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**"MANAGING" REDUCTIONS IN WORKING HOURS: A STUDY OF
WORK-TIME AND LEISURE PREFERENCES IN UK INDUSTRY**

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“MANAGING” REDUCTIONS IN WORKING HOURS:
A STUDY OF WORK-TIME AND LEISURE
PREFERENCES IN UK INDUSTRY

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This paper is predicated on the view that reductions in work-time are generally desirable. We analyse historical trends in working-hours, the organisation of production, and theories of power and authority in firms and other organisations. Then we consider this in relation to patterns of work in the UK, demonstrating empirically that managers are more wedded to a ‘long-hours’ culture than are other employees. We theorise that this is because managers’ roles align their attitudes with those desired by the firm or organisation and conclude that, as a consequence, the “voluntary” nature of work-time regulation should be revisited.

Key words: Working Hours, Hierarchy, Power, Preferences

JEL Classifications: J08, J22, J53

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1. Introduction

In recent years a number of European governments (and the European Union) have taken an active role in regulating hours devoted to paid work (subsequently referred to as ‘work-time’). This is significant since one premise of our paper is that low and falling average work-time is as significant a measure of economic success as the traditional macroeconomic objectives of high and growing GDP *per capita*, stable prices, low unemployment and balanced balance of payments (to which we would also add equitable distribution of income). This new interest in reduced working hours is to be welcome; however, we believe that it is important to consider how reductions in work-time are to be managed at the firm or organisation level. Given the realisation that UK workers may “waive” their rights under legislation, and acknowledging the fact that managers have the power to interview, appoint and sack workers, we feel it is important to consider the role of managers in determining working hours.¹ Moreover we wish to explore the hours worked by managers, thereby inferring what their attitudes might be to extensive and intensive labour extraction.

Historically, the emergence of the Protestant work ethic and the Industrial Revolution are often connected (Weber, 1976).² Early in England’s Industrial Revolution there were problems in enforcing work discipline in factories, and pressure to increase the working hours of employees (Bienefeld, 1972). The practice of Saint Monday –

¹ Work by Bosch and Lehdorff (2001) has considered the role of work-time reduction as an unemployment policy. Other work by Philp (2001) and Philp et al. (2005) has argued that the power of respective classes is important in generating outcomes in contemporary conflict over the length of the working day. The contribution of our paper is in considering the role of management and hierarchies in determining working hours at the firm or organisation level.

² This phrase ‘Protestant work ethic’ was first coined by Weber in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976), which was originally published in German in a series of essays between 1904 and 1905.

whereby workers took time off to engage in leisure activities – persisted from the seventeenth to the twentieth century (Reid, 1996). Work ethics have been modelled in rational-choice terms, suggesting there is ‘social recognition’ associated with longer hours (Faria and León-Ledesma, 2004). Nevertheless, other work has challenged the appropriateness of rational-choice models of hour determination arguing instead the norms, habits and power are more significant determinants than rational deliberation (Philp, Harvie and Slater, 2005). In this paper we wish to explore contemporary attitudes to work-time of different occupation groups. Managers, historically, had an important role in representing the firm’s interests in this regard. However, as a result of public pressure and more effective legislation, average working hours began to fall from the middle of the nineteenth century.

The recent political economy of UK work-time regulation has been controversial (Philp, 2001). In 1993 the UK initially refused to subscribe to EU work-time regulation, emphasising liberal flexibility instead. In 1998, however, the UK Government introduced regulation of work-time, albeit it with a voluntary waiver. This implies workers can “opt-out” of the EU rules governing excessive work-time.³ The patterns of work-time, too, are also much diverse now. Work-time is increasingly variable, driven by economic, technological, and cultural influences (Boulin, 1993), and the feminisation, tertiarisation and casualisation of the economy (Crompton, 1997). The ‘usual and acknowledged hours of labour’ (Bienefeld, 1972, p.40), which

³ The scope for employers to abuse such a system is obvious. In some cases workers have been passed the “waiver” to sign at the end of an interview, in a manner reminiscent of some the nineteenth century abuses of the Factory Acts outlined in Marx (1976). The sense in which such a state of affairs is “voluntary” is thereby highly dubious.

