; Wood "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906", p 69; Hubback, "Women's Wages", p vi; Mallon, "Women's Wages", p 238.
149. Ibid. See also C Smith, "The Minimum Wage", in G M Tuckwell et al, Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View (Duckworth, 1908), pp 17-19.
150. For example, see Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 211-20. Tawney argued that the minimum wage would not have a sudden detrimental effect on homeworkers, but that they would be phased out gradually. Margaret MacDonald, the wife of J R MacDonald and a member of the Women's Labour League, feared, however, that because some homeworkers were desperate for employment they would either starve or work illegally: M E MacDonald, "Sweated Industries and the Wages Board", Econ.J. XVIII, 1 (1908), pp 142-3. For an account of the opposition of the MacDonalds to Trade Boards, see J A Schmiechen, Sweated Industries and Sweated Labour: The London Clothing Trades, 1860-1914 (Croom Helm, 1984), pp 169-70.
151. Men's Wear, 22 March 1913. The AUCO claimed that the minima proposed would benefit only sweated workers: Y.F.T. 25 January 1912.
152. See the statement of Mr Harrison to the Leeds Trades Council, reported in the L.W.C. 23 December 1911.
153. L.W.C. 11 April 1913.
154. For example, see the speeches made at the AUCO meeting to protest against the low minimum rates: L.W.C. 21 October 1911. In 1914 the union attempted to obtain 5d an hour for women: ibid. 10 July 1914.
155. The wages books of individual textile firms in Leeds and its neighbourhood reveal the extent to which women workers benefited from all-round wage increases in different mills, in particular between 1910 and 1914. In one mill female minders received 11/- in 1880, 11/6d in the early 1890s, 12/- in 1900 and 13/- in 1905. After this there was a more rapid rise to 14/- in 1910 and to 15/- in 1914. Male workers also received increases in these years: Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Messrs Kellert Brown & Co Papers, Wages Books, 1880-1914. In the Airedale mill the wages of female fillers rose from 13/1½d in 1904 to 14/- in 1910 and to 15/- in 1913: Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Airedale Mill, Papers,

Wages Books, 1904-13. Not all firms paid such high wages. One firm of worsted spinners paid burlers only 10/- to 11/- in 1912: L.C.A. Messrs T & M Bairstow Ltd Papers, Wages Books, 1912-13.

156. B Turner, The Heavy Woollen District Textile Workers' Union: A Short Account of the Rise and Progress of the Heavy Woollen District Branch of the General Union of Textile Workers (Dewsbury: Yorkshire Factory Times, 1917), Chapter xxi. For the increase in union membership, see Appendix 5, Table 5.6.
157. Turner, The Heavy Woollen District Textile Workers' Union, pp 106-7.
158. For example, see Ben Turner's speech to the 1913 Trades Union Congress in which he suggested that the minimum for women workers should be at least 20/- a week: Y.F.T. 11 September 1913.

CHAPTER 6WOMEN'S WAGES, 1880 TO 1914: SEX AND REGIONAL VARIATIONSThe Differential Between Male and Female Wages

Women workers in industrial employment received lower wage rates than men in the period 1880 to 1914. This was the most obvious way in which the work experience of both sexes could be differentiated.¹ Part of the difference in wage rates can be explained by the nature of the work carried out, since men monopolised occupations defined as skilled. The differential, however, is still apparent when the wage rates of men and women engaged in similar work are compared. It is difficult to find examples in the period of men and women engaged on exactly the same tasks, but it is possible to compare occupations in terms of the degree of training and aptitude required along with the extent of organisation and scarcity value of the worker.² Both men and women were employed in monotonous, repetitive industrial occupations which required little training. Nevertheless, women received an average wage of only 10/- to 11/- compared with the 18/- to 20/- of male labourers.³ In work requiring some judgement and experience the majority of women were unlikely to average over 15/- a week, whereas semi-skilled men expected over 25/-.⁴ Women who regularly earned over 20/- a week were in a small minority, except in cotton weaving, and usually had some special ability.⁵ The 1906 wages enquiry suggested that in female trades outside cotton, one fifth of adult women averaged less than 10/- a week and two thirds earned less than 15/-.⁶ Moreover, these proportions would have been higher if the enquiry had taken a year's earnings

into account.

A minority of women did receive higher wage rates than unskilled male labourers. Such women, however, were employed in work requiring some ability, and even in the more highly paid cotton industry the majority of women did not earn wages that approximated to those of semi-skilled men, either in their own or in other industries.⁷ Although women regularly employed in factory work could take home higher weekly earnings than men who were irregularly employed, their hourly rate of pay was still lower. It was estimated that in the early twentieth century the most usual average wage rate for women was 3d an hour compared with 5d for unskilled men and 7d for all male workers.⁸

The differential between male and female wages did vary within different industries and across industries and regions. In male dominated occupations the differential was particularly high because men were largely employed in skilled or semi-skilled work, whereas women were concentrated in the more subsidiary, less skilled tasks. In metal manufacture, for example, men averaged 33/11 in 1906 compared with 12/8 for women; this represented three eighths of a male wage.⁹ In textiles, where women had the opportunity to work in tasks requiring ability and experience and where male employment was generally not highly skilled, there was a narrower differential in earnings between the sexes. In Yorkshire wool and worsted mills women averaged 13/10 or almost half the male wage of 27/3. The cotton trade had the smallest differential, with women averaging 18/8 or more than three fifths of the average

male wage of 29/6.¹⁰

The difference in the average wages of men and women could vary even within the same industry if different towns are compared. In the wool and worsted trade, for example, women's wages were less than half those of men in Leeds, Halifax and Bradford, but were two fifths of those of men in Huddersfield and Dewsbury.¹¹ The narrower differential between the wages of men and women in Huddersfield can be explained by the extensive employment of male weavers and the high quality of cloth produced.¹² Wherever men and women were found working in the same tasks, the tendency was for women's wages to be higher than the usual average for female workers, but for the wages of men to be lower than their counterparts in exclusively male tasks.¹³

