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Determinants of temporal flexibility and precarious flexible scheduling – a cross sector qualitative study of line managers relationships with staff and regimes of control and consent

Jonathan D. Wellington

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

School for Policy Studies

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I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: JD Wellington. DATE: 23 January 2023

Abstract

This thesis focuses on two separate but connected strands. The first is the increasing prevalence of temporal flexibility in the deployment of frontline staff in diverse sectors to manage demand. The second element uses this context to focus on a specific outcome of the move toward temporal flexibility and considers the implementation of precarious and flexible scheduling, and how line managers implement this and how they negotiate with their staff to deliver outcomes. The thesis argues that line management and senior management/firm outcomes are not the same, and that line management and staff outcomes often converge even where there is conflict over the implementation and practice of flexible scheduling. To conceptualise this, Burawoy's concept of consent is considered, along with Chun (2001) and Wood's (2020) theory of flexible despotism and scheduling gifts. While other studies in the literature focus on worker behaviour and resistance, this thesis is distinctive in taking line management as its empirical focus. It examines how line management decision-making and management style impact on these forms of precarious scheduling and the extent to which managers are able to create room for autonomy to achieve their goals and manage relationships with staff. Twenty-seven managers in direct line management roles with responsibility for scheduling practices and implementation were interviewed across four discrete sectors - supermarkets, sport and leisure, software development, and hotels and hospitality. These areas are identified in the literature as utilising high levels of temporal flexibility with varying levels of flexible scheduling, with new technologies being implemented in recent years and a rapid pace of change. The thesis concludes that while precarious scheduling may be considered as a form of senior management and capital control, it is mediated and diluted by line management which is able to turn the potential conflict into a site of negotiation, thus potentially empowering both parties and allowing favourable outcomes for both staff and line management and produce a regime of control by consent.

For David Wellington (1945-2008), who spent 35 years working for Ford, so I didn't have to.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis's research questions focus on two separate but connected strands. The first is the increasing prevalence of temporal flexibility in the deployment of frontline staff in diverse and expanding sectors to manage demand (Doogan 2009, Rubery 2005, Rubery et al 2015, 2016). This means that, rather than numerical or functional flexibility as might previously have been employed, part-time, flexible work has become more widely used as the standard practice to manage demand. Using interviews with line managers across four sectors as evidence, this dissertation outlines the types of temporal flexibility that firms use and why, and how this affects their day-to-day management of staff, and how this affects line management outcomes and their decision making process.

The second part of the research question uses this context to focus on a specific outcome of the move toward temporal flexibility and considers the implementation of precarious and flexible scheduling, and how line managers are made to implement this and how they negotiate with staff to deliver outcomes. These outcomes could be favourable to them or to their staff, or be mutually satisfactory. The thesis argues that line management and senior management/firm outcomes are not the same, and that line management and staff outcomes often converge even where there is conflict over the implementation and practice of flexible scheduling.

While other studies in the literature focus on worker behaviour and resistance, this thesis is distinctive in taking line management as its empirical focus. It examines how line management decision-making and management style impact on these forms of precarious scheduling and the extent to which managers are able to create room for autonomy to achieve their goals and manage relationships with staff. Consideration is given to external and internal factors, as discussed in the first research question, and to the implementation of new forms of temporal flexibility.

Twenty-eight managers in direct line management roles with responsibility for scheduling practices and implementation were interviewed across four discrete sectors - supermarkets, sport and leisure, software development, and hotels and hospitality. These areas are identified in the literature and through the Labour Force Survey as utilising high levels of temporal flexibility with varying levels of precarious scheduling, with new technologies being implemented in recent years and a rapid pace of change.

This thesis identifies that there are commonalities across sectors/organisations in changing temporal practices and forms of precarious scheduling. However, this is mitigated by the relationships between line management and those being managed, with the level of autonomy that middle managers have to implement or resist precarious scheduling being inconsistent, despite efforts from senior management to implement more automated or regulated forms of precarious scheduling. This demonstrates the possibility of resistance,

as defined by classical Labour Process theory, not only from workers, who can use their individual negotiating position to resist and negotiate schedules that suits them, but also from the line managers in resisting senior management rules.

This thesis adapts a form of Labour Process Theory, derived from Braverman's (1974) theory of control, and in particular from Burawoy's (1979) conception of workplace regimes, consent legitimization and coercion, to theorise the interactions between line manager and shop floor staff. The thesis also draws on elements of critical management theory and mainstream management models to allow for theorising of management decision making beyond the confines of shop floor interactions. Wood's (2020) conception of precarious scheduling through his adaptation of Chun's (2020) 'flexible despotism' are considered, as well as the concept of scheduling gifts and the nature of reciprocity. The sphere of flexible working and scheduling is conceptualised as a site of conflict and negotiation within the labour process and a determinant of the quality of work. Furthermore, the influence of flexible and precarious scheduling on labour market outcomes and quality of work is less well explored than other factors.

The thesis concludes that while precarious scheduling may be considered as a form of management control, it is mediated and, sometimes, diluted by line management which is able to turn the conflict that is inevitable in such a practice into a site of negotiation, thus potentially empowering both parties and allowing favourable outcomes for both staff and line management, creating a work regime based on consent, at least in their sphere of the labour process. While there is little evidence of 'gifts' as per Wood's conception, the line manager is able to maintain a powerful position through the allocation of shifts and the potential for gifts remain as long as they resist the encroachment of technologies that seek to remove this aspect of their autonomy. It is argued that while line managers in this study do not overtly exercise control in this way, and in every case seek to try and be as fair and equitable to their staff as possible, it nevertheless offers them a bargaining chip in their other interactions with workers that can be used for reciprocation in the future. This is similar but distinct from 'gifts' which are rewards for compliant behaviour. In other sectors however, the labour market realities shift the balance of power and mean that staff are able to enter into negotiations that are able to deliver favourable outcomes for themselves, or at least outcomes that are mutually beneficial for staff and line manager.

The key outcome of this for future research, and for policy around flexible working is the need to recognise the line manager as a key mediating mechanism between the experience of work for frontline workers and the desire of senior management to extract value from them through increasingly temporally precarious and demanding employment practices. Where external constraints are not overwhelming and line managers retain sufficient autonomy they can act in ways that delay the degradation of work. However, the

imposition of new automated scheduling patterns, and the use of punitive contracts are eroding the line manager's autonomy over this sphere of activity.

1.1 Background to research

This section will provide a brief overview of discussion around flexibility in the policy and politics arena. The discussion of academic approaches will be considered in detail in the Literature review section. The starting point for this thesis was about the idea of flexible working, and whether it can provide a better **quality of job for the employee** while at the same time benefiting employers through better use of staff resources and also for staff retention. At the same time, I was interested in the rise of part-time work and self-employment. This, alongside the (at the time) mainstream discussion in political discourse around the high profile uses and abuses of zero hours contracts seemed to be an interesting starting point for an analysis of how companies that employ part-time workers deploy these resources to avoid employing additional staff, and the effect this has on the employee's life, and whether the necessarily flexible nature of these part-time roles meant that contribute to the then fashionable discussion of 'precarity' as a state of mind.

This entailed a study of policy approaches to flexibility in the labour market as well as the organisational level approach to flexible working within the labour market. That is outlined and discussed in the literature review. I also considered at the outset various forms of welfare regimes that enabled or codified flexible working and the motivations for doing this. Policy responses such as 'flexicurity' seemed to be a genuine attempt to reconcile the conflicting needs of workers and of companies, albeit one that ultimately benefitted the companies and had the potential to accelerate looser regulations on hiring and firing workers.

This dissertation focuses on the UK experience of labour market flexibility, flexible working and precarious scheduling. The social and economic outcomes that this dissertation explores are the result of policy choices of successive governments which have transformed the lives of millions of people while loosening the regulations on capital in its relation to employees and long-term retention on full-time contracts. In the UK, the Conservative governments of 1979-1992 sought an explicit policy of bringing about greater labour market flexibility through a range of measures, including but not limited to: a reduction in trade union power and encouraging individual rather than collectivised pay deals; deregulation through abolition of wage councils and privatisation of services; promoting market-led pay and conditions; and less generous or more difficult to obtain out of work benefits (Reilly 1998: 14).

Organisational flexible working time policies was formalised in 2003 by the 'right to request' flexible working legislation, which was initially for parents of young children, but was soon upgraded to all with caring

responsibilities, and finally extended to all employees in 2014. (Kelliher and de Menezes 2019: loc. 224). The Equalities and Human Rights Commission has recently called for all jobs to be made available on a flexible working basis. These approaches are considered to be ‘worker-friendly’ concessions, and have trade union support with the Chair of the TUC recently stating that ‘Allowing people more flexibility in how and when they do their work makes them happier and more productive’ (TUC 2019). The tension around the concept of flexibility is the core of this thesis. Flexibility is sought by employers and employees – one of the key drivers of this project was to explore how this conflict affects labour market and organisational outcomes

Other policies, aside from those that explicitly address working time flexibility may have contributed to a rise in ‘nonstandard’ work (see literature review for discussion around this concept). The introduction of Working Tax Credits in 1998 is one of the main redistributive measures of the Labour Government 1997-2010, bringing means-tested in work benefits into the UK’s policy environment. Under the Working Tax Credit policy, part-time work was encouraged through qualification for the benefit OF working a minimum of 16 hours per week. This policy, alongside more punitive measures for failing to seek work, meant that employment policy under the Labour government 1997-2010 followed, broadly speaking, the ‘Adult Worker Model’ the aim of which is that all adults who are in good health should be active in the labour market (Murphy and Turner 2016: 137) and should be encouraged or, if necessary, coerced into participation. This coincided with more punitive welfare measures for those not considered willing to enter the labour market, and a real term decrease in out of work benefits for those eligible. The measures had the effect of increasing the pool of available labour in the UK, with more women in particular who might otherwise have stayed as full-time carers for longer entering the labour market. The bill to the treasury for Tax Credits grew and eligibility criteria tightened since 2010. Clegg (2015: 498) argues that one of the reasons for the growing bill was the rise in part-time work (rather than the policy driving the rise in part-time work), which had been growing year on year prior to the policy’s introduction. This is probably the correct analysis, though it is also probably true that it made part-time work more attractive as it could be ‘topped up’ with extra income from the state.

Tax incentives for self-employment have been noted as a contributing factor to the rise in self-employment which were demonstrated earlier. The rise in self-employment is often attributed to the rise of gig economy practices (discussed later). However, the ONS data suggests that the majority of self-employed people are in professional and technical services. This accounts for the rise in part-time self-employed, with the data also suggesting that the rise in self-employment is largely driven by older workers. There is a whole thesis to be developed on this phenomena, and this thesis originally sought to understand this. These changes seem to arise from labour market change as a result of the Great Recession which will be discussed later in this section. On a policy analysis level, there is also an incentive for firms to hire self-employed labour through

tax incentives. The Resolution Foundation suggests that tax incentives have driven the rise in self-employment, with a firm saving around 7% on what they would spend on a similar employee costing the firm £100,000. (Tomlinson and Corlett 2017)

Away from changes in welfare policy, the labour market effects of the Great Recession of 2008 are still being felt. One of the novel aspects of this was the fact that there was no great surge in unemployment as was seen in other recessions. Nor was one economic sector hit hardest, or one geographical area as was found in previous recessions. The Great Recession's effect on the labour market was more subtle and the effects are still ongoing, with organisational restructuring being the main outcome. The aftermath brought about the policy response of a sharp reduction in state spending and the introduction of what came to be termed 'austerity' measures to balance public spending with income. There are arguments that austerity measures in the UK were purely a political response by a Conservative government ideologically committed to reducing the size of the state. However, reductions in state expenditure following the 2008/2009 crisis were in evidence throughout Europe to varying degrees. State expenditure on welfare has both direct and indirect impacts on the labour market. The definition of welfare spending can vary, as it could feasibly include roads and legal costs, but it certainly encompasses the things that most people identify with the 'welfare state: social security, housing, health and education. Since the beginning of the 20th century these policy areas have had a continuing and close relationship with 'government perceptions of the needs of the labour market' (Thane 2007: 178) and the type of welfare regime can define the labour market response (Rubery and Grimshaw 2003: 84).

The UK also has a unique form of industrial relations compared to other European countries. Policies around employment relations are usually made at organisational level. (Rubery et al 2006), meaning that there is often more conflict and negotiation at organisational level rather than at national level, as might be found in other European countries with more regulated regimes of managing industrial relations. The exception to this is in the public sector where many policies are still set nationally (ibid). However, in both sectors there is a high degree of room for negotiation around everyday working concerns, such as flexible scheduling.

1.2 A note on terminology

'Flexibility' is a term that has several different but related meanings in this area of literature. 'Labour market flexibility' is commonly used and usually refers to the change from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regime of accumulation, with firms moving from standardised ('Fordist') production to flexible specialisation (Amin 1994). Labour market flexibility in this context is the ability for the labour market to respond to fluctuations in

demand, or for new products. This is discussed further in the next chapter. However, flexibility can apply to the organisation or to the individual workers' scheduling. Terms like 'flexible specialisation', which is the prevailing definition of the post-Fordist organization (according to those that write within this tradition eg. Jessop 1994; Amin; Hirst and Zeitlin 1991), and numerical and functional flexibility refer to the functions of the organisation and how they manage their workforce to meet demand. It is also important to note Thompson's view that there are further distinct spheres of literature around the study of work, including political economy, firm governance, employment relations and the labour process (2013: 474), all of which contribute to the debates around flexibility. The debates around the labour process often alternate between management-focused accounts and those that emphasise the political economy (Thompson 2010: 8). The thesis seeks to consider the intersections between the two and how they manifest themselves in different sectors through a comparative study of sectors within the UK economy.

The terminology around flexible specialisation and the flexibility in working time are not to be confused, though they often appear in the same area of inquiry and often in the same books or articles. This is best summed up by Beaston's (1995) typology of the two ways in which employers can secure flexibility in their workforce with 'flexibility on the extensive margin' to mean the ability to alter the number of people they employ as demand arises, and flexibility on the intensive margin' through changes in working time, or the range of tasks that they can get those employees to perform. This thesis focuses on the intensive margin, with temporal or working time flexibility, so the unit of analysis is primarily the organisation, mediated through an analysis of management. Specifically, it is about the options available to management to manage employees and to cope with fluctuating demand or rising costs, and the type of working patterns that allow them to do this. Other forms of flexibility are discussed to add context, including spatial flexibility and agile working policies that many firms have introduced to manage reduced costs (or rising rents) for physical space in which work is conducted. However, rather than using Beaston's terminology, the approach will consider 'employer-led' vs 'employee-led' flexibility, which are terms used through the literature that this thesis locates itself within, and also serves to emphasise the level of analysis of this these that will, ultimately, focus on interactions in the workplace and to test the theory that employer-led flexibility is encroaching in many more areas of the economy, partly as a result of the need for increased work intensification and the need to do more with fewer staff resources.

The term 'temporal flexibility' is used throughout this study as a generic label for any form of working-time flexibility or working schedule, whether at the employer or the employee's discretion. This encompasses the use of part-time work, overtime, fragmented scheduling and so on. These will be discussed in more detail.

‘Flexible scheduling’ is used more specifically for instances of direct management of workload using a temporally flexible staff to manage demand.

1.3 Research aims and questions

The general overarching research questions are as follows:

- What are the temporal strategies firms and managers use to manage staff workload/demand? What are the determinants for these practices? What are the constraints to further use of these strategies?
- Is scheduling a site of negotiation or conflict between line management and employee? What tactics do line managers employ to exert control in this sphere? Is this a constraint on further use of temporal flexibility and precarious scheduling?

The aim of the study is to understand why different organisations employ different temporal strategies to manage their staff and workload, through different types of scheduling. In particular, the aim is to seek to identify the drivers of ‘new temporalities’ (Rubery 2015, Doogan 2015) through the use of differing approaches to temporal strategies in different areas of the labour market. The parallel second question is to understand what constrains firms in different sectors from utilising a purely employer-focused schedule. It will do this through an understanding of the constraints that exists externally as well as the main qualitative part of this dissertation which considers the extent to which precarious scheduling practices can and have been extended and the resistance to these from middle managers and the negotiation around it in the workplace between line managers and technology. It will also consider how this is mitigated or mediated by technology and software.

This differs from other studies focusing on a similar topic in that its focus is on line managerial decision-making, and seeks to understand the context, limitations and opportunities available to middle management when utilising forms of flexible scheduling, hence the emphasis on employer-driven flexible scheduling in the research questions. Wood (2016) states in his conclusion to his study of a large retail firm, that he was unable to interview managers to provide a rationale for the use of flexible scheduling practices, or the positives and negatives or perceived drawbacks. Therefore, he calls for more research into why these practices are used and manager ‘awareness of the problems’ that are caused by these types of time management regimes (Wood 2016: 2007). Similarly, Wood and Burchell (2015) state that there has been little research into what has driven the rise in employer-led flexible scheduling. This is a break from much of the work in the field that focuses on

employee experiences of flexible working. Instead of seeking to understand the effects of employer-driven flexible scheduling on employees' work-life balance, wellbeing or happiness, or the particular forms that various types of flexibility take, this will focus on the drivers and determinants behind their introduction and the perceived usefulness of such arrangements for management and how this affects or is affected by labour market change. The research design is a comparative study between sectors, allowing for a more sophisticated understanding of temporal trends across the labour market, rather than in one particular sector, or through the study of one specific temporal trend.

Some firms and public sector employers offer a flexible working time arrangement as part of their job retention strategy (CIPD 2019). Irak and Mantler (2018) found that employers that offered employees greater control over their schedules were more likely to remain committed to their role. Doogan offers a more critical take on retention policy (2009) arguing that employers have an implicit policy of job retention, but an explicit policy of producing a policy of what he calls 'manufactured uncertainty' and 'contrived competition'. This, he argues explains the gap between perceptions of insecurity amongst the workforce and the statistics which point to longer term tenure in jobs and fewer job separations (Gregg & Wadsworth 1999; Doogan 2015: 47; Choonara 2019). The issue of job retention and recruitment will form part of the study which may also be a constraint on the introduction of various forms of employer-led flexible scheduling.

Kelliher and de Menezes' recent study concludes that further research is needed into the extent to which employer and employee demands for flexibility can be matched, echoing Reilly (1998)'s earlier study of the quest for 'mutual advantage' between employers and employees. The suggestion that the tension between employer-led and employee-led flexible scheduling, and the differing reasons why employers and employees seek flexibility is evident within and across sectors. However, in practice these can lead to similar demands from both sides, so it is possible to explore areas where the demands meet to bring about 'matched employer-employee flexibility', leading to greater organisational efficiency on the one hand and increase job satisfaction and commitment for the employee on the other (2019: 53).

These aspects of the literature represent areas of working time that are less well researched, particularly on a comparative cross-sector basis that this thesis will adopt to attempt to gain an understanding of the wider labour market implications. Central to all of these is the idea of management control, and negotiation and conflict with employees around the degree of control that management can exert. The need for line managers to exert control over its staff may be a brake on further temporal flexibility, as may worker resistance.

A central assumption to be tested is that temporal flexibility is more frequently deployed as an approach to demand management than numerical flexibility in the modern workplace, as per Wood (2020)'s assertion. This allows firms to operate for longer hours in a day or week without having to recruit or pay extra staff, thus reducing labour costs. The thesis also seeks to test the theory that this employer-led flexibility gives management greater control over the workforce. However, this thesis will also focus on the constraints to further implementation, either through the labour process and resistance, or through the external constraints and societal structures that scheduling managers operate alongside. Wood notes that the increasing temporal fragmentation increases complexity of management of the workforce and thus this is a brake on wholesale adoption of temporal flexibility:

However, the temporal fragmentation of work increases exponentially the organisational complexity of workforce management. This complexity acts to limit the extent to which temporal flexibility can be adopted by firms. Previously managers had to maintain a core of workers with stable schedules on who they could rely on to cover the operational functions of the business. However, the connectivity provided by smartphones and other portable and wearable devices means that this barrier to flexibility is beginning to be overcome, through the algorithmic management of workers (Wood 2020: 3)

Following this assumption, this thesis highlights that temporal flexibility is the outcome of conflict and negotiation in the workplace, and a site of the exercise of control of management over labour. It draws on the literature in the debate between employer-led versus employee-led flexible scheduling (Wood and Burchell 2015; Kelliher and de Menezes 2019; Henly 2008, 2014) studies of control and conflict in the labour process theory literature, and attempts to identify the drivers and constraints of different temporal regimes through a study of line managers and their decision-making. The determinants are the ultimate outcome of the research through a labour process study of management and employee relations around the area of work scheduling.

A further assumption to be tested is that temporal regimes within sectors (and the differences between them) are influenced more by the relationships, and subsequently the relative power that line managers have over staff than other factors such as legislation, HR policy, or the labour market. However, these factors all contribute to the constraints of the power that they wield. Workers can resist based on various factors including formal workplace organising through unions, sectoral norms on work intensification and hours, local labour market conditions (i.e. how replaceable they are), or the difficulty of their jobs (again how easy is it to replace staff that either need specific skills or long training periods).

In effect, there are two approaches being considered here and the aim is to try and synthesise an analysis of the temporal strategies used in different sectors of the economy and a study of control and

relations between management and staff. Then it will demonstrate the link between the two and how each constrains the further adoption of precarious scheduling.

The aim of the project is twofold: to contribute to the debates about changing temporal regimes in workplaces and the perceived increase in precarious work, through an analysis of precarious scheduling practices; and to theories of power and control through the labour process.

The thesis is located within the literature of the sociology of work, the attendant debates around power and control through the labour process and other more general studies that adopt a critical approach to the use of power and control in the workplace. It is located within the tradition of Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism* and its immediate successors and adherents including Freidman, Burawoy and but draws on the more recent work by Wood (2016, 2020) around workplace regimes, flexible scheduling and scheduling gifts which allows an analysis of service sector and white collar work. This is within the broader critical/sociological tradition of the study of work, as it seeks to understand the underlying power structures that govern relations in the workplace.

It will contribute to the literature in an understanding of control and resistance in the workplace, a common area of study in the literature of sociology of work and industrial relations. It uses temporal flexibility and precarious scheduling as the variable around which to understand this. There is a tacit understanding that working conditions are changing negatively in most sectors, and that the balance between capital and labour has moved towards capital and continues to do so. There is also an understanding that capitalism, and neoliberal capitalism in particular will inevitably lead to a situation where the pursuit of ever sharper profit margins means that work effort will become more intense as firms cut the size of their workforce but require the same or more output from their workers. This has been exacerbated in recent years by the pursuit of a policy of austerity through large cuts to the funding of the public sector, which means that the public sector, which in some cases governs the institutional behaviour of other firms (for example, the care sector), is operating on even tighter financial constraints than much of the private sector. However, as discussed in the theoretical framework section, the wider implications for the future of the global organisation of capitalism are not considered in this thesis, focusing instead on the level of the organisation and the sector, and treating this as an arena of interest in itself.

The requirement for contribution to knowledge in the thesis locates itself within these traditions, but also strives to approach the subject from a different angle and to approach the subject of temporal flexibility and precarious scheduling from the point of the line manager and middle management.

To summarise, the thesis's **contribution to the literature** comes from the following:

- It is a cross-sector approach to analysing temporal flexibility in the workplace – seeking to identify commonalities and differences across sectors.
- It focuses on managers and decision-making rather than an experiential account of working life.
- Temporal flexibility is not done to people or organisations by external forces beyond the control of human agency – it is the result of choices made by managers, albeit bound by other determinants. It may also be the result of either lobbying (for employee-led flexibility) or resistance from employees - temporal flexibility is something both management and employees seek (Campbell 2017: 108). However, the form it takes may be down to the outcome of the informal negotiations and through the labour process.

It is also novel in that it understands that line managers and middle management are themselves employees/workers and operate within the same organisational and cultural structures and constraints as other employees. They are not exempt from the various forces that govern how their firm operates and most will have found themselves subject to more fragmented working hours and unavoidable temporally flexible schedules. The pressures on middle management have been considered by Hassard and Morris (2018)'s account of insecurity amongst middle management and McCann et al's (2008) labour process analysis of middle management and work intensification but there has been little additional focus on middle management decision making in the literature, with most focusing on the experiences of workers in various discrete sectors. Line managers have significant power over workers lives through rotas, scheduling and shift allocation. Wood (2018, 2020) demonstrates this through his analysis of 'schedule gifts' – the practice whereby favoured or compliant workers, or those that are most compliant, are 'rewarded' with the shift patterns that suit them, or in some cases, simply one where there is predictability allowing them to manage their leisure time. This 'gifts' thesis is discussed in more detail in the theoretical framework section of this dissertation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will outline the academic debates around working time and flexibility in the last fifty years, as well as discuss in more detail the more recent work in the fields of sociology of work and organisational studies relating to new temporalities in work. There are several areas of literature that address or attempt to ultimately explain the determinants of different forms temporal flexibility and changing working time. The literature review groups these into the following categories:

1. Transformation theories/post Fordism/the flexible firm/flexible accumulation
2. Working time and nonstandard forms of working
3. Work intensification and the labour process
4. Labour process theory/theoretical framework

There is a huge amount of literature relating to working time and flexibility across several academic disciplines. Therefore, this literature review is selective.

2.1 Transformation Theories and the flexible firm

Perhaps the primary theoretical account of change in the global economy, the labour market and by extension the way people work, is through the transformation theory characterised by the move from a 'Fordist' regime to that of a 'Post-Fordist regime of accumulation. Fordism is characterised by three elements, all of which are related to the working time debates. Firstly, by a production regime and labour process based on mass production. Further, by an economic system that relies on mass consumption of these mass-produced goods. Finally, it is enabled by a social and economic system that ensures a ready supply of workers through a welfare state that ensures health and economic stability (Lipietz, cited in Edgell 2016: 90).

The decline of the Fordist system of production has altered the concept of 'working time' characterised by set hours. The regulatory framework within which this took place, including a welfare state based on supporting this temporal regime, has also changed to reflect this. Flexible specialisation, the form of production associated with the post-Fordist regime, has become the standard approach to understanding labour market transformation. Harvey (1989) identified the move from Fordism to flexible specialisation necessitated the move to recruitment of more part-time workers, contractors, and temporary staff.

There are many criticisms of the post-Fordist school as a theory of the global economy and for its use in analyses of the labour market. Doogan (2009: 93) argues that this theory of transformation overstates the fragmentation of labour markets and the demise of mass employment, and fails to explain labour market change that does not correspond with production change, such as the rise of part-time work, nor can it explain more recent forms of restructuring beyond its focus on production and consumption. Fine (1998: 81) argues that the prevalence of the theory comes from the flexibility of the theory itself, being broad enough to fit into many studies and types of evidence, but also because of its links to Piore's dual labour market theory. By dividing the economy into mass production and flexible production, it reproduces the failures of the dual labour market theory. The crisis of Fordism in this is that it was insufficiently flexible to respond to volatile and more sophisticated demand (Fine 1998: 84)

Horgan suggest that Fordism is useful as a 'metonym for a particular time in history as well as a particular kind of mass factory work, dominated by the production line' (2021: 49). It is, she argues, usefully used as shorthand for a historical period bookended by Taylorism and scientific management before it and 'Toyotism' that succeeded it – just in time, lean and dynamic production with a flexible approach to demand management which necessitates a flexible approach to labour to meet peaks and troughs in demand. While Fordism is usually characterised by factory work, it is also useful for understanding all kinds of work in organisations during this period. White collar work for example, was during this period increasing specialised with for example, typists, telephonists, clerks, and other clerical roles often tasked with performing one type of task only. This has been replaced by workers who are able to perform several tasks. This provides more interesting work and more autonomy for the employee. It also makes them harder to replace as the skills they have are often specific to their job and have been built up over time in the same post. These positive elements are balanced by the fact that jobs are considered to be less secure, and because workers are required to work flexibility and also to give more of themselves – to constantly improve, to be seen to 'enjoy' their work rather than simply exchanging their time for wages. It also, crucially, reduces the sharp divide between work time and leisure time. Horgan argues that the 'wager' that employees entered into during the Fordist period was that they would accept jobs consisting of repetitive tasks, intensively performed, in exchange for job security, free weekends and predictable shifts. The next section will consider the literature around the 'flexible firm' - a model developed as a counter to the Fordist approach by both managers and academics. The outcomes for employees is considered and informs the conception of the labour market as it is now.

Dualism and Core-Periphery; the Flexible Firm

Organisational change as a result of the move to a post-Fordist regime as theorised by the literature discussed above, has been a determinant of labour market change, according to many influential accounts. One of the early attempts to understand the post-industrial world through the study of management and organisations is through the dual economy approach and dual labour market theory. Dual labour market theory as espoused by Reich *et al* (1973) or Piore (1972), divides the economy into two distinct sections - the primary and secondary markets, which can be further broken into segmentation within the primary markets, as well as segmentation by race and sex. Segmented or dual labour market theory had become the de facto orthodox position in labour market theory (Fine 1998: 107). Thus, firms were better able to contain industrial action or unrest through a segmented workforce in competition with itself. Economic dualism is now a discredited theory of the structure of the labour market. Hodson and Kaufman (1982) recognise that it can have some use as a starting point for analysis, but also found that it was insufficient and was overly simplistic and did not stand up to any kind of empirical analysis. Similarly, the dual economy approach which emphasizes dualities between firms rather than within them, was found to be inaccurate, a point demonstrated by Zucker and Rosenstein (1981) in their empirical analysis of the model in four different sectors.

Core-periphery theory extends the dualist concept of a divided labour market to within organisations rather than across the labour market, as might be found in 'traditional' dual labour market theory. As such this theory has proved useful as an analytical tool in mainstream management and organisational studies literature. This can highlight both the sectoral and institutional forces that drive different labour markets within a wider national or international economy. Core-periphery theory would suggest that within 'flexible firms' (Atkinson and Gregory 1986: 13) there is a core of permanent and stable jobs, with a periphery of contractors and temporary staff the core might be 'numerically flexible internal workers' and a 'further layer of external peripheral workers, employed by agencies and subcontractors (Rubery 2005: 36). In Atkinson and Meager (1986)'s 'flexible firm' model, management divides their workforce into 'core' and 'peripheral' groups, acquiring enhanced flexibility in hiring and firing, hours worked, remuneration and so on. This is closely linked to the debates around 'post-Fordism' and a move towards flexible specialisation. Kossek and Michel (2011, discussed in more detail later in this chapter), for example, use it to explain their understanding of different approaches to flexible working schedules and how this is managed in larger firms.

However, core-periphery theory is based on generalisations that do not account for certain areas of the labour market. Most importantly, Atkinson's core-periphery model posits that all part-time work is necessarily in the peripheral part of the model. For example, Atkinson and Gregory state that 'in the service sector, the dominant form of peripheral working is part-time labour' (1986: 14). Doogan (2005: 86, discussed earlier) highlights the problems inherent in this stating that the models 'need to be revisited in terms of labour

market attachment and numerical flexibility. The bracketing of part-time and temporary employees as part of the periphery needs to be challenged’.

This may well be the case, and Doogan makes a strong case for dignifying part-time workers with the same status as full-time workers, on the basis that part-time workers are disproportionately women, and their part-time status allows them to participate in the labour market. He also argues, correctly that, part-time workers are as valuable to the firm as anyone else. Again, this is true. However, it does not change the evidence that part-time workers, where they are employed in any number, are more often than not employed in lower income work and are used to fill gaps in schedules and are expected to work more flexibly than other workers in terms of their schedule. Atkinson and Meager [point out, albeit nearly 40 years ago, that part-time workers form a large part of the peripheral workforce. However, in many parts of the economy, and especially in the sectors under study in this dissertation, there is evidence that part-time work, (or at least part-time contracts) is becoming the default form of working time arrangement for lower paid workers on the shop floor level.

Aside from its age, the core-periphery model has been disregarded as a descriptive or analytical tool for organisational study. Pollert, based on her analysis of many firms in the 1980s found that models of core and peripheral workers, and indeed numerical and functional flexibility appear to be little more than ‘buzzwords of the 1980s’ (1988: 311; Macdonald 1991: 177), with the neatness and simplicity of the model usurping the complexities of the reality it seeks to describe. This model is presented as a heuristic ideal type of the firm, and Boxall and Purcell, management writers in the mainstream tradition, note that there is little evidence of any firms knowingly employing this type of model, and further less of firms making use of ‘both numerical flexibility and task flexibility simultaneously’ (2003: 200). Felstead & Jewson’s large-scale quantitative research projects showed that employers with a conscious core-periphery strategy form a ‘very small minority’ of those that have peripheral workers on their payroll (1999: 4). Flexibility is something of an ambiguous or even political term and most people would agree with the idea in the abstract (Atkinson and Gregory 1986: 12) and as Appay (2010: 25) points out, there are few who would prefer to manage or be part of a ‘rigid’ workforce, and it allows capital to portray those who might oppose flexibility, such as trade unions as ‘inflexible’ (Atkinson & Gregory 1986: 12). The bestselling management ‘guru’ Charles Handy (who also advocated a modified core-periphery model) also suggested that employment flexibility is associated with greater personal choice and freedom, and the supposed decline in the standard employment relationship as an opportunity for personal growth (cited in Bradley *et al* 2000). Nevertheless, the influence of the core-periphery model on HR and management studies has lasted long beyond the decade in which the term was coined, and still informs many debates around labour markets to this day, with ‘precarity’ being the latest in

the offshoots of this dualist line of analysis that does not adequately reflect the labour market, the way people work and the way firms organise. Kalleberg (2011) also reflected in his study of US firms that the old core-periphery model no longer held true because precarious work had become so pervasive that the contrast in the model between the primary and secondary labour market was no longer useful for most firms.

To bring this discussion in line with the research questions, Kalleberg, in an earlier study (2001) elaborates upon and attempts to modernise Atkinson's idea of the flexible firm by highlighting the relationship between functional and numerical flexibility, the two characteristics of flexibility that Atkinson emphasises. For Wilkinson and White (1994: 111), labour flexibility can be achieved through several means:

1. Financially: by adjusting wages,
2. Numerically by adjusting the number of employees or the number of hours worked
3. Functionally: by the reorganization of work and by training workers in different skills to enable them to complete different tasks
4. Distancing: through subcontracting work previously done internally. (Wilkinson & White 1994: 111).

Chun (2001: 129) suggests that employers achieve flexibility in their firms by three forms of flexibility: numerical flexibility and functional flexibility as discussed above, but also structural flexibility, which she defines as essentially contracting out and outsourcing, the same as 'distancing' in Wilkinson and White's model. This analysis is shared by Reilly who identified five categories which provides grouping around 'the policy intention of the employer' (1998: 9), but adding temporal flexibility to the four identities by Wilkinson and White. In practice, some firms use a combination of several types of flexibility, with a combination of temporal flexibility and numerical flexibility (through the hiring of temporary workers) to meet rising demand (Wood 2016: 1996).

The next section will consider these forms of flexibility and how they relate to changing outcomes in the way that working time is arranged as it relates to working patterns, with particular reference to the rise of part-time work and nonstandard forms of working. Part-time and nonstandard work allows the modern flexible firm to manage staff resources in ways that suit their desired outcomes.

2.2 New capitalism and insecurity

Labour market flexibility has been central to research in employment and work literature for at least three decades (Campbell 2017: 108). Labour market flexibility broadly refers to the ability of firms to respond to fluctuations in demand by adjusting the labour force within the firm through numerical or functional flexibility (Atkinson 1985, Edgell 2012), with working time and issues of temporal flexibility a key factor in much of this research.

Working time flexibility remains high on the policy agenda for many reasons. As a way of balancing work life-balance for employees on the one hand, or to increase productivity and competitiveness or to retain and recruit for employers. Recent policies have enshrined the right for employees to request flexible working of various kinds. These policies have been supported by trades unions as well as employers' organisations. Flexible working, especially where employees have control over their schedule increases job satisfaction (Irak and Mantler 2018) allows many more people to participate in the labour market and can aid management in recruitment and retention of staff, reducing staff turnover. Similarly, the continuing rise in part-time work as a proportion of the UK labour market has brought about many benefits to both employers and employees.

However, working time and extreme flexibility practices that are led by employers rather than employees have had negative coverage owing to the emergence to new forms of working temporalities, including fragmented time contracts, zero hours contracts and bogus self-employment. These 'new temporalities' (Rubery et al 2006) have dominated the debates around working time and flexibility in recent years, particularly in political circles and the mainstream non-academic press. The exploitative characteristics of some of the new temporalities (amongst other working practices) are included in Bloodworth's (2017) journalistic covert study of day-to-day life in various jobs that exhibit poor working conditions. In many cases the working time variations and inconsistencies were the worst part of the jobs. In other cases, the intensity of the work was very high, with shift patterns designed to remove idle or low intensity periods from the schedule. In all cases, the pay was low. The correlation between poorly paid work and new temporalities will be discussed further in the thesis to contextualise new temporalities in wider debates around job quality and the question of good work.

Attempts to measure precarity, based on a more nuanced framework and analysis have been produced. Kretsos and Livanos (2015) have produced a detailed study of precarious work. Using the European Union Labour Force Survey they are able to provide a comparative study of workers from a sample of 1.7m workers. They identify three categories of precarious work. They are:

- Part-time (but wanting more hours)
- Temporary but want a permanent job
- Looking for a new job because they fear they will lose current job

The study finds that the highest figure for precarious work is 'involuntary temporary work' while the lowest is 'looking for a job because of fear of losing current job' at just 0.8% across Europe. 9.2 % of all workers in the EU-15 workforce are classed as in precarious employment, which is a notable figure but must be taken in the context of the fact that the figures are from 2009, shortly after the global financial crisis. This figure is also skewed by the very high numbers from Spain and Portugal. In the UK, it is just 4.3%, a very low figure given the circumstances. Of course these would be in the context of sharply rising unemployment which reached 7-8% overall in the years 2009-2013 from 5% or thereabouts in the years preceding it (Statistica 2018).

These indicators differ from, for example, the TUC's insecure work figures (2016) which combined the figures for temporary/casual/seasonal; zero hours contracts, and low paid self-employed. Kretsos and Livanos's method is also much more appropriate than simply calculating the sum figures of part-time work, temporary contracts, and 'looking for a new job' as was the case with the Guardian and Resolution Foundation reports discussed earlier. In doing so, their analysis of precarious work (in the UK at least) show a much smaller figure than the TUC or Resolution Foundation analysis shows. This brings into focus the difficulty in 'measuring' the extent of precarious work in the UK. However, Kretsos and Livanos's approach is not an entirely objective because it includes workers who are looking for a new job because of fear that they will lose their current job. As will be demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis, there is a gap between the perception of losing one's job and the reality, and it is this gap that needs further research.

In many mainstream, media or journalistic accounts of this nature, the assumption that precarious work is becoming normal is used very casually. Bloodworth (2018) in his journalistic account/ethnography of various forms of contemporary insecure work, states that the post-2008 years since the financial crisis have been characterised by a 'huge rise in the number of people on zero hours contracts and in temporary work' (Bloodworth 2018: 195). He opines that Britain is now much more wealthy than in the 1970s but that 'much of that wealth depends on a permanent class of people who live a fearful and tumultuous existence characterised by an almost total subservience to the whims of their employers' (Bloodworth 2018: 123). Bloodworth's book, while not claiming to be a work of science, is rife with language such as this. When discussing the rise in self-employment since 2008 (citing the statistic of it being up by a million from 12% of the workforce to 16%), he refutes the suggestion that this is genuine self-employment, instead he suggests: *'there is a suspicion that....companies have been offloading more of their business costs onto employees by*

effectively pretending that they are not employees' [my emphasis]. This supposed relational change between employer and employee is predicated on the understanding that work is changing, and the standard employment relationship is disintegrating.

The imprecision and lack of agreed parameters means that researchers that are ostensibly covering the same ground are not covering the same categories of workers. Researchers are willing to draw conclusions around the prevalence of precarity from very different data. Without understanding a rise or decline or any other trend in the incidences of precarious work, it is not possible for an objective understanding of the modern labour market.

Debates around precarious working time are central to the academic literature in labour market change, industrial relations, business and management and the sociology of work. As well as being the source of formal industrial disputes, it is the site of informal negotiation and conflict in the workplace, and this is the central theme of this thesis. Working inequalities are reflected not just in wage inequalities but in working conditions, and simply considering wages or income as a source of inequality could understate the true nature of inequality in work (Harkness 1990: 91). Changing temporal arrangements are considered detrimental to work-life balance (Wood 2016: 1990) and to family life (Nolan *et al* 2000).

Perhaps the key factor for these theorists is the notion that the structural changes to the economy arising from globalisation and technological change and the move from manufacturing to services described in Bell's work has led to the normalisation of insecurity and precarity of job tenure. The idea of the 'age of insecurity' was first popularised in news media, advertising and politicians speeches in the 1990s (Fevre 2007: 519), and has remained in the popular consciousness since. This technological pessimism apparent in business and management literature in the 1990s is exemplified by Rifkin's hyperbolic *The End of Work*, in which he opined that 'new technologies have paved the way for a revamping of the global economic system along high tech lines with a concomitant decline in the global workforce required to produce goods and services' (1995: 162). Likewise, Dunkerley (1996) suggested that we have 'little control' over the jobs that are overtaken by technology and called for significant intervention by government to quell what he saw as the inevitability of an economy defined by mass unemployment.

The literature portrays a labour market that is characterised by Sennett's (1998) view that 'a change in modern institutional structure has accompanied short-term, contract or episodic labour' for large parts of the workforce (1998: 23). Coyle agrees, stating that 'changes that probably explain the sense of insecurity

involve the switch to part-time, temporary and contract work' (1997: 38). Beck goes as far as to suggest that labour market change is bringing about a 'Brazilianization of the West', meaning that Western economies will soon take on the characteristics of less developed countries and will come to resemble the 'patchwork quilt of the [global] south, characterised by diversity, unclarity and insecurity in work and life' (2000: 1).

