



ECAY5004: Work, Welfare and Poverty

Theme 4: Changes in Working Practice (Part Four) The Twentieth Century and the Contemporary World

Learning Recap

What did we cover in the previous session?



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A Brief History of Work

The Twentieth Century

- It should be remembered that the division of the past into periods is something of an arbitrary exercise
- It is widely recognised that historians make decisions based on when a period begins and ends for reasons of neatness or convenience (see for example Blackbourn, 2012)
- Many of the issues that we looked at in terms of the industrial revolution (e.g. factories, mines and mining disasters) continued into the 20th century
- Society does not change suddenly because 1899 becomes 1900 at midnight.

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The Twentieth Century

- However, whilst this is true, there are enough developments to patterns of work that occurred in the last century to make it a viable period of study for us.
- We can trace significant changes to the types of work undertaken, the ways in which work was carried out and the effects on society that occurred in this century
- We will look at these and, as before we will seek to make links to contemporary society as we do so

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

- Mass production is the name given to the method of producing goods in large quantities at relatively low cost per unit.
- The mass production process itself is characterized by high volume, a highly organized flow of materials through various stages of manufacturing, careful supervision of quality standards, and precise division of labour.
- Whilst we have seen that factories in the 19th century began to produce goods on a large scale there were a number of developments that led to truly mass production

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

These included;

- Improvements in the ability to make machinery
- Developments in the factory system (production / assembly lines) known as Fordism
- The growth of the middle classes (in the earlier part of the 20th century)
- The changes in working practices necessitated by World Wars 1 and 2.

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

Other changes included;

- The creation of the 'affluent working class' in the 1950s onwards
- The development of the retail sector
- The development of 'leisure time' as a concept
- The increasing speed of technological advance
- The emergence of 'post-Fordism' in the latter part of the century and into the 21st century
- We will briefly look at each of these in turn

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

Improvements in the ability to make machinery

- In order to make factories more efficient owners needed machines that could be built quickly and cheaply but which were precision built
- Development in **machine tools** (machines that could make machine parts meant that high precision equipment was readily available
- Such equipment also made the production process faster and needed skilled labour, or **machinists**, to produce it

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption



Machinists and Machine Tools

- Without these high precision machines and their operators the next development in work practices would not have been possible

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

The Production / Assembly line

- Essentially the assembly line allowed workers to work more efficiently
- Although elements had existed in the 19th century the true assembly line is usually thought to have been developed by Henry Ford (hence '[Fordism](#)').

What is the key feature of the assembly line?



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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

The Production / Assembly line

- Under the old system, by which parts were carried to a stationary assembly point, 12 1/2 man-hours were required for each chassis.
- Using a rope to pull the chassis past stockpiles of components, Ford cut labour time to 6 man-hours.
- With improvements—a chain drive to power assembly-line movement, stationary locations for the workmen, and workstations designed for convenience and comfort—chassis assembly time fell to 93 man-minutes by the end of April 1914.
- This became known as the [Production or Assembly line](#)

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

Fordism

- As we have seen Fordism involves mass production of standardized goods on a moving assembly line using dedicated machinery and semiskilled labour performing repetitive tasks
- It relies on what is known as a ‘virtuous cycle’ of mass production and mass consumption.
- It requires an institutionalized compromise between organized labour and big business whereby workers accept management prerogatives in return for rising wages
- It leads to **monopolistic** competition between large firms based on [cost-plus pricing](#) and advertising

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The Twentieth Century – Mass Production / Mass Consumption

Fordism

- Indeed, Fordism is seen as defining and even creating the western industrial world of most of the 20th century
- Not only did it create truly mass production and mass consumption
- It gave rise to the mass ownership of private cars and the creation of mass transportation
- The need to reach a huge audience to advertise the product led to the development of the mass media
- Although we have seen a move away from Fordism in the UK it is still practised where labour costs are cheap and there are fewer or less influential Trades Unions

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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

Why do you think the development of Fordism might be seen as contributing to the growth of the middle classes?