Hunt argues that over the long term the differential between the wages of men and women tended to become narrower, in particular after the 1870s.¹⁴ He suggests that women benefited from a reduction in child labour, from a lessening of skill differentials and from minimum wage legislation. Moreover, Hunt argues that the shift of women from low paid farm labouring, domestic production and homework into higher paid work in semi-skilled manufacturing, teaching and office work also contributed to this development.¹⁴ The pattern of male and female wages at a local level, however, did not necessarily conform to this more general trend. In Leeds the differential between male and female wages does not appear to have narrowed in the period. To some extent at least it may have increased. There was some narrowing of the differential in the 1880s

when the development of new factory industries provided work opportunities for women outside the lower paid workshop and homework sectors. Part of the labour force, however, was recruited from girls who would otherwise have entered domestic service which was not viewed as a particularly low paid occupation by contemporaries.¹⁵ It has already been argued that women's wages in textiles and clothing were subject to a downward pressure in the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century. The statistics provided by the two wage enquiries of 1886 and 1906 indicate that male wool and worsted workers received a higher rate of increase during the period than women workers in the trade.¹⁶ Male workers also benefited to a greater degree than female workers from the standard rates of pay achieved by the union in 1913 for the Heavy Woollen District.¹⁷

In the ready-made tailoring trade it was argued that neither male nor female workers had achieved increases in wages over the whole period up to 1910. When minimum rates were fixed by the Trade Board in 1909 they were set at such low figures that they did little to improve the average wages of either sex in Leeds.¹⁸ Although the union negotiated higher minima for Leeds workers, these still reflected and reinforced the existing differential between the sexes. Moreover, the acceptance of a percentage clause for women widened the differential in some cases.¹⁹ Over the whole period there was a decrease in the proportion of the male labour force employed in low paid occupations such as textiles and an increase in the proportion employed in better paid work such as engineering.²⁰ This in turn widened, rather than narrowed, the wage differential between male and female workers in the city.

Contemporaries interested either in general social questions, or, more specifically, in the conditions of women's employment, showed an increasing concern in the period with women's low pay and the differential between male and female wages. A range of explanations for women's low pay were put forward, including legal, health and educational disabilities. But the explanations which received most emphasis were women's characteristics as workers, their weak market position and their role as secondary earners, all of which were recognised as being closely related to women's social position in the family.²¹

Women's characteristics as workers were thought to derive from a combination of their natural abilities and disabilities as a sex and from their position within the family. It was frequently assumed that women received lower pay than men because they had a lower standard of living. This was countered, however, by the argument that women had to adapt to fewer needs because their pay was so low.²² A more crucial argument was that women received lower pay because they were less efficient and productive than men. It was said that they had less physical strength, were more frequently ill and, because their prime commitment was to family life, had few skills and were uninterested in acquiring any.²³ Sidney Webb went so far as to conclude that lack of efficiency was the main reason for women's lower rate of pay:

The frequent inferiority of women's earnings is due in the main to a general but not invariable inferiority of productive power, usually in quantity, sometimes in quality, and nearly always in net advantageousness to the employer.²⁴

Since women were seldom employed on exactly the same work as men, Webb could produce little evidence to back up this assertion. Further, where men and women were employed in similar work, the differences in productivity, in the quality of work and in the attitudes of workers were found to be minimal and not enough to justify the extent of the differential in wage rates paid.²⁵ In cotton weaving men and women did receive the same rate of pay for the same work, although male earnings were generally slightly higher. This, however, could be accounted for by the content of the work performed; men, for example, could tune their own looms, whereas women had to waste time waiting for a male tuner.²⁶

The greatest emphasis in most contemporary studies was on the weak market position of women. This was thought to stem from the fact that too many women were in competition for a narrow range of unskilled jobs.²⁷ Some social commentators also assumed that the problem of low wages was then exacerbated by the fact that women were overcrowded in trades which were less wealth producing than male trades and where the price of the finished product was low.²⁸ The character of the consumer-goods trades in which women were most frequently employed may have led employers to seek cheap labour. It was pointed out, however, that factories paying comparatively high wages to women were able to produce very low priced articles through the application of new technology, while men in these trades were not necessarily paid low wages because prices were low.²⁹

Explanations for the overcrowding of women into a narrow group of less

skilled occupations ranged from women's disabilities as a sex, since it was assumed that they did not have the aptitude for many tasks, to their expectation of marriage. This was thought to make them uninterested in acquiring skills and less industrious as workers.³⁰ Commentators such as Sidney Webb, Mrs Hubback and Millicent Fawcett also argued that trade unions had an important role to play in limiting women to a narrow range of less skilled occupations.³¹ Heidi Hartmann's more recent study also accepts the view that male trade union action was largely responsible for job segregation by sex which underpinned women's low pay. Hartmann argues that the prime motive of union restrictionist policies was to bolster the privileges of male workers at the expense of women, thereby keeping women dependent on men within the home as well as in a subordinate industrial position. She argues from this that job segregation and low pay must be seen as "patriarchal in origin".³²

Trade unions did attempt to restrict women to specific occupations, but this cannot simply be seen in terms of patriarchy or as constituting the major explanation for women's low pay. Skilled male trade unionists also sought to confine a large group of male workers to less skilled employment. Their actions were as much part of a struggle against capital to maintain wage levels and job control as an attempt to uphold male privileges at home and at the workplace.³³ Moreover, employers also played a part in the formation of a sex segregated labour force and in the use of women as cheap labour. They drew on the long standing practice of paying women lower wage rates than male workers which preceded the development of strong trade unions.³⁴ The existence of all-female occupations made it easier for manufacturers to employ cheap

labour with the minimum of protest, while they acted on the basis that there was a "woman's rate" for the job.

This leads on directly to a consideration of the importance of women's status as secondary earners in explaining their low pay. Contemporaries usually added this on to their list of explanations, since they did recognise that women's wage rates were not simply influenced by their market position but also that they were fixed according to different standards from those of men.³⁵ It was assumed, therefore, that men were paid on the basis that they had, or would have, dependants, whereas women were paid on the basis that they were partially supported by others.³⁶ Such an assumption conflicted with the prevailing economic theory that wages were fixed according to the value of the work done and the bargaining strength of workers and employers in a competitive labour market.³⁷ Some contemporaries, such as Mrs Hubback of the Fabian Society, did attempt to minimise the importance of family responsibilities in fixing the level of wages and stressed instead that they related to the extent of union organisation.³⁸ It was certainly the case that poorly organised, low skilled male workers were paid a wage which was barely sufficient to support a dependent family, but they were still paid higher wage rates than female workers. And even where female workers were well organised or possessed some skill and ability they were rarely able to earn more than a recognised "woman's rate".³⁹ Professor Edwin Cannan, for example, noted that where women were recognised as having a specific aptitude for work, such as child care, they were not necessarily rewarded for their skills.⁴⁰

