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The Four-Day Workweek as a Policy Option for Australia

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**A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Research),
Political Economy, Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney, April 2014.**

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the Four-Day Workweek (4DW) as a policy option for Australia. Like most advanced capitalist countries, Australia has experienced little reduction in average working hours in the postwar era despite decades of cumulative productivity gains and social surveys that report a significant number of Australians would like to work fewer hours. This thesis highlights some of the reasons for this apparent anomaly as part of its focus on the nature, purpose and extent of work.

The thesis draws on the diverse traditions of political economy, including Marxian, feminist, Keynesian and institutional perspectives, as well as labour history and organisation studies. In particular, the contributions of Gorz (1999) and Weeks (2011) to the literature on work futures inform the arguments developed in this thesis.

The body of the thesis is divided into three parts that focus, respectively, on the theoretical, historical and institutional levels of analysis. Part I canvasses the 'utopian' and 'pragmatic' nodes of argument in relation to change in the nature and extent of work. It highlights the obstacles to change within capitalism and also the centrality of politics in attempts to circumvent these barriers. The 4DW as a policy option for Australia is situated within this general framework. Part II focuses on the empirical evidence regarding the 4DW in the US in the 1970s and during the Great Recession. Part III centres on a case study of one Australian organisation that gives the option of a 4DW to its staff.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this thesis, it is argued that the 4DW could form part of a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time* in Australia. It is further argued that this reform has a greater chance of lasting success if the 4DW is adopted as a goal of the trade union movement as part of an *offensive agenda*.

“Many people in our culture experience work like a mild disease. Not like cancer or diabetes. No, like a cold. When one has a cold it is natural to say: in two days it will be over. In the case of work one says: it is already Wednesday – I can hold till Friday. That is the point: one waits for work to end. Waiting for the weekend is still minor, the waiting in the case of many is more grave: they wait for the next vacation, or much longer for their retirement.” Frithjof Bergmann (2008: 3).

“Work must lose its centrality in the minds, thoughts and imaginations of everyone. We must learn to see it differently: no longer as something we have – or do not have – but as what we do. We must be bold enough to regain control of the work we do.” André Gorz (1999: 1).

“The idea that the poor should have leisure has always been shocking to the rich.” Bertrand Russell (1932: 4).

“Beyond it [the realm of necessity] begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite.” Karl Marx, (1980: 959).

“The four-day work week has been one of the more widely debated topics in business in recent years. On the one hand, it has been heralded as a momentous social innovation that provides the employee with a choice in the manner in which he earns his ‘daily bread.’ On the other hand, it has been decried as just another management tactic to undermine the advances that have been achieved by labour in the areas of hours of work per day and per week. Most likely, the truth lies somewhere between these extremes.” Hodge and Tellier, (1975: 25).

“The advantages of a so-called 4-10 schedule are clear: less commuting, lower utility bills. But there have been unexpected benefits as well, even for people who aren't state employees. By staying open for more hours most days of the week, Utah's government offices have become accessible to people who in the past had to miss work to get there in time.” Bryan Walsh on Utah's four-day workweek for state workers, (September 7, 2009).

“Going on a 4-day working week makes such an amazing difference in terms of just what you can get done in your time outside of work.” Pete, Researcher at the Institute for Sustainable Futures (2013).

PREFACE

This is to certify that the content of this thesis is my own work and that this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes. I certify that all sources drawn on as part of this thesis have been acknowledged.

The interviews conducted as part of the research for this thesis received ethics approval from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee on April 12, 2013 (see Appendix B).

I would like to thank Professor Stuart White, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), for agreeing to let ISF staff participate in the case study that forms part of this thesis. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr Chris Riedy and Caitlin McGee from ISF for their invaluable assistance in facilitating the interview process and providing access to ISF documents relevant to my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor Emeritus Professor Frank Stilwell for his guidance and encouragement.

Troy Charles Henderson, April 7, 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

Why do we work? Why should we work? Who decides what work is? And who should do it? Do we work because we have to? Does work give life meaning? Or do we increasingly work in “nonsense jobs” that mean “huge swathes of people in the Western world spend their entire working lives performing tasks they secretly believe do not really need to be performed” (Graeber, 2013)? Perhaps these questions do not rank with the first order philosophical questions: Why do we exist? What happens after we die? Why is there something rather than nothing? What are truth, love, beauty and consciousness? But they are nonetheless important questions. They have been of deep concern to the great majority of humans who have lived throughout history; they remain important to those living today, and they will be relevant to those who inhabit this planet in the future. These questions regarding the nature, purpose and extent of work are the central themes of this thesis.

In the beginning, our ancestors had to find food in order to survive and reproduce. Taking the goal of reproduction for our species as a whole as a given, the requirement to feed ourselves remains in force. The great revolutions in agriculture, animal husbandry, industrial technology and chemistry have dramatically reduced the number of people required to work directly in food production, despite the population explosion of the last couple of centuries. This radical increase in agricultural productivity produced – and continues to support – the original economic surplus on which the great multiplication and diversification of other forms of work is based. Yet, despite the dramatic decline in the number of people employed in agriculture (at least in rich countries) work in food production remains the only necessary form of human work in a strictly existential sense. Of course, in a capitalist society where sufficient food is not simply distributed to all who need it, working for a wage is the principal means of gaining access to what Smith called the “necessaries and conveniences of life” (Smith, 1904: I.8.34). In addition, there are many other reasons for engaging in a wide variety of forms of work: from personal satisfaction and passion, to social belonging, professional status and ambition. Because the vast majority of forms of work are, in some

sense, socially determined, they are therefore legitimately subject to a social and political process of continual renegotiation as to their content, distribution and extent.

The image of a world in which people are freed from hard toil and drudgery has long captured the imaginations of philosophers, visionaries, and ordinary men and women. From medieval folk fantasies to techno-socialist utopias, people have dreamed of the abolition of work and its replacement by expanded leisure and freely chosen activity. The young Marx and Engels (1938: 1.4) envisioned a communistic society in which the social regulation of production might free the individual to “hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, [and] criticise after dinner” without needing to become a narrow specialist. Their liberal contemporary, John Stuart Mill (1909: IV.6.7, IV.6.9), argued that with “just institutions” and the “deliberate guidance of judicious foresight” the stationary state economy he deemed inevitable could lead, not to generalised poverty, but to a society characterised by a “well-paid and affluent body of labourers”, “no enormous fortunes”, and sufficient generalised leisure to “cultivate freely the graces of life.” In a similar vein, Bertrand Russell (1932: 2) argued that “the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organised diminution of work” and that a four-hour workday should suffice to meet society’s material needs. Keynes (1963: 358-373), like Russell, looked beyond the dark vistas of Depression and looming war to a society, a century hence, in which the “economic problem” in “progressive countries” had been solved and humanity’s great challenge would be how best to use the superabundant leisure occasioned by a world of three-hour shifts and fifteen-hour workweeks.

There are, of course, other traditions that emphasise the central importance of work to human life on an individual and social level. The difference, as Langmore and Quiggin (1994: 9) put it, between an idea of work as “alienation, suffering and drudgery”, on the one hand, and as “personal fulfillment in cooperation with the natural world”, on the other, has remained a central tension running through the heart of debates regarding work. The impulse to achieve ‘freedom from work’ and the principle of the ‘right to meaningful work’ may well pull in different directions in relation to attempts to renegotiate our relationship to work. Regardless of which of these goals is accorded the higher priority, it is clear that – despite the achievements of workers and unions, radicals and reformers, social democracy,

and socialism – neither the radical democratisation of leisure nor universal access to secure and meaningful work has been achieved.

It is in this broader context that we can usefully consider proposals for a Four-Day Workweek (4DW). Recognising that the questions posed at the start of this introduction will never receive a final and absolute answer, an emphasis on a specific, pragmatic proposal has the attraction of offering a significant step forward. This thesis seeks to examine the case for change in the nature and extent of work from several perspectives, with particular emphasis on the 4DW as a practical means of reform. Although the primary focus is on Australia, lessons are usefully drawn from other places, particularly the United States (US), where there is relevant historical experience.

Description of Procedure

This thesis adopts a multi-perspective, multi-level analysis, a qualitative methodology that draws on some secondary quantitative research, and a multi-method approach that combines basic research and document analysis with a case study centred on semi-structured interviews. This is consistent with the view of Sarantakos (1993: 30), that “Social research is a complex and pluralistic process, diverse in purpose and methods, and based on a varied theoretical and ideological structure.” Social research is constructed and conducted on the basis of different paradigms/perspectives (positivism, Marxism), methodologies (quantitative, qualitative) and methods (interviews, experiments) (Sarantakos, 1993).

A range of theoretical perspectives, including Marxism, feminism, utopianism, Keynesian economics, institutional economics, labour history, as well as work and organisation studies inform this thesis. It adopts Anderson’s (2004) approach to political and economic enquiry. Anderson warns against the dangers of “dogmatism” and “grand theory” and highlights the potential for – not the inevitability of – “creative syntheses in political economy” to “advance coherent understandings” (Anderson, 2004: 135-136). His advocacy of a series of “guideline ‘steps’ of analysis” for “political economic issues” draws on the discipline’s rich theoretical heritage, political traditions, and normative concerns, while rejecting any narrow dogmatism (Anderson, 2004: 141). These steps involve a process of “deferring judgement,

contextualising, disaggregating, and identifying interest, power, ideology and distribution” before presenting “a considered judgement” (Anderson, 2004: 144, 142).

In terms of the 4DW as a policy option for Australia, deferring judgement – Step 1 – implies an openness towards reaching the conclusion that the 4DW is, in whole or in part, undesirable and/or inferior to other proposals. Step 2 – contextualising – requires analysing the 4DW in specific historical and institutional contexts; this is undertaken in Part II and Part III of this thesis. Step 3 – disaggregating claims and applying a class/group analysis – means investigating the extent to which the 4WD impacts different groups in different ways, and whether its appeal does, or does not, cut across class and gender lines. Step 4 – identifying interest, power, ideology – involves unpacking ideologically-charged concepts, which, in terms of this thesis, requires an analysis of the social and ideological construction (and enforcement) of norms regarding the nature, purpose and extent of work. Step 5 requires an assessment of the implications for value distribution of the issue under review. In this context, this means investigating the impact of the 4WD in terms of the potential redistribution of work and income, and the reallocation of time away from paid work. Step 6 entails forming a conclusion, based on the evidence generated by following the previous steps in relation to the issue being examined.

The empirical aspects of the thesis include historical-institutional analysis and a qualitative methodology. Empirical evidence from previous research studies is supplemented by some original qualitative research based on a case study of work at the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). According to Vromen (2010: 250), “Case studies tend to involve the in-depth qualitative study of lived human experiences by means of on-site fieldwork and some combination of observation, interviews, and/or document analysis.” The ISF case study includes document analysis, but is centred on 10 semi-structured interviews with ISF staff designed to generate some qualitative evidence – and “thick description” (Geertz, 1977) – regarding the personal and organisational impacts of Alternative Work Schedules (AWS), such as 4DWs, and flexible work practices at ISF. This interview method was chosen, at least in part, to reflect Gorz’s (1999: 61) view that “open-ended interviews and case histories cast more light on the cultural changes [in relation to attitudes towards work] which are taking place than opinion

polls could do. Such interviews provide the themes on which opinion polls can be based, together with an interpretative grid for understanding responses.”

Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into three parts, according to its theoretical (philosophical arguments, political economic analysis), historical (empirical evidence, quantitative and qualitative), and institutional (case study, qualitative evidence) levels of analysis.

Part I analyses the case for change in the nature and extent of work and is divided into six subsections. Subsection A focuses on the nature and determinants of the ‘good life’, and the requirements for extending the good life to all. Subsection B examines the utopian case for a radical renegotiation of the nature and extent of work. Subsection C outlines the pragmatic case for reduced working hours and increased leisure. Subsection D looks at some of the obstacles presented by the character of capitalist work and culture to the utopian and pragmatic cases for change in the nature and extent of work. Subsection E interrogates the relationship between capitalism, work, politics and time. Finally, Subsection F situates Australian society in relation to the themes and arguments developed in Part I, and puts forward some preliminary analysis regarding the 4DW as a Policy Option for Australia within this context.

Part II examines the Four-Day Workweek in historical perspective and focuses on the US experience in the 1970s and during the Great Recession. It is divided into three subsections. Subsection A begins with an overview of the US economy at the end of the long postwar boom, before analysing the nature, extent and impacts of the 4DW in the period 1970-1975. Subsection B starts with a brief look at the US economy in the lead-up to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), and the impacts of the Great Recession, before examining the resurgence of interest in the 4DW in the period 2008-2011, including the Working 4 Utah Initiative (W4UI). Subsection C assesses the implications of the US experience with the 4DW for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

Part III focuses on AWS and flexible work practices at the ISF. It is divided into seven subsections. Subsection A provides an overview of theoretical approaches to the

relationship between work and organisation. Subsection B provides some basic information regarding the ISF and outlines the case study design. Subsection C describes the formal policy framework underpinning ISF's commitment to AWS and flexible work practices, and details the reasons why case study participants took advantage of these arrangements, and the ease with which their preferences were negotiated. Subsection D focuses on the attitudes of case study participants towards work, including their 'ideal job' and the importance of autonomy. Subsection E details the evidence regarding the personal impacts of AWS and flexible work practices on case study participants, while Subsection F looks at the organisational effects. Subsection G concludes by examining the implications of the ISF case study for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

Finally, the concluding section of the thesis briefly summarises the findings of the study highlighting the extent to which the evidence presented supports the 'utopian' and 'pragmatic' cases for a 4DW as a policy option for Australia. It suggests that the 4DW has the potential to be part of a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time* and that it could be adopted as a goal of the trade union movement as part of an *offensive agenda* that challenges neoliberal discourses on work.

PART I

THE CASE FOR CHANGE IN THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF WORK

This first main part of the thesis examines arguments for – and obstacles to – the case for change in the nature and extent of work, in order to establish a broad framework in which to situate, and analyse, the specific idea of the 4DW as a policy proposal for Australia. The first three subsections examine the ethical, utopian and pragmatic arguments regarding the place of work in a ‘good society’ dedicated to providing a ‘good life’ for its members. This is followed by a discussion of the continuing obstacles to change presented by the nature of capitalist work and culture and of the critical role of politics in attempts to circumvent these barriers. This part of the thesis concludes by applying the foregoing analysis to Australian society and to the proposal for a 4DW.

A: The Ethics of a Good Life for All

Any proposal for a significant change in the way a society operates should be assessed in terms of its likely – and intended – impacts on the people who constitute that society. Such an assessment necessarily involves the exercise of judgement regarding the chief objects of human life, and the ways in which the proposed change may affect the pursuit and enjoyment of these objects. In this clearly difficult task, the branch of ethics concerned with the nature and determinants of a ‘good’ and ‘satisfying’ life can serve as a useful reference point and guide. This subsection touches on the origins of that tradition in Aristotle’s conception of the good life, before turning to Skidelsky and Skidelsky’s (2012) attempt to apply that tradition of ethical thinking to contemporary circumstances, via their concept of “basic goods.”

Thinking about the nature of the good life is a tradition that long pre-dates capitalism. For example, Aristotle (384-322 BC) argued that “eudaimonia” (happiness, flourishing) and “eu zên” (living well) were the highest ends of human life, and that they could be achieved in rational “virtuous activity” (Kraut, 2014: 4). Ethical virtues, such as courage, moderation and generosity, Aristotle argued, needed to be instilled in the individual during childhood, before being developed through the exercise of “practical wisdom” as life progressed (Kraut, 2014:7).

Aristotle argued that, in order to pursue the good life, a certain level of material comfort is essential. “No man”, he wrote, “can live well, or indeed live at all, unless he be provided with necessaries” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 73). In Aristotle’s time, slaves provided the “necessaries” that permitted male, Athenian citizens to engage in philosophy, politics and pursuit of the good life. But while Aristotle argued that a certain level of material comfort was a prerequisite for gaining access to the good life, he rejected the pursuit of money as an end in itself due, as Skidelsky and Skidelsky put it, “to its power to subordinate the proper end of every human activity to the ancillary end of money-making” (2012: 75). This basic ethical vision in which money-making is not a pre-eminent value was common to many great civilisations of Europe, India and China which “All regarded the love of money for its

own sake as an aberration” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 86).

Aristotle lived and worked in a world of small Greek city-states where slavery and the subordination of women were taken for granted. The distance, however, between the circumstances, and some of the pre-eminent values, of Ancient Greece and the present need not blind 21st century citizens to the potential ongoing salience of an ethical vision that considers the objects of human life as being superior to – though not independent from – material circumstances and the pursuit of wealth.

The idea that human life has a purpose that can be realised in rational, virtuous activity (including time for contemplation and civic engagement) is at the very least a provocation to consider the proper objects of human life, and the ways in which a given society does – or does not – promote their enjoyment. In addition, acceptance of Aristotle’s argument, that some level of material comfort and education are essential prerequisites for a good life, has implications for the organisation of society. The precise nature of these implications will, in large part, depend on a judgement as to whether the good life should be considered the preserve of elites, as in Aristotle’s time, or whether it should – and can – be extended to all members of a society.

Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012) take up the challenge of integrating the ethical conception of the good life for the individual with a society so organised as to open up the possibility of a good life for all. They acknowledge that this task is made the more difficult by the power of dominant discourses to frame – and constrain – debates regarding the relationship between society and the individual. For Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012: 87), modern liberal theory and neoclassical economics have “established a virtual monopoly on public discourse, forcing older ethical traditions into a marginal, counter-cultural position.” Both discourses, they argue, sideline discussions of the good life by rejecting any “public preference for this or that way of life” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 93). Post-Rawlsian liberalism advocates “public neutrality between rival conceptions of the public good” and neoclassical economics takes individual consumer preferences as given, and accepts private want-satisfaction as the chief end of human life (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 87, 89). Having argued that it is necessary to reject these hegemonic strands of liberal thought, Skidelsky and Skidelsky go

on to outline a list of seven “basic goods” that, they argue, people *must* have if they are to have access to the good life. These basic goods are “universal”, “final” (not a means to another end), “sui generis” (not part of some other good), and “indispensable” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 150-152). They propose health, security, respect, personality, harmony with nature, friendship and leisure as the basic goods on which the good life depends.

Objections can be raised regarding the “goods” that Skidelsky and Skidelsky consider “basic”, and the ways in which these goods are defined and interpreted. But the point here, as with the discussion of Aristotle’s ethics, is not to elevate Skidelsky and Skidelsky to the status of final arbiters of the good life for all. Rather it is to illustrate the fact that inquiries into the nature and determinants of the good life remain a feasible, legitimate and, in terms of considering changes in the organisation of society, necessary exercise. It directs our attention to the potential significance of utopian thinking in attempts to bridge the gap between present realities and future possibilities, and, more specifically, the place that work should occupy in a good society dedicated to the good life for all.

B: The Utopian Case for a Radical Renegotiation of the Nature and Extent of Work

An ethical vision of the good life for the individual – and the requirements for extending the good life to all – can provide some useful benchmarks for assessing the case for a change in the nature and extent of work. It can do so by drawing attention to the ways in which work as it is presently organised and experienced encourages, or inhibits, the pursuit and enjoyment of the good life. The utopian tradition offers another, complementary, means of approaching the question of which objects and experiences human beings most desire value, and how the constitution of a given society reflects, or suppresses, these wishes, including those related to work. As Gorz (1999: 113) says, “It is the function of utopias...to provide us with the distance from the existing state of affairs which allows us to judge what we are doing in light of what we could or should do.”

Work and Utopia

Work is one of life’s main experiences and, as such, it is no surprise that the nature and extent of work features prominently in utopian visions of the future. The main dream manifest in folk utopias regarding work is its wholesale abolition, and the provision by nature of the means of subsistence and leisure. As Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012: 44) put it: “Men and women have always dreamt of a world without suffering, injustice and above all, without work” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 44). This is as clear in the image of the bounty of the Garden of Eden as it is in the vision of roast pigs wandering the countryside with carving knives sticking out of their backs in the medieval Land of Cockaigne. The fantasy is one of a spontaneous deliverance from work by means of divine providence, or some other form of magic.

In More’s *Utopia*, by contrast, work is seen as both essential and debilitating, and the task is to apportion it fairly, while ensuring there is no slacking off. Men and women are trained in husbandry, and some other craft, work six-hour days, and have time off for approved leisure pursuits. The “Syphogrants” are charged with “provoking others to work”, but there is also an acknowledgement that people should “not to be wearied...with continual work, like labouring and toiling beasts”, and each family is assigned two slaves to perform the most degrading work (More, 1910: 63-66).

For Oscar Wilde, as in the folk utopias, the dream is of deliverance from work, but by technology, not magic, and to the end of the full development of individuality. “Every man”, he writes, “must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others. And by work I simply mean activity of any kind” (Wilde, 1891: 5). He asserts that machines must take on all the drudgework if humans are to be freed for higher things. He writes: “On mechanical slavery, on the slavery of machines, the future of the world depends” (Wilde, 1891: 14).

In the cult novel *Ecotopia*, first published in 1975, Ernest Callenbach describes a society where working time has been quantitatively reduced, but there is also less of a hard division between ‘work’ and ‘life’, and there is a qualitative change in the experience of work in both its paid and unpaid forms. Ecotopians work a 20-hour week and have access to a universal guaranteed income, but the working day itself is punctuated by impromptu parties and trips to the sauna, making it hard to tell whether the Ecotopians are working or engaged in leisure activities. As the narrator, an incredulous American journalist visiting Ecotopia, observes: “The distinction between work and non-work seems to be eroding away...along with our whole concept of jobs as something separate from ‘real life’” (Callenbach, 2004: 160). An updated version of Callenbach’s utopia can be seen in philosopher and New Work Founder Frithjof Bergmann’s vision of high-tech self-providing communities built around “industrial halls” and modern technologies, such as fabricators (three-dimensional printers), where “all needs, the necessities, and not for subsistence but for a comfortable modern life” could be provided “with a minimal amount of biblically notorious sweat” and work of “more than six hours a week would not be required” (Bergmann, 2008: 32-33). Similar, techno-communitarian visions can be found in Schor (2010) and Rifkin (2011).

In Gorz’s (1999: 65, 77) vision of “a society of chosen time and multi-activity” he makes it clear that “wage-labour has to disappear and, with it, capitalism.” He argues that “the multi-activity based society is not a modified version of the ‘work-based society’” and that it “marks a breakthrough to a quite different form” that “shifts the production of the social bond towards relations of co-operation, regulated not by the market and money, but by

reciprocity and mutuality” (Gorz, 1999: 78, 65). There are clear echoes of Marx and Engels’ *German Ideology* (1932) in Gorz’s sketch of a future based on multi-activity where “Social time and space will have to be organised to indicate the general expectation that everybody will engage in a range of different activities and modes of membership of society” from “a self-providing cooperative, a service exchange network, a scientific research and experiment group, an orchestra or a choir, a drama, dance or painting workshop, a sports club, a yoga or judo group” (Gorz, 1999: 78).

From this brief discussion of work and utopia, two main themes emerge: first, the dream of deliverance from work by means magical, providential or technological; and, second, the wish to make work more meaningful, directly satisfying, freer and less rigidly demarcated from ‘life’. The implications for a utopian vision of the future of work are clear: work as drudgery should be progressively reduced and/or eliminated, while work as one aspect of a “society of chosen time and multi-activity” (Gorz, 1999: 65) should be progressively expanded and democratised, with modern technology enlisted to support both these ends.

Utopian Politics

For both Gorz (1999) and Weeks (2011) the utopian impulse is a political necessity, as it serves “to free people’s minds and imaginations, to cast off those unquestioned assumptions which the dominant social discourse latches on to” (Gorz, 1999: 78) and “to do the work of estrangement and provocation” in a present that can appear fixed and natural (Weeks: 2011: 211). Both argue that utopian goals and utopian imagination need to be combined with a political project aimed at addressing immediate social needs. For Gorz (1999: 78), this means developing a “set of specific policies which...could open this up into a society based on multi-activity and culture” based “exemplary experiences which explore other forms of productive cooperation, exchange, solidarity and living.” Gorz identifies a universal guaranteed income (UGI) as a “particularly interesting...‘transitional policy’” that might turn capitalism’s tendency to generate precarious employment, and unemployment, into expanded opportunities for multi-activity without insecurity (Gorz, 1999: 80). Similarly, Weeks (2011:222) advocates a UGI, along with shorter working hours, as “utopian demands” that go beyond “narrowly pragmatic reform” and aim at a “more substantial transformation of the present configuration of social relations.” Both Gorz (1999: 80) and

Weeks (2011: 23) emphasise the importance of *participation* in social and political processes aimed at achieving such “transitional policies” and “utopian demands” in terms of its effect on the formation of subjects, who can not only win these reforms, but who can imagine, and take part in, a more open-ended process of social transformation.

Can these notions of the “transitional policy” (Gorz, 1999) and “utopian demands” (Weeks, 2011) underpin a future politics of work, that combines utopian imagination with pragmatic reform, while opening up the space for a more radical transformation of society? It is not possible to say with any certainty. The next subsection of this chapter shifts the focus from the ‘utopian node’ to the ‘pragmatic node’ by outlining the case for reduced working hours and increased leisure as an alternative path to increasing access to the ‘good life’ within capitalism.

C: The Pragmatic Case for Reduced Working Hours and Increased Leisure

Exploring the potential for reduced working hours and expanded leisure within the limits of capitalism requires a philosophical case for leisure and a political economic analysis of the case for taking the benefits of cumulative productivity gains generated by continuous technological change in the form of more leisure. This case may be further strengthened by evidence of cultural attitudes that increasingly favour reduced work and greater leisure.