Accounts stressing the pace and significance of change to a new capitalism in the labour market can be found across many academic disciplines, and from both the left and right. Much of the sociological literature characterised by Beck, Sennett and Standing, is from a post or neo-Marxist perspective, and is critical of the new capitalism that it describes, mainly because of the belief that labour's power as a collective movement has been reduced and that the interests of capital have created a structure with no room for resistance, due in part to the widely held view that employers have the ability to effectively hold employees to ransom with low wages, insecure contracts and poor working conditions by the threat of moving elsewhere in the world if their demands become unacceptable to employers (George & Wilding 2002: 48) leading to reduced security of employment (Standing 2011: 11). By contrast, the literature from the right (such as the normative popular business and management literature and some economists influenced by Hayek and other free market disciples) is optimistic about the prospects for a supposed new capitalism through increased flexibility, greater innovation, and the possibility of new markets opening as result of institutional and technological changes (May 2002: 49). Between the two voices from the left and right, a consensus has emerged that has become almost unchallenged. It is perhaps this variety of political views that adds a credibility to the narratives (Doogan 2009: 29).

2.3 Newer and nonstandard forms of working time and scheduling

The relationship between work and time has been discussed for as long as work has been studied (Bittman 2018: 523), with the time management techniques of Taylorism and scientific management intensifying the contestation of working time between labour and capital (Edgell 2012: 58), forming a key part of industrial conflict in the twentieth century. In recent years, new temporal trends in working time and scheduling have emerged and the debate around the use of zero-hours contracts in some sectors has brought this to the attention of the mainstream and into political discourse in recent years, as well as the rise in 'bogus' self-employment (see Wood and Burchell 2015). These trends signify some symptoms of a trend towards 'employer-led flexible scheduling' (Wood and Burchell 2015). However, they do not tell the whole story, as employer-driven flexible scheduling has been introduced to many more jobs otherwise categorised as full or part-time permanent employment.

E.P. Thompson's (1967) study of working time has laid the foundations for much work in the study of working temporalities, schedules and tasks. His historical account of working time relations and disciplines demonstrates how working time has been used as a tool by managers for discipline in the workplace, and then later as a source of conflict between management and employees. As the industrial epoch advanced, workers and managers began to realise the value of 'time as money' and time became the contested area for industrial conflict. E. Rose (2015: 507) argues that the 'objectification' of time was central to the power employers have to control work life, indicating not only the start and end time of the working day, but also by dictating the activity that workers should be doing at a particular moment and the pace at which that work should be done.

The Supiot Report (2001), an influential piece of comparative research into various aspects of working time and regulations in Europe found that the standard time-based employment relationship was moving towards two new temporal trends. The first being a move towards a results-based system, with completion of tasks rather than working to the clock. The second is a move to a fragmented working time system, with less emphasis on continual work over a single period of time. These two forms have proved to be the key to many of the debates around working time and new temporalities. The trends are not universally applicable across the labour market. Campbell (2017) highlights the outcomes of his research which shows that in high-skilled work the trend has moved toward results-based systems. The increase in worker autonomy is offset by reduced costs through new rewards, heavy workloads and lean staffing. With low-skilled work, the time-based relationship remains in place, but the fragmented working schedule comes into play to manage demand at times of high and low demand.

Supporting the Supiot reports findings, Rubery et al 2006 outlined the outcomes of their research which has formed the basis of much of the work in temporal trends in the UK labour market. They found that

'the employment relationship is moving from a clear contract of service based on time, to contract for services related to outputs or results. For others, the agreed period of time is becoming fragmented into shorter, discontinuous periods and is being scheduled across the week or the year to match the requirements of employers. The scheduling of time becomes part of the process through which employers manage the amount of labour provided under a time-based contract, as periods of slack demand are eliminated from schedules.' (Rubery et al 2006: 123).

Outside of Europe, US researchers Kossek and Michel (2011) identified a variety of flexible work schedules that are employed to manage workload and staff. The strategies are used for many reasons but in their analysis, they are implemented with both employer and employee interests in mind. They concede that they reflect 'changes in the design of work systems in response to a 24-7 global economy' (2011: 535), suggesting that external factors play a more significant part in change than employee demands. They suggest

that flexible schedules are mainly used to give employees 'scheduling discretion' over their working time and to determine how long and when they are at work. They note that there is a related literature on 'nonstandard' schedules (discussed later in this chapter) which are generally disadvantageous to workers, and are not of the employees' choice, including shift work, temporary and contingent work, or compulsion to work longer than contracted hours (Kossek and Michel 2011: 538).

However, not included in their list is what Rubery et al (2006, 2015) term fragmented time contracts. Strict work time scheduling by managers mean that the working day can be broken up so that only the times when work is being undertaken is the worker considered 'on the clock' and selling their labour. This is sometimes termed a 'split shift' with research in the US labour market showing that around 7 percent of the US workforce has a schedule of this type (Golden 2015: 1). Grimshaw et al (2015) and Pennycook et al (2013) focuses on domiciliary social care in the UK where this is now the most prevalent form of scheduling, with staff only being paid for the work they are doing, and are 'off the clock' when travelling between tasks. This is clearly a significant change from a split shift style arrangement which would usually consist of two periods of time with a prolonged break in the middle. There is a link between fragmented time contract work and low pay, a correlation found in studies in the UK (Grimshaw et al 2008) and the US (Golden 2015). Fragmented time systems are introduced when close monitoring of productivity and performance are in use, and Rubery et al (2006: 139) suggest that it is this very monitoring of effort (along with customer demand) that leads to this kind of fragmented time scheduling. This has the effect of shifting the risk of fluctuating demand for services onto staff and increasing the work intensity during the paid periods (Rubery et al 2015: 754, Lambert 2008, McGovern et al 2007). Rubery et al also suggest that this form of working blurs the boundary between employed and self-employed status (ibid.), with task-based work like this normally only performed by those in self-employment, or with a historical perspective, by those in non-industrialized economies (Thompson 1967: 92). This type of working time arrangement precedes the possibility of a 'new temporality of capitalism' driven by new forms of employer-led flexible scheduling (Wood and Burchell 2015) as part of a move from the traditional employment model to employer-led modalities.

One could argue that new forms of temporal flexibility are enabled by the growth of part-time work. If, part-time work is to be included as part of the standard employment relationship and not considered 'nonstandard', then it will follow that the potential for part-time workers to *either* choose the hours within their working week or have them chosen for them is much greater than full-time workers. Rubery et al's research (2005: 92) suggest that the growth of flexible time arrangements are attempts by employers to extend the times that employees can be expected to work, allowing them to schedule work when it is most productive for the employer. They allow for longer operating hours and enable employers to introduce it as a 'radical alternative to traditional overtime and shift-work systems' (Campbell 2017: 15). It is also used to

reduce costs, with staffing arrangements more directly matched to fluctuating business needs. Shift work, annualized hours, overtime, part-time hours, variable hours, temporary workers, agency workers and piecework were all used in various ways by organisations. These different types of contractual arrangements allow a very high degree of numerical flexibility to cope with lulls or spikes in demand for labour (Grimshaw et al 2008: 291). More perniciously, they can be used to avoid regulatory protections. Most frequently through avoiding lunch and other breaks, but also targeting holidays, transport time and training needs (Campbell 2017: 20)

Nonstandard work – definitions and debates

Before considering the research on determinants of different forms of flexibility, it is necessary to consider the debate around 'nonstandard work' which was alluded to in an earlier section of this literature review chapter, as this is central to some of the themes that arise, and also some of the assumptions made about different forms of temporal flexibility. The concept of what constitutes 'standard' and 'nonstandard' work is central to debates around temporal or working time flexibility. Working time 'flexibility' is often used in the context of the growth of nonstandard work (Robinson 2000: 25). The definition of nonstandard work is subject to ongoing debate. On the most basic level, Pilovka et al (2000) identified eight types of workers based on their temporal and contractual status. Seven of these categories were classed as 'nonstandard' simply by being different from the most prevalent form of working arrangement which is full-time employment.

In much of the sociological literature, 'nonstandard' work is characterised by part-time work, self-employment and temporary, seasonal or contingent work. (Bradley et al 2000: 52). These are broad categorisations, but nevertheless the employment relationship between these workers and their firms can suggest or allow forms of temporal organisation to emerge. Choonara (2019: 96) suggests that agency workers ought to be considered separately from temporary workers, owing to the 'presence of an additional party mediating between the place of work and the worker making this arrangement qualitatively distinct from the other major forms of temporary work', though agency work is more often than not considered alongside various forms of temporary or contingent work.

Debates around nonstandard work are often characterised in relation to the 'standard employment relationship' (SER) model. In the standard employment relationship (Bosch 2004, Rubery et al 2015), jobs are 'stable, socially protected, dependent, full-time...' (Bosch 2004: 618). Most contracts in a standard employment relationship specify the length of the working week, the working day (or how the working week is divided into days), as well as exceptions such as lunch breaks. However, Bosch (ibid.) suggests that much of

the literature is around the decline in the SER, and how the SER is based on an outdated male breadwinner model. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Recent years have seen literature attempting to redefine the SER to account for changing work patterns. Rubery et al (2018: 510) suggest that *'the essence of the SER is found not in its habitual form of full-time permanent work but in its substantive protections against a pure market relationship, jointly provided by employers and the state through employment rights and social protection'* (Rubery et al 2018: 510). This places the type of work in the context of the relationship between employer and employee, but also the regulatory environment within which this relationship takes place.

The 'nonstandard' work category is also problematic because of the inclusion of part-time work. As Rubery et al demonstrates, the standard employment relationship should describe the relational factors, rather than the temporal factors. To suggest that part-time workers are 'nonstandard' suggests that they have a different kind of relationship to the firm to full-time workers, which is not the case beyond the fact they work fewer hours. Despite some studies showing that nonstandard work has a correlation with poorer quality work (McGovern et al 2004; Gash & Inanc 2013), any insinuation that all work that falls outside of this category is somehow 'less than' or inferior to full-time needs to be challenged. The use of the terms 'nonstandard' or 'atypical' employment is also loaded with normative assumptions: that 'standard' employment is still understood to be full-time employment, usually performed by a male workforce (Doogan 2009: 189). In particular, the rise in part-time work, and the conflation of part-time work with notions of insecurity or peripheral work fails to highlight the importance of part-time work allowing many people, especially women (Ellingsæter & Jensen 2019: 445) to participate in the labour market that otherwise could not.

Moving towards the sociology of work literature that this thesis will ultimately lean on for its theoretical framework, Edgell (2012) considers the literature around the process of working becoming 'destandardised' in his own literature review of the key debates in the standard/nonstandard, debating the work of Ulrich Beck (2000) and Manuel Castells (2010), two of the most prominent social theorists of the last thirty years. Their definition of nonstandard work facilitates 'temporal destandardisation'. This, he argues covers temporary work and part-time work, because of the limited time contract of temporary work and the temporal issue of the number of hours in a working week that part-time work covers. Castell's starting point is the observation that 'the traditional form of work, based on full-time employment, clear cut occupational assignments, and a clear pattern over the life cycle is being slowly but surely eroded away' (2010: 290). Castells sees individualisation and flexibility as creating different realities for different segments of the workforce, dividing them into two groups: the core labour force and the disposable labour force. The latter are the majority 'generic labour' 'who do not have any special skills...other than those necessary to execute instructions from management' (Castells 2010). In this conception, such generic labour can be automated,

outsourced or located offshore. Under informational capitalism, the working conditions of those at the lower end of this market have deteriorated. There is a global race to the bottom. (Stalder 2006: 63). The good jobs versus bad jobs thesis has been considered by the economists Goos and Manning (2003), who found that there was evidence of polarisation in the UK job market, brought about by technological change. This paper, along with the work of Sennet and Standing, has drawn a degree of notoriety and fame owing to its usefulness as rhetoric device. Polarisation and binaries are easy to explain and function well for opposition parties.

However, this dualistic approach has drawn criticism. Doogan (2009) strongly criticises the construction of the 'nonstandard' model, particularly as espoused by Beck and Castells, arguing that the negative definition categorises a hugely diverse set of working practices into one group. Secondly, there are assumptions inherent in the model are that full-time work equals stable work, while the nonstandard category is 'banished to the dark side of the labour market' and is inherently unstable and insecure. These groupings are false, and the nonstandard category has, Doogan argues, through a 'perverse generalisation' become conflated with a minority of workers in the category that are in temporary work. Similarly, Reilly (1998) disputes Will Hutton's claim in *The State We Are In* that 30% of the UK workforce are marginalised and insecure, as Hutton includes not just temporary and casual workers, but all part-time workers except those who have worked in the same job for more than five years, all self-employed workers that have been self-employed for less than two years, and those earning less than half the average wage.

Conversely, Edgell (2012) argues that Doogan's thesis - that the discourses around destandardisation, especially those of Beck and Castells (and by extension insecurity) relies too heavily on temporal destandardisation at the expense of other forms of destandardisation such as spatial and contractual destandardisation. There is perhaps some merit in this argument, however, the debate around destandardisation is often a proxy for debate around insecurity or precarity (see Standing 2011), and it is the generalising from marginal working schedules (such as temporary work or zero hours contracts) that Doogan seeks to disprove through his research. Standing's book *The Precariat* has become one of the most influential social science books in recent history. Its reach into the mainstream of political thought is unusual for an academic text. Its themes have been enthusiastically adopted by left wing and social democratic political parties. Standing offers a detailed description of his definition of 'the precariat' in the introduction to his 2011 work on the subject. His definition of the precariat relates to seven forms of labour security, which I have summarised below:

- Labour market security - macro level; adequate opportunities for employment
- Employment security - protections against dismissals

- Job security - ability to 'retain a niche' and opportunities for career progression
- Work security - protection against illness, health and safety, limits on working time, compensation
- Skill reproduction security - opportunities to train and gain skills
- Income security - assurance of adequate stable income, protected through social security and welfare safety net (includes 'progressive taxation to reduce inequality and to supplement low incomes')
- Representation security - possess a collective voice with the right to strike

(Standing 2011: 10)

As this summary shows, this is a very broad approach to categorizing workers. Standing's reasoning for including these categories in his understanding of precarity is sound enough, they relate to various forms of insecurity rather than precariousness. This is broad enough to cover the lowest paid call centre worker up to the career civil servant who is shunted between departments (2011: 11) or a social worker denied promotion (2011: 20). Temporal security is not explicitly discussed as form of insecurity but is used in the examples of poor working practices which contribute to his notion of precarious work.

The destandardisation debate is the most fundamental in the study of labour market change. It remains important from both a theoretical and practical position. For example, McGovern et al (2004)'s research 'supports the hypothesis that nonstandard employment (part-time, temporary, and fixed-term) increases workers' exposure to bad job characteristics' based on qualitative evidence. The debates suggest that full-time work and the standard employment relationship are the jobs that are most desirable or provide the most stability. This thesis will seek to explore this assumption but will do so with a far finer distinction between categories of non standard work which will be outlined later in this chapter.

Gig economy, digital labour, Uberisation, 'just in time' platforms, emerging temporal arrangements

Recent literature on labour market change focus heavily on these new forms of work, which are facilitated by app-based, sharing technology. More commonly known as the 'gig economy'. This is a technology-enabled acceleration of the fragmented time scheduling discussed by Rubery, above. The gig economy, as it is commonly understood has been enabled by this new communication technology (Srnicsek 2017; de Stefano 2016). Smartphones with GPS and access to 4G networks and software that can connect people in real time have allowed task-based employment companies such as Uber and Deliveroo to exist, as

well as gigging platforms such as TaskRabbit that connect self-employed labour to clients for tasks. The growth of this type of work can be attributable in part to the development of technology and of social media, through smartphone apps which allow people to communicate easily and in real time transactions. These forms of digital labour have allowed a form of task-based self-employment to take hold in certain industries, and labour can be sourced from anywhere in the world. Web-based digital labour platforms permit the real-time hiring of labour, from IT programming to graphic design, copywriting or routine clerical tasks. On these platforms, groups of workers ('the crowd') living across multiple time zones offer businesses the possibility of completing projects at any time, day or night. (WEF 2019)

There is a great deal of research into this form of working arrangement, and its implication for the future of work, for capitalism and for society in general. Srnicek's *Platform Capitalism* (2017) is perhaps the key text in the UK that seeks to analyse this form of employment arrangement. The key change here is that labour can be hired immediately, from anywhere in the world, as the service being provided is not a physical good but digital goods such as graphic design, software programming and so on. This is a fascinating area of research and has implications for many such sectors. Platform based work is an interesting avenue for research as it is arguably a genuinely novel employment relationship that would be impossible without the advent of certain types of technology. De Stefano (2015) argues that this type of working time arrangement represents an intensification of the commodification of labour through the ability to buy labour for discrete tasks rather than a time-based relationship. Parker et al, business writers seeking to guide entrepreneurs on how to exploit the possibilities of the 'platform revolution' highlight how this new temporality can 'annihilate barriers of space and time' (2016: 5), which echoes some of the more hyperbolic predictions of labour market change seen in the 1970s to 1990s, from Toffler to Beck and Leadbetter and arguably, and certainly most influentially within sociological literature, Sennett. The rise of platform labour is fascinating, and its wider use has already drawn policy responses, as discussed in the introduction of this dissertation. However, as with many accounts of changing working practices within the sociology of work literature, its prevalence is over emphasised, and researchers often try to generalise a marginal activity to the wider economy. Platforms and gig working are an important development in the labour market, particularly for those looking at new forms of flexibility, but its spread beyond the areas for which it is best known has been mitigated by regulation, resistance as discussed elsewhere, and also by other factors both internal and external to the labour process which are discussed in the empirical portion of this dissertation.

While separate from gig and platform work, the rise of zero-hour contracts is also incredibly important and have particular importance for the sectors being studied in this dissertation. Zero-hours contracts are the most high-profile form of fragmented time contracts or employer-led flexible scheduling. Wood and Burchell

(2015:3) suggest that the rise in interest in zero-hours contracts relates to the rise in the perception of insecurity in work in all forms of employment, and *'common to other, far more prevalent forms of employer-driven flexible employment, which "allow front-line managers to keep a tight link between fluctuations in demand and labour costs by varying the number and timing of employees' work hours.'*

There is a strong evidence base based on interviews demonstrating the plight of workers in domiciliary adult social care (eg Rubery 2005; Rubery & Grimshaw 2003), an area which has the highest number of workers on zero hours contracts. Investigations into the employment practices of warehouse of Sports Direct have also been investigated by a House of Commons Select Committee (2016). There is no doubt that zero hours contracts are a pernicious form of working arrangement that has the ability to exploit low paid or skilled workers. However, Choonara's statistical analysis of the labour market survey shows that zero hours contracts are not common across the UK labour market but are instead heavily concentrated in five areas of employment including residential care and domiciliary care, as well as in restaurants, hotels and bar work. These are sectors that have either always used casual workers to cope with fluctuations in demand, or where employers are prepared to tolerate high levels of staff turnover (Choonara 2019).

2.4 Employer-led flexibility vs employee flexibility

One of the key debates in the literature on flexibility, and the one that informs the key research questions in this thesis is the question of who benefits from temporal flexibility - the worker or the employee (see Reilly 1998 for an earlier study advocating a mutual approach. It is one of the paradoxes of the idea of temporal or working time flexibility that while this can often be a site of conflict or negotiation, working time flexibility is something that is pursued by both employer and employee (Campbell 2017: 108).

Employee demand for flexibility is a determinant of differing temporal regimes. Reilly suggested that functional flexibility can allow employees to acquire new skills; to manage lifestyle through temporary work; maximise earnings through contracting; organise work and life balance through flexi-time or part-time work, or can cut commuting time and costs through remote or home working. (1998: 17). Reilly also demonstrates that there are benefits to employers to each of these arrangements through improved productivity from numerical flexibility, better labour input through flex time working, and reduced overheads from home working (1998: 19). Much of these recommendations are of course now being put into place across many sectors following the Covid restrictions. This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

Much of the literature seeks to understand the effect of flexible scheduling on work-life balance, which is a normatively positive outcome of flexible scheduling (Kelly and Moen 2002) or on the blurring of boundaries between home and work which is normatively less desirable (Hyman et al 2005). There is fewer research projects that focuses on managerial aims, and the constraints or opportunities to employ flexible scheduling on their terms to a greater degree.

Wood (2016)'s case study of two retail firms found that where flexible scheduling was used (and it was used extensively in both cases), it was a manager-led flexible scheduling approach that was most prevalent, rather than employee-led. It was found that the use of manager-led scheduling was found across employment types in the retail firm he studied, whether hourly paid full-time, part-time or flexible workers. The purpose of this is to reduce the need for numerically flexible staffing such as temporary, agency or casual staff. This is a break with the core-periphery model as discussed earlier, as the peripheral workers in that model are not replicated in Wood's findings. Indeed, most of the staff were relatively long-term workers with more than a year's tenure. To this end, Wood argues that the flexible firm model as discussed earlier needs to be amended 'to remain relevant in an increasingly temporally flexible age', suggesting that only managers should be in the core part of the model, with their long, fixed hours, and secondly, The barriers between Atkinson's core and periphery need to be changed to reflect that temporal flexibility is now the main form job flexibility, rather than numerical flexibility.

Wood questions the usefulness of the model given that in his view, the vast majority of a firm would be in the periphery.

2.5 Work intensification and the labour process

There is overlap with the literature on the new forms of flexible scheduling with literature on work intensification.

However, it is first necessary to explore some of the debates around job degradation that are inherent in LPT literature. Braverman's original thesis related to the degradation of work, alongside work intensification. This has been intensified in recent years, most notably in accounts which emphasise the increasing duality of work, with Goos and Manning's study of 'lousy jobs vs lovely jobs' being particularly well cited in recent studies. This has also contributed significantly to some of the debates around insecurity and precarity as discussed earlier.

The questions that arise in this dissertation are no different. The assumption inherent in the research questions is that scheduling, and in particular employer-led flexible scheduling, has contributed to a decline in job quality with infrequent or unpredictable working hours and a greater strain on workers' leisure time.

Employer-led flexible scheduling does not necessarily change the nature of the job, as in the labour process or the tasks that make up a job. It does however change fundamentally the relationship between employer and employee, giving the employer far greater control over the employee's time. This in turn changes the power relationship between employer and employee in favour of management. The reduction in autonomy this brings degrades the job quality.

I have a degree of cynicism about the job degradation thesis. As Strangleman (2007) highlights, much discussion on work quality is based on nostalgia. His own research into railway workers found that complaints about the decline in the quality of work have been present in previous studies decades earlier, with the same complaints about degradation in job quality, standard of staff and management, and job status recurring throughout. (2007: 91).

In Prophecy and Progress Krishan Kumar (1978) addresses some of these same issues. He notes the way in liberal thought the idea of progress artificially creates a disjuncture between the past and the present. He also stresses the way in which sociologists are always attempting to make sense of change at the very point of change. (Strangleman 2007: 94).

This being said, the research design of this thesis is about line management, so it less likely that nostalgia or simple misremembering will be a factor., However, line managers are also liable to romanticise the past -some of them have been non managerial workers previously and may have been with the company for many years.

The extension of employer-led flexible scheduling is fundamental to LPT and to debates around work quality and degradation. Conversely, while I am sympathetic to claims that jobs quality decline in qualitative research can be the outcome of nostalgia, or romanticising the past, discussions around flexible working and scheduling do not really come into this. Certainly some aspects of temporal organisation could be romanticised, not least the belief that jobs used to be more secure, but employer-led flexible scheduling represents a significant change in many industries in the type of flexibility that is offered. Sometimes there has been a change from the use of numerical flexibility (ie. bringing in temporary staff), and sometimes from the use functional flexibility to cover gaps in schedules, temporal flexibility has, according to the data found in

Rubery et al's various studies, moved into areas of the labour market where it has not existed previously, or has become normalised where once it was a more marginal practice..

As has been discussed earlier, employer-led flexible scheduling, and much flexible working strategies is an attempt by employers to increase the number of hours an employee can work across the working day to manage demand. This means that the worker will have fewer idle periods or will only be paid when a task is being undertaken. Reporting of greater work intensity grew significantly throughout the 1980s and 1990s in the UK (Green 2001) and has continued steadily in the 21st century (Green et al 2018). Green et al state some possible reasons for this increase. New technologies have made it easier to schedule and fill up the working day with more tasks. This has been exacerbated by email and, increasingly, smartphones with email capability which mean workers are under pressure to do more out of hours remote working or to respond to requests outside of their scheduled hours of work. Automated schedules mean fewer breaks in the day with idle or resting workers. Secondly, in the public sector the amount of work needing to be done has expanded but staffing levels have been drastically cut. To cope with this increased workload, workers have had to work harder and faster (Green et al 2018). This relationship is explored by Piasna (2015) in her analysis of fragmented working hours and work intensification in EU countries, where she found that any time-based deviation from the standard working model of 35-40 hours a week at set times usually incurred greater work intensification. This combination of technological change and external pressures are an interesting combination, and one that will be explained in the sectors under examination in this dissertation.

Rubery et al (2006: 126) note that changing working time relationships 'may contribute' towards pressure on work intensification. If as some commentators have argued, work becoming fragmented and individualised, employees as a collective are not able to form norms of behaviour around the amount of effort that is made at work, as you might do in a workplace with a more collective team model. Results based workers find that the length of time they work extends or the intensity they need to work increases. For those on fragmented time contracts, it has led to the need to work harder in the scheduled hours with no 'slack' in between tasks, and a need for the working day to be longer to accommodate unpaid hours.

These new temporal arrangements cause increased work intensification, a phenomena increasing in both private and public sector (Felstead et al 2018). According to Felstead et al 2018 there are two main 'scientific' reasons for work intensification -

- New technologies have made it easier to schedule and fill up the working day with more tasks. Automated schedules means there are fewer breaks in the day with idle or resting workers.

- This has been exacerbated in the public sector by where the amount of work needing to be done has expanded but staffing levels have been cut. To cope with this increased workload, workers have had to work harder and faster.

Felstead et al concluded that the public sector has seen a significant rise in work intensification in recent years, with the private sector a less pronounced increase in the same period.

Rubery et al (2005) sought to identify, through a large case study of six firms (two public sector, four private sector), if there was evidence of a shift from the UK or European model to a more employer-led model as discussed earlier - what they call the emergence of a 'new temporality' and 'new time rhythms in wage work and beyond' (Rubery et al 2005: 96). In it they found that five strategies were noted in the organisations that used working time flexibility primarily to increase work intensity (Rubery et al 2005: 99):

1. Greater use of flexible scheduling to target most productive hours
2. Time off in lieu rather than overtime pay is now normal.
3. Cutting of core hours for part-timers to reduce paid breaks. So for example, scheduling work for 4 hours instead of 5 so that a break is not required.
4. Extension of operating hours without an increase in staff numbers
5. The linking of time schedules (ie when staff worked) to tighter job specifications, so that what tasks an employee was doing was more transparent.

This, the researchers contend, represents a shift in the 'wage-effort relationship'. Flexible scheduling had meant staff were working harder during the hours they worked, and that paid overtime had been 'effectively abolished', replaced with this type of arrangement. Managers and workers were clear: they had to work harder during their working day - or 'restructuring the wage-effort relationship'. All social care workers had to be available between 8am and 8pm for shifts with the tasks scheduled within that time.

In a recent paper based on the same survey data, Adăscăliței et al (2021) found that work intensification, as theorised by the sociological literature, has intensified in recent years and in particular since the financial crisis. However, they found that this intensification is slowed by external factors such as increasing regulations around the labour market and by collective bargaining. They also found that the extent to which intensification occurs differs across not just sectors but employment groups, with intensity levels for temporary workers increasing. They also found that 'higher levels of unemployment intensify work for agency

workers but not for workers on a fixed-term contract relative to workers on a permanent contract.’ These factors are considered in the research design and research questions.

2.6 Automation

The role of technology is discussed elsewhere in the literature review. With relation specifically to employer-led scheduling, software, algorithms and automated scheduling systems has been introduced in recent years to manage demand. Recent articles on software-controlled scheduling include Wood et al 2019, which researches algorithmic scheduling in the gig economy, while Mullan and Wajcman (2019) discuss the use of mobile devices outside of normal working hours and working patterns. The use of automated scheduling to manage demand is found in several sectors, including retail and domiciliary care. A recent piece of investigative journalism (Vice Magazine 2020) researched this in the US, and found automated scheduling for appointments in healthcare, with a schedule from each employee fine-tuned down to the minute.

Technology allows monitoring of productivity via software, including keystroke monitoring or other electronic surveillance of the labour process (Mishra and Crampton 1998). Minute remote logging of worker activity such as this can indicate to management where further efficiencies can be made through identification of idle time. This type of extreme surveillance (and associated fragmented schedule) has been termed a return to Taylorist control regimes (Wood et al 2019) and is often found in call centres (see Bain and Taylor 2000, 2002, Callaghan and Thompson 2001 and Pitts 2016)

It was shown in the previous section how predictions of widespread job loss and labour market change as the result of new technology have been inaccurate, with employment levels remaining stable throughout the decades. This has not stopped many from predicting the same as a result of the new wave of automation, brought about this time by artificial intelligence and algorithms. One much-cited study by Frey and Osborne (2013) of the possible mass job losses as the result of the new wave of automation (albeit from an engineering school rather than a social scientist) suggested that 47% of US jobs are at risk of being automated. Other more moderate claims have been put forward. A subgenre of popular social science and current affairs (eg Brynjolffsen and McAfee 2014, Rifkin 2016) has emerged predicting the automated future of work and leisure and its societal impacts. This technology is based on ever more sophisticated artificial intelligence.

The Autonomia/Autonomism group of theorists inspired by Hardt and Negri (2000)’s *Empire* point to what they see as the trend for ‘flexible labour has moved from the periphery of Fordist production to take a position at the core of post-Fordist capital accumulation where ‘immaterial labour’ produces services that are not material or durable goods’. (Hewison 2016: 430) This has led to a decline in the bargaining power of labour

and so the old forms of 'non-guaranteed labour' has returned as the 'dominant form of work'. (Hardt and Negri 2000 cited in Hewison 2016: 430). To accommodate this, A further Negri-inspired literature which addresses labour market change has emerged which the writers associated with it term 'accelerationism'. Writers in this genre accept the coming of an automated economy and predict associated mass job losses. Rather than resist this, as the traditional left via organised labour might have done, they embrace this as an emancipatory force, and so insist that policy-makers ought to 'accelerate' this tendency (*Mackay and Alvesson 2017: 4*). The accelerationist school traces the intellectual origins of accelerationism to Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' from *Grundrisse* (contradicting Weeks 2011 view of Marx as being 'workerist' in nature - it is the concept of alienated labour rather labour itself that Marx critiques) via Negri's work . This approach has been taken to a UK political audience by Aaron Bastani, a blogger and sometime TV personality and his designed-to-provoke 'Fully Automated Luxury Communism' theory, which much like the mainstream literature (discussed in introduction) is predicated on the idea of a third industrial revolution of automation. This envisions a future where labour is free from the shackles of actual work and instead can enjoy the fruits of labour without having to partake in it. While there are many critics of Bastani's work who completely reject the entire basis of his work and his methods (Pitts 2018 is particularly fierce), his views are also interesting because as we have seen in previous years, the left's approach to technological change has been essentially pessimistic, the accelerationists embrace technology as an emancipation from labour. It acknowledges that capital needs labour in order to reproduce itself, but suggests that the opposite is no longer true: that technology can reduce the need for labour and can break the exploitative capital labour relationship.

The coming of more automated systems for work is considered in this dissertation, as there was evidence of new systems that would take over the job of scheduling. Part of the thesis is to determine to what extent this could happen and the constraints on this. This element has been researched in the retail sector (Wood 2018, 2020, Henly (2014), food delivery (Veen et al 2019) and in domiciliary care work (Moore and Hayes 2017). Automation of scheduling could arguably represent a further 'deskilling' as per Braverman's thesis, this time of middle management who are no longer required to manage resources to meet demand. It may also represent a further removal of politics from the workplace – scheduling is a site of informal negotiation in the workplace but automated scheduling can remove this site of conflict with the middle manager able to claim that the decision is no longer in his hands. This reduces the agency of all members of staff and represents a constraint. Automated scheduling is only present in a handful of sectors but there is a potential for application in many sectors with spikes and lulls in demand throughout the working day or week. There are several off-the-shelf dedicated packages that offer solutions for automated scheduling in varying ways and these are increasingly being used by firms to manage demand . These include:

- EZ Facility (a specific gym/sports/leisure package)
- Schedule Force
- MySchedule
- Deputy

The initial two were cited by respondents as off the shelf packages that they used to assist with rotas and schedules. There are also options within more generic business management packages such as Quickbooks that offer rota and time management functions as well. These offer businesses scheduling assistance and remove the necessity for human input to time management beyond entering staff availability. This being said, in this study, the larger companies that used software to assist with scheduling – for examples the supermarkets - used bespoke software solutions as befitting the size of their businesses. These are discussed in the findings section where appropriate. Broadly speaking, these packages offer the ability to generate rotas based on information inputted to them. The information would be generated by the company itself about shift timings but also about demand at certain times. Some packages are able to update in real time about the activity on the shop floor and request additional staff, as in the ‘heat map’ in the evidence from one supermarket line manager (see Chapter 6). Others are ‘dumber’ but many seem to integrate a communications system which allows staff to access the system and see rotas, apply for vacant shifts, request holidays and so on. This thesis will consider the role of automated schedules more closely in chapter 6.

2.7 Labour Process theory

In order to have a conception of control, labour process theory can offer a useful lens through which to consider the issues in the research questions. Furthermore, The intensification of work and the deskilling associated with technology is an area in which **labour process theory**, which is the framework that this thesis will be based around, offers the best analysis allowing for qualitative analyses of the labour process and the work done. It can also provide some insight into scheduling practices which can determine or be determined by aspects of temporal flexibility strategies that are outlined in Rubery et al 2005, discussed above.

Labour Process theory originated in Braverman’s text *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*. In it, Braverman, using the Marxist concepts of the struggle between labour and capital, identified that work in the post industrial age, specifically in the United States, was being rapidly deskilled through the use of scientific knowledge and technology. This led to large scale corporations, which in turn led to a greater control of the labour force in an organisation. Taylorism and scientific management was the ultimate form of control for Braverman, as it reduced workers to timed tasks over which they had no autonomy. This, he contended, was

the pinnacle of the struggle between capital and labour. Scientific management took from workers their knowledge of the labour process, and transferred it to management. It even went to far as to remove any knowledge of the wider labour process from workers, as they were not required to know about other tasks in the same factory or other work setting. This 'monopoly of knowledge' (Braverman 1990) was the main way in which capital could exert control over labour. This was exacerbated by increased use of machinery which reduced workers to discrete tasks, leading to deskilling and a degradation of work, as well as the associated ceding of control to management.

Braverman's observations were derived from Marx, who had discussed deskilling himself in his work (Edgell 2012: 61). However, his theory of control and work intensification has formed the basis for much LPT work that followed. Braverman's work has been the basis for all LPT research: research papers and articles in the tradition published fifty years after the publication of *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism* will have a section in the literature review on their research relates to Braverman. It is the definition of a seminal text. Thompson argues that the central focus of LPT is on the nature and transformation of labour power under capitalism. Some of the trends are an increase in work intensification, which Thompson describes as a 'qualitative intensification of labour' which involves accessing more of the worker's labour, such as emotional and aesthetic labour. Study of the labour process seeks to overcome the flaws of the post-Fordist model, which it is claimed could not adequately explain change because of the flaws in its claims about markets, skills and employment relations, overstating the system cohesiveness and an 'overdetermined conceptual architecture', along with an over ambitious attempt to link macro-economic structures, global capitalism, the state, labour markets and processes all into one conceptual framework. (Thompson 2013: 474). The labour process analysis allows a meso-level analysis of a problem, balancing structure and agency issues inherent in other approaches which focus on macro or micro level interactions (Thompson 2010: 10). Thompson also notes the differences between associated literature in the post Fordist tradition and the postmodernist turn. A rejection of the post-Fordist regulation school literature. For example, LPT research, he contends, was at the forefront of service and knowledge work analysis, 'puncturing the myths of post-Fordist and knowledge economy perspectives'(ibid.). Furthermore, unlike HRM and Foucauldian literature which suggests that worker organisation and militancy is declining, LPT articulates a new account of labour agency. Focusing not just on usual forms of resistance but a closer look at the idea of misbehaviour.

However, despite Braverman's continual influence and citations, almost all research will include a critique of his work, much of which follows a similar pattern. Edgell claims that Braverman's thesis can be reduced to the following:

Blue/White collar craft work > Taylorism and Mechanisation = increased managerial control and work skills. (2012: 61)

As well as the simplicity of this, many writers in the tradition sought to develop a more nuanced approach to the idea of workplace control, beyond the simplistic model put forward by Braverman. While Braverman did not intend the level of fine grained analysis that many of his critics were undertaking in their own research, there are flaws which mean that his model is not ideal for studying work today. For example, Friedman (1977) argued that scientific management was but one strategy for exerting authority, not managerial authority in itself. Scientific management he argued was just one way in which management could try and exert control, and that worker resistance was possible and prevalent. Friedman developed a model of 'responsible autonomy' which workers employ to halt the degradation of work and to reassert some of their own authority over management control. Through producing their own improvements in productivity through flexibility, they can subvert the direct control of increased mechanisation or technology.

US sociologist Michael Burawoy, built on the limitations of Braverman's thesis with a similarly nuanced view of conflict in the workplace, based around the concept of manufactured consent and the ways in which management ensure compliance from their workforce through the construction of a situation where workers consent to their own subjugation. He was Influenced by Gramsci and Althusser's views on ideology and politics and how that relates to monopoly capitalism (Knights and Willmott 1990: 16), and in particular the Gramscian idea of how a dominant social group enforces its authority through legitimation rather than force, so that the dominant group and the subordinate group have coordinated interests. Though production of legitimatised regimes arose through this process, hegemony is still hegemony and is protected by the 'armour of coercion' (cited in Wood 2020: 9).

Burawoy's main theory derived from this approach was of the production of consent and of coordinated interests on the shop floor between management and workers. The elements of coercion inherent in Braverman's thesis, and Marx's approach to the labour process are undermined by the creation of consent by management and workers. He states that:

'...all these mechanisms, and Marx's analysis of the labour process in general, rest on the assumption that the expenditure of effort is decided by coercion. For their economic survival, workers are presumed to be totally at the mercy of the capitalist or its agent, the overseer, who can arbitrarily intensify the work, provided that his demands are compatible with the reappearance of the worker the next day and that they remain within certain broad and often unenforced legal limits. In other words,

Marx had no place in his theory of value for the organisation of consent, for the necessity to elicit a willingness to cooperate in the translation of labour power into labour. (Burawoy 1979: 27).

Burawoy goes on to say that in Marx's time of writing, the issue of consent was not really considered, but thanks to working class struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth century the gap had closed, and as such the wage-effort relationship are much more independent of each other. To survive, firms identified that 'coercion must be supplemented by the organisation of consent'. Burawoy adds that:

'The defining essence of the capitalist labour process is the simultaneous obscuring and securing of surplus value.... obscuring surplus value is a necessary but not sufficient condition for securing surplus value. In other words, it is necessary to explain not only why workers do not act according to an imputed set of interests but also why they attempt to realise a different set of interests. The labour process, therefore, must be understood in terms of the specific combinations force and consent that elicit cooperation in the pursuit of profit.' (Burawoy 1979: 27)

Burawoy, in *Manufacturing Consent* (1979), identifies two forms of control that is used by management – despotic and hegemonic. 'Market despotism', in Burawoy's conception, represented the ideal model of capitalist accumulation and refers to straightforward coercive control of the labour process, enforced by supervisors and line management. Hegemonic control, conversely is the more nuanced approach around obtaining consent from employees that he found in his ethnographic study of the car plant under investigation. In later works, he added a third approach which he called hegemonic despotism, which while retaining the elements of control, did so through granting rights and obligations to workers through trade union recognition, contracts and regulations with management around their rights in work. It also codified the behaviour of managers which could be policed by trade unions or collective worker organisation. Internal labour markets were produced which were made up of rules governing the allocation of work, shielding workers from the external labour market and therefore reducing insecurity and cultivating loyalty to the firm (Wood 2021: 121). In producing this regime, workers developed work 'games' which made their work easier or more enjoyable. However, Burawoy noted that these games became the focus of worker resistance and produced consent in the regime, away from the struggle with capital and instead they matched their focus on securing additional capital for managers. It is these 'micro transactions' that produce worker consent (Mears 2015: 1101) that are the unit of analysis in these studies. The concept of hegemonic despotism has been picked up more recently by Chun (2001), who has made an important contribution to the field in her study of assembly workers. She adopted Burawoy's concept of 'despotism' to the modern setting by identifying forms of 'flexible despotism' to highlight the continuity but also the differences with Burawoy's conception of market despotism. Chun highlights that in a regime of flexible despotism, firms seek to ensure control through three dimensions: the

labour process, as already discussed, through the internal labour market and through the organisational culture. In all cases, control and power is obscured.

Wood's adapts Burawoy and Chun's work to identify contemporary regimes in the modern workplace, through his study of US and UK supermarket workers. While a useful approach for the arena he is studying, focusing on worker resistance, it is not associated with studies of line management and so my own thesis, as well as testing some of his findings, and applying Burawoy's concepts as Wood and Chun do, uses some of the CMS literature which has a model of management subjectivity and agency to conceptualise the line manager's role in the labour process and their role in producing the workplace regime.

The next chapter will set out the theoretical framework upon which the analysis of the empirical data will be based.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework through which these relationships will be analysed is based on an adapted form of Labour Process Theory, adapted from Braverman and the literature that followed him as discussed earlier, though the focus on management decision making and interactions means that it needs to be modified and synthesised alongside a conceptual framework that theorises management behaviour and understands agency through its relationship to the meso level of the firm. Although LPT theorises workplace interactions it is usually focused on the labour process itself, rather than decision making processes and on managers' actions. Therefore, a synthesis with elements of management theory is undertaken to account for this.

This section will also consider the basis of managerial decision making from an ontological point of view with questions of structure vs agency and the potential for managerial autonomy, and for employee resistance.