were once commonplace, have been replaced by a system which emphasises liberal flexibility, driven in part by the emergence of the 24/7 service sector (Hardill, 2002).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the working hours of various occupation categories in the UK economy, and to consider the choices and role of managers in this context. We begin, in section 2, by looking at hierarchies, briefly examining Weber's economic sociology and the role of management in monopoly capitalism. The role of managers is to act as agents of the firm (or organisation) and we maintain they are selected (or self-selected) on the basis that their values are aligned with those of their employers. In section 3 we use the *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) to explore contemporary working hours and attitudes of broad occupation groups. This allows us to consider the working hours of some 41,031 UK respondents in full-time employment. While other surveys provide important insights into other determinants, most do not compare to the LFS in terms of sample size.⁴ Using the LFS we consider managers and professionals separately, and derive results which suggest the two groups have distinct characteristics. In particular we are interested in whether those workers working in excess of 48 hours a week are satisfied with their working hours. In concluding we argue that: (i) many full-time workers in different employment categories are unhappy with the hours they work; (ii) managers, especially in the private sector, seem to work long hours; (iii) professionals, especially in the public

⁴ For example MacInnes (2005) uses the *British Social Attitudes Survey 2002* to explore work-life balance and the demand for reductions in working hours. This excellent study usefully explores household characteristics, but does not consider occupation group or whether employees work in the public or private sector. The study is also based on a sample of 2316 respondents. Another report has been produced by Bielenski, Bosch and Wagner (2002). This study explored work-time preferences across 15 EU Member States and Norway, surveying 30557 individuals of whom 12649 were employed. The sample frame for UK workers in employment was 1308.

sector, work long hours *and* are dissatisfied with them; (iv) the long hours worked by managers raises doubts over their willingness to implement policies aimed at increasing leisure-time for other groups. These points lead us to recommend that “opt-out” clauses in work-time legislation need to be abandoned given the hierarchical nature of most organisations and firms.

2. Managers, Power and Authority

The day-to-day formulation and implementation of policies on work-time and conditions are the responsibility of management. Their success is, in part at least, measured by the extent to which they extract effort from other employees. This puts them in a unique position in the labour process. Working hours are, of course, now regulated in the UK; however, the voluntary opt-out in the *Work Time Regulations* (1998) is problematic given the explicit and implicit power organisations have over workers. The hierarchical relationship between managers and other workers is the nexus for this conflict. In this section we shall consider some of these theoretical issues, in particular the relationship between managers and professionals, the nature of moulding effects, and the general issue of “shirking”, or malfeasance. Prior to this we will outline Weber’s (1947) theory of rational-legal authority in a hierarchically arranged, co-ordinated and specialised work environment.

Weber’s (1947, p.145) analysis considers the ‘corporate group’ which is defined broadly as a ‘social relationship which is either closed or limits the admission of outsiders by rules’ (1947, p.145). There are three possible sources of authority in a corporate group: (i) rational-legal authority; (ii) traditional authority; (iii) charismatic authority. It is the model of rational-legal authority which is relevant to our study of

hierarchy in contemporary society. A corporate group in a structure of rational-legal authority is run by a chief (or head) and, in the case of a bureaucratic structure, by an administrative staff as well. Administrative staff, and their different offices (in the sense of their 'positions'), are subject to strict hierarchy: 'each lower office is under the control and supervision of a higher one' (p.331). Parsons has summarised the nature of this authority: 'This control and supervision above all includes the power of appointment, promotion, demotion, and dismissal over incumbents of lower offices' (Parsons, 1997, p.58). The technical rules or norms which govern conduct of an office may require specialized training. Thus Weber suggests:

It is thus normally true that only a person who has demonstrated an adequate technical training is qualified to be a member of the administrative staff of such an organized group, and hence only such persons are eligible for appointment to official positions. The administrative staff of a rational corporate group thus typically consist of 'officials', whether the organization be devoted to political, religious, economic – in particular, capitalistic – or other ends. (Weber, 1947, p.331).

Note the conflation of "professional" and "managerial" characteristics in Weber's treatment of bureaucracy – a problem identified by Parsons who has pointed to Weber's 'failure to bring out the structural peculiarities of the modern professions and to differentiate between the organization of professional services and what may be called the 'administrative hierarchy' of occupational structure types' (1947, p.54).