Work and Leisure

The philosophical case for reduced working hours and increased leisure rests on the view that leisure is a precondition for the enjoyment of other activities and experiences that enrich individual and – potentially – communal life. Leisure, in this perspective, is deemed a superior good to work, as it increases the time available for freely-chosen activities that best reflect the passions and interests of each human being, activities that constitute ends in themselves rather than being means solely to earning a living. As Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012: 166) articulate the argument: “a life without leisure, where everything is done for the sake of something else, is vain indeed. It is a life spent always in preparation, never in actual living. Leisure is the wellspring of higher thought and culture, for it is only when emancipated from the pressure of need that we really look at the world, ponder it in its distinct character and outline.” As we have seen, Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012) include leisure in their list of “basic goods”, and are among those, including Keynes (1963) and Russell (1932), to have advocated the democratisation of access to leisure. For Russell (1932: 5), there was “no longer any reason why the bulk of the population should suffer this deprivation [lack of leisure]; only a foolish asceticism, usually vicarious, makes us continue to insist on work in excessive quantities now that the need no longer exists.”

The main objection raised to the democratisation of leisure – often by intellectuals, business leaders and members of elites – is the fear that the average man and woman would not use their increased leisure for ennobling ends and might instead opt for more drinking, gambling, general sloth, and other forms of ‘vice’. “The wise use of leisure”, writes Russell (1932: 5), “it must be conceded, is a product of civilisation and education. A man who has worked long hours all his life will become bored if he becomes suddenly idle.” Russell (1932)

contends that, in his vision of four-hour workdays for all, it would be essential that “education should be carried further than it usually is at present, and should aim, in part, at providing tastes which would enable a man to use leisure intelligently.” It is possible to recognise a certain snobbishness in this view of acceptable leisure, while conceding that the combination of long working hours and the commodification of existing leisure pursuits has the potential to degrade the experience of available leisure time.

Work and Technology

The philosophical case for reduced working hours and increased leisure is buttressed by political economic analysis regarding the relationship between work and the process of technological change. Technological change destroys some types of work and creates others, while the interaction of capitalist production, trade and technology affects the local, regional, national and global distribution of work, income and leisure over time. While the precise extent and specific location of these changes are difficult to predict, the general arc of this dual process of rising productivity and increasing technological displacement of labour provide at least a *prima facie* justification for an “*equal liability* of all to [participate in a progressively shrinking quantity of necessary and/or available] work” (Marx and Engels, 1848: II, *emphasis and bracketed text added*), on the one hand, and an ‘equal right for all’ to gain access to a progressively increasing quantity of income and opportunities for leisure, on the other.

In his famous 1930 essay *Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*, Keynes approached this issue from what might be termed a ‘techno-socio optimist’ perspective, where the outline of a future society of democratised leisure is visible in the historical trajectory – and cumulative productive power – of capitalism. He calculated that if “capital increases, say, 2% per annum” and “technical efficiency is increasing 1% per annum compound” that in a century “the standard of life in progressive countries will be between four and eight times as high as it is today.” Making the heroic assumptions of “no important wars and no important increase in population” Keynes speculated that the “economic problem may be solved” within one hundred years and that work of “three hours a day” would be “quite enough to satisfy the old Adam in most of us!” (Keynes, 1963: 368). According to Beggs (2012), “Keynes turns out to have been on track in his numerical guesses”, with Angus

Maddison's data showing UK real per capita incomes on track for a 6.6 fold increase between 1930 and 2030, with corresponding projections of a 7.9 fold increase for the US, and between a 5.5 and 9 fold increase for Western Europe and Anglo ex-colonies (Beggs, 2012).

Despite these impressive productivity gains, average weekly working hours in industrial countries have only fallen from around 50 to 40 hours between 1930 and today. On current trends, they might reach 35 hours by 2030, but nowhere near Keynes' posited 15-hour workweeks (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012: 21). The possible reasons for this failure to convert these productivity gains into increased leisure are numerous, and of clear relevance to any proposal for reduced working hours and increased leisure. Due to space limitations, these can only be touched on here, but several among them will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent subsections. According to Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012: pp.21-42), possible explanations include: average per capita income gains concealing trends in income dispersal that makes expanded leisure impossible for low-income earners; satisfaction and sense of identity that many people find in their work; social pressure to work longer hours, especially for high-income earners; and the argument that, while human 'needs' may be finite, human 'wants' are insatiable. In addition, as Beggs (2012) suggests, "capitalism is structured with an extremely strong bias to redeploying productivity gains towards output expansion" and relies on a "gigantic marketing effort" that sustains commitment to work and consumption. Perhaps the key point to make here is that, while productivity gains make increased and democratised leisure possible, they do not make them inevitable.

Scholars disagree regarding the implications of technological change in the current period for the future of work. For some, the trajectory of capitalist development, including continuous technological change, poses a threat to the quantity of available work in absolute terms. Gorz (1999:46), for example, argues that: "Post-Fordist industry is the spearhead of a thoroughgoing transformation which is abolishing work, abolishing the wage relation and tending to reduce the proportion of the working population who carry out the whole of material production to 2%." He also (1999: 23-26) rejects the idea that a return to full employment in the West can be based on the development of consumer capitalism in developing countries, arguing that ecological constraints, the pace of automation and

enclave development mean the “creation of hundreds of millions of new Westernised consumers is a mirage.” Others, such as Rifkin (2011), agree with this analysis, and argue that the combination of automation and digitisation will destroy jobs in the manufacturing and the services sectors at an accelerating rate.

On the other hand, some analysts caution against excessive pessimism regarding the job-destroying power of new technologies and argue that the recurring theme of ‘automation anxiety’ in debates about work is not justified by the evidence (Akst, 2013). For example, economist David Autor has argued that, while technological innovations are leading to changes in the types of jobs that are available in the US, “that is very different from saying technology is affecting the total number of jobs” (Autor in Rotman, 2013). Another illustration of the need for caution in making predictions regarding the impact of technological change on work is the dramatic decline of agricultural employment and, more recently, of manufacturing employment in the US without a catastrophic destruction of work in absolute terms. The proportion of the US labour force working in agriculture declined from 90% in 1800 to 41% in 1900 to 2% in 2000, while the proportion of US workers in manufacturing fell from 30% in the 1950s to under 10% today (Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2011, *Economist*, 2014). Despite this, outside of major depressions, unemployment has never been much above 10%, new types of work have been created, and existing forms of service work have been substantially expanded.

While the nature of the relationship between work and technology is contested, the proposition that some benefit more than others from the process of technological change in terms of job opportunities and income flows is less controversial. Technological change, interacting with international trade and financial flows and the development of complex transnational production networks, has meant that some groups of workers in advanced capitalist countries have fared much better than others. According to Reich (1992), routine production workers in the US – such as blue collar manufacturing workers – have borne the brunt of global competition and automation over the last four decades. Supporting this contention, Greenstone and Looney calculate that the “the median earnings of men ages 25 to 64 dropped by 28 percent after inflation” in the period 1969 to 2009 (Akst, 2013). In-person servers – such as hospitality workers and other low-paid service workers – have also

fared poorly, due to factors such as low unionisation rates, increased competition from retrenched routine production workers and the automation of service sector jobs (Reich, 1992: 166-168). The biggest winners from globalisation and technological change, according to Reich, are the symbolic analysts who “solve, identify and broker problems by manipulating symbols” and whose incomes are derived from licensing fees, salaries and profit shares (Reich, 1992: 177-178). The spectacular wealth of a “new global elite” (Freeland, 2011) comprising hedge fund operators, derivatives traders, Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, new media moguls, and global entertainers, on the one hand, and the growth of inequality and a “precariat”, on the other, (Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso, 2014, Picketty, 2014, Standing, 2011) lends support to this analysis.

The key point here is that a more equal distribution of the work and – even more importantly – the income generated by the process of technological change is essential if access to leisure of the type advocated by Keynes, Russell and Skidelsky and Skidelsky is to be increased and democratised.

Cultural Attitudes Towards Work

Added to the philosophical case for the value of leisure and political economic analysis of the relationship between work and technology is a third dimension of the pragmatic case for reduced working hours and increased leisure, one that emphasises workers’ own attitudes. It is important to examine the evidence regarding cultural attitudes towards work and leisure over time, and to investigate the extent to which current work and leisure patterns reflect individual and broader cultural preferences. According to Gorz (1999: 63-4), the: “dissatisfaction with ‘work’ is spreading in all countries throughout the entire working population”, “a cultural change has actually taken place” and “the political world [has] not...caught up with the change in attitudes.” He cites as evidence the fact that the proportion of the US workers who consider “work as the most important thing in their lives” fell from 38% in 1955 to 18% in 1991, and highlights similar trends in Western Europe (Gorz, 1999: 63-4).

More recent research suggests some basis to the claim of “dissatisfaction with work”, particularly as regards a mismatch between desired working hours and actual working

hours, an issue that highlights the problems of overwork and underemployment. Reynolds (2003: 13) study of US attitudes towards working hours in 1997 found that 33% of men and 40% of women wanted to work fewer hours, while 25% of men and 19% of women wanted to work more hours. According to Reynolds (2003: 12), "On average, American men and women would like to shorten their weekly work schedule by about five hours." In Europe, Bielenski, Bosch and Wagner (2002) identified a desire, on average, for reduced working hours, finding that self-employed workers would like to see a reduction in average weekly hours from 48.2 to 38.4, while dependent workers favoured a reduction from 37.7 to 34 hours (Bielenski, Bosch and Wagner, 2002: 32-33).

In reviewing the relevant research on "mismatches" in the US, Reynolds and Aletraris (2010) state that "at least three basic facts about hour mismatches are fairly well established." They are: mismatches "are quite common" with "some studies indicat[ing] that 60% of U.S. workers have hour mismatches", "most authors find that the desire for fewer hours is more common", and "Americans with hour mismatches typically want to reduce or increase their weekly workload by at least 5 hours" (Reynolds and Aletraris, 2010: 480). However, Reynolds and Aletraris (2010: 481) also highlight the lack of longitudinal data, in the US and internationally, as "One of the most glaring holes in the existing research" making it difficult to track "how and why hour mismatches change over time." Of the longitudinal studies that do exist of workers in Germany, the UK, Australia and the US, the evidence points towards an increasing desire to work fewer hours over time (Reynolds and Aletraris, 2010: 482).

These considerations and evidence necessarily lead us to the question of what stands in the way of shorter working times and more leisure. The next subsection explores the obstacles to change in the nature and extent of work generated by the nature and dynamics of capitalism.

D: Obstacles to Change in the Nature and Extent of Work within Capitalism

This subsection examines the relationship between work and capitalism and the ways in which it militates against a shift to a society of “chosen time and multi-activity” (Gorz, 1999: 65), and the more modest goal of shorter working hours and expanded leisure. It begins by drawing a distinction between ‘work in general’ and ‘work under capitalism’, before a brief exposition of the wage relation, and the development of capitalist work in its Fordist and post-Fordist forms. This is followed by a short discussion of the evolution of the work ethic, before conclusions that emphasise the way in which unemployment functions as a major obstacle to both pragmatic reform and more radical social change.

Work and Capitalism

Work has been central to the evolution of human society. As Braverman (1988: 34, 36) wrote, following Marx, “work as purposive action, guided by the intelligence, is the special product of humankind” and “its various determinate forms are the products not of biology but of the complex interaction between tool and social relations, technology and society.” This relationship between thought and action, and technology and society, has underpinned the success of the human species. Industrial capitalism, the dominant socio-economic system of the modern era, is at once an outcome of, and a fetter upon, the special properties of human labour. Wage labour, the advanced division of labour, and modern technology are responsible for capitalism’s dynamic development, but also for its antagonistic social relations and, according to its political economic critics, for the degraded – and degrading – nature of capitalist work.

From a Marxian perspective, the wage relation lies at the heart of the capitalist mode of production. As Braverman (1988:35) puts it, capitalism’s “differentia specifica is the purchase and sale of labour power.” In order for wage labour to become a generalised phenomenon, workers must be alienated from ownership of the means of production (land, tools, machinery etc) and be made ‘free’ to sell their labour power to a particular capitalist, while being compelled to sell it to capitalists in general. The capitalist must then seek to convert the labour power purchased into labour performed, at a ratio that maximises the creation of surplus value. From the capitalist’s perspective, the purpose of production is to

increase the size of an individual unit of capital by appropriating the value created by social labour and realising this value in monetary form. As a consequence, the nature and objects of work from the perspective of capitalists are secondary to the overriding priority of capital accumulation. As Braverman (1988: 316) states: “while humans work to provide for their needs, in capitalist society nobody works who does not at the same time provide for the needs of capital.” The capitalist encounters the worker as both the means to the creation of value and as a cost of production. The conflicts over wages and over the intensity and duration of work are, therefore, a permanent source of tension within the social relations of capitalist production.

The Fordist system of mass production and mass consumption developed through the early decades of the 20th century and reached maturity in the post-WWII economic boom in capitalist countries. Fordism was underpinned by new technologies, production techniques and corporate forms, but also by an accelerated development of the detailed division of labour and by the birth of scientific management. For Braverman, while “control is...the central concept of all management systems” (1988: 47, 62), Frederick Taylor, the pioneer of scientific management, “raised the concept of control to an entirely new plane when he asserted as an absolute necessity for adequate management the dictation to the worker of the precise manner in which work is to be performed.” Taylor’s aim was to break down all work into “dissociated elements” (Braverman, 1988: 59) that stripped work of its particular skill requirements, and that minimised the scope for an individual to exercise autonomy in relation to his/her work. It also meant moving all “possible brain work...from the shop...[to] the planning or laying-out department” (Taylor in Braverman, 1988: 78). The huge increase in manufacturing output during the Fordist era drove the growth in clerical and sales work where the same processes of rationalisation and de-skilling were implemented (Braverman, 1988).

The posited transition from Fordism to post-Fordism has further implications for the organisation of work. It is most readily associated with the flexible specialisation, re-programmable machine tools, just-in-time production methods, and work teams pioneered by Toyota, and other Japanese firms, in the 1970s and 1980s. From one perspective, the post-Fordist work teams have been seen as a reaction against the dehumanising effects of

Taylorism, and as an opportunity for workers to exercise greater autonomy and intelligence. From another perspective, however, post-Fordist work practices have been interpreted as facilitating a closer alignment of the interests, actions and values of workers with those of capital. For Gorz (1999: 30), the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist work can be described as the “total and entirely repressive domination of the workers’ personality [being] replaced by the total mobilisation of that personality.” In addition, Gorz argues that the greater autonomy and rewards are made available only to a “core of elite workers” while the class antagonism is displaced onto “the peripheral, insecure or unemployed workers” (Gorz, 1999: 45). The trend, according to Gorz (1999: 50), is towards a shrinking core of workers in secure jobs and expanding periphery of “jobbers” who make “insecurity into a way of life” and “free-lancers” who are “the boss of a one-person enterprise.” For Gorz though (1999: 53), “the insecure worker...is potentially the central figure of our own world” but only if “this pattern of working can become a mode of life one chooses” rather than one that is forced upon him or her.

The posited transition from Fordism to post-Fordism is much debated and, while its extent and coherence are beyond the concerns of this thesis, it is a reminder of the dynamic character of capitalism as an economic system. There is no one fixed and unchanging form that determines the organisation of work. Yet the underlying power relations have ongoing continuity.

The Work Ethic

The antagonism these power relations generate has meant that capitalism relies on a system of social legitimation centred on the work ethic that recognises that “wage incentives do not necessarily function as a stimulus to work longer hours at a more demanding pace” (Weeks, 2011: 44). The work ethic has taken religious and secular forms that have mirrored, and reinforced, the trajectory of capitalist development. Under the Protestant ethic, famously analysed by Weber (1905), work was seen as a calling and form of ascetic discipline that was “turned with all its force against one thing: the spontaneous enjoyment of life and all it had to offer” (Weber, 1905: V. 11). In later secular forms, the work ethic has linked the disciplined performance of work to ideas of respectability, social mobility and independence. During the era of Fordist mass consumption, the work ethic was

complemented by a new consumer ethic. The work ethic itself was renovated to reflect the growth in forms of work that, as Weeks (2007: 239), after C Wright Mills, puts it were “less about manipulating things and more about handling people and symbols.” This change, documented by Mills (1951), among others, emphasised the ways in which “personal or even intimate traits of the employee are drawn into the sphere of exchange” (Mills, 1951: 182) in fields like sales, office work, teaching and managerial work.

The work ethic has undergone a further renovation in recent decades to incorporate, not just the disciplined performance of work, but the capacity for ‘affective’, ‘emotional’ or ‘immaterial’ labour. There is a clear gender dimension to the construction – and mobilisation – of affective labour, that is manifest in the growth of feminised industries, like childcare and nursing, but also in the supposedly ‘feminine traits’ of caring, nurturing and empathy that are demanded in a wide range of service sector jobs. This trend was analysed by Arlie Hochschild (1983) in her pioneering study of ‘pink collar’ industries, in which work “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (Hochschild, 1983: 7). This “strategic management of emotions for social effect” (Weeks, 2007: 240) is required of flight attendants, hotel concierges, retail sales assistants, secretaries, call centre workers, waitresses, sex workers, and others in occupations with a high proportion of women workers, and where what is sold is “a smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship” (Hochschild, 1983: 198).

The range and diversity of employment arrangements necessarily gives rise to differences in attitudes to work – and to the importance of working times. Yet capitalism has systemic characteristics that create tensions affecting all workers, most obvious in the inherent insecurity of the employment relation that functions to maintain capitalist class relations.

Capitalism and Unemployment

Capitalist work subordinates the vast and varied potential of human labour to the overriding goal of capital accumulation. The work ethic, in its several iterations, attempts to provide a moral justification for this subordination. A third feature of capitalism that presents an

obstacle to pragmatic and radical change in the nature and extent of work is unemployment.

From a Marxian perspective, unemployment in the form of the reserve army of labour plays the structural function in a capitalist economy of “check[ing] any tendency toward a too rapid rise in real wages which would bring accumulation to a halt” (Bellamy Foster, McChesney, Jonna, 2011: 6). As Marx (1976: 792) wrote in *Capital Volume I*, “The industrial reserve army, during periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active army of workers; during the period of over-production and feverish activity, it puts a curb on their pretensions.” Bellamy Foster, McChesney and Jonna (2011) estimate the prime working age (25-54) global reserve army of labour at “some 2.4 billion people, compared to 1.4 billion in the active labour army.” This vast reservoir of labour, and the enormous wage differentials that obtain, allow global capital to engage in “global labour arbitrage” putting locally, regionally and nationally-bound labour at a strong disadvantage, and potentially setting one group of spatially-tied workers against another (Bellamy Foster, McChesney and Jonna, 2011: 15).

The structural function of the reserve army of labour in the process of capital accumulation engenders political opposition to its liquidation via permanent full employment, even if, as Kalecki (2011: 179) argues, that “profits would be higher under a regime of full employment.” Removing the threat of unemployment is, in this view, seen as a threat to capitalists’ social and economic power, and their capacity as a class to control labour. As Kalecki (2011: 181) puts it: “under a regime of permanent full employment, the ‘sack’ would cease to play its role as a ‘disciplinary measure’. The social position of the boss would be undermined, and the self-assurance and class-consciousness of the working class would grow.” The flipside of capital’s opposition to full employment as a remedy for systemic unemployment is the relentless stigmatisation of the jobless and the rise of various ‘workfare’ schemes. As Gorz (1999: 81-2) makes the argument: “All forms of workfare stigmatise the unemployed as incompetents and scroungers, whom society is entitled to force to work – for their own good. In this way, it reassures itself as to the cause of unemployment: that cause is the unemployed themselves.”

The structural function of unemployment, the related political opposition to full and secure employment, the stigmatisation of the unemployed, and the demoralising experience of unemployment itself combine to create an environment hostile to both radical and pragmatic proposals for change in the nature and duration of work. How have these political-economic characteristics shaping the nature and extent of work in capitalism been borne out in historical time? The next subsection looks at the history – and possible future – of the relationship between politics, work and time.

E: Politics and the Fight for Time

Political processes and activities are critically important in any attempt to circumvent the obstacles to redistributing time among competing uses, and to changing the nature of work. A historical perspective is similarly important for understanding the evolving relationship between capitalism and time, and its implications for the politics of work.

Capitalism and Time

The story of capitalism could be told as the conquest of physical territories by the capitalist mode of production and by its output: commodities. From another perspective, the same story could be told as conquest by capital of time. In his seminal analysis of “The Working Day” in Chapter 10 of *Capital Volume I*, Marx (1976) elucidates the peculiar perspective of the capitalist class towards the value and purpose of time. As previously discussed, capitalists aim to convert labour power into labour at a rate that maximises the pool of surplus value created. The fact that the “working-day is...not a constant, but a variable quantity” (Marx, 1976: 341), and thus its extent and intensity affect the amount of surplus value that can be created, makes the working day a site of permanent conflict over the distribution of time. “Capital”, Marx writes (1976: 342), “is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.” As a consequence, from the perspective of capital, “If the labourer consumes his disposable time for himself, he robs the capitalist” (Marx, 1976: 342). It is the capitalists’ “were-wolf hunger for surplus-labour” (Marx, 1976: 353) that drives them to colonise more and more social time. In the 19th century in Europe and the US, technology provided the heavy artillery in this conquest of time, from mechanical looms and steam power, to the clock which “became a weapon used by employers to eliminate the gaps in the traditional day of work” (Cross, 1989: 6).

Class Struggle and the Quest for Time

The lust of capital for time over the course of capitalism’s historical development has stimulated a counter-movement in the form of class struggle, and the evolution of the labour movement, that has attempted – and sometimes succeeded – in resisting capital’s encroachment on people’s time. According to Donaldson, (1996: 107), while the “time wars”

that this counter-movement engaged in were “bitter and protracted” and “while individual men and women suffered quite terribly” as a consequence, “trade unionism itself was critically shaped in their fury” and significant gains were won. Cross (1989: 10) contends that the fight to reduce working hours in 19th century Europe “captured the imagination of workers long before vacations, retirement, or even an extended childhood.” He adds that the struggle was not just for “rational recreation and family stability” but for “liberty” from “the constraints of alienation of an industrial work environment” and from “authoritarian relationships” (Cross, 1989: 11). In relation to the struggles of US workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Hunnicutt (2010: 8) argues that the key goal was “not shorter hours or higher wages, but shorter hours *for higher wages*” (*italics added*).

As a consequence of this “intense industrial and political conflict”, the “the industrial workyear in Europe” fell “from 3,000 to 3,600 hours per year to the contemporary standard of 1,650 to 2,000” between 1840 and 1940 (Cross, 1989: 14, 20). Hunnicutt (2010: 1, 17) cites similar evidence for the US, with a particularly sharp fall in average weekly working hours from around 60 to around 50 between 1900 and 1920. As discussed earlier, the postwar era has not seen any further significant reductions in average working hours in advanced capitalist countries. There are many possible explanations for this fact, some previously cited, including the growth of consumerism, the prioritisation of full employment over leisure during the long boom, the fear of mass leisure among elites, and the widening income inequality and increasing levels of insecure employment. The key point in relation to any future proposals for a change in the nature and extent of work is that logical argument, and appeals to justice, are necessary but insufficient requirements for achieving reform: political struggle always plays a vital role.

New Threats to Life to Social Time

This subsection has outlined capital’s drive to colonise time, and the role that some technologies, like the clock, have played in facilitating this conquest. Later technologies, including the conveyor belt, TV and credit cards, have also been important in the increasing commodification of social time. This process of temporal commodification extends beyond the nature and extent of work itself, to the ways in which people use their time away from the workplace. The development of new media technologies and social media platforms

provides new means by which market values can invade and pervade contemporary life, with potentially major implications for how work and life are experienced.

In *Work's Intimacy* (2011), Gregg provides important insights into the ways in which new media/social media technologies are affecting work and social relationships. Gregg (2011: 3) argues that: "Communication platforms and devices allow work to invade spaces and times that were once less susceptible to its presence", with the result that people are aware of the "always-present potential for engaging with work [that] is a new form affective labour that must be constantly regulated." Gregg sees these changes as part of the trend towards shifting responsibility for work – and its performance – from the organisation to the individual, a shift that includes increased part-time, casual and insecure work. Social media platforms like Facebook, in this context, serve "a 'security blanket' for workers conscious of the need to remain flexible, available; and likeable in a dynamic employment market" (Gregg, 2011: 88-9). Gregg highlights the potential these technologies have to provide competition for time that was previously allocated to interacting with friends or family, or to personal leisure (Gregg, 2011: 126-127). As Gregg (2011: 14) contends, when "the office exists in your phone" it may be even more difficult for people to claim time free from the demands of work. Gregg's analysis suggests that any future politics of work needs to take account the potential of these technologies and platforms to undermine campaigns for shorter hours and freely chosen time.

Towards a New Politics of Shorter Hours and Chosen Time

Capitalism's history of temporal colonisation has engendered struggles of resistance that have sought to put a limit on capital's claims over social time. These efforts, as far as they relate to average working hours in rich countries, have stalled in recent decades and the development of new media technologies and social media platforms have provided additional scope for the commodification of social time. This set of circumstances suggests that the development of a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time* could prove crucial in relation to the success of future efforts to change the nature and extent of work. For Gorz (1999) and Weeks (2011), such a politics would involve challenging the dominant discourses on work that subordinate human life to the priority of capital accumulation, as well as a willingness to challenge existing power relations and to engage in political conflict. As Gorz

(1999: 73-74) argues: “Rights over time, over periods of time for diversified activity, are the stakes in a cultural conflict which inevitably spills over into a political conflict.” In addition, Weeks (2011: 162) stresses the importance of ensuring that “any account of working time” includes “an account of socially necessary unwaged labour, and any movement for reduced working time must include a challenge to its present organisation and distribution.” While Gorz and Weeks do not advocate a 4DW specifically – both support a UGI and Weeks proposes a 30-hour workweek – their arguments regarding “rights over time” (Gorz, 1999: 73-4) and the need for “reduced working time” (Weeks, 2011: 162) are relevant to consideration of proposals for a major reform such as the 4DW.