The thesis will conceptualise workplaces as 'workplace regimes' in their own right, as per Burawoy's definition. This understands them as sites of management control, presented on a spectrum between coercion and legitimation. The workplaces will be codified as such by also bringing in Kerhof et al's concept of a continuum between employer-led and employee-led flexibility, to ensure the analysis remains rooted in the idea of flexible scheduling, which is the central analytical element of this thesis.

The labour process in a sector is key to an understanding of changing temporal trends. Not only does the nature of the work being done determine how it is managed temporally, but a labour process approach would also emphasise the interplay between employer control and employee resistance, of conflict between capital and labour and how this manifests itself in everyday interactions in the labour process (Thompson 2010). Wood (2019b) argues that management control through the labour process is central to the study of work and to theories of the labour process. Wood refers to the debates around the distinction between detailed and general control, with detailed control referring to the more Taylorist approach to working time and tasks, with general control being all other forms of control. Employer strategies over time and tasks, then, must find the balance between control and autonomy. A degree of flexibility over working time is one way to do this. Conversely, strict scheduling on the employer side is likely to alienate the employee, leading to resistance or exit.

Labour Process theory as a way of conceptualising power and control dynamics within a discrete site of investigation can exist as the study of social relations in isolation from the wider capitalistic system, as a set of rules, or an arena of conflict worthy of study in itself. It need not be associated with the theories of value

extraction and alienation that its originators, Braverman in particular, intended. Modern LPT tends to work on this basis, and studies of the service sector and white-collar jobs where 'value' is much more nebulous a concept than the Taylor era widget production studies, where productivity and employee output was more easily quantified. Put simply, it is much harder to quantify the success of a worker or group of workers at a hotel (the outcome of a hospitality worker) in an economy with dynamic pricing, reputation management and unpredictable demand cycles, high competition and changing behaviours than the outcomes of an assembly line worker where physical outputs can be measured.

Given the nature of the research questions, it is not possible to simply observe or quantify experiences to reveal the structures in society, as this neglects the power relations inherent in the research questions. Therefore, data collection needs to be 'combined with historical analysis and guided by theory'. Theory is required to extend from micro to meso level analysis and to understand power structures, and vice versa, so they are understood as an interdependence and can determine both structure and agency, similar to Giddens' structuration ontology which emphasises the contingent and interdependent nature of social phenomena and how structures are produced and reproduced by social practices, rather than being external to how social practices operate. This interplay between social practices on various levels (the individual and the manager, the individual and the firm, the manager and the firm, and so on) is key to Burawoy's approach to the labour process and is also central to the research questions of this dissertation where the initial research questions seek to understand external or structural issues that determine temporal flexibility before considering how these impact, or are impacted, by flexible scheduling. Therefore, this thesis uses Burawoy's conception of consent, along with Wood's adapted approach to flexible despotism, based on Chun's preconception of Burawoy's categories of market despotism and hegemonic despotism, towards flexible despotism. It will also claim elements of classical critical management studies theory to help conceptualise the role of the line manager, though as this will demonstrate, there is considerable overlap between the two literatures. The following section will outline how I arrived at this framework and how it will be applied to the evidence collected and presented in subsequent chapters.

However, in this dissertation, the interplay between the micro and the meso (as emphasised by labour process theory) is emphasised as the link between individual interactions between manager and employee, and how these connect to the meso level of the organisation and of company policies which is a determinant of the autonomy of middle managers and of the capacity for resistance or negotiation from employees.

Thompson (1990: 140) states that *'this level of analysis, comprising the level of negotiation of the contradictions of capitalism, as distinct from the tacit level of the basic principles governing the labour-capital relation – that questions of tacit skills and the generation of consent arise. It is true that labour processes involve consent as well as conflict and control, but this fact does not establish the revisionist case that the*

control of labour by capital is on a par with the various processes create and sustain workers' accommodation within an subordination to the demands of the capitalist production system'

While Burawoy's work was improved upon by later labour process theorists, it was improved upon only in the sense of scholars identifying that the labour process is not reducible to simple labour-capital antagonism and that there are myriad strategies employed in different places that can bring about control regimes. Thompson's work best typifies this. Its more granular approach embraces complexity and focuses on worker resistance on a micro level. Given that this thesis focuses on one aspect of the labour process that is about direct relationships between workers and line management (and it could be argued that it is not part of the labour process but rather informal relations), Burawoy's approach remains useful as it foregrounds the way that line managers can be conduits for senior management attempts to introduce more coercive methods for scheduling and workers who are likely to resist them by assisting in the creation of consent. Burawoy's identification of work regimes as on a spectrum of force and consent is also useful and informed the research design, discussed below. My conception of sectoral or organisational regimes, based on literature of employee-led vs employer-led flexibility based on Henly et al (2006) as well as Kerhof et al (2006) study of retail workers in the US corresponds broadly with this continuum.

The rationale for adopting a form of Labour Process theory from a theoretical point of view is discussed in the next section. It will consider material approaches vs ideational approaches, and the ontological basis for this in the context of the main approaches in the existing literature.

Material vs ideational, Marxism, post structuralism, the labour process

Any study of the labour process requires a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, usually through observation, participation or through interviews. As it operates on the level of human interactions with other workers, managers, organisations or with the form of labour itself, it can be categorised as a micro level or meso level approach, though I would argue that it is a meso level approach as the site of observation is often the organisational context within which the human interactions are taking place, and considers how these actors interact within that context.

As a meso-level theory, researchers in post-industrial work (as opposed to the origins of LPT, which focused on more traditional forms of manual and semi-manual labour) adopting the labour process tradition sought to bring the 'material' back to the analysis following the macro theorising of the interaction of the labour market, labour process and the global economy of the post-Fordist literature (discussed in the literature review chapter). Thompson (2013) defended his conception of the direction of the debate in Labour process theory vs the writers in the post-Fordist tradition, argued that on the one hand there is ample research available on the 'accumulation regime' of modern capitalism, and a great deal written about the regulatory

regime as per the Post Fordist literature. Thompson contended that the 'control regime' is often overlooked and it is on this level of activity that the second part of this dissertation focuses. Labour process theory seeks to overcome the flaws of the post-Fordist model, which it is claimed could not adequately explain change because of the flaws in its claims about markets, skills and employment relations, overstating the system cohesiveness and an 'overdetermined conceptual architecture', along with an over ambitious attempt to link macro-economic structures, global capitalism, the state, labour markets and processes all into one conceptual framework (Thompson 2013: 474).

Labour process theory also provides a more materially focused approach beyond that of the post-structuralists, and neo-Marxist critical theorists that adopt an approach based on Gramsci's or Lukes' conception of power. While these approaches are distinct, they place a greater emphasis on the ideational and the cultural - in effect forces beyond those that are effectively unobservable. The researcher in these instances has to 'fill in the gaps' to uncover the power relations implicit in these approaches. Labour Process Theory, through the various approaches developed by **Burawoy, Edwards, Friedman, Thompson** and others also concerns itself with uncovering power relations, but it does so with an ontological position of an observable reality, and an epistemological basis that this can be researched through observation or interaction with actors at the site of activity. In some ways, the outcomes of the varying approaches remain the same, however the power of the labour process approach is precisely its materiality and its epistemological position on the ability to observe relations and theorise control strategies and regimes.

3.1 Labour Process theory- ontological/epistemological considerations

As established, fundamental to the approach is the concept of control, which is the conceptual issue that is under consideration and implied in both of this thesis's research questions. The epistemological problem with seeking to identify control mechanisms, particularly through second-hand accounts, is that it seeks to uncover unobservable phenomena, and the requirement of the researcher is to reach beyond the immediately observable and identify phenomena that is beyond the surface of the data. This is why many projects in this field involve participatory or observational methods. Here the researcher can at least claim unique insight through lived experience.

Lucio (2016) suggests that the key question that needs to be asked about the labour process, which is a meso level of conflict, is *'to what extent is this the outcome of the socio-economic process, i.e. capitalism?'*. This question has been the root of the fundamental debate in labour sociology, with classical Marxists relating it to the inherent contradictions of capitalism. For example, *Smith (2015) argues that LPT enables a critical analysis of labour-capital relations, especially around issues of control and resistance. The antagonistic nature of these relations comes from the intrinsically exploitative nature of capitalism.* This is contradicted by

Thompson (1990), who suggests that the causal link between the labour process, class and political transformation is not clear or observable. This reflects the reality that many industrial disputes - formal or informal - are not about class emancipation or transformation, but simply defensive in nature, seeking to maintain small perks that make the working day easier or maintain a benefit to one section of the workforce over another.

This thesis will consider the labour process as an arena in itself, as per Thompson's (2010) conception. It will consider the relations in the sectors being studied as their own process and will not attempt to provide a class analysis or locate it within the debates surrounding the global economy and the decline or otherwise of neoliberalism. This is important in this study which seeks to find distinctions and comparisons between sectors. The labour process in different sectors is obviously going to be multi-dimensional and diverse because the intended outcomes for the firm and for the manager are different. The labour process is therefore '*contextualised by capitalism and its employment relation*', not determined by it. Therefore, policies around work, flexibility and the rebalancing of the employment relationship can bring about positive outcomes for employees (or employers) without fundamentally transforming capitalism or its social relations. (Lucio 2016: 12). This reflects Edwards (2003) who argues that the labour process is autonomous, despite the conflicts, tensions and antagonisms that are inherent in relations between management and employees in most workplaces.

This approach to labour process theory allows for finer-grained and more nuanced studies of the labour process (Lucio 2016: 12) which can allow for the incorporation of analyses of other external factors, which are considered in Research Question 1. In particular - and where the theoretical position of this dissertation is located - it allows for objective studies of conflict and control in 'more localised, informal and hidden (micro-level) arenas of individual and workplace conflict' and an understanding of the 'reality of conflict'. Conflict at this level can be around many aspects of working life, from "gossip and humour on the one hand and through subversion and sabotage on the other", this has led to many rich accounts of shop/factory/office life such as those identified in the literature review, and has led to qualitative approaches dominating this field including many ethnographic and participatory accounts which demonstrate the indirect ways in which managers and employees interact.

This thesis has two main parts. On the one hand it seeks to contextualise workplace relations and understand the many constraints on firms and their use of temporal flexibility and different types of employment contracts. **It does not accept that the labour process, however this is conceptualised, is the sole determinant.** It does accept that the labour process can provide an analytical framework to understand workplace relationships which determine the extent to which ever more 'employer-led' forms of flexibility can be implemented. This takes into account external determinants, but the focus is on how the manager utilises

this context when scheduling and managing schedules on a day-to-day and short-term basis. There are several calculations which they must take into account around the many determinants (Chapter 5) that feed into how they implement and negotiate schedules and rotas (Chapter 6).

Mears (2015: 1100) notes that the labour process literature traditional focuses on a set site – a factory floor, or an office perhaps. However, Mears rightly identifies that workplace relations exist beyond these sites and the formal tasks that make up work. *‘Work spills into the interpersonal realm as workers and management forge powerful, regulating relationships. For the growing numbers of contingent workers, social ties with supervisors and brokers shape the terms of work.’* (2015: 1101) She goes on to add that studying informal relationships as opposed to the more formal labour process is essential to gaining an understanding the creation of consent as per Burawoy’s conception.

Wood’s recent ethnographic study (2020) is a recent study using a form of Labour Process Theory to analyse workplace relations that lead to scheduling outcomes, and of how scheduling can affect workplace relations and the labour process. This dissertation’s theoretical approach will borrow some of the framework and test some of the findings around precarious scheduling that Wood has employed. Wood has written previously (2016, 2018) about employer-led flexible scheduling (see literature review for more discussion) but in this monograph he extends it to cover Burawoy’s conception of ‘flexible despotism’, through a comparative ethnographic study of supermarket workers and their relationship with management in the UK and US.

Wood’s central framework, which borrows from Burawoy’s work (especially the methodological approach) is that power and resistance in work can be understood through what he calls ‘workplace regimes’ - ‘the political dynamics, institutional rules and norms that workers encounter’ in their daily lives. These regimes are relatively autonomous but are influenced by the wider balance of power between capital and labour in society. There is a diversity of workplace regimes across the economy but also within the same sector and at the same point in time.’ (Wood 2020: 8)

David Harvey’s conception of space-time compression is alluded to in a discussion of technology and the role technology plays in bringing about this compression, especially the temporal factors. In order to remain competitive in the light of many tasks in many sectors being moved overseas to markets with cheaper labour, western workforces have adopted a more flexible temporal approach to compete, shifting their regimes ‘back towards despotism’ (Wood 2020: 12). This argument would usually apply towards manufacturing and some less skilled white-collar work, but Wood highlights this trend towards ‘flexible despotism’ in relation to supermarket and retail work, which accounts for a large share of the UK and US labour market, and this dissertation will seek to understand if there is any move toward this in other sectors (alongside supermarkets) where temporal flexibility is increasingly employed to manage demand. It will also

consider aspects of the use of technology and the role this plays in enforcing these new regimes, and the extent to which managers are bound by technology which may be designed to enforce senior management desired outcomes rather than those that benefit the labour process or effective scheduling at floor level.

3.2 Shifting power relations – or depriving employees of agency in the analysis?

The labour process in a given organisation or sector is key to an understanding of changing temporal trends. Not only does the nature of the work being done one of the determinants of how it is managed temporally, but a labour process approach would also emphasise the interplay between employer control and employee resistance, of conflict between capital and labour and how this manifests itself in everyday interactions in the labour process. The labour process in each economic sector is therefore possibly a determinant of differing temporal strategies across the economy. Wood (2019b) refers to the debates around the distinction between detailed and general control, with detailed control referring to the more Taylorist approach to working time and tasks, with general control being all other forms of control. Edwards argued that there is a limit to the level of direct control over the labour process, as workers are likely to become alienated and resist, or leave the firm. Employer strategies over time and tasks, then, must find the balance between control and autonomy. A degree of flexibility over working time is one way to do this. Conversely, strict scheduling on the employer side is likely to alienate the employee, leading to resistance or exit.

Knights (1990) noted the tendency in LPT, particularly those that followed closely Braverman's thesis, towards a simple agency and structure dualism (with free agents struggling against a structure) which can strip workers of agency through a deterministic reading of workplace conflict. This simplicity, he argues, is one of the attractions of LPT but strips it of its analytical power through the inability to conceptualise worker agency.

Others highlight the other ways in which power manifests itself, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Granting workers more autonomy over their workload or their tasks does not necessarily change the relational position of employees with management, or fundamentally alter capital's grip, but 'merely change its form'. Thompson stresses that *'Of particular importance is the use of autonomy as a means of self-discipline. By making workers responsible for clients, or defects in a product that are traceable to source, control is ensured through the greater immediacy of the market'* (Thompson 1989: 142).

The next section will consider various theories which attempt to conceptualise management and management agency.

3.3 Understanding management agency and subjectivity

Friedman's (1977; 1990) contribution to the labour process debate focuses on his conception of responsible autonomy versus the received wisdom prior to his writing of direct control (see Literature review chapter for more discussion of Friedman's work). The suggestion here is that by ceding certain aspects of the work regime or the labour process to workers, then control can be ensured in other ways, as control is multi-layered and operates at different site and at different parts of the labour process.

Friedman's analysis focuses on management as he understands that 'the primary dynamic influence on the organisation at work is normally exerted through the initiatives of managers. Workers will also influence work organisations, sometimes by forcing managers to alter their tactics or strategies and sometime directly, particularly through informal practices' (1990: 180), he then goes to state that as they hold the possession of the means of production they will normally take the lead on organisational issues. Friedman's focus on management is very useful and influences this thesis, however, this thesis focuses on middle and line management rather senior management means that we are focusing on the strata of management that is set a series of tasks that involves the interpretation and implementation of senior management wishes, and ensuring that workers carry them out as far as possible to the companies aims. Despite this, Friedman's 'direct control vs responsible autonomy' as managerial strategy is useful as it is a simple lens through which modern labour relations can operate in many parts of the labour process, including scheduling. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, attempts to impose more direct control are evident in some sectors while others resist or attempt to maintain the responsible autonomy approach despite technologies (both in the sociological and commonplace definition of the word) existing to allow management more direct control. What this thesis will seek to understand is how line managers – ie those who do not control the means of production or set the policies for the direction of the organisation manage their position but nevertheless have a responsibility to uphold the aims of those that do.

Crompton (1978) confirms that the different types of control as advocated by Friedman's model reflect a fundamental tension in management - which is to obtain the greatest level of control over workplace activities, while at the same time ensuring voluntary compliance. Crompton's position then, as distinct from Friedman's was that 'direct control' and 'responsible autonomy are 'not so much alternative strategies of managing the workforce, as a reflection of this persisting management dilemma.' (Crompton 1978: 9, cited in Thompson 1989: 151). This suggests that ensuring compliance through some form of negotiation and agreement between workers and managers is an essential part of the requirements of the task of the line manager, as distinct from the aims of senior management or shareholders/boards. This form of negotiated management is central to the argument of this thesis and is fundamental to the various dimensions that surround changing flexible working, temporal change and scheduling.

The Labour Process literature here conceptualises the role of the manager in their position of a participant in a struggle for control over a resistant workforce. It considers to a limited extent managerial agency, autonomy and decision making, but it is not the main focus. Labour process theory fails to provide a convincing account of managerial decision making, or of management agency, and it fails to identify scheduling and temporal flexibility as a site of conflict and negotiation. This is not a failing of the literature but rather reflects the lack of a neat fit for this thesis which shifts the focus of the site of conflict towards management rather than worker and seeks to identify the constraints on their agency. Labour Process Theory is not intended to provide a framework for managerial analysis and so this thesis will adopt a complementary conception of managerial decision making and agency with which to synthesise it.

Line managers often take the role of the foreman in positions where there is a defined shift and staff to be managed. The role of the foreman is well discussed in sociology of work literature, particularly in the earlier Braverman inspired period when manufacturing was a more prevalent form of work in the British and US economy. Beynon's *Working for Ford*, a key text in UK LPT literature focuses a lot of attention on the foreman as part of his analysis of shop floor relations. Whyte (1956) identified the role that a foreman has in bringing about worker happiness in repetitive jobs where dissatisfaction was expressed about the labour process. Dunkerley (1975) highlighted the common usage of the word 'foreman', - 'overlooker, supervisor, section hand, overseer...an individual being in charge of other individuals' and this is analogous to modern line management in supermarkets in particular, but in other sectors too such as hospitality. However, Dunkerley notes that the foreman, rather than being separate and part of the management hierarchy, carrying out the wishes of the management against the interest of the shop floor workers, can also be conceptualised as leader of a group of workers. This distinction is very important for this thesis as the line manager's position is neither representing the interest of staff nor senior management.

Despite the extensive literature considering the role of the foreman, the role of the line manager is less well studied in sociology of work literature. It is not clear why this is the case. Marx's conception of line and middle managers recognised this, with managers in factories being intermediaries between the owners and the employees. Therefore, they could be considered both employees themselves, and 'agents of capital' (Hendry 2013:98). This position as a conduit, intermediary, gatekeeper is of high importance to this thesis and will be considered in depth in subsequent chapters.

The CIPD, the professional body for HR staff, cites the following as the key functions of line management:

- Day-to-day people management.
- Managing operational costs.

- Providing technical expertise.
- Allocating work and rotas.
- Monitoring and quality assurance work.
- Measuring operational performance.
- Developing people.
- Recruiting and inducting new people to the team. (CIPD 2024)

This dissertation focuses on the fourth aspect identified by the CIPD. However, it is important to note that this work does not operate discretely, especially when considering interactions with the staff they are directly responsible for. The allocation of work and rotas inherently linked to the other functions as will be explained later in this dissertation.

In orthodox management journals, there is a body of work considering the role of the line manager but primarily in their effectiveness as the implementation side of management policy. For example, Sikora and Ferris (2014) highlight the role that line managers have in implementing HR policies and how these policies survive or fail based on the ability of line managers as mediators and ‘interpretive filters’ to enforce them. Most notably for this thesis, their conception notes that *Line managers are responsible for many diverse job duties. In meeting these expectations, managers make numerous decisions about what activities they take on, and which tasks are put aside. These decisions then play a crucial role in the effective implementation of their organization's employee management practices.* (Sikora and Ferris 2014: 279)

In this conception, the ability of line managers to prioritise certain tasks while neglecting others is a form of autonomy that they can bring to their everyday tasks including scheduling. This also affects the ‘outcomes’ as determined by their own ability to generate a regime of consent whereby they can secure the complicity of the workers that they manage. The outcomes of managerial activity can differ depending on the perspective. The outcomes expected of a line manager by senior management will be very different from those of the staff being managed. The line manager’s own view of a successful outcome is likely to be one that differs from both. For example, as discussed above, senior managers would see the smooth implementation of their new policy as a successful outcome, with associated profit increases. The line manager on the hand, might see this differently and focus on the way in which a new policy could be implemented without alienating staff or reducing morale. This dissertation explores this perspective. A degree of resistance is to be expected to new policies from staff, and a line managers’

successful outcome would be to find a way to negotiate this potential conflict through personal interactions. Sikora and Ferris note that even 'well designed' HR policies can be 'poorly or inconsistently implemented' by line managers. Furthermore, they argue that some line managers may resist these practices through ignoring them or deliberately sabotaging them to further their own interests. Sikora and Ferris also note the possibility of line managers favouring one employee over another for reasons other than 'merit'. Each of these factors will be explored in the empirical part of this dissertation.

Certainly, the role of the foreman carried with it greater symbolic weight than the line manager. It is common in both roles for a shop floor worker to be promoted to the position, rather than recruited externally, with Beynon identifying that workers accepting the promotion to the role of foreman become ostracised. However, that was in the context of a factory with a large, established workforce riven with shop floor industrial dispute in a company that was at that time experiencing near continual conflict and formal and informal industrial action. A supermarket or a hotel does not have this dynamic, and most managers do not have an overtly hostile relationship with their staff or vice versa.

The next section will consider the role of management and how this has been conceptualised in critical management studies literature and how this will add to the LPT framework already outlined.

3.4 Critical Management Studies

This thesis will also employ some of the ideas inherent in critical management studies literature to conceptualise management behaviours. Hassard et al 2001, state that labour process theory is a 'tributary' of critical management theory, so the attempt to bring in some of these ideas to the central labour process theory approach is an appropriate fit, especially as few LPT accounts conceptualise management behaviour in itself.

Critical Management Studies as a distinct literature emerged as a reaction to the rise of management studies as an established field, with a critique of the orthodox and normative nature of much literature in this area. (Kilkauer 2015: 197) Alvesson and Wilmott's seminal text 'On the idea of emancipation in management and organisational studies' (1992a) took its intellectual inspiration from Critical Theory (Alvesson and Wilmott 1992) and the Frankfurt School in particular (Kilkauer 2015: 199). This approach to understanding power dynamics shares with Critical Theory the uncovering of power structures and identifying ways in which control is manifested and internalised by the individual through problematising the role of the manager and identifying the changing nature of the role through to its position as professional role with its own distinct

practices and norms. CMS has become a field of its own with a distinct literature that is defined by its opposition to orthodox management literature - (this long quote will be reduced)

It focuses on management not as a function but rather as a set of institutions that is implicit and embedded in all capitalist functions. Much like LPT, rather than attempt to develop methods for effective management it seeks to consider ways in which management manifests itself and, sometimes, resisted. (Alvesson et al 2009: 1)

Critical management studies literature complements labour process theory because the motivation of authors in the literature is to understand power in the workplace and to uncover hidden relations between those managing and being managed. It is also a complementary approach in that the site of observation and analysis is the micro and meso level and understands management as a separate site of activity and sphere of control, rather than theorised as a manifestation of capitalist social relations or as a site of class struggle.

Deetz (1992) added an ideational element to these accounts with his emphasis on the managerial focus on *means* rather than *ends*. Efficiency is prized above all other considerations, to the point of suppression of other interests that might benefit the firm. All other interests must be subservient to the economic outcomes and the reduction of costs. The trend, Deetz, claimed, was towards making decision-making routine and automated as much as possible. This technocratic style of management, Deetz argues, is both the outcome and the symptom of the professionalisation of management and the firm, to the exclusion of all other parties that have an interest in the firm. This professionalisation means that managers can become *de facto* business managers with the freedom to make decisions that value efficiency and profit. This professionalisation, leading to managerialism as a system, brings about the 'seeds of its own demise' - through the relentless mechanisation and technological improvements, managers render themselves free of sufficient agency, with the job reduced to a technical exercise. Professionalisation as technical management removes the very thing that makes a profession a profession - the discretion to use technical knowledge and exercise judgment freely to perform tasks, reducing management to a 'trade' rather than a profession.

Deetz built on Alvesson and Wilmott's critical approach with a greater focus on the ideational and discursive elements of power, as distinct from Alvesson's approach based on critical theory, which is focused on political interests and the Marxist focus on reproduction of existing power structures. Being more influenced by Foucault, Deetz's analysis loses some of the analytical rigour found in empirical examinations of the labour process or in orthodox management literature. It does share with LPT the desire to uncover the ways in which control and power regimes are obscured, and how legitimacy is secured through the consent of those that are being exploited, but loses the material aspect of the LPT approach

Knights noted that CMS considers the concept of power in general, such as Lukes's faces of power thesis. In this case, power is exercised through 'defining the situation such that subordinates internalise norms and comply even when it is against their interests to do so' (2009: 147). This is a similar approach to that offered by Friedman and his inception of responsible autonomy, discussed in the literature review section. As stated, this is largely superfluous to a labour process approach in terms of ontological positioning. However, in terms of uncovering the 'hidden' aspects of power in employment relations, there is a common theoretical basis albeit with a slightly different emphasis on the origin of this power.

Bringing the theoretical positioning of CMS into sharper contemporary empirical view is McCann et al's 2008 approach to understanding managerial decision-making. This is a useful lens through which to conceptualise the way that line managers and middle managers understand their role in the labour process. They begin by contextualising the position of middle management in that particular period of the twenty-first century – as one that saw middle management as surplus to requirements in some cases and often the first to be removed in restructures, downsizing/efficiency drives or threats of redundancies. They also identify, through a literature study of workplace change in the (orthodox) human resources discipline, of 'increased pressures on managerial staff; larger workloads; increased insecurity and surveillance; replacement of permanent by temporary contracts; and a decline in 'life-time employment'. (McCann et al 2008: 345).

McCann et al (2008) identify the importance, as this study does, of emphasising 'macro level changes to the political economy' (which might account for the external factors constraining further use of temporal changes) and micro level analyses of behaviour, which this study does through understanding scheduling negotiations and conflict around scheduling. McCann et al's qualitative study of managers found that a large proportion of company pressures manifested themselves in managerial pressures and working time grievances. This thesis is in part about how managerial pressures around workload/demand are transferred to normal employees and the various forms of control that managers use to ensure productivity and to manage demand through scheduling and interactions. They focus on large scale studies of white collar workers in large organisations, so is not directly translatable to this thesis which has only one white collar setting of the four sectors being studied. Their findings of evidence/reporting of more varied and interesting work and attendant higher salaries for staff in middle management positions may not directly translate to this thesis. This is problematic in itself, as the nature of white collar management work is distinct from that of a line manager in a retail or hospitality environment, as the cultural norms of work and in particular around hierarchies and status are very different between manual and office-based occupations. The greater use of part-time and temporary labour in these sectors also adds an extra factor, whereas the sectors McCann et al studied are more likely to feature permanent and full-time staff.

However, the issues of greater responsibility and work intensification can be considered as universal as private firms continue to restructure on an almost permanent basis (Hassard and Morris 2018, Fevre 2007, Thrift 2000). To this end, the need to have a cooperative and pliable workforce who are willing to work unusual shift patterns and at short notice will benefit the manager who is attempting to meet their goals and to manage their own workload. To this end, the likelihood of scheduling 'gifts' is more likely to occur, which are mutually beneficial to the manager and employee, albeit within the context of the position of coercion and power that management has through the employment contract.

While McCann et al's research is not an attempt to develop a theoretical approach to middle management, they suggest a framework through which this study of this particular part of the labour process can be understood, the agency and motivation of the actors being studied, as well as a way of contextualising the study within the global and local economy within which these firms operate. Furthermore, if we are to understand that middle managers are under the same pressures as the people that they are managing, and in some cases their positions are more likely to be threatened by change through redundancy or restructuring, or an increasing work intensification, then a conceptualisation of the constraints of management decision making is possible.

Hassard and Morris's recent study (2021) focuses on a longitudinal analysis on the change in managerial workloads from an earlier study in 2002-2006 to a study of similar workforces in 2015-2019, with a focus on technological change and the changes in 'managerial availability'. In particular they were concerned with identifying any perceived changes to the spatio-temporal boundaries that might affect their way of working. Their research shows that middle managers have found that they are conducting work in new spatial locations and at increasingly atypical working times. They term this change 'extensification', They noted that control from senior management has moved to a model of self-regulation, from the previous model of external regulation. Technology has allowed this change, through the use of surveillance technologies and portable devices (smart phones were not available in the earlier part of their study, for example).

Hassard and Morris's work, as with the paper from 2008 with McCann, attempts to identify a position for middle management within the new corporate structures that have arisen *around concepts of neoliberalism, technological change and the rise of so-called surveillance capitalism and many other factors affecting white collar middle management*. Hassard and Morris identified a shift to increased remote working, but this has manifested itself in a move towards not only spatial and temporal flexibility, but an 'always available' form of working where they have to be available to make decisions, and (as my own evidence suggests), to be able to cover employees shifts at very short notice if necessary.

With these changes, middle managers could find that they have greater agency – the physical presence of senior managers, or the need to be in a building with them, can free them from the behavioural norms that direct physical control can bring. Similarly, technological change can free up time for other tasks around management and to try and extract the most productivity from employees – scheduling and rotas being a good example, as well as automated stocking, bookings and so on which no longer require direct human input beyond a light touch supervision of the systems. On the other hand, the changing nature of senior management control, through technology, bureaucratic control and so on, can mean that middle managers' agency has declined, with little autonomy to make decisions beyond those that have been set up in the systems through bureaucratic control and technological control.

3.5 A synthesis?

Wood, in his 2016 study of retail workers and flexible scheduling, cited one of the limitations of his research. He was only able to access workers, and no management. He concedes that this was a weakness of the research design, and that trying to understand why managers used these practices would have been beneficial to his case study. The decision not to interview working people is also made with practical and ethical considerations.

Critical management studies and Labour process theory are similar approaches with Labour Process Theory seen in some circles as a branch of CMS, or even a forerunner. Certainly, modern proponents of Labour Process theory tend to find themselves in management schools rather than in sociology or social policy departments, disciplines with a greater focus on critical approaches. (Rowlinson and Hassard 2000: 85). Hassard et al (2001) argues that the displacement of Marxist labour process theory by postmodernism and critical theory makes the location of critical management studies in organization studies and business schools problematic, and also serves to undermine the emancipatory power that LPT sought to bring about for workers. The sublimation of LPT in recent years towards CMS and towards its place in business schools means, for Hassard et al, that the potential use of the theory to improve the lives of workers, or even for revolutionary change, is diminished.

I am not convinced by this argument. I share Hassard et al's disregard for postmodern approaches, only in that my epistemological position remains that as far as possible social science should seek to record and interpret the material and observable. However, the power of the theory within management approaches allows for greater integration with accounts of management effectiveness, leading to a better understanding of the dynamic between worker and manager. This is something that this thesis is attempting to bridge,

through a study of management, albeit the lowest rung of management, and its interactions with workers. The structures that constrain and determine managers decision can be described more richly with reference to the similar or opposing constraints that their staff are working within. The relationship between the two is of interest and that is what this thesis will seek to describe and interpret.

A framework that encompasses labour process theory, including Friedman’s conception of autonomy and Burawoy’s theory of manufactured consent , alongside Thompson’s attempts to theorise work in the post-industrial global economy, alongside parts of critical management and middle management theories and the external pressures they face allows for a novel understanding of scheduling processes and the external and internal constraints on temporal flexibility. The framework also encompasses an approach to middle management/management agency that allows for an analysis of decision making and control in the modern workplace.

The conceptual framework used will allow for the presentation of data and empirical discussion to be theoretically sound, with a form of Labour process theory that links with some of the literature on management autonomy and the role of the middle manager both traditionally and in the modern workplace.

Labour process theory	– considers the workplace negotiations around scheduling negotiations as a site of struggle. This can affect outcomes for the firm but also for the relational position of workers within the firm and their relative power to workplace regimes. Provides a conceptual framework around ‘control’ and consent and the creation of consent and the various forms this can take, through the forms of implementing control available to the middle/line manager and also the possibility of resistance and autonomy for workers.
Critical management theories around middle management and line management	– provide an analysis of the role of the manager in the firm. Organisational issues around

	efficiency, professionalisation, reduction of autonomy and increased automation.
'Gifts' and reciprocity in precarious scheduling	testing Wood's theory of management gifts and favours through flexible scheduling to maintain control in a period where a degree of flexibility is expected but in fact constructs and maintains employer-led flexibility, management control and precarious scheduling.

Given the diversity of the workplaces and the different approaches to management that will be found across sectors, as well as the different levels of management interviewed within sectors, a single theory will not suffice and LPT or CMS approaches on their own will be too reductive to adequately understand the site under consideration. However, the understanding of the various forms of external constraints, some visible and clear, others more cultural and institutional, will give a richer account of the phenomena than one that leans heavily on one framework or approach.

Finally, the labour process will give a better understanding of the constraints on managers in expanding or adopting more employer-led temporal changes, as well as uncovering some of the control dynamics around scheduling within these sectors.

The focus in the thesis on line management provides an alternative prism through which to view this area of social and economic activity. By acknowledging and considering the autonomy available to line managers of front-line workers in these sectors and the ability they have to influence outcomes for the firm and for the lives of the employees that they manage, it is possible to gain an understanding of this area that is not found in other accounts in this area.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Epistemology and qualitative methods

This is a qualitative study and interview data is used to address the research questions. The research questions lend themselves to this form of enquiry, as they seek to understand the motivations of management and seek to understand the external and internal pressures that make firms and managers employ flexible scheduling to manage staff and workload. The impact of the local labour market is to be considered.

Before undertaking the practical and material methods for obtaining qualitative data to address the research questions, it is necessary to consider the theoretical underpinning of social research which will inform this project. In qualitative research, the researcher must submit to some degree to a series of ontological and epistemological assumptions and positions that underpin this type of research. Using Hay's conception of the directional dependence of ontology and epistemology (2007), I will consider ontological concerns first, then epistemological issues which informs the method chosen

Qualitative research is underpinned by certain ontological and epistemological assumptions. The ontological position is generally a constructivist ontology (Parsons 1995: 80), meaning that 'social reality is produced and reproduced by social actors' (Blaikie 1992: 203), requiring the researcher to 'understand the subjective meaning of social meaning' (Bryman 2012: 28). This is contrary to positivist claims that an objective view can be taken that exists independently of the beliefs, values and concepts created to understand the world (Devine 2002: 201)

The epistemological position that often follows from a constructivist ontology is interpretivism. Devine (2002: 201) argues that the intensive interview is the most appropriate method for understanding people's motives and interpretation, and the motive of this approach is to understand experiences and practices of respondents, rather than making predictions or attempting to extrapolate to wider contexts.

Therefore, the data that is gathered from individual respondents represents their personal construction of reality. As such, it is not possible, or expected for the findings of the study to be generalised across a population. Instead, the aim of qualitative research in the interpretive tradition is to capture the individual's conceptions of the world and to then interpret this, taking into account the ontological and epistemological positions of the researcher.

This is reflexive approach to social research which understands and acknowledges the researcher's central position to the work being undertaken. A qualitative approach is necessarily interpretive - it is not possible, in my view, to complete a truly objective and value free qualitative project. This is doubly so where the researcher is also the interviewer. However, despite this knowledge and reflexive approach, all efforts will be made to eliminate bias and value judgments through the research design and data analysis.

4.2 Participants

The participants in the study are line managers in firms in the four sectors. The nature of these firms will be guided by the literature and will seek to fill in gaps or areas identified as needing more study.

The aim was not to seek a representative sample of the population but to try and reach theoretical saturation (Bryman 2008), defined as the point to which no new data would help with understanding the activity or phenomena under investigation.

However, in order to understand the determinants and constraints on differing approaches to scheduling, sectors for study are selected on the basis of differing determinants, as suggested by the literature.

Other reasons for new working times include instances when staff and supervisor hours become decoupled. A move to 24 hours working for a firm, perhaps, but with no supervisor cover for these hours, though the supervisor is still the sole supervisor. This means that even if the supervisor is scheduled for a normal working day, he is responsible for the conduct of employees at hours beyond these times and as such feels obliged to check in or be contactable, or cover some of these extra hours. (Rubery et al 2006: 137). This was observed in a retail firm, and a banking firm's debt management team.

The inability to fill vacancies (local labour market conditions) is another driver of working time change, but existing targets or customer/client demand remaining the same despite having fewer staff. This was found in the retail firm, and in the local authority domiciliary care team studied.

Longer hours were also linked to promotion opportunities, with even minor promotions leading to longer hours. Again, this was found in retail where staff needed to demonstrate a willingness to work beyond the scheduled hours to be considered for promotion. (Rubery et al 2006: 138)

The table below lays out what the literature identifies as some of the main determining or constraining factors on the use differing temporal strategies across sectors. To this some potential economic sectors where the determinant or constraint are more prevalent has been added, based on the study from Rubery et al 2006 outlined above, but also from the data provided by Kerhofs et al (2008)'s study and Choonara's (2019) analysis of British labour market statistics.

Determinant/constraint	Typical economic sector
The contract	Health and Social care, transport, all contracted public sector work; much contracted private sector work eg cleaning, catering, IT
Economic policy/welfare policy	Health and social care, transport,
The labour process	Call centre work, manufacturing
Flexible specialisation	Manufacturing, financial services
Demographics (immigration/students)	Retail, accommodation, factory, hospitality, construction
Cultural factors/industry norms/professional expectations	Construction, manufacturing, academia, banking and finance

The danger of this kind of analysis is that a form of technological determinism can creep into the analysis, or a simplistic cause and effect model of research question. The idea that that because one piece of technology (defined in the broadest sense) exists, so it is that a societal change will invariably follow. This is not the case. The flip side of this approach is that the study seeks to understand not only the determinants but also the constraints placed on managers. To some degree these are the same things – for example, the availability of a flexible workforce in the local labour market at that point in time can be a determinant and a constraint, depending on local labour market conditions at that time. Similarly, the labour process in a given sector can act as both a determinant and a constraint on temporal change, as can the process by which management and employees resolve disputes.

On this basis, the following areas were selected as suitable to represent areas with different determinants of varying temporal strategies, with interviews with line managers in each sector from the following:

- Hospitality and accommodation (Hotel) - employer-led flexible scheduling in effect here, as well as being reliant on a ready supply of flexible, low paid labour. 8 Line managers were interviewed
- Software and Tech – high use of contractors, possibility of use of overseas remote labour, employee-led flexibility, task based work and billable hours, professional. 6 Line managers/team leaders were interviewed.
- Retail - local labour market implications high prevalence of part-time work, students and people with caring responsibilities. Flexible scheduling in use. 7 Line managers/store managers were interviewed
- Sport and Leisure – high use of temporary and casual work, also use of independent contractors paying for floor space. 6 Line managers were interviewed

4.3 Method

Line Managers of firms in each sector were interviewed in a series of one-to-one semi-structured interviews. Interviewing is the most common form of data collection in qualitative research (Mason 2002: 62) and is the most appropriate way of collecting the views of managers on this subject relating to these research questions. The outline interview questions are included in the appendix of this document.

Interviews were originally to be held at the workplace of the respondent where possible, as this would represent a 'natural setting' in the hope that interviewing people in their own context will reduce the contrived nature of the research interview (Creswell 2014: 185; Patton 1987: 60). Ultimately, Covid restrictions in place at the time the fieldwork was undertaken meant that this was not possible, and interviews were conducted by video call or telephone call instead. The implications of this are discussed further in this chapter.

The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed shortly afterwards by either the researcher or a professional transcribing service. Use of audio recording negated the need for another person to be present to take notes. The audio data and transcriptions were stored securely to comply with Data Protection and GDPR laws and university regulations.

Participant observation could also be a suitable form of research method. Indeed, there is a long bibliography of participant observation/ethnography studies into the world of work and the study of organisations (G. Fine et al 2009: 602), from Beynon's *Working For Ford* (1973) and Burawoy's *Manufacturing*

Consent up to recent studies of working life discussed in the literature review such as Wood (2016, 2020) and Pitts (2016) where the researcher was a covert employee of the firm under study. Ethnographic research allows for rich data and for genuine researcher embeddedness in the social sphere under study. However, I have chosen not to pursue this research method for the following reasons.

1. Ethical reasons – I was informed by supervisor that observational or participatory methods whether covert or overt would not pass the university's ethics board requirements. This is the primary reason for not considering observational or participatory methods even if it was practically possible.
2. Practical reasons – unlike similar studies in the LPT tradition, this study focused on four different sectors rather than one to form a comparative study. It would have been impractical to have found paid employment in four different sectors, and similarly difficult to obtain permission to observe in four different workplaces.
3. Covid 19 lockdown restrictions. While the research design was submitted prior to the Covid restrictions being put in place, the restrictions would have forbade this owing to social distancing. Two of the sectors (leisure and hotels) were entirely closed down during the period

Firstly and most pertinently, university ethics guidelines forbid covert studies of workers and organisations, so consent would be needed. It would be very unlikely that a company would allow me to continue working in the knowledge that I was making notes on behaviours and that my work for the firm was to further my research project. Furthermore, it was felt that accurate recording of data is very difficult. In the absence of using audio or visual recording techniques as can be used in the traditional interview to ensure accuracy, most ethnographic studies use diary accounts and notes (Flick 2014: 322). The problem here is twofold. One is accurate recording of events, simply through forgetting things that may have happened or not being able to write and record at key times. The second issue with this type of work is that the researcher is often interpreting events as he sees them on the fly, without the necessary time to pause and reflect that interpretations of transcriptions of interviews might allow. For these reasons the semi structured interview was chosen as this offered the best balance between obtaining rich data while remaining focused on the research questions.