Others have categorised professionals and managers together into a single class. Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) have argued that we can identify a Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) and they relate this to the monopoly capitalist phase of economic development. They suggested the PMC is distinct from the working and

capitalist classes and there is a ‘*three*-way polarization’ in society (1979, p. 42). The PMC are distinct from other classes in that they consist of ‘salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production ...’ (p. 12). Goldthorpe (1995, p. 319) also suggests that the division between managers and professionals is ‘one of *situs*’, or functional context, and both are components of the service class. Goldthorpe presents empirical evidence relating to mobility and marriage rates, which are considered to show more similarities than differences (1995, p. 320). While such data is interesting, it does not offer a thorough analysis of the disparate nature of the working patterns and occupational requirements of managerial and professional occupations. Thus Esping-Anderson has reaffirmed the need to differentiate between ‘scientists-professionals’ and ‘managers-administrators’ (1993, p. 13).

There appears, then, to be controversy about whether managers and professionals should be grouped together or not. Our suggestions would be that if we accept the notion of a PMC it is nevertheless important to recognise the diversity of occupation groups within that class. Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) argue that by the middle of the twentieth century the PMC was ‘minutely splintered’ (p.28). And, interestingly for our investigation, they identify a key conflict:

The deepest rift, over-riding the petty occupational subspecializations, was the one which developed between the managers, administrators and engineers on the one hand, and those in the liberal arts and service professions on the other. The material difference between the two groups was that those in the first category are directly tied to business and industry ... Those in the second category are more likely to enjoy the relative shelter of the university or other sorts of non-profit agencies ... (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1979, p.28)

There thus emerges a conflict between what we might broadly identify as those in managerial roles and those in ‘service professions’. There is a further conflict between ‘business and industry’ on the one hand and ‘non-profit agencies’ on the other.⁵

In terms of qualitative differences the issue of autonomy has been historically important in distinguishing managers and professionals. Individually, some professionals *may* act autonomously, with minimal hierarchy of offices compared to that envisaged in Weber’s bureaucratic model. But we should note significant diminution of this autonomy in many professions. Indeed, many professionals are no longer sole practitioners, but are part of the workforce of large bureaucratic organisations, whether it is in multi-national companies, legal practices, or large hospitals. This, on occasion, brings professionals into conflict with managers of such organisations; for example medical doctors are principally concerned with delivering the best care they can for a particular patient, but managers (in implementing *organisational* policy) are frequently charged with some form of cost-minimisation.

There are further complications with the nature of professions and management in a state of constant flux. In addition to the learned professions (such as the law and medicine) the professions include an expanding number of ‘emerging’ professions, such as information technology specialists (Sullivan, 1995). As a consequence there is more ambiguity in the public mind as to what occupations really are professional. At the same time modern management aspires toward a recognisable professional

⁵ This is something which we will explore empirically in the next section. In particular we will look at the differences between managers and professionals in the public and private sector, focussing on work-time and, in the penultimate section, attitudes towards leisure.

identity, reflected in the development of managerial qualifications, such as the MBA (Schoenberger, 1997, p. 140). In spite of this “blurring” we maintain that there are differences in the nature of many management and professional occupations, such that we can identify tendencies. As Baran and Sweezy point out: ‘managers are not professionals in the sense that doctors and lawyers are’ (1966, p.42). Nor are they the same as many in new professional occupations. One key difference for us is that we see managers and supervisors in terms of their “functional” roles in organisations. While, individually, choice may play a role in the sense that managers aspire to mastery and control, they also adopt a role which implies they are compelled to represent their company or organisation interests.

There are different levels of management, and the broad group “managers and senior officials” is comprised of different levels or points in the hierarchy. In the context of the corporate paradigm, Baran and Sweezy (1966) explore the role of senior managers in the modern corporation (as distinct from Weber’s use of the term “corporation”). They suggest that control of modern corporations rests in the hands of senior management rather than shareholders, and that management is a self-perpetuating group: “Each generation of managers recruits its own successors and trains, grooms, and promotes them according to its own standards and values” (1966, p.29). Baran and Sweezy clearly have senior managers in mind, however, as noted by Weber (1947, p.331), there are clearly lower levels in such hierarchies. But the key unifying characteristics of the managerial role – whether senior or junior – is the imposition of work on others. This may take the form of an “intensive” or “extensive” imposition of work, where the latter implies prolongation of the work-week.