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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

- Factories needed accountants, secretaries, managers, lawyers etc. as well as manual workers
- So, the growth in mass production also led to a growth in ‘middle-class’ occupations
- The many of these occupations required additional training and/or study at Higher Education
- They also resulted in more people having more ‘disposable income’ which they chose to spend on luxury goods (e.g. record players, radios, cars etc).
- This growth of the middle classes also lead to the creation and expansion of the ‘suburbs’ which in turn led to the growth in ‘commuting’

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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

Why do you think that the growth of the middle classes lead to the development of suburban living?



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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

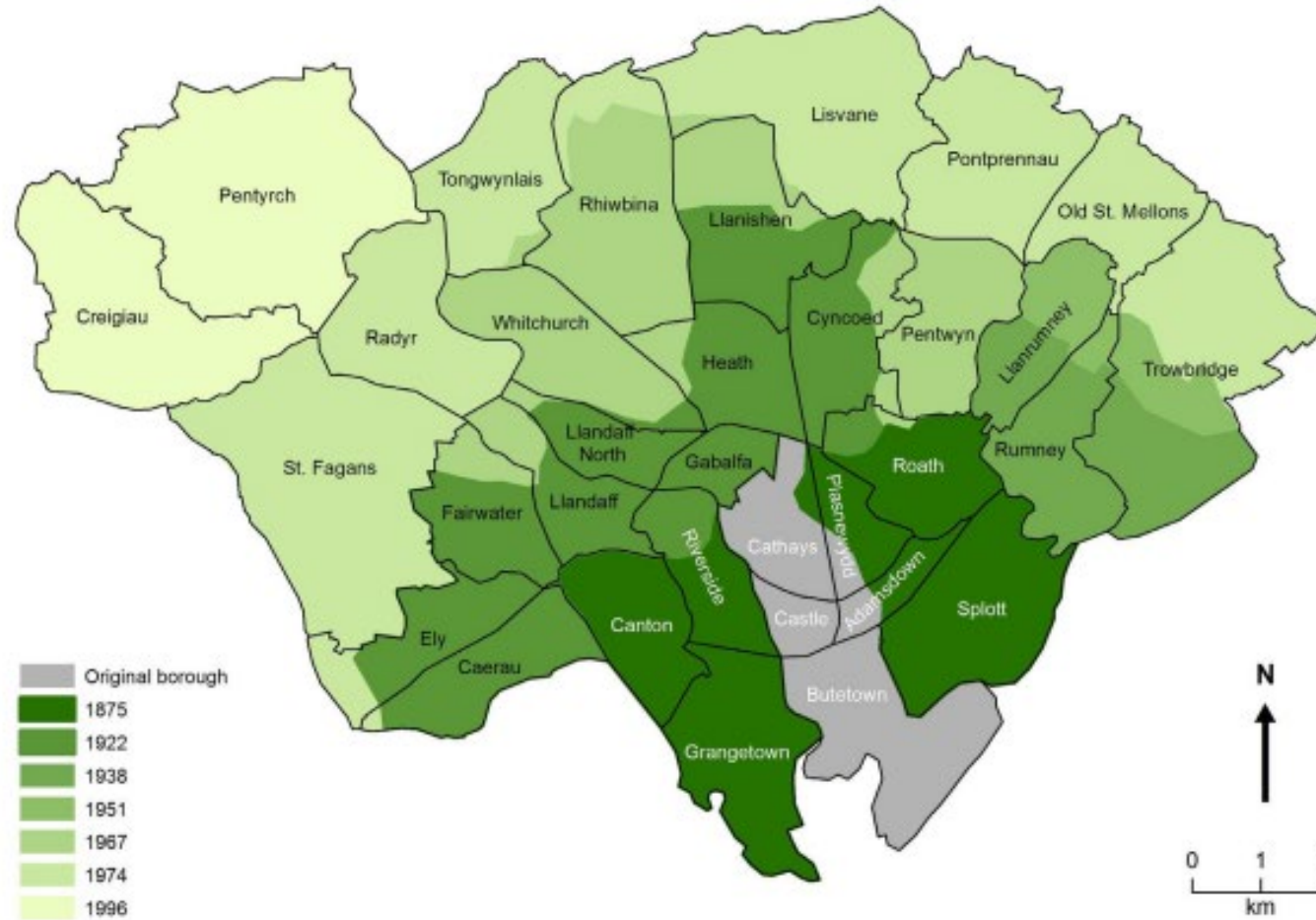


Figure 3: The extension of Cardiff's boundaries 1875 - 1996. Source: Davies, 2002.