A new politics of shorter hours and chosen time may be critical to achieving – however partially – the ethical, utopian and pragmatic visions discussed in Part I of this thesis. We turn now to the relevance of these concerns in Australia, and to the possibility of a 4DW as a policy option that might advance a progressive agenda in terms of the nature and extent of work.

F: The 4DW as a Policy Option for Australia

Australia and the Utopian Case for a Radical Renegotiation of the Nature and Extent of Work

The arguments for radical change along the lines of Gorz's (1999: 65) "society of chosen time and multi-activity" are, in one sense, universal, and there is nothing that would make them necessarily more applicable to Australia than to any other place. Despite this, there are at least three points worth mentioning that may have some bearing on the prospects for success of campaigns for radical change in the nature of work in Australian society.

First, Australia is a rich, technologically-advanced capitalist country with at least the potential to combine a reasonably high material living standard with a reorganisation – and redefinition – of work. By some measures, it appears few people on earth enjoy greater access to the 'good life' than Australians. In the UNDP Human Development Report 2013, Australia ranked second on the Human Development Index, after only Norway (UNDP, 2013: 143). Furthermore, according to the Credit Suisse 2013 Global Wealth Report, Australia ranked first in terms of median adult wealth at US\$219,505 per person, and second, behind just Switzerland, in terms of average per capita wealth at US\$402,578 (Sydney Morning Herald, 2013). In addition, Australians enjoy world class health and education systems, abundant space, and live in a stable democracy.

Second, while its early European history as a penal colony was not an auspicious beginning in relation to free and meaningful work, Australia did go on to acquire a reputation as a 'workingman's paradise' (JCPML, 2002) and the 'social laboratory of the world' (ABC, 2002) in late 19th and early 20th centuries, and to develop some innovative institutions and processes in relation to work. According to Castles (1994: 124), Australia's "wage-earners' welfare state" was built on three factors: "the attempted control of wages through the quasi-judicial activity of the state (the arbitration system), the substantial use of protective tariffs to bolster wage levels in manufacturing, urban service industries and fringe rural production (which became 'protection all around'), and a strong concern with the regulation of manpower through controlled migration with the aim of maintaining the bargaining

power of labour (the non-racist side of the White Australia policy and subsequent migration policy).” The central role of the arbitration system in a range of areas, such as “basic wage developments; secondary wage developments; the adoption of the total wage concept; over-award payments; equal pay for females, Aboriginals and ‘juniors’; wage indexation” was particularly significant (Plowman, 1986: 15). To cite just one example, the Arbitration Commission’s 1972 ‘equal pay for work of equal value’ decision saw the “ratio of female-to-male award rates increased from 74 per cent in 1971 to 94 per cent in 1976 and that of hourly earnings from 65 to 85 per cent over the same period” (Plowman, 1986: 40). In relation to equal pay, Mitchell (in Plowman, 1986: 40) argues that: “Since occupational structure cannot change dramatically in the space of a few years...the dramatic changes reflect the will of the Arbitration Commission.” The pillars of the “wage-earners welfare state” (Castles, 1994) have been progressively dismantled or degraded since the 1970s, and in relation to the racist element this is unequivocally positive. However, this history does at least point to a willingness to ‘do things differently’ in relation to work, especially in the case of arbitration, a factor that might serve as inspiration to consider future changes in the way – and the terms on which – Australians work.

Third, regarding the techno-communitarian visions of Bergmann (2008), Schor (2010), and Rifkin (2011), the technologies (internet, renewable energy systems, fabricators, permaculture etc) that would support them are reasonably developed in Australia.

Australia and the Pragmatic Case for Reduced Working Hours and Increased Leisure

As already discussed, the pragmatic case is based on arguments asserting the value of leisure, the potential for a higher proportion of cumulative productivity gains to be converted into additional leisure, and the evidence of cultural attitudes that favour less work and more leisure. On all three fronts, there is evidence suggesting some level of support for the pragmatic case in Australia.

Australia experienced average annual productivity gains of around 2% through the 1960s and 1970s, falling back to 1.2% in the 1980s, increasing to 2.1% in the 1990s, before falling back again to 1.4% in the 2000s (Cowgill, 2013: 6). Despite these strong productivity gains, average weekly hours worked by Australians only decreased from 35.5 hours in 1978 to 33

hours in 2010 (ABS, 2010: 11). Since 1985, average weekly full-time hours have actually increased from 36.4 to 38.6 for women and from 39.5 hours to 42.3 hours for men, the fall in average hours being explained by a significant increase in part-time work (Cassells et al, 2011: 11, ABS, 2010: 13). Factors that may have contributed to the failure to convert more of these productivity increases into leisure include rising wealth and income inequality, and related factors such as increasing levels of overwork and underemployment. According to Rafferty and Yu (2010: 45-46), the percentage of those working over 45 hours per week increased from 22% in 1984 to 32% in 2009, while the rate of underemployment shows a sustained rise from just over 2% in 1978 to just under 8% in 2009.

In Australia, the pattern of structural economic change has mirrored that of other advanced capitalist countries, with the service sector's share of national employment increasing from just over 50% in 1960 to around 75% today, while the share of manufacturing has fallen from over 25% to less than 10%. Construction has remained within an 8%-10% range, agriculture has fallen from over 10% to around 2%, and mining has held constant with a 1% to 2% range (Lowe, 2012: 1). The complex interaction of shifting trade and production patterns, fluctuating exchange rates, and technological change that displaces labour (including digitisation) adds an element of uncertainty to the future of different types of work in Australia, and suggest that a more equal distribution of available work and income is essential if expanded leisure is to be experienced not as involuntary unemployment – or underemployment – but as *secure leisure* that represents a genuine advance.

There is also some evidence that a substantial percentage of Australians hold views towards work that may support Gorz's (1999) claim regarding a shift in cultural attitudes, including a mismatch between preferred hours and actual hours. According to one report (Fear and Denniss, 2010: 13), 50% of workers surveyed wanted to work fewer hours (including 81% of those working over 40 hours a week) and 29% wanted to work additional hours (including 60% of part-time workers). The average mismatch between hours worked and preferred hours was 2.5, with those working over 50 hours wanting to work an average 13.5 hours less per week, and those working under 15 hours wanting an extra 8.7 hours on average. Those earning less than \$40,000 reported a desire to work an additional 1.23 hours per week, while those earning more than \$80,000 wanted to work 4.61 fewer hours per week (Fear

and Denniss, 2010: 15). The 2010 Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) survey found that one-third of all workers wanted to work fewer hours, with full-timers wanting to reduce their hours by an average 5.6 hours per week and part-timers wanting an increase of 4 hours per week on average. Overall, the report found that 52.8% of workers had a good fit between their actual hours and their preferred hours (Pocock et al, 2010: 35). For those working very long hours (over 48 hours), 72.8% wanted to reduce their hours at work (Pocock et al, 2010: 38). On work-life balance, one regular survey reported a solid 69% of Australian workers report being satisfied, but for full-time working mothers there has been a sharp rise in dissatisfaction from 15.9 per cent to 27.5 per cent over the past five years (Skinner, Hutchinson, Pocock, 2012: 7, 21).

Obstacles to Change in the Nature and Extent of Work within Australian Capitalism

Australia is an advanced capitalist country, where the work ethic and consumer ethic exert a powerful influence in terms of how Australians experience and think about work. The trend towards increasingly insecure forms of work identified by Gorz (1999), Standing (2011), and others, is clearly evident in Australia. The *Lives on Hold* Report found that 40% of Australians were in some form of insecure work. This includes around 2.2 million casual workers, over 1 million independent contractors, and more than 1 million business operators. Casuals as a percentage of all employees grew rapidly from 15.8% in 1984 to 27.7% in 2004, before dropping back to 23.9% in 2012. Around 60% of casual workers in Australia are under 35 and women are more likely to be in casual employment than men. Around 40% of all casual workers are employed in just two industries: retail and food and beverages (Howe et al: 2012: 15). Casual and contract work is sold by business and political elites as providing 'flexibility' for employers and workers. However, the evidence presented in *Lives on Hold* suggests that these forms of work are more often associated with a range of negative outcomes, from reduced job and income security, to low pay, difficulty in getting bank loans, increased anxiety, reduced autonomy, and damage to physical and mental health (Howe et al, 2012: 20-21). The authors of *Lives on Hold* see the growth in insecure work as being part of "a business model that shifts the risks associated with work from the employer to the employee" that "has been driven by the internationalisation of our economy, rapid technological change, and changes to our household arrangements" (Howe et al, 2012: 19).

This trend towards increasingly precarious work, and the rhetoric of flexibility that seeks to legitimate it, may be partly explained by dynamics inherent to capitalism. However, in Australia, as elsewhere, it has been exacerbated and accelerated by the political project variously referred to as 'neo-liberalism', 'economic rationalism', 'economic fundamentalism', and by 'new right' lobby groups and think tanks like the Business Council of Australia (BCA), the Centre for Independent Studies and the H.R. Nicholls Society (Stilwell, 2000: 40-53, Langmore and Quiggin, 1994: 41-56). The BCA played a key role in driving this agenda, with the publication in 1987 of its *Towards More Flexible Working Time Arrangements* signalling the beginning of a shift away from a centralised system of conciliation and arbitration built on industry-wide awards towards an increasingly 'flexible' system that has tilted the balance of power firmly in the favour of employers (Donaldson, 1996: 58-93).

While work is rendered less secure, and workers are enjoined to be more flexible, the consumer culture is reinforced by a vast marketing and advertising apparatus and, according to some critics, offered as a new "opiate of the masses" (Beder, 2004: 4) that can "relieve them of their anxieties, self-doubt and the drudgery of their lives" (Hamilton, 2006: 2). The power of consumer culture in Australia is neatly captured by one survey finding that: "Although nearly two-thirds of Australians say they cannot afford to buy everything they really need, they admit to spending a total of \$10.8 billion every year on goods they do not use" (Hamilton, 2006: 6). The work and consumer ethics, and the ideological, financial and cultural resources deployed in their defence, pose major obstacles to change in the nature and extent of work in Australia. But the history of class struggle, together with the growth of diverse social and environmental movements, offers some support for the view that a new politics of shorter hours and chosen time could be developed Down Under.

Australia, Politics and the Fight for Time

This history of the struggle by Australian workers and their unions to reduce hours of work makes three things abundantly plain: change is possible, reversals are common, and conflict is unavoidable. Sydney stonemasons and a wide range of Melbourne building workers led the world in winning the 8-hour day after striking in 1855 and 1856 respectively (Donaldson: 1996: 109-110). By the 1880s, according to Donaldson (1996: 112), "there were two distinct

styles of paid work. Some people had achieved fewer hours and worked in a more intense way. Others – notably, but not only, women, non-white and country workers – still worked as long or longer than their parents had.” The Australian labour movement, like those in other Anglo-American countries, fought for “a uniform working day, compressed into as few hours as possible, to deliver to workers a regular and predictable chunk of time of their own” which “was quite different to the previous pattern of working life, in which work and non-work were fused in ways that were more arbitrary and less certain” (Donaldson, 1996: 113).

Employers fiercely resisted the shorter hours movement, but by 1900 the average workweek in Australia was down to 48 hours, 45% of workers belonged to a union in 1914, and workers in industry after industry went on strike for the 8-hour day (Donaldson, 1996: 116-7). As Donaldson puts it “In a protracted war over time, Australian workers were undoubtedly leading the world” (Donaldson, 1996: 18). Workers won gains through militant industrial action, and through the conciliation and arbitration process. The ACTU Congress called for a 30 hour week in the early 1930s, and employers pushed for a 48-hour week, wage cuts, and the abolition of the Arbitration Court in the same period. The ACTU called its first general strike on May Day 1947, and in 1948 the 40-hour workweek was won for all federal awards. More industrial action followed, the 40-hour standard spread and the weekend was formalised. The ACTU called for a 35-hour week in 1957, but it was only in 1981 that metal trades workers won a 38-hour week that was incorporated into many other awards (Donaldson, 1996: 118-121, 125-9). Donaldson (1996: 129) concludes that, while the victories of the labour movement in the face of the “implacability of the opposition” were impressive, they should not be overstated. He writes: “It took the white Australian working class 100 years of intense struggle to achieve the average weekly hours worked in employment by their 17th century forebears in Europe.”

The “implacability of the opposition” has if anything hardened over the past three decades, with the spread of enterprise bargaining, the precipitous decline in union density, the 1998 waterfront dispute, and the 2005 Work Choices agenda that introduced individual agreements, removed unfair dismissal laws, and further neutered the industrial relations umpire (Muir and Peetz, 2010: 219). However, the union movement mobilised the major

Your Rights at Work (YRAW) campaign that, according to Muir and Peetz (2010: 224) “was central to the defeat of the Howard government” in 2007 and showed that the labour movement was “Not Dead Yet” (Muir and Peetz, 2010). As successful as YRAW was, it was still primarily a defensive campaign, and the fact remains that union membership has fallen from 43% in 1992 to 18% in 2011 (ABS, 2012) and the Labor government (2007-2013) did not completely roll back the neoliberal agenda implemented under Work Choices.

In addition, the new coalition government elected in 2013 remains wedded to a neoliberal approach to work, and has the trade union movement’s power firmly in its sights as evidenced by its announcing a Royal Commission into trade union governance (Eltham, 2014). As Assistant ACTU Secretary Tim Lyons (2014) put it in a recent speech: “In a very real sense, the Royal Commission is designed to be a trial about the legitimacy of trade unionism. Allegations of corruption and other misbehaviour can be as damaging to reputations as the reality. The Royal Commission will unfold at the same time as a long Productivity Commission inquiry which amounts to trial regarding the nature and scope of the industrial relations system.” The union movement faces the challenge of how to defend past gains and attract new members, while simultaneously developing an *offensive agenda* – in coalition with other groups and movements – that wins popular support.

The 4DW as Policy Option for Australia

The 4DW has never attracted significant public attention or political support in Australia. It is the official policy of the NSW Greens, and it has been the subject of the odd article about companies that have introduced 4DWs, or occasional opinion pieces that extol its putative merits (NSW Greens, 2006, news.com.au, 2011, Watson, 2012, Colgan, 2010). This may suggest that the 4DW is not a priority for Australians in relation to work, that other factors are more important, or that no compelling and sustained case for a 4DW has yet been mounted. In relation to the broad framework elaborated in Part I of this thesis, however, a case for a 4DW could be argued on numerous grounds.

First, if the implementation of a 4DW in Australia meant a more equal distribution of available work, income and leisure, it could increase the proportion of Australians with

access to several of the “basic goods” (Skidelsky and Skidelsky, 2012) that underpin the ‘good life.’

Secondly, in an ideological context where capitalist and neoliberal discourses on work remain dominant, the 4DW could serve as a “utopian demand” (Weeks, 2011) and, if achieved on a significant scale, as a “transitional policy” (Gorz, 1999) that might open up increased opportunities for “chosen time and multi-activity” in the long run, while addressing immediate social needs (Gorz, 1999: 65). More radical reforms, such as the UGI – advocated by Weeks (2011), Gorz, (1999), Standing (2011), Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012) – may be more likely to achieve this effect, but the ‘demand’ for a 4DW still has the potential to challenge the apparent ‘naturalness’ and ‘permanence’ of the five-day workweek (5DW), on the one hand, and offer a progressive counter to neoliberal efforts to remove barriers to the extension and intensification of the workweek, on the other.

Thirdly, a 4DW that reduced the length of the workweek, without a reduction in pay, would mean converting a higher percentage of cumulative productivity gains into increased leisure and a more equal distribution of work and incomes. Even a compressed 4/38 workweek (one that retains the total of 38 working hours but compresses them into four days) might increase the amount – and usefulness – of leisure by cutting down commuting times, and introducing a permanent three-day weekend. The fact that a substantial percentage of Australians report a mismatch between preferred hours and actual hours of work provides some evidence of a significant social base for such a change.

Fourthly, a compelling case for a 4DW would have to counter the force of the still dominant work ethic and the argument that a shorter workweek will hurt Australian workers in an increasingly competitive and interconnected global economy. Given the growth of insecure work in Australia, a proposal for a 4DW that is tied to the ‘secure work’ agenda promoted by the ACTU, and others, may have more chance of gaining public support and political traction.

On these bases, the 4DW has the potential to be part of a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time* and of forming part of an *offensive agenda* for the trade union movement in Australia.

The first third of this thesis has elaborated a broad framework in which to situate the general case for change in the nature and extent of work. It began with a discussion of the nature and determinants of the 'good life', before moving on to outline utopian and pragmatic arguments for a renegotiation of the meaning, content and extent of work. This was followed by an examination of the obstacles to change in relation to work presented by the nature and culture of capitalism, before a look at the centrality of political struggle in past campaigns to reduce working hours that concluded by suggesting the need for a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time*. Finally, an attempt has been made to situate Australian society within this broad framework, and to relate the themes and arguments to the specific policy proposal of the 4DW.

Together, these components establish a *prima facie* case for seeing the 4DW option as a progressive policy with potential traction in Australia, notwithstanding the constraints of operating within a capitalist economy. A careful consideration of its practicality, however, requires further steps. We need to move from broad philosophical arguments and political economic analysis to the historical level of analysis, seeking to learn from experience. This is the aim of Part II of the thesis which focuses on the US experience with the 4DW in the early 1970s and during the Great Recession, with a view to assessing the extent to which the empirical evidence provides support for the arguments developed in Part I.

PART II

THE 4DW IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: the US experience in the 1970s and during the Great Recession

The second major part of this thesis shifts from the theoretical to the historical level of analysis, with a view to interrogating some of the strengths and weaknesses of the philosophical and political economic arguments advanced in Part I in relation to the 4DW. The focus here is the US experience during the two periods – 1970-1975 and 2008-2011 – in which the 4DW was trialled on a significant scale, leading to increased media and academic attention. The US is chosen as the focus for this historical study for two reasons. First, as the largest and richest capitalist country in the postwar era, the possibilities for (ie advanced technology, strong economic productivity growth) – and obstacles to (ie the strength of the work ethic and consumer culture) – reform in relation to work were, perhaps, accentuated relative to other capitalist countries. Therefore, what has been tried in the US in terms of changes in the nature and extent of work is of relevance to other countries faced with similar opportunities and constraints, such as Australia. Secondly, while a 35-hour week has been achieved in France, and other innovative work-related policies have been pursued by countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, the US is the only major capitalist country where the 4DW, in particular, has become an explicit goal of a minority of private and public sector employers. As a result, the US experience provides the richest source of evidence regarding the impacts of a 4DW on workers and employers.

Subsection A provides a brief overview of the US economy in the context of the end of the long postwar economic boom and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods System in the 1970s. It deals with the upsurge of interest in the 4DW during this period, focusing on the extent to which it was adopted, the reasons cited in its favour, and the impacts of its implementation on workers and firms. It concludes by assessing the reasons for the failure of the 4DW to become a more widespread – and sustained – phenomenon, paying particular attention to the lack of trade union support. Subsection B begins with a sketch of the main dynamics of US economic development in the period prior to the Global Financial Crisis, before highlighting some of the impacts of the Great Recession (2007-2009). It points

to the re-emergence of the 4DW as a subject of media and academic interest, and assesses the extent to which this heightened interest was matched by an increased implementation of 4DWs in practice. This subsection includes a case study on the Working 4 Utah Initiative (W4UI) (2009-2011) that saw a mandatory 4-Day/40-hour compressed workweek introduced for the majority of government workers in the US state of Utah. Finally, Subsection C examines the possible implications of the US experience with the 4DW in the periods 1970-1975 and 2008-2011 for consideration of a 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

A: The 4DW in the US 1970-1975

The US Economy in the 1970s: from Bretton Woods to Stagflation

The US emerged from World War II as the undisputed economic, political and military leader of the capitalist world, accounting for 35% of global GDP in 1944 (Maddison, 2001). The Bretton Woods Era was a period of unprecedented global economic expansion, with a compound growth rate of close to 5% in the period 1945-1973 (Harvey, 2010: 27). However, the strong productivity gains of 3% per annum that occurred during this period of economic growth were not converted into any major decline in working hours. Between 1947-76, the average workweek in US manufacturing fell from 40.4 to 40.1 hours, while the average hours of all full-time workers fell from 45.8 in 1960 to 43.2 in 1976 (Levitan and Belous, 1977: 23, 7, 10). There were gains in terms of increased paid leave and longer retirement but, according to Levitan and Belous (1977: 21-22), “75 to 80 percent of the productivity dividend [was] used to increase consumption of consumer goods, and the remaining smaller portion [was] used to increase leisure.” Whereas, they argued, if “the short-run experience followed the historic pattern, the workweek even in the manufacturing sector would now [1977] be close to 35 hours, and the weekly time spent on the job by white-collar workers would be under the 35-hour mark.”

By the late 1960s, the Bretton Woods System was showing increasing signs of strain. The vast literature on the breakdown of the Bretton Woods monetary arrangements is beyond the scope of this thesis, but its relevance lies in the fact that the upsurge of interest in the 4DW occurred during a period of increasing economic instability between the late-1960s and mid-1970s. The US experienced a shallow recession in 1969-70 and a much deeper ‘stagflation’ recession in 1973-1975 that saw a 3% decline in GDP over 16 months, unemployment reach 9%, and the inflation rate peak at over 12% (Labonte and Makinen, 2002: 23, 18). The stagflation recession marked a pivot point in the struggle between capital and labour in the US and elsewhere, that presaged a shift towards the redistribution of national income – and political power – in favour of capital. As Varoufakis, Halevi and Theocarakis (2011: 331) write in relation to the US, “from 1973 onwards...in a country priding itself over the fact that, at least since the 1850s, real wages were rising steadily...real wages stagnated.”

It is therefore in this context of a period of increasing economic upheaval that followed two decades of broadly-shared prosperity – but no corresponding significant reductions in working hours – that the US experience with the 4DW in 1970s must be situated and assessed.

The 4DW in the 1970s: a Revolution in Work and Leisure?

During the first half of the 1970s – sandwiched between the 1969-70 and 1974-75 recessions – the 4DW was identified as an emerging trend that, according to some observers, represented a ‘win-win’ reform that would improve productivity for firms, while increasing the leisure time available to workers. The idea held out the possibility of a more harmonious relationship between capital and labour at a time of deteriorating economic circumstances. The 4DW received considerable media and academic attention due, in no small part, to the publication in 1970 of management consultant Riva Poor’s book *4 Days, 40 Hours: reporting a revolution in work and leisure*, and a follow up study with Theo Richmond in 1972.

Poor identified 100 firms that had some form of 4DW in 1970, and provided brief case studies of 27 of these companies in *4 Days, 40 Hours*, concluding that the 4DW had generally – though not exclusively – positive effects. Around two-thirds of the firms Poor studied were small manufacturing businesses that employed fewer than 200 people each; but the sample also included 3,500 workers at *Readers Digest*, 1,200 nurses at a general hospital, oil terminal workers, and McDonalds office staff. The firms were all non-union and, in every case, the introduction of the 4DW was a management-led initiative (Poor and Richmond, 1972: 14-17).

4 Days, 40 Hours is part academic analysis, part implementation guide, and part sales pitch, and Poor is not hesitant in claiming credit for identifying the 4DW as a rapidly-growing trend. She writes: “Reviewers, managers, workers, and others have hailed this book as ‘the bible’ of the rearranged work week” and that the “growth to 4-day has indeed been rapid, as I predicted. It has swept across the USA and into other countries as well” (Poor and Richmond, 1972: xvi). Poor (1972) claimed that 4,000 articles had been written on the 4DW,

with half mentioning her book, and it seems clear that *4 Days, 40 Hours* sparked both media and academic interest.

Academic work on the 4DW included: *The workweek revolution: a guide to the changing workweek* by Fleuter (1975), *The four-day workweek: blue collar adjustment to a non-conventional arrangement of work and leisure time* by Maklan (1978), *Three or four-day work week* by Hameed and Paul (1974), *Four factors influencing conversion to a four-day work week* by Hartman (1977), *Factors relating to varying reactions to the 4-day workweek* by Goodale (1975), *Worker adjustment to the four-day week: a longitudinal study* by Nord (1973). In an annotated bibliography of 162 academic articles on compressed workweeks (CWW) – mostly on 4DWs – compiled by Hung (1996), 78 were published in the 1970s, a further 31 between 1980-1985, with a handful in 1960s and the remainder between 1986-1996.

Media coverage of the 4DW, such as the three examples cited below, demonstrates a degree of popular interest, and also provides some insight into the limitations of the 4/40 model that will be discussed later in more detail.

“Schedules Fit Company Needs. Four Day Week Gains Favour. Hobart Bowen: The inevitable drift to a shorter working week has flushed up a new idea – a four day, 40 hour week...Much of the interest in this concept has been stimulated by a fascinating little book called “4 Days 40 Hours” ...What Mrs Poor and her associates are talking about is not so much a new, rigid concept of four days, 40 hours, but a move toward individualized schedules that fit the pattern of a given company and its workforce” (Milwaukee Sentinel, March 4, 1971).

“An increasing number of companies as well as cities -- including 10 in Southern California -- have adopted a four-day, 40-hour work week. A major breakthrough for the concept occurred last month when Chrysler and the United Auto Workers agreed to pilot studies of a four-day, 40-hour week in selected plants. If the Chrysler experiment succeeds, the shorter work week could spread quickly throughout the entire automobile industry and far beyond” (Britten, J. The Daily Chronicle, 16 February 1971).