4.4 Number of participants/sample size

6-7 interviews with managers from each sector was considered an amount that would be possible for lone researcher to secure and a valid amount of data. This number allows a sufficient depth of data while allowing

for a manageable project, allowing for organising interviews, travel, transcription time and the subsequent data analysis.

Interviews lasted 40-60 minutes - concessions had to be made to allow for amount of time interviewees are willing to give. The interview invitation stated that interviews would take around 45 minutes.

4.5 Sampling and access to participants - purposive sampling

Having identified the sectors in which to base this study as per the case study approach, managers in each organisation were approached via email. If the response to the request was less positive than anticipated, existing contacts within each sector were utilised. This may have the disadvantage of not being truly random or of giving the researcher undue influence in the data collected.

While probability sampling is generally considered the most rigorous form of sampling in social research, in qualitative research it is rare because 'the precision and rigour of a qualitative sample is defined by its ability to represent salient characteristic and it is these that need priority in sample design' (Ritchie et al 2014: 113). In this case, the need to find workers in a particular type of employment contract in a particular sector means that it would be impossible to use a probability sample and a snowball sample would seem to be inevitable.

Using organisations and gatekeepers to identify potential interviewees for the sample frame is useful but there are problems associated with this, too. For example, the people that the gatekeeper may point the researcher towards may represent their own views of what constitutes the 'problem', bringing in their own biases (Ritchie et al 2014: 126). It is also important to include people who are not involved with organisations (Ritchie et al 2014: 124) and the nature of the sample frame suggests that the intended sample frame are less likely to be involved with organisations, especially trade unions.

4.6 Interview questions

The interview questions were designed help understand the research questions that were outlined in the previous chapter. While the research questions are theoretically informed, the actual questions that will be asked will attempt to intertwine the theoretical positions with the motivations and everyday workloads of management. The draft questions for the semi-structured interviews are included in the appendix of this document.

4.7 Ethical approval

A full submission to the University's Research Ethic Committee was made. Following suggested amendments, it was approved. See appendix for these forms and the granting of approval and code from the REC.

4.8 Limitations and constraints

Social Care (domiciliary)

Domiciliary adult social care is a sector that makes significant use of temporal flexibility, fragmented schedules, as well as being by far the biggest sector to use zero hours contracts. This sector was due to form the centrepiece of this dissertation, especially in relation to its relationship with the retail sector. I had hoped to build on a previous research project I had completed about the sector which focused on commissioning and its effect on working practice and temporal outcomes. The extreme forms of temporal flexibility and fragmented time scheduling as highlighted by Rubery and Grimshaw (2003, 2016) and also in reports by Skills for Care (2015, 2016) would have formed a very useful comparator to the other sectors in this study and the basis for an analysis of temporal flexibility, fragmented time and precarious flexibility in lower paid jobs. My previous research in another project suggested that many staff employed in social care often leave the profession to work in retail or hospitality, as these professions are present in all parts of the country and offer similar rates of pay and do not require specific qualifications. Unfortunately, owing to the turbulence in the social care sector owing to Covid, the decision was taken to not pursue research into this sector. Preliminary discussions with contacts in the sector ahead of beginning formally approaching potential participants suggested that this would be an unsuitable time to be conducting research with line managers. Managers were dealing with a pandemic situation, and staff were stretched to breaking point thanks to the need to change working practices to allow for rules around social distancing and working with people in this situation. Staff were contending with increased fatalities, and managers with increased sick rates and a more-than-usual level of crisis in terms of filling posts. Following these informal discussions with contacts in the social care sector, I decided, reluctantly, to drop the social care component of this study. Instead the decision was made to include sport and leisure as a sector instead.

1. Sample

Participants were selected based on the need to find a diversity of companies within the economic sector.

Supermarkets were selected based on an attempt to speak to at least one manager from each of the major supermarkets.

Hotels were drawn from the major city chains. There is a diversity of management roles within this sector and effort was made to represent each of these. Owing to the large number of operators, brands and franchises it was not possible to seek a sample from each company, though effort was made to seek participants from the major hotel groups.

Gym and sports and leisure is a diverse sector with providers in the public, private and not for profit sector, with a diversity of budget options for consumers. An attempt to find a diversity of representatives was sought.

Software and tech represented a different type of sector – a well-paid, professional sector, with significant barriers to entry around qualifications and experience. It is also one that tends not to use shift-based work or rotas. However, preliminary discussions suggest use of temporal flexibility including increasing use of contractor and self-employed, as well as a flexibility to allow for work with clients from across the world and in different time zones. This also represents a sector which is more of an employee's market: developers' skills are very much in demand and the job market remains buoyant in the sector, with many vacancies and high staff churn.

2. Access

Access to participants proved to be far more difficult than anticipated when drawing up the research design. As Ritchie (2014) highlighted, the gap between your own needs and those being researched is vast. The type of respondent I was seeking, especially in supermarket management jobs, which proved by far the hardest to access, was less likely to be willing to discuss their company's procedures in a critical or reflective manner, and far less willing to reflect on their own management style.

The research design did not include trying to contact organisations formally, for example through head office and asking them to cascade down for research participants. This use of gatekeepers was not considered to be useful strategy, as I wanted to seek personal testimonies, rather than meet with a representative of the firm who would tell me what the company's line was. The data aimed to identify the labour process and negotiations and the style of the manager.

Responses to speculative emails and letters were very low. It simply did not yield positive results barring one or two of the participants, all in the hospitality sector. Similarly, direct approaches to potential participants in retail in person was also difficult, with most managers simply too busy to consider it. This was anticipated but was exacerbated by Covid restrictions and the fact that it was difficult to get out and speak to people directly. Hotels were closed, gyms and sports centres were closed. Some participants were found

through chance – I would speak to a colleague or friend socially about my research and I would be put in touch with a colleague or friend with the correct characteristics. However, the Covid restrictions on socialising made even this difficult. Most of the participants were found in way similar to this though utilisation of contacts and colleagues. While only three of the participants could be classed as a friend, a majority had a connection to somebody I knew personally or professionally. This is likely to have had an impact on the data.

It was difficult to convince some potential participants of the benefits of taking part in this study. Several people declined to continue with the interview once the full information was sent to them, with most doing this by simply refusing to answer further emails or chasing emails. Some people said that they were reluctant to be audio recorded. However, my feeling, albeit one not supported by clear evidence, is that many simply did not feel willing to risk anything related to their jobs. This was particularly true in supermarkets. Although reassurances were given around confidentiality and anonymity in the main body of the approach email/letter, it is entirely reasonable to be cautious about a speculative approach from somebody they did not know.

Conversely, the fact that hotels were closed for the duration of the data collection period seemed to be beneficial. Many staff who were either employed as duty managers in empty hotels, or who had been furloughed and were doing no work at home welcomed the chance to help a researcher. One participant said that I was the first person they had spoken to in several days.

3. Semi-structured interviews, and the absence of face-to-face interviews

Data collection took the form of semi-structured interviews. A set of themes and guideline questions was to hand at every interview as reminder of the ground that was needed to be covered. On some occasions not all questions were covered, either because of time constraints, or more commonly, they were not applicable as the participant had already indicated that they had no knowledge or control over a certain area of inquiry (for example, recruitment or contracts). The outcome of this is that the interview data is not something that can be compared in a systematic way. Data analysis can be done this way, with themes applied, but it is not the case that there each interview would have answers to the same questions. This prohibits simple quantitative style analysis of the data through, for example, counting keywords, or instances of a certain phenomena. Each transcript had to be considered on its own terms and considered in how it related as an individual piece of evidence to the research questions and themes identified either. Then it would be compared and analysed alongside other transcripts.

Firms were researched on a basic level before commencing the interview through the company website. It was simply not necessary to know the exact function of the firm, as the questions were about the working practices in the interviewees team and the labour market rather than exactly what was being

produced or serviced. This lack of probing into potential commercial confidentialities also served to put participants at ease. In most cases I did not mention the firm they worked for at all, and I was keen to use the words 'your firm, your hotel, your supermarket' etc, rather than naming the business. This emphasised that I was seeking their personal testimonies and not for them to be representatives of their organisation. Questions were asked of all participants at the outset of the interview of the size of the firm or the branch of the firm in which they worked, as well as how many staff were in the department they were responsible for managing.

Conducting interviews by phone or video call was not necessarily a hindrance, though it did have the effect of making interviews more business-like and brisk. Having conducted interviews in person for previous projects there is usually a little more preliminary small talk, a lot more facial and body language reflecting and, I would argue simply from my own experience, more openness and less guardedness. People seem more willing to be helpful if they meet you in person, to offer you the name of a colleague who might be willing to help with further interviews, to show you round the office and offer more insights this way, or similar.

The other problem with phone or remote interviewing is the absence of what I would term informal ethnographic data. Meeting a manager in their place of work could give rise to opportunities for the researcher to note certain work practices actually happening in front of them, and the ability to probe those issues or to ask for more information about what is happening in front of us. This could be something simple, such as a member of staff coming in to start a shift or clocking out, or a member of staff interrupting to ask a question of a manager. These small instances of the labour process in action can give insights that cannot be found through telephone conversations. Furthermore, the ability to have a demonstration of, for example, the scheduling software used by the firm was stymied by remote interviews, though most were willing to send me screen grabs or more information on their systems if required. Even being able to see how a rota is presented to staff either through the traditional method of a chart on a wall or the modern way via email or app notification would have been useful. Managers of course are not able to share certain types of data with third parties owing to data confidentiality and of course they were reluctant to disclose any data relating to their staff via electronic means such as email or through screen sharing functions of Microsoft Teams, nor did I ask them to.

There are some benefits for meeting on neutral ground. The standard approach in qualitative research tends to be for the researcher to travel to the participants environment, rather than to meet on neutral ground (Ritchie et al 2014). The use of phone calls and video calls changes the relationship quite significantly. The participant may be sat in their office in their managerial chair, but the researcher is not, this negates any possible power dynamic around physical space. It may mean that it is perhaps a slightly different power dynamic to similar studies which invariably take place in the workplace under study, though this perhaps

reflects the popularity of the use of participatory or observation methods in the field of labour process research (see literature review chapter).

Compensation

All participants were offered a £20 Love2shop voucher to incentivise, compensate, or thank them for participating. I was reluctant to do this initially but on reflection it was essential as it demonstrated that this was a professional study. Only one participant mentioned the voucher as the specific reason for agreeing to take part. Most accepted it gratefully on the proviso that I was not personally out of pocket. This being said, I do not believe that incentivising or compensating changed the data that was gathered. In retrospect I would have offered a larger sum of money to participants because 45-60 minutes of a telephone or video conversation is actually quite a significant demand on a participant's time and the nature of the questions asked proved to be quite a taxing experience for some participants who had not previously reflected on this topic in a critical way.

Educational level of participants

The types of participants are also reflected in the educational level of participants. This information was not sought from participants and I hold no data on the educational level of participants, but many volunteered information about their previous experience of higher education research from their own degrees. There is a diversity of educational levels overall but it was clear that those who responded to speculative requests (mainly in the hospitality sector) were people who had completed research dissertations at undergraduate or postgraduate level themselves, and so were familiar with the idea of social research and what a research interview was likely to entail. One participant had achieved a social science PhD himself and written a dissertation, which was unknown to me before I began the interview. Again, this is not necessarily unexpected – management staff are far more likely to have post-18 qualifications and in some cases they are a requirement to reach this level. However, familiarity with the language of academic research, of the type of data I would be seeking and the purpose of it all may contribute to the type of evidence they would be willing to give.

Covid factors

It was impossible to conduct these interviews without discussion with participants of Covid and the associated lockdown measures that were affecting their personal and professional lives. Facilities in two of the sectors represented here (hospitality and sport/fitness/Leisure) were closed for the duration of the research period, and had been able to make significant use of the government's furlough scheme for their staff, with some managers retained on a monitoring basis. Supermarkets had a rise in demand for their services as they were often the only shops left open at the time of conducting the fieldwork. They were also

having to cope with new social distancing measures. Furthermore, the way people shopped changed, with a massive increase in demand for home delivery of groceries which meant the employment of temporary staff to cope with demand or the redeployment of staff to cope with this. It was very useful that one of the participants in this study had been redeployed from her usual role as a customer service team manager to the delivery service manager. Finally, software and tech jobs did not change too much, aside from a move from office-based work to home working. Of the participants, for some this was a new development, for others, they had been working at home exclusively or partially anyway.

Interviews were hampered significantly by the presence of measures to manage Covid. A change to the interview schedule was made to include the impact of covid on the future of the labour market and the labour process. However, given the massive impact on either the labour process, scheduling, and number of staff it made it difficult to keep some people focused on the topic. It was also necessary to ask staff to 'remember' how they did things prior to Covid restrictions, rather than what they are doing right now. This could affect the reliability of the data collected.

4.9 Data analysis

Thematic analysis

In a study such as this which seeks to find commonalities and differences between different sectors, thematic review is the obvious starting point of data analysis. The analysis consisted of descriptive and inferential coding (Punch 2005: 200). Descriptive coding will identify recurring or interesting data that arises. The second (inferential) reading will look at themes and patterns that emerge from this descriptive coding in line with the research questions. Qualitative research design should allow for flexibility and for further decisions to be made as the research process evolves (Mason 2002: 45). A thematic analysis will follow to identify recurring themes salient to the research questions. Qualitative data analysis in the interpretivist tradition involves the researcher spending a lot of time with the participants and the data (Creswell 2014: 187). As discussed, I will use an interpretive reading of the gathered data which gives the researcher a key role in the production of the text and constructing and documenting a version of what the data may mean, and 'reading through or beyond the data' (Mason 2002: 149).

Given the type of data that will be gathered, the choice of which type of data analysis method was limited to those that apply to the analysis of interview transcripts and the spoken word. The shortlist for this was:

- Discourse analysis or critical discourse analysis
- Conversation analysis

- Grounded Theory
- Thematic analysis

Conversation analysis was discarded as an option because close linguistic analysis of participants oral evidence was not needed to address the research questions.

Discourse analysis was considered but as the research questions related to material reality and relationships, it was discarded. Discourse analysis and its variants are better suited to theoretical frameworks that use postmodern theories. While LPT does seek to uncover 'hidden' power structures, its basis in Marxism and materialism means that the unit of analysis remains the material and observable.

Thematic analysis is very similar to grounded theory (Flick 2014: 422) though much more suitable for a thesis such as this which has explicit research questions, problems to be addressed and a clear goal. Braun and Clarke state that in contrast to inductive data analysis techniques such as grounded theory, theoretical thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytical interest in the subject, and is therefore much more explicitly researcher-driven. It also suits projects where coding is done to meet the needs of the research question, as is the case in this project, rather than the inductive approach where research questions will arise from the data which is associated with grounded theory (Braun and Clarke 2006: 84). Nevertheless, themes were applied beforehand and were drawn from both the literature and the data. This is consistent with Ryan and Bernard's approach to thematic analysis:

'Themes come both from the data and from the investigator's prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study. A priori themes come from the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied; from already agreed on professional definitions found in literature reviews; from local, commonsense constructs; and from researchers' values, theoretical orientations, and personal experiences' (Ryan and Bernard 2003: 88)

Thematic analysis involves 'discovering, interpreting and reporting patterns and clusters of meaning within the data. Working systematically through texts the researcher identifies topics that are progressively integrated into higher-order key themes, the importance of which lies in their ability to address the original research question (Spencer et al 2014: 271). It is common in qualitative studies to hear of themes 'emerging' from the data. However, Braun and Clarke (2006: 80) reject this, stating that the idea of themes 'emerging' ignores the researcher's active role in the identification of themes or patterns as 'Researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an

epistemological vacuum' (ibid: 84). My role in interpreting the data, as well my role in generating it through the interview questions and probes, is always a consideration.

Coding of data is a laborious process. (Creswell 2014: 195). Therefore, NVivo, a software package for managing qualitative data, was used to deal with inconsistencies and to aid the coding and analysis of the interview material. After the initial thematic analysis to identify trends and themes across the dataset, further coding and analysis was undertaken with the theoretical approaches used to address the research questions.

There are a multitude of approaches to thematic analysis. I have chosen, for reasons I will outline in more detail elsewhere, variants of Ritchie and Spencer (1994)'s 'Framework analysis' method, as clarified and expanded on in Spencer et al's (2014: 279) approach to data analysis and by Srivastava and Thompson (2009) in an approach for policy analysis. In this approach the first stage of analysis following data management is the process of familiarisation and labelling and sorting or 'indexing' (Ritchie et al 2014:302). However, they recommend that what should follow this stage is not the next step of the process of 'abstraction and interpretation' but rather to complete an additional stage of 'data summary and display'. This data summary is my attempt to do this stage, with the abstraction and interpretation phase to be written up in the subsequent months. The point of this additional stage is to allow for a systematic process and the construction of 'a structure of evidence withing which the building blocks of the analysis can be seen' (ibid.). Though these are presented as distinct stages, and for the purpose of this document will be necessarily presenting only the first stage, in reality the relationship between the stages of analysis is fluid with elements of interpretation in the formal data analysis and vice versa.

There are criticisms of thematic analysis - some point to the absence of clear guidelines which means that it is often criticised for having an 'anything goes' approach (Braun and Clarke 2006: 78). Some critics suggest that thematic analysis is not an approach in its own right but rather more of a generic method (Spencer et al 2014: 271). Nevertheless, it provides a flexible, systematic and consistent method of analysing and presenting qualitative data.

The initial thematic framework for organising or 'indexing' (Ritchie et al 2014: 302) the data is reproduced below. Saldana (2009, cited in Spencer et al 2014: 298) suggests that between five and seven themes, with subthemes, is appropriate for most qualitative studies, and that approach has been replicated for this stage of the analysis. There are more than seven here, but the process of analysing the data will mean that these are likely to consolidated to fewer categories. Nvivo 11 Pro is being used to organise data.

1. Labour Process

- 1.1 work intensity/intensification*
 - 1.2 resistance*
- 2. Temporal flexibility*
 - 2.1 fragmented*
 - 2.2 part-time*
 - 2.3 self-employed and contract*
 - 2.4 agency*
 - 2.5 Zero hours*
 - 2.6 Full-time flex*
 - 2.7 Low hours contracts*
 - 2.8 casual/bank*
- 3. Other flexibility (to relate to temporal flexibility)*
 - 3.1 numerical*
 - 3.2 functional*
 - 3.3 spatial (see also Covid)*
- 4. Scheduling (control, labour process)*
 - 4.1 negotiation*
 - 4.2 software*
 - 4.3 rules*
 - 4.4 compulsion*
 - 4.5 demand management*
 - 4.6 favourable and unfavourable shifts*
 - 4.7 variable hours*
- 5. Individual manager style and attitude*
 - 5.1 freedom of manager to manage.*
 - 5.2 attitudes to flexibility*
 - 5.3 closeness to workers in hierarchy*
 - 5.4 previous experience of being managed*
- 6. Structure of organisation (context)*

- 6.1 *Size of organisation*
 - 6.2 *size of branch*
 - 6.3 *number of staff*
- 7. *Labour market*
 - 7.1 *student labour*
 - 7.2 *immigration*
 - 7.3 *retention*
 - 7.4 *risk of losing staff to competitor*
 - 7.5 *risk of staff moving to another sector*
- 8. *Relations with senior management (constraint)*
 - 8.1 *HR*
 - 8.2 *relationship with head office*
 - 8.3 *Relations with boss*
- 9. *Legislation and regulation (constraint, lab market outcome)*
 - 9.1 *living wage*
 - 9.2 *working time directives*
 - 9.3 *Uber ruling/IR35*
- 10. *Brexit (constraint, external, lab market outcome)*
 - 10.1 *uncertainty*
- 11. *Covid (external, lab market outcome)*
 - 11.1 *staff exiting*
 - 11.2 *people leaving the industry*
 - 11.3 *furlough*
 - 11.4 *uncertainty*
 - 11.5 *patterns*
- 12. *Contracts/Contractual issues (constraints)*

Further themes more closely related to the research questions were generated following the initial phases of data analysis. These focused on more theoretically focused areas such as power, control, negotiation and linking to the labour process and to the literature on control, employer-led flexibility, gifts and others. These formed the next stage of analysis and have separate codes. The theoretical elements, then were, the final stages of the data analysis, and only applied once the descriptive thematic analysis was completed. The tags of 'zcontrol', and 'zconsent' and other theoretically generated tags were applied to data already thematically organised.

This form of analysis allows for the repeated reading and coding of data to understand first organise the data into manageable portions and to log the 'what' of what is being said, which was necessary with the large amount of written data. Following this, further layers of abstraction as the researcher becomes more familiar with the data, themes emerge, and responses to the research question can begin to emerge through interpretation.

Data analysis began following the completion and transcription of 20 interviews, with further analysis on further collected data taking place concurrently. This was necessary as time ran out as participants failed to show up or cancelled without rescheduling. The next part of this chapter will present the data in line with the overarching themes as identified prior to the data analysis, with sub themes that emerged from the data.

In the second stage of data analysis, the balance in each workplace regime under study (as expressed through the interview) was considered in each case and given a tentative rating of 'employer-led', 'employee-led', or 'balanced'. Generally, the 'balanced' tag was to be avoided and in most cases it was not necessary as the categories were very clear cut. Each interview transcript was later given a rating out of three to describe the extent to which control was exercised according to the account provided. This was based on how the manager described the conditions they worked in rather than their own individual style, as it may be possible that they can understate or overstate their own control regimes. This system, though crude, allowed me to map which sectors had a more acute control regime and which tilted more towards an employee-led system. It also helped to identify outliers in the evidence base which could be given less weight in the analysis.

Further data analysis was given over to the idea of negotiation. These negotiations, where they exist, are simultaneously a hidden form of control available to managers and of resistance and negotiation for employees, and also quite openly an interaction between manager and managed where conflict may be necessary depending on the context in which it takes place such as the time of year, relative staffing levels, skill of employee and so on. These will be explored in more detail in the next two chapters.

The presentation of data chapters (the following two chapters) are presented based on the themes that arose from the literature, and then from preliminary findings of the data analysis. Each chapter focuses on each of the two research questions. The research questions are sufficiently broad that many themes emerged, and these are selected or discussion in how they relate to the research questions but also how they link with the other research question.

Arranging the presentation by theme for this dissertation seemed to be the best way of organising this presentation, rather than by sector, which was another consideration. While the data was analysed and thematically organised initially in groups per sector, the presentation will seek to find different approaches and commonalities that might suggest something about the labour process and the labour market in 2021. Therefore, the presentation will use comparative approaches to identify trends across sectors.

The naming conventions/aliases of each participant are set out in the appendix, but are included below again for ease of reference:

Sector	Number of participants	Alias
Hospitality/Hotels:	8	[initial]Hotel
Gym/sport and leisure	6	[initial]Leisure
Retail (Supermarkets/food retail)	7	[initial]Supermarket
Software/tech:	6	[initial]Tech

Participants will be attributed in direct quotations as per the aliases in the appendix. However, for easier readability, phrases such as ‘a supermarket customer service manager’ to describe a participant will be used, alongside the more precise individual codes.

4.10 Summary

In the research design section, there is a discussion about interpretative data analysis. What follows is the ‘story’ of the data, as told by a researcher who has been immersed in the data through collecting and analysing it over the course of several months. With it comes my own assumptions and emphases, which were

inherent in the research design, and evident in the questions I asked in the interviews, and the supplementary questions. These chapters represent my subjective reading of my participants' subjective reading of their own environment and their own decision-making processes, and how they relate to their organisation, to the sector and to the wider economy.

5. Temporal flexibility, temporal change, temporal continuity

This chapter will consider the various forms of temporal arrangements utilised by firms across the sectors. Questions were asked of all participants about the different types of contracts, how many staff were employed overall and in each shift, overtime, agency workers and so on and the constraints on using each approach. This element of the evidence does not lend itself well to an interpretive approach but the thematic review approach is helpful in categorising and organising responses and identifying trends in the data. It also helped inform the next stage of coding around scheduling interactions. The main sections in this chapter are as follows:

- Full-time work – still the default?
- part-time contracts
- Numerical flexibility
- independent contractors and self-employed workers
- overtime
- recruitment and retention and flexibility
- functional flexibility
- exogenous constraints
- sector specific practises

This is the starting point of the empirical part of the dissertation, and provides the context for the later chapters on employer and employee-led flexibility, negotiation and control and the labour process. Therefore, it is necessary to present the main ways in which employers in the four sectors use temporal (as opposed to numerical, or functional flexibility) to manage their workforces, and to the ways in which this is effective, either from the point of view of organisational goals, or from the line manager's view of effectively managing a team and achieving the set of tasks for the day. Wood (2020: 14) argues that it is far more common in the UK for flexibility in low paid service sectors to be secured through temporal flexibility rather than through numerical flexibility as he found was more prevalent in US companies.

Forms of temporal flexibility

Temporal flexibility in the four sectors under study is utilised primarily through the use of:

- Use of part-time workers to fill gaps in schedules alongside full-time staff
- Flexible scheduling patterns and variable hours (full-time and part-time workers, casual and ZHC).

There is some cross over here with numerical flexibility.

- Overtime

How these are managed and the interplay between management and these forms of temporal flexibility is considered in greater depth in the next chapter.

5.1 Full-time workers – still the default?

Recent ONS labour market data suggests that there is an overall rise in part-time work across the labour market as a trend in the last decade. However, the evidence also suggests that this is concentrated in certain industries. This appears to be borne out by this study where supermarkets are increasingly and exclusively using part-time contracts and with fewer guaranteed hours to manage demand in an increasingly competitive market with smaller margins and ever more complex supply chains. For example, many supermarkets now offer single shift contracts instead of zero hour contracts, which only guarantee the worker a single shift per week. In practice, the employee will be offered many more shifts than this, but the employer has the ability to drop them back to one shift only if there is a lull in demand or if the worker is not performing. This can be considered a further disciplinary technology with precariousness of predictable hours being introduced to the firm's arsenal of techniques to ensure employee compliance.

Stovell and Basescu's (2021) recent paper notes this trend toward an 'ambiguity' in the boundary between part-time work and full-time work, and how this binary separation between the two is increasingly less useful as a way of categorising employees' temporal status. This relates not only to white collar workers and the blurring of work and leisure time through working from home and the use of smartphones but also for other workers such as those in retail and hospitality who must be available for shifts at all times.

Hospitality, tech, and health and leisure managers valued the presence of full-time staff far more than their counterparts in supermarkets. There were many reasons given for the need to maintain a full-time workforce, despite the opportunities available to adopt the flexible part-time model that was favoured by the supermarkets. The primary motivation for line managers seemed to be the need for retaining good employees and the difficulty in attracting good staff to replace them. While managers in supermarkets also valued retaining staff, the policies and technologies of the large national organisations for whom they all worked meant that they had less autonomy than others to offer incentives through scheduling to make life more stable or flexible as required for the employees that they wished to retain.

This need to maintain staff in this sector, and the valuing of their ability and their work ethic was also reflected in conversations with managers, particularly in the hospitality sector where recruiting suitable staff was difficult. To this end, maintaining staff on full-time contracts, with flexible hours that are negotiable with management, was primarily a matter of staff retention.

Supermarket managers valued their full-time staff but, from the interviews which crossed most of the major supermarket chains, this seemed to be increasing in rarity in the field. In most cases line managers were constrained by company policies which meant that employing full-time staff (on full-time contracts) was no longer possible, with full-time staff on full-time contracted hours now no longer offered at all in at least two supermarket chains.

Supermarket managers felt that replacing staff would not be difficult in this environment. There was a ready availability of workers willing to work in supermarkets and applications for vacancies remained very high, drawing applicants of all ages, sexes, demographics and geography. At the time of writing, many industries are complaining of labour shortages owing to Brexit or Covid related issues. However, the managers of the supermarket chains reported that vacancies are still filled quickly with many applicants for available jobs, despite claims of the seven major supermarket chains seeking to fill 136,000 new roles during the pandemic (Yahoo Finance, 2021). However, in the retail sector as a whole, there are 77,000 vacancies and a reported labour shortage (The Grocer, 2021).

5.2 Part-time work

The use of part-time work was growing in the supermarkets being studied, but less utilised in the other sectors, with full-time hours remaining the preferred temporal arrangement for staff in the other sectors. In supermarkets, the use of part-time work was, in fact, becoming the norm, especially for new staff joining the sector. Two major supermarkets operated separate contracts for 'legacy' or similarly named termed staff. These staff, who had been employed prior to a certain point in time when a restructure took place, were usually on full-time contracts and were generally scheduled for regular hours in the week, although weekend work was always a requirement for all staff regardless of contract. For staff employed after this point, more flexible contracts were in place which in effect placed staff into variable hours, precarious and flexible part-time work. Staff were sometimes employed on a single shift basis (supermarket 1, supermarket 3). See 5.1 for more detail on this.

In terms of temporal change involving part-time staff, only one supermarket employed variable shifts patterns in terms of hours of a single shift (supermarket6). Even those that used these short part-time contracts offered regular hourly shifts – so a minimum of 6.5 hours, perhaps, to a maximum of 8 hours.

The reasons for the increased use of part-time staff (in whatever configuration) was attributed to the need to have a flexible workforce in order to fill the schedule in a day which the store operates for around 16-18 hours a day (in supermarkets). A manager of a convenience/metro store as part of a national chain, albeit one with regional management structures said that in his store, only the managers worked full-time and that all other staff were part-time:

It's not possible anymore [to have full-time staff] in convenience retail. I think if I had maybe two or three more full-time staff I'd have to lose maybe 5 members of staff. It gives me no flexibility then. I'm down to 12-13 members of staff, and I need to cover 17 and half hours a day 7 days a week... it really cuts into it. And if someone goes on holiday that's 39 hours to cover. [SCSupermarket]

The manager in this supermarket is responsible for ensuring that there are enough staff available to cover the shifts on any given day. These can vary seasonally and demand can change through the week. He has significant autonomy with recruiting to hire staff in any way he prefers in order to fill those hours. He said that it was 'normal' for staff to be employed on part-time hours, though not necessary – he still had the authority to hire full-time staff.

Despite it being a part-time job, staff were still required to be available for more hours than they were prepared or were able to work. One major supermarket chain's policy made this clear when recruiting, the line manager explained the new contracts:

R: Yeah, so in the interview they would fill in something called an availability form, we'd ask them then to commit to five days availability up to 36.5 hours and we know then when those colleagues are available to work and we would review that availability on a yearly basis as obviously people's circumstances could change.

I: Sorry, is that for full-time staff or part-time staff?

R: Part-time staff.

I: So they have to be available for five out of seven days?

R: If they're on a flexi contract, yes.

I: A part-time flexi contract, yeah.

R: Yes.

I: Okay, but they can stipulate two days that they definitely can't work?

R: Yes, the company encourages that and ideally if you were being recruited on a flexi contract they like you to put two consecutive days as well. [CJSupermarket]

Here we have staff employed on variable part-time hours, maybe as little as one shift a week, but still having to be available for at least five days. This is clearly company policy and not something the line manager had any influence over, but it demonstrates the context within which the line managers are working, and the move towards employer-led flexible scheduling as per the research questions. The capacity for the line managers in this sector to maintain discretion over the schedules and rotas for these member of staff is being eroded, as will be demonstrated in more detail in Chapter 6.

The use of part-time working is evident in the hotels managers interviewed but not across all functions, and there was a much higher use of temporary staff, or casual or zero-hour contracts. As indicated elsewhere, studying the working environment of a hotel means considering different teams, each with different functions, different skill levels and in some cases different working cultures (as distinct from simply working practices) according to the work being done. A team of receptionists works very differently to those in food and beverage service, for example. This might seem obvious, but it was a surprise that given that they work for the same employer, that working practices, contracts and temporal change could be so disparate within one organisation and one building. Supermarkets, similarly, have different teams doing different functions, but in general the rules governing scheduling, part-time work and other temporal issues remained broadly the same across the organisation (though not across organisations).

Similar to the supermarket sector, part-time contracts were offered where full-time workers were used, in order to meet demand and account for quieter periods of the year. One events manager explained how part-time contracts of 20 hours were used in their hotel:

I: You said the other team members are on 20 hour contracts. Is that a minimum or is that what they do?

R: That is a minimum. They could be working a lot more, up to 60 hours a week. ...Because of the variation of business needs throughout the year. From October to January, typically in previous times, would have been a busy, busy time. We would be talking 12 to 15 hour shifts per day, per person. But then January to April tends to be extremely quiet, so we might only be able to fulfil the 20 hours a week. Even so, not even that, so at least then they have the fall back of that consistent 20 hour contract. (CBHotel)

Hotel scheduling brings with it their own practices peculiar to the function that they are performing. This is most keenly felt in the food and beverage sections. A food and beverage manager in a large hotel was interviewed, as was a head chef with management responsibilities. Here, junior staff were generally on casual or zero hours contracts, and often drawn from local university student populations if available. Student workforces are discussed more broadly elsewhere in this chapter, but it was clear that the availability of student labour was valued for their willingness to work anti-social hours, to work flexibly in terms of being available for spikes in demand, anticipated or unanticipated, and also, for the interpersonal skills that they offered in working in public facing roles.

Part-time work was welcomed by one hotel line manager, who, much like the supermarket line manager quoted earlier, found it easier to manage a schedule with part-time staff.

R: We offer a range of contracts. We would offer mostly full-time, but we would offer from 16 hours upwards. 32 hour contracts. But generally, in either 4 or 8 hour shift patterns.

I: When you say you would offer 16 plus hours or whatever. If you recruited a housekeeper, or restaurant staff. Are you saying there's an option for people to say they want to do full-time or part-time?

R: Yes. It depends on the position. If it's a full-time position and it needs to be full-time then fine...Certainly with our current staff we would do flexible working requests, we're quite good at working around. Because we have such a variety of shifts, we can be flexible. I get a lot of people who say I can only work Friday or Saturday, cos of child care or whatever, that's great, because, there's plenty of people that don't want to work those days. I've got a couple of guys that only want to work nights because of childcare. I've got a night manager, he's a good guy, I could promote him and he could do something in the day. But his wife works in the day, so he gets home at 8am, take the kids to school, wakes up, picks them up, then he goes to work. You've got to be flexible. We're a 24 hour operation, it's important we have flexibility.

This need for flexibility, and the resulting rise in this form of part-time contracts is one of the factors that allows for the regimes of precarious scheduling that now inherent in this sector. Without the part-time element companies would not be able to piece together the shifts that allow them to meet spikes in demand without resorting to introducing temporary staff (see sections 5.3 and 5.4).

Full-time staffing was the norm in the other parts of the hotel those participants were sought. Work was split over seven days and usually during morning/evening opening hours, but staff generally had full-time hours of between 37 and 40 hours a week with 7-9 hour shift patterns depending on the time of day. The reasons for this relate equally to the labour process and to the labour market constraints of recruiting staff in certain functions.

In the software sector, all managers said that part-time work in the sector was very rare, with most struggling to think of many colleagues or people they had managed with formal part-time hours. One manager noted he could recall one woman with caring responsibilities who worked a four day week:

No, not really that I can think of. I know one person who was a single mum, or is a single mum, and she would work four days a week because of practicality reasons. And that was very much the exception. I'm sure it would be allowed, I think employers have got to consider requests for those sorts of things these days. (DJTech)

While another manager in the sector (MBTech) agreed that part-time work was rare, possible because of the heavy imbalance of men to women workers in the sector ('its possibly a guy thing'). Another manager who was currently working at in the software side of a large education setting said that his current employer seemed to have more part-time staff, but this was an exception to the norms of the industry which he also agreed was 'male dominated':

I would say [organisation redacted] is quite unusual from what I've seen. There's quite a lot of part-time work. Everywhere else I've worked; it's been the exception anyway... I think it is - from someone who's - from a company's perspective, if you can get a load of people who are just there five days a week and you don't have to think about how to schedule things or whatever, it is a lot simpler and then you get a culture that - well it's quite male dominated..It means it's harder for women. I happened to meet the ones that were coming but with childcare - so it's harder and then it means there's less of a push for work businesses. (MWTech)

Part-time work was very common in the sport and leisure sectors, mainly as all managers interviewed made use of student labour. This reflected the fact that their peak demand times were weekends and evenings when students were available to work. Most managers interviewed preferred part-time workers as they

offered greater flexibility. As noted elsewhere, zero hours and casual contracts were used quite often, rather than permanent part-time contracts. Though one manager was currently recruiting for a permanent position at the time of interviewing, and stated that he was willing to consider recruiting part-time or full-time, so long as he could fill the hours with two part-time staff as it was a 40 hour contract. When asked how he felt about managing part-time staff instead of full-time, he said:

It doesn't matter to me to be fair. If you're qualified to do the work, if you're qualified to do the job, you do the job well, you love what you do, you enjoy being here, that's good enough for me. ...There is usually a reason why someone's part-time. When bringing them in I try to ascertain why that it is. Not why that is, but I'm knowledgeable enough, been around long enough to know that if you're a part-time worker. My question is generally how can we help you do what you need to do. So whatever that is, if they've gotten through the interview with me they've done a pretty good job. So once they're at that point I'm more than willing to flex with them. (MVLeisure)

Part-time work is important in the three sectors with flexible schedules, and less so in the tech sector where it is largely non-existent according to the participants. The extension of part-time work in supermarkets to almost all new recruits is a significant change, and a sign of increasing precarious scheduling. That staff working full-time hours, or staff that want full-time hours, are employed on these type of part-time contracts is a significant development.

5.3 Numerical flexibility - Casual staff, temporary staff and zero hours contracts. Student labour

Numerical flexibility is associated with the models of the 'flexible firm' as discussed in the literature review chapter. The core and periphery model has a core of workers alongside a periphery of contingent workers who can be added or removed as demand increases. This thesis argues that temporal flexibility is now the main form of flexibility in these sectors. Supermarkets, however do use a lot of temporary workers to meet with seasonal demand, and during the fieldwork for this dissertation, all were recruiting additional staff due to increased demand for delivery services as a result of the Covid lockdown measures.

The distinction between 'casual work' and 'zero hours contracts' work is not clear. The CIPD report on flexible working (2019) includes zero hours contracts under the heading of 'casual work'. My own conception of casual work refers more closely to what might be termed 'bank' work, where there are staff members on the books who can be contacted and offered shifts when required. Zero hours contracts imply a more formal contractual basis whereby a worker can expect to be offered shifts regularly, but with no guarantee. This definition seemed to be the case across the hospitality sector. The hospitality sectors, especially those with customer facing roles such as bar and table waiting, found that having a bank of available student labour was a good way of securing flexible and good quality workers who were keen to work evenings and weekends to fit around their classes. The unwritten part of this contract was that staff would be considered available for the periods they agreed to but could turn down shifts if they needed to. Generally, they would operate a 'first come first served' approach to offering shifts with WhatsApp or email being used to 'put a call out' to all casual staff offering shifts.

Casual staffing seemed to be almost exclusively used to employ students from local colleges and universities. The distinction between casual staff and zero hours contracts is key here. A zero hours contract seemed to imply that a worker would be expected to work every week but with variable and unpredictable hours. As one manager of a hospitality and leisure facility clarified:

Obviously with zero hours contracts, they are what they are. But that does mean they need to be available. So if one person said they couldn't work, all the time, then you're not kind of fulfilling the fact that you're available to work sometimes. Zero hours is how it is, but it is with the assumption that you work. Otherwise, why sign up to a job you never did any shifts on? It'll be like this is happening, this is... we need shifts for this. And then people just will go on the chat and say yeah I'm free, I'm free. It gives us a little bit of time if they're not free, but nine times out of ten they are free....

....But in terms of those zero hours staff, in practice, do they get shifts every week if they're available?

Yeah. There's a minimum you get of two a week.

So they will in practice get 15, 16 hours.

Yes something like that, 10-15 hours.

In a city centre hotel, zero hours contracts were again used extensively for seasonal and evening work. Here there was no such guaranteeing of shifts:

Yes, I know what you're getting at, the sort of gentleman's agreement ... But no, there's absolutely no obligation for me as a business, as a manager to give any set hours. Now in the past we tended to find that those staff who were very reliable, who could be relied upon to do anything we needed, who wanted to work, who may not necessarily be able to get a contract but tended to always work four days a week - it's that old saying that you work hard you play hard but by that logic we can rely on you so were going to favour you in terms of the hours, there were staff who were on zero hours contracts but due to the fact they had been here so long, their reliability, their dependability almost, they were effectively always given a full-time set of hours regardless of their contract. It's just that when the business no longer needed those types of hours they understood that there could be weeks like Christmas, like early January, February that they might not get that so they understood that there was that risk. But many of them liked that flexibility because whereas with a full-time contract - yes a staff member can request time off, if the business does not have the ability to offer that person time off and they have to work regardless, it's not a given. Whereas a zero-hour casual member of staff if they do not wish to work it's a mutual agreement of look, we need someone to work Saturday, there are three zero hour staff, first come first serve, so those who want to work, those who are reliable, dependable, they would tend to get that. There's also the fact that if they chose not to do the hours and we're in a quiet period they almost accept that risk that there might not be that they don't get that time etc. (MPHotel)

The manager here describes the zero hour contracts as a 'mutual agreement' between the firm and staff who 'want to work'. The implication here is that those who are more dependable, or have proved themselves to be more dependable will tend to get the shift. It is difficult to unpick the participants meaning from the transcript but it is clear that there is a significant discretion in the line managers decision making in who gets the shift, indicating a high degree of autonomy over shift allocations.

For those on casual contracts within the same organisation, the contract again has no bearing on the number of hours worked:

However, with the casuals we will try to guarantee the 40 hours for them and that's again

another unwritten verbal agreement that whenever we hire casuals it's very, very weird - and this is thinking about pre-COVID - that we will give them less than 40 hours unless it's a student that works in the events department and can only do weekends. Let's say we are recruiting for a room attendant in the housekeeping department, we will not advertise a full-time, permanent role. We will advertise it as a zero hours contract or maybe 20 or 30 hours but in 95 per cent of the cases they get 40 hours because we know the importance of giving the team the hours they need to pay the rent. (MPHotel)

Here is an example of how the figures around part-time work can be skewed, and how it is in the interest of the employers to have this ambiguity as it allows them to reward the 'good workers' with longer hours while retain what they seeing as poorer workers on occasional shifts only. This relationship is discussed in greater detail in the subsequent two chapters.