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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

Work Patterns – The Daily Commute

- In previous centuries, some people had travelled a distance to work (particularly in large cities)
- However, the majority of people had lived within walking distance of their work (remember the ‘knocker upper’)
- With the growth of suburbs and a middle class with more disposable income the practice of ‘commuting’ became more common
- Initially using buses, trams and railways but increasingly using their own cars (produced in ‘Fordist’ style factories)



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The Twentieth Century – The impact of the two World Wars

- Both World War 1 and World War 2 made a massive impact on working practices
- They accelerated the development of mass production as Governments needed to produce vehicles, weapons uniforms etc., as quickly and cheaply as possible
- Both conflicts also meant that much more effort was put into research and development
- After each war, factories that had been producing armaments and equipment could convert to producing other products
- For example, factories that had produced tanks could move on to produce agricultural and construction machinery

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The Twentieth Century – The impact of the two World Wars

- The two World Wars also had a massive impact on the role of women in the work-force
- During the conflict they replaced men who had been conscripted into the armed forces
- This meant that women were doing work that previously had not been seen as suitable for women (see following slide)
- In WWII in particular women were also recruited into roles within the armed forces (although not combat roles)
- The number of fatalities and casualties in the armed forces meant that women continued in traditionally males roles after the wars

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The Twentieth Century – The growth of the middle classes

*What types of work do you think were
opened up to women as a result of the two
World Wars?*





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The Twentieth Century – The impact of the two World Wars

TABLE 2

Activity rates of women (aged 15–59) by marital status (E & W)

<i>Activity rates†</i>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Widowed and divorced</i>
1911	70·9	10·5	43·9
1921	70·3	9·5	41·2
1931	75·0	11·3	37·5
1951	82·2	25·7	53·1
1961	79·7	34·6	62·6
1966	76·5	44·2	67·5
1971	72·9	49·7	66·7

Source: As for Table 1 together with unpublished tabulations for Scotland in 1966.

† The rates for 1911 cover the age range 15–64; those for 1921 and 1931 cover the range 14–59; and those for 1971, being based upon year of birth, cover the range 15 years 4 months to 60 years 4 months.

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The Twentieth Century – The affluent working class

- This is a phenomenon that was recognised after WWII in studies such as those carried out by Goldthorpe & Lockwood *et al* (1968)
- The increase in skilled manual labour meant that wages had increased and the working class now had more disposable income.
- It had been thought that this would mean that manual workers would begin to be assimilated into middle class values and culture (remember ECSO4002: Culture & Identity last year?)
- This is known as ‘ebourgeoisement’ from Marx’ use of the term bourgeoisie to describe the middle classes
- The original study, in Luton, looked at workers in Vauxhall Motors, Skefco Engineering and La Porte Chemicals.

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The Twentieth Century – The affluent working class

- What the original study, and others, found was that far from moving towards middle class values and culture there was still a very strong working class identity
- There was less ‘communal’ activity and a growth of individualism and aspiration to better oneself
- The affluent workers wanted better houses, cars and luxury goods (e.g. televisions)
- But they still kept many of the values and cultural interests of previous working class generations
- However, it was this group of workers (the C2 group*) who were successfully recruited as voters by Margaret Thatcher in the late 1970s and early 1980s

A Study Skills digression

How do we measure class, social stratification and 'social grade'?

- On the previous slide, we came across the term 'C2 group' for the skilled 'affluent' working class?

Do you know where this classification comes from?



