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A FRANCO-BRITISH COMPARISON OF PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS IN LARGE-SCALE
GROCERY RETAILING, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PART-TIME WORK

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The University of Aston in Birmingham
A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale
Grocery Retailing, with Specific Reference to Part-time Work

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PhD

1989

In this thesis patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France are compared. The research is carried out using cross-national comparative methodology, and the analysis is based on information derived from secondary sources and empirical research in large-scale grocery retailing involving employers and trades unions at industry level and case studies at outlet level.

The thesis begins by comparing national patterns of working hours in Britain and France over the post-war period. Subsequently, a detailed comparison of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France is carried out through the analysis of secondary sources and empirical data.

Emphasis is placed on analyzing part-time working hours. They are contrasted and compared at national level and explained in terms of supply and demand factors. The relationships between the structuring of, and satisfaction with, working hours and factors determining women's integration in the workforce in Britain and France are investigated. Part-time hours are then compared and contrasted in large-scale grocery retailing in the context of the analysis of working hours. The relationship between the structuring of working hours and satisfaction with them is examined in both countries through research with women part-timers in case study outlets.

The cross-national comparative methodology is used to examine whether dissimilar national contexts in Britain and France have led to different patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing. The principal conclusion is that significant differences are found in the length, organization and flexibility of working hours and that these differences can be attributed to dissimilar socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts in the two countries.

Key words: Patterns of working hours, working time, part-time work, Franco-British, women's work, large-scale grocery retailing.

To Dennis and Mary Anderson
with love and gratitude

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LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	9
LIST OF FIGURES.....	15
INTRODUCTION.....	16
Changing Working Patterns in Western Industrialized Countries.....	16
A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours.....	18
A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Part-time Working Hours.....	22
Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing.....	30
Research Methodology.....	34
The Structure of the Thesis.....	37
Chapter	
1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	40
Cross-national Comparative Methodologies.....	40
Data Collection Methods.....	47
Secondary Analysis.....	49
New Empirical Work.....	50
Empirical Work with Trades Unions.....	52
Empirical Research at Firm level.....	54
Case Study Research at Outlet level.....	74
2. A FRANCO-BRITISH COMPARISON OF CHANGING PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS.....	90
Changes in Working Hours in Britain and France.....	90

The Process of Change.....	102
The Role of the State.....	103
The Role of Trades Unions.....	115
The Role of Employers.....	124
3. A FRANCO-BRITISH COMPARISON OF PATTERNS OF PART-TIME WORKING HOURS.....	136
Length of the Working Week.....	136
The Organization of Working Hours.....	144
Flexibility in Working Hours.....	164
Satisfaction with Working Hours.....	165
4. A FRANCO-BRITISH COMPARISON OF PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS IN LARGE-SCALE GROCERY RETAILING.....	178
The Growth of Part-time work.....	178
Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing in Britain and France.....	207
Length of the Working Week.....	207
The Organization of Working Hours.....	219
Flexibility in Working Hours.....	223
Satisfaction with Part-time Working Hours....	229
5. PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS IN LARGE-SCALE GROCERY RETAILING: INDUSTRY LEVEL FINDINGS.....	235
Hours Systems.....	239
The Length of the Working Period.....	239
Weekly Contract Lengths.....	240
Attitudes Towards Part-time Work and its Level of Use.....	240
Labour Cost and Labour Productivity Targeting.....	248
Multi-skilling.....	254
Weekly Part-time Contract Lengths.....	259
Daily Part-time Hours.....	263
The Organization of Working Hours.....	267

The Organization of Hours on a Daily Basis.....	267
Shift Patterns.....	269
Flexibility in Working Hours.....	274
Flexibility in Part-time Working Hours.....	274
Flexibility Embodied in the Employment Contract and in Employment Law.....	274
Other Methods of Introducing Flexibility..	283
Overtime - the Supplementary Hours System.....	286
Flexibility in Full-time Working Hours.....	288
Mediating Mechanisms.....	290
Works Committees, Self-expression Groups and Quality Circles.....	290
The Influence of Trades Unions.....	293
Collective Agreements Relating to Working Hours.....	293
Informal Methods of Influencing Working Hours	298
Unions' Working Time Policies.....	301
Conclusion.....	305
6. PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS IN LARGE-SCALE GROCERY RETAILING: CASE STUDY FINDINGS.....	312
Hours Systems.....	312
The Length of the Working Period.....	312
Weekly Contract Lengths.....	313
Attitudes Towards Part-time Work and its Level of Use.....	313
Labour Cost and Labour Productivity Targeting.....	328
Multi-skilling.....	336
Weekly Part-time Contract Lengths.....	339
Daily Part-time Hours.....	350
The Organization of Working Hours.....	354
The Organization of Hours on a Daily Basis...	354
Shift Patterns.....	356
Flexibility in Working Hours.....	361
Flexibility in Part-time Working Hours.....	362

Flexibility Embodied in the Employment	
Contract.....	362
Other Methods of Introducing Flexibility..	365
Overtime - the Supplementary Hours	
System.....	366
Flexibility in Full-time Working Hours.....	368
Mediating Mechanisms.....	369
Works Committees, Self-expression Groups	
and Quality Circles.....	370
The Influence of Trades Unions.....	372
Employee Control and Satisfaction with	
Working Hours.....	375
Weekly Contract Lengths.....	375
Shift Patterns.....	384
Flexibility in Working Hours.....	394
Conclusion.....	396
CONCLUSIONS.....	403
A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of	
Working Hours.....	403
Patterns of Part-time Working Hours.....	414
The Interest of the Findings.....	419
The Limitations of the Research.....	427
Areas for Further Research.....	430
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	434
APPENDICES.....	457
Appendix I Examples of Letters Requesting	
Interviews with British and French Trades Union	
Representatives and Employers.....	457
Appendix II Semi-structured Interview Schedules	
and Outlines of Question Areas for Employers,	
Unions, and Part-timers in Empirical Research...	465

Appendix III The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work in Britain, 1960-.....	514
Appendix IV The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work in France, 1936-.....	516
Appendix V Evidence for Age and Sex Changes in the Retail Workforce in Britain and France.....	519
Appendix VI The Use of Semi-Autonomous Teams in French Retailing.....	524
Appendix VII Innovations in Working Hours in Firm FR2.....	529
Appendix VIII Typical Branch Manning Guide and Scheduling Sheet in British Case Study Company..	534
Appendix IX Labour Productivity Calculations for Check-out Staff in French Case Study Outlet.....	537
Appendix X Principal Shift Patterns in French Case Study Outlet.....	539

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 Numbers of Outlets by Surface Area and Proportion of Outlets in Each Size Range, British Sample, 1986.....	60
1.2 Number of Outlets by Surface Area and Proportion of Outlets in Each Size Range, French Sample, 1986.....	64
1.3 Women Part-timers with Children by Age Group in Sample from Midday Shift Compared with Distrib- ution of All Women by Age Group on that Shift...	84
1.4 Women Part-timers with Children by Age Group in Sample from Evening Display Shift Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift.....	84

1.5	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from Saturday and Late Nights, and Twilight Shifts Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts (and Proportion of Women in Each Age Group).....	85
1.6	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Day Part-time Shift compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift (and Proportion of Women in Each Age Group).....	85
1.7	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Rolling Shifts on Check-outs Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts.....	85
1.8	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Semi-autonomous Team Compared with the Distribution of all Women by Age in the Team.....	86
1.9	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Information Desk Shift Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift.....	86
1.10	Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Fixed Shifts on Shop-floor Departments Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts.....	86
1.11	Numbers of Women from British and French Samples by Age Group.....	87
2.1	Principal Legislation Affecting Working Hours in France, 1950-.....	108
3.1	Number of Hours Usually Worked by Week by Female Part-timers in Britain in 1980 (Salaried and Self-Employed).....	137
3.2	Number of Hours Usually Worked by Week by Female Part-timers in France in 1982 (Salaried and Self-Employed).....	138

3.3	Weekly Working Hours of Women Aged Over Eighteen Working Part-time in Britain on Adult Rates.....	139
3.4	Weekly Working Hours of Women Working Part-time in France, 1982-8.....	139
3.5	Proportion of Part-timers Working Various Numbers of Days in Britain and France.....	146
3.6	The Organization of Hours of Work of Female Part- timers with Youngest Children of Pre-school and School Ages and of All Part-timers (Excluding Women whose Organization of Hours was Not Known) in Britain.....	147
3.7	Proportions of Part-timers in France (Male and Female) by Starting and Finishing Times.....	148
3.8	Arrangements Made by British Female Part-time Workers for the Care of School Children During Term Time by Pattern of Working Hours.....	149
3.9	Estimated Proportions of All British Women Working and Working Part-time by Age of Youngest Child..	154
3.10	Degree of Choice in Starting and Finishing Times Among Women Working Full and Part-time in Britain, 1980.....	165
3.11	Proportion of Female Part-timers by Type of Working Hours in France, 1978 and 1984.....	165
4.1	Breakdown of Jobs by Sex and by Job Classification in MAS Firms, 1987.....	184
4.2	Female Part-time Employment as a Proportion of the Workforce in British Food Retailing, 1961-88.....	186
4.3	Number of Employees in British Food Retailing by Sex and Status (Full or Part-time), 1961-84 (in Thousands).....	188
4.4	Proportion of Part-timers in French Food Retailing, 1972-86.....	189

4.5	Number of Employees by Status (Full or Part-time) in New Stores Belonging to British Multiple Retailers 1979-83 (IGD Sample).....	190
4.6	Numbers of Part and Full-time Employees, and Proportion of Employees Working Part-time in French Food Retailing, 1972-84.....	191
4.7	Proportion of Part-timers by Outlet Size (Number of Employees), French Food Retailing, 1972-86...	194
4.8	Number of Employees by Status (Full or Part-time) and Sales Area in British Multiples, 1983 (IGD Sample).....	196
4.9	Average Full-time Weekly Working Hours by Sex in British Food Retailing, 1971-84.....	209
4.10	Average Full-time Weekly Working Hours (Men and Women) in French Food Retailing, 1974-83.....	209
4.11	Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87, Women Part-timers Aged Over Eighteen on Adult Rates in Firms Belonging to the Retail Multiple Grocery and Provisions Trade Joint Committee Agreement.....	211
4.12	Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87 of Women Part-timers Aged Over Eighteen on Adult Rates. Sales Women, Shop Assistants and Shelf-fillers..	211
4.13	Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87 of Women Part-timers Aged Over Eighteen on Adult Rates. Retail Check-out Operators etc.....	212
4.14	Proportion of Employees who Work Part-time in Britain by Retail Type.....	213
4.15	Distribution of Usual Part-time Working Hours for Female Employees in French Distribution (Employees de Commerce) 1982-8.....	215
4.16	The Regulatory Framework for the Organization of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing in Britain and France.....	221

4.17	Proportion of Hours Slots Worked by Category (Superstore or Supermarket) and Status (Full or Part-time) and Total Hours Worked.....	222
4.18	The Regulatory Framework for the Flexibility of Working Hours in Britain and France.....	225
6.1	Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in British Parent Company, 1982-5.....	314
6.2	Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time by Sex and Proportion Part-time in British Outlet, 1984-6.....	315
6.3	Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in French Parent Company, 1982-5.....	315
6.4	Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in French Outlet, 1984-6.....	315
6.5	Numbers of Workforce (Excluding Management) by Age in British Case Study Outlet, 1984-6.....	320
6.6	Average Age by Occupation, Female Part-timers in Non-management Occupations, in British Case Study Outlet, September 1985.....	321
6.7	Numbers of Shop-floor Workers in French Case Study Outlet (Excluding Management and Supervisory Staff) by Age Group and Proportion in Each Age Group, 1984-6.....	324
6.8	Numbers of Shop-floor Workers in French Case Study Outlet (Excluding Management and Super- visory Staff) by Age Group and Sex and Proportion in Each Age Group, 1984-6.....	326
6.9	Numbers of Female Part-timers in French Case Study Outlet by Age and Main Department, April 1986...	327

6.10	Proportion of Part-time Temporary Workers by Contract Length in French Case Study Outlet and Total Number of Part-time Temporary Workers, 1984-6.....	342
6.11	Proportion of Part-time Permanent Workers by Contract Length in French Case Study Outlet and Total Number of Part-time Permanent Workers, 1984-6.....	342
6.12	Numbers of Part-timers by Contract Length and Shop- floor Department in French Case Study Outlet, April 1986.....	343
6.13	Numbers of Female Part-timers by Age and Contract Length on Check-outs in French Case Study Outlet April 1986.....	344
6.14	Numbers of Part-timers by Weekly Contract Length in British Case Study Outlet, 1984-6.....	346
6.15	Job Function and Associated Shift Patterns and Weekly Contract Lengths (Average Hours for Female Part-timers) in British Case Study Outlet September 1985.....	349
6.16	Part-timers' Weekly Contract Length by Age, Children's Ages and Type of Working Pattern in French Case Study Outlet.....	378
6.17	Weekly Contract Lengths, Age, Children's Age and Working Pattern by Type of Shift, in British Case Study Outlet.....	382
6.18	Shift Patterns and Length of Weekly Contract by Age, Numbers and Ages of Children in French Case Study Outlet.....	386
III.1	The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work in Britain, 1960-.....	515
IV.1	The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work in France, 1936-.....	517

V.1	Women (Employed and Self-Employed) as a Proportion of the Workforce in Food Retailing in France, 1962-88.....	522
V.2	Distribution of Workers in Food Retailing by Age and by Sex in France, 1975-87.....	522
V.3	Distribution of Non-manual and All Hypermarket Employees by Age in France, 1980-83.....	523

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.1	Interaction between Types of Empirical Work and Research Findings.....	51
1.2	British Sample Companies: Regional Distribution and Size (Numbers Employed).....	59
1.3	Distribution of Outlet Sales Area by Ownership Type in France.....	63
1.4	French Sample Companies: Regional Distribution and Size (Numbers Employed).....	65
1.5	Sales Area in Outlets Over 929m ² by Ownership Type - British Grocery Retailing.....	67
3.1	Female Activity Rates by Age Groups for UK and France, 1985.....	152
5.1	Lee's Hours Control Framework.....	238
6.1	Method of Predicting Man Hour Requirements and Calculating Labour Productivity in the British Case Study Outlet.....	331
V.1	Female Participation Rates in British Retailing 1950-84.....	520
V.2	Age Profile of Retail Trade Employees in Britain, 1961-81.....	521

Introduction

In this thesis patterns of working hours are compared in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France with specific reference to part-time work. In this introduction the rationale for researching this particular area is explained and the structure of the thesis is described. The discussion is organized into six sections which begin by situating changes in working time in the context of the process of economic development over the post-war period in Western industrialized countries. The second section explains why it is of interest to carry out a Franco-British comparison of patterns of working hours, and the third accounts for the specific focus on patterns of part-time working hours. The fourth section explains why large-scale grocery retailing was chosen for a Franco-British comparison of patterns of working hours. The next section explicates the use of the cross-national comparative research and the final section outlines the order of the chapters and the main areas addressed in them.