The moulding effects of the organisation, and the career progression which compliance entails, implies both a motivational effect and a social process of preference formation, especially for managers. The latter suggests there is an outcome which is, partly at least, functional for the needs of the organisation. The preferences of our managers might therefore be systematically moulded:

The ‘company man’ is dedicated to the advancement of his company. This does not mean, however, that he is any more or less *homo economicus*, any more or less selfish, any more or less altruistic, than either the tycoon or the individual owner-entrepreneur before him. All of these conceptions are at best irrelevant, and at worst misleading. The problem is not one of ‘psychology’ of any kind but of the selective and moulding effects of institutions on the personnel that operates them” (1966, pp.48-49).

While recognising that preferences are formed socially, we are not suggesting “choice” is irrelevant. Individuals make decisions about careers, promotion, etc., and these decisions may be ‘constrained’ by the personal and household circumstances, especially so for women (Hardill, 2002). There may be some freedoms within their job such that they have limited autonomy (e.g. in some professional occupations). Our argument is not that people do not make choices; rather we are exploring some of the forces which shape and constrain their preferences.

At the outset of this section we highlighted the “surveillance” role of managers. This has been developed in recent decades in the economics literature on “shirking” (or malfeasance). One strand of this work has been the efficiency wage literature, which makes a case for equilibrium involuntary unemployment (see Shapiro and Stiglitz, 1984; Akerlof and Yellin, 1986). This draws parallels with the traditional “reserve army of the unemployed” which is a cornerstone of Marxian labour economics (see

Bowles, 1985). The efficiency wage literature begins from the premise that it is difficult to measure the quality and quantity of a worker's effort. Above-equilibrium wages increase the loss to workers from losing their job if managers catch them shirking. The macroeconomic implications of this aside, notice the presumption being made about the role of managers in this highly significant literature. Their role is effort-extraction and to identify malfeasance.⁶ Interestingly, great efforts have been made recently by policymakers who have sought to increase the monitoring of health professionals and those in education. Indeed, while historically professionals may have been viewed as having an intangible output, increased managerialism in these areas seems indicative of more and more surveillance in previously exempt arenas.

A final interesting point concerns the role of managers as agents for shareholders, owners or other principals. Baran and Sweezy (1966) do distinguish between corporation managers and the "tycoon" or capitalist entrepreneurs of the early twentieth centuries. The main concern of the latter was seeking business opportunities, whereas the role of managers is the 'surveillance and regulation' of industrial processes on behalf of the firm or organisation; the manager is thus 'a leading species of the genus "organization man"' (1966, 41). Moreover the emphasis on surveillance and control by managers of modern corporations, they suggest, is more reminiscent of earlier phases of industrialisation. Managers may act in the interests of the firm or organisation (for example pursuing profit maximisation or cost minimisation). However, managerial theories of the firm have suggested that managers may have objectives other than profit maximisation. For example Baumol

⁶ Theoretical problems have been identified with such models. For example Currie and Steedman (1993) have argued that the calculus used in the efficiency wage literature presupposes effort be cardinally measurable. They are sceptical that effort can be anything other than ordinally ranked.

(1959) has argued that managers may pursue sales revenue maximisation because their salaries are linked to sales rather than profits. Shareholders may demand a minimum acceptable dividend and this may constrain sales revenue maximisation, but we should note whether constrained or not, profit maximisation is not being achieved. Williamson (1963) has also argued that managers may have interests other than those of their principal in mind. In this model managerial satisfaction is a function of various elements including staff expenditure, perks, and discretionary investment expenditure. These approaches recognise that managers' interests may not be aligned with those of the principal of the firm or organisation; the firm is not a single entity, it is, rather, a coalition of various interest groups. However, while acknowledging all these issues we believe they are secondary, and managers can generally be viewed as representing the company interests, i.e. managers' motivations are well-aligned with those of the organisation and hence we feel the observation that there are significant "moulding effects" is apposite.

In summary, we have argued in this section that there may have been some blurring of the boundaries between the role and characteristics of managers and professionals. However, we maintain that the essential role of both senior and junior managers is, generally, the imposition of work on other employees. This distinguishes them fundamentally from professionals and other workers. As we shall see in the next section, this has implications for policies aimed at reducing work-time and provides insight into the organisational setting of work-time regulation.