“Four Day Work Week – To ‘Sweep the Country’ by Nathan Miller. A CLEAR sign of the spread of the idea is the contract signed Jan 19 between the United Auto Workers and Chrysler. It calls for the establishment of a joint committee to study the establishment of a pilot program for four-day week for assembly line workers. The nation’s third largest union – the million member United Steelworkers of America – has added the four-day

work week to its list of goals in the bargaining later this year for a new contract (St Petersburg Times, Jan 30 1971).

However, the extent to which this upsurge in academic and media interest in the 4DW reflected a “revolution in work and leisure” (Poor, 1970) in practice is highly debatable. According to Bird (2010: 1065), by the early 1970s in the US, “hundreds of companies were converting to the four-day week with new adoptions occurring at the rate of sixty to seventy per month.” Wadsworth et al found that by 1972, 2,000 companies in the US were offering compressed workweeks and, in 1974, 853,000 workers were doing compressed 4-day/40-hour weeks (Wadsworth, Facer, Arbon, 2010: 328). Levitan and Belous (1977: 69) cite another estimate of a peak of “approximately 10,000 firms and about 1 million employees...on a four-day workweek.” These figures need to be placed in the context of a total US labour force in 1970 of over 82 million, a figure that increased to nearly 107 million by 1980 (Toossi, 2002: 24).

According to Bird (2010: 1079), “interest in compressed work weeks peaked in 1973” and “By 1975, interest in the four-day week has substantially cooled” with “One-third of firms that adopted the compressed work week report[ing] that they discontinued use shortly thereafter.” Bird also claims that, by 1980, “participation in compressed work weeks for all US employees remained at an insignificant 2.7%” (2010: 1079). Similarly, Levitan and Belous (1977: 71) conclude that: “Media interest in flexible workhours and four-day workweeks...failed to move many managements to change established work schedules” and that “control of working time...remained a management prerogative.” Poor (2010: 1050-1052) claims that participation in compressed workweeks continued to grow through the 1980s, although the US Department of Labour stopped tracking 4/40 workweeks specifically. Poor also concedes that “with hindsight, it is now clear that the real innovation was not 4/40 or any other of the many schedules that proliferated after 1970” but the “real innovation in the 1970s was utilising work scheduling itself as a management tool.”

In summary, the 4DW in the 1970s in the US was a minor – though real – trend and proved to be relatively short-lived. These facts notwithstanding, the diverse arguments put forward in favour of the 4DW at the time, the specific effects of the 4DW on workers and firms in the

cases where it was implemented, and the various weaknesses of the 4/40 model are all relevant to any consideration of a contemporary proposal for a 4DW.

Arguments for a 4DW

At least part of the appeal of the 4DW in the early 1970s may have been due to its putative potential to reconcile competing interests, while simultaneously advancing several broad social goals. As already discussed, the early 1970s was a period of relative economic turbulence in the US, following the decades of broadly-shared prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s. The 1970s was a time when, while blue collar unions remained relatively large and strong, US industry faced increasing competitive pressure from West German and Japanese firms. In addition, the widely-held belief in the efficacy of Keynesian macroeconomic management in achieving economic growth and full employment came under attack during the stagflation recession, a challenge that ultimately culminated in the neoliberal counter-revolution of the 1980s. This period was also shaped by the diverse impacts of a range of new – and recent – social movements, including the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war campaigns, and the growing environmental, feminist and other counter-cultural movements that challenged the values of the establishment and rejected the status quo. In short, it was a context in which an idea like the 4DW could be framed as a pragmatic, progressive reform that offered ‘a little something for everyone.’

These features are evident in the assessments made at that time. For example, in *The Workweek Revolution: A Guide to the Changing Workweek*, Douglas Fleuter (1975) characterised the 4DW as both a practical response to specific contemporary problems, and as part of a long-term trend towards increased leisure and freedom. He wrote: “Evidence points convincingly to the adoption of a shorter workweek as part of inevitable sociological change. Current problems such as unemployment, commuter jams, overcrowded service and recreational facilities, and depletion of natural resources must be resolved. The shorter workweek appears to provide at least a partial answer.” He continued: “The widespread interest in the four-day week is further evidence that a shorter workweek is more than a passing fancy. The recent energy crises gives even more impetus to this approach...It will be a wise management which recognises the inevitability of going to some form of shorter

workweek and acts while there is still a choice that offers advantages to the company as well as the employees” (Fleuter, 1975: 7-8).

It is particularly interesting to see the view on the issue put at the time by Nobel economics laureate Paul Samuelson (in Poor and Richmond (eds), 1972: ix, x) because of his eminence as the doyen of mainstream economists. In his foreword to *4 Days, 40 Hours*, Samuelson described the 4DW as a “social invention” that “offers new variety of choice in an area where modern man has had the fewest personal options” and situated it as part of “the steady sweep toward greater leisure and less life time toil in a society growing more affluent.” From a labour movement perspective, Samuelson saw the 4DW as “one more skirmish in the continuing battle for higher standard wage rates, improved work conditions on the job”, while for “some canny employers” he suggested “the 4-day week is a gimmick for getting the jump on the opposition...in the hope of attracting workers away from employers in tight labour markets” (Samuelson, in Poor and Richmond, 1972, x). He went on to argue that a reduction in the workweek should be seen as a way to facilitate choice and expand leisure, rather than being necessary to reduce unemployment as “modern knowledge of fiscal and monetary policy can end for all time the ancient scourge of depression and chronic unemployment” (Samuelson, in Poor and Richmond, 1972: x). He further suggested that a shorter workweek could “change...the structure of the family itself, as the division of labour between husband and wife in the house is changed to redress the ancient curse of female drudgery” (Samuelson, in Poor and Richmond, 1972: x). The breadth of these concerns indicates the liberal dimension of Samuelson’s personal judgements beyond the narrow strictures of neoclassical economic theory.

Other social assessments also looked at the positive implications of a 4DW. For example, Riva Poor (1972: 228) argued that the 4DW offers benefits for management and workers, writing: “The 4-day week improves productivity of firms and permits workers to gain a rearrangement of their work and leisure package that they prefer.” But Poor’s emphasis was clearly – and unapologetically – on the benefits that accrue to management and firms in using “scheduling as a new tool for conducting their businesses profitably.” She stated that the “4-day week innovation makes no claims for improving the quality of work” (Poor, 1972: 205, 228). Poor’s (1972: xvi) focus on firms “individualising their scheduling in order to meet

the needs of their individual work tasks, and at the same time the needs of their individual sets of workers” clearly foreshadowed the management-driven ‘flexibility’ rhetoric that has become the hallmark of neoliberal discourses on work.

Impacts of 4DWs on Workers and Firms

As the above discussion makes clear, diverse claims were made in relation to the benefits of adopting a 4DW. The most common form of 4DW during this period was the 4/40 compressed schedule. As Bird points out (2012: 1066), the main way of assessing what was the impact on workers and firms was the evidence provided by surveys of employee attitudes at workplaces where 4DWs were implemented. According to Fottler (1977: 657), various surveys in this period “found overall employee acceptance of 4/40 to range from a high of 92 per cent...to a low of 55 per cent.”

In one study, Hodge and Tellier (1975) sent a job satisfaction questionnaire to 371 workers at 12 4DW companies where the median time since implementation of a 4DW was 19 months, and the workers surveyed had been at their respective companies for at least 3 months prior to the switch. Based on their analysis of 223 usable questionnaires, they concluded that: “no matter how the employees were classified (whether by sex, age, or any other of the demographic classifications examined by the study) the conclusion was reached that employees are substantially more satisfied with their jobs as a result of the conversion to the four-day week” (Hodge and Tellier, 1975: 27). Another study by Fottler “based upon interviews with 48 employees...in the nutrition and food service department of a large, urban, government hospital” that had introduced an “experimental 4/40 program” in 1972, found that 56% of those workers voted to continue the 4/40 after 6 months. Fottler’s analysis showed that workers tended to view the 4/40 positively, if they perceived the new schedule as a job upgrade. Of relevance, perhaps, to the design of any future 4DW models, the “personnel department decided...to allow those employees who voted...for continuance of 4/40 to remain on the new schedule” while the “other employees were allowed to return to the old 5/40 schedule” (Fottler, 1977: 665). There are other examples of workers being given a vote on adopting then discontinuing a 4DW schedule en masse; but giving workers within the same workplace the *right to work different schedules* based on some form of

democratic process may be an idea worth serious consideration in relation to new models of the 4DW.

In a meta-analysis of 78 academic articles on CWW – mostly 4DWs – between 1970 and 1979, Hung (cited in Bird, 2010: 1071), “found strong support for positive employee attitudes towards the idea of a compressed work week, positive effects on one’s personal life, and increased or improved opportunities for leisure.” Another 1999 meta-analysis found that “compressed workweek schedules had primarily positive and no negative effects on work-related criteria” (Bird, 2010: 1076). According to Fottler, (1977: 657) “while no single factor adequately explains favourable employee response to 4/40, the opportunity to ‘bunch’ leisure time activities and to conduct personal business without taking time out from work” is a commonly cited factor. Bird concludes that: “It appears that a significant reason why employees like the four-day week so much is because it gives them more time and pleasure while away from work, and not necessarily greater job satisfaction while working” (Bird, 2010: 1067).

However, not all scholars have accepted these positive responses towards 4/40 weeks at face value. In a 1974 paper, Gannon (cited in Bird, 2010: 1069) argued that “the 4/40 drive represents a classic case where a new program has been accepted uncritically” and, as Bird paraphrases Gannon, the “beneficial effects” reported in studies are “because the system is novel and they [researchers] are being asked to measure it” (Bird, 2010: 1069). A 1980 study by Ivancevich and Herbert provides some support for this argument, finding that workers reported greater satisfaction related to factors such as autonomy, job security and salary outcomes 13 months after the introduction of a 4DW than those in a control group, but that after 25 months nearly all of these benefits had disappeared (Bird, 2010: 1071).

While the evidence regarding positive worker experiences of the 4/40 workweek is abundant and reasonably strong, the data on the productivity effects is scarce and less persuasive. Gannon cites a “1965 study of 1233 companies that found no gains in productivity from shorter work weeks” (Bird, 2010: 1070). A 1971 study of the impact of a “12-hour, fixed shifts, alternate four-day week/three-day week” schedule at a small manufacturing firm reported a 3.1% average increase in output per hour worked (Steward

and Larsen, 1971: 13, 19). In 1974, the US Bureau of Labour Statistics carried out a pilot study of 16 organisations (13 on 4DWs, 3 on 3DWs) in a range of industries (manufacturing, banking, insurance, retail, government) to “ascertain what records were available, what type of measures would be useful in assessing the economic effects of compressed schedules.” The results showed an increase in productivity in some organisations, no change in others, and a decrease in the remainder, as well as reduced absenteeism and improved recruitment (Macut, 1974: 55). In a 1986 analysis of the impact of CWW on productivity and absenteeism at eight organisations, Kopelman found that, of the five studies that included evidence regarding productivity, results ranged from a 4.5% increase to a 3.1% decline, with a median change of 0%. Kopelman states that: “All factors considered, there is no evidence that the CWW improves productivity” (Kopelman, 1986: 152-153).

Levitan and Belous also raise the issue of the potential impact of a 4DW with reduced hours and no loss of pay – the preference of the labour movement in the 1970s – on productivity and employment. They point out that cutting the workweek to 36 hours without reduced pay would mean an 11.1% pay increase, while a 35-hour week would mean a 14.3% rise. On employment, they argue that while the equation of *reduced workweek = more jobs* may be logically compelling, the fixed costs of employing more people may mean employers choose paying existing workers more overtime, rather than increasing employment (Levitan and Belous, 1977: 53, 55, 56, 51). In a meta-analysis of 14 CWW studies, Ronen and Pimpis (1981: 71) found that “of two studies that objectively measured productivity changes reported no change after introduction of compressed workweeks” and concluded that “From the mixed results” based on customer feedback, reports from supervisors and workers self-reported productivity “it is difficult to draw conclusions about the direction of change in productivity associated with CWW.”

Failure of the 4DW to Become More Widespread

There are at least four interrelated factors that together constitute a plausible explanation for the failure of the 4DW in 1970-1975 to become a larger – and more sustained – trend, despite the generally positive attitudes of workers towards the new schedule and the apparently negligible impact on productivity.

First, the implementation of 4DWs in this period was overwhelmingly a management initiative: a privilege bestowed by bosses on their workers. In retrospect, it seems reasonable to suggest that the 4DW was a tactic deployed by a minority of employers in a context of worsening economic conditions and increasing worker unrest that offered a long-weekend for workers and the possibility of higher productivity for firms. As it was generally a reform that was not 'won' by workers for themselves, there was perhaps less resistance to its removal when economic and ideological circumstances changed, and when major productivity increases were not realised.

Secondly, and with the benefit of hindsight, we know that the mid-1970s marked a turning point in the trajectory of twentieth-century capitalist economies and societies, in which the balance of power shifted away from labour and towards capital. The early 1980s in the US were marked not by a return to Keynesian full employment and rising real wages, but by a deep recession, stagnant real wages for average workers, the start of a sharp decrease of manufacturing employment as a share of total employment and a precipitous decline in labour union membership, together with the ideological ascendancy of neo-liberalism (Reich, 1992, Varoufakis, Halevi and Theocarakis, 2011, Harvey, 2010). In summary, there was progressively less pressure on employers to concede or to compromise.

Thirdly, and related to the above, is the fact that the firms most likely to introduce 4DW schedules were small, non-union businesses. Observing the types of firms that introduced 4DWs in the early 1970s, Neipert Hedges (1971: 33) wrote: "Few are capital-intensive, few compete in world markets, few employ more than 500 workers." This obviously affected the aggregate number of workers likely to experience a 4DW, but perhaps – and this is only speculation – these smaller firms, especially those in manufacturing, were also under more pressure than larger firms, as business conditions deteriorated. As a result, they may have been more willing to experiment with a change that offered the possibility of improved economic performance and reduced tensions with its workforce. Perhaps, though, the bigger issue was that non-union workplaces were not faced with the opposition of organised labour to the 4/40 compressed workweek schedule.

Fourthly, the two key – and related – issues for organised labour in relation to a 4/40 workweek were the departure it represented from the 8-hour day and the threat of the loss of overtime payments that could accompany an increase in the length of the working day. The 8-hour day was one of the great historical achievements of the labour movement and many working class people relied on overtime payments to maintain their living standards. As Fleuter (1975: 5), put it, “While union leaders, in general, have had some misgivings about the four-day week, their objection has been to the ten-hour day, not the longer weekend. After struggling all these years to reduce the workday to eight hours, they are of the opinion that any increase in these hours is a step in the wrong direction. Their primary concern is that overtime will be reduced or eliminated.” Reflective of this view, the Canadian Labour Congress Convention in 1972 passed a resolution to “urge all Canadian wage earners to resist pressures to accept changes in hours of work, such as a four-day, 40-hour workweek which restores the 10-hour day and constitutes a serious danger to the eight hour or less per day already won by labour” and pushed for “a workweek comprising 32 hours maximum, with emphasis on a week of four days with eight hours or less per day, without loss of take-home pay” (Fleuter, 1975: 5). Similar attitudes were evident in the US labour movement, with the AFL-CIO, the union peak body, calling for “a decrease in hours, whether on a daily, weekly, or annual basis, with no reduction in wages or benefits” at its 1975 Convention, with a 35-hour workweek as an intermediate goal (Levitan and Belous: 1977: 41).

While some major labour unions flirted seriously with the idea of a 4DW with reduced hours, there was a general, though not universal, opposition to the compressed 4DW. Levitan and Belous (1977: 36) cited a US Department of Labour study of collective agreements that could not find a single example of a 4-Day/40-Hour workweek for all full-time workers. But in 1975-1976, the large and powerful United Auto Workers did argue for a 4-Day/36-Hour workweek as part of a period of protracted industrial conflict with the Ford Motor Company. Ultimately, however, the union chose to prioritise more paid leave, as this was viewed as more achievable, of greater benefit to workers in general, less disruptive to senior workers, and less likely to be used by management as a tool to avoid hiring more auto workers. On October 5, 1976, the union struck a deal with Ford that ended a strike that had started on September 14, “that provided for additional paid time off which the union

hailed as a step towards its announced goal of a 4-day workweek for the automobile industry” (Monthly Labor Review, 1976: 53). As Levitan and Belous (1977: 38-9) put it, “In the end the UAW decided not to attack the workweek directly but instead demanded and won twelve more paid vacation days, which would reduce the total number of work-days during the year without a reduction in pay.” Ultimately, the union reached similar agreements with General Motors and Chrysler for its nearly 700,000 workers that prioritised extra paid leave in the form of the “Scheduled Paid Personal Holiday Plan”, while claiming this represented a step towards a 4DW with reduced hours (Bornstein, 1977: 28).

In one example where the 4DW was actually implemented, members of the United Auto Workers local for Chrysler workers in Tappan, New York, chose to abandon a 4/10 workweek after a two-month trial and reverted to the traditional 5/8 workweek (Levitan and Belous, 1977: 70). Levitan and Belous (1977: 70) also cite the Walsh-Healey Act “that requires firms with federal contracts of more than \$10,000 to pay overtime rates to workers who put in more than an eight-hour day” as another important factor that limited the uptake of the 4DW. This was coupled with the general concern of unions and workers regarding the potential for compressed 4DWs, and other flexible schedules, to undermine “premium pay and pay differentials” and the “status of full-time workers” (Levitan and Belous: 1977: 72).

The 4DW option remained ‘on hold’ for decades for the reasons elaborated above. But it was to experience a modest re-emergence in the context of the Great Recession of 2008-2011. This is the subject of the next subsection.

B: The 4DW in the US 2008-2011

The US Economy in the 2000s: from Subprime Boom to the Great Recession

The period between the 'Volcker Shock' – where US interest rates increased from around 10% to around 20% between 1980 and 1981 (*Economist*, 2010) – and the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 could be loosely categorised as the neoliberal era. This period was marked by a drop from 20% to under 10% in US manufacturing's share of national employment (*Economist*, 2014); a near halving of union membership from 20.1% of US workers in 1983 to 11.1% in 2010 (ILO, 2013); a steep rise in income inequality reflected in the top 1% increasing its share of national income from 12% to 25% since 1976 (Stiglitz, 2011); and an increase in US financial sector profits as a percentage of total profits from under 20% in 1980 to nearly 40% by 2005 (Bellamy Foster, 2008). According to Varoufakis, Halevi and Theocarakis (2011: 347, 357), this phase of US hegemony was based on an economic model sustained by a combination of vast inward capital flows – due to high US interest rates and the dollar's continuing reserve currency status – low unit labour costs, and soaring corporate profits.

This combination of large capital inflows and stagnant real wages, together with financial deregulation, laid the foundation for the explosive growth in financial innovation and household debt that fuelled the boom in US house prices, the spread of predatory lending practices, and the stratospheric growth in the market for collateralised debt obligations, and related financial products. The detailed story of the spectacular – if partial – collapse of this economic model in the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 is beyond the scope of this thesis; but its effects on the US economy, and especially on the lives of ordinary Americans, were numerous, negative and severe. Between December 2007 and October 2009, the US experienced its worst recession since the Great Depression of 1929-1933 with at least 8.4 million job losses and unemployment doubling to a peak of 10% in October 2010 (ILO, 2014: 1, BLS, 2012: 2). According to a report by the Pew Research Centre in 2010, 28% of those surveyed had seen their working hours reduced, 23% suffered a pay cut, 12% had taken unpaid leave, and 11% were forced to switch to part-time work. In addition, between 2007 and 2009, median household wealth fell by 19%, and almost 4 million Americans lost their

homes on the back of the subprime housing crash (Pew Research Centre, 2010: 7, Varoufakis, Halevi and Theocarakis, 2011: 410).

There are, however, some key differences worth highlighting between the US recessions in the 1970s, previously discussed, and the Great Recession of 2007-2009. In the 1970s, rising wage-price inflation had been an important factor, whereas the unsustainable growth in asset prices was of more importance in relation to the GFC and the subsequent Great Recession. Furthermore, whereas the 1970s recessions had taken place in the context of two decades of strong economic growth and rising average real wages for workers, the GFC and Great Recession occurred after three decades of stagnant real wages for most US workers and big falls in union membership. It is in this somewhat different context that the most recent upsurge in interest in the 4DW should be situated and assessed.

The 4DW and the Great Recession: Revolution Redux?

If the 4DW failed to deliver the “revolution in work and leisure” (Poor, 1970) predicted by some analysts in the 1970s, it has amounted to no more than a minor revolt during the Great Recession. This fact notwithstanding, the Great Recession has at least provided the context for a modest resurgence of interest in the 4DW among some policymakers, journalists, academics and workers in the US. However, Bird (2010, 1061-62) cautions against over enthusiasm towards – and excessive claims made in relation to – this renewed interest: “The fact remains” he writes “that the four-day work week is not novel, questionably beneficial, and far from inevitable. The popular press, with academics in tow, has been down this path before.” Where it has been implemented – and advocated – the 4DW has been framed as both a specific response to exigencies of the recession and, as was also the case in the 1970s, as a more general reform that could serve to mitigate the negative effects of a range of economic, social and environmental problems.

While other countries have adopted policies – such as Germany’s *kurzarbeit* – designed to reduce unemployment during the global economic downturn, interest in the 4DW as a policy response to the recession has centred on the UK and the US. In the UK, for example, KPMG offered their 11,000 UK staff the option of moving to a 4DW with reduced hours and pay, and Ford introduced a compulsory 4DW without loss of pay for its UK production line

staff in 2008 (Fleming, 2009, Fleming 2008). A similar decision was made at Jaguar Landrover in the UK, with workers voting to accept a 4DW and one-year pay freeze as an alternative to major job cuts (*Telegraph*, 2009). In the US, while there are various examples of individual firms that have introduced some form of 4DW, by far the most significant instance – both in terms of the numbers involved and the attention garnered – was Utah’s introduction of a mandatory 4-Day/40-Hour workweek for the majority of state employees in 2008. The Utah experiment has received extensive media coverage in publications such as *Time Magazine* (Walsh, 2009), *The New York Times* (Johnson, 2011), *Scientific American* (Peeples, 2009), *Huffington Post* (Jamieson, 2011), *The Washington Post* (Kumar, 2011), among many others, and has been the subject of academic research, including a symposium on the 4DW at the University of Connecticut in 2010.

In August 2008, Utah’s Republican Governor Jon Huntsman introduced a one-year pilot program of the Working 4 Utah Initiative (W4UI): a mandatory compressed 4/10 workweek for 18,000 of the state’s 25,000 workers (13,000 of 17,000 full-time workers). The aims of the initiative were to reduce energy costs, lower air pollution, enhance service delivery, and improve staff recruitment and retention. Public buildings were open 7.30am-6.00pm Monday through Thursday, and closed on Fridays – excluding essential services (Facer and Wadsworth, 2010: 1042). There were staff surveys carried out one month before the program was introduced, and three and nine months after implementation. The combined results of these surveys, a statewide poll, and a performance report produced 12 months after the introduction of the W4UI showed generally positive effects. These results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Impacts of Implementation of W4UI on Energy and Environment, Productivity, Workers, the Public and other Stakeholders

Category	Impacts
Energy and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.5% reduction in energy usage saving US\$502,000 (substantially less than the US\$3 million projected) • US\$203,000 reduction in operational costs • 523,980 gallons reduction in petrol consumption and 3.1 million mile reduction in distanced travelled by state vehicles saving US\$1.4 million • 10,040 metric tonnes reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% reduction in paid overtime equivalent to a US\$4.1 million saving • Employee annual turnover rates decreased from 10.7% to 9.7% • 35.3% of workers reported being more productive than on previous schedule, 47.2% reported they were equally productive, 8.9% less productive, and 8.6% already worked 4/10 schedule • Asked to assess the impact of 4/10 schedule on “my immediate work group”, 11% said their work group was less productive, 37% said it had no effect, and 42% that it made their work group more productive
Worker Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% of workers favoured continuation of W4UI after pilot period • 37.7% of state workers reported no change with the implementation of the 4DW in terms of ability to participate in family events and social activities, 41.4% reported a positive impact, and 21.9% reported a negative impact • 60.1% of survey respondents reported a positive overall impact on family and personal life, 25% were neutral, and 11.9% reported a negative impact • 10.3% stated that arranging childcare had become more difficult with new schedule, 11.9% said it had become easier, 21.8% reported no change, and this issue was not applicable to 56% • 8% reported problems accessing public transport • 65% agreed that 4/10 schedule had reduced commuting costs and time spent commuting • 59.7% agreed that 4/10 schedule made their commute easier
Public and Stakeholder Impacts and Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average waiting time at the Department of Motor Vehicles fell from 11.4 minutes to 7.3 minutes • Calls to W4U Hotline fell dramatically • Agencies reported customer service results were similar to pre-W4UI period • 66% of Utah residents supported continuation of W4UI • 20% favoured discontinuation of initiative • 72% viewed 4/40 schedule as good way for state to save money • 39% of local government leaders said they had harder time doing business with state government agencies because they were closed on Friday (18% reported no difference, 43% disagreed that Friday closing made it harder to do business with state agencies)

(Sources: Facer and Wadsworth, 2010: 1043-1046, Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: Appendix B, Hansen, Harrington, Herring and Sowards, 2009).

On the basis of these and other findings, Governor Huntsman announced that the 4DW would be made permanent in December 2009. However, a performance audit of the W4UI conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor General and published in July 2010 disputed the connection between the 4DW and some of the positive findings documented in the earlier research. The report authors argued that: “the savings in these areas are not entirely due to the four-day workweek” and “We estimate the initiative produced less than a US\$1 million savings on building operations, overtime, and fleet services” (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: i). According to the report, the reduction in energy costs was due mainly to big falls in energy prices and improvements in managing the heating and cooling of state buildings. The report also disputed the savings estimated from reduced overtime payments. The Department of Corrections accounted for US\$3.2 million of the US\$4.7 million of estimated savings over the 12 month pilot period of the W4UI, but this was because: “During the fiscal year 2008 the department paid out millions in overtime expenses to cover shifts caused by 120 vacant positions” while in “fiscal year 2009, the first year of the new schedule, overtime expenses returned to normal levels” (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: 37-43).