Changing Working Patterns in Western Industrialized Countries

Working hours are an important area for research because they have been a major component in the changes which have taken place in working patterns over the post-war period in Western industrialized countries and have made an important contribution to the process of economic development. Any study of working hours should be seen in the context of these wider changes in working patterns.

Authors, such as Baum and McEwan Young (1973), Blyton (1985) De Lange (1986), and Boyer (1987), have identified a number of factors which they suggest combined to explain changing working patterns, including

new lifestyles, economic change and shifts in organizational and individual priorities. They argue that the post-war period of prosperity and low unemployment, lasting into the mid-1970s, produced a favourable labour market situation which gave workers and unions greater bargaining power in negotiations over working conditions. As a result, working time was reduced and more flexible patterns of working time such as flexi-time and part-time work were developed with afforded greater control for employees over both their work and non-work lives (this was not to say that some of these changes were not welcomed by employers, in Britain for example after initial reluctance towards using part-time work, employers were quick to develop the use of this form of work, Beechey and Perkins, 1987). New patterns of working time were accompanied by shifts in attitudes towards work, family and education, and changes in the composition of the workforce and in other aspects of social life.

The post-oil-crisis period saw a dramatic reversal in economic trends and consequently in working patterns. As economic conditions deteriorated in Western industrialized countries and unemployment levels began to rise, two major changes occurred: negotiating power shifted away from workers back to management; governments recognized that the new economic situation was likely to last and that a major revision of productive systems, monetary, and public policy would be necessary. Governments reacted by promoting a fundamentally new orthodoxy in the 1980s, based on greater flexibility, particularly in the employment relationship. Employers, in turn, took advantage of the new approach by governments to develop practices associated with the concept of flexibility. The shift of power in their favour was an important enabling factor (Boyer, 1987; De Lange, 1986).

The flexibility sought by employers has taken a number of forms. In the production methods used by industry, large organizations, which in the past had tried to make economies of scale by applying Taylorist work organization practices, are being replaced by small and medium-sized businesses more able to adapt volume of production and manpower in response to variations in demand and market saturation. A second form of flexibility is to be found in the attempt to adapt wages to economic conditions in the firm and in the labour market and to individual performance. Changes in social and fiscal legislation, designed to encourage job creation, have helped employers to achieve a higher degree of flexibility.

Finally, increasing emphasis has been placed on developing flexibility which enables labour levels to be adjusted more effectively to meet changes in demand. This flexibility has taken two forms: growth in "the ability of firms to reorganize competences associated with jobs so that the job-holder can deploy such competences across a broader range of tasks" (IMS, 1986: 8), known as functional flexibility, and "the ability of firms to adjust the number of workers, or the level of worked hours in line with changes in the demand for them" (IMS, 1986: 6), known as numerical flexibility (Atkinson, 1985; Michon, 1987). Over the last decade the growth in "management-orientated" patterns of working time (De lange, 1986: 104), such as compressed working hours and flexible year contracts, has contributed significantly to the development of numerical flexibility by employers.

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours

In the thesis a definition of patterns of working hours is used as a basis for the secondary analysis and the presentation of the fieldwork

findings which was advanced by Bosworth and Dawkins (1981) and breaks down patterns of working hours into three components: the length of the working period; the time at which work takes place within a given period, and the flexibility of working hours. Although this definition includes the location of work throughout the working life (such as early and flexible retirement schemes, sabbaticals, and parental leave), the discussion in the thesis is restricted to patterns of hours over shorter periods: the day, the week, and the year.

A Franco-British comparison of patterns of working hours at national level and in large-scale grocery retailing is of interest because although little work has been done in these fields the research which has been carried out suggests that further study would be worthwhile. Much of the limited research which has been carried out in the field of Franco-British comparisons of patterns of working hours examines Britain and France in the context of superficial multi-nation studies based on the juxtaposition of single-nation data. Some authors investigate all facets of patterns of working hours (Documentation Française, 1985; Blyton, 1985; Nedzinski, 1982; OECD, 1973), while others (for example, CEGOS, 1985; Jim Conway Memorial Foundation, 1985; Hert, 1984; European Foundation, 1981) study specific aspects of working hours. However, on a superficial level this body of research has identified both similarities and differences in patterns of working hours over the post-war period and suggested that differing national socio-economic and cultural factors may help explain the dissimilarities found.

While these multi-nation studies are of interest, they do not provide a detailed, explicitly comparative analysis of patterns of working hours in Britain and France. There is increasing interest in this type of

comparison, reflected in the Economic and Social Research Council-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (ESRC-CNRS) Franco-British programme which was initiated in the 1980s. There is also a growing body of literature comparing employment in Britain and France which highlights the use of part-time work in the two countries (as described below). However, there has been very little research which explicitly compares patterns of working hours in Britain and France.

The only explicitly comparative research about working hours at national level in Britain and France has been Boulin's overview of the role of trades unions in changing working hours in Britain and France (Boulin, 1986) and the state of the art review of literature depicting the interface of work, family, and leisure, in British and French society (Hantrais et al, 1984) in which working time is only one of the three dimensions under study, and the main purpose is not to compare patterns of working hours. Nevertheless, these authors provide some findings which suggest that further research in the area is justified. Boulin (1986) shows that the trades unions have been more preoccupied with issues of working time in France than in Britain and Hantrais et al (1984) find that French State control of working hours has been greater than in Britain, the French are more preoccupied with time than the British and may have gone further than the British in experimenting with working hours, and that working time may have a more important role in changing value systems in France than in Britain.

In food retailing, and more specifically in large-scale grocery retailing, there is little national, and no comparative, information about patterns of working hours. The main descriptive work in Britain has been carried out by Sparks (1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1984, 1987) who has recently analyzed the composition of the retail workforce in

superstores, supermarkets and departments stores and has investigated patterns of working hours in these outlets. This research has examined patterns of full and part-time working hours in terms of a number of variables such as the number of days worked per week and hours worked per day. The intention was not, however, to examine the organization of working hours (for example, shift patterns) or their flexibility, or to explain the rationale for the patterns of working hours found. In France the closest comparable work is by Bieganski (1983) which analyzes in detail the composition of the retail workforce in certain supermarket, hypermarket, department, and co-operative stores. In particular, he looks at the use of part-time work and considers some of the employment practices relating to it.

Juxtaposition of the studies by these authors and other disparate data relating to patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing, in Britain and France, which is carried out in the body of the thesis, suggests that there are a number of Franco-British differences in working hours which would be worthy of further research. In particular, it suggests that, in parallel with national trends, there is a greater preoccupation with issues of working time in large-scale grocery retailing in France than in Britain, and that experimentation with systems of working hours has also been taken further in France.

The research in this thesis seeks to contribute to the knowledge about patterns of working hours in Britain and France and, in particular, to gain a better understanding of the Franco-British differences in patterns of working hours identified in the existing comparative literature. In order to fulfil these objectives the research about patterns of working hours is carried out in two ways. Firstly, a comparison is made of patterns of working hours in Britain and France

over the post-war period on the basis of secondary sources. This approach is used to compare and contrast changing patterns of working hours (addressing in particular the extent to which experimentation with working hours has occurred and the relationship between working time and changing value systems) and the process by which they have changed. It seeks explanations for the differences found in terms of the role of social actors, institutional frameworks and the wider social context in the two countries with a view to providing insights into the national specificity revealed by less detailed comparisons.

Secondly, a detailed comparison of patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France is carried out through the analysis of secondary sources and empirical work in this sector. This comparison analyzes how patterns of working hours are derived in order to draw out similarities and differences, and the relationship between patterns of working hours and socio-economic conditions affecting them is examined by seeking explanations for the findings in terms of national socio-economic characteristics. The comparison of patterns of working hours includes an examination of similarities and differences in approaches towards working time and in systems of working hours, and an attempt is made to relate these findings to national trends and characteristics.

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Part-time Working Hours

A common problem in any cross-national comparative research is that the official national statistics are not directly comparable. This arises in comparing the use of part-time work at national level and in retailing in Britain and France and is also raised in the comparison of other aspects of patterns of working hours. The difficulties in

comparing data on patterns of working hours represent one of the major methodological problems encountered and are described in greater detail in Chapter 1 and throughout the thesis where difficulties arise.

The definition of part-time work differs currently in the two countries and has differed over time. The current definition of part-time work in France is four-fifths or less of the full-time working week, while in Britain the official definition is thirty hours or less per week. However, the definition used in French employment statistics differs from the official definition, and part-timers are taken to be those who describe themselves as working part-time. This is the definition of part-time work used in the EEC Labour Force Survey which enables the direct comparison of levels of part-time work in all EEC countries.

A Franco-British comparison of patterns of part-time working hours was considered worthy of research for a number of reasons. The first reason is that the growth of part-time work over the post-war period in Britain and France both at national level and in food retailing may be considered as one of the most significant changes in patterns of working hours. According to official national statistics, which are not strictly comparable but give some indication of the extent of the part-time phenomenon, in 1984 over 4,600,000 men and women were in salaried part-time employment in Britain (Census of Employment) and 1,700,000 in France (Enquête sur l'Emploi), while over 280,000 men and women employees were working part-time in food retailing in Britain (Census of Employment) and 123,418 in France (Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce). Statistics are not available for large-scale grocery retailing. Secondly, there have been no Franco-British comparisons of patterns of part-time working hours either nationally in large-scale grocery retailing or in food retailing, and

existing comparative literature suggests that further research in this area is warranted.

The use of part-time work at national level in Britain and France has been discussed in a number of explicitly comparative studies over recent years (Dex and Walters, 1988; Dale and Glover, 1987; Gregory, 1987; Garnsey, 1985; Barrère-Maurisson et al, 1987), although it has not been the main topic of study in all of these (Dale and Glover, 1987, for example discuss women's working patterns as a whole in the UK, France and the USA). The interest in this area has stemmed from the significantly greater use of part-time work by women in Britain (42% compared with 19.7% in France among employees in 1984 according to national statistics which, although not strictly comparable, give some indication of the differences in magnitude) particularly during the period when women are bringing up children.

Much of this comparative literature has related the differing structuring of working hours found at national level to supply factors determining women's integration into the workforce and advanced the idea that different forms of labour force participation in the two countries may be explained, to a large extent, by differences in levels of childcare provision (for example Dale and Glover, 1987 and Garnsey, 1985), and in the operation of the tax system in the two countries (Dex and Walters, 1988 and Barrère-Maurisson et al, 1987). Barrère-Maurisson et al (1987) also identify differing national attitudes and norms relating to the care of young children which they suggest contribute to an explanation for the dissimilar forms of labour force participation adopted by women in Britain and France. They suggest that in Britain women's high level of participation in the workforce on a part-time basis reflects a relationship between work and family in

which childcare is seen as family based, while in France women's more extensive participation on a full-time basis reflects a relationship between the two in which the State is expected to play a more important role in enabling both parents to work.

Hantrais (1988) in her comparative study of the time structures of professional women in Britain and France, goes some way towards explaining the differing contexts for the development of these dissimilar attitudes and family policies. She also found evidence of a practical impact of these attitudes and policies on women's feelings about work, although the relevance of these findings for understanding women's attitudes to work in retailing, where women are less highly qualified, and among whom patterns of activity are different, may be limited. She found reduced attachment to work among British women and a widespread feeling that it was impossible for women to combine work and family successfully because of the inadequacy of support networks and their cost, current work practices, and the attitudes of employers, colleagues, and family. In France, by contrast, women were found to have a greater commitment to work and more positive views about reconciling work and family: they expected to be able to have a career and a family and be supported in doing so, both in the home and through the provisions made for childminding and for flexibility in working conditions. Although this evidence cannot be taken as representative of the French and British female populations as a whole it does suggest, when seen in the context of the findings from other Franco-British research about women's work, that further research into the attitudes of women towards work and family and how they have developed in Britain and France may be useful in understanding the inevitability, or otherwise, of a given pattern of employment. From the foregoing, it may be expected that differing attitudes towards work and family among

women and dissimilar levels of childcare services in Britain and France will have an impact not only on whether women take part-time work and their reasons for doing so, but also on the sorts of patterns of hours they work. There is, however, relatively little comparative work to substantiate this contention.

There is a similar paucity of comparative research at national level attempting to examine the influence of demand-side factors on the structuring of working hours. Some of the literature comparing the use of part-time work at a national level in Britain and France (Baroin, 1981; Garnsey, 1985; Dale and Glover, 1987; Barrère-Maurisson et al, 1987) offers a tentative demand-side explanation for differences in the level of use of part-time work in the two countries in terms of their differing legislative frameworks.

Finally, there has been no attempt to date to assess how supply and demand factors interact in order to produce patterns of working hours. It has been argued in Britain by Clark (1983) that relations between employers and employees in the labour process have differing periodicities, providing employees with opportunities to revise and refine bargains over workloads. Indeed, the importance of convenient working hours to British women with children has had a direct impact on employers' structuring of working hours during periods of labour shortage when they have been obliged to meet women's needs in order to attract them into the labour force (Seear, 1982). Given the differences in the workforce outlined above, it is of interest to see to what extent part-timers are able to influence their patterns of working hours in the two countries.

Another reason why a Franco-British comparison of patterns of part-time working hours is of interest is because a review of single-nation data about satisfaction with working hours (which is discussed in the thesis) suggests that there may be differing degrees of satisfaction with part-time hours in the two countries which could reflect dissimilar reasons for taking this form of work, and that these differences appear to be particularly significant in low-skilled jobs. The lack of comparative work in this area suggests that it may be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between satisfaction with, and patterns of, working hours.