This approach has been adapted in supermarkets with what are similar 'one shift' contracts where people are employed on a contract only guaranteeing one shift per week (CBSupermarket, JSSupermarket), as discussed earlier in this chapter (5.2). In practice they may be scheduled many more hours than that but by offering contracts like this they are insulating themselves against a drop in demand. Perhaps more perniciously, there is also the potential perhaps if the worker turns out to perform poorly, there is the option to only offer one shift a week, potentially forcing them to seek a new job if they had been expecting more hours.

Staff on zero hours contracts were felt by one hotel events manager to not offer the required degree of control over staffing levels.

So we do not offer zero hours contracts because from... people just kind of get... lost or forgotten about or not always available, and just kind of keeping them on the books for when it exactly fits then....

Is that a policy across the hotel, or just your...

It's a policy across the entire [hotel] group. We do offer contracts as low as 8 hours a week. People need to be able to commit to that because consistency is of course extremely important and with a heavily based student staff, it really doesn't help people settle.

Conversely, one manager of a hospitality and leisure company said that his company employed most of its staff on zero hours contracts, including supervisors and duty managers:

But the way that ... our casual staff are classed as bar staff, bar supervisor, well not the supervisor, they're still on zero hours contracts but they usually get 30 hours a week, give or take, cos of their role. But the bar staff and ops, duty supervisors, that sort of thing, and obviously the bar staff, they're all on zero hours. And the way we work that is because we're close to [university name redacted], we use them as a bit of a feed, so we'll hire them second year, so they'll stay with us 2-3 years, they graduate and then we'll hire in the next lot, it just sort of feeds through like that. That's how it sort of works in that sense. But they're all on zero hours contracts which suits them and their studies. So obviously they go home in the summer, yeah its more to give them flexibility so they can choose, basically, if they want to work or not. (JMNFPP)

In this facility, which employed a small team of managers, the core-periphery model was used with a core team of managers on permanent contracts and all other staff on zero hours contracts, with a high degree of spot scheduling for certain shifts. This was a relatively new company with a small user base and currently operating on a not-for-profit basis. It was anticipated that staffing would be a more serious issue as the business grew and the facility expanded. However, it is useful to note the flexibility in terms of revenue that the exclusive use of zero hours and casual staff could ensure. This facility also operated very close to a large university, and was considered a 'fun' place to work and so there was seemingly a ready supply of casual staff. In another setting, for example if the facility were located in another part of the city, there would be less likelihood of obtaining the type of flexible labour that was required, basically as most of the work was required in the evenings and weekends which are the times that students are most suited to being available for shifts.

Temporary staff, using my definition as staff with directly employed fixed-term temporary contracts are used by supermarkets to cover seasonal or other demand. They are always used around Christmas, with all supermarkets directly (rather than through external agencies) hiring seasonal staff to cover their busiest time of the year. The difficulty with using temporary staff at other times of the year is the time it takes to recruit directly, as well as the various hoops relating to company and HR policy that they must jump through. However, one manager explained that owing to the labour shortage arising from Covid and the sudden need for replacement staff with people self-isolating, they were able to ignore some of this and recruit as a store rather than through the companies HR processed:

So the hiring process is we go to head office, say we want this, we want this hour contract for this availability. And at this level. And they place an advert on the [COMPANY REDACTED] jobsite and then they pushed that to Indeed and other places like that. And they send us a list of results of online assessments, and five people to arrange interview with. And then we would bring those into interview and hire. So it's quite a drawn out process. Maybe takes 3-4 weeks to hire someone. But obviously we are in a position where suddenly staff are isolating, shielding, and we were losing too many staff to keep the shop running. So they cut out all that online and you could bring someone into store, interview

them, send their details to HR with their UK right to work, and you'd have it all done within a week. So direct hire, straight into store to cover. And these were all temporary contracts. We had a lot of people furloughed, who didn't want a new job but wanted something to tide them over. So we were able to bring people in on 8 week contracts, 3 months contracts, 6 month contracts. (Supermarketconvenience)

Outside of this, they were seldom used amongst participants interviewed. One interesting aspect of the study and the timing of it was the change in demand for supermarket home delivery services as a result of Covid-related lockdown. I was fortunate to interview a manager of the delivery service who had been seconded from her usual role as a customer service manager to cover the demand for the service at the large supermarket in which she worked. She was one of three managers who had been seconded to the service in light of the massive increase in demand. Temporary workers had been hired to manage the jobs relating to home delivery – warehouse staff, shelf pickers and drivers. The interview took place around 8 months after the first lockdown was announced so there had been a chance for demand to be quantified and a reasonable model of the number of staff needed. At the time of interview she noted that demand had not yet been worked out, so they would soon be able to offer them permanent positions.

5.4 Agency work, temps and contractors

The use of numerical flexibility through the ability to bring in additional staff in times of high demand was in use, but all barring the events manager who made extensive use of temporary staff suggested that they would try and avoid drafting in workers from outside of the organisation as much as possible. In particular, managers felt that the use of agency workers and contractors were to avoided if necessary for many reasons, with common themes. The first and most obvious is the cost of employing agency staff to meet demand: the costs to the agency was considered prohibitively high for it to be worthwhile. Traditional agency work is being eroded with task-based apps such as Limber being used, primarily in hospitality, specifically for events. Hospitality participants 1, 3, 7 all stated that these were used to cover one off events. This had the benefits of being cheaper than a traditional temp agency, being quicker to recruit, and the outcome of getting better staff through being able to peruse worker profiles and select them themselves rather than relying on who the agency put forward for the job. These are also used by smaller software firms on occasion for project workers, usually on day rates rather than hourly rates, and with a more thorough selection process given the much higher costs of the worker's rate and the risk to the company.

Contracting out of services in the interviewees from the hotel sector was varied, with cleaning staff being the main contracted out activity. This being said, the larger hotels tended to recruit to their own staff. One managers of a London hotel noted that

Most hotels like to contract out because when there's peaks and troughs in demand.... 100% occupancy one month, 50% the next, its much easier to flex the agency workers. And the agency will then take the staff to other hotels and ship them around to where the work is. But in London, we all do our own. Pre-pandemic we were running at 94% occupancy, we wouldn't want to contract out. (DLHotelGM)

Cleaning represents a large number of staff doing an essential and quantifiable role. In smaller teams, the expectation was that staff would simply cover and work harder if necessary, unless there was a seasonal spike in demand or a forecasted spike which could be anticipated. One head chef in a hotel stated that in his hotel, and in others he had worked at:

General approach, if it's a one-day issue, just crack on [without getting extra staff in]. If it's somebody breaks a leg, then they'll look at getting agency. It again depends on the month, if it's January, February, March, we'll just struggle on but if it's high season, then we'll get an agency guy in. Especially if it's a senior position like a Senior Sous Chef or a Sous Chef or a Senior Chef de Partie. One of those goes down – basically, they will get people in if you're busy at that time, yes. (DPHotel)

The hospitality sector tended to use agency staff for specialist skilled work, where the use of a flexible bank of workers with generic skills would not be sufficient. The same Head Chef noted how he had a relationship with the agency and the difficulty with getting the right kind of chefs to cover shifts, with agencies offering unsuitable candidates in order to ensure they have candidates to put forward and have a chance of securing the commission:

Yes, especially the lower ends. You'll have one guy who made sandwiches in his last job or has been making sandwiches for the last two years and he'll go to an agency. No fault of his own and they'll say, 'Right, you're a Commis Chef,' and they'll send him to us. When I need someone to do full butchery, they'll send me somebody who's just made sandwiches. You have to be very specific. It's where your relationships with agencies come into play, you know, if I ring them up and I go, 'It's [name],' 'What do you need?' I'll say, 'Well someone – oh I just need a Commis Chef.' 'Someone who make me tuna sandwiches, forget about it.' 'Yeah, I've got someone like that.' Or, I'll just say, 'Look, I need somebody who knows full butchery, full fish and can run a section in a busy five-star hotel,' and then they'll, 'Right, okay, that might take a day or two.' Boom. So, if you work with your agency, they're pretty good.

Supermarkets tended not to use agency staff outside of Christmas seasonal work, firstly because they had large numbers of part-time staff anyway (see section 5.2), many of whom would be looking to gain extra

shifts, as discussed earlier. Furthermore, the periods of high demand were more predictable with supermarkets, with seasonal and historical data available for when there were more likely to be more customers and more demand for produce. For this, they would tend to look to employ people for short-term seasonal work.

While hotels could also model data to account for seasonal spikes in demand based on previous years' data, participants noted that they are more susceptible to unanticipated peaks for events within or outside the hotel and other situations where more workers are needed at short notice.

Agency staff were found to offer variable quality. One of the reasons given why greater use of agency staff was not employed given the need for flexibility and the difficulty in hiring staff was the perceived poor quality of some of the staff, or at least the risk of being sent a poor quality worker for an important job. One manager of a front of house team in a large hotel pointed out the problem with using traditional agencies:

they charge £15-16 an hour, the higher end of £15 an hour, and they used to pay the staff member £8.72 an hour. So their rates are really high and the quality was shambolic sometimes. (SDhotel)

Quality of staff was obviously a major factor for most of the managers. As the person with responsibility for managing them on a day-to-day level, it is natural that they would seek to have some control over the workers recruited. For managers in cities, increasing regulation on foreign workers and the penalties for not diligently checking immigration paperwork was also an issue:

We used to use quite an old-fashioned agency. Mostly the Bangladeshi community in Brick Lane. With them, it's quite traditional....But unfortunately, we found quite a lot of them the paperwork wasn't quite up to scratch, so we had to move away from that because they were either illegal, weren't being paid minimum wage, we had some issues with modern slavery and different things so we moved away from that. (DL Hotel)

Agency workers traditionally allow managers to distance themselves from certain working regulations and to avoid having to pay for on-costs. However, with increasing tightening restrictions this hotel could not risk the penalty for being found to be hiring workers without the correct credentials.

In software, self-employed contractors are used in many organisations to meet needs, particularly for projects rather than agency staff. However, they were seldom used by tech companies in the sample of managers interviewed. Contractors were seen as a major risk, in terms of the quality of their work and very expensive. In many cases the products being worked on required detailed knowledge of the business and its clients which contractors would not be able to pick up quickly enough for the managers interviewed. Therefore, contractors would only be used for more straightforward tasks in a tech company, though the preference was

not to use them at all and to recruit in house. However, one manager's firm used contractors as a recruitment tool, with an explicit policy of temp-to-perm hiring, allowing them to effectively test the employee on a risk-free basis before offering a permanent contract at the company.

Contractors were also not favoured in tech firms because there was an expectation that existing staff will work the necessary hours that allow them to fulfil tasks. If there was a deadline, or a spike in demand, it would fall on staff to side-line other tasks and devote themselves to the more urgent task. While all managers interviewed were reluctant to see staff work longer hours than that contracted, (and on the whole, they reported that they did not), it was always the possibility that a late night, or less usually, weekend work would be needed to meet spikes in demand, with the promise of time off in lieu for any time worked over contracted hours. Temporal flexibility was very much in evidence here, rather than numerical or functional flexibility, perhaps owing to the high costs of recruiting contractors and the specialised nature of staff

In the hotels studied, instead of using agency staff, overtime was sometimes employed, but only rarely as budgets needed to be balanced. In most cases some form of functional flexibility was used – in many cases the managers themselves would fill in. In relatively few cases were staff brought from other parts of the building. Only in budget or smaller stores/hotels was this employed, and this was because the store or hotel was set up in this way with a small team of functionally flexible staff.

Gig and task apps for recruiting temporary staff

This was prevalent in hotel and software management, but not in the other two sectors. The hiring of temporary staff through traditional temporary worker agencies seemed to be going out of favour owing to the high cost and to the variable quality of the workers they were supplied with, with many (though not all) managers now filling gaps in schedules with workers who have made themselves available via apps such as Limber and Taskrabbit. The benefits to these for the employer over traditional agencies were many: they cost a lot less than traditional agencies, more information was available to the manager on the worker and his skills, and staff can potentially be found instantly as it is possible to immediately put shifts up as 'available' and receive responses immediately. This is summed up by one hospitality manager, who used Limber:

Limber, it's an app. It's good in Bristol. Basically, you can sign up as a worker or an employer. And basically it's that you just put shifts on there and a pool of ad hoc workers can apply for the shift. You can see their rating, and skill set, and you can just hire them at late notice. The only time we'll use that is if we've got say a wedding, and we don't have enough staff here at that point. But to be fair that's very rare at the moment. (JMNFP)

Limber was also used as a way of filling short term vacancies in another hotel setting:

I could go right, one person's called in sick, we've got 100 people for breakfast, one other's on holiday so I've got no one else to work, I know that for 300 plus on a breakfast I need six people set for breakfast. I've only got 5. Now I could get the rest of the team to run around sweating and kill themselves, or I can post a job ad through an agency and get an agency worker. I'm going to give them the least skilled job which is the pot wash, washing dishes, but at least it means I can tackle my staff who know what they're doing and put them front of house with the guests. That would be the backup of the backup. Normally, we would have enough staff. (MSHOTEL)

Both managers were positive about using these apps and felt it offered a better value system of obtaining temporary staff than agencies. While in the hotel chain setting (MSHotel) it was a senior management decision and out of his hands, it was felt that this represented a better way of recruiting quality short term staff as they were able to vet the candidates themselves rather than being reliant on the agent to present them with suitable candidates, which most managers suggested often resulted in poor quality staff. One hotel manager noted the positives to management of using these apps succinctly:

The gig workforce now gives us much greater clarity because documents are uploaded online. Before they register they have to have their documents uploaded. They get like an Uber rating, a star rating, we know they've worked at 4 different places, they've worked in banqueting, or kitchen.... so it's a much more open, straightforward system. And if they don't show up for a shift they get taken off the system. It's very much like an Uber rating for staff, which works quite well. (DLHOTEL)

The implications of this kind of 'spot' recruiting are interesting, especially from a relational point of view but perhaps beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it does show that numerical flexibility is being used, albeit for very short term, often one day jobs. This is discussed further in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Where traditional agencies were used, it tended to be for more discrete areas of the hotel trade such as cleaning and housekeeping staff, where agencies seem to have 'sewn up' the labour market in that particular task (DLHotel) and would be the only place to go for staff willing and able to do this kind of work at short notice. This would be the harder to recruit areas such as cleaning and portering, which rely heavily on overseas labour. Often this work was done by foreign nationals with little English language skills. Short-term kitchen staff were also found this way, with agencies specialising in catering able to source chefs and porters at short notice for a high hourly rates.

5.5 Independent contractors and self-employed workers.

Independent contractors are distinct from contractors who are brought in through outsourcing in that they are self-employed workers offering their services as an individual to the firm. They are used in the tech sector and indeed any sector with high demand for high level discrete skills that can offer distinct commercial advantages to a firm.

Independent contractors and self-employed workers were not used by any of the supermarket managers. They were used in the leisure industry extensively for gym instructors, though this employment relationship is more complex, as in this case the gym or leisure setting tended to be used as a kind of platform for self-employed people to do their work in an environment that suits their skills rather than having the more traditional employment relationship with a manager that an independent contractor in the tech sector might have. For example, the independent contractor is accountable to the management of the tech firm for their outputs whereas they are not in a the leisure setting.

Contractors were used extensively in the tech sector though the tide seemed to be turning somewhat, according to the participants. The high number of vacancies, the good pay and the expectation that people will move jobs every few years (MBTech) meant that their use was felt to be declining, though larger firms used them for project based work. Start-up firms would often use them as well according to one start up manager, but only for short-term tasks (CETech):

It might be typical of start-up more-so where you can't quite afford to bring in someone permanent but you just need some work to be done by someone and that, so yeah, bringing in an engineer or specialist for three months to get a job done, that's quite common. There's loads of engineering contractors.

I: If you felt that you needed somebody for a year say, for a year's project, would you go down that route?

R: No, we'd recruit them, I think we'd recruit them on a fixed term contract or something, if we could. It might be that actually no one would stand up to a one year fixed term contract and therefore they'd end up having to be a contractor anyway, so either you go with permanent because you think that there's a need to have them longer or you take the hit on cost and maybe you would go contractor because of course they're a lot more expensive.

A software manager in a public sector setting noted that in his organisation they were used occasionally, though pointed out in a previous firm he had worked at that they marketed themselves to clients on the basis that they do *not* use contractors:

Well now in the [public sector organisation redacted] they have contractors, there was one contractor on my team who was there before me. In [firm redacted] I don't think they used any contractors whatsoever, and that was part of their marketing offering... Yes so, they marketed themselves on not using contractors. (DJWAG)

An interesting approach to extracting further value from contractors in the tech sector was as a way of recruiting people. They would explicitly have a 'contract to perm' approach whereby they could 'road test' staff to see if they were a good fit. One start-up manager noted:

We're currently recruiting for another two tech guys, [redacted] but effectively we're looking for permanent staff, but we're effectively taking them on as contractors so we've got the ability to try them and see how they go. Our experience of recruiting it's been a case of... it's hit and miss. Some guys have been great, some guys have been a bit shit. And I think we're more interested in bright people, even if they're inexperienced, as I think we can help shape and direct their experience, than more experienced guys who aren't particularly... dynamic, independent, I guess. So it's a good way for us to test that out.

This is possible in a labour market where discrete skills are required but also where there is an employee's market with - it was reported by all participants in the sector - plentiful vacancies and a high degree of churn. This correlates with a degree of employee-led flexibility in the sector. This is discussed in later chapters in issues around employee-led vs employer-led flexibility.

The sector that employed most independent contractors was sport and leisure. One of the reasons for selecting this sector for this dissertation was because of the uniquely exploitative way that many of the budget gym chains employ staff on a floor hire basis (see Harvey et al 2019 for a study of these workers). Unfortunately, only one manager of such a facility agreed to speak with me and so the remaining leisure facility managers have more traditional temporal regimes, similar to those in the hospitality industry.

Independent contractors were not used in the supermarkets studied. The hospitality sector participants in certain areas would employ some people who were specialists – for example event organisers and managers for large events, but on a day to day basis in the kind of work that this dissertation is considering, they were not used at all. Agencies were used for all difficult to recruit jobs, such as head chefs.

5.6 Overtime

The previous use of ‘atypical’ or nonstandard (as in outside of the full-time hours model) working patterns are ways of managing demand through the contracting of hours and the number of hours that employers need to meet demand. Full-time and part-time workers are the traditional approach, with overtime offered to those when there is additional work needed to be done. In shift-based sectors like supermarkets and hospitality, overtime is often used and often happily accepted by employees who are low paid and are often working flexible shift patterns anyway, and so are perhaps more likely to be able to squeeze in extra shifts at times convenient to them outside of their weekly rota’d in schedule. Overtime, if used routinely, is a form of temporal flexibility along with the other forms already discussed, especially if performing extra shifts or hours is expected of staff.

Unpaid overtime was not a feature of the interviews with participants in the sectors studied, though the tech sector managers generally stated that there was an expectation that staff would occasionally or frequently work longer hours to complete shifts. This is similar to many similar professional jobs, though most of the participants had informal arrangements whereby a member of staff working late could come in later or finish earlier later in the week with time off in lieu. There was no formal accruing of additional hours in any of the companies studied, and all were expected to broadly work their full-time contracted hours, and usually a little beyond. One manager in a tech company was asked how common it was for staff to work beyond their contracted hours:

Very common. I'd say most of the devs are working online or on instant messaging till around 6 or 7. and every two weeks we do a release which has to be out of hours, so a couple of them will be staying until midnight to do that. (EHHTech)

Other managers in this sector identified similar behaviours – it was not formally expected that staff would work late but many did anyway. This is an example of where technology can erode the barriers between working time and leisure time in white collar work, with many members of staff now working at home, or continuing with their workload when they get home due to the ease in which they can resume their work at home thanks to technology. However, one manager suggested long hours were being phased out as staff begin to value their leisure time more.

Traditionally the software industry was a nightmare for this. It used to be about over committing and under delivering ...offering deadlines to customers where you internally knew you wouldn't make it and, I've done it myself, you end up working until one in the morning every night in a week. You have burnout and suffering for it, and people jump around a lot. For us, I try to push past that, I don't want my team having that sort of stress on them. But at the same time I pop on and do a

couple of hours if I've got nothing on in the evenings, do a couple of things, and I know my guys do as well. It is not paid overtime and not really managed or counted to a level that needs to be but if someone is asked to do something extra they are offered overtime or usually time off in lieu. In the contract any time off in lieu for every half hour you get extra and use it for holiday. But to be honest we struggle to get people to use up their holiday and taken it at the end of it. (MBtech)

The Supermarket managers interviewed use overtime very frequently to meet demand. With the rise of part-time staff as the norm for new recruits in this sector as discussed earlier in this chapter, this is much more easily achieved and it would seem that 'overtime' is not really overtime in the traditional sense, because many employees rely on 'overtime' to make up their working week to a liveable wage. The issue of it being forced on people or offered as 'gifts' to favoured employees seems to be declining as well as Whatsapp groups or more formal staff communication apps means that available shifts are posted and offered on a first come first serve basis. (see next chapter for full discussion of negotiations and use of technology). A major supermarket chain home delivery manager, managing a heavy workload with fluctuating demand during the Covid lockdown said her approach to getting more staff for a particular shift to meet a spike in demand was to:

If there's 30 people that's contracted on those days and we want 45 then we'll put 15 shifts in for overtime and then people just put their name down to whatever shift they want.... It's all done on the tablet now ...this app comes down and it will ping any overtime out to the colleagues so they can look on the system on their phone and say 'Oh look. There's overtime flittered about. Oh I'll put my name down for that' and they can put it straight into the app and fill it, but anybody on the flexi contracts gets priority because they're on the flexi contract, before the people that isn't on a flexi contract, so that's the difference between the two. That's why it pays you to be on flexi. (JSSupermarket)

Here we can also see how this supermarket uses 'flexi' staff – which is their term for staff on part-time contracts but with minimal guaranteed hours. Here it shown that staff on these contracts get priority when it comes to securing additional shifts as it is a way of allowing them to obtain enough hours per week for them to make up to the number of hours they need to live on. This also meant it was very easy for her to get the staff she needed, presumably as so many were very keen to accrue enough hours for a reasonable wage:

if their contract is for two or three days then, is it generally quite easy to get staff to work overtime?

it is on [redacted name for the home delivery arm of the business including picking and delivering] because there's such a big head count that everybody wants overtime on there (JSSupermarket)

This was also the case in another supermarket chain, which has an app for all scheduling and shift-based issues. This is discussed in much more depth in chapter 6. The app allows the manager to seek additional labour from beyond his own team and beyond his own store:

We can also put available shifts on the app now, which is a new feature which is really good. And not only my store team if they see a shift can put themselves on it, but anyone... I can put it out to whole area, and anyone in that area can put themselves on that shift, and I'll get a notification. Which is a really good advancement. (Supersmarketconvenience)

Overtime is often the first port of call for a hotel line manager facing a short period of high demand, or to cover a member of staff who is absent. While all participants stated that back-to-back/double shifts were generally a thing of the past, they did on occasion happen as a last resort. This was more prevalent in the hospitality industry which has a history of long and gruelling shifts. However, one front of house hotel manager suggested that culture around work in the sector had shifted, and that staff would not work the longer hours traditional associated with the industry.

No! If you ask someone to do a double now... I hate to use the word millennials, or people new to the industry, they're going to look at you like 'yeah right.' Maybe a student might do it, but otherwise, you certainly won't have the right to ask now. If you ask someone to stay for a couple of extra hours, the first thing they're going to say is 'are you paying me?' You're going to say yes, and then they'll do it. But you're not going to get them to a double. Things have changed massively... The most I go to as an emergency where I go to 12 hours... if anything the GM would expect the manager to stay, not the receptionists. Managers, there's an expectation, maybe, but not the receptionist. (SDHotel)

Hotel managers had mixed approaches to forcing additional hours on their staff. Most managers said that they accepted the people had a right to a home life and that forcing or expecting staff to work longer hours would lead to dissatisfaction, one manager stated that in the hospitality sector it is simply part of the job and that long hours and late evenings were part of the job of working in the hotel industry. (MSHotel).

The hotel events manager interviewed also disclosed that the staff he employed would, during peak season, have to work long hours as part of their daily schedule, sometimes '12 to 15 hours shifts per day' This covered his directly employed staff, who would work variable hours based on a minimum 20 hour contract, as well as agency staff and zero hours contracts staff (CBHotel)

Sport and Leisure sectors ran to a more predictable timetable with far fewer unanticipated increases in demand, and overtime was only usually offered in the event of a staff member being absent unexpectedly or for covering absences if they wanted it. **Amongst the participants, there was no expectation that they would work extra and some could use student labour on zero hours contracts to make up the shortfall. They were**

also covered by much smaller teams than are found in larger supermarkets and hotels. Nevertheless unlike the evidence from the budget hotel and supermarket line managers where a 'lean' approach was taken, there was little evidence of functional flexibility owing to the nature of the work (see section 5.8 for more discussion on this).

5.7 Recruitment and retention and flexibility

Recruitment of staff represented a major and difficult part of many line managers jobs. Again, the policies around recruitment, and often budgets were out of the hands and decisions had been made elsewhere, but the operational side of advertising positions or liaising with recruitment agencies, assessing applications, conducting interviews and negotiating start dates, hour worked per week (for part-time workers) was the responsibility of the line manager.

While recruitment is not a part of this dissertation's research question, the link between recruitment and scheduling is worth exploring. It is also a part of the job which most of the line managers felt was very important to the role and took some up a lot of their time. They also highlighted the importance of finding the right kind of people and very often this entailed the right attitude to flexibility. In areas where there is a labour shortage, such as in hotels, negotiations around scheduling for new recruits ahead of the job being started can take on an extra importance, or the promise of favourable scheduling can be used to incentivise prospective staff to work for their company instead of a competitor. Similarly, for those sectors where there was a surplus of available staff, such as in supermarkets, recruitment practices tended to be more prescriptive with employer-led flexibility being made clear as a form of screening for staff who are not able to be completely flexible and available at all time for shifts.

Recruitment of staff represented a major and difficult part of many line managers jobs. Again, the formal policies around recruitment, and usually budgets were out of their hands and decisions had been made elsewhere, but the operational side of advertising positions or liaising with recruitment agencies, assessing applications, conducting interviews and negotiating start dates, hour worked per week (for part-time workers) was the responsibility of the line manager.

In the interviews, issues surrounding recruitment were discussed with all participants, usually simply to ask them if they are involved with recruitment. However, discussions very often came back around to recruitment from other topics as it was clearly a major part of the job for most line managers and one that they saw as intrinsically linked to scheduling, rotas and other tasks around meeting demand and managing resources, especially as for all cases (apart from those in the software sector), they would be hiring staff who would be employed on the basis that they are available for variable shifts at different times of the day and different days of the week. In most circumstances prospective employees were required to state their availability up front and of they had any circumstances that meant that they were unable to attend work for

certain periods of the week. All accepted that it was not reasonable to expect part-time or full-time to be able to be available for all shifts.

Therefore, the need to offer more flexibility was, according to participants, very important for staff retention. In general, however, temporal flexibility was less important for line management staff in tech sectors as spatial flexibility (i.e. working remotely or from home), with the ability to work from home often associated with the desire to work in a fragmented way and at the hours that suited them. Line managers in the study felt reasonably happy to do this (and of course all were forced to do this anyway, when the lockdown restrictions were introduced) though it meant them having to devise new ways of ensuring control through the labour process given that the power to control the time when work was done was shifting quickly to employees. Aptly, technology was key to ensuring this control with software designed to ensure easy access to staff workload, project timelines and milestones and if they had been hit, times logged in during the day and others allowing managers to monitor workers and ensure control of workflows throughout. The fact that staff seemingly acquiesce willingly to this perhaps demonstrates two things – that staff in the tech sector are willing to trade greater surveillance for greater control over their own schedule, but also that the culture in the sector is towards collaboration, flatter team structures with workloads being shared amongst staff of all levels and less of a conflict or negotiation-based relationship.

Managers in the tech companies found that flexibility was becoming a key bargaining tool for recruitment and retention and the resistance from their staff to a reduction in the level of employee-based scheduling came from the threat of losing staff to other companies that might offer more favourable terms around flexibility. The nature of the work in this sector, with a high turnover of staff seeking better opportunities with competitors and a shortage of skilled and experienced staff made this a more serious threat. There were more available jobs in the labour market and that employees could generally find work easily, and one participant (DJTech) said that recruiters were actively headhunting staff and managers via LinkedIn and offering opportunities with the promise of more flexible work.

5.8 Functional flexibility

In the orthodox management literature and the models of the core-periphery flexible firm, functional flexibility was a highly prized form of flexibility for firms to adopt, one that was a model for the flexible firm. Distinct from the Fordist approach where workers work on discrete and focused tasks, the flexible firm values the worker that can perform many tasks. Functional flexibility is also valued in the hotels and supermarkets under study, though there are a similar number of constraints on their use which means that it is not used as frequently as managers would like.

Before beginning the empirical stage of research for this study, I had assumed that most supermarket and hotel workers could, if necessary cover each other's jobs in different parts of the store or hotel and also, that they frequently would. This came from my own experience of other workplaces in other sectors as well as from the literature on the flexible firm (see for example Rubery 2005, Kelliher & de Menezes 2019). From the respondents in this study, this is not the case, especially in larger organisations. Large hotels and supermarkets, and tech companies seem to work on a team basis and there is little crossover to other teams within the same organisations, even though the skills might be similar.

One of the line managers at one of the largest supermarket chains noted that they now try and emulate the practices of the budget stores and recruit staff who do more than one role, rather than them being brought in simply to work on the tills, for example:

We tend to put vacancies up for general assistants and we would state on that application what that role would be but at interview stage then we would discuss whether they would be flexible to be multiskilled across the board rather than just to specific departments. I suppose over the years [firm] have only ever recruited people say for checkouts, for example, and they've only ever worked checkouts but now in modern times they recognise that people want to learn different areas, want to have more of a variety, so offer them multiskilled and I suppose we look at our competitors, like Aldis and Lidl's where they're on something called an agile contract where they can go into work and they could work on the tills or they could be filling for example and we would try to encourage that environment in our stores as well. (CJSupermarket)

The same manager also noted that the increasing demand and staff self-isolating of the lockdown period meant staff had to become more functionally flexible (See 'Covid impact' section of this chapter for more on this).

In the hotel sector, One manager noted that the standard of the hotel had a bearing on whether functional flexibility was used. We had established from MBHotel, who line managed a team in a budget hotel

that staff there were used to swapping from task to task, for example serving at reception as well as serving drinks at a bar. However a manager in another hotel felt that this would compromise the customer experience which is something that the hospitality industry tried to enhance:

No. Its quite complex. Because people have vision in their head of the ways things work. People are going to want to not see that. They don't want to see people struggling, ... we provide an environment, they want people to be smiling, enjoying themselves, and if you are out for dinner and you saw them cleaning the toilets earlier on, you don't want to see that! (DLHotel)

The use of functional flexibility to meet demand was varied in the sport and leisure sector, with some staff in some facilities being asked to perform a different function from that which they were contracted to perform if the need arose. A line manager of a leisure facility with attached food and drink facilities said:

.. there is a massive crossover. So all of the staff know how to change a barrel, know how to hop on the bar if its busy, know where all the sports stuff is, know how to make a booking, can take an event enquiry. They've all got the basics of the job, they can do the initial point of call with a walk in or a call, and then they can pop it into an email to the manager. (JMNFP)

While another leisure line manager said that it was very common in his facility, a publicly owned facility. Aside from the lifeguards, who had to be qualified, staff would cover for each other when necessary.

... It's not like in the [facility where interviewer had previously worked], we had 100 odd staff on the books there once you took into account the bar, reception and all the lifeguards and the cleaners. Here we are talking about, what, 30 staff in total. But unlike the [facility where interviewer had previously worked] they can all do everything. Apart from the lifeguards who obviously have to have the qualification, but they can chip in as well. But we encourage all our staff to have the qualification so they can cover [the swimming pool]. And when we're recruiting for other posts we have lifeguard qualification as a desirable. I mean it's fair enough the kid who works the café on a Saturday hasn't got it, but the main staff we would like that and they can do it [the lifeguard qualification] here as well in work time if they want. (MBLeisure)

Though in the more specialised private fitness facility, the line manager there noted that it was difficult for staff to flex functionally, owing to the need for specialist qualifications. In response to a question about whether staff cross over in roles and tasks, he replied:

Unlikely. We train our staff to come in, do a job, they specialise in ideally. I think our company's a bit different in that if there's a shortfall somewhere that department would have probably made provisions for that. So if there's a shortfall in the gym, I would utilise the surrounding team in the gym to provide a solution. Because of the... you have to remember that everywhere I oversee, there's

qualifications necessary. So to pull somebody from for instance, food and beverage, to gym, that's an impossibility. So I wouldn't do anything that would put us in breach of anything or a legal battle (laughs) (MVDL)

The common feature here is that those roles that do not have specific qualification can be subject to flexible functions, but those more specialised such as lifeguards or gym instructors were not.

Functional flexibility was less of an issue with software as they tended to work in discrete teams and were recruited for their skills with a particular system or coding language. Nonetheless, there was some evidence of functional flexibility if a deadline was needed by another team working on a separate project. One line manager explained the system when there are bottlenecks, using system borrowed from manufacturing:

Because there's different hats and different jobs, you've got testers and developers, if the bottleneck is in the testing, or the testers can't get through, then I can assign developers to help with the testing. They're not going to be as good as the qualified testers, but by all means they can assist. I can assist with that. My consultants can assist with at as well. If the block is in development and we can't get through the work its usually not because the developers can't do its usually because they're waiting on an answer from somebody or a machine goes down or something, or a server or something, it's all hands on deck to resolve that. Yeah, so it's a means of keeping the flow through the system, keeping the tickets going through it, started state, or complete state. [MBtech]

Overall, functional flexibility was, overall found to be of mixed utility with the managers interviewed. Some organisations relied on it to an extent, mainly in the leisure industry, whereas others had stricter delineations on departmental responsibilities. It is possible from these interviews to determine that most line managers can not rely on functional flexibility to cover unanticipated higher demand or gaps in the schedule/rota, and instead are ore likely to rely on some form of temporal flexibility from existing staff members.

5.9 Exogenous constraints

Brexit

A report published in January 2023 has indicated that there is a total shortfall of around 330,000 people in the labour force in the UK. Most of these jobs are in the low skilled economy with manufacturing, transport and hospitality the sectors most affected. This follows a report from the ONS which showed that there was an overall reduction in net immigration of 540000 to June 2022. The hospitality sector had a drop of 67000 or 4% of total employment in the sector. (Guardian 17th January 2023)

The interviews were conducted in the period between November 2020 to March 2021. This was during a national lockdown which had huge effects on three of the four sectors, as well as the fifth sector, social care, which I did not go ahead with for the reasons discussed in the Research Design chapter. However, the other

major exogenous shock was Brexit, which was unavoidable in discussions, in particular with managers in the hospitality and hotel sector. It is worth presenting some of the evidence for context, as the issues relating to the intersection of Brexit and Covid measures meant that recruitment and retention became a major short-term concern. The hotels that were under study in this thesis were all closed at the time of research because of Covid restrictions, and staff were furloughed. Most managers knew that their staff had gone back to their home countries, and were unlikely to be coming back:

Yeah they've been put on furlough. Because they're on furlough and 80% pay, they can't pay their rent. They go home, no rent, no travel, better off. They might have gone back, built their life, their kids gone to school, maybe found another job back home, things have picked up. A good chunk won't come back. We were struggling before... I don't know how... I think there's going to be some big problems. September will be the time, end of the summer. I don't know how we are going to clean hotel rooms. (DLHotel)

This demonstrates the position that hotel recruiting managers found themselves in in Winter 2020/21. Uncertainty around the future of their contracted staff as well as the prospects for recruiting future staff. This section will explore some of these issues in relation to the research questions and the possibility of how, at this specific point in time, issues related to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union would have related to determinants and constraints on temporal flexibility and flexible scheduling. In particular it focuses on the labour market issues and how the sector as well as the organisation would adapt to any changes as a result of Brexit, the outcomes of which were still unknown at the time of interviewing.

The term 'Brexit' is used, as it is throughout academic and non-academic literature, to refer to the set of decisions relating to the UK's exit from the European Union. It is used imprecisely in the interview evidence because at the time of researching, a deal regarding the exact nature of the UK's exit from the EU was not in place and there was still uncertainty about what a post-Brexit labour market would look like. The hospitality sector in particular had severe concerns as much of the workforce in major cities were of non-UK, European citizenship. One participant (DPHotel) described eastern European workers as the 'backbone' of commercial kitchens across the UK, without which many would be able to operate. A hotel catering (MP2Hotel) manager also noted:

...you just go on [recruitment website] Indeed and you just look and every single job in housekeeping at the moment is you know, everybody is looking for housekeepers, head housekeepers – it's all because obviously a lot of the Polish and the eastern European ladies have you know, they've decided to go home. Not just because of Brexit – well you've a mixture of Brexit and Covid – and they've gone home and I should think that hotel and cleaning industry – I mean care homes, oh my god, every care home you look at is looking for housekeeping staff. So I don't think we rely on, in events, we don't

rely on it as heavily as they do in hotels but there were certainly the less skilled – a lot of your kitchen porters and porters would be eastern Europeans.

The reliance on cheaper foreign labour seemed to be coming to an end and the need to reconsider how to recruit, and ultimately how to manage without a compliant workforce with surplus labour is having to be considered in the hospitality industry.

These issues were not reflected in the other sectors. One software manager (EHsoftware) was concerned about the effect on client markets, but he felt that recruitment would not be affected as the majority of their staff were UK based. Some larger firms make use of European workers but it was not felt that Brexit would affect staffing or future flexibility.

Participants in the supermarket and leisure sectors did not raise Brexit as a particular concern because they did not draw extensively on foreign labour. Their flexible and contingent workforce were generally drawn from students and people with caring responsibilities who needed to work flexibly. They did not report difficulties recruiting and even in the height of the Covid lockdown with increased temporary opportunities because of increased demand, they found a willing workforce willing to work flexibility (employer-led flexibility) (JBSupermarket).

Labour force statistics (see opening paragraph of this section) as well as evidence from the participants suggest that fears of labour shortages in the sector have been borne out and that most hospitality venues are struggling to fill vacancies. This analysis is outside of the scope of this dissertation and future research could focus on the sector and how labour shortages have affected the outcomes of precarious scheduling and how staff shortages affect line management control regimes. This thesis must focus on how managers interpreted the state of post Brexit UK labour force at the time of interview, and that is presented here. As one hotel manager (MSHotel) noted:

Who knows what the future will bring, now we're in what's called the new normal, it might all change by 2021, completely changed tack. All the stuff with Brexit, prices might go up, it's very difficult to predict what will happen but all we can do is look at what we're doing now and I do think of the ever changing coronavirus legislation all we can do is a hotel is guesstimate what will happen and that is the truth, it's just guesswork right now.

One events manager was more pessimistic about the future prospects for recruitment in the sector:

It's massive and it's going to have a massive implication after Corona. So many lives I know of friends, destroyed is the wrong word but you know but people have lost good jobs, have had to move home, and they're not going to be coming back. The workforce that has left the country is enormous. I haven't felt like all of these people that were agency staff before have all gone back to their home

countries. We're talking hundreds of thousands of people. There was a shortage before. I know one guy who does agency staff for housekeeping. He said he was looking to increase his staff needs by 40% last year. He was looking for another 600 people to do this job. That he already needed those position filled, that he wasn't able to provide. But I don't think that you're going to get 600 people willing to do that hard work and benefits are potentially easier. (CBHotel)

A manager in a hotel chain was also pessimistic and felt that the sector was going to change irrevocably as a result of Brexit and Covid:

As of today, possibly. I see a major labour shortage... this prediction that unemployment will peak in September [2021] is nonsense. Because I'm already struggling to get staff now.... The major issue you've got is Brexit. That is you know, the vast majority of staff.... 134 staff, only 4 were born in the UK, including myself. So we've got quite a few British citizens, been naturalized over time. We rely heavily on eastern European staff, and I know for a fact that probably three quarters of my furloughed staff are in eastern Europe as we speak. They're at home, on 80% of their salary, and they're not paying rent, or travel. Whether they will come back... I very much doubt. I can foresee a really big staffing crisis coming up. July August, I can absolutely see real difficulty in recruiting. ..

As we stand now, we've probably got enough staff. But every time we go out and do a welfare check, another two or three are saying they're not going to be coming back. In housekeeping we've got 25 in housekeeping, I've already lost ten, and I reckon another five won't come back, so I'm already ten or twelve short in housekeeping. And I genuinely do not know how I'm going to recruit them. We're going to have to pay more, pay a premium and suck it up (DLHotel)

A manager in Bristol was also worried about the risks that Brexit brought for the labour market in the hospitality industry:

Then we have Brexit as well which is something that we haven't spoken with but obviously hospitality's gonna be massively affected for that so now if we do want to recruit a position and the person they are not in the country we need to offer at least 24K and 24K probably only let's say more than yeah, 15 per cent of the staff members get more than 24K – 20 per cent – so that's gonna be very difficult so as I was telling you we have our housekeeping team that they are... 70 per cent of them they are over 60 years old, they are from Eastern Europe, they're gonna get retired and we don't have anyone applying for room attendant jobs. (MPHotel)

One manager (SDManager) of a budget hotel in Bristol did not think that Brexit would have a huge effect, though his evidence suggests possibly otherwise. He was also the only one to not be overly concerned

by the change, though it is worth noting that his hotel ran a very lean operation being a budget option with limited staff:

I don't see it having an effect. It's a tough one. For housekeeping, mainly all our housekeepers are all Bulgarian and Romania. I'm not personally worried in my department, but some departments like Housekeeping, it might be problem. They rely hugely on Romanian and people from Bulgaria. And Hungarians. In certain departments this might be a problem.