It is not enough, therefore, to see the weak market position of women as

the major explanation for their low rates of pay in comparison with those of male workers, or to simply tag their secondary status as wage earners on to a long list of other explanations. The close inter-relationship between job segregation by sex and women's secondary status as wage earners must be seen as providing the most fundamental explanation for women's low pay. It was this interrelationship which underpinned the existence of a "woman's rate" for the job and ensured that neither experience nor length of training would enable women to break the sex related wage barrier.⁴¹

It is important to recognise, however, that the assumption that men should be breadwinners rather than simply earning more wages than women was a distinct development of the nineteenth century and arose from a complex of related factors.⁴² The growth of strong male trade unions and their concern to improve wage rates came at a time when the location of paid work outside the home made it increasingly difficult for married women to engage in paid employment.⁴³ At the same time, middle-class social reformers, as well as some sections of the better paid working class, stressed the importance of women devoting a full-time commitment to domestic duties and child care. This could only be achieved if men had a family wage.⁴⁴ The ideal of a male breadwinner earning a family wage was seldom a reality for most working-class families in the period and women's wages remained important for family income. The character and extent of their contribution, however, varied considerably in different regions.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, women's contribution to family income increasingly took place in the context of a growing acceptance of the concept of a male breadwinner amongst all social classes.⁴⁶

A number of contemporary commentators continued to justify women's low pay on the grounds that they were less efficient, that they had low living standards and that they did not have dependants.⁴⁷ It was more usual in this period, however, for those interested in social questions to argue that women's wages were unacceptably low regardless of the criteria used to determine their wage rates. Contemporaries approached women's low pay either through a concern with women's overall social position and lack of economic independence, or as part of a more general concern with underpayment and sweating which was thought to be sapping the nation's strength and resources. G H Wood, statistician and secretary to the Yorkshire Textile Employers' Federation, for example, demonstrated that women's wages in industrial employment regularly fell below the 12/- to 15/- needed to make them self-supporting. He summed up the views of many when he concluded that women were therefore unable to maintain their efficiency as workers or their health as mothers of the next generation.⁴⁸ He argued that, although many women were partially supported by others, this did not justify their employers being subsidised both by other employers and also by a wider group of family members. Instead, Wood suggested that it was the duty of the community as a whole to ensure that women were not underpaid.⁴⁹ Wood, many Fabians, members of the Anti-Sweating League and some trade unionists were primarily concerned, therefore, with women's underpayment, defined as wages which fell below the level required for self-support. They suggested that wages would be raised if training opportunities were extended to enable women to enter a wider range of occupations, if trade union organisation were improved and if minimum wage legislation were passed for the sweated trades.⁵⁰ These suggestions fell short, however,

of challenging the differential between male and female wage rates which was perpetuated both by trade union policies on the minimum wage and by minimum wage legislation itself. In 1918, for example, the Trade Boards used different criteria in establishing men's and women's wage rates. These were based on sex rather than on the content of the work, for women were deemed to be self-supporting and men to be responsible for dependants.⁵¹

Many members of the Women's Industrial Council and the Fabian Women's Group did seek to challenge the principle that women should receive lower wages than men. They pointed out that surveys had shown that a high proportion of female workers had dependants, whereas a high proportion of men did not.⁵² At the same time, they rejected the idea that women should be dependent on male wages, urging that women's wages be raised to enable them to become economically independent. As Barbara Drake claimed, "it is a vicious principle that working girls should be dependent on men for all their pleasures".⁵³ The argument that women should receive wage rates of an equivalent level to men for equal work gained an impetus from the outbreak of war. Members of the Women's Industrial Council and the Fabian Women's Group demanded a uniform national minimum wage for both men and women to be secured by Trade Boards in sweated trades. They also called for a rate for the job in which the sex of the worker would be irrelevant.⁵⁴ The policy of equal pay for equal work was fraught with difficulty, however, since women rarely performed exactly the same tasks as men. Consequently, it was frequently argued that male trade unionists merely used the principle of equal pay as a device to ensure that women would be unable to enter

more highly skilled work.⁵⁵

Recognising this difficulty, members of the Fabian Society, the Women's Industrial Council and individuals such as Eleanor Rathbone tried to promote a policy of family allowances, whereby the community would take responsibility for the maintenance of dependants.⁵⁶ Many Fabians saw this as a way to encourage women to stay at home once they had children.⁵⁷ The Fabian Women's Group, however, argued that it would give greater economic independence to women who were engaged in domestic duties. The Group also hoped that it would provide women with the choice of entering paid employment, since they would be able to pay for adequate child care.⁵⁸ Eleanor Rathbone argued further that family allowances would lead towards equal pay in industrial work, since the wages received by each sex would no longer be different.⁵⁹

The concern with women's economic independence and the critique of a system in which wage rates were related to sex was put forward by only a minority. As already noted, existing social legislation sought only to raise women's wages to a more acceptable, non-sweated level. Moreover, most trade unions aimed at a minimum wage policy which would allow women to be self-supporting but which did not seek to lessen the wage differential between the sexes.⁶⁰ The labour movement as a whole was unwilling to challenge the concept of a male family wage or the sex division of labour within the family and within production. Many members of the Women's Labour League were also divided over the question of economic independence for women. Margaret Macdonald, for example, stated that "the fact that their wives can supplement the family income

has unfortunately a bad effect on many husbands; it lessens their sense of responsibility as wage earners".⁶¹ The failure to present any real challenge to job segregation by sex, whether by trade union and political action from the labour movement, or by the development of more widespread training programmes, even under the impact of the upheaval of war, ensured that the payment of a women's rate for the job would remain persistent and long lasting.⁶²

Regional Variations in Women's Wages

It has been argued that the majority of adult women in industrial employment earned average wages below 15/-. There were, however, considerable local variations in their wage rates and average earnings. This was partly related to the methods of production which predominated in particular areas. Women engaged in homework or small workshop production, for example, tended to receive lower wage rates and earnings than those employed in factories.⁶³ On the other hand, regional variations in wage rates and earnings also occurred even when women were employed in the same type of work. The difference most frequently commented upon by contemporaries was that between the low paid workshop and homeworker of the south of England and the higher paid factory worker of the north, but women's wages could also vary between towns in the same region even if the type of industrial employment was the same.⁶⁴

The 1906 wages enquiry did reveal a lower average wage for women across a range of trades in the south, although in occupations requiring considerable skill, such as dressmaking and some branches of printing, women's wages were high in London compared with other areas.⁶⁵ This

can partly be explained by the high class of work carried out in the capital. Nevertheless, dressmakers suffered from a greater irregularity of employment than factory workers which reduced their overall earnings throughout the year.⁶⁶ The ready-made tailoring trade provides a useful example of local differences in wage rates, since it was carried out in numerous centres throughout the country. However, the average wages found in official enquiries must be treated with caution because they could reflect a difference in the proportion of women returned in specific processes and the quality of the work produced was not necessarily identical. In her survey of the wages paid to 2,300 tailoresses in Leeds and 567 tailoresses in clothing factories in Bristol, Clara Collet found that a higher proportion of women in the northern city could earn wages above 15/-.