3. Working Patterns of Occupation Groups: Empirical Analysis

In spite of the introduction of the *Working Time Regulations* (1998) we suggest the UK labour market are still characterised by the liberal flexibility identified by Lipietz (1997). In addition, hierarchies are important and there are significant “moulding” effects connected to the appointment and promotion of individuals to management roles. The downward trend in working hours in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century seems to have been partially arrested in the post-war period, and even though there is now legislation in place in the UK, the “voluntary” nature of this legislation means workers can waive their rights. Managers may play a significant role in implementing organisation policies on working hours. This raises a very important question, namely: can we rely on managers to impartially implement policies aimed at restricting hours when the average manager seems willing to work long-hours?

The working time preferences of workers have been subject to investigation. For example Bielenski, Bosch and Wagner (2002) have conducted an extensive study of working time preferences across sixteen European countries, surveying a total of 12,649 employees. Their study identified interesting characteristics, in terms of gender, caring responsibilities and other aspects influencing preferences for hours. While this study provided a good overview of the countries considered as a whole, the small samples from individual countries prohibited more complex analysis at the occupation level. Nevertheless, aspects are worthy of note for what we intend to explore in this paper; thus, Bielenski et al (2002) report longer hours work among those with managerial or executive duties (pp.62-73), and speculate that there is greater resistance to work-time reduction among those in managerial employment (p.13). This work is noteworthy, too, because they do not adopt a crude rational

choice approach to working-hour determination. Thus they recognise that ‘employees’ working time preferences are not static; rather they evolve over time in accordance with personal and family circumstances’ (Bielenski et al, 2002, p.114). However, for reasons identified in section 2, we would go further. Preferences may be fluid because they can be influenced, or shaped, by the employer through their agent, the manager.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between managerial duties and preferences for working hours in the UK. The voluntary nature of the “waiver”, we argue, makes the UK unique among the countries studied by Bielenski et al (2002). Moreover, since we wish to consider different broad occupational groups and breakdown by public/private sector, we would need a large sample to facilitate our analysis. In order to investigate this we propose to use the *Labour Force Survey*. While we will be unable to look at organisational dynamics, the insight gleaned into the working hours and preferences of managers and professionals, in particular, justifies this approach.

In this section we shall consider the hours worked by full-time employees, using broadly defined groups. Occupations are defined using the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (SOC 2000) and data is obtained from the *Labour Force Survey* (LFS). Our cross-sectional analysis extracts data from the LFS for the fourth quarter of 2005 and is used to provide insight into work-time patterns among UK employees. Full-time is established by the respondents’ self-classification of their working patterns.⁷ Our analysis investigates ‘usual’ basic hours and ‘usual’ total hours (the

⁷ There is no internationally agreed definition for the number of working hours considered as full-time, although a number of different definitions exist. The EU uses self-classification to differentiate full-time and part-time hours, while the ILO states that part-time work is working consistently less than

latter including overtime), as well as mapping trends of paid and unpaid overtime. Usual hours refer simply to the hours the respondent ‘usually’ works. Actual hours refer to hours ‘actually’ worked in the reference week. Average usual hours exceed average actual hours, because actual hours may be affected by absences from work, for example through holidays or sickness.

The roles of managers and professionals have been conflated in some studies (Weber, 1947).⁸ Thus Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) describe a ‘Professional-Managerial Class’ and Goldthorpe (1995) has described these employees as constituting a ‘service class’ in which employment is regulated through a service relationship as opposed to a labour contract. This implies that rather than there being an exchange of wages for output in which the worker is closely supervised, the service relationship is more long term and involves more diffuse exchange.⁹ These similarities aside, there are differences between managers and professionals; in particular, we have pointed to the role of managers in organisational hierarchies. The role of the managers is the imposition of work on other employees. Hence, we feel it is important to look at the patterns of work and attitudes of managers, in relation to work-time.

Our initial results are presented in Table 1. Mean working hours for full-time managers and professionals in both the private and the public sector are longer than

normal. The Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) state full-time hours as working over 30 hours per week. For the UK the distinction works on self-assessment, but anyone working over 40 hours is classified as full-time (Bishop, 2004, p.115).

⁸ In the following analysis we use the abbreviation ‘managers’ to refer to ‘managers and senior officials’ in the SOC 2000.