While Brexit was deliberately not something that the research questions considered – an entire alternative dissertation could be produced on the effect of Brexit on each sector – it was important to discuss it with participants in order to understand the context in which they were working and the constraints on their working pattern. As demonstrated, the hospitality sector was being hit very hard by the uncertainty around Brexit and their prospects of recruiting a flexible low paid work force was in jeopardy, as well as the possibility of losing their existing staff. However, the snapshot of time that these interviews represent can only offer speculation. The managers in other sectors were less concerned about the impact of Brexit on their staffing, with Covid restrictions very much in their thoughts and the changing role of the manager during lockdown measures and how to manage staff falling ill or testing positive, and the immediate need to fill shifts in that context. Conversely, the hospitality managers were able to be more reflective as their hotels were closed during the period the interviews took place and had no such pressing problems around ensuring the rota was filled.

Covid

There were other exogenous issues that were not covered, but most have been discussed already. As noted elsewhere, the research design had to change considerably to allow for the Covid lockdown regulations which was the complete focus of managers in all sectors, and adapting to what at the time felt like a very uncertain future where jobs, including their own were at risk and retaining staff difficult. It would be easy to speculate on how Covid has affected these sectors in terms of temporal flexibility and flexible scheduling, but the data available does not allow for anything more than speculation. The need for more staff to meet new demand (supermarkets were often the only shops open, there were reports of panic buying, and demand for delivery services rose) was met with more staff having to stay at home to self-isolate. One manager at a large supermarket chain said that they required staff to work in a functionally flexible way:

I suppose over the last year it's been quite frequent with obviously COVID and with the isolation periods etc ... so there have been quite a lot of opportunities where I've had to pull a lot of people from different areas. I suppose in the beginning of the pandemic it was quite easy because we had closed

quite a lot of areas of our shop, the café, the delicatessen etc, so we had people there who we could instantly train to come across to the areas that were short but as time has gone on and different areas have opened back up it's been really important for me to get that sort of multiskilled. I suppose I've recognised it more since the pandemic than I ever have because you wouldn't tend to have colleagues going off like we have throughout the last year. (CJSupermarket)

The Covid lockdown measures had hit the other sectors differently – tech workers had moved to working from home, whereas the other two sectors (leisure and hospitality) had closed completely. Their thoughts on the future of staffing were therefore only speculative and are not repeated here, though some of their concerns are outlined in the 'Brexit' section of this chapter.

5.10 Summary

There is a lot of evidence to consider in this chapter which encompasses the diversity of ways in which firms, initially, and then line managers are able to 'flex' their workforce to meet demand, but also to ensure recruitment and retention of staff. The research question asks if temporal flexibility in firms is becoming more prevalent than the functional or numerical flexibility and this would appear to be true, certainly in supermarkets. However, there is also evidence that functional flexibility is increasing in supermarkets, where staff are required to be able to perform more than one job. This is, perhaps, and as the manager quoted suggests, in direct response to the success of the budget supermarket chains that run a lean staffing regime that are able to perform different roles in the store.

Part-time work was becoming the norm in supermarkets, as per Wood's studies of retail firms. However, full-time work remained important in hotels and tech manager interviews. Participants in the leisure industry made use of significant amounts of zero hours and casual staff, and students. Zero hours contracts are prevalent in hotels and leisure, whereas supermarkets, have a system of precarious scheduling, backed up by the minimal hour 'flex' contracts they offer where only a single shift or perhaps two a week is guaranteed. This allows them to manage normal fluctuations in demand through temporal flexibility. For seasonal fluctuations, some managers directly hired temporary workers. Supermarkets therefore show a high degree of both temporal and numerical flexibility. This will be exacerbated in the future by the continuing introduction of automated schedules, which unless staff and line management can override, will place this area of the labour process firmly in the hands of senior management and their policies. The next chapter will look at how line managers and staff cooperate or conflict to try and overcome this and create a work regime where the aims of these two groups are realised, and resisting the excesses of senior management moves to precarious scheduling.

There are significant constraints to the use of these types of flexibility, and this chapter highlighted some of those constraints from the interviews with the line managers, both internal and external. The main constraint is, perhaps, staff resistance and the need for staff to be retained. A more coercive regime may mean staff leaving to work at another firm, as jobs tended to plentiful in these sectors (with the exception of sport and leisure) creating a system whereby staff are complicit and have the same aims as the line manager is essential. The next section will look at how line managers and their staff interact around scheduling decisions and temporal flexibility, and how this is a site of conflict and consensus.

6. Staff-line manager interactions around schedules and rotas

This section comprises the main theoretically informed element of the dissertation, which is an analysis of line managers, decision-making, and the ways in which the issues around flexible scheduling are a site of conflict, consensus. It links to the literature, in particular Wood's interpretation of Burawoy, but also to the CMS approaches and other LPT theorists and my own synthesis of these approaches to try and find a consistent theoretical approach to studying line management and this part of the labour process.

Thematic review was used to identify trends in answers to the questions, following initial thematic coding that corresponded with questions from the interview in the research design phase. Several stages of analysis were done to identify these themes and they are laid out below. Questions asked in the interviews directly sought to obtain information about negotiations and the processes of scheduling staff, and the manager's role in this task. A degree of interpretation is required in this process but as much as possible this chapter will report faithfully the recollections of managers of how they manage scheduling and staff management around rotas and schedules. The interviews focused heavily on management of scheduling and rotaing, and identifying how staff were able to negotiate around schedules, obtain sufficient flexibility from their staff to ensure the shift was fully occupied, and what factors managers required to secure a flexible workforce that they were able to retain.

In this chapter the following themes that emerged from the evidence are set out, with discussion and presentation of data:

- Negotiating flexible schedules
- Software and automation
- Variable and unpredictable scheduling
- Sector specific practices

The key issue that arose from the data in terms of fundamental analysis is that the person who is being studied – the line manager, usually a grade above the staff they are managing – is that while they are managers, tasked with the management of staff, most did not necessarily feel 'apart' from the staff they manage, as salaries were generally low in line management roles in these sectors (apart from tech). Many of the managers were keen to put themselves in the position of their staff as they had been in that position themselves previously, and acted accordingly:

Like I'm quite flexible and understanding because I was once.... I can easily remember I was once in that position. But at the end of the day, I can't make my life super hard by giving in to everything, but I will always try and be flexible, especially if people have actual reasons for it. It's just the way it is.
(SCSupermarket)

This attitude seemed prevalent even with those in more senior line management positions, possibly because hospitality is considered an area where rapid career progression to a management roles is possible from starting at the lowest level (according to DLHotel). This reconception of line managers fundamentally alters the issue around control and consent as discussed in much of the literature. The analysis that follows has to take this into account. Issues of control and consent are still fundamental to this thesis, but the intention of many line managers is to protect the relationships they have with their staff in order to secure a degree of control, and in some cases to relieve them of some of the more punitive diktats of senior management. They do this while at the same time attempting to preserve their own autonomy and room to manoeuvre to complete their task.

In many cases the line managers and worker's pay is similar, though most respondents in line management enjoyed benefits relating to job security and flexibility that were not afforded to the staff that they managed. In this chapter I will outline themes from the data that surrounded scheduling, negotiating schedules and rotas, and the constraints on any move towards more employer-led flexible scheduling.

Line managers in all sectors under study retained significant autonomy and control over the staff rota and schedule, despite the ongoing introduction of software and other technologies, restructures that remove layers of middle management, and other internal changes. It is a major area where the immediate line manager has formal authority over another employees' working life, and by extension their leisure time as well. Attempts by senior management to impose more control on this area of management were still filtering through, but resistance was found from both the managers and the workforce. This is discussed in this and the subsequent chapter.

6.1 Negotiating flexible schedules

This is the central analytical part of the dissertation. It is the site of conflict and consensus that is being uncovered and which will be analysed in the next chapter around issues of control and consent, as well as gifts and reciprocity. Therefore, this section is very long, and contains a lot of evidence. This was the primary set of questions in the interviews with participants, and the decision-making processes, and its constraints and determinants were discussed in depth. This section reflects that. The framework around management decision-making and work regimes will be considered, and the issue of flexible despotism as per Chun (2001) and Wood's (2020) conception of the theory.

Negotiating around scheduling was something that almost all participants encountered did with their staff, and all were prepared to entertain doing so to facilitate good relations with staff. The exceptions were those supermarket line managers that used or were beginning to use software (see next section in this chapter), or had a system whereby requests for a different work pattern were sent through an app to a scheduling system. This tended to give the line managers who used these systems sufficient distance to be able to avoid prolonged verbal negotiation. However, all managers using this system stated that they would always try and accommodate these requests as well as much as possible. In this case the negotiating started with a formal 'bid' rather than with a request, which changes the power dynamics in the interaction.

This left a significant amount of room for managers to negotiate schedules with their workers and to overlook policies or the 'correct' way of doing things, thus creating a workplace regime centred around consensus. This section will present some of the evidence of how managers do this and link to the other factors discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Working weekend shifts was generally the part of the working week that managers identified as the time that most of their staff wanted to avoid. Therefore, the ability to schedule away from weekends is something that enables managers to exercise control and introduce the possibility of schedule 'gifts' (see chapter 7 for discussion of gifts). Some managers explicitly said that they would try and ensure that weekends shifts were distributed fairly across the month or year, but others did not and sought to ensure maximum flexibility from their staff across the seven days.

The default approach, found within most of the workplaces studied across all sectors to changing a scheduled shift is for staff within the same team to swap shifts. While this is presented as a staff led activity, it is usually entirely at the line manager's discretion if they grant the shift swap, and as we shall see elsewhere,

is often dependent on the quality of the worker and if the line manager feels they have sufficient quality of staff to cover a shift, with many managers seeking to ensure that they have a senior member of staff alongside a junior one. This can cause some problems for managers who need to balance having sufficiently experienced staff. As one head of department in a large supermarket noted:

R: ...so we'd look then to see if we're able to move that colleague without impacting someone else. If we wasn't then we would discuss them to do a shift swap to see if a colleague would be able to change their hours to be able to accommodate the person who can't work that shift, so there's ways around it. We're trained to start off with yes and then the worst case scenario we'd have to decline that request, but we try to honour the most that we can, I suppose.

I: So it's done informally? Ideally would you like them to just say to you or do they have to request through an app, sort of can I change a shift?

R: No, it's done informally via conversation, there is documentation, there's forms with shift swaps where they can write it down and nine out of ten the colleagues will work it between themselves and say I can't work tomorrow until 10 but my colleague can swap with me and I work their shift and then it's just a case of I would update the app then and swap those around for the colleague. (CJSupermarket)

This approach was reflected in another manager of a different chain of large supermarket. He showed a high degree of autonomy and made significant efforts to accommodate his staff's wishes:

When I sat down to do a rota I had specific things I knew there would be certain people that really didn't want to do a Thursday late night, so I always knew for example if someone always had football on a Thursday night, they'd say please schedule me for any other night. So I'd say, OK I won't. So I'd have a list of things, requirements. 'I'm going out next week, can I not do Monday night' or whatever, so I would have those in advance, and they'd normally come to me and say 'oh I can't do that day, can I have that day off', y'know 'I've got the gas man coming on Tuesday can I have Tuesday as my day off next week'. And providing that everybody didn't ask for Tuesday off, then I could be pretty accommodating really. You'd usually find the solution and obviously the more you can be accommodating the more that they think that they're getting something out of that then, and they gonna respond to that, that you've been flexible and they've got what they want. And if they get what they want then they're gonna be happier....So yeah, they would come to me and say, I can't do this so I've swapped, and I could change the schedule and that's fine. Or you know, it kinds of a negotiation thing really. (CTSupermarket)

Here the line manager explicitly highlights the key role of scheduling negotiations in keeping staff happy and engendering good relations between staff and management. This is a clear indication of a manager seeking to form a consent based system. His assertion that staff may feel that they are 'getting something out of' him is a key factor in producing consent, though it may also be considered 'gifting' as a reward for compliance.

It works the other way as well, with the need to ask staff to cover other shifts to meet demand or to cover for absence. Another manager of a customer service team in a supermarket noted that negotiation was a large part of her role in ensuring adequate cover was found, with the need to ask staff to cover shifts:

.. what will happen is – so, say one person works nine till five, Monday, Tuesday and Friday, they'll stick to that but then there might be an odd occasion I'd say, 'Oh can you, instead of working the Friday, can you work the Wednesday' and they go 'Oh yeah that's fine', if it's nine to five, but if was to say 'Could you do one till ten' they'd be 'Oh no. I can't do till ten. I've got something on'. (JSSupermarket)

Again, this kind of flexibility was common, and realistically there would be no reason to inconvenience staff by denying such requests. There was, however, also evidence that the part-time or zero hours workers were given more room for manoeuvre than their colleagues on full-time hours. The ability to swap shifts was in some cases reserved for those with flexible contracts. Those on fixed hours, which as noted in the previous chapter was increasingly rare in the supermarket sector, would often have to ask for holidays if they could not attend a shift:

No. They normally take holiday, or they can do it as a shift swap. So they can as long as they can get the shift swapped. So say like – I'll say [name redacted] again, ...but they need to sort the shift swap out themselves and then say to [name] for instance, 'Right then. Can you do my Wednesday and I'll do your Thursday night' and as long as they're both in agreement that's fine and then they come to me and say 'This is what's happening. I'm doing this and [name] doing that' and I'm like 'That's fine. As long as you both agree with it that's fine' (JSSupermarket)

A manager in a smaller supermarket also noted that full-time staff could not expect to have the same sort of right to flexibility as those on part-time or the kind of part-time/option to flex up contracts that have become the norm in the sector. When asked if a new member of staff could ask to not work on a particular morning or day:

If you're full-time? If you just said Thursday morning then I wouldn't personally have a problem with that. But if you said to me I can't do weekends, or if you said to me I can only do opens [first shift of the day], 5 days a week, it just doesn't give me enough flexibility with my team. Because I'm so

limited. If I've got people on large contracts that can't cover the shifts, I find myself in a hold quite a lot. So it very much depends on the size of the contract. How much flexibility I require when I hire someone. (SCSupermarket)

This demonstrates the difference between the core and periphery in a workforce with a mixture of fixed schedule workers and flexible workers, as discussed here with two supermarket firms. Though one manager noted that his fixed schedule workers often swapped shifts. **When asked if certain employees had set days they worked or if they were expected to always work different days:**

So they do actually get set contracted days and contracted times but to be fair, my team are really flexible and they will swap and change to keep it fair so the same person doesn't work a late night on a Monday every week, they do swap and change just to keep it fair and obviously give them the work life balance so they're not always committed to that same night. (CPTSupermarket)

It would seem, however, that this approach is becoming increasingly rare in the sector, however, and new staff are employed on flex contracts that require variable shift patterns throughout and amongst working weeks.

This discrepancy (between fixed and variable working hours staff) can lead to an uneven way of managing which leaves managers with scheduling dilemmas that mean that not only is the basic task of ensuring there is enough labour to complete tasks, but also how to ensure staff do not get resentful or resist in any way. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

This continual negotiation is part of the line manager's constant calculations that they must find to ensure that they sufficient space to manage and to achieve their goals. Day to day management of people and schedules relies on compromise and finding ways of accommodating requests for different shifts, as it seems that staff have come to expect that there will be flexibility in the rotas should they need it for one off occasions where time is needed to fulfil personal or leisure obligations. This is counter to the way that supermarkets are restructuring to try and remove this element of negotiated flexibility, mainly through software which allocates shifts in a generally random way, and through organisational change which requires staff to make themselves available for work at all times of the working week. Despite these changes, there appears to be some resistance to this not only from the workers but from the line managers as it makes managing teams of flexible workers very difficult or even impossible, and to allocate favourable and unfavourable shifts fairly, and to keep staff onside. The issue of whether this constitutes scheduling 'gifts' and punishment, requires another layer of analysis and is discussed in the next chapter.

There appeared to be a similarly loose approach within the hotel managers studied, with scheduling and rotas agreed on a spot and negotiated approach. The variable here, that makes the dynamic very different

from supermarket schedules, relates to the more fluid demand in hotels around seasonal fluctuations and the quantity of bookings that might come in with events or similar. In this, case numerical flexibility is used with temporary staff employed (see previous chapter for discussion of this). Cultural norms around the industry are also in evidence with an expectation that people will go the 'extra mile' and do extra hours if necessary when the business demands require it.

One hotel events manager was willing to accommodate those staff who had requirements for absence that he felt were 'legitimate' reasons for not being able to fulfil certain shifts. All other staff were considered to be available at all times:

Yeah some people couldn't work evening times. There's a difference between actually 'can't' and 'do not want to... 'If they do not want to, I will probably not accommodate it. If they can't I will accommodate it.

So what, childcare, something to do with education?

Health, you know if they have regular appointments they need to be soon. All of those are completely legitimate. If it's, oh I don't like to work that time, I don't really think that's good enough. Some people try and say oh I'm not able to get home safely, you know. This was something that I struggled with at some point. ... It's just people saying that so that they can get away with that. I try to give people the benefit of the doubt. (MSHotel)

This suggests that there is a hierarchy of needs in this organisation when it comes to requesting flexibility, with some matters considered more serious than others. This would appear to be arbitrary and **within the authority or discretion of the line manager**, but it also ties in with seniority of staff and length of service. As shown below by another manager, longer serving staff are generally given more favour in schedule negotiations. This may be considered 'gifting': this is discussed in the subsequent chapter in more detail.

We do have certain employees that they have a verbal agreement that they only can work either mornings or evenings based on personal requirements that they need outside work and most of the time we can agree for that which is very good for the team member and that's why again we have team members that they've been working here for so many years because we can guarantee that facility. But they can request days off as well so for example let's say that they do have plans or anything or they need the weekend off we do have a system that everyone can log onto the phones and they can send a request to the manager. (MPHotel)

It is noted here that the flexibility that they can offer is one of the reasons why staff are retained and continue to work in their roles. This is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter but the flexibility in the hotels studied is on a more informal level and allows for greater employee-led flexibility because of the

greater scope for negotiation. Another line manager within a large hotel accommodated staff with caring responsibilities, though noted that this could cause resentment:

Yes, [employee name] has been with me for 12 years and she's a mother and she could only do certain, mornings only, and I accommodate her request because she was such an asset to the hotel and I respected her for being a long serving member, of course mothers, why wouldn't we uphold that. A lot of people can get annoyed by it, especially quite junior staff, some people don't understand, but I think that comes with maturity to be honest. (SDHotel)

This demonstrates the limited ability for complete employer-led flexibility when dealing with a workforce consisting of people of all ages. There are structural, institutional and other constraints, discussed in the previous chapter, but the reality is that 'good' staff are considered hard to retain and so managers will overlook company/HR rules on flexible scheduling, and in doing so potentially open themselves to resentment from other members of staff to accommodate their personal schedules in order to retain them in the role. The line manager needs to retain this autonomy and room to manoeuvre in order to not only manage effectively but to ensure that more senior members of staff are retained who can be relied on to perform the functions of the role competently. It also brings about a situation which allows the possibility of a more flexible inexperienced set of staff who work around the more senior members of staff's schedules, which is a desirable situation for most managers when considering scheduling. The same interviewee, elsewhere in the interview, however noted that this could work both ways, with requests for flexibility from senior members sometimes rejected as the need for 'stronger' members of staff at certain times and for certain activities was required and so they could have requests rejected:

Sometimes I don't care who's working, but its interesting. If I've got a really important group come in and they are an important client I will put certain stronger team members on, so I will probably decline that [request for a change in shift] if I've done it for a reason. (SDHotel)

Nevertheless, another participant, a manager in a medium sized city hotel, agreed that it was part of the manager's role to accept shifts when there was a busy period and to balance this against more leniency during periods of lower demand:

If it was last year around this time [December] we would be working very long hours but for example it gets to January and we are quieter so we might do shorter shifts. Eventually, at the end of the year you do balance that out but it is really expected from the team to do long hours and to change their shifts because at the end we are here for the business so whenever it's required. That is important and in all fairness we do have a good team and pretty much everyone is normally happy to do that. (MPHotel)

The 'requirements of the business' expect that busy times require additional staff, and most staff have accepted this and so suspend cooperation around flexibility when the schedule requires additional workers. The fact this is offset at quieter times is considered a reasonable trade off in these settings. The relative predictability of seasonal demand change allows workers to retain a sense of control over this aspect, and negotiation around scheduling can resume as soon as the busy period is eased.

Another hotel line manager has her own system for negotiating schedules with her staff, but she notes that the business needs and the guests come first and that she enters into negotiation with staff when they request.

So I would much rather go down the route of, look there's four people here on reception, that's effectively a weekend off for one, you guys can decide amongst yourself who wants what, you can then come to me for time off. Now a request is not a guarantee, a request is just that they can request a day off if they want. For example one supervisor texted me today and said, when you do the rota for next week, or the week after, would it be possible if I could have Saturday the 12th off. Now, he would know that that's not a guarantee, it's first come first serve, if there's the possibility of that time off he will be the first to be considered for it. It doesn't mean he would necessarily have two days off in a row, he might still have to work a late shift on a Friday and an early shift on the Sunday, but if I can give the request, I would. Of course naturally I would like to give them two days off together. But again in a hotel, you have to prioritise your guests, we are a hospitality, the guest comes first.

OK so it's quite close to the time then?

Yeah. The team can come to me at any time and have a look at the rota but the rule is no matter what is written or what is proposed, until its actually emailed out to you nothing is set in stone. The only thing that is set in stone is when a holiday is actually booked in advance. And that is something that will not be changed. (MShotel)

As noted in this quotation, the line manager in this hotel says that shifts and rotas are up for change and potentially negotiation right up until it is sent out via email. This allows the line manager to create the conditions where she can enter into negotiations and retain the regime of consent.

As expected, those in the tech industry had a different approach, primarily as they are not subject to precarious flexible scheduling. However, they have to negotiate flexibility through the day, albeit not with the patterns of shifts as found in the other three sectors. Typical of the sector is a sort of flexible office hours system with core hours, as is found in most professional jobs (although EHHTech was the exception, in a more long established company said that her company's senior management insisted on traditional office hours attendance for all of its staff, though at the time of interview Covid working from home changes had made

significant changes to this).

MBSSoftware, a line manager in a medium sized tech firm said that he generally allowed a high degree of flexibility, so long as it was requested of him. Their company also operate office hours, though they were quite long:

Officially our hours are flexible, or flexi hours in terms of, we have core hours, starting no later than half nine and finishing no earlier than half four. But even those hours are flexible, if you have a reason, an appointment, kids drop off or pick up or whatever else, half three or whatever is fine

Can they just do that, or do they have to go to you or a line manger?

They'd have to ask me or I'd ask my director if I was doing it, it's just asking the line manager with as much notice as you can give. But it's very flexible in that sense as well.

A manager working in a smaller team in a startup firm in a different company said that office hours were still required in his office, but with a high degree of flexibility:

Pretty much as and when. There's sort of an informal agreement as there's a few group calls in the diary. We tend to work office hours, tech office hours I suppose, which is more like 9 till 5, 9 till 6. But I know.... I will take time off, oh I'll not work today, I'll work the weekend instead. [colleague name] likes paragliding, so he'll be weather's good today, I'm going flying. And [other colleague name] has two fairly young kids so he will sometimes work weekends, sometimes work all night. So were all fairly flexible, fairly dynamic, we just have the regular touchpoints where we catch up, sometimes they get bumped. But we normally stick to that fairly well. (EBSsoftware)

This form of negotiation in this sector is very different. There is an expectation that they can make changes to their scheduled hours and that managers will agree to it. This obviously differs from the other sectors where the negotiation is around which shifts they are given, and the tension between their needs and the manager's. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Negotiation was very prevalent in the sports and leisure sector with managers talking about the negotiations they have with their staff on a frequent basis. The prevailing feeling in this sector was one of a very informal arrangement with staff having considerable input into their place in the schedule. One, a manager of a spa and beauty therapy part of a leisure facility said that staff openly use the uncertain demand of the business as a 'bargaining tool':

And the therapists, you said, if there was an unexpected spike in bookings, on a Wednesday, say, you said you could ask them to move, and then say take next Tuesday off or something.?

Yeah, and they can use that as a bargain tool. (DTHOTELSPA)

This is one of the few managers who offered the opinion that there is a degree of bargaining. However, this was based on a team that was very 'bookings' based, with high degrees of fluctuation. Sometimes, there would be no bookings for the services at all and staff would be expected to fit around when the bookings came. On this basis, it easy to see why staff, if they have to accommodate this arrangement, would resist any further forms of precarious scheduling or management diktat, and instead seek to impose their needs if they are required to fulfil shifts at short notice

In another leisure and fitness facility, a line manager in a larger organisation considered the 'puzzle' of scheduling. He then states that where there is no consensus or a schedule can't be agreed, he must begin the process of seeing who he could persuade to fill in the vacant shifts:

But in all of my other departments there is that level of see what they prefer and then see if that fits in the puzzle nicely. Where it doesn't, we'll have to have a conversation about where people are willing to bend and mould and be malleable (MVGym)

This again demonstrates that there is an element of negotiation in this organisation, which is perhaps unsurprising given the less formal arrangements in this and in other leisure facilities. The same manager of a private leisure facility noted, building a rapport with his team was essential to ensure his job could be done effectively, which again highlights the importance of relationships and the establishment of consensus:

So when the rotas are done, I don't know if you do rotas or the supervisors do it. Are they the same every week, or do people change every week?

I encourage my guys, and this is up to them, to work on the basis of either every other week or monthly. So I don't say to change your rota every week. Because of the nature of what my team does I don't... there's a sense of rapport building and things like that where it's good to have stability within a month or within two weeks at least. That's my personal belief. However, if someone comes in and feel very inclined to changing their rota every week, I'm fine to sit down and listen to that and encourage them to do that (MVGym)

Similarly, a manager of a small public leisure centre had his own way of negotiation which produced similar results to the above participant:

How do you make it fair, or is it people saying, oh I can't do his shift, I can't do that?

No. I try and make it fair. So I know how many hours someone works, and their preferences. [name redacted] for example can't come in until after school drop off. So realistically she's not getting

an early shift and that's fine with us both, we both know, and the other staff don't mind as its more earlies for them. She's pretty flexible otherwise and she's happy to do weekends normally...If she couldn't do mornings and weekends we'd have to have a think about it. We expect people to be available on weekends, no one can skip them. So there's informal agreements like that, but they exist as long as we can manage them. If she said to me, she couldn't work weekends, we'd have to look at it again. It not fair on others, no one wants to work weekends but we're open seven days and weekends are our busiest days. (MBLesiure)

Again, highlighting how there was a need to identify stronger and weaker members of staff when considering scheduling in this sector.

Yeah, sorry, so I do it a week in advance, and then people can ask to change it. I say to them to sort it out themselves and then come to me. I rarely say no but sometimes I'll need to think about combos. I've got one girl, she's hopeless really, in my opinion, so I make sure there's someone with a decent brain on when she's there as well. I'm just not happy with her being on her own. (MBLeisure)

He (MBLeisure) was also one of the few participants across all studies to discuss openly the idea of scheduling gifts. Even then, he stated that it was not something he considered useful to him:

It's mainly the weekends and Friday night, to make sure everyone does their fair share of weekends. Other than that people are not too bothered, I don't think, about shifts in the week. You can't please everyone. But as I say, I do make sure people get one weekend off in 3, at least, unless they want to shift and do more. Some people are happy to work weekends. I still try and make it so they don't though, just to protect myself if anything?... I don't want people to think I'm favouring certain people over others, or to be able to say, oh... I've done four in a row now, can you do this for me. If they've done four in a row it's because they've either swapped or taken overtime. I mean realistically, you do sometimes have a bit of give and take with shifts, it's the nature of having three shifts 7 days a week to manage.... And I see what you're getting at, sometimes you do give someone who's gone above and beyond what they ask for, but I try not to. Also, the full-timers and people who've been here longer do have a more established routine. The younger ones fit around that but like I say, I don't take the piss, I make sure weekends are given out fairly, it doesn't matter how long you've been here.

This demonstrates the tension between providing 'gifts' to longer term or favoured staff, and being fair, or appearing to be fair to everyone when it comes to the unfavourable shifts. Here, even if a staff member is happy to work weekends, he tried to avoid given them more weekends than others for the exact reason that he does not want to be in a poorer negotiation position if the employee asks for favours because of working repeated weekends. It should be noted that the scheduling system of this organisation is highly informal with

the line manager (the participant) putting together schedules with an Excel spreadsheet and no other assistance. Staff were encouraged to approach him with scheduling and rota requests rather than using any other more formal means. The fact that weekends are the busiest times for the facility with the need for more staff puts him in a difficult position, but he has defused the potential for conflict by setting a boundary around which all staff have an understanding that weekend shifts must be worked by everyone but that he will distribute the unpopular shifts as fairly as possible, albeit while allowing him room to manoeuvre with the caveat 'as much as possible'. The concept of gifts is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

6.2 Software and automated scheduling

Scheduling in these three sectors relies heavily on the manager and his or her interactions with his staff. Wood, (2020: 3), noted the encroachment of automated scheduling software in the supermarket sector, especially in the US market. This roll out of scheduling technology is in evidence for this sample. Most, though not all, organisations have the availability of a scheduling system which assists the manager in managing demand, to varying degrees of sophistication. Many, though not all, only used some of its functionality and retained control over staff schedules and rotas. In most of these cases, staff had access to an app or website where they could access reports on their schedule for the coming weeks, and in some cases could request time off or holiday through it. These were most in evidence in the supermarket and hotel sectors, where there was the highest degree of flexible scheduling. This was sometimes the same software, or otherwise an entirely different application. However, in many cases this was ignored in favour of the more traditional line manager route where staff simply verbally asked for changes in shift patterns or for time off, or checked verbally before requesting a change in shift. Managers preferred this way of doing things, and in many cases would go into the scheduling system and manually amend published or suggested rotas or add notes around a staff member's availability. As one store manager noted:

In theory, the system is supposed to generate rotas for us based on their availability we put in. Their working preferences and their preferences of hours, and it's supposed to generate rotas for us, and take that out. But it doesn't work. So basically I have to go in, delete everything, and do the rota. (Supermarketconvenience1)

The use of software and scheduling algorithms in supermarkets seems to be increasing. It takes some of the scheduling tasks away from the line manager, is able to automatically match demand to staffing, and could be argued to be a way of making staff scheduling ostensibly 'fairer' as it allocates on a random basis shift according to staff members' stated availabilities and according to the store's needs. This is a feature of all but one of the stores I interviewed, with only one supermarket retaining the manager's explicit autonomy over the process, rather than giving them admin rights over the software to make adjustments.

In one supermarket (CBSupermarket), the last year has seen **the process of** a move entirely to scheduling software. This was accompanied by all existing staff having to resubmit their shift and hours availability. The respondent in this interview noted that staff were expected to extend their availabilities beyond their existing availabilities, and to provide reasons why they could not be available for certain shifts even if they were contracted as part-time, which most of them are.

One supermarket department manager explained the scheduling system and how it correlates with an automated demand management system.

Yeah, we've got My Schedule, which is a digital sort of schedule where the colleagues then can review their shifts... it's all done electronically by an app on their phone. So it would be the case where we would have a conversation with a colleague to see if they were able to move and then obviously we'd update their schedule then to reflect that shift, but it was more done on the perception of what we were seeing in regards to trade wise rather than sort of data, whereas we know come Halloween, for example, three days before trade is really busy, those hours would reflect in that and we'd have data from the previous year to work on (CTSupermarket)

A line manager in another supermarket explained their own scheduling software processes. **As can be noted there is a high degree of automation around demand and scheduling in this system with some line manager discretion being reduced.**

So, head office deals with – it's called a heat map ... It's like a tally chart basically that tells you where you should have your staff and where they should be, at what certain time and how many, and it does it for every department in the whole store and then we've got a scheduler which comes down on a tablet. So that heat maps as you go over hours, under hours and then the tablet also tells you how many hours you're using and how many hours is on holiday, cause if you do holidays and then you put them in on the system, it then tells you who's on holiday. You take out your sick people and then it calculates it to how many hours you should have and how many you're allowed and how much overtime or, ... how many hours is missing, basically. So then you apply for overtime for those hours that's missing. (JSSupermarket)

For a large store such as this one, a 'heat map' is used which pinpoints the exact amount of labour needed in certain areas of the store and schedules are adjusted accordingly. This means that line managers, such as our respondent here in the large supermarket, were unable to adequately plan what they felt was the correct amount of cover for shifts at certain times of the demand cycle:

It's based on the quietest week of the year, unfortunately. This is why I don't agree with the heat map because if you look at the – say the customer service desk, it tells you that you don't need as

many hours as you need but if you stand back and look at it, on the day they say no you only state me two, or say it only needs two, you look and you think 'That ain't right. You need four', so it's not a real good guide on what to go by, it's not brilliant, whereas the scheduler on the tablet is built in with everything. So, it's built in with Mother's Day. It's built in with Valentine's Day. It's built in with all the things that's coming up, the events, Christmas, all of those are built in with the hours so it's a better guide to go by than the other one and then, as long as you do your holidays right, process stuff out, you take them out and it tells you your allowed hours and then it tells you how many hours you've used and how many hours you got through, to obviously have back as in you can ask for overtime, so that one's a better guide to go by but the heat map. (JSSupermarket)

However the huge spike in demand for home delivery services during the Covid lockdown mean that line manager discretion was returned to managing the schedule for this service.

but when it comes to the rota for [the home delivery arm of the supermarket], because it's so big and it changes so quick, we've just got it on a computer. We print it off. All their names is already wrote down with their shifts and then all we do is then count up; we take out the holidays. Take out anybody out sick but we do it two weeks in advance and then what we do is then we work out how many people there is, what the shelves is looking it, divide it and then work out how many people we need and then, say we had 30 people by the time there was holidays taken out and sick, if there's 30 people that's contracted on those days and we want 45 then we'll put 15 shifts in for overtime and then people just put their name down to whatever shift they want. (JSSupermarket)

The same manager explained how shifts can then be allocated. **Though crucially those on 'flex' contracts (discussed earlier, those staff with limited hour contracts) are given priority to 'bid' for that shift:**

So, there is going to be an app that's coming down eventually because it's all a new thing. It's all done on the tablet now and I would say that's up within the last six months ...so eventually, what it will be, is this app comes down and it will ping any overtime out to the colleagues so they can look on the system on their phone and say 'Oh look. There's overtime flittered about. Oh I'll put my name down for that' and they can put it straight into the app and fill it, but anybody on the flexi contracts gets priority because they're on the flexi contract, before the people that isn't on a flexi contract, so that's the difference between the two. That's why it pays you to be on flexi. (JSSupermarket)

A supermarket line manager in another firm also explained how demand management software is used in his organisation:

Yeah software, it's called [redacted for confidentiality]. Yeah, it's very good, it tells you exactly how many hours you're spending, including breaks, that kind of thing. Matches people's contracts to

their currently scheduled hours, manages holidays for the entire year. It's just got everything you need in there. Tells you your forecasted hours. Everything's in there, basically. So two and half weeks before or three and half weeks before I'll go in and do the next weeks rota so when we hit that Sunday star week it goes live then and they'll be able to see it cos we have an app called Shifts where you can log in on your phone and see your rota, all your shifts for the next three weeks. (CJSupermarket)

This links to the software that staff use to see rotas and available shifts. Another manager highlighted how he works with the system:

You schedule in... You'd have pay codes. If there was a funeral, or a hospital appointment or anything like that. You would put that in the rota ahead of time just so when you go that week you can see in those hours they're already on there and that pay code is there and work round it then. But yeah, in theory you should go into each employee, put in their availability for each day of the week, their preferred hours to work for each day of the week and it should generate based on that. But it doesn't work (laughs). Basically. It just doesn't work. It rotas people for the weirdest shifts, puts people on their own, it's just a mess. But it's not talked about basically.

But it connect to an app called Shifts and staff can access that, is that how they get their rotas and schedules?

Yeah, and hard copies on the wall in the back area so they can ... for all the staff that still have bricks for phones and can't see an app (laughs), so they have a look at the hard copies, they can even have their own rota if they want to print one off. It can change quite a lot. Like I'll never swap someone's shift or move them to a cover without asking them. The way it is these days is a constant live interaction between you and your staff constantly. (SCSupermarket)

Here we see the line manager disparaging the software and instead reverting to the previous system of the manager cooperating with staff to ensure that the system he uses to ensure demand is met and that staff are happy is maintained. **This resistance is discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this dissertation, but the main issues here is that resistance to this imposition of automated scheduling can arise from the line manager as much as the staff who are most affected by it.** However, The use of software in supermarkets is increasing and scheduling is becoming increasingly automated, reducing the manager's discretion. A team leader in another major supermarket chain explained how since a restructure and the introduction of a pilot of the new software, rotas had become largely automated and out of line managers' hands:

Yes, that's the way they are going. The idea is that the manager inputs the details into the system. And then the computer decides where to put people, so it's less work for them. That's the basic idea. The computer, or the algorithm knows what hours are needed for that week, it knows what everyone's

availability is, and everything goes into the system, and then it does it automatically. (CBSupermarket)

The system is sold as reducing the workloads for middle managers but by removing the discretion it can also remove the 'soft' power that these interactions allow and the possibility of scheduling gifts, or bargaining position in future interactions. At the time of interview, the system was still being piloted but it was clear that it reduced the scope for workers to negotiate, and in turn the line manager's scope for ensuring cooperation. It would have been useful to return to this manager to see if this implementation of the system, ongoing at the time of interview, had been successful and how it had affected his job and his relationship with his staff.

Hotels - as expected due to the fact they have many functions and teams under one roof - have mixed systems, with larger hotels requiring software to manage overall demand but with scheduling delegated to team leaders or department managers. Unlike the supermarkets which are dominated by five or six large firms, there are many hotel chains and groups, all of which have different approaches. Most, however now use software at least to manage demand and calculate shift requirements and labour power needed. One manager of a large London hotel said:

Yeah we use [name of software] It's a scheduling software. You can use it... you can put... you can say ok we're expecting 250 arrivals on Friday afternoon therefore you should have 5 receptionists, or whatever. You can do that. We do that to an extent, more of a costing thing. So we would look at forecasting turnover of x, you know our forecasted payroll is Y. is that too little, too much or about right. So, it all gets scheduled online.....It does the rota effectively. But then they would do the rota in advance and then I have to approve it, or the deputy. We'd look at how many staff they've got on against the ratio. We'd look at the cost against what we're budgeting for the week. We'd have our weekly meeting to say on Friday we've got x amount and we need such amount, and then I would authorize more staff, or less staff, we would work it out from there... I would imagine vast majority of places would use a similar system, setting up a scheduling system. (DLHotel)

This seemed to be one of the few hotels that had embraced the technology and that it was being used, though this is a higher level system in a very large hotel. Even then, it still requires sign off by the manager and as the evidence shows, it can still be overruled if they feel the software has produced incorrect results. Again, this highlights the potential for line managers to resist the imposition of more precarious scheduling, thus protecting staff from the worst aspects of it. Another hotel line manager (SDHotel) explained the software system she uses, and how it is also often overridden:

I: You mentioned that some of the staff prefer mornings, or nights or wherever. How is that negotiated? Do they just have a conversation with the line manager or is there a more formal way of requesting?

R: I like the conversation with line manager, I'm a bit old-school, cos you can tell them, but we also have a system called Force. We use where they can request shifts. So there is a formal one. But I tend to say just come directly and I can tell you at the time, as I might not check Force till 4 or 5 hours later, or I might be in meetings. But it tends to be the students that have got things on to be honest, if they got assignments or something like that. But yeah we're pretty open and chilled about, it's never been a problem, I've always been very flexible with people.

Here there further is evidence of the manager overriding the company's official policy and the requirement to use the software in order to secure room for manoeuvre for herself and also to ensure the cooperation of her staff who may resist without this element of cooperation around schedules. This is consistent with the evidence above from other managers in the supermarket sector, though the requirements of the job are much looser in this form of line management than in supermarkets.

In tech companies, scheduling is generally not done in the same way, with staff primarily working full-time hours (see previous chapter for discussion around full-time hours and nonstandard hours in tech/software) during core office hours **which are set by senior management**. However, software is employed to manage projects, as in any industry, and it is here that software is able to dictate the terms of their workload, though not necessarily their time. Staff workload management in tech firms tend to be task-based rather than temporally based and as such they are usually free to manage tasks as they see fit, except in rare situations. Task management and schedules are more often determined by project management techniques in this work, and consensus achieved on how long, how many hours and so on individual tasks might take. To a certain extent this project management system, which I am told is ubiquitous within the industry replicates scheduling software, but it replaces temporal scheduling with task scheduling. It also differs in that employees tend to have some kind of formal (rather than informal as found in other sectors) input into it: it is by design a consensual system whereby employees are granted the autonomy to estimate their own workloads. There is the potential in these systems for managerial power in that it eliminates the managerial authority and allows for closer control and surveillance of workload and work effort.

Software was not used in the leisure sector studied here as the shifts and workload were predictable, and smaller teams were being managed. Managers used pen and paper or an Excel spreadsheet. The one exception was in a newer facility, being run as a not for profit, had recently adopted a new system:

we used a system called EZ facilities, ... so essentially, I'll go through the facilities software, and look at exactly what is booked in, and how many staff are required, and then book that in for the month. Now that'll be done for the full-time staff, and a couple of casual staff which help pick up... sort of doing the weekend stuff, which helps the full-time staff have a bit of a break. So I do that. And then

based off the back of that rota, the bar manager will also use the same system, EZ, and also my rota that I've put on, to rota on the bar staff and the supervisors. They do that every two weeks, because it can be trickier.... Once you've sent a rota out it's hard to backtrack. (JMLLeisure)

There is mixed uses of technology in each of the sectors. Some line managers embraced whatever technology was there, while others sought to resist it. From my interpretation, managers that resisted tended to be those with a close relationship with their staff, rather than a more formal one. The increasing use of scheduling software removes the potential for negotiations and, possibly gifts, and those line managers with a closer relationship would seek to avoid this. On the other hand, the increased work intensification and increase in complexity of the jobs meant that some line managers welcomed the assistance. However, from the interviews, especially in the supermarket sector, there was a feeling that line management control needed to be maintained over this area in order to secure a good working relationship, or in Burawoy's conception, to ensure that a regime of consent is maintained. Denigrating the systems that is attempting to remove this is one way of doing that.