A Study Skills digression

How do we measure class and 'social grade'?

- The 'social grade' classification C2 forms part of the **National Readership Survey(NRS)** grading of social status by occupation.
- It is used by the marketing and market research industries to target advertising and research activities
- Classification is not only by income but also takes into account the number and levels of qualifications held by people in that 'social grade' among other factors.
- However, there is a 'strong correlation between income and social class'. (National Readership Survey, No Date)



A Study Skills digression

How do we measure class and 'social grade'?

- Although this classification is also used in social science research, as well as advertising and marketing there is another form of classification that should also be considered by students of social science

What source do you think this might be?



A Study Skills digression

How do we measure class and 'social grade'?

<u>National Readership Survey classification</u>	
A	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
C1	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
C2	Skilled manual workers
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
E	State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only

<u>National Statistics Socio-economic classification</u>	
1	Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations 1.2 Higher professional occupations
2	Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations
3	Intermediate occupations
4	Small employers and own account workers
5	Lower supervisory and technical occupations
6	Semi-routine occupations
7	Routine occupations
8	Never worked and long-term unemployed

What are your thoughts on the differences between these two ways of classifying social stratification?



A Study Skills digression

One final thought of class and classification.

*Who has heard of the phrases 'white collar'
and 'blue collar' workers?*

Do you know where they come from?



A Study Skills digression

Blue and white collar workers



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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of Retail work

- As we have seen, the growth of both the middle class and the affluent working class meant that many more people had disposable income.
- We have also seen that the concept of ‘mass production’ needs to be supported by ‘mass consumption’
- It is therefore no surprise that the growth of mass consumption led to the growth of the retail sector
- However this is not to say that retail work was a 20th century phenomenon, far from it

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of Retail work

When were these ‘High Street’ names founded?

- | | | |
|----------------|------|----------------------|
| • W H Smith | 1792 | London |
| • Clarks Shoes | 1825 | Street, Somerset |
| • The Co-Op | 1844 | Rochdale, Lancashire |
| • Boots | 1849 | Nottingham |
| • Sainsbury’s | 1869 | London |
| • M & S | 1884 | Leeds |

It is also interesting to note where they were founded

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of Retail work

- But the 20th century did see major changes in the retail sector
- All of the companies on the previous slides began as local companies but by the 20th century were on every high street
- Two other significant developments were the Department Store and the Supermarket
- Clothing and ‘luxury’ item (electrical goods, records, watches) stores also grew over the course of the century , particularly from the 1950s onwards
- It should also be noted that, from the very beginning of the retail industry, employment as a retail worker was often seen as an ‘acceptable’ trade for women (McBride, 1978)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of the Leisure Industry

- As we have mentioned, for many people in the 19th century the working week was a six-day week and Sundays were officially only for worship
- However, there was the practice known as ‘Saint Monday’ where workers would take the Monday off as sick leave to prepare for the working week
- This became a common practice and Music Halls and other providers of leisure would stage special event on a Monday
- Even though widespread this was not official practice and religious groups and Trades Unions campaigned for reform
- Employers began to see the benefit of giving a ‘half-day holiday’ on Saturday afternoons

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of the Leisure Industry

- Across the country a new and growing leisure industry saw the new half-day Saturday as a business opportunity.
- Train operators embraced the idea, charging reduced fares for day-trippers to the countryside and coast on Saturday afternoons.
- With increasing numbers of employers adopting the half-day Saturday, theatres and music halls also switched their star entertainment from a Monday to Saturday afternoon.
- Perhaps the most influential leisure activity to help forge the modern week was the decision to stage football matches on Saturday afternoon (or Rugby matches depending on where you lived!)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of the Leisure Industry

- The adoption of the modern weekend was neither swift nor uniform as, ultimately, the decision for a factory to adopt the half-day Saturday rested with the manufacturer/owner.
- While they had their different reasons, employers, religious groups, commercial leisure and workers all came to see Saturday afternoon as an advantageous break in the working week.
- This laid the groundwork for the full 48-hour weekend as we now know it – although this was only established in the 1930s.
- Once again, it was embraced by employers who found that the full Saturday and Sunday break reduced absenteeism and improved efficiency.