⁹ The service relationship can be understood as the means through which an employing organisation seeks to create and sustain commitment. These means include a salary and fringe benefits, such as company cars, private health insurance and performance-related pay.

that for all other broad occupation groups. This similarity aside, there are also distinct differences between managers and professionals. The view of Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) – that the nature of organisations matters, whether business or non-profit agencies – seems to be borne out when we distinguish the working patterns of private and public sector employees. Full-time private sector managers work the longest hours of all our categories, with total usual hours averaging 46.5 hours (F-tests confirm the significance of these findings with Sig. of 0.000 for both basic and total usual hours). Full-time professionals in the public sector work long hours too, averaging 44.7 total usual hours. This is driven, in particular, by high levels of unpaid overtime among full-time public sector professionals.

Major Occupation group	Basic usual hours (no overtime)		Total usual hours (incl. paid and unpaid overtime)		Percentage working over 48 hours		n
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	
Managers and Senior Officials	38.5	42.5	42.7	46.5	16.8	35.1	7505
Professional Occupations	38.8	40.6	44.7	44.1	30.3	23.2	5788
Assoc. Professional and Tech.	38.2	40	40.8	42.6	9.3	18.2	6181
All other occupations	36.6	40.6	38.5	42.9	5.4	18.9	21557
Total UK	37.8	40.9	41.2	43.8	14.4	22.6	41031

Table 1: Mean full-time working hours by major occupation group, 2005

The highest proportions of full-time individuals working over 48 hours a week – the critical point in the *Working Time Regulations* (1998) – are also found among private sector managers and public sector professionals. In looking at Table 1 we can see that the third highest group, in terms of the proportion of workers working in excess of 48 hours, are full-time private sector professionals, with 23.2% of them usually working in excess of 48 hours. Worryingly 30.3% of full-time public sector professionals and

35.1% of private sector managers usually work in excess of 48 hours. This indicates (given our initial premise) that there are quite severe problems of overwork among these groups. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that private sector managers play a significant role in hiring, promoting and sacking other private sector workers. These workers who work long hours themselves may also adversely influence the hours of other groups, including professional occupations, associate professional and technical, and all other occupations. There thus might be a “trickle-down” affecting the hours of other occupational groups. Given managers work long hours this may call into question their judgement in their influence over the hours of others.

The roles of managers and professionals are distinct and it is possible to identify differences in the characteristics these workers. We can provide some insight into this empirically using a logit regression model, the results of which are summarised in Table 2 (the adjusted R^2 equivalents of 19.8% and 24.3% reflect a reasonable explanatory power in our model). *Contra* Goldthorpe (1995) we find significant differences between managers and professionals which cannot be reduced to one of ‘*situs*’ (p.319). Taking occupational group as our dependent variable we find that there are significant differences in the hours worked by these respective groups. We also find that managers are less willing than their professional counterparts to take a pay cut to secure a shorter work week. Our model also includes a number of independent variables, including individual variables such as age and gender, household variables, and industry variables including public/private, and SIC sector.

Our results suggest a greater proportion of managers and senior officials working over 48 hours, confirming our evidence presented in Table 1. Once we take account of the

split between public and private sector workers, the apparent long hours of managers in relation to those of professionals becomes, evidently, important. There are industry characteristics too. Because of a disproportionate need for managers in distribution, hotel and restaurant industry, we find managers are (relatively) more likely to work in this sector.¹⁰ The household characteristics of managers are also interesting. They seem to have larger numbers of dependent children, and are more likely to be married or cohabiting. This may be a consequence of the fact that they are, on average, older. An alternative causal explanation might be that those who take on managerial roles may do so because of a financial compunction, as a consequence of their dependents.

Males are more likely to be occupied in a professional capacity,¹¹ and such roles are prevalent in banking, finance and insurance, public administration, education and health. Professionals show greatest preference for reducing their hours, even when this reduces their pay. Individuals undertaking professional roles are more likely to state a preference for a reduction in pay in order to endure fewer hours of work than their managerial counterparts. This provides strong evidence suggesting that the grouping together of managers and professionals may oversimplify the characteristics of these disparate groups. This would seem to provide evidence for Esping-Anderson's (1995) hypothesis that 'scientist-professionals' and 'managers-administrators' comprise groups with distinct characteristics. Moreover Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) assertion that the PMC are minutely splintered would seem to

¹⁰ This industry is characterised by low-pay, transient working, and low skills. It may also be that production methods necessitate close supervision rather than the detection of malfeasance by other means. For a discussion of malfeasance see Shapiro and Stiglitz (1984) and Bowles (1985).