In addition to the lack of comparative research about patterns of part-time working hours at national level in Britain and France, there is a total absence of research of this type, either from a demand or a supply perspective, in large-scale grocery retailing. A comparative study of part-time patterns of working hours may, however, be of particular interest for two main reasons. Firstly, although food retailing is a sector in which levels of part-time work are amongst the highest in both countries, single-nation studies and official statistics suggest that, in parallel with national trends, levels of part-time work remain significantly higher in this sector in Britain than in France. There have been no comprehensive attempts to analyse or to explain these differences between the two countries, and their implications for patterns of part-time working hours.

Secondly, a large proportion of part-timers working in food retailing in both countries would seem to be women with children: official statistics show that in 1985 88.6% of all part-timers in food retailing in France were women and of all female employees in food retailing 60% of women were aged between 25 and 49, the age group in which most women

have dependent children (Enquête sur l'Emploi); in Britain, where no official statistics provide this sort of information, a recent small-scale study (Sparks, 1987) found that 89% of female part-timers working in superstores and 88% of those working in supermarkets had dependent children. This is a sector in which part-time work is located in low-skilled jobs and in which, therefore, it might be expected that differences in reasons for working part-time and in satisfaction with this form of work between Britain and France would be significant. There have been no studies to date in large-scale grocery retailing which compare and contrast the motives for working part-time among women with children and their satisfaction with part-time work, or which assess their possible implications for the structuring of working hours.

The research in this thesis was therefore carried out in order to contribute to knowledge about the structuring of patterns of part-time working hours in Britain and France and, in particular, to compare and contrast how the structuring of working hours may be related to the supply factors determining women's integration into the labour force. The research in the thesis attempts to achieve these objectives in three ways. Firstly, the available secondary data from cross-national and single-nation studies is drawn together in order to provide the first Franco-British comparison of patterns of part-time working hours at national level. Explanations are made for the similarities and differences found in terms of both demand and supply factors. On the one hand the effect of the legislative frameworks in the two countries on the structuring of working hours are examined and, on the other, the relationship between the supply factors determining women's labour force participation and the structuring of working hours. An assessment of satisfaction with part-time working hours based on

secondary data is also carried out which investigates the relationship between satisfaction and patterns of hours.

Secondly, in the context of the discussion about patterns of working hours, secondary single-nation data is used to provide, as far as existing literature allows, a Franco-British comparison of patterns of part-time working hours in large-scale grocery retailing. This includes an assessment of why different levels of part-time work are used in the two countries and their implication for the structuring of working hours. Similarities and differences in patterns of part-time working hours are identified and explanations for them are sought from a supply and demand perspective. In particular, attempts are made to relate dissimilarities found to those in the wider economy and to provide explanations for them in national terms. A comparison is also made of the evidence about the relationship between satisfaction with part-time working hours and their patterns in large-scale grocery retailing.

Finally, empirical work carried out in large-scale grocery retailing in order to gain more detailed information about how working hours are structured looks specifically at part-timers in the context of the description of patterns of working hours in this sector. This empirical work is done at industry level and in case studies within the industry in both countries and involves discussions with management and trades unions about the structuring of working hours. The case study research also includes interviews with samples of women with children who work part-time in large-scale grocery outlets. These interviews are carried out in order to investigate the relationship between patterns of working hours, reasons for working part-time, and satisfaction with working hours.

Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing

Large-scale grocery retailing does not have a precise and generally accepted definition in either Britain or France. In Britain a popular definition of large self-service stores is of those with a surface area of over 929m² (Euromonitor, 1986). In France the closest definition to large-scale grocery retailing is the category les grandes surfaces alimentaires (large-scale food retailers) which comprises supermarkets, hypermarkets, and magasins populaires. However, magasins populaires differ in many respects from the other two types of outlets which would make it impossible to include them in the category of large-scale grocery retailers: for example the majority of their sales are non-food while the opposite is true for supermarkets and hypermarkets, and they use very different sales techniques from supermarkets and hypermarkets where self-service is the norm.

For the purposes of the research in the thesis a definition of large-scale grocery retailing as supermarkets and hypermarkets was used because the aim was to focus on grocery outlets only (hence, excluding magasins populaires), and because it simplified the process of research: for example it was not possible to obtain official statistics for grocery outlets with a surface area of over 929m², nor was it thought likely that it would be possible to carry out the empirical work using this definition. Nevertheless, the definition chosen raised other problems, notably that supermarkets and hypermarkets were defined differently in the two countries. The implications of these differences for the research are explained fully in Chapters 1 and 4.

Detailed cross-national comparative research of organizations has started to be carried out over the last decade as the validity of the

culture-free thesis of organizational theory has been questioned (this thesis is fully discussed in Chapter 1). One of the most widely quoted contributions to the debate may be considered to be Maurice et al's (1980) research into the impact of education and training arrangements in France, Germany and Great Britain on organizations' structure and style of operations in these countries, which found that there were significant differences in organizational structure which could only be explained in cultural terms. Another pathbreaking piece of comparative research was Gallie's (1978) comparison of workers' class attitudes and aspirations within two oil refineries in Britain and France which sought to challenge a sort of culture-free thesis (put forward by both Blauner, 1964 and Mallet, 1975) that advanced technology would change the class orientations of workers. Gallie's study (1978) suggested that more significance has to be attached to the structure and culture of the society outside the plant in understanding class consciousness, this being indicated by the more conflictual and class-conscious orientations of the French workers compared with the British. Both these studies highlight the importance of cultural factors for understanding organizations and the behaviour of people working in them.

In food retailing, and in large-scale grocery retailing in particular, there have been very few cross-national comparative studies, and those which exist are mainly studies of labour productivity based on secondary data which do not compare Britain and France (see for example the comparison of labour productivity in British and American retailing by Smith and Hitchens, 1983, and of the relationship between part-time levels and labour productivity in French and Dutch stores by Thurik and Van der Wijst, 1984). Only one cross-national study (Epstein et al, 1986) investigating the interaction and interdependence of work and

family among women in Britain and Germany through research in retailing has approached the subject of patterns of working hours, and this only in a very general way. The main pieces of cross-national research studying practices in individual organizations are the European Foundation's (1985) study of the impact of New Technology in Supermarkets in some European countries and the work by Epstein et al (1986) which uses detailed case study analysis of retail stores (including one large-scale grocery outlet in Britain). There has, however, been no Franco-British study of patterns of working hours in retailing and, moreover, none which has researched this area through the detailed comparison of practices in organizations in this sector. It is also for this reason that comparative empirical work was carried out with organizations in large-scale grocery retailing.

Large-scale grocery retailing has two main characteristics which makes it particularly suitable for research in the field of working hours. Firstly, food retailing forms part of the developing service sector and is becoming an increasingly large employer in both Britain and France. Hence, patterns of working hours in food retailing, and particularly in large-scale grocery retailing, are very relevant to a discussion of patterns of working hours in the two national economies because they affect an increasingly large proportion of the national workforces and their families.

Secondly, patterns of working hours are particularly important in food retailing because they are affected by the "service relationship" (Smith, 1983). The service relationship is the necessary association between retailer and consumer, in which the provider of the retail services is dependent on the physical proximity and involvement of the customer. The service relationship has had two major effects on

patterns of working hours. The first has been the pressure on retailers to adapt patterns of working hours to changing consumer patterns and lifestyles in the post-war period. Indeed, the changes which have taken place, and are continuing to take place, in food retailing provide an example of the way in which the services adapt to changing consumer patterns and, as a consequence, result in changes in patterns of working hours. For example, since the early 1960s large-scale grocery retailing has developed as a result of a number of changes in customer patterns and lifestyles such as the increase in the suburbanization of the population, in car use, in women's integration into the labour force, and other factors such as greater customer price sensitivity and demand for choice (Fulop, 1964; Dawson, 1982).

A number of these factors have encouraged the extension of trading hours, particularly in large-scale grocery retailing. As retailers have been confronted with longer trading hours in response to customer demand, they have also been faced with falling full-time working weeks and troughs and peaks in customer flow. They have responded by creating new patterns of working hours dependent on multiple shifts and the use of part-time work. In both countries the major changes in food retailing have taken place since the 1960s and therefore the discussion and analysis of large-scale grocery retailing in the thesis focuses on the post-1960s period. Some of the most significant responses to changes in customer behaviour have been seen over the last three decades in large-scale grocery retailing where profit margins are lowest and opening hours tend to be longest. In this sector, in particular, effective labour use, and consequently optimal patterns of working hours have become crucial to effective business operations.

The second major effect of the service relationship in food retailing, and particularly in large-scale grocery retailing, has been to bring labour use to the forefront of employers' policies. This has taken place against a backdrop of fluctuating customer demand combined with high levels of competition, high labour costs and low labour productivity by comparison with industry. Consequently, the organization of working hours have become crucial for effective business operations. Large-scale grocery retailing is a good example of the impact of the specific constraints imposed by the service relationship which have led retailers to be among the first to attempt to reduce its impact by developing self-service retailing, new merchandizing policies, and new forms of labour use (Dawson, 1982; Smith, 1983).

For these reasons, in addition to those set out in previous sections, large-scale grocery retailing was chosen to be the specific focus for the comparison of patterns of working hours with particular reference to part-time work.

Research Methodology

The research carried out in this thesis is cross-national comparative research according to the definition given by Hantrais et al (1985), on the basis of their state of the art review of cross-national comparative research. This defines a cross-national study as comparative:

...if one or more units are compared in respect of the same concepts and if it concerns the systematic analysis of phenomena with the intention of explaining them and generalising from them (Hantrais et al, 1985: vi).

Cross-national comparative research can be used in a number of

different ways to achieve a range of objectives (as discussed in the standard reference works on cross-national sociology, see for example Marsh, 1967; Rokkan et al, 1969; Przeworski and Teune, 1970; Vallier, 1971; Warwick and Osherson, 1973; Smelser, 1976,; Armer and Marsh, 1982; and Niessen and Peschar, 1982). Hill (1962), for example, who is typical of the authors on the subject, notes the use of the cross-national comparative research method for hunting common patterns and discovering "propositions which transcend the boundaries of nation and culture" (Hill, 1962: 426), while Bulmer (1983) sees it as a means of enlarging insight and knowledge. Koistinen and Urponen (1984) consider that one of its uses may be to test and prove theories, while another may be to use it to analyze changing structures in relation to nation specific macro conditions and state policies in order to contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which societal factors have an impact on the consequences of innovation and also how innovation influences the development of society (Koistinen and Urponen, 1984: 17).

The cross-national comparative research carried out in this thesis shares a number of the objectives common to this type of research. Its main objectives are:

1. to contribute to knowledge and to enlarge insight by seeking to discover how patterns of working hours differ between Britain and France, and by assessing the extent to which context, social conditions, policy and culture have contributed to the patterns found;
2. to gain a better understanding of the specificity of each society in relation to patterns of working hours and the factors determining them;

3. to draw out limited cross-national generalizations on the basis of secondary data and to seek to formulate general statements about common patterns in the two societies based on empirical work;

4. to test specific hypotheses about patterns of working hours in Britain and France.

If methodology is defined as "all the processes and techniques used in scientific investigation" (Samuel, 1985: 9), then many authors have shown that there is no one best methodology used for cross-national comparative research (see for example Przeworski and Teune, 1970; Maurice, 1979; Qvortrup, 1984), and it is often necessary to combine more than one approach and more than one method in order to achieve the research objectives. In this thesis, for example, a method based solely on contrasting and comparing secondary data was rejected, because comparable data were both insufficient and unreliable. For example, information about the use of part-time work in large-scale grocery retailing was not directly comparable and it was not feasible to reestablish the data sets. However, the greater problem lay in the lack of basic data on patterns of working hours.

The choice of cross-national comparative research methodology for the thesis has therefore involved rejecting certain approaches and methods and drawing together a number of others which provide a concerted means of achieving the research aims, as explained in full in Chapter 1 of the thesis.

Cross-national comparative research raises a number of problems which as Frey (1970) points out " ...are not in principle different from those of within-cultural surveys, [but] in both particulars and

severity they are different" (Frey, 1970: 187). The problems of cross-national research have been discussed in many of the standard texts on comparative sociology and are analyzed in detail by Armer (1973). The two central problems he identifies relate to the fact that much cross-cultural comparative research is carried by researchers who are alien to at least one culture under study and that this type of research involves the comparison of different socio-cultural systems. This gives rise to two further problems: firstly, assuring the appropriateness of conceptualizations and research methods for each specific culture, and secondly, achieving sufficient equivalence in the research concepts and methods to permit meaningful comparisons across societies. These problems of appropriateness and equivalence are encountered at almost every stage of the research process from the formulation of problems and conceptualization of variables to the analysis of data and interpretation of results.

A large number of the problems associated with the cross-cultural research required for this thesis have been overcome because the author has a detailed knowledge of the language and cultures of both countries under study. The problems which arise in carrying out cross-national comparative research, the way in which they are overcome, and the limitations which they place on the generalization of the research findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

The Structure of the Thesis

In the first chapter the methodological approaches used in the thesis are presented, and the design and carrying out of the empirical work are described in detail. In this chapter particular attention is paid to the way in which the methodological problems arising from adopting a

cross-national perspective are overcome and to the limitations which remain on generalizing from the research.

In the second chapter changing patterns of working hours in Britain and France in the post-war period are compared and contrasted on the basis of secondary comparative and single-nation studies. This includes an assessment of the speed and nature of the changes which have taken place and of the relationship between non-work values and changing patterns of working time which culminates in the development of two hypotheses: that more experimental changes in patterns of working hours have been taking place in France and that employers are more aware of non-work issues in France and are more likely to take their workers' preferences into account in structuring working hours.

In the third chapter patterns of part-time working hours at national level and satisfaction with these hours are compared and contrasted using available secondary data and explanations are sought for the differences found. In particular, the explanations involve examining in detail the legislative framework governing the length of part-time hours in Britain and France as well as women's patterns of activity in the two countries and the factors which contribute to them.

In the fourth chapter a detailed analysis of the growth of part-time work in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France drawn from secondary data is followed by a comparison of both full and part-time patterns of working hours and of satisfaction with part-time hours in retailing. This comparison of secondary data culminates in the presentation of two more hypotheses: that retailers are developing patterns of working hours in significantly different ways in Britain and France, and that women with children are more satisfied with their

part-time hours (in terms of their length and organization) in Britain than in France.

In the fifth chapter the findings from the industry-level research are described while the sixth chapter presents those from the case study research. The findings are organized within a framework based on research by Lee (1985) and the rationale for using this framework is given in Chapter 5. A full explanation of the organization of the research findings is given in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the conclusion the principal findings from the thesis are summarized and their implications for academics and policy makers are discussed as well as their relevance to wider issues. The impact of the limitations of the empirical work for making wider generalizations are considered, and avenues for further research are suggested.