Table 6.1 Percentage of Women and Girls Earning the Undermentioned Wages in Ready-Made Tailoring in Bristol and in Leeds in 1891⁶⁷

| | <u>Under 10/-</u> | <u>10/- to 15/-</u> | <u>Over 15/-</u> |
|---------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Leeds | 36.0 | 32.5 | 31.5 |
| Bristol | 53.4 | 29.5 | 17.1 |

Collet did point out, however, that the methods of production were not strictly comparable. Steam power, for example, was not used in all the Bristol factories and the subdivision of labour was less well developed.

The 1906 wages enquiry also confirmed the impression that the average wages of tailoresses in Leeds and in other northern town were considerably

higher than those of their counterparts in the south, despite the fact that homeworkers, who predominated in the southern region, were not included in the figures.

Table 6.2 Average Earnings of Female Workers in Ready-Made Tailoring in Selected Towns in the Last Pay Week of September 1906⁶⁸

| | <u>Women</u> | <u>Girls</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Leeds | 13/8 | 7/7 |
| Manchester | 13/7 | 6/1 |
| Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire | 13/6 | 7/10 |
| Bristol | 11/10 | 6/1 |
| Norwich | 10/9 | 5/6 |
| London | 11/11 | 6/- |
| All UK | 12/11 | 6/6 |

A higher proportion of machinists in Leeds received between 10/- to 15/-, and a lower proportion below 10/-, than in areas in the south of the country. Regional differences in the proportion of finishers whose earnings fell within particular groups of wages were less marked.⁶⁹ A higher proportion of finishers in Leeds earned under 10/- if compared with Manchester and the rest of Yorkshire, but the proportion was lower than in London, Bristol and Norwich, where up to 45 per cent of finishers received less than 10/-.⁷⁰

The wages of textile workers in Leeds and in other towns in the north were also higher on average than those of the few women still engaged in wool and worsted manufacture in the west of England. In this area, a higher proportion of adult women earned wages below 10/- than in the Yorkshire

towns.⁷¹ Wages of female textile workers in the north were higher on the whole than those of women who were engaged in other trades in the south. There were considerable differences, however, in the average wages paid to women within the Yorkshire textile district and also between the two major branches of the trade, cotton and wool and worsted. The average wages of women working in the wool and worsted industry in Leeds were similar to those prevailing in most other Yorkshire towns. However, they fell below those in Dewsbury and Huddersfield which were inflated by the high earnings of weavers.

Table 6.3 Average Wages of Weavers Working Full Time in the Four Weeks, September to October 1906, in Selected Towns⁷²

| | <u>Woollen Weavers</u> | | <u>Worsted Weavers</u> | | <u>All Weavers</u> |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| | <u>1 loom</u> | <u>2 looms</u> | <u>1 loom</u> | <u>2 looms</u> | |
| Huddersfield | 19/6 | -- | 19/11 | -- | 19/8 |
| Leeds | 14/- | -- | 17/3 | -- | 14/6 |
| Dewsbury/Batley | 15/4 | -- | -- | -- | 15/4 |
| Halifax | 14/11 | 14/10 | 14/1 | 14/3 | 14/5 |
| Bradford | -- | -- | 13/5 | 13/10 | 13/10 |
| Keighley | -- | -- | 13/11 | 14/6 | -- |

The most usual comparison made by contemporaries was between women's wages in the Yorkshire wool and worsted industry and those in the Lancashire cotton trade. In any comparison the wool and worsted worked was found wanting.⁷³ Adult women in the cotton trade averaged 18/8 compared with the average of 13/10 in the wool and worsted industry, while a higher proportion of women in the cotton trade earned wages in excess of 15/- a week.⁷⁴

Table 6.4 The Percentage of Women Earning the Undermentioned Wages in the Cotton and in the Wool and Worsted Industries in 1906⁷⁵

| | <u>Under</u> <u>10/-</u> | <u>10/- to</u> <u>15/-</u> | <u>15/- to</u> <u>20/-</u> | <u>20/-</u> <u>plus</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cotton | 3.0 | 20.9 | 35.4 | 40.7 |
| Wool & Worsted | 10.7 | 55.6 | 24.7 | 9.0 |

Again, the averages for cotton workers were inflated by the high earnings of weavers. The average wages for female cotton workers in spinning approximated more closely to those of women in the wool and worsted trade in Yorkshire.⁷⁶

Differences in women's pay, both between regions and between similar industries, were related to the prevailing methods of production and to the supply of labour available. Clementina Black suggested that underpayment occurred most frequently where industries were not highly organised or regulated by law. This applied most obviously to women employed in homework or in small workshops, unless they were engaged in more skilled bespoke sections of a trade.⁷⁷ It was also thought that a large supply of women chasing a few less skilled jobs was bound to pull down wages, in particular in areas in which casual employment predominated for men and women were desperate for work at any price.⁷⁸

R H Tawney took up this point in an attempt to explain regional differences in female wages by emphasising the strategic position of the woman worker.⁷⁹ He maintained that a woman's market position would be favourable if there were alternative female occupations in the area, and if the prevailing male wages were high and earned on a regular basis.