¹¹ However, results if associate professional and technical occupations were included would possibly differ, as there are a number of occupations which are highly feminised, including education (particularly in reference to primary education) and nursing.

have some basis when we look at the working hours and characteristics of managers and professionals in the public and private sector.

Parameter	Estimate	Std. Error	Z	Sig.
Constant	0.343	0.204	1.680	0.093
Prefer shorter hours, even if less pay	-0.123	0.062	-1.965	0.049
Total usual hours over 48 hours	0.105	0.060	1.733	0.083
Male	-0.317	0.070	-4.563	0.000
<i>Age: Reference is 55+</i>				
16-24	-0.668	0.209	-3.192	0.001
25-34	-0.472	0.106	-4.450	0.000
35-44	0.104	0.134	0.780	0.436
45-54	0.148	0.107	1.381	0.167
Dependent children under 19	0.331	0.080	4.155	0.000
Married/Cohabiting	0.126	0.092	1.368	0.171
Private Sector	0.942	0.097	9.690	0.000
<i>Industry Sector: Reference is Other Services</i>				
Agriculture and Fishing	1.097	0.550	1.996	0.046
Energy and Water	-0.523	0.259	-2.018	0.044
Manufacturing	-0.266	0.158	-1.676	0.094
Construction	-0.107	0.180	-0.596	0.551
Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants	1.647	0.192	8.597	0.000
Transport and Communications	0.188	0.188	1.001	0.317
Banking, Finance and Insurance	-0.838	0.150	-5.570	0.000
Public Admin. Education and Health	-1.362	0.157	-8.688	0.000

Table 2: *Logit regression: Characteristics of managers and professionals, 2005*

Having observed that private sector managers and public sector professionals work long hours, this prompts us to ask whether these employees are satisfied with their hours. Table 3 presents the responses when questioned about shorter hours. In this table we consider those full-time workers who report their total usual hours are in excess of 48 hours per week, who answered the following question positively: ‘*Would you rather work shorter hours than at present, even if it meant less pay?*’ We should note that this is a hypothetical question and it may be more likely to solicit strong negative feelings around an activity such as work. Schor, *contra* this view, has argued

the opposite, i.e. people may understate their dissatisfaction with hours: ‘The fact that large numbers of people say they are contented with their working hours (or job conditions) may reveal that they are tractable, not that their deeper desires have been fulfilled’ (Schor, 1993, p. 129).

Major occupation group	Prefer shorter hours even if less pay (%)		n
	Public	Private	
Managers and Senior Officials	33.9	29.3	1510
Professional Occupations	37.5	33.1	929
Associate professional and technical	22.3	25.2	507
All other occupations	25.0	23.1	1895
Total UK	33.2	26.5	4841

Table 3: *Preference for reduction in hours even if less pay, 2005*

This evidence suggests some significant differences between different groups of workers. The level of dissatisfaction with working hours, among those working long hours across all occupations is obvious, especially those in professional jobs, with a third of respondents stating a preference to work fewer hours, even if they receive less income.¹² Our evidence undermines the claim that the right to waive rights under the *Working Time Regulations* (1998) are being effectively enforced. In particular Table 3 indicates a significant proportion of professionals are unhappy with the hours they work. Such dissatisfaction is perhaps exacerbated because professionals are subject to the significant levels of unpaid overtime (see Figure 1). In contrast, even though

¹² The differences between the responses of the different occupation groups in table 3 are confirmed as significant using a Chi-squared test (Sig. of 0.000), and a Cramer’s V of 0.081 (private) and 0.130 (public) suggests a fairly good relationship for the latter. Note this relationship was tested on the numbers of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses to the question, ‘*Would you rather work shorter hours than at present, even if it meant less pay?*’ The output shown in table 3 is simplified to include only percentages of ‘yes’ responses.