The performance audit places an overwhelming emphasis on the productivity impacts of the W4UI. The authors stress both the potential for negative impacts, but also the difficulty in calculating the extent of any such impacts due to the lack of objective data on productivity. They point out that the Utah state government spends around US\$1.5 billion on pay for state workers per annum and that, therefore, if the 4/10 schedule had even a minor negative effect on productivity it would cancel out the modest savings generated by the scheme. The report also criticises agency heads for providing only “anecdotal evidence” on productivity outcomes in relation to the 4DW, and the authors express scepticism regarding self-reported productivity impacts of 4/10s on state workers (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: 20-21). They also express concern over “questionable personnel practices that threaten productivity”, such as not taking a lunch break, not exercising, and being allowed to work from home or during commutes. They write that “it is unlikely that employees who work during their commute every day will be as effective performing their work tasks...as they are in their office.” However, they also acknowledge that only 4% of workers were authorised to work during their commute, and just 12% of respondents in one

survey reported that they worked from home more than 20 hours per week (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: 47-56).

The audit report also found that just 12% of state workers believed their jobs were not well-suited to a 4/10 schedule, while pointing to some agencies where this figure was over 20%. Despite this, the report recommends that: “Agencies that regulate the business community, represent the state’s interest in court, or provide support to local government could be more effective if they were to operate during the same business hours as those other organisations.” The authors make some salient points regarding particular occupations that may be ill-suited to the 4/10 schedule, such as national parks officers who need to work with animals early in the morning, parole officers required to be available when courts are working, and lab technicians who cannot leave samples sitting for three days. However, the authors also acknowledge that other jobs, such as those requiring a lot of travel or set up times (ie road maintenance workers), can benefit from longer working days (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010: 23-32, 28).

Ultimately, the audit report made two key recommendations: 1) “We recommend that agencies develop performance measures that can be used to better monitor employee performance”, and 2) “We recommend each agency be given the flexibility to identify the work schedule that allows employees to be as effective as possible” (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman: 2010: i).

The research reviewed above found broadly positive effects of the W4UI in terms of worker and public satisfaction. The evidence also showed that the savings to government generated by implementation of the 4DW were less than anticipated but probably difficult to accurately assess. Despite the strong support of Utah’s public sector workers – and the backing of the Utah Public Employees’ Association – for the W4UI, and the absence of any major negative organisational impacts, the Utah state legislature voted to abandon the mandatory 4DW after two-and-a-half years in operation, and to re-open state buildings and services on Fridays from September 2011 (Jamieson, 2011). It is difficult to identify with any degree of certainty the precise reasons for the discontinuation of the W4UI. However, several factors that were potentially significant can be highlighted.

First, W4UI was originally introduced by Republican Governor Huntsman, without gaining prior support of state legislators. Huntsman's successor, Governor Herbert, continued to support the 4DW and vetoed a bill designed to scrap it. However, the Utah Senate then voted 21-6 to 'override' Herbert's veto and end the mandatory 4DW in July 2011 (Riley Roche, 2011). Therefore, it is at least possible that ending the W4UI may, in part, have been a case of the legislature reasserting its authority in relation to the executive.

Secondly, the public comments of senior legislators and business lobbyists provide at least some anecdotal evidence that the 4DW may have been viewed as setting a precedent in relation to the workweek that they did not wish to see become institutionalised, and perhaps more widespread. Senator Wayne Niederhauser, the Republican Senate Whip, argued: "The state should be open on a complete basis." Marty Carpenter from the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce commented that: "The lack of accessibility on Fridays was just really an inconvenience for a lot of businesses" and "With everyone else working on a Friday, it was weird for state employees not to be in the office." Republican state representative, Mike Noel, who sponsored the repeal of the W4UI, echoed these sentiments stating: "The business community didn't like it, and the court system didn't like it at all" and "The whole idea, it just didn't work very well" (Jamieson, 2011). Furthermore, according to journalist Melissa Maynard, "Critics, including some in the legislature, saw three-day weekends for public employees as a lavish perk and yet another example of out-of-control public employee benefits" (Maynard, 2011).

Thirdly, the recommendations of the audit report, with its strong emphasis on productivity and flexibility, may have been another significant factor. In relation to this last point, it is important to stress that, while the mandatory 4DW was officially ended, state agencies were given the authority to determine whether some of their employees and operations could be conducted on a 4/10 schedule.

The end of the mandatory 4DW for Utah state workers has not meant the end of all 4DW schedules across the US, but it does mark a clear reversal. Viewed retrospectively, the Utah experiment may come to be seen as the high water mark for the 4DW in the period of the

Great Recession. Several US cities, including Provo, Utah (pop. 100,000), El Paso, Texas (pop. 800,000) and Las Vegas City, Nevada (pop. 583,000) continue to operate on a 4DW schedule for most city workers (Loftin, 2011, Kolenc, 2012, Toplikar, 2010). But at the state level, Oregon, Hawaii, Virginia and California have all considered – but ultimately rejected – moving to 4DWs for state workers. In California, Governor Jerry Brown had proposed a 4-Day/38-hour week with a 5% reduction in pay for state workers, but this was ultimately rejected by the Services Employees International Union in favour of an additional 12 days of unpaid leave (Ortiz, 2012).

As the examples discussed above show, the end of the 4DW in Utah was not the end of 4/40 schedule across the board in the US. However, it is hard to determine exactly how many US workers are now on a 4DW. In general, CWW – such as Utah’s 4/40 – have been subsumed under the heading of Alternative Work Schedules (AWS), a category that also includes flexi-time, telecommuting and job sharing (Wadsworth, Facer and Arbon, 2010: 325). CWW include 4/10, 9/80 and 3/12, among other schedules (Wadsworth, Facer and Arbon, 2010: 327). While it is difficult to accurately gauge how many Americans work 4DWs (compressed or part-time work), the Families and Work Institute estimates that 36% of US employers allow *some* of their workers to do 4DWs, but only 7% give *all or most* workers this option (Eisenberg, 2013). Furthermore, 37% of US organisations offered some type of CWW in 2009, compared to 33% in 2005, with the 4/10 schedule being the most popular (Wadsworth, Facer and Arbon, 2010: 326). Consistent with the evidence already presented regarding 4DWs, the research on CWW suggests broadly positive impacts on workers and negligible productivity impacts on firms (Wadsworth, Facer and Arbon, 2010: 1039, Bambra, Whitehead, Snowden, Akers, Petticrew, 2008: 773-774, Tucker, 2006: vii, 27).

Despite the broadly positive evidence presented regarding the effects of the W4UI and CWW in general, there has been criticism of these schedules from class and gender perspectives, particularly during the Great Recession. Green (2010: 2-3), for example, argues that in the context of a “great jobs crisis...the motivation to work less, to allow employees more leisure, or to prevent them from being overworked does not resonate with workers who are just struggling to keep their jobs.” He suggests that workers should be wary of any proposal for a “reduced work week when it comes with fewer wages, as occurs with the

increasing use of unpaid furloughs” (Green, 2010: 10). This would not, of course, apply to CWW such as Utah’s, but would apply to the 4/38 scheme that was proposed in California. Green rightly points out that any reduction in working hours that includes a corresponding decrease in pay will hit low income workers hardest and that “employers can use the current threat of increasing unemployment to squeeze even more productivity out of workers” while reducing pay and conditions (Green, 2010: 21-23).

Another critic, Lung (2010: 1121), expresses scepticism regarding the “altruistic efforts of employers” in relation to AWS, like the 4DW, during a recession, and questions their ‘family friendly’ and feminist credentials. Lung writes: “It is no small irony that it has taken an economic recession to place the issue of four-day workweeks and reduced hours into public discourse” and “as feminists and feminists of colour, we must ask which workers are the most likely beneficiaries of reduced or compressed work weeks? Which workers are the least likely beneficiaries?” Lung argues that these proposals “aim to offer middle-class professional women greater flexibility to choose caregiving at home over waged work outside the home” but that the “structure of low-wage industries and labour markets, immigration policies, and social welfare benefits intersect to deny poor and low-income women the same right to choose between paid work, unpaid work, and caregiving.” She contends that many women working long hours are just not able to compress their work into fewer days (Lung, 2010: 1122-1125).

It is also pertinent to note that it is state and local government agencies that have been the focus of the 4DW proposals in the context of the Great Recession, and that these agencies have faced major budget cuts, and a sustained ideological assault on their legitimacy. According to Gordon (2012: 7): “Overall, states faced more than US\$500 billion in cumulative shortfalls from 2009 to 2012” that were only partially offset by the US\$145 billion federal government stimulus package in 2009 that has now expired. State revenues have rebounded after the 2009 plunge, but local governments are still struggling “due to lagged effects of the housing bust and cutbacks in state aid.” Most states also cut spending on health, education and social services and combined state and local government job losses between August 2008 and September 2012 amounted to 574,000 (Gordon, 2012: 1-14). State and federal politicians, such as Congressman Paul Ryan and other Tea Party

Republicans, have used the recession to intensify their attacks on public spending and the public sector in general. For example, Ryan put out his 2010 “Roadmap for America’s Future” that proposed huge cuts in government spending and taxation – a proposal that was dismissed by Paul Krugman (2010) as “a fraud that makes no useful contribution to the debate over America’s fiscal future.” It is, perhaps, no coincidence that the cutbacks and attacks have been focused on the public sector which remains 35.3% unionised versus the 6.7% figure for the private sector (BLS, 2014).

In summary, this combined set of economic and ideological circumstances meant that, as in the 1970s, the 4DW can be interpreted as primarily a management-led initiative, with workers negotiating from a position of relative weakness. The next subsection examines the possible implications of the US experience in the 1970s and during the Great Recession for the 4DW as a policy option in Australia.

C: Implications of the US Experience for the 4DW as a Policy Option for Australia

What are the possible implications of the US experience with the 4DW in the periods 1970-1975 and 2008-2011 for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia? This subsection begins with a brief discussion of the relationship between capital and the 4DW during these periods, before looking at the orientation of organised labour towards the compressed 4DW. It concludes with a discussion of workers' experiences with the 4DW during these periods.

Capital and the 4DW

For both periods in the US during which it became more widespread, it took an economic downturn for the 4DW to be placed on the table by employers. Recessions provided the context in which management in some private and public organisations were willing to 'concede' and/or 'impose' a 4DW on management's terms. In the 1970s, it may have been small, non-union firms facing competitive pressures that were more likely to 'concede', whereas during the Great Recession it was more typically government administrators 'imposing' 4DWs on their workforces as they experienced pressure to cut costs. The common denominator is that the managerial prerogative was reinforced, rather than challenged, and in retrospect the 4DW can be viewed as a short-term response by capital to deteriorating economic circumstances. This characteristic, it is suggested here, affected both the type of 4DW that was most likely to be offered (a compressed 4/10 schedule) and the longevity of the new schedules that were implemented. US workers did not generally 'win' the 4DW in either period and, as a consequence, when economic and/or political circumstances changed, management faced less opposition to removing a 'privilege bestowed on workers' than would have been the case if workers had achieved the reform on their own terms.

This reasoning suggests that any future proposals for – and experiments with – 4DWs may have more chance of lasting success if the following conditions are met: a) the proposal is developed by workers in the first place, b) the campaign is based on a long-term goal rather than being a kneejerk response to a recession, and c) the reform, if it is achieved, is won through a collective political process.

From the viewpoint of capital, a key question is the productivity impacts of moving to a 4DW schedule for firms operating in different industries within a capitalist economy. The existing research on 4DWs in both periods suggests negligible effects on productivity; but it should be stressed that both the 4/10 compressed schedule that was preponderant, and the limited scale on which the 4DW was trialled, mean that the relationship between any future proposals for 4DWs and productivity effects is not clear cut. For some organisations (including some government agencies, office-based firms, NGOs, among others), the Utah-style 4DW that involves a complete shutdown for an extra day per week may represent a net gain in terms of reduced energy costs. However, for other organisations (such as hospitals, sole traders, restaurants, some manufacturers, among others), this option is unlikely to be viable due to the organisation's function (ie hospitals needing continuous operations or restaurants that open every day) or the impact of high fixed costs (ie rent, plant and equipment costs for manufacturing businesses). In these latter cases, any 4DW proposal needs to be more focused on implementing a reform that may be desired by workers, rather than on shutting down an organisation or business for an additional day per week. This could mean either a change in rostering based on a compressed schedule, or hiring more workers due to a shorter workweek (on the basis of either reduced hours for reduced pay, or reduced hours for the same pay), which would have implications for factors such as payroll costs and the supply of labour in particular sectors.

Organised Labour and the 4DW

There were some differences in terms of the position taken by organised labour in the US towards the 4DW in the 1970s and during the Great Recession. In the first period, smaller, non-union firms were more likely to implement 4DWs; while the union movement remained hostile to 4/40 schedules because of the lengthening of the working day, and the threat these schedules posed to overtime pay. The United Auto Workers did at times push for a 4/36 week without loss of pay, but ultimately opted to pursue increased paid leave rather than a shorter working week in its negotiations. The later W4UI, by contrast, was supported by Utah Public Employees' Association, but this support was obviously not enough to ensure the continuation of this program, despite its evident popularity with Utah state workers. Interestingly, the California proposal for a 4/38 schedule for state workers with a 5% pay cut was not supported by the relevant union, and the scheme was not implemented.

Regarding the implications for future proposals for a 4DW, it would seem reasonable to conclude that, without the support of organised labour, the 4DW has very limited prospects of constituting a widespread and permanent reform. In addition, the support of individual unions may not be enough to guarantee the permanence of individual instances of 4DWs, as was the case with the W4UI. A proposal for a 4DW in Australia may have more chance of winning majority support if it becomes a political – and organising – goal for the union movement as a whole. The support of a coalition of groups, including union, environmental, feminist, social welfare, and religious organisations, among others, for a 4DW would increase the likelihood of building the social consensus necessary for long-term success. Given the concerns over increasing the length of the working day and the effect of compressed schedules on penalty rates remain extant, for any future 4DW proposal to win the support of the union movement it would need to be based on reduced working hours without loss of pay, which in turn would mean a positive redistribution of national income towards labour. The question of whether a 4/36 (longer day, shorter workweek) or 4/32 (same day, shorter workweek, bigger economic impact and political change), or some other model, might be preferred would need to be decided via a collective political process.

Workers and the 4DW

The most consistent finding related to the 4DW in both periods was that the majority of workers preferred them to five-day workweeks (5DW). The permanent three-day weekend seemed to be adequate compensation for the lengthening of the working day that occurred under 4/40 schedules. This is not to discount the fact that compressed 4DWs did not suit all workers equally well. There is some evidence that older workers were less positive towards CWW due to fatigue, and that there can be problems with short-turnarounds for workers doing rotating CWW (Tucker, 2006). In addition, 12% of workers surveyed in the W4UI felt their jobs were not suited to the 4/10 schedule (Osterstock, Behunin and Lehman, 2010). However, the number of studies showing strong positive attitudes of workers towards the 4DW suggests some social base for this reform.

During both periods, there was some evidence that giving workers the choice over whether to move to a 4/10 (or other compressed schedule) could improve outcomes for workers. For

example, the case highlighted by Fottler (1977) where hospital workers were given the right to vote on whether they worked a 4DW or 5DW, and permitted to work their preferred schedule, and more recent evidence that “implementation [of a CWW] is more likely to produce positive effects when the new system is chosen by the workforce” (Tucker, 2006: 27). While, the goal of a 4DW may be more likely to be achieved in Australia if it is pursued as a *universal right*, the principle of *worker-centred choice* might usefully serve as a *subsidiary right* that challenges the managerial prerogative to determine working schedules, while at the same time providing some scope for workers to express non-uniform preferences in relation to the scheduling of their working hours.

In light of the evidence and argument presented in this part of the thesis, it is appropriate to move now from the historical to the institutional level of analysis, and from the US experience with the 4DW to a contemporary Australian workplace. This is done in the final third of the thesis, mainly through a case study on the Institute for Sustainable Futures, an Australian organisation with progressive work-related policies.

PART III

ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES (AWS) AND FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES AT THE INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES (ISF): A CASE STUDY

Part III shifts from the philosophical and political economic arguments and historical material discussed in the first two parts of the thesis, to the institutional level of analysis. It focuses on *the organisation* as the site of implementation for Alternative Work Schedules (AWS), such as the 4DW. The aim here is to complement the theoretical and historical analyses with a case study that highlights some of the opportunities and challenges created by implementing progressive work-related policies at a contemporary Australian workplace.

Subsection A draws briefly on Weberian sociology, old and new institutional economics and Marxist Organisation Studies to argue that an understanding of the goals, cultures, and internal and external power relations of *organisations* (corporations, government agencies, NGOs etc), as well as an understanding of the *process of organisation* (how organisational goals are realised) is essential to examining the case for any proposal for change in relation to the nature and extent of work. Subsection B provides an overview of the case study of work at the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) – a mainly self-funded research institute and consultancy at the University of Technology, Sydney – that offers a variety of AWS and other flexible work practices to its staff, including the option of working a 4DW. Subsection C outlines the formal policy framework that underpins the ISF’s commitment to AWS and flexible work practices, before turning to the experience of study participants with AWS. Subsection D focuses on study participants’ views on work in general, their understanding of an ideal job, and of the importance they attach to autonomy in relation to work. Subsection E looks at the personal impacts of working AWS for study participants, including the effect on work-life balance. Subsection F assesses the effects of AWS and flexible work practices at the organisational level, both in terms of self-reported effects on work performance, and in terms of the broader organisational challenges presented by the AWS regime. Finally, Subsection G advances some cautious conclusions regarding the broader implications of the ISF case study for consideration of a 4DW as a policy option in Australia.

A: Work and Organisation

Organisation is both a process and an institutional form, and the relationship between work and organisation is at once intimate and complex. Organisations embody values – and pursue goals – that are projected outwards towards the economy and society in which they are embedded, and inwards towards their own workers. Organisations exercise power, in both quantitative and qualitative forms, corresponding to the position they occupy at the local, regional, national and global economic levels. Power is distributed within the organisations according to their organisational structure, institutional culture, and the broader economic and social structures of which they are a part. A critical analysis of organisation as both a *process* and a *form* is essential in any consideration of proposals for change in terms of how – and why – we work.

A focus on organisation as a form and a process has not been characteristic of many currents of economic analysis. For mainstream neoclassical economists, economic activity is organised – or coordinated – by the free operation of competitive markets, and firms are individual maximising agents with a set of fairly predictable behaviours. Firms hire and fire workers in response to changes in the conditions of supply and demand, and workers balance their desires for income and leisure in deciding how much to work at a given wage rate. For Keynesians, the focus is on the macroeconomy, with the state afforded an explicit role in ensuring that aggregate demand is sufficient to generate full employment. Marxists have traditionally theorised capitalism as a whole system, structured by the ineradicable conflict between capital and labour. Capital hires labour on the basis of a structural power inequality, and economic activity is organised so as to facilitate capital accumulation on a continuing and expanded basis. These political economic approaches can, of course, tell us much about *how* and *why* economic activity takes place, and how it might be arranged for the better but deeper insights into the role of organisation must be sought elsewhere.

While functionalist theories may have come to dominate sociology, Weber's focus on bureaucracy remains a key reference point in the study of organisation and organisations. Within the tradition of political economy specifically, it is the analysis of 'old' institutional economists like Veblen, Berle and Means and Galbraith and 'new institutionalists' such as

Coase, North and Williamson that are especially pertinent to understanding the nature, purpose and power of organisation. This brief subsection draws on these approaches, as well as Marxist Organisation Studies, in order to emphasise the centrality of organisation (and organisations) to both current experiences of work and future possibilities for change in this area.

Weber's seminal contribution to the study of the evolution of capitalism is of continuing relevance to contemporary analyses of the nature and purpose of organisation. For Weber, according to Chakravarti (2012: 205), the development of capitalism was tied to the "ascendancy of the ideas of ascetic rationalism that formed the core of the Protestant ethic." This rationalism was associated with the increasing significance of a bureaucratic mode of organisation (Hass, 2007: 46). Bureaucracies, as Hass (2007:5) states: "mobilise a large number of people towards a common goal, whether producing goods (factories and corporations) or producing violence (the state)...[and]...manage this by creating *dependence*: bureaucratic employees are dependent on the organisation for wages (and thus for survival) and social status." This dual-character of rational bureaucratic organisation that facilitates both the achievement of complex goals and the subordination of individual desires to those goals, and to those who control the organisation, is why, according to Hass (2007: 46), Weber regarded bureaucracies with a combination of "fear and awe."

There are clear parallels between Weber's analysis and the later work of 'old' institutional economist John Kenneth Galbraith. For Galbraith, the development of modern capitalism has been driven by a process of organisation that involves planning, coordination and the analysis of information on an ever increasing scale. As a consequence, large organisations (especially corporations), as the institutions best able to manage this process of complex organisation, have become the most powerful economic actors in society. As Stilwell (2002: 229, 231) puts it, "according to Galbraith, it is organisation that is the most important source of power in modern societies" and the "enormous economic power [of corporations] reshapes economic relationships – within corporations; between firms; and with consumers, workers, and governments." In one sense, Galbraith, like Weber, saw the planning system dominated by large organisations as representing an advance in terms of the rational organisation of production. He writes: "It is not to individuals but to organisations that

power in the business enterprise and power in the society have passed. And modern economic society can only be understood as an effort, to synthesise by organisation a group personality far superior *for its purposes* to a natural person, and with the added advantage of immortality.”

Power within the organisation, according to Galbraith, was increasingly held by the “technostructure” which “embraces all who bring specialised knowledge, talent or experience to group decision-making. This, not the narrow management group, is the guiding intelligence – the brain – of the enterprise” (Galbraith, 2001: 76). The extent to which this power – or at least financial rewards – has been wrested back from the “technostructure” by owner-entrepreneurs in recent decades is open to contention, but the link between information, organisation and power remains strong. Finally, of note here is Galbraith’s concept of “countervailing power” (1952) that develops in response to the increasing economic power of large corporations, and may be expressed in the form of supplier federations, consumer groups, trade unions, environment groups, government agencies, and other institutions that can match – at least partially – the corporation’s capacity to leverage the power of organisation (Stilwell, 2002: 234). As Galbraith puts it: “the existence of market power creates an incentive to the organisation of another position of power that neutralises it” (Galbraith, 2001: 5). The ebb and flow in the relative strength of different forms of “countervailing power” is a matter for empirical analysis and explanation: the point here is that the source of power lies in the process and form of organisation.

New institutional economics (NIE) combines the neoclassical focus on the importance of markets and individual rationality with an emphasis on the essential role played by institutions, such as firms, in reducing the transaction costs that distort the behaviour of economic actors. Prominent new institutionalist Oliver Williams (1985: 202), for example, contends that “organisational variety arises in the service of transaction cost economising.” NIE maintains that the market failures mainstream neoclassical economics treats as a ‘special case’ (imperfect information, bounded rationality, free-riding etc) are in fact ubiquitous and, as a consequence, rational actors will seek to develop institutional mechanisms that reduce uncertainty and its associated costs (Chakravarti, 2012: 40-42). As

Chakravarti (2012: 41) states: “new institutionalism argues that markets and the price mechanism cannot, and do not, exist in a vacuum...[but]...are embedded in a specific framework of formal rules and informal constraints.”

As with orthodox neoclassical economics, orthodox Marxian analysis has tended to neglect the fundamental role of organisation – and organisations – in economic relations. According to Benson (1977: 1-2), “Marxists have rarely been interested in organisational analysis except to criticise the entire field”, a field in which “The study of complex organisations has been guided by a succession of rational and functional theories and by positivist methodology.” Marxist organisation studies have, in recent decades, attempted to address this area of neglect. Adler (2009: 73) draws a distinction between a “neo-Marxist” strand that emphasises “the conflictual aspects of the employment relations, and the ramifications for the structure and functioning of organisations” and the “paleo-Marxist” strand that emphasises the dual nature of large-scale organisations, and those who run them. As Adler (2009: 74) puts it in relation to the paleo-Marxist strand: “To emphasise conflict is not to deny the simultaneous need for cooperation in production.” He argues that “the large-scale capitalist enterprise depends crucially on cooperation to coordinate its complex division of labour, and managers play a key, productive role in that coordination”, a role that is “simultaneously productive and exploitative.”

There are similarities here with Weber and Galbraith in the view that the growth of large organisations, in a sense, “represents steps towards socialisation insofar as they allow more rational, conscious planning and management of large-scale, interdependent operations.” However, there is also recognition of the fact that “Under capitalist conditions, the substance of socialisation takes on a form that is exploitative and alienating” (Adler, 2009: 67-8). This ‘Janus face’ of organisation – and organisations – is of clear and major relevance to any consideration of a future of more multi-active and autonomous forms of work. As Benson (1977: 19) argues, “Organisations constitute important instruments of domination in advanced industrial societies” and “Any effort to change these societies must deal with the organisational dimension.”

In summary, what these four diverse perspectives illustrate is that the ubiquity, power and complexity of organisation – as both a process and an institutional form – cannot be ignored. The impact of organisation on power relationships between people, and between and within institutions, is of stark relevance to the study of work in the present, and in relation to any consideration of the future of work. The case study outlined in the next subsection represents a modest attempt to illustrate how this approach to organisation might shape one aspect of political economic analysis in relation to the future of work, and to policy proposals such as the 4DW.

