



**Nattha Komolvadhin**  
**PhD candidate**  
**LSE Gender Institute**  
**UK**

## Gender, Technology and Homeworking: New Family Practices

### Abstract

The use of the Internet as work at home can encourage transformative forms of familial relations. The Internet, which transcends temporal and spatial divisions, has enabled users to become self-employed, e-commerce entrepreneurs or freelancers. As Internet based work is more mobile, work can be relocated to the home sphere. Based on in-depth interviews with 55 Internet professionals in Thailand, this paper argues that Internet based work can promote intergenerational cooperation. Parents and children, husbands and wives can work together by using the Internet. Thus different generations can complement one another with different expertise and skills. Additionally, a number of cases show the extent to which cohabiting couples share the same household to develop an Internet business. However, these cohabiting couples tend to live with the parents of one partner. This form of relationship is considered progressive in that couples can live together before getting married. On the other hand, parents can monitor cohabiting couples more closely. The Internet brings about new forms of flexible work thus promoting more individualised society. Internet workers tend to feel less constrained by tradition and hierarchy in the labour market thus allowing more freedom in terms of working at flexible hours. On the other hand, different generations may feel more dependent on one another emotionally and professionally thus leading to more tension in everyday life at home. Grandparents appear crucial in the sustainability of the 'nuclear family' in urban contemporary Thailand and help mediate tension within families. From the gender perspective, however, women are still expected to be primarily responsible for domestic domains.

**Keywords: Internet, family, intergenerational cooperation, work, Thailand**