managers may express a desire for fewer hours they are less likely, in comparable sectors, to accept a commensurate reduction in earnings to bring this about.¹³ This corresponds with the findings of Böheim and Taylor (2003, pp. 113-4), who use data from the *British Household Panel Survey* to estimate that 40 percent of employees would prefer to work different hours than those they are currently constrained to, and that of these, most employees would prefer to work fewer hours. They also argue that empirical evidence and theoretical standpoints suggest that working hours cannot be varied continuously at the discretion of the individual, but are instead a product of *employer* preference, the level of local labour demand, individual demographics and unobserved effects specific to the individual, which vary with time. We could logically extend Böheim and Taylor's (2003) notion of employer preference to that of "manager preference" – Baran and Sweezy's 'organization man' (1966, p.4) – as agents of the principal. If we do so we can observe that managers themselves tend to work longer hours, and we hypothesise compulsion from managers – tacit or otherwise - may be underlying this process.

The results of our analysis point towards a culture of long hours – such as that identified by Kodz et al. (1998) – among private sector managers and all professionals, especially in the public sector. We have developed a number of themes related to working hours including the role of overtime, and we have considered satisfaction with hours among different occupational groups. Workers in professional occupations as a whole show some of the strongest preferences for reductions in hours (even with commensurate reductions in pay) and the levels of dissatisfaction among

¹³ The *Labour Force Survey* provides excellent data on various aspects of working patterns. However, the wages and earnings responses are problematic and while we feel these issues are highly pertinent the data is not sufficiently robust to facilitate investigation here.

those working the longest hours, summarised in Table 3, must cast doubt over the effectiveness of legislation enacted to prevent excessive working hours.

We have speculated as to the cause of long hours among managers and their role in imposing long hours on others. The long hours worked by public sector professionals are something which also warrants some comment. Green (2001, pp. 73) has suggested long hours are increasingly accompanied by greater levels of 'discretionary' effort and 'constrained' effort in the workplace. This was particularly evident between 1992 and 1997 in the public sector, and may be a driver of increased levels of work related stress among employees. The strong preferences for reductions in hours may therefore be a result of extended periods of unpaid overtime and increased work intensity in public sector professional occupations.

Finally, even though managers in the private sector work very long hours, their preference for reductions in hours is not as great as we might have expected. We suggest that this provides evidence that individuals choosing to undertake management roles may be "organisation" men or women. Long hours are viewed simply as part of the job – an occupational norm – and are necessary, not least because managers are responsible for policing the activities of others. Because of the requirement for managers to supervise, their role requires presenteeism to ensure the company or organisation interests are in safe hands. Those undertaking management roles may well be self-selecting, because they are attracted by the governing nature of these occupations. While management may be necessary in economic organisation, our evidence seems to suggest that many managers work long hours. This indicates to

us that more stringent regulation of working hours may be required if such employees are responsible for the day-to-day operation of organisations.

4. Conclusions

This paper has explored contemporary patterns of work-time and organisation in the UK. It has suggested that at the organisation-level hierarchies matter in determining working hours, and we have focussed on the hours of managers. Managers have often been grouped with professionals such that some have described them as constituting a class (Goldthorpe, 1995). While this may be true we have suggested that in certain key respects professionals and managers are distinct and need to be treated separately when looking at the issue of working hours. There are quantitative and qualitative differences in their respective roles. There may be similarities: managerial practice has become increasingly bureaucratic and professional occupations have seen reductions in autonomy and a move toward bureaucracy. However, managers are required to impose work on others and this suggests they are on one side of a hierarchical dynamic relationship in which they represent the company or organisation.

Our principal focus in this paper has been on working hours and the hours worked by managers and professionals, alongside other broad occupational groups. Our empirical evidence throws up some interesting and highly significant differences between different categories of workers. Our work presents evidence of long hours in the UK and it would seem that even though UK workers cannot be regularly required to work in excess of 48 hours, many do against their wishes.

The role of managers in this process has been considered in this paper. A significant minority of private-sector managers work hours which are particularly long. We have shown that these managers are, on average, not as dissatisfied with their work-time as are their professional counterparts in their respective sectors. We suggest that this may reflect the fact that managers are in some sense “wedded” to the company or organisation, and their policies. Workers can ‘waive’ their rights voluntarily under the current UK work-time legislation. However it is managers – who seem to be more tolerant of long hours themselves – who have power over employees and their working conditions. In view of the high levels of dissatisfaction among those working long hours, it seems that the voluntary nature of working time regulation should be abandoned by policymakers if their intent is to make serious inroads into work-time excesses.

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