B: Case Study Overview

ISF Goals, Orientation and Performance

Established in 1997, ISF is a research institute within UTS that aims to foster “change towards sustainable futures by conducting independent project based research for Australian and international clients” (ISF website). ISF “understands sustainability to be ‘meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’ in accordance with the 1987 Brundtland definition of sustainability” and states that their “impact on economic, social and environmental sustainability principally occurs through the application of our research by our clients, the dissemination of our research findings through publications, the professional development we facilitate, and changes in attitudes through media exposure and public forums” (ISF, 2012: 1). ISF is a largely self-funded hybrid academic-commercial organisation, producing scholarly books and journal articles, and supervising postgraduate students, on the one hand, and conducting research for a range of private, public and community-sector clients on a billable hours consulting model, on the other (ISF, 2012). ISF receives an annual grant from the university that pays for its publications and research student program. The grant is negotiated on an ongoing basis between ISF’s Director and the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research at UTS. According to ISF, the grant is just over \$1m per year, or between one-fifth and one-sixth of its annual income. As stated in the 2011 *Annual Report*, this dual-identity means that there is recurring pressure to “maintain the balance between employing enough researchers with the right skills across our research areas to undertake our work and getting enough work to cover the costs of these staff members” (2012:1).

Table 2 provides a snapshot of ISF’s performance in 2011 and 2012. The significant drop in income in the latter year is largely explained by \$1.0 million of subcontractor income being included in the 2011 accounts (ISF, 2013: 1).

Table 2. ISF Headline Performance Data 2011 and 2012

Indicator	2011	2012
Income	\$6.6 million	\$5.0 million
Research Income as % of Total Income	97%	92%
Salaries as % of Total Expenditure	65% (subcontractors next largest component of expenditure)	82%
Staff (full-time and part-time)	62	78
Graduate Students	21	27
Books	2	0
Book chapters	7	6
Journal Articles	50	30
Conference Papers	48	27
Reports	32	39
Media stories	69	68
Radio Interviews	32	28
Television Interviews	6	4
Online Stories	18	26
Public events	5	4

(Sources: ISF Annual Report 2011, ISF Annual Report 2012)

ISF Employment Characteristics

ISF is a medium-sized organisation that employed 78 full-time and part-time staff in 2012, in addition to 7 honorary associates and additional casual staff who are occasionally hired. There were 5 staff who left at the end of 2012 and a further 12 who departed during 2013. Of the 57 ISF staff listed in the Organisational Chart January 2014 (ISF, 2014: 1), only 7 are either casual or on fixed-term contracts. Additionally, there are several UTS staff who have a working relationship with ISF (including staff at the Research and Innovation Office).

Gauging the exact number of full-time and part-time staff is difficult, as many ISF workers are employed as full-timers on part-time variations (eg part-time for 12 months on the understanding that he/she will shift back to full-time after that period). As of January 2014, 33 staff (58%) are full-time and 24 (42%) are working part-time schedules of between 4.5 and 1 day per week (ISF, 2014: 1). Average tenure was 49 months at the end of 2012, and the average age of staff was 36. In terms of gender, in 2012 65% of ISF staff were women, including 62% at Level B and above. Employees come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, “including engineering, architecture, management, economics, science, social sciences, and international and political studies” and all research staff have qualifications at Bachelors degree level or above (ISF, 2012: 11). ISF staff are employed under three separate agreements, with salaries ranging from a low of \$45,276 to a high of \$180,286. In 2012, 73% of salary expenditure was on research staff, with 20% on administrative staff (ISF, 2013: 10-13, UTS Support Staff Agreement, 2010: 59, UTS Academic Staff Agreement, 2010: 56, UTS Senior Staff Group Collective Agreement, 2013: 21).

Table 3 shows the ISF Senior Management Structure. Table 4 shows the Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Staff by Occupation Category as of January 2014.

Table 3. ISF Senior Management Structure (includes 3 Tables below)

Institute Steering Group Membership 2013

Role	Person	Notes
Director	Stuart White	Ex-officio
Executive Manager	Carroll Graham	Ex-officio
Portfolio Director Postgrad Program and RAO	Cynthia Mitchell	Ex-officio
Portfolio Director Research Outcomes	Damien Giurco	Appointed position
Portfolio Director Research Development	Mick Paddon (to June) Pierre Mukheibir	Appointed position
Portfolio Director Sustainable Workplace	Chris Riedy	Appointed position
Portfolio Director Planning & Quality	Joanne Chong (to May) Samantha Sharpe	Appointed position
Staff Representative	Katie Ross (to June) Katie Gilbert	Appointed position

Management Group 2013

Role	Person	Notes
Director	Stuart White	
Executive Manager	Carroll Graham	
Research Manager	Neridah Baker	Left in July

Management Group 2014

Role	Person	Notes
Director	Stuart White	
Executive Manager	Carroll Graham	
Deputy Director	Cynthia Mitchell	
Research Manager	Craig Archer	
Operations Manager	Suzanne Cronan	

(Source: Provided to Researcher by ISF)

Table 4. ISF Full-Time and Part-Time Employees by Occupation Category

Position	Number of Employees	Percentage of Total Employees
Senior Management	2	3.5%
Research Directors	13	23%
Research Principals	11	19%
Researchers (incl. Senior Research Consultants, Research Consultants and Research Assistants)	17	30%
Professional Staff & Corporate Services and Infrastructure Team	13	23%
Postdoctoral Fellows	1	1.5%
Total	57	100%

(Source: ISF Organisational Chart Jan 2014)

Case Study Design

The aim of the case study is to provide some qualitative evidence regarding the impacts of AWS and flexible work practices, including 4DWs, at an Australian workplace where these policies are incorporated into a formal policy framework and encouraged by a supportive institutional culture. As Vromen (2010: 250) states: “Case studies tend to involve the in-depth qualitative study of lived human experiences by means of on-site fieldwork and some combination of observation, interviews, and/or document analysis.” This case study draws on basic information contained in ISF annual reports, and other documents, but is centred on semi-structured interviews with 10 case study participants. This method was chosen partly due to considerations of feasibility, but also to reflect Gorz’s (1999: 61) view that “open-ended interviews and case histories cast more light on the cultural changes [in relation to attitudes towards work] which are taking place than opinion polls could do.”

After ethics approval was granted (Appendix B), an email was circulated by ISF management to ISF staff outlining the nature and purpose of the study, and seeking study participants. It was made clear to prospective participants that their confidentiality would be guaranteed, that ISF management had agreed for interviews to be counted as work time, and that the results of the research would be shared with ISF. Those interested contacted the researcher via email. The interviews were based on the sample set of questions (Appendix C), but there was also scope for free-flowing conversation and study participants were invited to raise any additional issues and questions relevant to the study. An edited example of a semi-structured interview is included as Appendix D. Study participants were provided with a Participation Information Statement and a Participation Consent Form (to sign) prior to their interviews, and the interviews were conducted at ISF in 2013 and 2014 by the researcher. The transcripts were transferred into the possession of the Principal Investigator as per the requirements of the ethics approval.

Table 5 provides a list of ISF Case Study Participants and includes their current and previous work schedules. They have been divided into three broad categories: managers, researchers and professional staff. The breakdown for the case study was: 3 managers, 6 researchers, 1 professional staff member. The names of case study participants have been changed to ensure the confidentiality of their responses.

Table 5. ISF Case Study Participants

Name	Occupation Category	Current Work Schedule (days/hours)	Previous Work Schedule/s (days/hours)
Stacey	Manager	5/35	NA
Danielle	Manager	5/35	NA
Jake	Manager	5/35	2/14, 3/21, 4.5/35
Terri	Researcher	3/24	4/28,5/35
Penny	Researcher	4/32	5/35
Mary	Researcher	5/35	4/32
Steve	Researcher	4/28	5/35
Pete	Researcher	5/35	4/35, 4/28
Kylie	Researcher	4/28	3/21
Sally	Professional Staff	4/28	5/35

C: AWS and Flexible Work Practices at ISF

ISF provides a very favourable environment for AWS and flexible work practices, in both its formal policy framework and through its institutional culture. Subsection C briefly explains the key provisions enshrined in formal policies governing hours of work and variation of working hours.

There are two policies that, alongside the relevant UTS collective agreements, govern ISF's approach to AWS and flexible work. The first is the Hours of Work Policy – Support Staff (see Appendix E) that covers “ISF full-time, part-time and fixed-term staff who are employed under the UTS Ent Ag (Support) 2000, Part E: Hours of Work (‘the UTS Agreement’)” but does not cover casual staff and “staff employed under the UTS Ent Ag (Academic) 2000.” The key objectives of this policy are to “uphold sustainable work practices for staff within the Institute” and “to provide flexible hours of work for staff.” It should be pointed out that ISF staff already work (at least formally) a 35-hour week – rather than standard 38-hour workweek – and that ISF's ordinary hours are 140 hours over a four-week cycle (280 hours over 8 weeks). In addition, this policy stipulates that “staff may determine their own daily and weekly hours of work during the eight-week cycle...unless otherwise determined by the Institute.” ISF staff can arrange to work their required hours between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday.

The second formal policy of relevance here is the Policy on Temporary Variation of Working Hours (see Appendix F). The objective of this policy is to “support life-work balance for ISF staff by providing clear guidance on the procedures for applying for a temporary variation in working hours. This policy is not intended to replace provisions in Collective Agreements or policy guidance provided by UTS. Rather, the policy provides further clarity and detail on internal processes.” The policy “covers ISF staff members wishing to apply for a temporary variation in working hours or mode of employment” and “includes staff members that wish to compress their normal working hours into a shorter period of time, such as a four-day week or a nine-day fortnight.” Temporary variations must be approved by a staff member's supervisor and the ISF Director, and are “normally between six months and two years.” Any decision on a temporary variation will be partly based on the Institute Manager's

assessment of “the organisational implications (financial, capacity and space) of the change.” Staff members whose applications are not approved are entitled to “a full explanation of the reasons for the decision.” If the application is successful, the staff member “should take steps to ensure all ISF staff are aware of their new working hours.” Finally, “no later than one month before the end of the approved period, the staff member and supervisor should meet to review the arrangement and decide whether to revert to normal working hours or submit a new application.” The same steps and procedures apply to requests to compress working hours.

Table 6 sets out the main reasons study participants cited for adopting AWS, and the ease with which the formal policy framework supported the requested changes.

Table 6. Mains Reasons for AWS for Case Study Participants

Name	Occupation Category	Reasons for Adopting AWS (including 3DW, 4DW, CWW)	Ease of Moving to AWS
Stacey	Manager	NA	NA
Danielle	Manager	NA	NA
Jake	Manager	Study, child care	<i>"It was sort of a new thing. They are really family-friendly here, or talked a lot about being family-friendly but haven't been tested a lot. It was a bit scary to have to test it, but it all went very smoothly."</i>
Terri	Researcher	Home renovation, work-life balance, creative pursuits	<i>"It was very easy to negotiate because I think management were really understanding and sort of thought...she's got a reason, and it was no problem at all. I didn't feel any resistance from management."</i>
Penny	Researcher	Creative pursuits, work-life balance, mental and physical health	<i>"It was relatively easy to negotiate."</i>
Mary	Researcher	Burnout, work-life balance	<i>"Yeah, it was easy. So, my supervisor was administratively supportive."</i>
Steve	Researcher	Stress, more time for other interests	<i>"just talked it over with my supervisor", let the "the office manager know... filled in a few forms" and got it "all ticked off. So yeah, it was pretty straight forward really. I mean, it's so widely done in the organisation."</i>
Pete	Researcher	Postgraduate study	<i>"Management had no problem with the trial, with the 35 hours and 4 days. They had no problem going on 4 days because they could see that I personally came to the conclusion that I couldn't do the hours."</i>

Kylie	Researcher	Time with family and friends, volunteering, study, stress	Started ISF position on 3DW but shifted to 4DW. It was <i>“much harder than I anticipated...because of the financial situation of the institute”</i> at that time.
Sally	Professional Staff	Study	<i>“I was going to ask the boss can I go down, but she sort of suggested, look, if you want to do four days, go for it.”</i>

D: Attitudes of Case Study Participants towards Work

The way individuals think about work is affected by numerous factors, from the work ethic and the broad culture of capitalism, to education, parenting, personality, and experiences in the workplace. This subsection focuses on the subjective attitudes of case study participants towards work, as a way of providing some qualitative evidence regarding the type of people who work at this atypical organisation. Specifically, it addresses the views of study participants towards the place of work in their lives, their understanding of an ideal job, and the importance of autonomy in relation to work. The direct quotations and conclusions drawn below are all based on the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher in 2013 and 2014.

Place of Work in Life

Passion, purpose and values were mentioned by several study participants, while the relationship between work and identity, the importance of financial stability, the avoidance of boredom, and the importance of intellectual satisfaction were also cited. Penny stated she had always wanted to work in an area she felt “quite passionately about” and that she had an obligation to “pick something useful”. For Jake, passion was also a key factor: “I have managed, and took a fairly conscious decision when I was at uni to align my work with things that I was passionate about.” Similarly, Mary wanted to “work in an area that...aligns with my values and that I can be passionate about” and that “work isn’t something that just pays the bills.” Terri, too, felt her work should be something “deeply satisfying and that aligns with my values” and that it was “more important” than “just making money and making a living,” Pete stated people “should try and enjoy [work] where possible”, and for Steve “it’s something you spend a lot of time doing and you want it to be interesting, and it’s an opportunity to do something that you feel has some purpose.” Kylie said she felt “lucky to be doing something that I really believe in” and that while “work is one of my passions” she has “passions outside of work as well.”

For Danielle, “work is central...in this Western culture...to identity” and, in a similar vein, Stacey stated that work is “critical to people’s – not only their livelihood, but their sense of identity as well.” On the other hand, Steve saw work as “a necessary task that people have

to do to fit into society and make sure that society achieves a certain standard of living for its members.” He did not see it as “a crucial part of my identity necessarily.” Penny and Pete both mentioned financial stability as a factor, while Sally saw work as “quite an important role because sitting at home twiddling thumbs is just boring and makes you go crazy.”

The Ideal Job

For study participants, diversity and flexibility were important factors in imagining their ideal job. For Penny, the ideal job “would be really diverse...in a very beautiful space...very energised and alive and a lot of interesting people” and “about the same hours that I do now” but “just a bit more flexibility.” For Steve too, “diversity would be the key”, and, echoing Marx and Engels (1932) and Gorz (1999), added that “in an ideal setting people would take on multiple roles, and so I might do one job in the morning, and a different one in the afternoon. Or I might do one job one day a week, and a different one another day a week.” Mary considered the content of her own job “pretty ideal” but “in a complete dream world I would love to work three or four days a week flexibly. But also take chunks of time off when I want to, to go on a trip or drive around Australia or just time to get your head working in other ways.” Terri also linked ideal work with “a flexible job” that focused on “projects that create social change” with a “fun element and a lot of engagement with the community” and without a “traditional kind of project manager whipping you.” Pete, too, felt it “would be great to be flexible”, but added that “If I’m doing what I love in a complete fantasy world, then I would say it doesn’t matter, time doesn’t matter.”

Danielle’s ideal job would be less “about the content but the value of the work” and she would like to work “a bit less than I am now”, while Stacey saw the ideal as “something that lets you draw on the breadth of your experience and qualifications” and “that helps you spread good professional practice and has a sort of an educative quality for the other people that you work with.” Jake was quite specific, stating that his “dream job probably would be as an author on sustainability or maybe a bit broader than that, a communicator on sustainability.” For Kylie, her ideal job is “Pretty close to what I’m doing now actually. It’s a really nice thing to be able to say.”

Importance of Autonomy

For Gorz (1999:74), a radical transformation of work would necessitate making autonomy “a cardinal value on which all others rest and against which they are measured.” For case study participants, autonomy in relation to work was viewed as very important, but this was qualified by the stress placed on the need for teamwork and guidance.

For Mary, autonomy is “up there in the top things for me, with job satisfaction”, and she linked it to “the part-time conversation” because autonomy is “just that sense of trusting your employees to do the work that’s required of them in the time that they’re paid to do it and beyond that not worrying about what they do when.” Similarly, Terri saw autonomy as “incredibly important because I kind of correlate autonomy to trust. Your managers and the people you work with will just trust that you’ll get the job done and you know how to behave correctly and do all the things that need to be done and you can manage that for yourself.” For Steve too, “autonomy is vital” as “the vast majority of people work their best when they are given autonomy”, while he added that “autonomy with guidance is really what you’re after.”

For Penny, however, “autonomy seems synonymous with being left to your own devices completely” and that can “make you feel quite unsupported and lonely and I would like to work in teams and sometimes it’s good to actually have directions or suggestions as well. A bit of a balance of those I think is important for me.” Pete also stressed that “it’s good to have guidance from senior staff because obviously you can go off on your own and spend a whole bunch of time doing something and it’s not what they want. But at the same time, it’s good to be able to go off and work on your own in a manner that’s kind of exploratory.” Pete feels that while ISF does “have a fairly hierarchical structure...it’s expressed in a fairly informal way, so people are given quite a lot of autonomy and quite a lot of responsibility, and even in quite junior positions.” For Jake, however, while he feels he has “almost total autonomy” he believed that “for junior people there’s less autonomy” and while “We’d like to talk about it as a very flat organisation...it’s not really true.” Kylie stated a preference for “direction and structure” or “autonomy within very clear boundaries” and, in contrast to other staff, felt there was “way too much autonomy for everyone...at a structural level.”

E: Personal Impacts of AWS and Flexible Work Practices on Case Study Participants

This subsection begins by documenting the principal impacts of working AWS on case study participants in terms of their personal and family lives. It continues with a brief discussion of whether the extra day/s off work, facilitated by AWS, constitutes a 'Special Day' when compared to the regular weekend (Saturday and Sunday). It concludes by looking at how study participants perceive their current work/life balance and their ideal work/life balance in the future. The direct quotations and conclusions drawn below are all based on the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher in 2013 and 2014.

Main Impacts of Working AWS

The main positive impacts experienced by case study participants in shifting to AWS, included: increased happiness at (and outside of) work, increased opportunity for rest and unstructured time, and the achievement of goals, such as study. For Steve, working a 4DW meant "I just started enjoying work again more." In terms of his personal life, it meant he had time "to play music", and an "unscheduled day" where "I can choose what I want to do." He also considered the extra day as "handy" for "personal admin." Pete also found the change to a 4DW made him "happier." He had a "Perception that the weekend was longer" and, at work, his "expectations for what you're supposed to do [went] down, so psychologically there's something there about doing less work." Terri, who shifted from a 5DW to a 4DW, and then to a 3DW, said she "spent more time, I suppose what you would call chilling out, just kind of sitting in a café, seeing friends, more time with my family", as well as pursuing creative projects and home renovations. Penny, who initially moved to a 4DW to complete postgraduate study, found that the extra day gave her flexibility in managing her various commitments, and increased the time available for personal use and for family and friends. She stated that "Having the extra day is not just about productive time. It's actually about unproductive time for my brain to be free and relaxed and think up new and fresh ideas and not feel owned by my work." In addition, it meant "Things like having time to write a thank you card to my grandma or being a good friend." Sally used her day off "to do Uni work and clean the house", "do the supermarket...and read a novel...and

just relax.” Kylie felt the shift to part-time work reduced her stress levels and, like others, allowed her to get “all of the chores done that usually you'd spend the weekend doing”, or to decide that “I'm not going to do anything today” or “I'm just going to go down and hang out with my cousins.”

Not all study participants viewed the AWS arrangements in a positive light. For Stacey, who works full-time, “there is a bit of an equity issue around those flexible arrangements” as she feels they are not available to everyone and, for her personally, she has been in positions where it was “never acceptable for me to have flexibility.” Similarly, Danielle stated that “I feel that I'm not able to have as much flexibility as I see others taking and sometimes I get a little bit cranky.”

A Special Day?

For some study participants, the shift from full-time to part-time work seemed to mean more than just a quantitative reduction in working hours, as the extra day off felt qualitatively different to the weekend. For Penny, her Monday off was special as she didn't have “to kind of compromise or discuss how I'm going to use the day” as it was free from work and social commitments. For Mary too, her day off felt different, free of “obligatory commitments” on the weekend, meaning it “wasn't a day when other people had expectations of me; it was a day when I could just do what I wanted to do...And I think it did probably trigger...going through a deeper thought process about the place of work in my life and how I wanted to approach it and what I was prepared to compromise on and not.” Kylie agreed, stating: “there's expectations of what I do on the weekend and a lot of that involves either socialising for its sake or obligatory socialising with family or events and things like that. I guess I feel like the days off during the week are more mine. Nobody else really has a say on those, so I can kind of decide what I want to do.”

Terri called her days off “my life admin and project work days” that meant on the traditional weekend she was free to “chill out or see friends.” For Pete, he felt the need to do “something productive or stimulating” on his day off, compared to the traditional weekend. Steve agreed that his day off had a different character to Saturday and Sunday because “the weekends [are] quite often busy with social stuff...so I don't find they're as freeform as my

day off” but he did not link it with a need to be productive, stating that “I just find a lot of people asking ‘what do you do on your spare day?’ And my general answer is ‘nothing.’” However, not all study participants considered their non-weekend day off different, or special. When asked if her day off felt different to the weekend, Sally answered, “Nope. I get a pedicure every two months.” While, for another participant the extra day just meant more time to work on postgraduate study.

Work/ Life Balance

Work/life balance (WLB) is a concept that has been the subject of academic study (Schor, 1993, Pocock 2003, Pocock, Crompton and Lyonette, 2006, OECD, 2011) and widespread attention in the media and public debate. A commitment to WLB is incorporated into ISF’s formal policies and institutional culture, and many of the issues raised by study participants above could be included within this framework. On this issue, several study participants stated that they tended to work significantly longer hours than the official 35-hour week on a regular basis. Table 7 sets out the case study participants’ attitudes towards their current WLB, and their views on the ideal workweek in terms of the number of days.

Table 7. Case Study Participants and WLB

Name	Occupation Category	Current Work Schedule (days/hours)	Ideal Work Schedule (days per week)	Additional Comments
Stacey	Manager	5/35	5	<i>"Some days you think... four days a week would be good", but happy to continue full-time</i>
Danielle	Manager	5/35	5 (for time-being)	Working less <i>"attractive"</i> but will be full-time until after formal retirement
Jake	Manager	5/35	4	Not ideal WLB due to work load but <i>"slowly getting that back under control"</i>
Terri	Researcher	3/24	3	Happy with WLB but <i>"it's just hard to survive financially"</i>
Penny	Researcher	4/32	3	<i>"I've always wanted to go three days but for...various organisational and financial reasons I've thought four was more acceptable"</i>
Mary	Researcher	5/35	3 or 4 flexibly	Happy with her WLB <i>"in terms of head space but not [in terms of] practical hours."</i>
Steve	Researcher	4/28	4 (maybe split between two jobs)	<i>"Satisfied"</i>
Pete	Researcher	5/35	4	<i>"The reality of...wanting to buy a house" led him to changing back to full-time work.</i>

Kylie	Researcher	4/28	4	<i>"I don't think I've got it right, but I think that's an issue with how much I take on outside of work."</i> Would consider full-time if/when start family or buys house.
Sally	Professional Staff	4/28	4	<i>"Two days is just never enough because by the time you get home, like Saturday, you'll have to do all your supermarket, cleaning, crap, crap, crap. Then it's Sunday, and then you already have to think about Monday because it's time to go back to work."</i>

F: Organisational Impacts of AWS and Flexible Work Practices at ISF

This subsection begins with an overview of case study participants' subjective assessments of the impact of AWS on their own productivity at work, before turning to address organisational challenges generated by AWS and flexible work practices, such as difficulty in meeting coordination and increasing infrastructure costs. It concludes with a brief discussion of study participants' views on whether AWS and flexible work practices are a key attribute of the organisation that boosts its appeal to staff. The direct quotations and conclusions drawn below are all based on the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher in 2013 and 2014.

Subjective Assessment of Impact of AWS on Personal Productivity

Study participants fell into two broad categories, in terms of their subjective assessment of the impact of AWS and flexible work practices on their own productivity. Those who took up the option to work part-time, compress their hours, and/or work from home, tended to report either negligible or positive effects on their own productivity. On the other hand, those with responsibility for administering this flexible work regime experienced an increased work burden.

Terri felt that the shift to a 4DW – and then a 3DW – meant she was “more productive”, stating that because she gets “more time to reflect, when I’m at work I really want to be here” and “I think I’m actually more creative and more productive.” Jake too felt that his experiences of working part-time and working from home have meant he “was more productive.” For Steve, the effect of moving to a 4DW was in his view negligible, stating that “In terms of how it’s affected me organisationally, I don’t think...with the four day thing I’ve really noticed.” Sally felt her own experience was broadly positive, but added that there could sometimes be issues with handover when you have multiple people sharing the same work tasks. Mary admits to “a bit of guilt” about “not being available on a day when other people in the team were doing things” but also did not feel like she did less work while she was doing a compressed workweek.

For Penny, the initial shift to a 4DW was a “positive change” with no major impact on her work. However, in more recent times she has noticed that because she had Mondays off she did “feel sometimes that I miss that wave, that start up wave of the week that everyone else is on” and that on Tuesday she’s “out of the loop.” Terri also acknowledged that there could be a “lack of continuity [so] that often on a Monday I’ll sort of have to spend like half an hour going ‘what was I doing last week again?’” Kylie felt she was “certainly much more productive” once she moved from a 3DW to a 4DW, but felt there was “an element of coincidence” in this as it “coincided with...finding my feet, finally kind of getting a sense of how the place works, having built up enough experience working with people.” She felt that it was easier to meet her billable hours targets because she was seen as a “much more reliable option” for project work if she was only absent one day per week.

For some managers, however, the high number of staff taking advantage of flexible work options has meant an increased workload. As one manager put it, “as the person who often has to chase people, monitor people, all of that sort of thing, it can be an impediment to getting done what you need to do”, and also that “there is no lesser administrative burden....around that person who is only here 3 days a week.” Another manager added that “the biggest challenge is that, when someone goes part-time, it doesn't reduce [the] workload associated with them. It actually increases it and it also increases the complexity of managing the budget, and managing the infrastructure.” The increased paperwork and monitoring can be compounded, on occasion, by some workers forgetting when their part-time variations end.