6.3 Precarious scheduling

Henly and Lambert's (2014) study of US retail workers highlighted the move towards unpredictable work time in retail jobs, Wood's studies replicated this and confirmed the increase of this type of temporal flexibility in the US and UK. From my own sample that crossed most of the major supermarket chains, this was confirmed in the data. This was also evidence in hospitality though it was less systematic, and done more in order to ensure fairness to all staff members so that an equal number of weekend and evening shifts are distributed amongst the workforce. In all interviews with supermarket managers, barring the manager at supermarket5 (includes a customer service desk, considered a more skilled job), variable and unpredictable hours were the norm. This was mitigated by rules and procedures on how far in advance rotas were published, with a range of 2-4 weeks in advance being offered. This is actually a longer lead in time for publication of schedules than was found in most of the hotel/hospitality interviews, where a week or less was common. As discussed elsewhere, this is perhaps because of the culture of hospitality workers where flexibility through evening work, weekend work and traditionally split or fragmented shifts (though no longer used according to respondents) where the needs of the business are most important. It also reflects the fluctuation of demand because of seasonal demands or external events meaning more customers.

Precarious scheduling is political term, and deliberately so. It seeks to link the practices found in certain sectors to the concept of precarity, as discussed in the literature review chapter. Precarity as a concept,

as per Standing's (2011) and others' definition, is a nebulous concept, based on many facets of the employment experience. Precarious scheduling, as a concept, is part of this conception and contributes to the psychological condition of precarity that Standing describes. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study it is a useful term to describe the type of practises whereby workers are unsure or unaware of their schedules on a week to week basis, and in particular where they may not know how many hours they will work, as well as the specific shifts. This type of scheduling was not only common but prevalent in the supermarkets studied. It was used in other sectors but more often with casual or zero hours contracted staff who had, we must assume, less need for regular hours than those on proper contracts of employment. Most students for example, neither want nor need regular hours.

The two most closely linked sectors are supermarkets and hotels as there is a similar management structure and people with similar skills and a range of customer facing and non-customer facing roles., as well as what could reasonably called elements of precarious scheduling although **this was** much more acute in the supermarket sector. As shown in Chapter 5, The standard practices in supermarket now seems to be to offer variable hours per week, and not just the same number of hours but spread across different shifts. So a worker could work 30 hours one week and only 20 the next, for example. Wood argued that this has a disciplining effect on workers who need to 'behave' in order to be rewarded with more shifts. However, most managers said that they would try and accommodate employees requests and that the system allowed for request for extra work to be made through the app they use to interact with the system, or for them to trade shifts with other employees. This app has the effect of removing the negotiating aspect from line managers and effectively placing it in the control of more senior managers who set the resourcing requirements for the week and let the system do the work. The managers interviewed said they maintained control over the system and in two cases, that they could and would override it, though these were in smaller settings with fewer staff. In the large supermarkets (CBSupermarket, CTSupermarket) there had been a discernible shift over the years, albeit gradually, to a wholly automated process with no input from managers beyond being able to approve requests or not. The negotiating element had gone. Precarious scheduling practises could be used as a disciplinary measure (disciplining in the non-social science meaning of the word) for members of staff that were deemed to be insufficiently flexible. One line manager noted **of those on the new 'flexi' contracts:**

So, no. The newer employees - so there's such a thing as you've got your normal contract, standard contract. So, they've got a flexi contract, so anybody that comes in now that's new is being put on a flexi contract. So, what you do is when you take them on, you ask them for availability. They fill out that availability form and from Monday to Sunday If I was say contacting somebody for the desk, I'll say 'Right. What's your hours between eight and ten o' clock?' If there's anything you cannot do - so, say you go football training on a Wednesday night, do not put those hours that you can work Wednesday night. Tick everything else that you can do but just be open and honest about it. If you

know you have the grandkids on a Thursday night, don't write it and then what happens is, we put them on a flexi contract. So say we put them on for fifteen hours, on the flexi contract – if, we'll say [name of staff member] and put that she was available to work Saturday nights and I needed somebody to work next Saturday, I give them a week notice, I could say to [name] 'I need you to work next Saturday for me' and I can ask her, because they've done fifteen hours, I can ask them to do up to half of their hours they do. So seven and a half hours, I can ask them to flex up to seven and a half hours of their contracted hours, so they can go up to 23. They can do more if they want to, but I can ask them to go up to 23 hours on a flexi contract. So, basically I might say 'Oh right [name], I'm due to work Saturday night, five till ten' and if she says 'no' - they're allowed to say 'no' but only in extreme cases. The idea of the flexi contract is they can say no but there's only three times they can say no and then it's down to a conduct issue that they're not right for the job so we can then say 'Come on. You either do them shifts or you don't do the shifts. If you're not doing a shift, then maybe the job isn't right for you'. (JSSupermarket complete)

This is the second instance of a line manager explicitly stating that refusal of offers of shifts could be a reason **for formal disciplinary measures** (CBSupermarket said the same though the process of restructure was ongoing at time of interview). This one has an explicit policy of three refusals. In this case, with a senior management policy of negotiations around shifts, it is very difficult for the line manager to override this and try to reproduce a consensual regime.

The other sector, that of leisure, is similar but offers a slightly different approach to hospitality with a longer-term relationship between the business and its customers. Smaller staff sizes, fewer working hours and more specialised working roles meant that most forms of temporal flexibility were employed in one way or another, and scheduling outcomes for workers more predictable. Negotiation was very much in evidence but there was less of a random element to it owing to the smaller sizes of teams and specialised roles. In general staff could negotiate a pattern of work agreeable to them within reason, and managers would try and honour that with more predictable hours.

The final sector, tech and software has a different approach to flexibility as unlike the other three sectors they are based around 'traditional' office working hours but are no less required to adopt flexible schedules should the business require it. This has been highlighted in many other sectors because of the changes to working practices following the Covid restrictions.

It is possible however, to identify approaches to scheduling and flexibility of line management as exhibited in different sectors and the way in which line managers approach their own autonomy and ability to make decisions. The question set in the research questions is how they use or discard this as necessary to

accommodate staff requests for scheduling favours, and how the processes that they use in these negotiations exhibit similarities which could be considered universal to the task of being a line manager to front line staff.

6.4 Sector specific practices

This thesis considers the flexibility regimes of four different sectors. These are discrete sectors. While the aim of the thesis is to identify similarities and commonalities across the sectors, it is worth noting that each sector (and indeed each organisation within the sectors) is going to have different practices which are ingrained within the working culture of the sector. For example, and as discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, employer-led flexibility appears to be ingrained within hospitality, whereas the opposite is perhaps true in the tech and software sector. Furthermore, the degrees of coercion and control and patterns of managerial control within a workplace regime (as per Wood 2021's conception) are historically identifiable, but can only be understood through qualitative research of the sector in question. This dissertation does not attempt this but future research could consider the sectors under study for their position within the historical workplace regime.

Evidence is presented here to highlight how cultural issues can affect the prevalence of or constraints on temporal flexibility. The organisational and sectoral culture is obviously a less observable set of phenomena than the other external shocks, and so a greater degree of interpretation is necessary. Sectoral practices and norms affect all and provide a context within which all interactions take place.

In the software industry, one participant, a line manager of medium sized team, noted that:

the software industry as a whole is ... most of the places I've worked has been flexible, you have to finish your core hours for the week. Unlike sort of other places where you'd have hours accrued over the months and you'd have hours paid back to you. There is no sort of watching or collecting of that data, it's more of a trust basis. Monitoring that from my level, but I generally have a good set of guys who will generally do more than their core hours as is the way in software industry really. (MBTech)

Another manager in the software sector also noted how they collectively decide amongst staff (with line manager supervision) the amount of time and effort needed to perform particular tasks relating to a given project. This approach is, I have since learned, very common in the industry and demonstrates how ingrained they are. While not directly linked to temporal flexibility as per the conceptions discussed in this paper, the ability of staff to bargain or negotiate the time taken to complete a particular task with managers shows an alternative form of temporal regime and one which gives the employee a significant amount of input to their working time regime. Line managers in this context must use their own negotiating skills to determine if this time allocation is feasible for the task while at the same time respecting the professional judgment of the

employee and ensuring the regime of consent is upheld:

We'd plan out the project and break it down into stories, which is essentially like tasks....Ok so this is the agile method, so you'd start with Epics, which is large overarching requirements, ... Then you'd break that down into stories which would be all of the individual tasks that would get you to delivering that epic. So break all these tasks down and then put them on the cards, then we'd go through them by playing planning poker. There's a set of cards you'd give out to each person, and everybody essentially, secretly, would decide how many points a task was worth, and so I might say that's an 8 pointer, which is just a relative magnitude of work, and someone else might say that's only six, and you'd discuss why. Eventually you'd get all these stories with points on them which is essentially similar to time taken to do them, and then if you add them all up at the end and if the budget doesn't quite cover the points then you'd have to start thinking about how you can either reduce what your planning to build, or sometimes you could ask for more budget (MBTech)

This collective, consensus based approach to time management is obviously not possible in the other sectors, but suggests a high degree of employee-led scheduling (rather than flexibility). The fact that there are procedures in place for staff to negotiate tasks (and by extension their time and functionality) demonstrates the possibility for collective decision making within these 'flatter' organisational structures.

6.5 Summary

There is a diversity of approaches across the sectors in terms of negotiating schedules and the associated line manager/employee interactions. Despite the use of software, all participants maintained a system where requests could be made through them. The extent to which rules or technology were used differed, but all were in the favour of the line manager so that they could maintain their existing work regime. Leisure and Hotel line managers seemed to have the greatest autonomy, with the exception of (DLHotel) which had gone to a scheduling system, albeit one which requires input from staff, so there is still potential for this to be 'gamed' by a line manager if necessary. They also tended to have smaller team sizes than in supermarkets, which thanks to the increase in part-time working contracts, meant that they have many staff and shifts to fill. Negotiations around rotas and scheduling in supermarket were still very much in evidence, with line managers willing to accommodate requests in order to maintain a balance between their own needs to fulfil the schedule and their staff's requests. In the tech sector, negotiations were less of an issue because of the absence of extended hours, but there were still negotiations around flexi time, holiday, time off in lieu which the line manager had control over. That they acquiesced to most requests (with the exception of EHSoftware which

had formal rules in place) shows that the creation of a consent-based regime is just as important here than in the three sectors with flexible scheduling.

The next chapter will discuss the findings of this and the three chapters in relation to issues of control, gifting and resistance as per Burawoy, Chun and Wood's conception of despotic and hegemonic regimes as outlined in the theoretical review chapter. It will also test the theory of schedule 'gifts'.

7. DISCUSSION - Control, gifts and resistance; employee vs employer-led flexibility and line management autonomy

This chapter is the main interpretive and theoretical part of the dissertation. As discussed in the Theoretical Framework chapter, elements of labour process theory, especially the models put forward by Burawoy and Friedman, are used to conceptualise the evidence presented. While there are drawbacks to the theory for studying scheduling, it allows for discussion of conflict, negotiation, consent, resistance and control. This is often used to theorise various forms of resistance within discrete parts of the labour process, for example worker 'games', but this thesis uses it to consider informal and implicit negotiations around schedules and rotas as presented in the previous chapter and how this relates to the labour process literature and other concepts of control. I will discuss the implications for this on constraints on temporal flexibility/more employer-led flexibility. This chapter will rely less on presenting evidence, and will instead interpret the themes and theories that have emerged in the previous chapters in relation to the research questions and to the theory. The main sections in this chapter are as follows:

- Control and coercion, consent and force
- Gifts and flexible discipline
- Employer-led versus employee-led flexibility
- Resistance

7.1 Control/coercion

Labour process theory and critical management studies are attempts to conceptualise power and control within the workplace, through an analysis of obscured power relationships between the forces of capital and labour. An interpretive thematic analysis of the interview data shows that line managers can and do use flexible scheduling as a means of control. The emphasis in this study on line management interviews rather than those being managed meant that this was downplayed and that most stressed that there was no explicit attempt to exert control over their staff. To this extent, it is a 'hidden' element of control. However, the context within which they operate and the encroaching and new forms of use of temporal flexibility to manage demand meant that they were obliged to enter into these negotiations with their staff and open up a site of conflict and resistance and a challenge to their notional use of control. The decisions that line managers make within this context, and the limit to which they can use this form of control are of interest in this section.

Wood's central argument, which borrows from Burawoy's work, especially the methodological approach, is that power and resistance in work, and subsequently, the capacity for control, can be understood through Burawoy's spectrum of 'workplace regimes' - 'the political dynamics, institutional rules and norms that workers encounter' in their daily lives. These regimes are relatively autonomous but are influenced by

the wider balance of power between capital and labour in society. There is a diversity of workplace regimes across the economy but also within the same sector and at the same point in time. (Wood 2020: 8). This context is important and is considered in Chapter 5 which details the external factors that influence moves toward more temporal flexibility and a greater tendency towards employer-led flexibility. Therefore the wider political and economic context is established through a conceptualisation of trends in the labour market. This in turn sets the context through which the micro level relations that are discussed in chapter 6 on scheduling negotiations take place. The wider labour market therefore, forms the wider context within which firm, middle managers, line managers and frontline workers operate.

Overt coercive approaches (characterised by Burawoy as despotism or direct control) are still in evidence in some of the settings studied, with refusal to accept a scheduled, unnegotiated shift without good reason leading to formal disciplinary action (eg CBsupermarket and JSSupermarket in major supermarket chains). However, at the time of interviewing, this coercive approach to management and ultimately control was not widely used, although the threat of it is behind every interaction, as had been evidenced in some of the participants' testimonies. Even when in an environment where this form of control was available to used, line managers will seek to avoid doing so, particularly those that are 'closer' to their staff in terms of pay grade and seniority, as line managers often are. They prefer to manage by consent where possible, offering suggestions of the possibility of negotiation and accommodating requests. This is consistent with the thesis that this part of the labour process is one that limits the dominance of flexible scheduling in these sectors. That workers cooperate with this process to try to ensure their own needs, and thus securing the reproduction of the work regime is a central finding of this dissertation.

Burawoy's thesis - that hegemonic regimes rely on consent rather than coercion - is central to this thesis and to the research questions. Analysing the interview data sought to identify instances where line managers sought to produce consent and a cooperative agreement with workers to ensure control. It also showed where the firm's policies contradicted this position. Ostensibly, moves towards a greater degree of coercive control, via senior management policy, over scheduling negotiations and a consent-based process were in evidence in the supermarket and hotel sectors, with the introduction of automated and software-based scheduling in supermarkets and, to a lesser extent, in hotels, as presented in chapter 6. Where the interesting point in the thesis lies is the line manager's role in resisting and modifying this and constructing or reproducing a scheduling regime that is based on consent rather than coercive control.

Temporal flexibility is generally ascribed in mainstream accounts to the need for companies to cut costs and make efficiencies to advance competitiveness, and to adapt to changing circumstances in the sector within which they operate and the wider economy. These accounts imply a passivity on behalf of the company and does not indicate the extent to which companies shape the environment within which they operate through their policies on how they interact with the economy and the labour market. It is the changing power

dynamic that arises from these dynamics that is central to this thesis and to the future of workplace relations, to quality of work and to changing trends in work intensification. More specifically the concept of control and the soft power elements that allow employers greater say over worker's lives, a power through increased employer-led flexibility that extends beyond simply their paid hours at work and into personal life. Scheduling and temporal change has implications not just for in-work time but also out of work time, with the need to be available for work at any potential time throughout a 7 day, usually 16 hour operating time, usually with little consistency or predictability, impacting on the leisure/family time of the employee.

The previous two chapters that present fieldwork evidence have considered the two ways in which firms manage resources and changes to demand through their workforce. The first is through changing temporal relations, via the employee contract, or through changing company policy around flexibility or recruiting practices, which can often be changed without reference or consultation with employees or, where they exist, employees' groups or unions. These are ultimately, all high-level decisions, made and enforced by an administration governed by rules and bureaucracy and led by senior managers. The line manager has little if any control over these aspects. Scheduling on the other hand – at least in the floor level form of managing staff hours through rotas and managing staffing levels - is usually the line manager's responsibility, and is one of the ways in which they may use their position to alter outcomes for the business, but more saliently for the employees over whom they have formal authority. However, as has been shown in previous chapters, there are significant barriers to this authority in the fact that employees tend to be able to establish a position of negotiation, through various forms of resistance which managers need to negotiate to manage effectively. Therefore a situation arises where the creation of consent and worker cooperation is necessary to ensure the reproduction of the regime. In addition to introducing policies or regulations, systems can be implemented to 'depoliticise' these decisions through technologies and software. As noted in the previous chapter, line managers in this study tended to find that the imposition of these technologies reduces their own autonomy and does not enable them to effectively manage and to be in a position to extract favours from workers when needed. Rather than making the job of scheduling redundant, as may be the aim, it can reduce the range of control available to managers and so is resisted. By resisting this imposition of technology, line managers are able to place themselves as both an ally of the employee by allowing that degree of negotiation around schedules to continue as before (ie. based on an informal relationship where favours and gifts can be exchanged), while simultaneously maintaining their own lever of control over this part of the labour process.

The struggle in this conflict is not about complete control by one party over another – the days of workers assuming complete control over a facet of the organisation's tasks would appear to be over - but rather to what extent the flexible worker can wrestle some control over their preferred working times and, by extension, their leisure hours. This negotiation, allowing the employee a stake in their working time and leisure time, is central to the creation of a consent based authority. This temporal conflict is central to modern

workplace relations, especially in low paid jobs such as supermarket and hospitality work where employees are seeking to maximise the benefits of the flexibility in working hours to offset the low pay, insecurity, precarious schedules and increasing intensification of their work. Managers in this study state that they have no wish to unnecessarily inconvenience their staff, or to make them unhappy, but their goal is to maximise the amount of available labour and the amount that labour can output so that increases in demand can be accommodated with minimal parallel increase in labour costs. This is the site of conflict that is being considered here.

Wood (2020: 138) highlights the ‘subtlety and ambiguity’ of flexible discipline, stating that it is difficult for workers to discern if they are actually being disciplined, and as such whether to blame their managers or blame the exogenous factor of shifting demand for their declining position in this relationship. This argument is difficult to obtain from this data because it focuses on management testimony. However, given the data suggesting that line managers set out to create a consensus based system, and that line managers state that they usually try and set up a system of cooperation, despite maintaining control and continuing to keep the regime going, this subtlety is a careful balance. While line managers are conceptualised here as closer to their staff interests, rather than the interests of their business/capital, the key part of the relationship, according to Burawoy is to secure but also to obscure the extraction of value from the worker (1985: 34).

7.2 Gifts/reciprocal favours

Wood, uses the terminology ‘gift’ when discussing scheduling favours offered by managers to workers as a means of securing control. This is to signify the non-reciprocal nature of the relationship between employee and management in the supermarkets in which he conducted his research.

Wood’s conception is influenced by the finding of Mears (2015) in which it is argued that ‘the situational construction of consent’ is *not* a useful framework and instead focuses on the aspects of control in this relationship that are obscured. Wood takes this further, arguing that based on his evidence of working in supermarkets, workers are forced to ‘beg’ for more hours or for more favourable shift patterns. If a manager agrees to these requests this is, he suggests, often misinterpreted as an act of kindness, which the worker is not in a position to reciprocate. This inability to reciprocate means that the manager has a greater feeling of control with a favour ‘banked’ for when it is needed in the future – Wood suggests that there is an ‘emotional debt’ or a ‘moral obligation’ to the manager for what might be perceived as acts of generosity.

This theory formed the basis for the ‘scheduling’ aspect of this thesis, with the aim to identify if there is evidence of this in supermarkets but also in other sectors, based on the managers’ point of view. Of course, it was not expected that managers would say that they use gifts to obscure the extension of control or production of consent that flexible scheduling can allow. However, the evidence from my own interviews

suggests that in fact there is a cooperative relationship between line managers and frontline workers, though this is weaker in supermarkets which have adopted more punitive policies and more intractable software systems, as suggested by Wood's study.

Therefore, the distribution of favourable shifts and how to fairly allocate these is a less well discussed part of the line manager's job in those sectors that operate extended operating hours. Wood's thesis is that these manifest themselves in the possibility of offering scheduling gifts to those workers that reciprocate and are used as a disciplining measure. This is a form of power and control that the line manager can exercise within the context of the constraints already discussed. Questions were asked of line managers to see if evidence could be found of this practice, and other answers were considered around the general relationship with staff.

The participants, with only two exceptions, (one in the leisure sector and another in hotels), did not explicitly admit to the possibility of gifts to favoured workers or to elicit future complicity favours on an individual level. Even those that did felt that putting themselves in this position would not be advantageous to them in the long run as it would eliminate the regime of fairness/consent that they were trying to foster to ensure the cooperation of all staff. All managers interviewed would try and accommodate as many requests as possible within a reasonable limit, and none were willing to suggest that there were favours given to preferred staff beyond the horse trading of 'if you work this Saturday you can have next weekend off' style approaches that in the majority of the cases were semi-formalised in order to ensure fairer distribution of the less favoured weekend (and sometimes evening) shifts.

This represents a constraint on the argument put forward by Wood. The line managers work hard to create a regime of control by consent. By offering scheduling gifts, or the possibility of them, they would undermine this position and weaken the control that they have. Based on the theory that the line manager's main focus is ensuring that they can secure the consent of staff to work flexibly on their terms so that they have enough resources to complete a schedule, this undermining through establishing gifts would not benefit them.

Similarly, punishment by only offering unfavourable scheduling did not appear to be an issue. Again, the evidence would suggest that less senior members of staff are given the unfavourable shifts – see JSSupermarket's explanation that 'the younger ones do all that' but this was in a supermarket context where there was something akin to the core-periphery model (see literature review for more discussion on this) with two tiers of worker – those who have been employed for many years on the legacy contracts with guaranteed fixed hours, and those on the newer flexible contracts with minimal guaranteed hours and the requirement to be available for shifts at all times, or near to all times if they have an accepted caring commitment. This

model was being eroded by new systems, but given the resistance to these changes from staff and line managers, may still be in place for some time.

There were exceptions. Seniority and length of service was often the main sticking point. Managers often arrive at the job and find staff who have worked at the site for many years and have established shift patterns that are difficult to change for reasons of either legacy contractual differences, as in the case of (*JSSupermarket and SCSupermarket, MBLeisure*), or by convention, whereby a private agreement has been met with an individual or a group of workers within a team. For example, the customer service team in a large supermarket where two of the longer-term staff continue to work regular hours of 8-5pm Monday to Friday, despite the rest of the team and indeed the rest of the supermarket and the wider organisation having moved to flexible hours with the requirement for employees to be available for shifts during nearly all the store's opening hours. This is because the role was considered by the line manager (who had an unusual amount of autonomy compared to others interviewed) to be a more specialist position, requiring a good knowledge of the specific store as well as company practices, good customer service skills, and the confidence to defuse difficult situations. These traits were not considered something that a new member of staff, or a part-time worker would be able to do sufficiently quickly, and so the bargaining position of the two workers in question was strengthened.

The focus on 'gifts' and/or reciprocity with the evidence interviewed yielded some interesting outcomes. The specific ways in which scheduling and rotas are done in each sector are discussed in earlier chapters, with 'gifting' being an underlying theoretical research question relating to the labour process. The interview questions sought to try and uncover some of this dynamic, without explicitly asking participants if they favoured certain employees. All participants, barring none said that they put together rotas and schedules as fairly as possible and would accommodate requests as much as possible, based on the need to meet the business's demand. All participants said they understood that some of their staff have different lifestyles and commitments and that they would be willing to take this into account when producing schedules. This creation of a regime of consent around scheduling is consistent with Burawoy's conception, though this was clearly in the process of changing in many sites under study.

While none of the respondents explicitly referred to using schedule gifts (nor were they prompted to – this was inferred from the answers to the questions about scheduling), there were many occasions cited when they would make exceptions for certain workers to the prevailing flexibility (or inflexibility) otherwise used to manage schedules in the organisation. One supermarket line manager had come to accommodate that the older workers would not accept later shifts, and that they should be left to younger staff who she would expect to be able to work more flexibly and be available for the less favourable shifts:

The mature ones that's worked there longer, they don't like working weekends. They don't like working nights, so they stick to the days, so when it comes to obviously the nights or the weekends, they leave it to the young ones to do all that. (JSSupermarket)

This again highlights that there are certain members of staff for whom the flexibility required of most employees is sacrificed to ensure continuity, or simply to foster good relations with more senior members of staff. This was seen in other contexts, including in hotels, where seniority meant that a compulsion to do certain shifts was absent, unlike for newer staff, who would be expected to fit in to the needs of the business.

From a labour process perspective, the difference between requesting changes to a rota and negotiating around scheduling seems significant. Managers willing to enter into negotiations, usually informal, are allowing a site of conflict to emerge which can weaken their position in maintaining the work regime. Managers tended not to worry too much about the relationship between the time management aspect of the job and their staff's role in managing the schedule. Staff had to be employed as and when to fill the schedule and meet demand. They recognised, universally, the need for staff to have some time off when it suited them, and to accommodate requests. However, the link between employee-led scheduling and efficiency was not in itself explicitly suggested (with the exception of [SCSupermarket]) with the attitude of most managers being that staff can contribute to the rota to the point where it becomes inconvenient or where conflict arose, and then they would need to intervene and exert more direct control. This rarely took the form of direct disciplinary measures, with further discussion and negotiation the favoured approach.

To this extent, the research question of whether gifting or punishment happened in scheduling cannot be confirmed from the evidence. Certainly, there are some staff that are favoured over others but this would appear to be more based on seniority and ensuring that the right combination is available so that tasks are completed. This of course does not disprove anyone's else theory, but this study based on the line managers interviewed suggest that scheduling 'gifts' are not a major part of their control regime. They are, as demonstrated elsewhere in this chapter used for control and the creation of control by consent.

7.3 Employer-led vs employee-led flexibility

While it is difficult to attempt to quantify qualitative data, especially in a study with relatively small number of participants, the table below synthesises the findings for each sector based on the qualitative interview data:

	Supermarket	Leisure	Hospitality	Software
Employer-led/employee-led/ flexible scheduling regime	Employer-led	Employer-led/balanced	Employer-led	Balanced
Use of scheduling software	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low (though task based scheduling software used instead)
Extent of use of precarious temporal scheduling	Very high	Moderate	High	Low
Negotiation potential	Moderate	High	High	High
Workplace regime	Coercive	Consent	Balanced	Consent

This table gives an overview of each sector based on the findings of this thesis. It is difficult to draw conclusions or try to identify causation from one interpretation of each factor. Nevertheless it was apparent from the findings that supermarkets are operating, or are moving toward a very strict regime of ultra precarious scheduling based not only on uncertainty of the days worked but also the number of hours worked, with employees hours fitting in with business demand on a dynamic basis. The introduction of scheduling software introduces an automated technocratic element to the interaction which removes the potential for negotiation. The findings showed evidence of the potential for line management resistance but this is likely to be eroded as new more sophisticated systems are being introduced alongside senior management dictat around the use of them (see CBSupermarket evidence) which effectively removes scheduling from the line managers list of duties. The fact that supermarkets are large, multi-site national chains that can have identical working practices across different sites is also important, compared to the more fragmented markets in hotels and leisure.

The debate, then, between Employer-led and employee-led regimes is not a simple binary, but rather a spectrum. While I classified each interview in my own data analysis as broadly, either employer-led or employee-led there was still room for some firms to be more flexible than others even within either category, and my data analysis graded them on this basis. This section of this chapter will consider the findings in light of the literature, in particular Wood and Burchell (2015), Henly et al (2016) Kerhofs et al (2015) and Rubery and her associates' various studies of working time. These conceptions, which explicitly tie to scheduling practices and working flexibility, can also correspond to Burawoy's concept of work regimes, which he

classifies as being on a continuum between the two stools of *force* and *consent*. The argument will be that employer-led flexibility in these sectors is being extended, though there is evidence of this being resisted by line managers and staff who cooperate to maintain the existing regime. The issue of resistance is considered more fully in the following sector of this chapter.

Employer-led flexible scheduling, as defined by Burchell and Wood (2015) is now the de facto 'normal' form of working in supermarkets and most retail environments (Wood 2020). It is implied in hospitality given the twenty four hour nature of many of the roles and the needs of the hotels to be dynamic in terms of staff numbers to account for fluctuations in demand. However, as has been suggested in the previous chapter, this expectation is tempered by the implication to the line manager in securing a regime of cooperation of too heavy an employer-led regime and the difficulties in recruiting. It is also tempered by the ability of staff to negotiate that this content brings, as well as potentially the culture of the sector which is more of a 'family' approach rather than the more coercive approach increasingly being adopted in the retail sector, which arguably has a built expectation of higher turnover of staff who are seen as more easily replaceable. In the sport and leisure sector it is constrained by the self-employed nature of some of the employees, and dictated by timetables and the need for services to be staffed at peak times which coincide with customers lifestyles.

Managers in supermarkets had, in theory a high degree of autonomy to schedule their staff how they see fit, though the piloting and introduction of scheduling software was changing that. Contracts were sufficiently flexible to allow them to schedule workers in any way they felt necessary, and they were given control over setting rotas for staff. There was not in any instance a contractual, institutional or quantifiable reason why they could not simply randomly allocate staff according to the needs of the business. In practice, this was not the case, as managers responsible for scheduling tended to be close enough to their workers to be sympathetic to the need to give people reasonably consistent schedules and time off work when needed. This cooperative approach cements the reproduction of the work regime in this setting, and employees, though still in a weak position compared to other settings owing to their contracts and the external labour market realities, have a hand in the process, however weak. Relationships with managers remained important as at this stage many of the managers were in a position to override the scheduling software that was in place.

Hospitality functions slightly differently in that here, the culture of the sector, to an extent determines the negotiating process, as well as the presence of spikes in demand. Nevertheless, though staff were expected to work flexibility, the culture in the sector appeared to be have staff on proper contracts and to value continuity, which was not necessarily in evidence in supermarkets. It is expected that staff will work long hours, will be asked to work additional shifts and so on because that is what is implied by their agreeing to work in the sector. A greater sense of camaraderie is also fostered in these cases, which was not identified in supermarkets where staff were less invested in the company or the needs of their team. This is consistent with

the literature, eg Chun (2001), who identifies allegiance to the firm as a sort of family as one of the key elements of control by line managers.

By contrast, staff in tech and software firms had a higher degree of flexibility, though they were constrained by the 'office hours' requirement that is either explicitly set or by the requirement for morning staff meetings or other regular recurring events where attendance is mandatory. There was far less of a requirement for working long hours beyond their contracted hours than I had expected to find, with managers explaining that it is rare that they expect staff to routinely work beyond their scheduled hours, preferring instead to manage clients' expectations on timescales. Inevitably deadlines would occur that required additional time to be spent on tasks, but this was, several said, managed by an 'all hands on deck approach' with other staff members dropping their tasks to contribute, rather than expecting the team members assigned to this task being expected to get it done. In this respect a type of functional flexibility is evident to manage increased demand rather than relying on temporal flexibility from the team member. I do not suppose that this is necessarily typical of the industry as whole, but it certainly seemed evident in the sample in this study. It would be interesting to pursue this avenue further given the centrality of the sector to the UK economy and its place in the high value global economy.

The degree of flexibility does not necessarily correlate towards it being either more in favour of the employer or in favour of the employee, or to switch to Burawoy's conception, more coercive or consensus based. The degree of flexibility is, at least from the evidence collected in this study, consistent from sector to sector, with working practices being adopted in different sectors as the norm, but there is sufficient room for different firms to have differing working practices. These different forms of policy allowed the middle managers interviewed to have sufficient room for manoeuvre to manage in their own style, and to schedule and negotiate around scheduling in their own way. This degree of autonomy allows for the degree of control that they can exert over the worker, over and above the policies of the firm that form the base layer of the forms of control over employees, in addition to the other 'hidden' forms of control that are apparent, such as cultural behavioural norms around the sector, the firm and even national behavioural traits associated with the way work is done and the expected behaviour of workers in the UK and the degree to which they acquiesce to management demands.

By contrast employee-led flexibility was low in these sectors, barring tech companies. However, as discussed there are various factors that meant that managers could not exercise autonomy over the schedule. Negotiation, informally and formally was required here and that is covered elsewhere in this chapter.

True employee-led flexibility in sectors that have to manage demand across a period beyond the 'normal working hours' will have difficulty nudging toward an employee-led model. In theory, it would be possible for teams, especially smaller teams as were in evidence in many of the interviews, to collaborate on

working hours and how to manage that demand, allowing for full-time workers, part-timers and casual staff. This is, in effect how staff in the tech sector work, though they do so without the trouble of having an 18 hour schedule to fill.

Tech staff are not completely unconstrained, of course, and there are caveats and penalties for the day-to-day personal flexibility they enjoy. Flexibility of hours is stymied by the full-time culture they work in (part-time work is not common in the industry – chapter five)) as well as the need to work to frequent and tight deadlines and work longer hours when necessary for these to be completed. So while they often have a high degree of flexibility to negotiate their working hours and to manage on a daily basis their schedules this is effectively jettisoned when a deadline or bottleneck emerges and they are no longer free to manage their own tasks and subsequently their own time. The flexibility they are afforded in ‘normal’ times is perhaps compensation for the fact that their company has, despite the outward easy going flexibility, much more control in this aspect than is immediately apparent. Loyalty is expected and rewarded but the firm can claim to ‘own’, the workers time outside of work much more than in the other industries where non-working time is protected, aside from the psychological factor of the need to always be available for shifts. This is ingrained in the contracts, with all staff stating that contracts in their own and in other places they have worked have all stated the hours expected (usually 40 hours a week) but with the caveat that sometimes hours may be needed to complete the tasks in hand. However, most no longer state working hours (although one manager in a tech firm stated that his contract does) and that there is flexibility around working times and office hours, though bound by client meetings, team meetings and so on.

7.4 Resistance

One of the key areas to emerge from the data was the resistance of managers to changing systems, policies and technologies, and how this resistance affected outcomes in the workplace both for themselves and for their staff in terms of scheduling and their ability to complete the tasks needed to get through the day. This section will consider some of these issues based on the theory and the evidence from the previous chapters.

As mentioned in the previous two sections, resistance is a key issue that arose, though the resistance came from line managers to protect their workers and by extension their own scheduling regimes. This should not, in retrospect, have been a surprise, as it is they that are having systems imposed on them, often to remove responsibilities from them as much as the staff that they manage. As with all technological related change, resistance is possible. Woodcock (2013), discussing changing systems in a call centre setting, explained that the experience of employer tactics like electronic surveillance and supervision has shown that its power can be far ‘far from total’. Every use of technology, especially in this site of activity ‘requires human interaction’, leaving space for resistance.

This thesis and its research questions did not initially foreground issues of resistance, as is common with many labour process-based studies. Instead its focus was on negotiation and gifts. The decision to interview managers rather than those that are managed meant that this would not be a useful research question to focus on because the analysis of worker behaviours necessary to do this would not be possible. Resistance was discussed with participants, through the consideration of interactions and how managers dealt with any 'pushback' from their decisions. It was also interpreted in the data through discussions of other activities. Strategies and 'games', a large feature of LPT literature relating to resistance were not considered.

In literature in this area, resistance is often evidenced with reference to those who are seen to be having power over them, so in this case the front-line workers for whom scheduling is done something that is done to them, with or without negotiation. This thesis, as discussed in the theoretical section, understand that and line managers can be both resisted and resisters. Middle managers are, As McCann argues, in an invidious position with demands from above and below, and so inevitable they will resist certain diktats or policies in order to manage their resources and get through their day successfully. It is this conflict that is at the heart of this dissertation and its understanding of the dynamics of flexible scheduling and ultimately the exercise of power in the workplace.

The ability for managers in these sectors to resist the goals of the company's senior management presents a key secondary finding of this thesis. That workers can resist management policies on working practices is well documented and many studies in this tradition focus on how workers can do various things or games to affect, slow or subvert the labour process. This is obviously less pronounced in the field of scheduling as it relies in direct interface with managers and company technologies, rather than with a process or set of tasks which are independent of direct management control. Therefore, it is necessary for the role of the line manager to be examined, as in the other aspects of this thesis, when it comes to resistance to a move toward employer-led flexible scheduling, the line managers role is equally important as the workers as it is these managers that ultimately implement these policies. In this respect, I liken their theoretical position in implementing policy as similar to any person tasked with implementing policy, who seek to retain a degree of autonomy so that they can maintain a degree of decision-making power outside of the formal decision-making paths that are in their job description.

Not all managers I spoke to resisted senior management or its policies, but several of those in supermarkets and hotels and to a lesser extent, leisure spoke of software emerging to assist with scheduling and the ways in which these were resisted by them in order to retain good relations with staff and retain control over this element of their job, one of the ones in which they can obtain a consensual regime through cooperating, rather than using coercive behaviour.

The nature of the evidence – transcribed interviews with line managers outlining their own decision-making - in this dissertation makes prolonged discussion of employee resistance difficult, as it would be seen only through the recollections and interpretations of their managers, who in most cases will not be aware of some of the more subtle forms of resistance that literature in this area seeks to uncover. However, attempts to understand the site of conflict and negotiation invariably uncovers some examples where managers could understand their staff's position and could highlight the forms of resistance whether explicit (for example, simple refusal to accept the schedule) or the more subtle forms, such as turning up late, deliberately performing poorly, calling in sick and so on. In most cases in the study, however, the main form of resistance was simply to imply that the schedule or degree of flexibility simply did not work for them and to implicitly threaten to leave and go to another firm that might be able to offer better terms and greater employee-led flexibility. This was most true in the tech/software and hospitality sectors where there were many more vacancies in the labour market. This, some line managers felt, was a constant risk and one that they had little control over given that they were bound by policy to have a degree of precarious scheduling. Most noted that pay and conditions were similar across the sectors (with the exception of MVleisure who managed in what was considered a desirable firm in the sector owing to its pay and conditions security) and that the only way to avoid precarious scheduling would be to leave the sector altogether.

8. CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to address two main questions, with separate areas of focus, but linked outcomes. They are repeated below:

- What are the temporal strategies firms and managers use to manage staff workload/demand? What are the determinants for these practices? What are the constraints to further use of these strategies?
- Is scheduling a site of negotiation or conflict between line management and employee, and what tactics do line managers employ to exert control in this sphere. Is this a constraint on further use of temporal flexibility and precarious scheduling?

The empirical research element sought to understand, initially, why have firms not moved all workers to be temporary, flexible, zero or low hours. Similarly, to understand why aren't all staff outsourced or self-employed where it is possible (ie tech, leisure). The questions aimed to identify what the limits are to this kind of flexibility and how is this manifested in scheduling practices and negotiation. What role, if any, does scheduling have or is it the other way round – what role does the internal and external labour market outcomes have on scheduling – ie. to what extent do wider forces of capitalism have on the bargaining position of employees and line managers when it comes to the shop floor level conflict around managing the time of workers. From a purely economic point of view it would make sense to do this. The reasons that they have not were to be considered – the constraints on increased flexibility, and to test that scheduling practices might be a factor in this brake on further precarious temporal flexibility. This dissertation has explored these through an analysis of line management decision making and activity.

It is worth considering the situation workers and managers in the sector studies find themselves. The degree of flexibility demanded of staff, and that staff can request of management is a relatively new phenomenon. Certainly, Braverman, Burawoy and others in the LPT tradition conducting their studies of factories found a workforce with rigid set shift patterns, often without even the possibility of asking for leave outside of plant shutdown dates. The extension of service work and longer operating hours (supermarkets usually operate 6am-10pm for example, with a further overnight shift populated with a different team) has meant that huge numbers of workers in these sectors now have a degree of flexibility in their working lives within which to manage their non-working hours. That this is often offset by precarious scheduling, with, increasingly no set shifts and in some cases, no guarantee of working hours, is the key tension that has been explored in this dissertation. It is also different from the set shift patterns that characterised much work in the

post-industrial era that Braverman, Friedman and Burawoy were investigating. Line managers in these sectors are tasked with managing this tension as part of what they perceive to be a relatively minor element of their day to day job. By 'minor' they mean in terms of the time and effort required in relation to the myriad other functions performed daily. While it may not dominate their working day, it nevertheless carries significant implications for the staff that they manage and their own working relationships. The finding that that line managers are equally likely to resist company policy as the staff that they manage is an overlooked element of the literature on temporal flexibility, initially, and on the literature on precarious scheduling. Certainly, the role of the line manager deserves far more investigation in this area.

This thesis's research questions focused on two separate but connected strands. The first is the increasing prevalence of temporal flexibility in the deployment of frontline staff in diverse and expanding sectors to manage demand (Doogan 2009, Rubery 2005, Rubery et al 2015, 2016, Wood and Burchell 2015). This means that, rather than numerical or functional flexibility as might previously have been employed, part-time, flexible working patterns have become more widely used as the standard practice to manage demand. Using interviews with line managers across four sectors as evidence, this dissertation outlines the types of temporal flexibility that firms use and why, and how this affects their day-to-day management of staff, and how this affects line management outcomes and their decision making process.

The second part of the research question uses this context to focus on a specific outcome of the move toward temporal flexibility and considers the implementation of precarious and flexible scheduling, and how line managers are made to implement this and how they negotiate with staff to deliver outcomes. These outcomes could be favourable to them or to their staff, or be mutually satisfactory. The thesis argues that line management and senior management/firm outcomes are not the same, and that line management and staff outcomes often converge even where there is conflict over the implementation and practice of flexible scheduling.

While other studies in the literature focus on worker behaviour and resistance, this thesis is distinctive in taking line management as its empirical focus. It examined how line management decision-making and management style impact on these forms of precarious scheduling and the extent to which managers are able to create room for autonomy to achieve their goals, reproduce their part of the workplace regime and manage relationships with staff.