Chapter 1

Research Methodology

Many authors (see for example, Niessen et al, 1984; Armer and Grimshaw, 1973; Vallier, 1971) have shown that there is no one best approach to cross-national comparative research and that it is often necessary to combine more than one approach in order to achieve the research objectives. The aim of the first section of this chapter is to describe, and explain the basis for, the comparative approaches used in order to fulfil the aims of the thesis.

Many of the standard works relating to cross-national comparative research¹ show that carrying out comparative research cross-nationally compounds the difficulties of doing comparative work by introducing a number of problems raised by cultural differences between societies (Samuel, 1985). They also point out that neglecting to consider or to overcome these problems can seriously jeopardise the validity of the research findings. The second section of this chapter examines the major problem areas arising from the approaches to cross-national comparative research adopted in the thesis and describes the difficulties faced and the way in which they were overcome at each stage of the fieldwork.

Cross-national Comparative Methodologies

The methodology used for the thesis combines several approaches: descriptive, analytical, and explanatory. This section examines how and why these approaches are used at differing stages of the research and their impact on the choice of research methods.

At the core of the research process is an approach concerned with explaining similarities and differences in social phenomena with reference to wider societal contexts. This is known as the "societal approach" and has perhaps been most fully explicated in relation to industrial sociology, although it is becoming increasingly valuable in other areas of cross-national research (see Berting, 1987, who suggests that the use of this type of approach has resulted from a reorientation of international comparative research from "culture-free" to comparative and cooperative research).

The "societal approach" (see for example, Maurice, 1979; Rose, 1985), was pioneered by Maurice in the area of industrial sociology at the Laboratoire d'Economie et de Sociologie du Travail in Aix-en-Provence. This approach was developed initially to help prove a counter theory to the contingency theory or culture-free thesis of organization theory. The contingency theory holds that countries at the same stage of industrial development and having similar industrial structures will adopt the same approach to the organization and management of their institutions. As Rose (1985) points out this theory is characterized by:

...a fixation with the interdependence of structural dimensions which relegates organisational actors to a residual explanatory importance, if it does not exclude them entirely from the analysis (Rose, 1985: 67).

In organizational theory the culture-free thesis has been associated with cross-national comparisons of research studies carried out on national samples of organizations which have virtually ignored the impact of the social environment (Maurice, 1979: 47).

The "societal approach", by contrast, places "...an increasingly explicit insistence upon the maintained diversity and qualitative

specificity of social forms in the advanced societies" (Rose, 1985: 66). The associated methodology uses cross-national comparisons as a direct contribution to the theory of organizations. Maurice (1979) summarizes the approach in relation to organizational theory as follows:

.. a comparison of the systemic relationships between social structure and organizations and of the processes by which they are manifested in each national situation alone can enable one to develop a theory of organizations (in society) which will integrate into a "universal" model the particularities and discontinuities of each national experience (Maurice, 1970: 47).

This approach, therefore, as Hantrais (1988) points out is:

...a useful framework for comparing institutions across nations, since it stresses the specificity of social phenomena and institutional structures in different societies and looks for explanations in the wider socio-cultural context (Hantrais, 1988: 1).

The adoption of the societal approach has had a major bearing on other methodological approaches and methods used in the thesis. At the beginning of the research it was necessary to gather together relevant data. The method which is used to achieve this depends on the research objectives and the institutional organization of the research. On the one hand a "survey" or "descriptive" method may be adopted. This is generally the first stage of any large-scale international comparative surveys such as those carried out by the Vienna Centre and the European Foundation and results in a state of the art review. Data are gathered by individuals or teams in each nation, according to agreed criteria, derived either from existing or new empirical work and subsequently pooled (Hantrais, 1989). This method has traditionally been associated with a culture-free approach to cross-national comparative research as carried out the by, for example, the Vienna Centre and the European Foundation because the search for data is not generally carried out

from the starting point of a comparative theory expressed in societal terms, and because the method does not normally enable detailed analysis and explanation in societal terms.

An alternative method, known as the "safari method", is more common when the research is being carried out by a single researcher (or by groups of researchers) in more than one country, and is characteristic of studies in which small numbers of countries are involved and the researchers have an intimate knowledge of the countries under study. This method aims to compare particular issues or social phenomena in differing socio-cultural settings and generally achieves this objective by formulating the research problem and hypotheses in a comparative framework and verifying them in studies using replication of the experimental design. This was thought to be the most appropriate method in terms of the research objectives for the thesis. The first stage of data gathering using the safari method involved collecting secondary data relevant to the field of study. The use of this method alone was rejected because of the inadequacy of comparable secondary data. Nevertheless, the secondary data available enabled the research problem to be more accurately defined and for some comparative hypotheses to be formulated. Subsequently, attempts were made, with the aim of verifying the hypotheses, to collect more comparable data. This was achieved by replicating as far as possible the research design for new empirical fieldwork in the two countries.

The safari approach was supplemented with analytical and evaluative approaches in order to highlight similarities and differences in the phenomena under study. For the purpose of analysis and evaluation it is possible to use a "juxtaposition" approach, which often follows on from the state of the art review established from a "descriptive" or

"survey" method. It involves placing side by side the information, which may not be comparable, and which has been obtained from studies in each nation, in order to determine the degree of variability observed from one national sample to another. The use of a "juxtaposition" approach was rejected in the thesis in favour of a comparative approach which was thought to be more suited to the objectives of the "safari" method and the societal approach. This comparative approach drew together, compared and contrasted, data which were as far as possible comparable in order to highlight similarities and differences in the phenomena under study in the two countries. This method was applied firstly to the secondary data (and was subsequently used to formulate research hypotheses for verification) and then to analyze data obtained through new empirical work in the two countries.

Finally, it was necessary to seek explanations for the differences found in the phenomena under study in terms of the wider socio-cultural contexts in Britain and France. When large-scale cross-national comparative projects are explanatory several methods may be used: the inductive method which seeks to use existing data to verify loosely defined cross-national hypotheses; the deductive method, applying a general theory to a specific case in order to interpret certain aspects; the demonstrative method, designed to confirm a theory and refine it (Samuel, 1985; Hantrais, 1989). These methods were not thought to be appropriate for the small-scale research in the thesis in view of its differing objectives: to seek to explain similarities and differences in social phenomena in terms of societal likeness and unlikeness rather than to develop cross-national theories. Under these circumstances two methods in particular were employed: the most similar systems design and the most different systems design. One of these,

the most similar systems design, described by Przeworski and Teune (1970), was used to find explanations for differences in patterns of working hours between France and Britain in the thesis. This design is:

...based on the belief that systems as similar as possible with respect to as many features as possible constitute the optimal samples for comparative inquiry...the number of 'experimental' variables, although unknown and still large, is minimized...it is anticipated that if some important differences are found among these otherwise similar countries, then the number of factors attributable to these differences will be sufficiently small to warrant explanation in terms of those differences alone (Przeworski and Teune, 1970: 32-4).

In short, the most similar systems design involves focusing on intersystemic similarities and differences and explaining within-system variations in terms of them. In the thesis, for example, the available data about systemic differences between Britain and France have been related to differences in patterns of working hours found nationally and within large-scale grocery retailing.

The other explanatory method involved taking into account differences among systems as they are encountered in the process of explaining social phenomena observed within these systems. This design takes as its starting point the variation of observed behaviour at a level lower than that of systems ie groups, individuals, organizations. The design calls for testing the assumption that the units of observation are homogeneous by means of cross-systemic research, ie by testing that systemic factors do not play any role in the observed behaviour. Hence, the research design seeks explanations for differences in observed behaviour at various levels in order to isolate the impact of systemic variables. Throughout this process of enquiry, the question of the level at which relevant factors operate remains open: there is

no preconceived assumption that systemic factors are operating. Przeworski and Teune (1970) describe the research process involved in this research design when comparing populations of individuals:

If a population of individuals is sampled from several communities within several countries, then differences among individuals will be tested both within and across communities and within and across countries. If communities differ, systemic factors operating at the level of local communities will be considered; if nations differ, national factors will be examined; if neither countries nor communities differ, the entire analysis will remain at the individual level and no systemic factors will be considered. The level that reduces to the greatest extent the within-group variance will be considered (Przeworski and Teune, 1970: 36).

A more limited version of the "most different systems design" was used to analyze the research findings for this thesis. For example, the use of part-time work among a sample of employers in large-scale grocery retailing is investigated in the two countries. Differences in practices are tested both within each country and across countries. As a result, a series of explanations for the range of practices in each country is revealed (for example, explanations are found in terms of company and outlet management practices). However, differences in the range of practices cannot be explained without reference to national factors.

The explanatory approaches used in this thesis are based on two main features of the comparative method. The first of these is that the method focuses on the similarities and differences between cases and not on the relationship between variables (Samuel, 1985). The logic is inductive and based on three of Mill's methods of inductive enquiry: the method of agreement, the method of difference, and the indirect method of difference (Mill, 1973; Skocpol, 1979; Gee, 1980). These methods all use the data concerning the preconditions of a particular

phenomenon to determine its causes by examining the similarities and differences between relevant instances. The second feature of the comparative method central to the explanatory approach used in the thesis is the way in which the method focuses on the congruence of causes rather than the unique cause, which is characteristic of the statistical method, in order to explain a social fact (Ragin, 1982): "...it is used to ascertain the different configurations of conditions that are responsible for particular social phenomena" (Ragin, 1982: 111).

Data Collection Methods

Armer (1973), in his review of the methodological problems and possibilities in comparative research, has highlighted the appropriateness of choosing data collection methods² to suit the cultures concerned and the research objectives:

Contrary to the view that comparative research should develop a distinctive method, comparative methods, like methods in non-comparative research, should be expected to vary depending upon the nature of the problems and cultures being investigated. One of the comparative methodologist's tasks, then, is to determine the best data-collection methods for his research objective (Armer, 1973: 66).

The following sections describe the data collection methods chosen to suit both the research objectives in the thesis and the cultural contexts of the two countries examined.

One of the principal problems with cross-systemic comparative research is that facets of the research process which may be appropriate in one's own culture will often not be appropriate in foreign cultures. As Armer (1973) explains:

Appropriateness requires feasibility, significance and acceptability as a necessary condition for insuring validity and successful completion of comparative studies (Armer, 1973: 51).

Another major problem is that of devising comparative research which is comparable or equivalent across the societies involved. Achieving phenomenal identity by duplicating methods in each society does not guarantee measuring the same concept. Armer (1973) points out that:

The criterion for assessing comparability is not whether methods are phenomenally identical but rather whether they are conceptually equivalent for the purposes of the research (Armer, 1973: 53).

Particular problems relating to appropriateness and equivalence in cross-national research arise in a number of respects: finding comparable units for analysis; the availability and comparability of data; the reliability and validity of measurement; ensuring the equivalence of meaning and concepts; communication (see Hantrais et al, 1985). The following discussion also describes the problems of appropriateness and equivalence which have arisen in the course of the research, the extent to which they were overcome, and the resulting limitations on the research findings.

The aim of the fieldwork was on a descriptive level to investigate factors influencing patterns of working time in large-scale grocery outlets in Britain and France but also, on a theoretical level, to examine reasons for working part-time, patterns of working hours and satisfaction with working hours among women with children working part-time in these outlets. For these purposes two data collection methods were used: secondary analysis and new empirical work. Both these methods were required because there was insufficient secondary data relating to patterns of part-time working hours, in particular with reference to large-scale grocery retailing. The secondary data only

enabled loose hypotheses to be defined which needed to be verified through new empirical work.

Secondary Analysis

Information was sought about the institutional framework influencing patterns of working hours both at the level of the firm and the individual in Britain and France. Examples of the information needed are: labour law, shops' law, union agreements and laws delineating the operation of the tax and social security contribution systems. In addition, data were collected for the purpose of identifying trends in patterns of working hours at national, sectoral and outlet levels in relation to the sex, age and the occupational distribution of the retail workforce.

A common problem in cross-national comparative research is being able to obtain equally good data from all nations under study. Even if data are available major problems of comparability often arise from the non-comparability of the samples used to compile the data, differences in the classification of data, and stimulus equivalence (the questioning used to elicit information) (described in some detail by Armer, 1973).

In the thesis, the collection of comparable information about the institutional frameworks was not problematic. By contrast, problems arose with the availability and comparability of statistical data sought for the purpose of carrying out trend analysis. For example, comparable data concerning the numbers of days worked by part-timers are not available for women only from French sources. Also, categories used to classify the length of part-time working hours were slightly different in Britain and France. Some of the greatest difficulties in finding comparable data were encountered in trying to assess the use of

part-time work at outlet level in large-scale grocery retailing. In France (as fully described in Chapter 4), detailed government statistics exist at the outlet level (for example those in the Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce), while in Britain relevant statistics are collected only by retail research institutes - for example the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) - and are based on non-comparable samples, outlet classifications, and definitions of part-time work. Also, problems arose in comparing part-time working hours over time because statistics relate to differing categories of worker in the two countries: in Britain statistics relate to the occupational category of female part-time sales assistants and shelf-fillers, while the French statistics consider all female employees in distribution. Similar comparability problems arose in relation to the definitions used for hypermarkets, supermarkets and superstores in the two countries (as described in Chapter 4). Finally, there were almost no data about satisfaction with working hours in large-scale grocery retailing.