Organisational Challenges Generated by AWS and Flexible Work Practices

The key issues raised by case study participants were meeting coordination, the impact on full-time staff, the fact that meetings take up a higher proportion of part-time staff’s working hours, and the additional infrastructure costs.

Most interviewees raised the issue of the difficulty of organising meetings with staff working such varied schedules at ISF. Penny said: “It’s incredibly difficult to remember who’s in what day” and, while there are phone lists with everyone’s working days, and it’s possible to run reports on who is on annual leave, the lists are not always up to date and the combination

of people working part-time and working from home can make it difficult to keep track. Stacey agrees that: "It is often difficult to schedule things because of finding common times." Pete also said it is difficult "to get everyone in the same room" and Jake agreed that it was "very hard to schedule a meeting where everyone in your team can make it." He says he tries to schedule meetings on a Wednesday when more staff are at work. But he admits that "negotiating everyone's schedules for the rest of the week can be pretty tricky" which "means you do a lot of tele-conferences and learn to get better at facilitating those."

Danielle also raised the meeting issue, stating: "It can be extremely difficult to schedule a meeting with a project team" and suggesting that it "does lead to a decrease in productivity because you might have to wait two weeks until you can get that meeting instead of being able to organise it in the next two days." Steve, too, acknowledged the challenges posed by AWS in terms of coordinating multiple projects with different clients, but was philosophical about the difficulties created. He said it was "managed on the fly really" and that "at the end of the day, it's like sometimes things can't be done" and "if something can't be done, then that's just the way it is. Most times it's not the end of the world." On a similar note, Terri agrees that "it's a bit harder to schedule things" but that "it's a matter of changing our culture and our expectations, which is only going to happen if part-time work becomes a bit more mainstream I think."

Kylie did not share the concern regarding coordinating meetings, but was one of several interview subjects to point to the difficulty of keeping track of which colleagues were working which days. She stated that while a page on the intranet records the set days of ISF staff, "It's not necessarily up to date" and "people don't use the intranet", and it does not record whether a staff member decides to work from home on a particular day. She contrasts this with previous workplace experiences where: "The way the calendars work is actually that you can see into people's diaries, not just when they are here or not, but you can see what they're here or not for, unless they're marked as private."

Mary, Jake and Terri all acknowledged the potential for AWS to negatively impact on full-time staff. Mary stated that, while she has not heard "resentment from the people I immediately work with", she has "heard other people around the office...being frustrated

with some people who were part-time, meaning just in terms of their responsiveness and access.” She felt it was very important not to leave other team members in the lurch, and tried to make sure that work she needed to complete before colleagues could move forward with a project was done before her day off. Jake agrees, stating that with a lot of people working part-time and/or from home, “sometimes, it means that tasks get dumped on people that are full-time and that are in the office because they’re visible.” Like Mary, he says he seldom hears complaints in “a direct sense”, but these issues have been raised in internal staff surveys. Terri also thinks her own part-time work can make it “harder for my colleagues [as] they can’t get my input five days a week” and that it can also create difficulties with some clients.

The two other organisational impacts of AWS that were raised by study participants in managerial roles were the fact that meetings, and other requirements, take up a higher proportion of part-time workers’ time, and the effect on infrastructure costs of increasing the number of part-time staff. One manager stated that, “relatively speaking, as a proportion of time, the impost of you adding another meeting to someone who is here in the office only 3 days a week is quite considerable.” Another manager reinforced this point by stating that part-time researchers bring in “less income” which means “less dollar value to cover those overheads, which are pretty much fixed.”

In addition, one manager outlined the effect on “infrastructure costs” because “we still have to provide a computer for everyone, whether they're one day a week or five days a week. We have to provide them with desks. Now we try desk sharing, but when you've got a lot of people who are working 3 or 4 days a week, desk sharing doesn't work.” ISF has recently expanded to take up a whole floor of their building, but there is a limit to what is affordable and practical in terms of continued expansion. Terri reinforced these points, stating: “everyone still has to have desks, so I suppose we haven’t yet got to a sophisticated way of managing that; so we end up just having a desk for everyone and then the office is often half empty. Everyone’s got to have their own phone line” and therefore “they’ve got more infrastructure for the number of what they call full-time equivalent, which is how many people are working on a given day.”

Appeal of AWS

Study participants expressed different views on the question of whether ISF's commitment to AWS and flexibility is perceived as a major positive attribute by current – and prospective – staff. For Penny, the answer is “absolutely” and she says that as “more senior staff have taken that up” it has become “really organisationally accepted.” According to Stacey, “Turnover is not high because there is flexibility, but also...there are not that many places where you can do the kind of work that people are doing here.” For Mary, there are “probably two broad personality types...people like me who really appreciate that and value it, and don't mind if that comes with a little bit of chaos and a little bit of extra management work to coordinate who does what when. And then there are other people that want much clearer structures for everything.” For Steve, “it's definitely attractive and I'm pretty sure – like I've been on a fair few of our interview panels and stuff – and I think it's definitely a job-attracting element.” He agreed with Stacey that ISF was an attractive workplace because of the work it does, but that the “flexibility angle is also a bonus.”

Jake did not think flexibility was used “as a selling point” but that if “it's important to people, then we'd be honest with them about it: ‘Yeah, this is flexible.’” He also felt that “it might be negative for staff retention” due to “the pressure, the time commitment and trying to fit all of my things into a certain number of days.” However, he added that flexible work arrangements were why he had worked at ISF for such a long period. On a positive note, Kylie also thought ISF's AWS and flexible work practices resulted in “having people who might not otherwise be here and having access to their amazing skills and resources.” Kylie, unlike Jake, thought ISF's work policies and culture might be “a marketing or selling aspect of the organisation” and that it was an attempt to align the external values of the organisation with its internal policies and processes. She stated that “allowing people to do that [work flexibly and part-time] means that we're operating in line with our values, so that's: ‘We believe in this generally as a principle and we're being able to enact it as part of being true to ourselves.’”

One manager saw the AWS and flexible work practices as having both negative and positive implications for the organisation. On the one hand, this manager felt that “when a lot of

people are part-time or working from home, it feels to me like the organisation is fragmenting; that there is less opportunity to come together and share what's happening" but that "there are positives and obviously if an individual is happier being part-time then they'll bring that into their work. So, they'll work more productively while they're here."

On the question of whether the ISF's commitment to AWS and flexibility was firmly embedded within a formal policy framework, or more reliant on the ongoing support of people at the top of the organisational hierarchy, Terri had some interesting reflections. She said: "I think that it is embedded at a policy level but it is also influenced by the leaders, the managers that we have." She thought that if key managers who broadly support the current workplace policies and culture were "to leave and we had people with a really different management style, I think things could really change around here." Finally, she stated that "Despite the fact that it is embedded in policy, I don't think that would be enough to keep the culture. I think it's really related to the people and the way they conduct themselves and the things they say in the meetings and what their model is as well, so yeah, I think the people are invaluable in creating a culture."

This subsection has examined the organisational impacts of ISF's commitment to AWS and flexible work practices. The next subsection draws some cautious conclusions regarding the implications of the ISF Case Study for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

G: Implications of the ISF Case Study for the 4DW as a Policy Option for Australia

This subsection begins by discussing the merits of the institutional level of analysis, in relation to identifying the specific challenges faced by – and opportunities created for – organisations that implement progressive work-related reforms, such as a 4DW. This is followed by a brief assessment of whether ISF could be viewed as a ‘model’ organisation, in terms of workplace rights and culture, from which other organisations could learn. The subsection concludes with some additional comments regarding the possible relevance of the ISF case study for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

Institutional Level of Analysis

In terms of the future of work, whether the goal is a full employment social democracy with shorter working hours and increased leisure, or a post-capitalist society of “chosen time and multi-activity” (Gorz, 1999: 65), the problem of organisation will still have to be faced. Questions regarding the ways in which people provide for their material and other needs, the scale on which these activities take place, and the process of deciding who does what in relation to these needs and activities will not disappear. The institutional level of analysis provides a means of studying organisation – as both a process and a form – that can generate evidence on which to base hypotheses regarding the possible and probable impacts of future changes in the nature and extent of work. The organisation is the site of implementation for work-related reforms and policies that will have different impacts on organisations with diverse institutional goals and cultures that operate in different industries. The precise nature and extent of these impacts will only become clear if the organisations themselves are studied.

The institutional level of analysis involves looking at the organisation from the ‘inside’ and from the ‘outside’. It means studying the goals, values, cultures, policies and people that constitute a given organisation, and the manner in which that organisation is integrated into broader economic and social structures. The focus on the organisation provides one way for researchers to juxtapose utopian and pragmatic arguments for change in the nature and extent of work with the practical problems and everyday experiences that occur in a specific organisational context. In relation to the 4DW, the institutional level analysis would allow

researchers to identify specific challenges and impacts in cases where this reform has been implemented, as well as the possible constraints on – and opportunities for – future implementation of 4DWs in other organisations and industries. Finally, the institutional level of analysis, with its focus on organisation, should be seen as complementary to individual-centred or system-wide analyses.

ISF as a 'Model' Organisation?

Clearly no general claims can be made in relation to the 4DW on the basis of a case study of one medium-sized organisation that offered 4DWs as one among many AWS options to its staff. This point is only reinforced by the small sample size of the interviews on which the case study was largely based. ISF is clearly not a 'typical' or 'representative' organisation in the context of the Australian economy. However, as this thesis is at least partly concerned with utopian possibilities for the future of work, there could be a case for viewing ISF as a 'model' or 'ideal' type of organisation as regards both its external goals and values and its internal policies and culture. Just as Gorz (1999: 61), citing Grell and Wéry, identifies the "new protagonists" in the future of work as "the 'obscure heroes of insecurity', the 'pioneers of chosen working hours', who, 'in their daily resistance to economic reason'" point towards "the possibility of creating an organisation for oneself and others which promotes autonomy", perhaps a similar focus on 'pioneer organisations' may prove a worthwhile avenue of enquiry regarding work futures.

In terms of its external orientation, ISF is committed to the idealistic goal of "sustainable futures", while, internally, it has implemented a range of progressive work-related policies (AWS, working from home and during commutes, different starting times, 35-hour workweek). To some extent then, ISF demonstrates what is 'possible' within the structure of Australian capitalism today. ISF has not, of course, abolished wage labour but it has taken some steps towards increasing the opportunities staff have for "chosen time and multi-activity" (Gorz, 1999: 65). There is some choice over when, where, and how much to work, and an attempt to give people more time for other interests, passions, creative projects, personal relationships and social obligations. However, the case for ISF as a 'model' organisation should be qualified by emphasising the fact that it provides work for a relatively small number of highly-educated people in what, at least at this stage, constitutes

a niche field of sustainability consulting. Furthermore, even as a not-for-profit organisation, ISF needs to earn sufficient income to cover its staff costs and overheads. Its survival and success ultimately depend on several political and economic factors. These include: ISF's competitive position in relation to providers of similar services, government policies related to sustainability that affect the amount of available work, public and corporate attitudes towards sustainability, and the cyclical ups and downs of the Australian economy.

In summary, ISF can perhaps be seen a 'model' organisation regarding the future of work in Australia only if two conditions are met: 1) the type of work ISF provides (knowledge-based, idealistic, not-for-profit) becomes more common, and 2) if the progressive policies (AWS, flexible work practices) and supportive institutional culture developed at ISF become more widespread. If this model of work were to become more prevalent in Australia, some of the problems experienced by ISF (eg meeting coordination, pressure on infrastructure) may prove more amenable to solutions as these work patterns and practices become the norm.

ISF Case Study and the 4DW

First, it should be emphasised that ISF does not operate on a fixed 4DW for all staff. A 4DW is one option among the AWS available to ISF workers, on either a part-time (ie 4/28) or compressed (ie 4/35) basis. Of the 10 case study participants, 8 worked – or had worked – a 4DW, and 6 nominated 4 days as their ideal workweek (2 nominated 3 days, 2 nominated 5 days). Clearly, ISF's workplace regime is quite different to the compulsory 4/10 schedules that were implemented by some US organisations in the 1970s and during the Great Recession.

Secondly, the ISF case study highlighted another approach to the principle of *worker-centred choice* introduced in Part II that may be of relevance to the implementation of reforms (such as a 4DW) in other organisations. In the ISF case, worker-centred choice is part of a formal policy framework and supportive institutional culture that affords workers the 'right' to move between different schedules. While most case study participants found this formal right relatively easy to exercise in practice, it should be stressed that the Institute Manager and ISF Director are entitled to reject requests for variation of hours as long as the reasons for their decision are formally explained. One issue that emerged in relation to ISF's

commitment to AWS is that the 'right' to take advantage of the relevant policies needs to be genuinely available to all staff or it is likely to be a source of resentment among some workers, especially if it increases these individuals' work burden.

Thirdly, the case study identified the importance of both 'flexibility' and 'autonomy' to case study participants. Flexibility, like choice, is a key feature of neoliberal discourses on work that aim to reinforce the managerial prerogative and provide a justification for precarious work. As such, any posited relationship between flexibility and progressive work agendas should be treated with some scepticism. As Weeks (2011: 172) states in relation to employers' fondness for "flexible work schedules" as a solution to WLB issues, "It is important to emphasise that the goal [should be] the reduction rather than the mere rearrangements of paid work time." However, seen from another perspective, flexibility has at least the potential to become a source of additional freedom and autonomy for workers. Gorz, for example, argues that "All the forms of...passively suffered flexibility of working hours and staffing levels, should be transformed into opportunities to choose and self-manage discontinuity and flexibility" (Gorz, 1999: 97). The key is to combine flexibility with job and income security. Autonomy, like flexibility, was an important factor for the majority of case study participants, although this was qualified by the emphasis placed on the need for teamwork and guidance. The case study highlighted the ways in which ISF supported flexibility and autonomy for its staff, and the ways in which these two factors were related (ie the flexibility to work autonomously from home). Perhaps, the principle of *flexible autonomy* could provide an additional means of articulating – and implementing – progressive work-related reforms, including proposals for a 4DW.

Fourthly, the case study drew attention to the potential for physical (office space), financial (budgets) and labour-related constraints to limit the extent to which an organisation can support AWS and flexibility for its workers. This finding has general implications for this thesis to the extent that implementing a 4DW – especially on the basis of a shorter workweek – has the potential to increase administration and infrastructure costs as a proportion of total costs for some organisations and also to exacerbate skill shortages in some industries. In a scenario where the 4DW becomes the standard workweek in Australia, these issues may be seen mainly as part of the 'challenges of transition.' However, the fact

that implementing a 4DW would affect the physical, financial and human resources of different organisations in different ways further underscores the utility of the institutional level of analysis as a means of identifying problems that are likely to arise.

Finally, while ISF's formal policies and institutional culture provide the environment in which AWS, such as the 4DW, are possible, it is the level of incomes that make these arrangements both feasible and sustainable. As already documented, the full-time salaries of ISF workers are well above the minimum wage (\$32,354), and most ISF staff are paid substantially more than the median wage (\$57,400) and even the mean wage (\$72,800) in Australia (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2013, Cowgill, 2013: 1). For the 4DW (or an AWS model like ISF's) to be an option for all Australian workers, incomes need to be sufficient to make a shorter workweek feasible for school cleaners, childcare workers and other low-paid workers, and not just for lawyers, bankers and others in well-paid jobs.

Part III of this thesis has focused on the institutional level of analysis to highlight the need to study the organisation as the site of implementation for AWS, such as a 4DW. The final part of the thesis summarises its main findings and presents some conclusions regarding the 4DW as a policy option for Australia.

CONCLUSION

FOUR DAYS WORK, AND THREE DAYS FOR WHAT WE WILL?

This thesis has investigated the 4DW as a policy option for Australia, using a multi-perspective, multi-level analysis, and multi-method approach. It has drawn on the diverse traditions of political economy, including Marxian, feminist, Keynesian and institutional perspectives, as well as labour history and organisation studies. It adopted Anderson's (2004, 144, 142) approach of "deferring judgement, contextualising, disaggregating, and identifying interest, power, ideology and distribution" before presenting "a considered judgement." It has examined the thesis topic at the theoretical (philosophical, political economic), historical (empirical), and institutional (organisational) levels of analysis. Finally, it has adopted a multi-method approach that has included basic research and document analysis, together with a case study centred on 10 semi-structured interviews.

Part I of this thesis elaborated a broad framework in which to situate the general case for change in the nature and extent of work. It began with a discussion of the nature and determinants of the 'good life', before moving on to outline utopian and pragmatic arguments for a renegotiation of the nature and extent of work. The utopian node put forward the ideas of "utopian demands" (Weeks, 2011) and the "transitional policy" (Gorz, 1999) as a way of developing a politics of work that addresses immediate social priorities (such as inequality, or overwork), while opening up the space for consideration of a more radical transformation of society. The pragmatic node emphasised the potential for cumulative productivity gains to be converted into increased leisure and the evidence on cultural attitudes reporting a mismatch between desired working hours and actual working hours in rich countries. This was followed by an examination of the obstacles to change in relation to work presented by the nature and culture of capitalism, including the wage relation, the work ethic, and unemployment. The relationship between work, time and politics was then examined and the centrality of class struggle in past campaigns to reduce working hours was emphasised. This subsection concluded by suggesting the need for a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time*. Finally, an attempt was made to situate Australian society within this broad framework, and to relate the themes and arguments developed in

Part I to the specific policy option of a 4DW for Australia. On the bases of the cumulative productivity gains over the last four decades and surveys of cultural attitudes reporting a mismatch between desired working hours and actual hours it was argued that there existed a *prima facie* case for a 4DW in Australia. It was further suggested that the 4DW could become a key plank in an *offensive agenda* for the trade union movement, and that the 4DW had the potential to be supported by a broader coalition that argues for less work, more leisure, greater equality, and less wasteful consumption.

Part II shifted from philosophical and political economic arguments regarding the nature and extent of work to the historical level of analysis, with a focus on the US experience with the 4DW during the periods 1970-1975 and 2008-2011. The empirical evidence supported the following conclusions: the 4DW was a minor trend in the 1970s and during the Great Recession for which some major claims were made, it was popular with workers who experienced it, and it had a negligible impact on productivity. In addition, the compressed 4/40 workweek was the most common 4DW schedule in the both periods. It was argued that the 4DW in the US can be best understood as a short-term, management-driven response by a minority of private and public organisations to deteriorating economic circumstances. This factor, together with the lack of consistent trade union support due to concerns over the lengthening of the working day and reduced overtime pay, was highlighted as a likely explanation for the failure of the 4DW to become a more widespread and sustained phenomenon. Part II concluded with a discussion of the possible implications of the US experience for the 4DW as a policy option for Australia. It suggested that any future proposal for a 4DW was more likely to achieve success if the following conditions were met:

- 1) the proposal for a 4DW is developed by workers in the first place,
- 2) the campaign is based on a long-term goal rather than being a kneejerk response to a recession,
- 3) the reform, if it is achieved, is won through a collective political process,
- 4) the 4DW model adopted (ie a 4DW based on a complete shutdown of an organisation for an extra day per week, or a 4DW for workers at organisations that continue to operate on a 5DW or continuous basis) needs to be sensitive to the function of – and constraints upon – different organisations,

- 5) the 4DW becomes a political and organising goal of the trade union movement as a whole on the basis of a shorter workweek,
- 6) the 4DW is pursued as a *universal right* for all workers but the principle of *worker-centred choice* operates as a subsidiary right that provides some scope for workers to express non-uniform preferences via a democratic process (ie some workers may prefer to spread their hours over 5 days).

Part III shifted to the institutional level of analysis, with a focus on the organisation as the site of implementation for work-related reforms. It began by emphasising the importance of analysing organisation as both a *process* and an institutional *form* in relation to any proposals for change in the nature and extent of work. It included a case study on ISF, a research institute with a formal policy framework and institutional culture that supports AWS and flexible work practices. The case study centred on 10 semi-structured interviews with ISF staff that examined their attitudes towards work, their reasons for moving to AWS, and the personal and organisational impacts of ISF's progressive work regime. Part III concluded with a discussion of the possible implications of the ISF case study for the 4DW as policy option for Australia. It suggested that, while no major conclusions can be drawn from such a small study, the following issues may be relevant to consideration of proposals for a 4DW:

- 1) the institutional level analysis would allow researchers to identify specific challenges and impacts in cases where this reform has been implemented, as well as the possible constraints on – and opportunities for – future implementation of 4DWs in other organisations and industries,
- 2) ISF could be viewed as a 'model organisation' if the type of work ISF provides (knowledge-based, idealistic, not-for-profit) becomes more common, and if the progressive policies (AWS, flexible work practices) and supportive institutional culture developed at ISF become more widespread,
- 3) the case study highlighted the potential utility of the principles of *worker-centred choice* and *flexible autonomy* in articulating and implementing progressive work policies (eg a 4DW) in a way that challenges the managerial prerogative to dictate working times and provides some additional scope for autonomous work and freely-chosen time,

- 4) organisations face real constraints (office space and equipment, budget pressures, supply of labour) that cannot be ignored in relation to proposals, such as a 4DW, that will affect different organisations in different ways,
- 5) the 4DW based on a shorter workweek can only become a universal right in Australia if incomes are sufficient in all industries to make this change financially viable for all workers.

Returning now to the 'utopian' and 'pragmatic' nodes of argument for change in the nature of extent of work, it is reasonable to conclude that the latter node offers a firmer basis on which to mount a case for a 4DW as a policy option in Australia. This is not to dismiss the utopian node entirely as, within an ideological context still dominated by neoliberal discourses on work, a proposal for a 4DW could serve as a "utopian demand" (Weeks, 2011) that challenges the 'natural' and seemingly 'permanent' status of the 5DW. In addition, if achieved on a significant scale, the 4DW has at least some potential to operate as a "transitional policy" (Gorz, 1999) by expanding the opportunities for "chosen time and multi-activity" (Gorz, 1999: 65), at least outside of the workplace. However, other policies (such as a UGI) may fit the criteria of a "utopian demand" and a "transitional policy" more neatly. Finally, there is no reason why these two goals (UGI, 4DW) cannot be pursued simultaneously, even if one is accorded a higher priority as a strategic goal. The combination of radical demands (ie a UGI) and more pragmatic goals (ie a 4DW) may enhance the overall effectiveness of a *new politics of shorter hours and chosen time*.

The case for a 4DW in Australia, and in other rich countries, on the basis of the pragmatic node of argument is more compelling. The Australian evidence for the pragmatic case includes: high levels of per capita wealth, continuous productivity growth, growing wealth and income inequality, increasing levels of overwork, underemployment and insecure work, a mismatch between preferred and actual working hours. On these bases it is reasonable to conclude that the widespread adoption of a 4DW based on a *shorter workweek with no loss of pay* has the potential – if complemented by other policies designed to achieve full and secure employment – to reduce inequality, insecurity, overwork and unemployment and, thereby, to increase access to leisure and the 'good life' in Australia.

The question of the optimal model for a 4DW should be the subject of further research and practical experimentation. The US experience demonstrated that even the most conservative 4/40 model was perceived as a positive change by the majority of workers. However, while a compressed 4DW may represent an advance on the current 5DW for many workers, there is scope for reduced average working hours within the limits of Australian capitalism. To illustrate this point, there is significant variation in average annual working hours in advanced capitalist countries. According to the OECD measure of average annual hours actually worked per worker in 2012, Australians worked an average 1,728 hours, which is less than the 1,790 average hours of US workers, but substantially higher than the corresponding figures for the UK (1,654 hours), Finland (1,479 hours) and the Netherlands (1,381) (OECD, 2014). For the sake of illustrating the potential for some reduction in the length of the workweek, if we assume that all Australians worked a 4/32 workweek over 48 weeks this would equate to average annual working hours of 1,536 per person, a figure still substantially higher than the current average in Finland and the Netherlands. This is only a stylised example that neglects numerous complexities. However, it does serve to highlight the real potential for achieving a shorter workweek and to underscore the need for such a change to be accompanied by a progressive redistribution of work and incomes, and the restructuring of particular jobs, in order to make a 4/32 workweek a realistic option for the majority of Australian workers.

The question of whether a 4/32 workweek is preferable to other options (eg a 5/32 workweek, or increased paid leave) can only be decided by a collective political process and practical experimentation. The fact that the 4DW would quarantine an additional day from the world of paid work has the potential to increase its attractiveness vis-à-vis other proposals. The final point to make in relation to the pragmatic case for a 4DW as a policy proposal for Australia pertains, again, to the optimal model for such a reform. A universal 4/32, Monday to Thursday, 9am-5pm model has the advantage of providing a common standard for all workers. However, given the diversity of organisations and industries that comprise the Australian economy, and the non-uniform priorities of Australian workers, a more flexible 4/32, Monday to Friday, 7am-7pm model may be preferable. The latter model would have the added advantage of reducing the pressure on transport infrastructure during what are currently peak travel times.

What is clear in relation to the subject of this thesis is that without the support of an organised political project neither the utopian nor the pragmatic arguments for a 4DW have any real chance of achieving the public support needed for the implementation of this reform on a widespread and sustained basis. Such a political project to change the nature and extent of work in this manner would involve a willingness to challenge the economic prerogative of capital accumulation, the managerial prerogative to determine working times and conditions and the broader culture of capitalism. It would entail acceptance of the fact that there is no conflict-free path to a more cooperative, kinder, freer and more equal society.