He claimed that this then raised the expectations of women about their average earnings and also affected the supply of women seeking work.⁸⁰

It was also argued by William Smart that the local opportunities for women's work were particularly crucial in determining the prevailing level of women's wages, since their secondary role as wage earners meant that they were less mobile than men.⁸¹ Such an analysis tends to underestimate the extent to which women's contribution to family income was still crucial in many regions. The availability of work for all family members in a local area, therefore, could affect the mobility of men as well as women.⁸²

In Leeds the existence of a large-scale textile industry, subject to protective legislation, was clearly important in influencing the local rate of wages paid to women in the newer factory trades. Employers in the ready-made tailoring industry initially drew a proportion of their workforce from the declining flax mills and paid higher wages in order to attract the women.⁸³ After this early period the relationship between the wages paid in both industries is less clear. There was not a great deal of competition for female workers between the two staple trades, since they did not experience a labour shortage until the period immediately preceding the First World War.⁸⁴ Moreover, the wages paid to women in textiles consistently fell below those of machinists in the clothing factories and cannot, therefore, explain the latter's higher rate of pay.⁸⁵

The supply of labour was important in establishing local wage levels for women. The availability of skilled and semi-skilled work across a

range of industries was a feature of male employment in Leeds. Although the city did have its share of low paid, irregular employment, this was not an endemic feature of male work. This ensured that there was no large pool of female labour desperate for work at any price.⁸⁶ At the same time, employers in the tailoring factories sought to attract girls from the homes of skilled workers and claimed that they paid higher wages in order to obtain the most efficient workers.⁸⁷ The predominance of factories and large workshops also meant that the wages of female factory workers were less subject to competition from low paid homeworkers than in centres such as London.

Contemporaries did have conflicting views on the importance of family background in affecting wages. It was accepted that where women were desperate for work because their husbands' wages were so low or irregular they tended to take employment at any price, but there was great disagreement about the effects of the employment of girls and married women from more comfortable backgrounds.⁸⁸ Tawney argued that such women had a greater sense of their own worth and were therefore unwilling to work for low wages, whereas others complained that the "pocket-money" earner was unconcerned about the level of wages she received.⁸⁹ It is unlikely, however, that pocket-money earners represented more than a small minority of female workers, and even girls from more comfortable homes played an important role in helping to raise family living standards.⁹⁰

There was also disagreement about whether the expectations of female workers played any role at all in affecting wage levels. Collet argued

that women were influenced by the local customary rate for work, and claimed that women in Bristol were "contented with earnings thought miserable in the north".⁹¹ On the other hand, William Smart argued that, since women's choice of work was restricted, they had to take what was offered if they needed to work.⁹² It can be suggested, however, that the way in which work was organised locally was itself affected by the supply of female labour and the prevailing level of women's wages in an area.⁹³

Women's wages in Leeds textiles do not appear to have been greatly affected by the existence of alternative employment in the ready-made tailoring trade. They were often lower, or similar to, the wages paid in other Yorkshire textile towns where there was little choice of work.⁹⁴

The differences in average wages between towns was based on the type of work carried out and the extent to which men were employed rather than on the availability of alternative employment for women. In Bradford, for example, women's low pay was linked to the predominance of the low class worsted trade which employed a high proportion of young girls.⁹⁵

In Leeds some declining branches of the textile trade, such as flax and linen manufacture, along with low class wool and worsted work, were located in the East End of the city in order to take advantage of the cheap labour of women from the low income families of iron workers and Irish labourers.⁹⁶ Moreover, the downward pressure on textile workers' wages in Leeds in the 1890s was experienced by all female workers in the Yorkshire wool and worsted industry and was the outcome of a depression in the trade.

Hunt suggests that regional differences in women's wages were also linked

to the prevailing level of male wages, for there was a customary differential between them.⁹⁷ It is unclear, however, whether he is referring to the differential between male and female wages in specific industries or between their wages across a whole district. Nor does he account for the fact that differentials within an industry could vary in different regions. For example, there was a wider differential between male and female wages in the ready-made tailoring trade in the whole of the United Kingdom than in Leeds.⁹⁸ Finally, he does not explain the differential between female earnings in trades within the same town where the organisation of work and the skill and experience required was not dissimilar, such as the textile and clothing industries in Leeds. To put too much emphasis on customary local rates or differences between the sexes almost denies that these could be changed. And yet trade union action, as in the case of cotton workers, the changing organisation of an industry and the introduction of minimum wage laws could all significantly alter customary practices.⁹⁹

The reasons for the differences in average rates of pay between homeworkers and factory workers are clear enough. However, differences in the level of wages paid to women within the factory sector cannot simply be accounted for by variations in the way in which work was organised, although this did play a part. Local earnings were affected by a complex interaction of factors. These include the supply of female labour - itself related to the earnings and type of work available to other family members - the particular characteristics of the industries in which women were employed and the prevailing level of female wages. It is unlikely, for example, that the differences in the nature of cotton and woollen

weaving were great enough to account for the difference in female earnings. In this case outside factors, such as the level of union organisation and the extent to which men worked in similar processes to women, played an important part.¹⁰⁰ Although the differences in the nature of the product, in the skill required and in the extent of mechanisation had some effect on the wages paid in different regions, these were less important than the combination of a wide range of local factors in affecting the wage rates of women.

CHAPTER 6, FOOTNOTES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.)

1. For the way in which there is still a significant wage differential between the sexes, see J West, "Introduction", in J West, ed. Work, Women and the Labour Market (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp 1-3.
2. For a discussion of this point, see H M Stevenson, "Relative Wages and Sex Segregation by Occupation", in C B Lloyd, ed. Sex Discrimination and the Division of Labour (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p 176. The article suggests that it is most appropriate to take clusters of occupations that require similar amounts of human capital. Contemporaries also tended to recognise that, although men and women did not do exactly the same work, those engaged in similar tasks could be compared. Wood, for example, compared the wages of workers who used similar strength and skill in their occupations: G H Wood, The Woman Wage Earner (Church League for Women's Suffrage, 1910), p 13.
3. Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, p 13.
4. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), pp 34-57, and H Clegg, A Fox and A F Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889. Vol 1, 1889-1910 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp 480-2.
5. In the major female occupations it was only in the cotton trade that a substantial proportion of adult women, that is 40 per cent, were returned as averaging above 20/- a week in the returns to the 1906 wages enquiry. In dressmaking workshops the proportion was 14.7 per cent and in bespoke tailoring it was 12.9 per cent. In the other clothing and textile trades the proportion fell below 10 per cent: L W Papworth and D M Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades: Summary Tables (Women's Industrial Council, 1912), Tables IV and VIII.
6. Mrs F W Hubback, "Women's Wages", New Statesman, Special Supplement on Women in Industry, 21 February 1914, p iii.
7. Just over 10 per cent of female workers in the cotton industry who were included in the 1906 returns earned wages above 25/-: G H Wood, "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906: A Review of the Wage Census", Huddersfield Technical College Textile Society Journal (1910), p 67.

8. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 68.
9. Ibid. p 67.
10. Papworth and Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades, Table VII.
11. Calculated from the Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople in the United Kingdom. Textiles in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), p xli.
12. Ibid. Bornat suggests that regional differences in the gap between male and female wages reflected the differing fortunes of specific branches of the wool and worsted industry in particular periods: J Bornat, "An Examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1980), p 32. See also J J Mallon, "Women's Wages in the Wage Census of 1906", in B L Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (G Bell, 1915), pp 216-17.
13. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), p 67.
14. E H Hunt, British Labour History, 1815-1914 (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), pp 105-7.
15. Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), p 483.
16. On average, male wages in the wool and worsted industry increased by 15 per cent, and those of women 10 per cent, between 1886 and 1906. When young workers are included, the wages of all males increased by 17 per cent, but those of all females by only 10 per cent: Wood, "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906", p 65.
17. Yorkshire Factory Times, 3 July 1913.
18. Men's Wear, 4 November 1911, and Leeds Weekly Citizen, 23 December 1911.
19. In their negotiations for higher minima union officials did not seek to narrow the sex differential. The rates proposed by the Trade Board were 6d an hour for men and 3½d for women. The union proposed minima of 9d for stock cutters, 10½d for special cutters, 10d for pressers and 5d for women: Leeds Weekly Citizen,

31 January 1913. They eventually accepted 9d for measure cutters, 8½d for stock cutters, fitters, tailors and passers, 8¾d for pressers and 4d for women: L.W.C. 11 April 1913.

20. See Table 1.5 above, p 55.
21. For a comprehensive range of views concerning women's low pay, see the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXI), especially Appendices 1 and 11. Evidence was taken from trade unions, employers, women's societies and economists. The views expressed were similar to those put forward before the war, although in some cases there was a change in emphasis concerning remedies.
22. For a discussion of the question of the lower standard of living of women, see Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v, and the evidence of M H Irwin, general secretary of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades, to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 1, p 18. They both questioned the notion that it cost less for a woman to keep herself than a man, and argued that if women did live on less it was because their low wages gave them no choice.
23. For the argument that women were less productive than men, see W Smart, Studies in Economics (Macmillan, 1895), pp 116-7; S Webb, "Women's Wages", in S & B Webb, Problems of Modern Industry (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1902), pp 75-80; Mallon, "Women's Wages", pp 235-7. They all suggested that women's lower productivity was caused by their physical weakness as well as by social and economic factors which included lack of training, expectation of marriage and a narrow range of occupations.
24. Webb, "Women's Wages", p 63. He did note, however, that where women had been substituted for men there were few differences in productivity, and that the custom of paying women lower wages than men had a great influence on their wage rates.
25. For example, see the evidence of J Downing to the Royal Commission on Labour. Minutes of Evidence of Group C. Textiles (PP 1892, XXXV), QQ 4819-33, 5028. He claimed that the output of women weavers was often as great as that of a man, but they were paid on a scale of prices that was 10 per cent less. They also had to wait for men to "tune" their looms. He calculated that, if an allowance were made for women having to wait for tuners, it would amount to only a 2½ per cent reduction in prices: Ibid. QQ 4963-70. M B Hammond attempted to test Webb's views

on efficiency by studying occupations in America where men and women were engaged on similar work. She concluded that, although women's productivity was less than that of male workers, their wages were far lower than the difference in productivity justified: M B Hammond, "Women's Wages in Man's Work", Political Studies Quarterly, September (1900), p 535. See also Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v.

26. B Drake, Women in Trade Unions (Labour Research Department, 1920), pp 121-2. Drake noted that, apart from delays occasioned by waiting for tuners, women also needed help from learners and had to pay them. In some cases there were differences in the type of cloth woven by each sex and also in the age and experience of the worker.

27. For example, see Mallon, "Women's Wages", p 236; Smart, Studies in Economics, p 122; C Black, Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage (Duckworth, 1907), pp 152-3. Black argued that too many workers seeking too few jobs led to lower wages. She countered the argument, which was frequently made, that the quality of work produced determined the level of wages.

28. Smart, Studies in Economics, p 122; M G Fawcett, "Mr Sidney Webb's article on Women's Wages", Economic Journal, 11, 1 (1892), p 175. Fawcett suggested that "the most wealth producing of men's industries are more wealth producing than the most wealth producing of women's industries", and therefore argued that women needed to have greater opportunities for training and the entry to more productive labour: ibid. p 176.

29. Black, Sweated Industry, p 142. See also E Cadbury, M C Matheson and G Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City (T Fisher Unwin, 1906), pp 126, 133-4.

30. Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, pp 136-9; Smart, Studies in Economics, pp 128-9; Mallon, "Women's Wages", p 238. Mallon suggested that young women were irresponsible and indifferent to organisation. This was partly because wages were so low, which forced them to look towards marriage. On the other hand, the low wages were themselves affected by their indifference and irresponsibility.

31. Webb, "Women's Wages", p 61; Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v; M G Fawcett, "Review of J R MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades", Econ. J. XIV, 2 (1904), pp 295-9.

32. H Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex", Signs, 1, 3, Pt 2 (1976), pp 151-3.

33. C.S.E. Sex and Class Group, "Sex and Class", Capital and Class, 16 (1982), p 85.

34. For information on the wages of female workers during early industrialisation, see I Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (G. Routledge, 1930). The extent to which employers drew on the existing pattern of the sex division of labour during the industrial revolution is discussed in S Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50", in J Mitchell and A Oakley, eds. The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp 74-80.

35. For examples of the inclusion of women's role in the family as part of a list of reasons for low pay, see the evidence of C Black, M Irwin and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 1, pp 17, 18, 36-7, and Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v. It was suggested that marriage affected women's wages in a variety of ways. The expectation of marriage meant that women were not well trained and lacked interest in work, while they were also considered as secondary earners.

36. For example, Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, pp 2-3, suggested that women should receive a wage that would enable them to be self-supporting.

37. Smart, Studies in Economics, p 129.

38. Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v. See also Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, pp 128-9, 136-8. They claimed that the argument that women's wages were low because they were subsidiary earners was not borne out by facts. Thus, they emphasised the influence of custom in affecting low wages. Moreover, because women looked forward to marriage, were partially supported by others and failed to combine, they received lower wages.

39. Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), p 478, claimed that women's wages were calculated on a different standard from those of men. See also Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, p 137. Many contemporaries argued that, if wages were really based on need, then widows and single women with dependants should receive higher wages regardless of their sex: for example, see the evidence of M Irwin in the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 1, p 18.

40. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix 1, p 18.

41. L Woodcock Tentler, Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-30 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p 20.

42. The development of the concept of a male family wage is discussed in H Land, "The Family Wage", Feminist Review, 6 (1980).

43. B Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem (Virago, 1983), pp 101-17, 265-75.

44. For a full discussion of the growing emphasis on domesticity, see chapter 7.

45. In Lancashire, for example, married women and children were extensively employed outside the home and their wages were crucial for raising family living standards: E H Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), chapter 3. At the opposite extreme, the widespread casual employment of women and children in the East End of London was necessary to keep families on or above the poverty level when male workers were also casually employed: G S Jones, Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp 83-7. See also S Alexander, A Davin and E Hostettler, "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop Journal, 8 (1979), pp 178-81.

46. R Gray, The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Macmillan, 1981), p 39.

47. See, for example, the evidence of the economist, Henry Clay, to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix II, p 179, and F Y Edgeworth, "Equal Pay to Men and Women for Equal Work", Econ. J. XXXII, 4 (1922), especially pp 448-9.
48. Wood, The Women Wage Earner, pp 2-3.
49. Ibid. p 3.
50. For example, see Hubback, "Women's Wages", p vi; J J Mallon, "The Legal Minimum Wage at Work", New Statesman, Special Supplement on Women in Industry, 21 February 1914, p xi; C Smith, "The Minimum Wage", in G M Tuckwell et al, Woman in Industry from Seven Points of View (Duckworth, 1908), pp 58-9; C Black, Sweated Industry, Pt 2, chapter 4. All these authors recognised the importance of trade union organisation if women's industrial position were to be improved. They felt, however, that it was almost impossible to organise in some trades and therefore legislation was necessary to raise wages, to improve conditions and to encourage trade unionism.
51. D Sells, The British Trade Boards System (P S King, 1923), pp 153-4. Although many Fabians recognised that it was not equitable to fix minimum rates for women that were less than those for men, they argued that there was no simple solution for this. If single men received less than married men the latter would not be employed. Similarly, if both sexes were paid equal rates many women would not be employed because men were seen as better workers. Most Fabians suggested, therefore, that while the competitive system continued, the minimum wage must conform to the principle of a lower rate for women which would enable them to be self-supporting. The man's minimum should enable him to support a family, while widows should receive help from public funds: W Stephen Sanders, The Case for the Legal Minimum Wage, Fabian Tract no. 128 (Fabian Society, 1906), p 10.
52. An enquiry by the Fabian Women's Group suggested that approximately 51.13 per cent of female industrial workers were responsible for the full or partial support of others: E Smith, Wage Earning Women and their Dependants (Fabian Soc. 1915). These findings, along with those from a similar survey carried out in the United States, were widely used by contemporaries who were concerned to argue against the view that women should receive lower wages because they did not have dependants: for example, see Hubback, "Women's Wages", p iv; D Zimmern, "Women's Wages", Women's

- Industrial News, July (1912), p 56; Mallon, "Women's Wages", p 234. The surveys, however, tended to be used uncritically. They were based on a small sample of female workers, and, in the case of the Fabian enquiry, a very complicated method was used to decide whether women were partially responsible for dependants. This yielded one set of results which could easily have been altered if a slightly different method of classification had been employed: for a critique of the methodology used, see M H Hogg, "Dependants on Women Wage Earners", Economica, January (1921), pp 69-71.
53. War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix I, p 17. Barbara Drake was a member of the Women's Industrial Council and the Fabian Women's group.
54. Ibid. and the evidence of C Black, pp 16-17.
55. This point was made by Millicent Fawcett in the 1890s: Fawcett, "Mr Sidney Webb's article", pp 173-6. Her view differed from that of many other women active in the women's movement. Isabella Ford, for example, argued that legislation should be passed to "equalise men's and women's wages for work of the same class and commercial value", Y.F.T. 11 May 1894. The upheavals of the First World War did encourage female trade union leaders to demand equal pay for equal work. The phrase was ambiguous, however, since it was difficult to determine whether the work done by women was the same in nature and amount as that done by a man. Employers took advantage of this ambiguity to evade paying equal rates. This led the National Federation of Women Workers to change the demand to "equal pay for the same job". Any concessions to equal pay during the war were short-lived and were not built upon afterwards: Drake, Women in Trade Unions, chapter 5, especially pp 96-100, 105-07.
56. E Rathbone, "The Remuneration of Women's Services", Econ. J. XXVII, (1917), pp 64-8. For a discussion of the various groups involved in the campaign for family allowances, see J Lewis, The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-39 (Croom Helm, 1980), chapter 6.
57. H Harben, The Endowment of Motherhood, Fabian Tract no. 149 (Fabian Soc. 1910), pp 21-3. Harben argued that a family endowment would encourage women to give a full-time commitment to child care and would provide them with the material means to do so.

58. Hubback, "Women's Wages", p vi.
59. Rathbone, "The Remuneration of Women's Services", p 68.
60. Trade union leaders in the Leeds ready-made tailoring and wool and worsted industries concentrated their attention in the period 1910-14 on the demand for a "living wage" for women, which would enable them to be self-supporting: see the speeches of trade unionists reported in the local press, for example L.W.C. 27 January 1912 and 24 January 1913; Y.F.T. 14 November 1912 and 11 September 1913.
61. M E MacDonald, ed. Wage Earning Mothers (Women's Labour League, 1909), quoted in C Rowan, "Women in the Labour Party, 1906-20", Feminist Review, 12 (1982), p 80.
62. Rowan, "Women in the Labour Party", pp 81-3.
63. Wood, The Woman Wage Earner, pp 8-9.
64. For example, see R H Tawney, The Establishment of Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Industry under the Trade Boards Act of 1909. Studies in the Minimum Wage No. 2 (G Bell, 1915), p 126, and the report on Bristol by C Collet in the Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 35. They both made the point that wages in the clothing industry in the south of England were lower than in the north, even if factory workers were compared. For the different wages paid to wool and worsted workers in the individual towns of Yorkshire, see Appendix 4, Tables 4.10 and 4.12.
65. Appendix 4, Table 4.1, and Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. The Clothing Trades in 1906 (PP 1909, LXXX), pp xxiv-v. In the printing trade women in London averaged 15/8 compared with 12/3 in the United Kingdom. In bookbinding the averages were 15/8 and 12/10 respectively: Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Paper, Printing etc. Trades in 1906 (PP 1912-13, CVIII), p xx.
66. F Hicks, "Dressmakers and Tailoresses", in F W Galton, ed. Workers on their Industries (Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), p 17. Bespoke tailoring in the West End of London also suffered

from sharp seasonal variations: B Drake, "The West End Tailoring Trade", in S Webb and A Freeman, eds. Seasonal Trades (Constable, 1912), p 76.

67. Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 35. Collet noted that the Leeds sample represented a smaller proportion of all tailoresses working in the city than in the case of the Bristol sample.
68. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p xi.
69. Appendix 4, Table 4.7.
70. Ibid.
71. Appendix 4, Table 4.10.
72. Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Textiles (PP 1909, LXXX), p xli.
73. For example, see Wood, The Women Wage Earner, p 15; Papworth and Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades, p 8; Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v. References were constantly made to the superior organisation of Lancashire cotton workers, and hence their higher rates of pay, during attempts to organise West Riding woollen weavers in the 1890s. See, for example, the report on the series of meetings addressed by Miss Marland, of the Women's Trade Union League, in the Y.F.T. 30 March 1894.
74. Papworth and Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades, Table VII.
75. Ibid. Table VIII.
76. Board of Trade, Report by Miss Collet on the Statistics of Employment of Women and Girls (PP 1894, LXXXI, Pt 2), p 67.
77. Black, Sweated Industry, p 142.

78. Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. Appendix XVII. Report by Miss C Williams and Mr T Jones on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment in Certain Unions in England (PP 1909, XLIII), pp 8-9, and E G Howarth and M Wilson, West Ham: A Study in Social and Economic Problems (J M Dent, 1907), p 406.
79. Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 126-30.
80. Ibid.
81. Smart, Studies in Economics, p 129.
82. For example, Connell argues that in South Leeds, "the mixture of trades provided work for entire families and this encouraged workers to settle there": E J Connell, "Industrial Development in South Leeds, 1790-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1975), p 339. In the 1880s it was reported in the local press that the fact that girls could obtain work in Leeds often induced respectable families to come to the city: Leeds Mercury, 25 August 1888. In the East End of London the availability of casual work for women lessened the mobility of male workers. It was suggested that the casual labourer was continually in search of fresh employment and therefore needed mobility. However, he lacked this because he was often kept in a district through his family's employment: Howarth and Wilson, West Ham, p 400.
83. Collet, "Women's Work in Leeds", Econ. J. 1, 3 (1891), p 467, and Rowland Barran's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts (PP 1908, LIX), Q 7033.
84. For references to the shortage of female labour in Leeds clothing factories, see Men's Wear, 9 September 1911, 24 February 1912, 23 November 1912, 1 January 1913. For the shortage of labour in textiles, see Y.F.T. 14 November 1912, and the Report of the Lady Inspectors in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1908 (PP 1909, XXI), p 153.
85. Appendix 4, Tables 4.6 and 4.8.
86. Collet, "Women's Work", p 468, noted that homeworkers did not receive lower prices than inside workers in Leeds because "Leeds has not yet, like East London, become a sink for the deposit of unskilled and good for nothing husbands and inefficient women compelled to support themselves and their families". See also chapter 9.

87. This point is discussed below, pp 415-16.
88. For the argument that women whose husbands earned very low wages would take work at any price, see the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. Appendix XVII. Report by Williams and Jones on the Effect of Outdoor Relief (PP 1909, XLIII), pp 7-8, 10, 23-6, and the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), pp 483-4. Single women complained that the use of married women as homeworkers reduced their rates of pay. See also Hubback, "Women's Wages", p vi.
89. Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 131-2. Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, pp 128-9, found that married women were often among the best paid workers in Birmingham and that the worst wage cutting came from widows who were entirely self-supporting. Others, however, suggested that unmarried girls from comfortable homes, and married women who worked merely to supplement their husbands' wages, led to a reduction in prices: for example, see A A Bulley and M Whitley, Women's Work (Methuen, 1894), p 113; Papworth and Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades, p 4; Hubback, "Women's Wages", p v. A range of conflicting views concerning the effects of married women's work on rates of pay can be found in the Royal Commission on Labour. Fifth and Final Report. Appendix III. The Employment of Women (PP 1894, XXXV), pp 483-4.
90. For a more detailed discussion of the contribution of female workers to family income, see below, pp 376-9.
91. Royal Commission on Labour. Reports by Miss Orme et al on the Employment of Women (PP 1893-4, XXXVII, Pt I), p 35.
92. Smart, Studies in Economics, p 115. He claimed that too much attention was paid to workers' attitudes and needs in explaining why they were paid at a particular level. See also E J Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-Load", in Labouring Men, p 347. Hobsbawm suggests that "the standards by which workers judged a wage to be acceptable or not were not the only factor in fixing them".
93. This point has been argued above, pp 164-5. Contemporaries suggested that the existence of a cheap supply of female labour could retard the introduction of machinery in specific trades: see A L Bowley's evidence to the War Cabinet Committee, Report on Women in Industry (PP 1919, XXXI), Appendix II, p 177.

- MacDonald, however, claimed that the relationship was a complex one. Small employers might be reluctant to introduce machinery, but larger ones tended to seek the increased productivity from mechanisation: J R MacDonald, ed. Women in the Printing Trades (P S King, 1904), p 97.
94. Appendix 4, Table 4.12.
95. Wood, "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906", pp 66-9, and Y.F.T. 21 February 1890.
96. Collet, "Women's Work", p 468; Y.F.T. 4 September 1913; M F Ward, "Industrial Development and Location in Leeds North of the River Aire, 1775-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1972).
97. Hunt, Regional Wage Variations, pp 117-8.
98. In Leeds male wages in ready-made tailoring averaged 31/11, while those for women averaged 13/8. In the United Kingdom men averaged 31/11 and women 12/11. In Bristol the averages were 34/9 and 11/10 respectively: Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours. Clothing (PP 1909, LXXX), p xl.
99. For the impact of minimum wage laws, see Tawney, Minimum Rates in Tailoring, pp 60-86; Mallon, "The Legal Minimum Wage at Work"; S C Moore, "The Trades Board Act at Work", Econ. J. XXIII, 3 (1913).
100. Wood, "Textile Wages in 1886 and 1906", p 69; Mallon, "Women's Wages", p 216; Drake, Women in Trade Unions, pp 121-2.