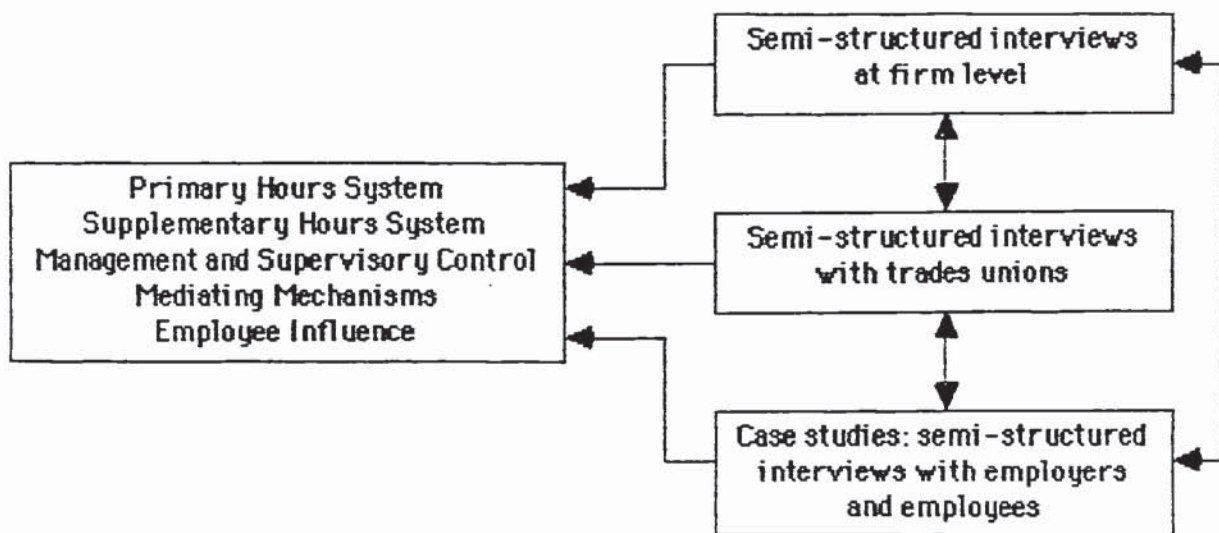
One solution proposed for problems of comparability with statistics (where they exist) is to return to the original source and regroup the data according to a common cross-national classification scheme (see Hantrais et al, 1985). This would have enabled comparison of stores of comparable size irrespective of what they were called. However, it would have been very difficult to do this, given the time and financial limitations of the project. Rather, these differences have been taken into account in analyzing the available data and conclusions have been drawn accordingly.

New Empirical Work

The empirical work involved interviews with trades unions and with

relevant individuals at firm and outlet level in large-scale grocery retailing. Figure 1.1 summarizes the observational units and methods adopted in the empirical work and their contribution to an understanding of the factors influencing patterns of working hours. It also shows how information obtained from one part of the empirical work was used to inform the rest.

Figure 1.1 Interaction Between Types of Empirical Work and Research Findings



Empirical Research with Trades Unions

The aim of this empirical work was to gain an understanding of the unions' perspective on the long-term and day-to-day changes in patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing and, in particular, to establish how far unions influence these changes.

Armer (1973) points out that it is important to design strategies which will enable comparable levels of access in different societies. The relevance of adapting the approach for gaining access to various cultures is highlighted by the comparative research in the thesis. The French are reputed for being slow to respond to written requests but to react much more positively than the British to telephone communications. These traits are born out by the research with the trades unions. All the main unions representing shop-floor employees in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France were contacted by letter in the first instance (examples of the letters sent to the British and French unions and employers are given in Appendix I). In the French case, however, few unions responded to this form of communication, and it was necessary to follow this up with requests by phone for interviews with the relevant spokespersons. In Britain the relevant unions were the Union of Shops, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). In France, the relevant unions were the Communist Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), the non-aligned Force Ouvrière (FO), la Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC), and the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT). In all but one case (FO) national officers were interviewed. At FO a shop steward was the respondent.

The semi-structured interview was thought to be the method most suited to the research objectives. This was primarily because in this unresearched area it was necessary to be able to investigate and respond to new ideas which could not have been envisaged from the analysis of the secondary data. The interviews were structured by a set of prompt questions and took place in two stages. The first stage involved asking basic questions about the union's understanding of the reasons for the development of part-time work and other forms of flexibility in working hours, the union's understanding of the factors influencing patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery outlets and, in particular, its own role in the process, the characteristics of part-timers in large-scale grocery retailing, and the nature of part-time work and hours. Some questions at this stage were related to specific aspects of the British and French legislative frameworks governing working hours. Examples of the interview schedules are reproduced in Appendix II. The second round of interviews focused on more specific questions which had arisen from discussions with unions and employers in the two countries. For example, it became clear from the fieldwork with retailers that some employers in both Britain and France regularly changed employees' working hours and patterns. Given the different legislative and collective bargaining structures in the two countries, it was therefore relevant to ask detailed questions about part-timers' practical means of redress against changes in their working conditions which were imposed on them.

Few problems arose in compiling the research schedules. The main difficulty was in achieving equivalence in meaning in the two countries for the concept "patterns of working hours" for which no clear comparable definition exists in French. It was necessary to use equivalent phrases to express this idea. This is one example of the

many times in the research process when fluency in French was invaluable. Another example was being able to guide the interview and make sure that the relevant questions were answered.

Empirical Research at Firm Level

Research was required at firm level because the comparable secondary data relating to patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing were not adequate for the purposes of the thesis. In addition, research by Bieganski (1983) in France and Sparks (1987) in Britain provides evidence to suggest that practices in relation to the use of part-time work differ significantly at firm level from the general trends depicted using national data. It was therefore necessary to attempt to inform the discussion about actual practices with respect to patterns of working hours by carrying out research at the level of the firm. The aims of this research were: to establish the policies and practices of employers which lie behind the statistical evidence, and to gain an insight into the perceptions employers have of their workforce; to delineate further the factors influencing patterns of working time in this sector with special reference to part-time patterns of working hours.

The method chosen for the empirical research at both firm and outlet level was subjected to time and financial constraints. As Armer (1973) and Walton (1973) have pointed out, when this is the case random sampling is often not feasible and purposive sampling is the most appropriate method. Purposive sampling involves targeting the most appropriate groups (in terms of significance, availability, and feasibility) in order to satisfy the research objectives. In this thesis purposive sampling of firms and outlets in large-scale grocery retailing was carried out in order to satisfy both the aims of

comparability and appropriateness and the research objectives. In order to maximize the comparability of the firm level samples, attempts were made to carry out standardized case comparison (see Walton, 1973). Standardized case comparison seeks to make the content of the data more theoretically relevant than when one simply selects and compares data. This objective is achieved by controlling the population scope under study: selecting cases according to "a stratified set of relevant independent variables" (Walton, 1973: 179). Standardized case comparison is also used for the purpose of providing for the simultaneous maximization or minimization of both the differences and similarities of data that bear on the categories being studied.

In the thesis the independent variable chosen for the purpose of selecting the scope of the firm-level research was the relative size of firms, expressed in terms of numbers employed. To this end, it was decided to focus the research on the principal multiple grocery retailing firms in Britain and France. Attention was directed to the ten largest employers in this sector in the two countries (which happened to be those having the largest number of outlets and turnover). The aim was to gain maximum similarity in the sample in terms of size ranking in order to limit the number of variables which could provide explanation for differences in findings, and hence gain greater theoretical relevance from the data.

An additional reason for this choice of firms was that problems arose in obtaining comparable firms based on size (expressed in terms of numbers employed) alone. Significant differences exist in the size of firms in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain compared with France (this is given detailed consideration below) which meant that, for example, selecting for study all those firms employing over 10,000

employees in the two countries would provide for many more British firms being sampled than French firms. Hence, sampling on absolute criteria was not suitable and a relative measure was sought.

The other reasons for this choice of firms were related to their appropriateness to the research objectives. In the first place, it was expected that these firms were more likely to have coherent policies on employment which would apply to all their stores in the country or region. Thus, by talking to these retailers and gaining an insight into their practices and policies concerning patterns of working hours, it was hoped that a general impression would be formed which would be strongly indicative of the behaviour in the industry generally.

Secondly, in both countries sales are being concentrated increasingly among a smaller number of multiple grocery retailers (although food retailing in Britain is considerably more concentrated than in France), and in turn these major retailers are accounting for an increasing proportion of food sales. In 1977 the corporate chains were responsible for nearly 26% of all retail sales in France and nearly 50% in Britain (Dawson, 1982: 82). In 1977 corporate chains in France accounted for 29% of retail food sales (Dawson, 1982: 84). In Britain, comparative statistics are not available, but concentration ratios in the 1982 Business Monitor for retailing indicated that the largest ten enterprise groups accounted for 47.5% of grocery and provision sales.

It is very likely, therefore, that these retailers will increasingly dominate the grocery market in the future and, as a result of the continuing process of concentration, employ a greater proportion of the retail labour force. An understanding of the way in which their policies and practices influence patterns of working hours is therefore

crucial in order to give a better understanding of trends in working hours. These retailers constitute an identifiable and important group which are undergoing similar patterns of growth in both countries; as such they represent an ideal focus for comparative research. The ten largest retailers were chosen in order to ensure that all major employers would be included in the study.

Finally, the time and resources available for the research did not allow for large-scale study of the practices and policies of all firms in large-scale grocery retailing. Choosing to focus the research on the largest retailers in the sector would enable optimal use of scarce time and financial resources.

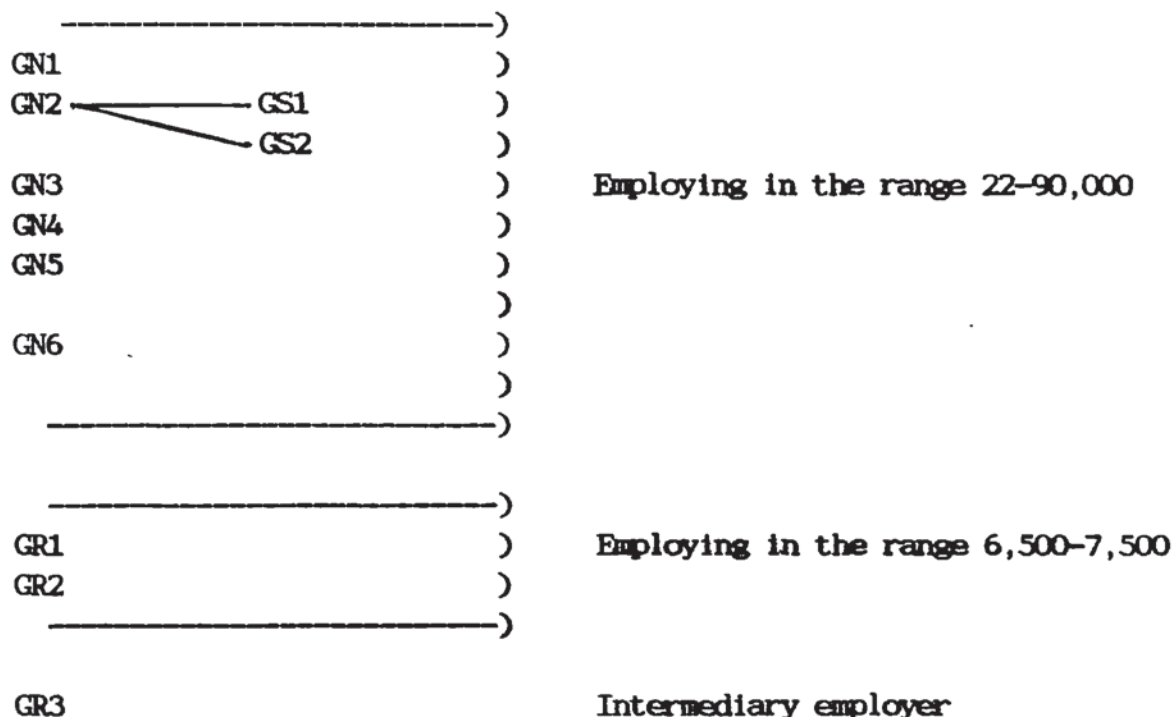
The research was carried out with retailers in both Britain and France on the basis that no information would be presented in this thesis which could result in the identification of the firms concerned. Consequently, all firms are given a code name in this chapter and in other relevant chapters.

In Britain eight of the largest employers in large-scale grocery retailing were approached by letter in October 1985. Two others were approached through personal contacts. Among the eight firms contacted by letter five had a national distribution of outlets and employed in the range of 22,000 to 65,000 employees in 1986. In order to preserve anonymity these companies will be referred to as GN1-5. One of them (GN2) comprised two subsidiary companies, one running hypermarkets, the other supermarkets. At the time of the fieldwork each subsidiary decided its own employment policy, therefore each was approached separately. The two subsidiaries will be referred to as GS1 and GS2. All these five companies responded favourably to the first letter, and

this included a positive response from the firm which was later to become the subject of the case study. A first set of interviews was carried out from October 1985 to April 1986. In March 1986 a second set of letters was sent to the three firms which had not previously replied. These firms responded favourably to the second letter. They comprised two smaller regional firms (GR1 and GR2) employing in the range of 6,500 to 7,500 employees and one semi-national company (GR3) with a workforce of intermediate size, falling between the smaller regional companies and the larger national companies. Interviews in these companies were carried out from April to August 1986. The indirect approaches to the other two remaining companies proved abortive. It became impossible, within the time limits of the study, to carry out fieldwork in these companies which, unfortunately, were among the largest employers in the industry. However, in order to obtain a fuller picture of practices relating to patterns of working hours in the industry, less detailed information concerning one of these firms was obtained from other sources. Information concerning one national firm specializing in hypermarkets was received from other researchers who had detailed knowledge of employment practices in this firm. It will be referred to as GN6. Figure 1.2 summarizes the annotation used to identify the companies and the information about numbers employed and regional distribution for the sample firms.

Most of the companies involved in the research owned outlets of varying size, from small supermarkets to superstores. However, some specialized in specific ranges of outlet size (see Table 1.1). GN6 and GR2 have a large proportion of outlets with a surface area over 2,322m², while GN1 and GN2 had a large proportion of outlets with a surface area in the range 464-929m² and GN4, GR1, and GR3 were specialised in outlets of surface area in the range 939-2,322m².

Figure 1.2 British Sample Companies: Regional Distribution and Size
(Numbers Employed)



Code:

GN = British company with national distribution in which fieldwork was carried out.

GN6 = British company with national distribution for which only secondary source material is available

GR = British company with a distribution of outlets which are confined to between three and six main regions only.

The final sample of eight companies in Britain for which complete data were available owned 212 of the 257 superstores (84%) and nineteen of the forty hypermarkets (47%) in 1984 (according to calculations based on Euromonitor [1986] and company reports for the same year). In February 1986 they also owned approximately 76% of all grocery stores with a surface area between 929m² and 2,322m² and 71% of all grocery stores with a surface area of over 2,322m².