This thesis has examined a range of arguments that challenge the dominant discourses on work. It has explored the potential of one reform – the 4DW – to challenge the primacy of these discourses while addressing concrete social needs. The thesis began by posing the question: why do we work? It argued that, while food production is the only necessary form of work in a strictly existential sense, there are a range of reasons why people engage in work. In a capitalist society, most people are compelled to work for a wage in order to earn a living and to participate in society.

Two contrasting views show what is fundamentally at stake in considering the nature, purpose and extent of work. For Oscar Wilde (1891: 4), only socialism and modern technology could ensure that all people, not just the elite, were free “to choose the sphere of activity that is really congenial to them, and gives them pleasure” and to develop their “individualism.” For the American philosopher-poet, Wendell Berry (2010: 141-143) by contrast, meaningful work can be found in the hard shared labour of the tobacco harvest that brings his whole community together each year. He writes: “None of us would say we take pleasure in all of it” but “we do take pleasure in it, and sometimes the pleasure can be intense and clear.” What unites these two very different visions – the individual liberated from drudgery and free to fully develop her passions and potential, and the communal labour of the tobacco harvest – is the link between work and pleasure.

The impact of a shift to a 4DW in Australia is impossible to predict with any certainty. It could be tried, and fizzle out, as in the US example. It could be successfully implemented

and achieve '4DW capitalism' that effects no change in capitalist social relations. Finally, the 4DW could play a minor role in a shift towards a post-capitalist society of "chosen time and multi-activity" (Gorz, 1999: 65). Whatever the case, if a 4DW can be shown to increase the sum total of pleasure experienced by Australian workers and to increase their access to the 'good life', there are strong grounds for deeming it a worthwhile progressive reform.

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Appendix A: Glossary of Acronyms

4DW	Four-Day Workweek
5DW	Five-Day Workweek
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AWALI	Australian Work and Life Index
AWS	Alternative Work Schedules
BCA	Business Council of Australia
CWW	Compressed Workweeks
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
ISF	Institute for Sustainable Futures
UAW	United Automobile Workers
UGI	Universal Guaranteed Income
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
W4UI	Working for Utah Initiative
WLB	Work Life Balance
WWII	World War Two
YRAW	Your Rights At Work

Appendix B: Human Ethics Approval



Research Integrity
Human Research Ethics Committee

Monday, 15 April 2013

Prof Franklin Stilwell
Political Economy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Email: frank.stilwell@sydney.edu.au

Dear Franklin

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved your project entitled "**The Case for a Four-Day Workweek in Australia**".

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project No.: 2013/037
Approval Date: 12/04/2013
First Annual Report Due: 12/04/2013
Authorised Personnel: Stilwell Franklin; Henderson Troy;
Documents Approved:

Date Uploaded	Type	Document Name
08/04/2013	Organisation Approval	Chris Riedy email to ISF Staff re Using Staff Survey
08/04/2013	Recruitment Letter/Email	Recruitment Email
08/04/2013	Interview Questions	Sample Interview Questions Revised

HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

Condition/s of Approval

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.
- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.
- All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.
- All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- Any changes to the project including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.

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Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities:

1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.
2. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Assinder
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.

Appendix C: Sample Questions for ISF Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview Questions for Institute for Sustainable Futures Study Participants

General Information

- Name (will not appear in study)
- Gender
- Postcode

General views on work

- How would you describe your view of work in general?
- How important is work in your life?
- Have your views on work changed over time? If so, in what sense?
- Can you describe your ideal job? (i.e. type of job, how much work etc)

Work history

- What age were you when you started working?
- What are the main types of work you have done? (i.e. admin, retail, teaching etc)
- What is the highest educational qualification you have achieved?

Role at ISF

- What is your current role/occupation at ISF?
- How long have you been employed in this position?
- Can you please describe your working day? (main tasks, division of time between different tasks etc)
- Has your experience of your working day changed over time? If so, how?

Work schedule at ISF

- Are you employed: full-time/part-time?
- How many hours a week do you work?
- How many days of the week do you work?
- Do you compress – or have you compressed in the past - your full-time hours into less than 5 days?
- What caused the change to a 4-day (3-day) week?
- Did you switch from full to part-time during the course of your employment?
- If yes, how long have you worked part-time?
- Would you like to continue to work part-time?
- Can you list up to three benefits you have experienced in moving to part-time work?
- Can you list up to three negatives you have experienced in moving to part-time work?
- Can you list up to three benefits you have experienced by compressing your full-time hours into less than 5 days?
- Can you list up to three negatives you have experienced by compressing your full-time hours into less than 5 days?
- If you currently work full-time, has colleagues shifting to part-time work negatively affected your work experience? If so, please specify how.
- If you currently work full-time, have you ever considered going part-time? If so,
- Why do you want to go part-time?
- What has prevented you from going part-time?
- If you are an employee, how would you rate ISF's flexible work policy? (i.e. is this an attractive feature of working at ISF?)
- If you are a manager, what are the main advantages of offering staff alternative work schedules?

- If you are a manager, what are the main challenges of having staff working different work schedules? How have you responded to these challenges?

Work/Life Balance

- Are you happy with your current work/life balance?
- Does work interfere with other commitments and interests? If so, how?
- If you moved from full-time to part-time work has this improved your work/life balance?
- How have you have reallocated your time since switching to part-time work? (i.e. household work, leisure, childcare, etc)
- Do you have children? If so, do you mind saying how many?
- Do you find it difficult to balance work and family commitments? If so, how?
- Do you do work tasks from home? If yes, what types of tasks (i.e. checking emails)? How long would you estimate you spend doing these tasks each week?

Final Comments

- Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix D: Edited Example of Semi-Structured Interview

ISF Case Study Interview

Interview Subject: Jake

Note: Interview subject's name has been changed – and interview has been edited – to protect anonymity of interview subject

Edit here.

Troy: Starting out with general views on work. How would you describe your view of work in general?

Jake: I'm pretty passionate about work. I have managed and took a fairly conscious decision when I was at uni to align my work with things that I was passionate about and that would keep me focused and interested...

Edit here

Troy: Passion is obviously important, how do you see work's importance in relation to other aspects of life? More generally?

Jake: I guess that's changed over time, now that I've got a family.

Edit here.

I do keep space free for family and work doesn't intrude on that so I don't work on weekends ever, really. In relative terms, I try and give priority to family where I can...

Edit here.

If you look at my behaviors, I probably give work more time than I think and that sometimes does subtract from family time. Sometimes, if I'm not actually working, I'm still in the headspace of what's going on at work and I'm not as present for my family as I could be. Then I do need to carve out time that's just for me as well, just relax and play computer games and watch videos, that kind of thing. Not a lot of that, but when I can get it, it's important.

Troy: Cool. This is something you've covered a bit, but I'm asking the question anyway, because I'm asking everyone the question. How would you respond to the statement, "My work is my passion"?

Jake: Positively. That's how I feel about it.

Troy: But is it more than that? Would you say that the work is perfectly aligned with your passion?

Jake: No I don't think it's ever perfectly aligned. We do consulting work here and you need to take what you can get sometimes. The more you can align that with what you're interested in, the better, and ISF is usually flexible in that sense. I've got a lot of scope to develop up the funding ideas that I want to develop and to make sure that they get funded. But when things have dried up a bit, you take what you can get and sometimes that means the projects don't line up perfectly, but they're a lot closer here than they would be in most places. The things I'd like to do but it's hard to do here like, I'd love to take the time to write a book or something like that, but it's pretty hard to carve out that space when you're working on here full-time and we need to put a lot of headspace into writing something.

Troy: Thanks. The next one you've already covered: has your view of work changed over time, and if so, in what sense? Unless you have anything else to add on that?

Jake: Yeah. I think I've always viewed work fairly positively or wanted work to be something that was positive in my life.

Edit here

Troy: Okay. Final question in this section is really putting reality all to one side, could you describe your ideal or dream job? In terms of content and also the amount of time it takes in your life?

Jake: Sure. I think then my dream job probably would be as an author on sustainability or maybe a bit broader than that, a communicator on sustainability. Someone who writes books about sustainability issues, blogs about it, gets involved in media about. Another, bigger research is part of that, because I do really enjoy research and probably a little bit of the post-grad supervision I do at the moment, but maybe a bit less of those things and being much more selective with those so they are much more aligned with my interests. I reckon four days a week for that. Carving out an extra day that was for family or for gardening or for stand-up paddle boarding or something that I'd love to do but haven't had time to learn how to, that'd be great. That would be ideal.

Edit here (work history, specific role at ISF)

Troy: A couple of issues I wanted to raise, one is this issue with the billable hours and your perspective on that. How you could fit it into the organisational framework here, its value, does it have negative effects? Do you think it puts undue pressure on staff? How do you see this whole issue?

Jake: I think it does lead to some negative impacts because everyone interprets what it means differently. It's supposed to be a representation of a collective target – of what it would be great if we could contribute that much towards the target. It comes across naturally, I think, that it's an individual target and if you're not meeting it, questions are asked. I wonder about the language of it and if we could communicate it better but the fact is we do need to do a certain amount of work to stay afloat and we do need to bring in a certain amount of dollars. I'd like it if some of the targets were more focused on those dollar aspects, of how much we're bringing in, rather than the effort we're putting in, when we talked about that. Focusing more on invoicing targets and things like that.

Edit here (more on billable hours, specific role at ISF, experience of compressed schedule)

Troy: How easy was that to negotiate in the first place?

Jake: It was sort of a new thing. They are really family-friendly here, or talked a lot about being family-friendly but haven't been tested a lot. It was a bit scary to have to test it, but it all went very smoothly.

Troy: Did it mean you were doing longer hours at the office on those other four days where doing more work at home in the evening?

Jake: More work at home in the evening.

Edit here

Troy: Apart from that obvious difference to the other days [already discussed] do you experience that day as different in some way to the four days you spent in the office, in terms of your work?

Jake: Yeah. It lets me do a different kind of work. I get interrupted less and it's quieter. That day tends to have more writing in it and reading...Because I'm away from the office and there's fewer distractions. If I turn off email, then I can get up ahead of staying on something, whereas here, it's bits and pieces of tasks and the flow happens on the train or in the evening.

Troy: How did you feel that [working compressed week] affected your productivity? Your capacity to meet targets that you had?

Jake: Yeah. It's definitely working less hours but there was less volume, but in some ways, I felt that it was more productive times. Partly having that time at home, which felt more productive than time in the office. It's getting more done then.

Edit here

Troy: Now just switching back to your role as a manager as ISF and looking at the issue of being a manager in a workplace where you have all these people on different schedules, what's been your experience of the challenges and impacts of that for you as a manager and for the institution as a whole?

Jake: Yep. It's very hard to schedule a meeting where everyone in your team can make it. It depends on the team. But it means that one thing that's happened is that Wednesdays are a really busy, frantic day at ISF because Wednesdays tend to be the day that most people are here. That's partly because we have our staff meetings that day. Once a month we have our institute steering group meetings, we have our post-grad meetings, we have our round tables so most people, if they're structuring their time, to be part-time or out of the office will try to be in the office on a Wednesday. I always try and book meetings on a Wednesday but that gets full very quickly. Then negotiating everyone's schedules for the rest of the week can be pretty tricky. It means you do a lot of tele-conferences and learn to get better at facilitating those.

Because people are working from home that day you've set the meeting, sometimes unexpectedly, and I'm as bad as anyone at doing that. I think, sometimes, it means that tasks get dumped on people that are full-time and that are in the office because they're visible and if there's a deadline on a Friday and someone gets to the end of Thursday and they don't work on a Friday, they leave everything in someone else's lap and often it's a bigger task than they realise that they've left someone with and that creates a lot of stress for the full-time people. There's a lot of negotiating with how to get people together when you need them and the equity between who's doing the task and how much burden they're having to take.

Troy: Do you experience having to deal with complaints from full-time staff about this sort of issue about?

Jake: Rarely in a direct sense...I've heard grumbings occasionally about people heading off for the weekend and leaving big tasks still to be done, but I've tried to avoid it on my projects and so I guess they wouldn't come and talk to me about other people's ones necessarily.

Troy: Do you think there's anything that could be done to improve, say the coordination issue or trying to keep track of where everyone is, what they're doing?

Jake: I've thought about having like a big board that says people are in this day. Our intranet has a phone list that says what days people are normally in, but I guess maybe not everyone knows that and it quickly goes out of date and because, like I was saying before I might decide this Monday I'm not coming in, and often I don't tell people, they'll say, "Oh Monday is one of those days that he's not here." I think some sort of flexible system that lets us very quickly ensures that people know, "Hey, we're not here today" other than sending an email around, which is what some people, do to let people know.

Troy: Yeah, sort of a real-time calendar or something?

Jake: Yeah because we've got the Outlook, the exchange calendar system but it's hard for people to see in there. The time's blocked out but I'm at home and I'm available versus I'm at home and I'm minding the kids. You just think that it's not available and you don't know why so it needs more information in it.

Troy: A couple more questions. Any other negatives you see for the organisation in terms of having all the alternative work shifts and also what positives do you see from an organisational perspective?

Jake: On the negatives, we've talked about the scheduling issue. The other is how people fit their billable hours and other commitments into a shorter amount of time. I think we ask and expect part-time staff to be at a lot of the things like staff meetings and research area meetings that fit outside the billable hour target and because of that, it soaks up more of their non-billable time than it does for other people.

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Jake: Depending on how you organise your week, it's broken up and you're going into different headspaces at different times. It can be hard, on complicated research projects, to keep your head in that space. But the positives are important. I've seen them, in terms of work like balance and being able to make time for family and the things that are important in life. Some people use that time to work up projects that won't pay at ISF at this stage, but maybe someday they'd bring back to ISF so they're still working on creating change towards the sustainability, doing the kind of things that they like to do at ISF but they're doing things that can't be brought into our funding model. Having that more creative outlet for people might be quite important.

Troy: Did you think it has any impact on either staff recruitment or staff retention? Is it used as a selling point for employment or not really?

Jake: No. I don't think so. I don't think we use it as a selling point. If it's important to people, then we'd be honest with them about, "Yeah, this is flexible" but I don't think we bring it up necessarily. Maybe if we were hiring in a part-time role it would be more of a focus.

Troy: Staff retention?

Jake: Staff retention. I've got a sense it might be negative for staff retention, in people juggling their time and that sort of thing, that they just feel the pressure.

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Troy: Our last two questions, very quickly. Are you happy with your current work-life balance?

Jake: No.

Troy: The ideal would be?

Jake: Right now I've been in a crunch period for a few months now which is what happens, being a consultant. With the best of intentions, you can't plan exactly how a research is going to go and suddenly you find that the projects you've got and maybe some publication deadlines and a trip overseas that you planned and something else all fall the same time. That's what I'm just coming out of. Recently there's been working pretty much every evening during the week and not having time for writing blog posts and things like that which I'd like to be doing. The balance hasn't been quite right there. In terms of probably total hours and the balance of the work in those hours, but I'm slowly getting that back under control. I think this period has been a bit of an abnormal time; normally the balance is pretty good.

Troy: Okay, final question. Coming back to the more philosophical questions in relation to work, and I'm finishing all the interviews with this question. We've talked about it a bit already, but how important is autonomy for you personally in relationship to work?

Jake: It's become very important to me. It's a really essential part of this role is that I have almost total autonomy, well...my manager and has some control over me but...doesn't exercise that really. It's a much

more collaborative and constructive relationship and that's generally what the organization's like for senior people. But I think for junior people there's less autonomy so there's a pecking order. We'd like to talk about it in a very flat organisation but it's not really true. But I have huge amounts of autonomy, being able to decide what days I come into the office and what projects I want to pursue and who should be in the teams for different projects and all those sort of things is really, really important to me. It lets me, as much as possible align the passions of the work that's available. Never perfectly but it often gets pretty close.

Troy: Alright. Any final comments or questions you have for me?

Jake: No I don't think so.

Troy: Great. Thank you very much.

Appendix E: ISF Hours of Work Policy – Support Staff

HOURS OF WORK POLICY – SUPPORT STAFF

Endorsed by the ISF Management Team on 22 August 2003

Approval by Director of UTS Human Resources Unit in February 2005

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy applies to ISF full-time, part-time and fixed-term staff who are employed under the UTS Enterprise Agreement (Support) 2000, Part E: Hours of Work ('the UTS Agreement'). It does not cover casual staff. It does not currently apply to staff employed under the UTS Enterprise Agreement (Academic) 2000.

1.2 The policy is to be interpreted in conjunction with the UTS Agreement. It is the first step in developing an equitable and consistent policy on hours of work for all ISF staff in light of the employment arrangements that apply to the higher education system.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the Hours of Work Policy – Support Staff:

- 2.1 to uphold sustainable work practices for staff within the Institute
- 2.2 to provide flexible hours of work for staff of the Institute
- 2.3 to achieve consistency amongst staff
- 2.4 to ensure that staff are paid for the work that they are required to do
- 2.5 to ensure compliance with mandatory requirements of the UTS Agreement
- 2.6 to better provide for the Institute's project-based nature of work which is inherently cyclical and often accompanied by strict deadlines
- 2.7 to clearly state local agreements that differ from the UTS Agreement
- 2.8 to ensure the financial viability of the Institute

3.0 JUSTIFICATION

The UTS Agreement includes clauses that relate to flexitime, overtime and ordinary span of hours that are not compatible with the Institute's work environment. The clauses in the UTS Agreement including strict limits on the amount of flexitime that can be accrued, when overtime must be paid, and the total number of hours that a person can work within a four week period. If the Institute strictly enforces the clauses, a number of staff may be unfairly disadvantaged. Accordingly the Institute's management and staff have agreed to develop this Policy as a "local policy on flexitime arrangements for – The term 'management' refers to the members of the Management Team – the purpose of ensuring that the flexileave provisions are applied consistently and fairly" as authorised by Clause 29.5 of the UTS Agreement.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Ordinary Hours of Duty

4.1.1 In accordance with the UTS Agreement, the ordinary hours of duty for full-time staff are 140 hours over a four-week cycle (280 hours over an eightweek cycle). In accordance with this Policy, staff may determine their own daily and weekly hours of work during the eight-week cycle and in accordance with 4.2.1, unless otherwise determined by the Institute.

4.2 Overtime

4.2.1 Ordinary hours of work, as prescribed in the Enterprise Agreement (Clause 26.3) are between 7am and 7 pm, Monday to Friday. Staff wishing/required to work beyond the normal span and up to 10 pm, may do so, with approval from their Supervisor.

4.2.2 Work undertaken outside the above span of time can be taken as TOIL at overtime rates, with the prior approval from their Supervisor.

4.2.3 Overtime work as defined in Clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement is not normally approved, except in exceptional circumstances.

4.3 Time off in lieu of Overtime (TOIL)

4.3.1 Where a supervisor has approved overtime, the staff member may elect to take accrued overtime as time off in lieu of overtime as provided in Clauses 28.10 – 28.12.

4.4 Flexible Hours Options

4.4.1 Flexitime is a system of attendance whereby individual staff select their times of starting, finishing and meal breaks from day to day and can accumulate flexileave.

4.4.2 Unless otherwise agreed, all ISF staff may utilise the flexible hours option.

4.4.3 Staff will normally take flexileave during the eight-week cycle in which it is accumulated. It is not necessary for a staff member to have a credit (positive) balance before taking flexileave (Clause 29.4(e)).

4.4.4. For the purposes of determining accumulation of hours, staff are deemed to have notionally worked standard hours on any day they were absent on approved leave, other than flexileave.

4.4.5 Staff may accumulate credit or debit hours through the eight-week cycle, provided that at the end of the eight-week cycle, it would not normally be expected that the number of credit or debit hours carried forward would exceed 35 hours.

4.4.6 In the circumstances where the credit hours at the end of the eight-week cycle exceed 35 hours, the staff member and supervisor will negotiate a satisfactory arrangement that takes into account factors such as the staff member's personal situation and the Institute's work planning and project management. Options that may be agreed include:

- taking the flexileave in the next eight-week cycle;
- deferring flexileave until an agreed date;
- being paid overtime, in exceptional circumstances.

4.4.7 If the staff member does not agree to an arrangement, or the staff member fails to take the flexileave at the agreed times, hours in excess of 35 hours will be forfeited.

4.4.8 Either the supervisor or the staff member can initiate this type of negotiation. The staff member will not forfeit the excess hours unless the supervisor has attempted a negotiation.

4.4.9 In the circumstances where the debit hours at the end of the eight-week cycle exceed 35 hours, the staff member and supervisor will negotiate a satisfactory arrangement that takes into account factors such as the staff member's personal situation and the Institute's work planning and project management. Options that may be agreed include:

- working additional hours over an agreed period of time
- charging excess hours to annual leave, long service leave or leave without pay.

4.4.10 If the staff member does not agree to an arrangement, or the staff member fails to work the additional hours over the agreed period, debit hours in excess of 35 hours will be charged to annual leave, long service leave or leave without pay.

4.4.11 Either the supervisor or the staff member can initiate this type of negotiation. The staff member will not have excess debit hours charged unless the supervisor has attempted a negotiation.

4.4.12 Staff departing UTS who have an accumulation of debit hours at the completed of their last day will have monies owing adjusted accordingly.

4.4.13 Staff departing UTS who have an accumulation of credit hours may receive payment in the following circumstances:

- where services were terminated without notice for reasons other than misconduct; or
- where an application for flexileave which would have eliminated the accumulated credit hours was made and refused during the period of notice; or
- in any other exceptional circumstances approved by the Director.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Staff will record their hours of work (to the nearest five minutes) on a weekly basis, using either: - the PMS timesheet (for research staff); or - the UTS timesheet (for administrative staff).

5.2 At the end of each fortnight, the People, Policy and Planning (PPP) Coordinator will inform staff and their supervisor if they have accrued in excess of 25 hours flexileave, or are more than 25 hours in debit. This is to flag any potential problems before flexi leave reaches the 35-hour limit.

5.3 The supervisor or staff member may negotiate the arrangement to deal with excess credits or debits. The supervisor will seek to ensure that the staff member is supported to complete the arrangement, if negotiated.

5.4 The staff member will inform the PPP Coordinator of an agreed arrangement prior to implementation.

5.5 Staff may take flexileave with appropriate notification but without the prior formal approval of their supervisor unless it is 3 or more consecutive working days, in which case prior approval is required.

5.6 Flexi leave for more than 5 consecutive days will not normally be approved.

6.0 POLICY EVALUATION

6.1 This policy will be evaluated by the ISF People's Committee, three months after the policy has been put in place and from time to time as required.

2 Formal approval is understood to be the submission of a leave form to the supervisor for approval. This is an internal process and does not need to be submitted to salaries.

Appendix F: ISF Policy on Temporary Variation of Working Hours

Policy on temporary variation of working hours

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to support life-work balance for ISF staff by providing clear guidance on the procedures for applying for a temporary variation in working hours. This policy is not intended to replace provisions in the Collective Agreements (<http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/manual/2ea/index.html>) or policy guidance provided by UTS (see <http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/conditions/flexible/index.html>). Rather, the policy provides further clarity and detail on internal processes.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy covers ISF staff members wishing to apply for a temporary variation in working hours or mode of employment. This includes staff members that wish to compress their normal working hours into a shorter period of time, such as a four-day week or a nine-day fortnight.

Procedures – temporary variation of working hours

Applications for temporary variation to hours or modes of employment should follow the UTS Principles and Procedures available here: http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/manual/3rec_sel/recruit.html#3.17.

Staff considering variation of their working hours should discuss this with their supervisor in the first instance.

To facilitate workload planning, staff should provide as much notice as possible of an intention to vary working hours. One month's notice is sufficient, i.e. less than the notice required by the UTS Principles and Procedures.

In exceptional circumstances, applications for temporary variations of working hours may be accepted with less than one month's notice.

Applications to temporarily vary working hours should be submitted to your supervisor, using the UTS form: <http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/docs/conditions/variation.doc>. Applications require approval by the supervisor and Director.

Supervisors should inform the Institute Manager when an application to vary working hours is received. The Institute Manager will provide advice on the organisational implications (financial, capacity and space) of the change to help inform a decision.

A variation to working hours is not permanent. The time period for the variation needs to be specified on the form and is normally between 6 months and 2 years. Shorter variations may be granted in exceptional circumstances. Longer variations will not be granted.

No later than one month before the end of the approved period, the staff member and supervisor should meet to review the arrangement and decide whether to revert to normal working hours or submit a new application. The new application will need to follow the principles and procedures outlined here.

There is no guarantee that applications to temporarily vary working hours will be granted. If a supervisor has concerns about a particular application, they should discuss it first with the staff member. If the concerns are not resolved, the supervisor should discuss the application with the Director Sustainable Workplace, who will decide whether to refer the application to the Institute Steering Group, discuss with the Director or contact the Human Resources Unit.

The supervisor or Director Sustainable Workplace must seek advice from the Human Resources Unit before deciding to reject an application. If an application is subsequently rejected, the staff member will be provided with a full explanation of the reasons for the decision.

Staff members that successfully apply for a variation to their working hours should take steps to ensure that all ISF staff are aware of their new working hours. This could include an email to the ISF staff list and changing voicemail and email out of office messages to note days or times when you are not working.

Procedures – compression of working hours

Applications to work normal hours over a reduced number of days should follow the UTS procedures available here: <http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/conditions/hours/support/models.html>.

Staff considering compression of their working hours should discuss this with their supervisor in the first instance.

Applications to compress working hours should be made in writing (email is sufficient) to your supervisor.

Supervisors should inform the Institute Manager when an application to compress working hours is received. The Institute Manager will provide advice on the organisational implications (financial, capacity and space) of the change to help inform a decision.

If an application to compress working hours is supported by the Supervisor and Institute Manager then the Supervisor should provide written approval for the compression of working hours. The agreement to compress working hours will not expire.

Staff members that successfully apply to compress their working hours should take steps to ensure that all ISF staff are aware of their new working hours. This could include an email to the ISF staff list and changing voicemail and email out of office messages to note days or times when you are not working.