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of the Leisure Industry

- The 'modern' weekend, along with improvements in housing (i.e. electric lighting) meant that people now had time to fill with 'leisure' activities
- Enterprising business saw the potential of the situation and, over the course of the 20th century this grew into a huge industry
- In some cases, workers were encouraged to take up 'wholesome' past-times, such as gardening, as this was seen as more self-improving than going to the music hall or pub.
- There was also a move on the part of working class people to form walking and cycling groups and these often developed alongside political activism
- For example the [Mass Trespass](#) on Kinder Scout in Derbyshire or the [Clarion Cycling Club](#)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Growth of the Leisure Industry

- As with other developments we have looked at, greater affluence, technological advances and other social factors have meant that the leisure industry has grown massively
- The sector includes Museums, Gyms, Cinemas, Theme Parks etc.
- The increase in Leisure time has also had an influence on retailing with a massive growth in DIY and Garden Centres for example
- Data is difficult to find as different 'leisure' activities is counted in different Sectors by the ONS
- However the ONS does survey and report on leisure activities, as for example in it's report 'Leisure Time in the UK'



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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

- As the 20th century developed a number of issues and crises began to become apparent
- The growth potential of mass production was gradually exhausted
- There was intensified working-class resistance to its alienating working conditions
- The market for mass consumer durables became saturated
- The costs of production and wages led to a declining profit rates
- Internationalization made state economic management less effective;
- And growing competition from the newly developing economies (India, China, Brazil etc. meant that UK and USA companies could not compete

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

- The response to this has been called Post-Fordism although it is also known as Toyotism, Fujitsuism, Sonyism, and Gatesism after companies or entrepreneurs who championed the new ways of working
- Or ‘informational capitalism’, the ‘knowledge-based economy’, and the ‘network economy’ due to the reliance on new and developing technologies
- Social scientists adopted three main approaches to identifying the post-Fordist practices, namely;

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

- 1) a focus on the transformative role of new technologies and practices regarding material (e.g. robotic production lines) and immaterial production (e.g. new information and communication technologies) and their role in facilitating a new, more flexible, networked global economy;
- (2) a focus on the leading economic sectors that enable a transition from mass industrial production to post-industrial production (e.g. a move from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy; and
- (3) new forms of management and governance that facilitate the rise and consolidation of profitable new processes, products, and markets (for example working with the Unions rather than against them, using Complexity theory in planning etc.)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

What do we mean by a manufacturing-based economy?



What do we mean by a service-based economy?



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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

- Key features of Post-Fordism working practices include;
- (1) flexible production based on flexible machines or systems and a flexible workforce;
- (2) a stable mode of growth based on flexible production, economies of scale, rising incomes for skilled workers and the service class, increased demand among the better-off for differentiated goods and services, increased profits based on permanent innovation and the full utilization of flexible capacity, reinvestment in more flexible production equipment and techniques and new sets of products, and so on;
- (3) growing economic polarization between multi-skilled workers and the unskilled (the precariat*), together with a decline in national or industrial collective bargaining (due to Government policy weakening Trades Unions)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Post-Fordism

- Key features of Post-Fordism working practices include;
- (4) the rise of flexible, lean (meaning minimal waste and processes such as '[Just in Time](#)' production or the Toyota Production System) , and networked firms that focus on their core competences, build strategic alliances, and outsource many other activities;
- (5) the dominance of hypermobile, rootless, private bank credit and forms of cyber-cash (e.g. bit coin) that circulate internationally;
- (6) the subordination of government finance to international money and currency markets (for example large global companies are now worth more than most countries)

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Contemporary Working Practices