Table 1.1 Number of Outlets by Surface Area and Proportion of Outlets
in each Size Range, British Sample, 1986

Firm	464.5- 929m ²	%	929- 2,322m ²	%	More than 2,322m ²	%
GN1	121	45.0	135	50.0	11	4.0
GN2	199	60.8	109	33.3	19	5.8
GN3	76	44.4	54	31.5	41	24.0
GN4	27	10.5	193	75.0	37	14.3
GN5	88	29.0	110	36.2	106	34.9
GN6	2	1.9	11	10.8	89	87.2
GR1	3	8.8	21	61.8	10	29.4
GR2	2	6.0	9	30.0	23	76.0
GR3	31	24.6	94	74.6	1	0.7
Total	519	33.2	736	47.1	307	19.6

Source: IGD (1986a) (1986b) (1986c).

They can therefore claim to have quite an effective coverage of the major large-scale outlets in grocery retailing. In 1984 these employers accounted for 72% of all employees in large-scale grocery retailing (according to calculations based on IGD, 1986a, 1986b, and company reports for the same year). Hence, it is likely that the practices and policies of the companies participating in the research will be representative of those affecting employees in large-scale grocery retailing generally.

In France the ten largest employers in large-scale grocery retailing were approached by letter for interviews in December 1985 and January 1986 (an example of these letters is given in Appendix I). The chief negotiator for the employers' union MAS who had been interviewed in December 1985, supplied a number of contacts both among the firms which were to be approached in the first stages of the project and among other smaller companies specializing in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

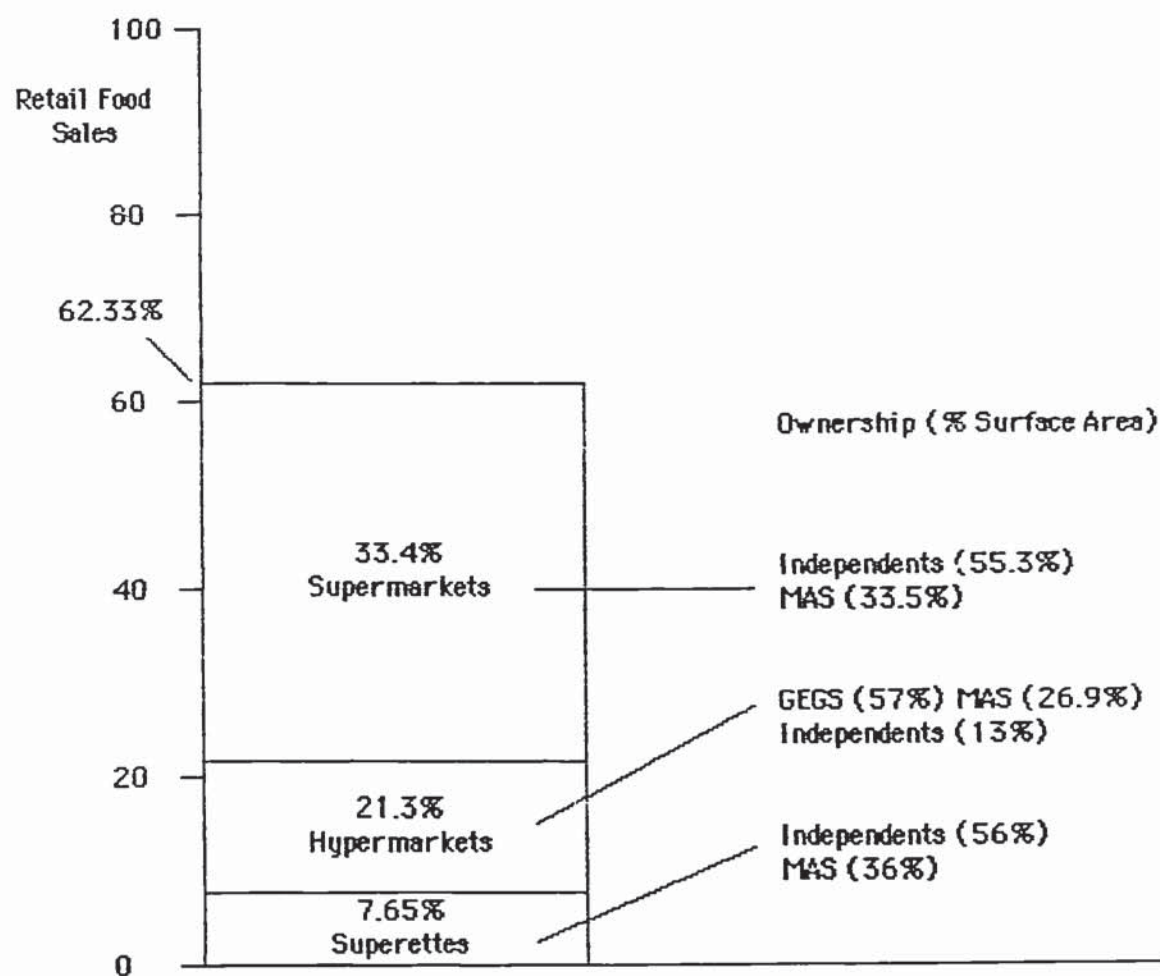
On the first attempt only two companies replied to the request for an interview. These came from two national firms specializing in hypermarkets (known in the industry as grandes entreprises de grandes surfaces [GEGS]). These two firms represented two of the four largest single employers in the sector, employing between 13,000 and 20,000 employees. In order to preserve anonymity they will be referred to as FN1 and FN2.

Because of the poor success rate achieved from the initial letter a second written approach was made to the rest of the firms in March 1986. At the second attempt only two other employers responded. However, these firms were the other two largest employers in the sector and had workforces of between 12,500 and 21,000 strong. Both firms owned a network of outlets covering most of France, one firm was a GEGS and specialized in hypermarkets (FN3) while the other, a MAS firm (FN4), owned outlets ranging from superettes to hypermarkets. At this stage only four out of the ten retailers had responded and it was clear that, while written communication was an effective method of gaining access to British companies, in France a more direct approach would have to be made if the deadline for the completion of the project was to be met. Consequently, a number of interviews were arranged by telephone during the time set aside for the French fieldwork in April 1986. Three smaller regionally-based subsidiaries (firms FR1-3) of a group ranking overall as the biggest employer in this sector agreed to participate in the research as a result of telephone communication during the fieldwork period. FR3 subsequently became the case study firm. More detailed consideration of the characteristics of this firm and the process by which it was chosen for the case study are made in the description of the case study research. The other five largest employing companies, which had considerably smaller workforces (3,000-

11,000 employees) and were more regional in location than the top five companies, proved to be more difficult to contact, even by telephone. It was possible to gain access to only one of these remaining top five employing companies (FN4). This company was developing a specialization in hypermarket retailing but also ran a number of supermarkets and superettes in the south west of France. As a result of the contacts provided by the MAS it was, however, possible to obtain an interview with the eleventh largest employer (FR4) in the industry. This firm was a small subsidiary of a major group; it was regionally-based and specialized in superettes and supermarchés in the range 120-1,800m². This company offered the advantage of providing some additional insights into the factors influencing patterns of working hours in smaller companies and on the relationship between outlet size and patterns of working hours. This is particularly relevant information in France where smaller independent retailers own a large percentage of French supermarket outlets (see Figure 1.3). All the regional firms (FR1-FR5) employed between 2,000 and 4,000 employees and were all MAS firms. A summary of this profile data and the codes by which the firms will be known is detailed in Figure 1.4 below.

As in Britain many of the firms in the French sample had outlets of varying size. However, more of the French firms (see Table 1.2) specialized almost exclusively in either one or the other end of the size range (in terms of surface area). The implications of these dissimilarities are discussed fully below. Three of the French firms FN1, FN2, and FN3 mainly owned very large outlets (over 2,500m²), FR1 specialized in outlets in the range 400-2,500m², while FN4, FR2, FR3, and FR5, had principally developed small outlets with a surface area in the range 120-399m².

Figure 1.3 Distribution of Outlet Sales Area by Ownership Type
in France



Source: LSA (1986c) (1986d) (1986e)

Table 1.2 Number of Outlets by Surface Area and Proportion of Outlets
in Each Size Range, French Sample, 1986

Firm	120- 399m ²	%	400- 2,500m ²	%	More than 2,500m ²	%
FN1	-	-	2	5.1	37	94.8
FN2	62	41.6	24	16.1	63	42.3
FN3	-	-	-	-	64	100.0
FN4	2,695	91.2	220	7.4	40	1.4
FR1	-	-	26	78.8	7	21.2
FR2	227	82.5	38	13.8	10	3.6
FR3	929	95.9	33	34.0	6	6.2
FR4*						
FR5	129	77.7	27	16.3	10	6.0
Total	4,042	82.7	370	7.5	237	4.8

* Data from this firm were not compatible for the rest. They owned 120 outlets in the range 120-800m², and 150 in the range 800-1800m².

Source: company reports.

Overall, approximately 8% of all supermarkets and 34% of all hypermarkets in France in 1986 are included in the firms in the sample (based on statistics from LSA, 1986d, 1986e and company reports for the same year). Of the 271 hypermarkets (LSA, 1986d) belonging to GECS firms it was possible to discuss patterns of working hours with firms running 60% of them. In France hypermarkets and supermarkets together employed 257,510 men and women in 1982 according to the Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce (1984) representing about 10% of the total retail workforce. The firms in this sample employed 31% of the retail workforce in supermarkets and hypermarkets in 1983 and 24.4% of employees in food retailing in 1982 (data compiled from company reports and information from the 1983 Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce and 1982 Enquête sur l'Emploi).

Figure 1.4 French Sample Companies: Regional Distribution and Size
(Numbers Employed)

)	
FN1))	
FN2) GEGS)	Employing in the range 13-20,000
))	
FN3))	
)	Employing in the range
)	12,500-21,000
FN4))	
))	
FR1))	
FR2) MAS)	Employing in the range 2-4,000
FR3))	
FR4))	
FR5))	

Code:

FN = French firm with national or near national coverage.

FR = French firm with regional coverage only.

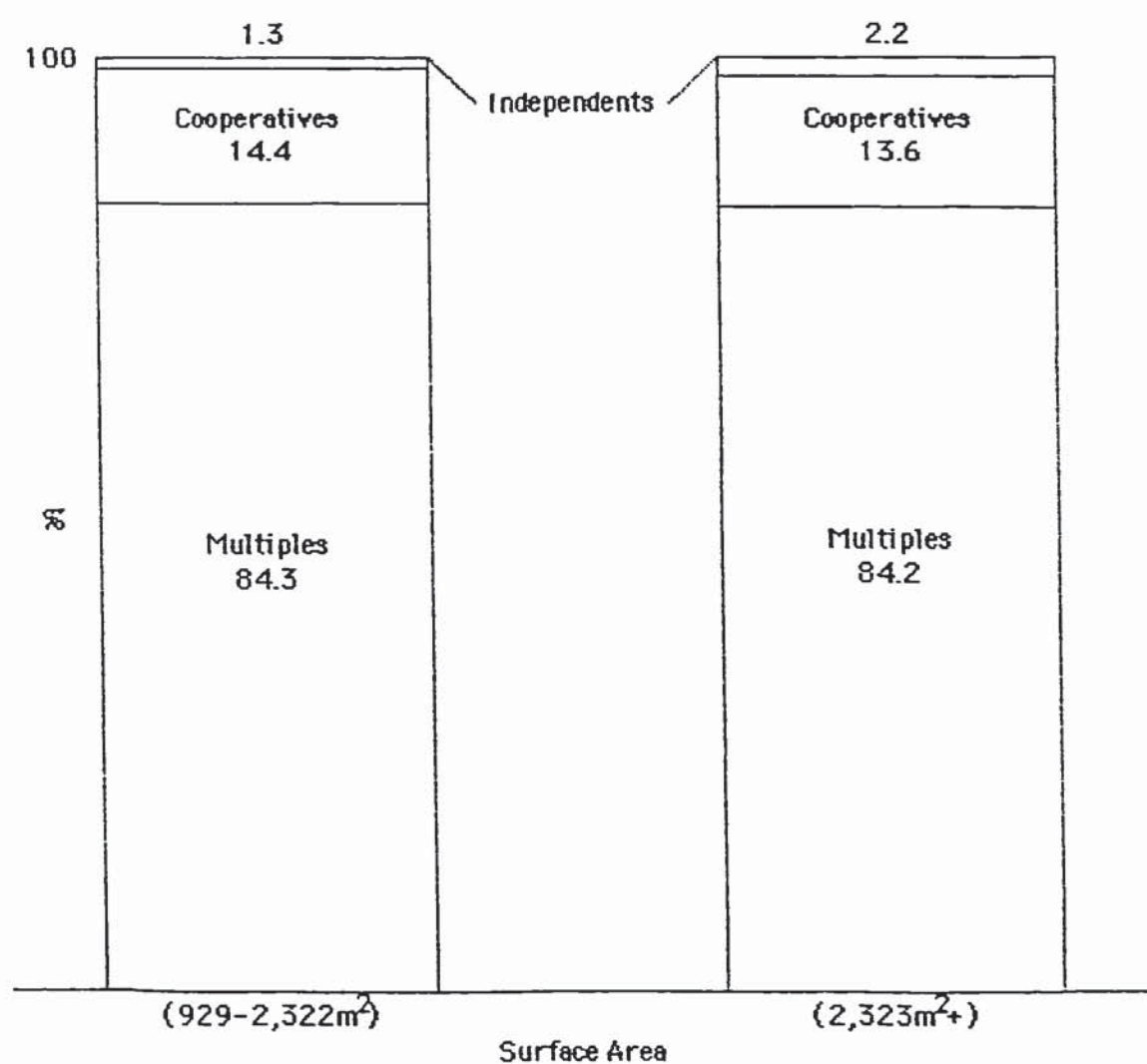
A number of comparability problems arose with the sample firms. These difficulties demonstrate clearly the difficulties in achieving comparable observational units in cross-national comparative research. Firstly, the British sample was more representative of large-scale grocery outlets, and employees working in such outlets, than the French sample, because retail outlets, and hence the workforces, in food retailing in Britain are more concentrated in firms with multiple outlets than in France (see Figures 1.3 and 1.5). In France, as noted above, independent firms - whether or not they are affiliated to buying organizations - own a considerably higher proportion of supermarkets than do multiple organizations, and they own a significant proportion of hypermarkets. Given the mis-match in classifications of surface areas of retail outlets used in the two countries (for a detailed

explanation of the differing definitions see Chapter 4) care must be taken in comparing the statistics shown in Figures 1.3 and 1.5.