This thesis identifies that there are commonalities across sectors/organisations in changing temporal practices and forms of precarious scheduling. However, this is mitigated by the relationships between line management and those being managed, with the level of autonomy that line managers have to implement or resist precarious scheduling being inconsistent, despite efforts from senior management to implement more automated or regulated forms of precarious scheduling. This demonstrates the possibility of resistance not

only from workers, who can use their individual negotiating position to resist and negotiate schedules that suits them, but also from the line managers in resisting senior management rules. The presentation of data and discussion chapter have demonstrated this.

The thesis argues that while precarious scheduling may be considered as a form of management control, it is mediated and diluted by line management which is able to turn the conflict that is inevitable in such a practice into a site of negotiation, thus potentially empowering both parties and allowing favourable outcomes for both staff and line management, creating the consensus based regime that Burawoy identified. While there was little evidence of 'gifts' as per Wood's conception, the line manager is able to maintain a position of control through the creation and maintenance of a cooperative workplace regime and to resist the encroachment of technologies that seek to remove this aspect of their autonomy.

The implication for the understanding of flexible working and changing temporal patterns is that it highlights the need to recognise the line manager as a key mediating mechanism between the experience of work for frontline workers and the desire of senior manager to extract value from them through increasingly temporally precarious and demanding employment practices. Where external constraints are not overwhelming and line managers retain sufficient autonomy they act in ways that reproduce the regime of consent and control by consent. This is counter to senior management policy that seeks to impose new rules that override this.

Wood argued that temporal fragmentation and flexibility increases the complexity of the organisation and this makes control more difficult. This complexity, he argued, is a limit on the extent to which temporal flexibility can be adopted by firms (2020: 3). This thesis argues that middle managers and workers can negotiate or cooperate with line management in order to affect outcomes around flexibility. The external factors discussed in chapter 5 are a factor to the spread of 'new temporalities' (Rubery 2005, Wood and Burchell 2015) that are also laid out in chapter 5, which in turn are affected by outcomes and the drive to greater precariousness, and less influence for the worker in the workplace. This is the driver of 'precarious scheduling' as Wood calls it in his study of supermarket workers. Certainly, the evidence from this study would point towards evidence of precarious scheduling in the supermarket sector. However, in terms of scheduling outcomes, workers can offset that precarity through negotiating and creating a consent based system, giving them greater autonomy than that suggested by Wood and others, who downplay the degree of agency that workers can still exhibit through interactions with their line manager, leading to more favourable scheduling outcomes.

The thesis concludes that the role of the line manager in any sector is central to an understanding of the labour process, and in particular around the debates around precarious scheduling, flexible scheduling, moves towards employer-led flexible scheduling regimes in particular. Their position, which has the potential

to be a brake on the expansion of new temporalities is not explored enough in the literature. Their role is also overlooked in discussions of precarity and insecurity, in particular conceptions of precarity that rely on psychological factors – i.e. the perception of employment insecurity rather than the reality. Line management decision making, middle management implement of policy and senior management policy are all organisational issues that contribute more materially to this condition than the accounts that stress global economic conditions or institutional or cultural factors. This thesis highlights the role that lower tier management positions can have in the wider position of working people and how they combine to interact with the labour market, the economy and essentially, to political outcomes around working conditions and precarious and insecure employment. The agency of working people is central to this analysis and while it does not seek to downplay the contextual factors (in fact the external factors form part of the first of the two research questions) it is the understanding of middle and line management agency and its contribution to scheduling and, ultimately, labour market outcomes that is the point of this thesis.

This raises a further question which future research might seek to address. The question is to understand what impact this has on working conditions, the continuing attempts to accommodate or impose flexible working in more sectors, and, theoretically, the continuing struggle between capital and labour. On this last point, the question is fundamental– this thesis points out that line management, rather than being the servants of the forces of capital, as in the overseer of Marxist accounts or the foreman in LPT accounts are in fact more aligned with the front-line worker in resisting management diktat on scheduling practices and in fact attempt to resist practices as much as anyone. That they do so with slightly different day to day ends to front line workers is rather a moot point. Their aims converge and line management goals have more in common with frontline workers than they do with their seniors in middle and senior management. This layer of management, which is often overlooked in the literature, forms a key part of resistance to greater forms of employer-led temporal flexibility than is previously considered in the literature. Line managers in effect can form a greater block to precarious scheduling than is previously considered. By creating some form of autonomy and disregarding certain rules where possible, they create the conditions where workers can negotiate and ultimately resist greater encroachment of employer-led flexibility/precarious scheduling into their working lives (and ultimately, the encroachment of working time or their leisure time). Where this line management autonomy is being eroded for example in supermarkets and other sectors where automated scheduling is being introduced, we are seeing examples of more pernicious working practices whereby precarious scheduling is built into the job with little or no room for negotiation on the front-line workers' part. The reason for this is that they cannot negotiate or enter in reciprocal agreements with the scheduling app that they must now interact with to manage their working hours.

There is a significant literature on surveillance and the labour process. It has also been discussed more recently by (Terry et al 2021, Kingma 2018, Woodcock 2017) as dynamic, 'spot' scheduling matched to

customer demand and work rate is now being used in many sectors and is seen as an extension of management control. This issued to the extent in some settings, for example in certain chain restaurants, where staff are asked to go home early (reducing their pay) if business is slow that evening. This would form the basis of future research in this area, with the encroachment of such dynamic systems in supermarkets and in the food and drink sector of the hospitality industry being a new frontier in the use of automatic control. It would be fascinating to see how the role of line managers change with scheduling removed from their job description.

This thesis is not intended as defence of line management, but rather an attempt to locate line management and middle management within their role as gatekeepers and conduits between labour and capital, manged and mangers. They have more in common with shop floor workers than management, but who nevertheless have a significant impact on employees' lives. The commonality of scheduling goals between front line worker and manager remains a site of conflict and one that will continue while there are still unpopular evening and weekend shifts to be filled. However, in the broader picture of the continuing encroachment of precarious scheduling, the resistance can only come from line managers whose day-to-day staff management goals remain to ensure that there are sufficient staff members present to complete the day's work. To do this they need to maintain some compliance from the workforce and the ability to elicit favours from staff and to meaningfully reward them for these favours in the future.

Studying line management decision making is a difficult undertaking precisely because there is no formal decision-making pathway as might be found in a middle or senior management role. Nor is it as simple to conceptualise as the resistant worker as found in much of the LPT literature. The decisions they make around scheduling are usually not signed off by seniors or written down, or codified. Dozens of micro decisions are made every day, each of which can affect frontline workers and their relationship with their work and their leisure time. Identifying these decisions in a more systematic way would give greater insight into the relationship between workers and management. However, this must now be considered through the suggestion put forward in this thesis that they could represent an additional site of resistance to management control and another block to employer-led flexibility, rather than acting as a conduit between management and frontline worker as some suggest, or as simply agents of the management as others might. The outcome of the continuing negotiating and accommodating around scheduling on this shop floor level can slow the advance of precarious scheduling in other sectors, and it is line managers that can lead this by refusing to use the technologies presented to them by management in the full manner, and by retaining the parts of their decision-making power that allows them to accommodate employee flexibility and reduce precarious scheduling.

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Appendices

Ethical Review approval

From: SPS Ethics Applications Mailbox <sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk>

Sent: 31 October 2020 10:34

To: Jon Wellington <jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk>

Subject: Re: Response from the SPS REC

Dear Jon

Determinants of flexible scheduling and temporal flexibility: a cross sector qualitative study
([SPSREC2021123](#))

Thank you for responding so fully to the SPS REC comments regarding the project above.

The committee has now given ethical approval to your research. Your research can now be conducted in accordance with the application and additional responses the committee has reviewed.

If you require a formal letter of approval, please contact Hannah Blackman.

Please do let me know if your project changes, you may need an amendment to your ethical approval. If this is the case, please email me, via the sps-ethics mailbox, including the following information:

- The title and reference number of your application
- The reason for the amendment
- The proposed change to the methods
- Any ethical considerations related to the proposed change in methods

We hope your research goes really well.

With very best wishes.

Beth Tarleton
On behalf of the SPS REC

Explanation of terms

Term	Explanation
Ethical approval	This means that the committee have a 'favourable ethical opinion' which is that we approve the research being conducted in accordance with the application and additional responses the committee has reviewed

Revisions required	This means that the committee has 'conditional ethical opinion' and will be approve the research once it has received the requested clarifications/reviewed changes in relation to the issues/concerns raised.
Full resubmission	The committee has an 'unfavourable ethical opinion' and require the application to be resubmitted. The resubmitted proposal will reviewed by the full committee. The resubmitted proposal should address the issues raised by the committee.

From: Jon Wellington <jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk>
Sent: 30 October 2020 17:01
To: SPS Ethics Applications Mailbox <sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Response from the SPS REC

Dear Ms Tarleton

Thanks for your response. I have attached the updated documents, and interview schedule as requested. Below is my response to each of your requested amendments.

Question 1: Please provide the details of your previous research.

Document updated: Amended to: 'I am an ESRC 1+3 Student and have completed the Policy Research MSc as required for progress. For this I completed a dissertation with a similar theme around the working time and temporal arrangements involving semi-structured interviews with 12 decision makers and commissioners in social care. I have also organised and conducted interviews and data analysis for a further study as a paid research assistant. This study involved interviewing 17 key decision-makers in the West of England devolution settlement about their relationships with civil servants around negotiations for the West of England devolution settlement. I was also responsible for all aspects of the data in these studies, including obtaining consent, anonymising data, safe storage, before conducting data analysis on the transcripts and presenting findings'.

Please confirm how many interviews will be undertaken.

30 interviews.

Question 3: please describe your sampling strategy - how will potential participants be selected.

Document updated 'Participants are selected based on the economic sector in which they work. Then firms within the sector will be identified as typical of the sector. This will be done through speaking to existing contacts and the literature. Existing contacts will be used to contact people directly (as private individuals) with the attached invitation. Snowball sampling is to be used to identify others in the organisations that may be willing to participate. If this approach does not yield sufficient participants, potential interviewees will be contacted via email or telephone and asked to take part via the attached email invitation using publicly available email addresses. '

Question 6: Please include the risk of lack of time to take part as a risk. How would the gift voucher make up for lack of time.

Document updated. If a participant does not have enough time to take part then they are free to cancel any arrangement with me. The gift voucher is designed to incentivise as much as compensate. It is not expected that participants will be able to take part during work hours as the type of participants I am seeking tend not to have this level of control over their working hours.

Question 7: please note that you would need an amendment to your ethical approval to move to face to face interviews.

I have removed the suggestion of moving to face to face interviews from the form.

Question 11: Will there be other terms/details that might need to be changed to ensure anonymity?

Document updated. References to other staff in the organisation by name would be redacted.

Will potential participants be at risk of feeling obliged to take part in the research because they have been sent the information by a manager?

I am seeking to interview managers and they will be approached directly. I am not going to use gatekeepers in this way.

Information sheet. This should be written in a way that supports the potential participant to decide whether they want to take part. Please change this: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

Document updated to 'Thank you for considering taking part in this study'.

In the first paragraph, please remove this statement:(through the transcription of the audio data from the interview) . This information is provided later.

Document updated

Please say how the person has 'been identified as somebody with responsibility for staff scheduling in your organisation'.

Document updated – removed 'as somebody identified as...' and replaced with 'As somebody with responsibility for...'

In the section on: What does participating in this study involve? Please include the length of the interview and how it would take place.

Added 'The interview will take around 45 minutes'.

In the section asking if they have to take part, please say that is completely voluntary and that they could remove their data until it has been anonymised.

Document updated.

Please indicate that you will be asking for specific consent for archiving.

Document updated to indicate that they will be asked to give explicit consent to this in the consent form.

Please reword this sentence: The transcript of the interview will be used, along with transcripts from other interviews being conducted for this study, to form the empirical portion of the PhD dissertation.

Document updated. Reworded as 'the information you have provided will be used, along with transcripts from other interviewees, as the main form of evidence for the final dissertation.'

Please change this sentence: The dissertation is likely to be only seen by supervisors and assessors. PhDs are submitted and available from the library.

Document updated. Reworded as 'The dissertation will be read by supervisors and assessors, and a copy will be available in the university library.'

Please make it clear that your supervisors can be contacted if there any concerns/complaints about your research practice.

Document updated.

Consent form

Please change this line so that it is clear that data be removed until it is anonymised: I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

Document updated.

Please reword this line to remove the discussion of 'empirical data' (this is not an accessible term) : I understand that information I provide will be used for the empirical portion of the researcher's PhD dissertation. It is possible that the data may be used in research conferences or academic articles in the future. My personal details will remain anonymous and I will not be identifiable. Please put the comment regarding anonymity in the section above.

Document updated. Reworded as 'the information you have provided will be used, along with transcripts from other interviewees, as the main form of evidence for the final dissertation.'

Please send us your interview schedule/topic guide.

Attached

Many thanks

Jon Wellington
PhD student, School for Policy Studies

From: SPS Ethics Applications Mailbox <sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk>

Sent: 23 October 2020 16:06

To: Jon Wellington <jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk>

Subject: Response from the SPS REC

Dear Jon

Determinants of flexible scheduling and temporal flexibility: a cross sector qualitative study
([SPSREC2021123](#))

Thank you for submitting your application regarding this project to the SPS REC. The committee have reviewed your application and revisions are required. Please respond to the following stipulations/comments/questions or queries:

Question 1: Please provide the details of your previous research.

Please confirm how many interviews will be undertaken.

Question 3: please describe your sampling strategy - how will potential participants be selected.

Question 6: Please include the risk of lack of time to take part as a risk. How would the gift voucher make up for lack of time.

Question 7: please note that you would need an amendment to your ethical approval to move to face to face interviews.

Question 11: Will there be other terms/details that might need to be changed to ensure anonymity?

Will potential participants be at risk of feeling obliged to take part in the research because they have been sent the information by a manager?

Information sheet. This should be written in a way that supports the potential participant to decide whether they want to take part. Please change this: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

In the first paragraph, please remove this statement:(through the transcription of the audio data from the interview) . This information is provided later.

Please say how the person has 'been identified as somebody with responsibility for staff scheduling in your organisation'.

In the section on: What does participating in this study involve? Please include the length of the interview and how it would take place.

In the section asking if they have to take part, please say that is completely voluntary and that they could remove their data until it has been anonymised.

Please indicate that you will be asking for specific consent for archiving.

Please reword this sentence: The transcript of the interview will be used, along with transcripts from other interviews being conducted for this study, to form the empirical portion of the PhD dissertation.

Please change this sentence: The dissertation is likely to be only seen by supervisors and assessors. PhDs are submitted and available from the library.

Please make it clear that your supervisors can be contacted if there any concerns/complaints about your research practice.

Consent form

Please change this line so that it is clear that data be removed until it is anonymised: I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

Please reword this line to remove the discussion of 'empirical data' (this is not an accessible term) : I understand that information I provide will be used for the empirical portion of the researcher's PhD dissertation. It is possible that the data may be used in research conferences or academic

articles in the future. My personal details will remain anonymous and I will not be identifiable. Please put the comment regarding anonymity in the section above.

Please send us your interview schedule/topic guide.

Please reply to me by email, responding to each point and attaching any updated documents.

With very best wishes.

Beth Tarleton
On behalf of the SPS REC

SPS RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM: STAFF and DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.
- See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.
- All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.
- See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.
- Please stick to the word limit provided. **Do not attach** your funding application or research proposal.

Key project details:

1. Proposer's Name	Jon Wellington		
2. Proposer's Email Address:	Jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk		
3. Project Title	Determinants of flexible scheduling and temporal flexibility: a cross sector qualitative study		
4. Project Start Date:	October 2020	End Date:	February 2021

Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere. As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not require a NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) review e.g. does it involve NHS patients, staff or facilities – see <http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/>

If you are not sure where you should apply please discuss it with either the chair of the Committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Social care research projects which involve NHS patients, people who use services or people who lack capacity as research participants need to be reviewed by a Social Care Research Ethics Committee (see <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/social-care-research/>).

Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records (without informed consent) must be reviewed by a REC and the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care (NIGB).

Who needs to provide governance approval for this project?

If this project involves access to patients, clients, staff or carers of an NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation, it falls within the scope of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social. You will also need to get written approval from the Research Management Office or equivalent of each NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation.

When you have ethical approval, you will need to complete the research registration form:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/study-notification.html>

Guidance on completing this form can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/guidance.pdf>. Contact the Research Governance team (research-governance@bristol.ac.uk) for guidance on completing this form and if you have any questions about obtaining local approval.

Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer. If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/insurance/travel-insurance/>).

Do you need a Disclosure and Barring Service check?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Criteria for deciding whether you require a DBS check are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

You should specifically look at the frequency, nature, and duration of your contact with potentially vulnerable adults and or children. If your contact is a one-off research interaction, or infrequent contact (for example: 3 contacts over a period of time) you are unlikely to require a check.

If you think you need a DBS check then you should consult the University of Bristol web-page:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/dbs/>

5. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution. Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.

Not applicable

6. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes

☐

No/Not yet

X

Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work. They will be provided with training and sign a detailed consent form.

Not applicable

☐

7. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor(s).

Kevin Doogan and Noemi Lendvai-Bainton

Please confirm that your supervisor(s) has seen this final version of your ethics application?

Yes

☒

No

☐

8. Who is funding this study?

ESRC as part of the 1+3 studentship

If this study is funded by the ESRC or another funder requiring lay representation on the ethics committee and is being undertaken by a member staff, this form should be submitted to the Faculty REC.

Post-graduate students undertaking ESRC funded projects should submit their form to the SPS Research Ethics Committee (SPS REC).

9. Is this application part of a larger proposal?

No

☒

Yes

☐

If yes, please provide a summary of the larger study and indicate how this application relates to the overall study.

10. Is this proposal a replication of a similar proposal already approved by the SPS REC? Please provide the SPS REC reference number.

No

☒

Yes

☐

If Yes, please tell us the name of the project, the date approval was given and code (if you have one).

Please describe any differences (such as context) in the current study. If the study is a replication of a previously approved study. Submit these first two pages of the form.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant ethical issues and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or proposals which do not directly answer the questions.** Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

- 1. IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS:** Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants

Interviews will be organised and conducted by the researcher with no additional assistance. I am an ESRC 1+3 Student and have completed the Policy Research MSc as required. For this I completed a dissertation with a similar theme around the working time and temporal arrangements involving semi structured interviews with decision makers and commissioners in social care. I have also organised and conducted interviews and data analysis for a further study as a paid research assistant. This study involved face to face and telephone interviews with 17 key decision-makers in the West of England devolution settlement about their relationships with civil servants around negotiations for the West of England devolution settlement. I was also responsible for all aspects of the data in this study, including anonymising, storage, assuming responsibility for securing informed consent, and conducting data analysis on the transcripts.

- 2. STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]:** Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

The aim is to identify the determinants (drivers/constraints) of different forms of flexible scheduling practices or temporal regimes in different sectors of the labour market. These determinants can be external or internal to the organisation. This thesis uses labour process theory to understand the dynamics of management decision-making when managing schedules or employing other forms of temporal flexibility.

To this end I will be seeking to speak to line managers or those involved in workload management and scheduling in five sectors of the economy, identified in the literature as having new or unusual forms of temporal flexibility. Managers in three companies per sector will be interviewed to obtain a reasonable view of the working practices in the sector. The qualitative data will be then be analysed and compared within and across the sectors to obtain a view of management decision-making and to identify the drivers and constraints of the introduction of new or extended forms of flexible scheduling and alternative temporal practices.

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

(If you are undertaking secondary data analysis, please proceed to section 11)

- 3. RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]:** Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

The research method is one to one semi-structured interviews. Interviewees will be asked a series of set questions about their approach to the working day in their organisation, managing working time schedules and workloads in their organisation, as well as some further questions about managing staff more broadly, and the external and internal labour market. Interviewees are selected based on the firm for whom they work (identified as typical of the sector under study based on preliminary research – more details are available), and their position in the company. I am seeking to interview middle managers/line managers in the firm that have responsibility for the scheduling of workload and staff. Interviewees will be invited to take part in a maximum 45 minutes recorded interview via telephone or video call. They are invited to do this as private individuals rather than as representatives of their company.

Participants are selected based on the economic sector in which they work. Then firms within the sector will be identified as typical of the sector. This will be done through speaking to existing contacts and the literature. Existing contacts will be used to contact people directly (as private individuals) with the attached invitation. Snowball sampling is to be used to identify others in the organisations that may be willing to participate. If this approach does not yield sufficient participants, potential interviewees will be contacted via email or telephone and asked to take part via the attached email invitation using publicly available email addresses.

- 4. EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY:** Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between March to July 2019. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

Interviews will be conducted from the time that ethical approval is attained until March 2021. The research design is to interview thirty line managers (6 from each sector as identified by the literature) for 45 minutes each. I aim to conduct two interviews per week.

- 5. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words]** Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

This project contributes to knowledge in several disciplines in the social sciences including policy studies, critical management studies, business studies, sociology and industrial relations. There are benefits to professional practice in the field of human resources and management, and to trade unions conducting research on scheduling and informal negotiations in the

workplace. There will be no individual benefit to the participants who will be informed of the audience for the final dissertation and associated data in the participant information sheet.

- 6. POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]:** What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example risk assessment form and guidance : <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/RA-gn.pdf> and <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/>

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
<i>Example 1: Participants may be upset during the interview</i> <i>Example 2: A participants may tell me something about illegal activity</i>	<i>Example 1: If a participant gets upset I will stop the interview at that time. I will give participants information about support services at the end of the interview.</i> <i>Example 2: The information sheet and consent form will warn of the limits of confidentiality and I will have a confidentiality protocol (submitted to the committee).</i>
Commercial confidentiality – managers may be concerned about information being released to competitors	The consent form and participant information sheet will explain in full how data is used, and how neither they nor their organisation will be identifiable.
Participants may tell me about illegal activity (for example working practices, wage practices)	The research design of this study is very unlikely to reveal any illegal activity.
Social distancing and Covid 19	All interviews will be conducted by telephone call or secure video calling software
Participants may not have time to conduct interviews	Interviewees are not asked to conduct these interviews as part of their working day but as private individuals. Given the relatively junior job roles (middle managers, supervisors and line managers), it is not expected that they will do this during their working hours. A £20 voucher will be offered to compensate their personal time.

*Add more boxes if needed.

- 7. RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]:** What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
<i>Example 1: Interview at the participant's home.</i>	<i>Fieldwork safety protocol will be followed. A colleague will know the start and approximate finish time of the interview. If there is no contact from the researcher, they will ring the researcher. If no contact is made the confidential address details will be accessed and the police informed.</i>
Not applicable – all interviews conducted are to be remotely via telephone or video call.	

- 8. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]:** How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be “obliged” to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so how will this be dealt with.

Interviews requests will be to line managers responsible for scheduling in their organisation. They will be approached through existing contacts, and snowball sampling may be used to identify other managers within the same firm that may be willing to participate. If existing contacts or those identified by snowball sampling are not available, speculative email/letter invites with details of the project will be sent making use of publicly available addresses or email addresses. I do not anticipate that any participants would feel obliged to take part. There are no gatekeepers being used, and participants are approached on the basis that they are autonomous individuals agreeing to take part outside of their role as managers, though it will be their own decision as to whether they choose to be interviewed during their working hours or in their own time. Participants will not be required or asked to disclose this.

Based on preliminary discussions, I have decided to offer participants a £20 Amazon voucher for taking part in the study. This is to compensate participants for their time (up to an hour). As the study is about work, it seems appropriate to acknowledge the time they have given to assist the study.

- 9. INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]:** How will this be obtained? Whilst in many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be clearly justified. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate. If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method then additional specific consent should be sought from participants.

Informed consent will be ensured through provision of a form to all participants which will be signed electronically and returned to the researcher. The interviewee will be asked to read the consent form before the interview commences. Once the interviewee has understood the

content, the interviewee will be asked to sign it. The interviewer will invite participants to ask any questions they have about the content of the document before they agree to sign it. They will be given contact details of supervisor and the school's contact detail should they wish to make further enquiries or make a complaint. All interviewees have the right to withdraw at any point.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms), securely for twenty years.

X

- 10.** If you intend to use an on-line survey (for example Survey Monkey) you need to ensure that the data will not leave the European Economic Area i.e. be transferred or held on computers in the USA. Online Surveys (formally called Bristol Online Surveys) is fully compliant with UK Data Protection requirements – see <https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>

Please tick the box to confirm that you will not use any on-line survey service based in the USA, China or outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

X

- 11. DATA PROTECTION:** All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation. University policy is that “personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA”. Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months?
https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Yes

X

No

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union?

See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-brexite/data-protection-if-there-s-no-brexite-deal/the-gdpr/international-data-transfers/>

No

X

Yes

If **YES** please list the country or countries:

Please outline your procedure for data protection. It is University of Bristol policy that interviews must be recorded on an encrypted device. Ideally this should be a University owned encrypted digital recorder (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/transcription/>).

If you lose research data which include personal information or a data breach occurs, you MUST notify the University immediately. This means sending an e-mail to data-protection@bristol.ac.uk and telling your Head of School. See additional details at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/data-breaches-and-incidents/>

The UK Data Protection Act (2018) include potential fines of up to €20,000,000 for not protecting personal data – so please provide details about how you plan to ensure the protection of ALL research data which could be used to identify a living person.

Data collected from participants will be processed, stored and destroyed in line with the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Interviews will be conducted via telephone or video call and recorded. The audio files, before they are transcribed, will be held on a password protected profile on the University of Bristol's secure server. The audio files will be transcribed to a text document without inclusion of the personal details of the interviewee or the organisation for whom they work. References to employees or other any other staff will also be removed. Once the research is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. There will not be transfer of data between institutions or other researchers.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	Yes	No
All my data will be stored on a password protected server	X	
I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/)	X	
If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol.	X	
Please tick the box to CONFIRM that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored in a secure storage facility. https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm		

Please outline your procedure for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Interviews are being organised and conducted by the researcher, so participants will be known to the researcher but transcribed interview data will be anonymised, with pseudonyms given to participants and their organisations, making the data confidential. A university-approved transcription service may be employed to transcribe some of the data, and the researcher will transcribe the remaining audio data. All information relating to the participants personal details, organisation, geographical location or other identifying factors will be removed when the audio data is transcribed. Organisations will be assigned a codename (eg. Retailco 1, Retailco2;

BankCo1, BankCo2), and individual respondents assigned a generic term related to that (eg. Participant1Retailco1) to ensure confidentiality of data.

It is not anticipated or expected that any illegal activity will be disclosed, and the research design and interview questions do not seek to identify them. The interviews are not with people under 18 or otherwise vulnerable people. Each participant is being approached to take part in the study as an autonomous private individual. To this end, I have not included a separate confidentiality protocol sheet but the confidentiality information is included on the participant information sheet.

DATA MANAGEMENT

13 Data Management

It is RCUK and University of Bristol policy that all research data (including qualitative data e.g. interview transcripts, videos, etc.) should be stored in an anonymised format and made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data.bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK Data Archive. What level of future access to your anonymised data will there be:

- Open access?
- Restricted access - what restrictions?
- Closed access - on what grounds?

This raises a number of ethical issues, for example you MUST ensure that consent is requested to allow data to be shared and reused.

Please briefly explain;

- 1) How you will obtain specific consent for data preservation and sharing with other researchers?
- 2) How will you protect the identity of participants? e.g. how will you anonymise your data for reuse.
- 3) How will the data be licensed for reuse? e.g. Do you plan to place any restrictions on the reuse of your data such as Creative Common Share Alike 2.0 licence
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/>)
- 4) Where will you archive your data and metadata for re-use by other researchers?

There will be open access to the data through the university archive for other researchers.

1. This will be explained to participants and included on the participant information sheet, and they will have to sign to agree to this on the 'informed consent' form.
2. Data will be anonymised when transcribed and any identifying factors for the individual or for the organisation will be removed. The audio data will be destroyed once the anonymisation process is completed.
3. There will be no restrictions.
4. Data will be archived on data.bris for use by other researchers.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

14. Secondary Data Analysis

Please briefly explain (if relevant to your research);

- (1) What secondary datasets you will use?
- (2) Where did you get these data from (e.g. ESRC Data Archive)?
- (3) How did you obtain permission to use these data? (e.g. by signing an end user licence)
- (4) Do you plan to make derived variables and/or analytical syntax available to other researchers? (e.g. by archiving them on data.bris or at the UK Data Archive)
- (5) Where will you store the secondary datasets?

Not applicable

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS

- 15. DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]:** Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on? If so, in what format and under what conditions? What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.? .

I do not intend to send copies of data to participants, unless they request it. If they request it, the anonymised transcript of the interview would be sent to them via email. The anonymised data will be presented, discussed and analysed in the final dissertation, and direct quotations from the interviewees will be used, though they will not be identifiable. It is possible that this anonymised verbal data may be used in presentations at conferences, or in future academic publications.

- 16. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application: Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

Additional Material:	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Participants information sheet (s)	1
Consent form (s)	1
Confidentiality protocol	n/a
Recruitment letters/posters/leaflets	1
Photo method information sheet	n/a
Photo method consent form	n/a
Support information for participant	n/a
3rd party confidentiality agreement	n/a

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the Committee will not look at this

SUBMITTING AND REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:

- To submit your application you should create a **single Word document** which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email to sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk
- If you are having problems with this then please contact the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk) to discuss.

- Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document. The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document. For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.
- Should the Committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly. If the Committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.
- Should your research change following approval it is your responsibility to inform the Committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.

Chair:	Beth Tarleton (beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk)
Administrator:	Hannah Blackman (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk)
Date form updated by SPS REC:	January 2019

Research project participant information sheet

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. This sheet includes further information about the project and how data I collect (through the transcription of the audio data from the interview) will be used and how confidentiality will be maintained.

What is the purpose of this Study?

The purpose of this study is to identify determinants of different types of approaches to flexibility in the workplace, either through the use of flexible working and scheduling or through the use of part-time workers, temporary or fixed term staff, agency workers and so on. You have been identified as somebody with responsibility for staff scheduling in your organisation and your insights are sought on these matters.

What are the benefits of this study?

The aim of the study is to aid understanding of flexible working, and the challenges and constraints to the introduction of new forms of flexible patterns or extension of existing ones. You are unlikely to benefit personally from this study but it will help contribute to research in this area.

What does participating in this study involve?

The interview will take the form of a series of questions prepared beforehand which will be used as a guide to our conversation. The questions seek to gain your understanding of the situation in your organisation and the wider labour market, and to understand your experiences. Your answers will be recorded using audio recording software.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to take part, and you can remove yourself from the process at any time including during or after the interview by contacting me on the email address or telephone number below.

What will happen to my data?

The audio data will be transcribed verbatim to a text document. In the process of doing this, all names will be removed, as will any references that could identify you or your organisation in any way. You are entitled to request a copy of this document during or after the interview has taken place. The audio file will then be destroyed. As the data will be anonymised and any identifying characteristics removed, it may not always be possible to destroy the data once this anonymisation process is completed.

The anonymised data, in line with university's procedures, will be archived in the university's data storage archive. If you agree to take part, your non-identifiable responses will also be stored in the University of Bristol's Research Data Storage Facility for 20 years. They will then be erased.

When you agree to take part in this research study, you allow your non-identifiable responses to be shared with other researchers to facilitate other projects seeking to understand flexible working patterns in UK workplaces. Your information will only be used by organisations and researchers to conduct research in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018. The information will only be used for the purpose of social research and cannot be used to contact you or to affect your legal rights.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The transcript of the interview will be used, along with transcripts from other interviews being conducted for this study, to form the empirical portion of the PhD dissertation. The transcripts will be analysed, presented and discussed in the dissertation. The dissertation is likely to be only seen by supervisors and assessors. However, it is possible that the data may be used in future through presentation at academic conferences or in publication in academic journals. You will not be able to be identified by your responses and any analyses or published reports of this research will ensure that you cannot be identified. If you would like to receive a summary of the overall findings of this research study, please feel free to directly email me and a summary of the research findings will be sent to you at the completion of the project.

Concerns or complaints

My contact details are below – please contact me if you have any questions or want to withdraw at any point.

My supervisor for this project is Dr. Kevin Doogan, Senior Lecturer at School for Policy Studies:
kevin.doogan@bristol.ac.uk

You can also contact the University of Bristol School for Policy Studies at the following address:

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road

Bristol BS8 8TZ

Telephone: +44 (0)117 954 6755

Email: sps-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

You can also make a complaint to this address.

This PhD study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which is the main public body for social science research funding in the UK. Their details are as follows:

Economic and Social Research Council

Polaris House

North Star Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1UJ

Email: esrcenquiries@esrc.ukri.org

Telephone: 01793 413114

Thank you for considering participating in this study. Please feel free to print or save this information for your records.

Interview invite text

Dear _____

I am a PhD student at the University of Bristol in the School for Policy Studies. I am carrying out research which focuses on working time scheduling in different sectors of the economy. To understand this, I am seeking to interview line managers in different sectors to understand how schedules are determined in your organisations and which factors are considered when managing staff and workloads.

The interviews will take no more than 45 minutes and can be conducted by video call or phone call. You will receive a £20 Amazon voucher if you agree to take part.

Owing to guidelines around social distancing, interviews will be conducted via telephone call or video call. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The transcription data and the audio file will be anonymised so you will not be able to be identified by your personal details or your organisation. You will not be identified or be identifiable when the results are transcribed or analysed for the final thesis. If you agree to be interviewed you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time before during or after the interview and your data deleted. However, once the data is anonymised it may not be possible for this data to be deleted.

If you are happy to participate, I will send you the full details of the study and information about how your data will be used, and a consent form.

Thank you for considering this request,

Jon

Jon Wellington

PhD student, School for Policy Studies

University of Bristol

Informed Consent for research study into temporal flexibility and flexible scheduling

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Yes No

1. Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐ ☐

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

☐ ☐

I understand that taking part in the study involves **an audio-recorded interview**, which will be transcribed verbatim to a text document, and anonymised to remove any indicators of your identity or of your organisation. The audio recording will be destroyed as soon as the transcript is produced.

☐ ☐

2. Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be used for **the empirical portion of the researcher's PhD dissertation. It is possible that the data may be used in research conferences or academic articles in the future. My personal details will remain anonymous and I will not be identifiable.**

☐ ☐

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the researcher and supervisor.

☐ ☐

I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs.

☐ ☐

3. Future use and reuse of the information by others

I give permission for the anonymised **interview transcript** to be deposited in **the University of Bristol's data archive** so it can be used for future research and learning. The transcript will be available for other researchers to view on request.

☐ ☐

4. Signatures

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____	_____	_____
Name of researcher [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

5. Study contact details for further information

Jon Wellington, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

Telephone: 07887387724

Jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk

Supervisor: Kevin Doogan, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

Kevin.Doogan@bristol.ac.uk

Letter to participants (speculative approaches)



8 Priory Road
Bristol
BS8 1TZ

Dear Manager

I am a PhD student at the University of Bristol in the School for Policy Studies. As part of my dissertation I am carrying out research which focuses on working time and staff scheduling. To understand this, I am seeking to interview line managers in different sectors to understand how schedules are determined in your organisation and which factors are considered when managing staff and workloads. I am hoping to speak to managers in your line of work that are involved with the scheduling of staff workloads, rotas and so on.

The interviews will take around 45 minutes and can be conducted by video call or phone call. You will receive a £20 Love2Shop voucher which can be used in over 20,000 UK shops and restaurants to thank you for taking part.

Owing to guidelines around social distancing, interviews will be conducted via telephone call or video call. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The transcription data and the audio file will be anonymised so you will not be able to be identified by your personal details or your organisation. You will not be identified or be identifiable when the results are transcribed or analysed for the final thesis. If you agree to be interviewed, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time before during or after the interview and your data deleted. However, once the data is anonymised it may not be possible for this data to be deleted.

If you are happy to participate, please reply via email or give me a call on the number below I will send you the full details of the study and information about how your data will be used, and a consent form.

Yours faithfully

Jon Wellington
PhD student, School for Policy Studies
Jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk
07887387724

Participant Consent Form

Informed Consent for research study into flexible scheduling

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Yes No

1. Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information dated **November 2020**, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐ ☐

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. Please note that once interview transcript data has been anonymised, it may not be possible to remove this data as you will not be able to be identified by it.

☐ ☐

I understand that taking part in the study involves an audio-recorded interview, which will be transcribed verbatim to a text document, and anonymised to remove any indicators of your identity or of your organisation. The audio recording will be destroyed as soon as the transcript is produced. My personal details will remain anonymous and I will not be identifiable

☐ ☐

2. Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be used for as the main form of evidence in the researcher's PhD thesis. It is possible that the data may be used in research conferences or academic articles in the future.

☐ ☐

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the researcher and supervisor.

☐ ☐

I agree that my information (in anonymous form) can be quoted in research outputs.

☐ ☐

3. Future use and reuse of the information by others

I give permission for the anonymised interview transcript to be deposited in the University of Bristol's data archive so it can be used for future research and learning. The transcript will be available for other researchers to view on request. ☐ ☐

4. Signatures

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____	_____	_____
Name of researcher [IN CAPITALS]	Signature	Date

5. Study contact details for further information

Jon Wellington, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

Telephone: 07887387724

Jon.wellington@bristol.ac.uk

Supervisor: Kevin Doogan, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

Kevin.Doogan@bristol.ac.uk

Interview questions and themes

New interview questions based on preliminary discussions. These are guides to moving the discussion on and not all questions will be used.

ICEBREAKERS/INTRODUCTIONS

What is your job title?

How many staff are you responsible for?

Are you responsible for scheduling?

Are you responsible for recruitment?

How many people work in your team and in your company? (if applicable) Is your branch typical of the branches in your organisation? Eg in terms of the type of work, number of staff, location.

1. THE LABOUR PROCESS, CONTROL, DECISION MAKING, FLEXIBILITY

FLEXIBILITY

(employer-led, temporal flexibility vs numerical or functional flexibility)

What is a normal working day in your organisation?

(Short-term) How do you/what is the process to move staff resources to where they are needed during the working day?

(Medium term) How do you manage spikes in demand, either expected (eg. seasonal) or otherwise?

Have staff resources been reduced or increased in recent times? (Are you having to ask staff to do more work in the same amount of time)

(for white collar/professional organisations) How much flexibility do employees have to complete tasks in their own time?

Is scheduling software used in your firm? What is your input to this?

(Employee-led flexibility , control and negotiation)

How can a member of staff request a change to a shift or shift pattern? Is there a request process? Do they approach you or someone else?

Are new members of staff treated differently – eg is there an expectation that they will do the less favourable shifts or work more flexibly?

Are people with family or caring commitments accommodated, and do you try and schedule around favoured hours for certain employees?

Is software used for scheduling – how do employees interact with this?

Are there employee groups or unions that negotiate on scheduling matters?

2. DETERMINANTS/DRIVERS & CONSTRAINTS

CONTRACTS

What are the time contracts that employees have (eg how many hours for full-timers/part-timers)?

Are staff working patterns fixed (ie. the same hours every week) or do they change weekly/monthly?

For part-time staff are there guaranteed hours in the contract?

Do full-time staff have a guaranteed number of hours per week?

Are contracts open ended or fixed term?

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL LABOUR MARKET ISSUES

Do you believe that the staff value the working time regime? How important is flexibility to their staying in the job?

How important is staff retention in your organisation? If a staff member leaves, is it easy to find a replacement?

Do you make use of student labour and how does this affect scheduling?

Do you make use of agency or self-employed labour and how does this affect scheduling?

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES/MANAGEMENT PRESSURE

How has your own working schedule changed? Is there flexibility within the contract or in practice?

How are changes to scheduling policy transmitted to you from senior management? How much flexibility do you have to manage the schedules?

Are there HR policies on flexible working or the right to request it in place?

3/12/2020 – what about technology? How has this affected scheduling and temporal flexibility?

Auto scheduling, automated tasks in evening shifts

COVID ISSUES (to be refined)

Has Covid changes your approach to (temporal) flexibility especially if staff working from home?

How has the uncertainty and unpredictability arising from COVID affected obtaining (suitably flexible?) staff to work for your organisation - considering the changes to

A) the external labour market and availability of flexible labour

B) uncertainty over consumer demand.

List of participants

Alias	Sector	Type business	Position	Location	Date
	Hospitality	Hotel	Events Manager, Food and Beverage Manager	Central London	
	Hospitality	Events/sports	General Manager	Bristol	
	Hospitality	Cafe	Manager	Bristol	
	Hospitality	Hotel	Front of House Manager	London	
	Hospitality	Hotel	General Manager	London	
	Hospitality	Hotel	Operations Manager	Bristol	
	Hospitality	Events company	Events Manager	South West	
	Hospitality	Hotel (budget)	Deputy General Manager	Bristol	
	Hospitality	Hotel	Head Chef	London	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Coop)	Store Manager	Cardiff	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Tesco)	Team Manager (Customer Services, seconded to Home delivery)	Bristol	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Sainsbury's)	Store Manager	Bristol	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Tesco)	Fresh Foods Manager	Swansea	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Morrisons)	Supervisor/Team Leader	Swansea	
	Supermarket	Supermarket (Aldi)	Team Leader	Bristol	
	Sport & Leisure	Gym, pool and Spa	Manager	London	
	Sport & Leisure	Gym, Pool, Leisure	Activities Manager	Bristol	
	Sport & Leisure	Budget Gym	Manager	Cardiff	
	Sport & Leisure	Public sector leisure facility	Operations Manager	Neath	
	Sport and Leisure	Independent Gym	Ops manager	Bristol	
	Tech	Consultancy	Chief Operating Officer	London	
	Tech	Software Developer	Lead Developer	Swansea	
	Tech	Software Developer	Lead Developer	Cardiff	
	Tech	Tech start up	Operations Manager	Bristol	
	Tech	Tech Start up	Operations manager	Bristol	
	Tech	Freelance	Developer	Bristol	

	Tech	Software Developer	Lead Developer	Bristol	