- Key features of Post-Fordism working practices include;
- (7) a shift from post-war welfare states (e.g. the ‘social-democratic’ approach identified by Esping-Anderson) to political regimes that are more concerned with international competitiveness and innovation, with full employability as opposed to jobs for life, and with more flexible, market-friendly forms of economic and social governance (e.g. the ‘liberal approach identified by Esping-Anderson) ; and
- (8) increasing concern with creating regional, supra-national, and even global economies (e.g. companies moving production to countries with a cheaper work-force and more favourable tax regimes)
- However, it is important to note that countries and economies develop at different rates and that Fordism and Post Fordism are still in evidence in different countries

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Precariat

- We have seen the classification methods used by the National Readership Survey (NRS) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- However, the rapid changes in employment practices has led a number of social scientists and economists to talk about a ‘new’ class of people
- The ‘**precariat**’ is a portmanteau word created from precarious (dependant on chance, uncertain) and proletariat (the term that Marx used to describe the working classes)
- It is used to describe people who may have unsecure employment
- Interestingly the ‘precariat’ is mainly used to describe unskilled workers but there is growing support for the argument that it includes some highly trained professionals

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Precariat

- The term first came to prominence in the findings of the [Great British Class Survey](#) published in 2013
- It has also been taken up by the economist Guy Standing in various publications
- A feature of the precariat is Zero Hours Contracts (ZHCs) and the ‘gig’ economy
- Meaning that workers are expected to be ‘on-call’ to work for the employer at short notice but are not paid for being ‘on-call’
- This results in low pay and a lack of access to financial packages such as mortgages etc. as banks do not like lending to people on such contracts

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Precariat

- It has also been argued that the need to be ready to be called into work at short notice means that such workers are also unable to take part in social, cultural and leisure activities
- This has led to them being called ‘the most deprived British class of all with low levels of economic, cultural and social capital’ (Savage *et al*, 2013)
- However, it should not be thought that such work only applies to people with low skills or educational attainment
- It is a business model being used increasingly in sectors which demand high levels of skill or education (e.g. interpreters, translators, lighting artists etc).

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Precariat

- When the practice was first introduced to the UK employers also tried to claim that such workers were ‘self-employed’
- In this way employers using zero hours contracts tried to avoid;
- Allowing statutory annual leave
- Paying the National Minimum Wage, and
- Being responsible for the health and safety of the workers
- However, the Government and Courts have ensured that these rights do exist for such workers, although they had to be fought for through the courts



UK Govt. Zero Hours Contracts

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – The Precariat

- In their report *Zero Hours Contracts: Evolution and Current Status* the Chartered Institute of Professional Development [CIPD] (2022) argue for a more balanced view;
- On the negative side, 57% of workers on ZHCs feel under pressure to accept the work offered to them
- And many companies do not pay any compensation for cancelling hours at short notice
- However, workers on ZHCs report similar levels of job satisfaction
- They also report a better work/life balance
- Some also say that ZHCs provides employment opportunities that would not otherwise be available because ill-health, care or studying needs mean that more formal contracts are not suitable

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Other changes to Working Practices

- In Theme 3 we discussed some of the other ways in which working practices are changing, including;
- [Robotisation](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence](#) (AI)
- Tele-working / [Telecommuting](#)
- These and other rapidly changing practices mean that the sociology of work is an increasingly interesting and complex area of study.

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Equality of Opportunity

- As we have seen in our look at working practices, some people have been disadvantaged by social values and customs when it comes to employment
- For many years there was no legislation in place to protect different groups from discrimination or unfair employment practices
- Governments began to introduce protection from the 1970s onwards
- In 2010 the UK Government passed the Equality Act to try to ensure equality for all.
- This act brought together over 116 different pieces of legislation which sought to establish equality for different groups

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Equality of Opportunity

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

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The Twentieth Century and Beyond – Equality of Opportunity

- UK Governments have continued to try to address such issues as the under-representation of women, people from ethnic minorities and people with disability in employment and particularly in positions of responsibility. For example;
- Women on Boards (2011)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31710/11-745-women-on-boards.pdf
- Ethnic Minority Employment Stake Holder Group (no Date)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ethnic-minority-employment-stakeholder-group>
- Employing disabled people and people with health conditions (2020)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions>

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