Secondly, problems of comparability lie in the differing ranges of outlet size owned by the retailers participating in the fieldwork in the two countries. Comparison of Tables 1.1 and 1.2 must take into consideration the fact that they show size ranges which are based on differing characteristics of the retail industry in the two countries. For example, Table 1.1 includes a size range which is not used in Britain because in contrast with the situation in France these size outlets do not tend to be owned by the major multiple retailers. Nevertheless, these statistics suggest that the British sample included a much higher proportion of outlets in larger size ranges than the French sample. They also suggest that the French sample was much more heavily weighted by firms owning small outlets, indeed this size of outlet does not figure in the British categorization of retail outlets' surface areas.

The implications of the differing ranges of outlet size included in the samples are twofold. Firstly, the higher proportion of smaller outlets in the French sample would lead us to expect (given the relationship between surface area and part-time levels found in Britain) that part-time levels will be lower in France than in Britain. It is difficult, however, to quantify precisely the likely effect of surface areas on part-time levels in France because French statistics only examine the relationship between numbers of employees in an outlet and levels of part-time work. Bieganski (1983) found that levels of part-time work were nearly twice as high in outlets with 200-499 employees compared with those with 10-49.

Figure 1.5 Sales Area in Outlets Over 929m² by Ownership Type-
British Grocery Retailing



Source: IGD (1986a) (1986b) and company reports for the same year.

Secondly, the differing ranges of outlet sizes may have a bearing on patterns of working hours in terms of the number, organization and flexibility of hours. At the time of the research there was no evidence which explicitly showed a relationship between outlet size and working hours (as found by Sparks in Britain in 1987) but it was assumed when carrying out the fieldwork that there might be some effect of differing ranges of outlet sizes on patterns of working hours, not least as a consequence of the relationship between part-time levels and outlet size. In order to try to overcome this problem of differing outlet sizes in the analysis of the research findings attempts were made either to compare companies from the two countries which were as similar as possible in terms of outlet sizes or to take into account differences in outlet sizes in the interpretation of the findings.

Finally, problems of comparability also arise from the differing average size (in terms of numbers employed) of the major large-scale grocery retailers included in the sample. As a consequence of the greater concentration of grocery retailing, which is related to the more widespread nature of national companies in Britain compared with France, the major retailers in Britain are much larger than their French counterparts. Not only does this have implications for the representativity of the samples (as discussed earlier) but also it may have an unforeseen impact on the research findings. To date there has been no research considering the relationship between company size and patterns of working hours in retail outlets. Some indications about the nature of this relationship may be obtained by comparing part-time levels for differing sized firms within and between Britain and France. This comparison suggests that there is no explicit relationship between the two in either country. In France, for example, two of the largest firms had the lowest levels of part-time work, while in Britain levels

of part-time work were broadly similar independent of the size of firm (for a full discussion about part-time levels in the sample firms see Chapter 5). It is unlikely, therefore, that the variable size of firm (in terms of numbers employed) would have an impact on patterns of working hours.

The decision about the level at which interviews should be carried out in the firms chosen for the research in Britain and France was made according to the criterion that, as far as possible, the individual (or individuals) should be interviewed who is (are) most likely to be able to give information about policy directives relating to patterns of working hours as well as information relating to actual practices in retail outlets, which would be broadly comparable for the purposes of this research. As a consequence, several information sources were used, because the most suitable interviewee (according to this criterion) varied depending on the organizational structures of the firms under study.

In all the five British national companies (GN1-5) the personnel function was organized on a regional basis and it was possible to interview regional personnel directors (although in GN2 this was only possible in subsidiary GS2). In two of these firms (GN1 and GN4), one of which was the case study company (GN4) (for the reason outlined above), discussions were also held with branch level management. In GN1 the branch manager carried out the store personnel functions and was the sole respondent; in GN4 discussions were held with both the branch manager and personnel officer. In the British subsidiary company which specialized in hypermarkets (GS1) where each outlet operated autonomously, the individual who could best respond to the questions was again the branch personnel officer. Although a central

policy did not apply to all outlets, it was clear that similar practices concerning working hours existed in most outlets. In one British company (GR3), a medium-sized employer, the interview took place with the personnel director. In contrast with some of the personnel directors in the larger national companies, he influenced policy directly and was in close contact with grassroots operations. In the British regional firm GR2 discussions were held with the personnel manager who gave directives to stores on personnel policy, and in regional firm GR1 discussions were held with the training controller who, in the absence of a personnel manager, effectively undertook the personnel function.

Two of the three national companies specializing in hypermarkets in France (FN1 and FN2) were organized on a regional basis, and it was possible to meet the regional personnel representatives. As proponents of policy with an extensive knowledge of grassroots operations, regional personnel managers were therefore suitable respondents for the purposes of the fieldwork. In the third national company specializing in hypermarkets (FN3) it was only possible for discussions to be held with a store personnel manager owing to disruption at head office (a new company personnel officer was shortly to be appointed). Although, restricted access in this case gave a limited view of this firm's practices, a second interview with a steward from FO in another FN3 store produced supportive information relating to patterns of working hours. However, the lower level at which information was obtained will be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the research findings. In the remaining French companies (FN4, FR1-5) interviews took place at several different levels. For example, in the smaller companies which tended to be very centralized in relation to employment policy, the policy maker in matters of working time - if indeed there

was a policy - was the personnel director and no other levels of management existed between him and the branch manager. For this reason the personnel director was the most suitable respondent in the regional firms FR1 and FR4. In company FN4, which was highly centralized but gave some measure of autonomy to hypermarket management, interviews were held with the personnel director and a hypermarket personnel manager. Interviews were also held at both these levels in the French case study company (FR3) where real autonomy for employment practices was given to hypermarket management. In the French firm FR2, where responsibility for personnel matters was divisionalized and the divisional manager's influence was considerable, the hypermarket division's personnel manager was interviewed. Finally, in the French company FR3 there was no personnel function as such, either at executive or store level. Each hypermarket or supermarket devised its own policies relating to patterns of working hours; they were limited only by the outlet's financial targets which were set by the firm's financial directors. Owing to this lack of direction relating to patterns of working hours, it was most appropriate to discuss these questions at store level where the relevant decisions were made. However, given the relative autonomy with which outlets operated, the degree to which generalizations about practices within the company can be made is more limited than by comparison with other firms. This should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the research findings.

Once suitable respondents had been identified they were interviewed in order to elicit original data about patterns of working hours. In accordance with the standardized case comparison method this data was obtained through the interviews being carried out by the same person using systematic and standardized procedures in the two countries.

In both countries the format of the interviews was semi-structured, for the same reason as it was in interviews with the trades unions, and a list of prompt questions was used to highlight the principal areas for questioning. The semi-structured interviews were used primarily to establish: the firm's labour force structure and the way in which it was derived; typical daily and weekly patterns of working hours and their rationale (and in particular their link with labour productivity measurement); the flexibility in working hours, in particular on a daily and weekly basis; the impact of work's committee decisions and union influence on patterns of working hours. The interviews also attempted to elicit information about the characteristics of the part-time workforce, the relationship between part-timers' characteristics and their patterns of working time, and employers' attitudes towards part-time employees. Respondents in both countries were notified in advance of the interview of the main areas of questioning. The interview schedule and the outline sent to respondents are given in Appendix II.

The different meaning of certain concepts in Britain and France caused some difficulty in the formulation of the prompt questions. This problem arose in particular with such key concepts as part-time work, supermarket and patterns of working time, where definitions differ cross-nationally. This potential pitfall, common to cross-national research, was overcome in part by asking the interviewees for their own definitions of the concepts, hence establishing an objective measure. Differences in concepts were later cross-checked and taken into account in the analysis of the research findings. In relation to some concepts such as casual, permanent, full and part-time work, problems of definition were as significant within nations as cross-nationally. The

open-ended nature of the interview questions enabled such problems of equivalence of meaning and concept to be resolved relatively easily.

Cseh-Szombathy (1985) has noted that:

Sometimes it may be necessary to ask a number of questions about one aspect of a phenomenon in one country, while it makes little sense to do likewise in other countries (Cseh-Szombathy, 1985: 59).

In the industry-wide research this was the case and prompt questions were also devised in order to draw out the specificities of the French and British contexts. Hence, in Britain, where there is relatively little legislation in the area of patterns of working hours, it was relevant to ask whether flexibility in working hours was written into the employment contract. In France, on the other hand, where the flexibility of working hours is established by labour law, such questions were superfluous and it was more appropriate to ask to what extent employers took advantage of the legal provisions for flexibility. Similarly, questions relating to the use of semi-autonomous teams in France, where this innovation had originated, sought to establish the reasons for the introduction of the system, its method of operation and its degree of success. In Britain, however, where such a system had not yet been introduced questions were aimed at eliciting reactions to it.

Due to the short period available for questioning, it was not possible to obtain as detailed quantitative information (ie about patterns of working hours) as might have been liked. This provided an additional reason for the case study research which enabled more detailed data to be collected. The industry-level research provided general information about patterns of working hours which allowed for a qualitative

analysis of working hour policies and practices in the two countries to be carried out.

Case Study Research at Outlet Level

The primary aim of the case study at outlet level was to obtain a snapshot of patterns of working hours and factors influencing working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France. This detailed information about the mechanisms affecting patterns of working hours at outlet level in the two countries was intended to help supplement the more general knowledge of practices and policies obtained from discussions with employers at firm level, and to be used for comparative analysis to give support to the hypotheses relating to patterns of working hours in Britain and France set out in Chapters 2 and 4. An additional objective of the fieldwork at outlet level was to carry out an initial probe into the relationship between reasons for working part-time and patterns of working hours for women who have children and work part-time, to assess the extent to which these employees could control their working hours and, more specifically, to seek support for the hypothesis set out in Chapter 4 concerning satisfaction with patterns of working hours.

In view of these objectives standardized case comparison was used as the appropriate method for carrying out the research. This method was adopted at the outset to help eliminate the effects of the firm and outlet on observations and to isolate a national effect. In the context of large-scale grocery retailing it proved very difficult to identify independent variables which could be held constant in order to attempt to isolate a national effect in relation to patterns of working hours. The factors influencing patterns of working hours are complex and inter-related: the literature (see Chapter 4) suggests that, in

both Britain and France, patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery outlets may be related in some way to outlet size, product range, the store operator, and additional factors such as the location of the outlet, trading hours and the presence of Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) systems in store (as explained in Chapter 4).

Local labour market conditions can also have a bearing on employers' employment practices (see Loveridge and Mok, 1979), and this might be expected to have an impact on the policies of employers in relation to patterns of working hours in retail outlets. Labour market conditions were also considered to be the most important variable, with a bearing on the choice of case study outlet and firm, in the comparison of reasons for part-time working and patterns of working hours among women with children who work part-time. Labour market conditions, in particular unemployment rates, have been shown in research in Britain and France to affect married women's participation in the labour market and therefore may be expected to be related to the reasons why women with children are working part-time³.

Another factor which may be expected to bear on women's reasons for working part-time, and which was also considered as an important variable in the choice of case study outlet and firm, is the degree to which the service sector (in which the majority of women's jobs are located) was developed in the local labour market. A poorly developed service sector (which is reflected in the proportion of employees working in this sector) is likely to create particularly unfavourable labour market conditions for women (and have a knock-on effect on unemployment levels), which may have a bearing on their reasons for working part-time.

It was not thought practical, given the time limitations on the research, to attempt to control all the variables which might enable the isolation of national effects in the case study work. At the outset an attempt was made to find firms and outlets of similar size located within towns or cities of comparable size and labour market conditions where the service sector plays a comparable role in the local economy (measured in terms of proportion of employees working in service sector activities). However, it was recognized that, while controlling for these variables would be likely to increase the reliability of the findings, the small scale of the research would mean that they could not be used to generalize about national trends.

In practice at a preliminary stage all major employers in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain were contacted and tentatively asked if they would consider being the subject of a detailed case study. It was thought to be easier for practical reasons to carry out the British side of the research first and then to follow this up with the French study. Subsequently, a major British national high street retailer (GN4) agreed to participate in the research.

The company is one of long standing which had started out in corner shop retailing and adapted to changing circumstances. It is primarily a grocery retailer, although it has recently developed interests in non-food retailing. Its outlets are located throughout Britain although it has relatively few stores in Scotland. It owns outlets of varying surface area (see Table 1.1) and specializes in the range 929-2,322m². During the 1980s the company reduced the number of its middle of the range units and gave priority to increasing the number of units with a surface area of more than 2,322m². Consequently the average size of its supermarkets has been increasing significantly in the

1980s. As a national company it is typical of the British retail grocery scene which is dominated by large national multiple retailers. The company was the second largest retailer in Britain in 1985 (excluding co-operative retailers) in terms of sales, and in 1984 had a 11.9% share of total grocery trade sales (IGD, 1984). In 1985 the company employed over 62,000 employees which, excluding co-operative retailers, made it the second largest employer in grocery retailing.

A supermarket (2,043 m²) in a suburb of Birmingham (three kilometres from the centre) was chosen for the case study. Birmingham was chosen for the case study because it was thought likely that, being Britain's second largest city, there would be a wide range of retail companies and types of outlets in which the research could be carried out, and because it was convenient for the researcher. Birmingham has a well-developed service sector: in the West Midlands region, 57% of employees were located in service sector activities in 1982 according to the Census of Population. The case study outlet was marginally larger than the average size of supermarkets in the parent company in terms of both surface area and weekly throughput of items. The store was slightly atypical for a store of its size because as it was one of the older stores in the company (it was opened in 1965) it did not have a home-made bakery or a delicatessen. Consequently, staffing levels in the store were a little lower in the case study outlet than in stores of similar size offering these services. The outlet was chosen for the case study despite its atypical nature because it was located near a number of shops (including other large-scale grocery retailers), offices, and houses, which meant that access could be safely and easily obtained from early morning to late evening, times at which interviewing for some of the more unsocial shifts would need to take place. Apart from the absence of a delicatessen and home-made bakery

the British store had a normal range of goods which were mainly food based, with the exception of cleaning and chemist products.

The first stage of the research with the British research took place in September 1985. While the British research was taking place, attempts were being made to locate a comparable French firm which would participate in the research and which had outlets in a town of comparable size and labour market conditions to Birmingham. A firm of similar size was sought for the case study, even though it was not expected that size would have a major impact on patterns of working hours, in order to eliminate any bias which might arise from size differences.

In France the most comparable town to Birmingham in terms of its size and the extent of development of the service sector was its twin town Lyons (60% of employees were working in service sector activities in 1982 in Lyons itself, with 58% in the Rhône-Alpes region overall). Nevertheless, local (male and female) unemployment rates differed significantly with levels being higher in the Birmingham than in the Lyons area (16.3% compared with 8.3%). As a result of this difference it might be expected that more British than French women may be working part-time for economic reasons (from the 'encouraged worker' effect) as a result of their husband's unemployment, and that more women in Britain may be forced into part-time work because of the greater shortage of full-time work. Also, these differences in local labour market conditions may have an influence on employment practices, because higher unemployment levels give employers greater bargaining power over employment conditions. It is difficult to predict the impact which differing labour market conditions might have on patterns of working hours in the two countries because the impact is likely to

vary from one employer to another. In order to improve the comparability of the case studies, the fieldwork attempted to find out whether changing labour market conditions had affected patterns of working hours in the two outlets.

Major difficulties arose in gaining access to an outlet of similar size and location belonging to a firm of comparable importance in the industry. Outlets situated in the inner suburbs of Lyons were of a much smaller surface area than the British outlet and tended to belong to independent retailers, while outlets situated in the outer suburbs of Lyons were larger than the British outlet. A firm belonging to one of the major retailing groups in Lyons (FR3) agreed to participate in the case study. The firm chosen for the study belongs to a much larger national group whose subsidiaries own outlets located in most areas of France. At the time of the study the national group was the second largest employers in the retail grocery industry and it was the fifth largest retailer in France with a 5% share of the retail grocery market. The firm is well-established and, like many other large-scale grocery retailers in France today, started business with small grocery outlets (succursales) and moved into large-scale retailing as the opportunity arose. The company's outlets are located mainly in the South and South East of France, and the firm is, in this sense, representative of the more geographically dispersed companies in French large-scale grocery retailing. The regionally based company owns retail outlets of various surface areas (see Table 1.2). While small outlets are disproportionately represented in the company's outlet range, nearly half of all sales (48%) were made through the six hypermarkets stores alone in 1985. In recent years, in the face of falling sales of food in France and consequently increased competition, the company had been following a similar strategy as its British

counterpart by trying to close very small outlets, and to modernize and increase sales area in all types of outlets.

Because the company chosen for the study was regionally based it does not account for as high a proportion of retail grocery sales as the British company (its sales represented 0.9% of national grocery sales in 1985) and it employs only 3,911. This difference compared with the British case study company reflects the greater concentration of sales and employment in the hands of a small number of retailers in the British grocery retailing industry. Although the French company was much smaller (in terms of numbers employed and sales) than its British counterpart, it was not thought, for the reasons set out above, that this would have a significant effect on patterns of working hours in the case study outlets.

All the large-scale grocery outlets belonging to the French firm were in the outer suburbs of Lyons or further afield and were larger than British outlet. This difference reflected national characteristics of the nature and location of large-scale grocery outlets. As there was not time to find another firm with an outlet whose surface area would be comparable with the British outlet, the closest of the firm's large-scale grocery outlets - situated seven kilometres from the centre of Lyons - was chosen as the case study outlet. The outlet was a hypermarket which had a much larger surface area than the British case study store: 7,438m², and it was slightly larger than the average hypermarket size in the French parent company (in terms of surface area). The positive correlation between part-time levels and size of outlet in both Britain and France (explained in Chapter 4) and the possible implications of differing outlet sizes for patterns of working hours suggested that the dissimilar sizes of the outlets would

introduce sample bias into the research findings. Hence, attempts were made to locate a second British outlet with characteristics more similar to those of the French store. This proved impossible in the short period available for carrying out the research. Consequently, efforts were made to assess to what extent differences in surface area of the stores would account for dissimilarities in patterns of working hours found.

There were other differences in the outlets associated with their different sizes. The French case study outlet was located in a shopping centre seven kilometres from the centre of Lyons. The centre included small boutiques and restaurants, but no other large-scale grocery retailers. The main competition to the French store came from a hypermarket two kilometres from the shopping centre, which shared the clientele from the neighbouring residential areas and from Lyons. The outlet had a product range which was typical of hypermarket stores: it sold a wide range of non-food goods such as electrical wares, records, books and clothes, as well as preprepared and fresh foods.

The nature of this in-depth and small-scale research leads to problems of representativity and limits the ability to make generalizations on the basis of the findings. In order to overcome some of these limitations the findings are interpreted in relation to the findings from the industry-wide research which provides a more reliable basis for comparison. The research findings from the case study, therefore, should be viewed as a means of informing the findings from secondary data and the industry-wide research.

The research process in the case studies was broken down into four main steps which, in accordance with the methodology of standardized case

comparison, involved replicating standardized research methods in the two outlets (see Walton, 1973). The first step involved collecting empirical evidence about the stores' and their parent companies' labour force structure: the breakdown by sex, age, hours worked and occupation. Particular attention was paid to obtaining data relating to the characteristics of the stores' part-time workforce in terms of age, sex, marital status, and shift patterns. Obtaining some of this data from the British store was particularly laborious because the data were not available in an easily manageable form. It was necessary to collect the relevant information from individual records and subsequently to rework the data using a computer in order to obtain statistics which would be comparable with the French format.

The second step involved observing the methods by which daily and weekly patterns of working hours were established. This implied spending time with the individuals responsible for scheduling patterns of working hours at store level and, where applicable, at firm level. The third step involved carrying out interviews with store managers and other personnel involved in establishing patterns of working hours at outlet level and with personnel management at firm level. The objective of these interviews was to identify the main factors influencing policy directives relating to patterns of working hours and their application in the outlet. These interviews were semi-structured and based on the format used in interviews with employers in the two countries.

A final step involved semi-structured interviews with samples of twenty-five women with children working part-time in each outlet. The aim of the interviews was to contrast and compare the relationship between reasons for working part-time and patterns of working hours for

part-timers in the two stores and to gain support for the hypothesis set out in Chapter 4 concerning their satisfaction with these hours. The best method of achieving this was thought to be to examine these areas for women working various shift patterns in the two stores and then to contrast and compare the findings from the two countries. Given the importance of the variable age in determining women's patterns of part-time working hours (at least in Britain), an effort was made to interview women with children who were representative, in terms of the age, of women on each shift pattern in the two stores. However, it was not always possible to obtain representative samples of women with children working on various shift patterns for several reasons. Firstly, because some women were absent on holiday or sick, secondly, because interviewees were questioned in store, and their availability depended on the daily level of business and, finally, because not all women were willing to be interviewed. An attempt was made, nevertheless, to ensure that where certain age groups were dominant on shift patterns, women from these age groups were adequately sampled, and similarly that when there was a spread of ages women were sampled from most age groups.

In the British sample (see Tables 1.3-1.6) the women taken from the mid-day shift (Table 1.3), Saturday and late nights and twilight shifts (Table 1.5) were broadly representative of the women on those shifts. However, the samples from the evening display shift and the day part-time shifts (Tables 1.4 and 1.6 respectively) were less representative of women on these shifts because particular problems were encountered in finding women to interview on these shifts. In the French store it proved much more difficult to try to find women who were representative of each shift pattern because there were so many different patterns (for an explanation of this see Chapter 6).

Table 1.3 Women Part-timers with Children by Age Group in Sample from Mid-day Shift Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift

	Age Group				
	21-25	36-40	40-45	56-60	Total
Total no. in Store	1	1	2	1	5
Sample	1	1	2	1	5

Table 1.4 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from Evening Display Shift Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift (and Proportion of Women in Each Age Group)

	Age Group					
	21-25	26-30	30-35	36-40	40-45	Total
Total no. in store	1(3.3)	10(33)	9(30)	4(13)	6(20)	30
Sample	0	3 (60)	1(20)	1(20)	0	5

In order to simplify the analysis shifts were broken down into a smaller number of categories which grouped together the main shift patterns with similar characteristics: rolling shifts on check-outs, semi-autonomous team shifts, rolling shifts on the information desk, and fixed shifts from shop-floor departments. As in the British store some problems were encountered in finding enough women from specific age groups to interview. Consequently, the sample does not fully represent women with children on each major shift pattern (see Tables 1.7-1.10). Overall, similar proportions of all female part-timers were interviewed in the stores (18.6% in Britain compared with 16.9% in France) and similar numbers of women were interviewed from each principal age group (see Table 1.11).

Table 1.5 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from Saturday, Late Nights and Twilight Shifts Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts (and Proportion of Women in Each Age Group)

	Age Group						
	<21	21-25	26-30	30-35	36-40	40-45	Total
Total no. in store	1	2(10.5)	4(21)	7(36)	4(21)	1	19
Sample	0	1(11.1)	3(33)	3(33)	2(22)	0	9

Table 1.6 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Day Part-time Shift Compared with Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift (and Proportion of Women in Each Age Group)

	Age Group								
	21-25	26-30	30-35	36-40	40-45	46-50	50-53	56-60	Total
Total no. in store	2(5.1)	1	2(5.)	1	15(38)	6(15.4)	6(15.4)	6(15.4)	39
Sample	0	0	1(33)	0	2(66)	0	0	0	3

Table 1.7 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from Rolling Shifts on Check-outs Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts

	Age Group						
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	Total
Total no. in Store	2	2	3	0	2	1	10
Sample	1	2	0	0	0	1	4

Table 1.8 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Semi-autonomous Team Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group in the Team

	Age Group						
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	Total
Total no. in Store	3	3	1	1	0	0	8
Sample	2	2	0	0	0	0	4

Table 1.9 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Information Desk Shift Compared with the Distribution of all Women with Children by Age Group on that Shift

	Age Group						
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	Total
Total no. in Store	0	0	6	1	1	0	8
Sample	0	0	3	0	1	0	4

Table 1.10 Women Part-timers by Age Group in Sample from the Fixed Shifts on Shop-floor Departments Compared with the Distribution of All Women with Children by Age Group on those Shifts

	Age Group						
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	Total
Total no. in Store	2	2	7	8	16	0	35
Sample	1	1	1	2	5	0	10

Table 1.11 Numbers of Women from British and French Samples by
Age Group

	Age Group						
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	Total
GB	2	7	4	4	4	1	22
F	4	5	4	2	6	1	22

Although the sample of women with children from the stores was small, and there are inadequacies in the samples in both countries, it does seem reasonable to use the findings based on this research provided that these problems are taken into account and are located in the context of the industry-level research. These findings provide insights into the relationship between women's reasons for working part-time, satisfaction with part-time work, and patterns of working hours, and as such can help indicate areas for further research. However, they cannot be used on their own to make national generalizations.

In both stores, interviews took place in a private room: the store management made no attempt in either store to be present at the interviews. Interviewees were taped, the tape recorder was unobtrusive and the interviewees did not seem to find it a deterrent to replying fully to the questions. An attempt was made to ensure that employees in both stores knew that the interviews were part of a PhD research project. Despite this, only the British store remembered to give prior information about the context of the research. In order to compensate for this in the French store interviews were preceded with a general preamble about the research. The information given in both stores did

not indicate the sorts of questions which would be asked in order to ensure that all responses would be spontaneous.

Interviews with part-timers focused on the women's personal characteristics in terms of age, number of children and educational level. They also investigated their past employment histories, motivations for working part-time and the satisfaction gained from work, actual and preferred patterns of working time, and future employment plans. Once again a semi-structured format was used, and comparable prompt questions were devised for this purpose (see Appendix II). The open-ended nature of the questions ensured that concepts which might otherwise be mis-translated, such as part-time work, were fully explained. For example when women stated they worked part-time, attempts were made to obtain an objective measure of this by asking for their average weekly working hours (excluding lunch and other breaks). Due to the small size of the samples it was considered that the most suitable analytical approach was qualitative, for which detailed reference would be made to women's individual situations. To this end a relaxed environment was created in the interviews in which women felt able to openly discuss their attitudes.

In sum, attempts were made in the course of the fieldwork and in the interpretation of the findings to overcome some of the limitations of the research at firm and outlet level and hence improve the comparability of the research. When these limitations are taken into account it does seem reasonable to draw limited national generalizations about patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France.

Footnotes

1. For example, Hantrais and Ager (1985) review the problems of language barriers, and Berting (1987) notes the impact of different languages and cultures in organizing international comparative research. Form (1973) highlights the difficulties encountered as a result of interviewer distrust in some cultures, while Johnson and Artright (1973) note the problems of inadequacy and incomparability of national statistical sources in analyzing Latin American illegitimacy. Other authors (see for example Cseh-Szombathy (1985) and Boulin (1985) have identified the problems of comparing specific concepts.

2. A range of data collection methods are possible. For example, Bodiguel (1984), in his comparison of high level public officials in East and Western European countries, adopts a functional methodology to complement his evaluation of formal situations. Haller and Mack (1984) used reanalysis of data sets in order to assess structural changes and mobility in Austria and Poland. Social survey research was the basis of the European Values project described by Harding (1987), and Masser (1984) has used case study methods to carry out comparative research in urban and regional planning.

3. Research carried out in Britain and the United States has found that unemployment can have two opposing effects on a married woman's labour supply. These are the 'discouraged' worker effect and the 'encouraged or added' worker effect. It is the second of these effects which may have a bearing on the decision to work part-time. The encouraged or added worker effect occurs when husbands are unemployed and married women are encouraged to seek employment to make up family income. Although the effect is linked to the husband's employment, this in turn is likely to be linked to local labour market conditions (Mallier and Rosser, 1987). French research has also found evidence of the encouraged worker effect (Barthez, 1983). However, the long term effects have been shown to depend on women's qualification levels.

Chapter 2

A Franco-British Comparison of Changing Patterns of Working Hours

The object of this chapter is to review of changing patterns of working hours in Britain and France over the post-war period in order to provide the framework for the discussion about patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing. It draws together, compares and contrasts, relevant literature leading on to the presentation of two hypotheses. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first one compares and contrasts the principal changes in working hours over the post-war period in Britain and France, while the second describes the process by which these changes have taken place.

Changes in Working Hours in Britain and France

Changes in working hours over the post-war period are characterized by two main features: reductions in working hours and their restructuring. Franco-British comparisons about the restructuring of working hours are, in particular, problematical because little single-nation or comparative information is available. These changes have not been the subject of comprehensive government surveys, but only relatively small-scale studies. The discussion about the restructuring of working hours therefore attempts to draw out trends and to suggest hypotheses on the basis of relatively limited documentary material.

A number of articles and reports which compare single-nation studies of working hours have shown that, in common with a number of other Western industrialized countries, working hours in Britain and France have been declining during the post-war period (ETUI, 1979; Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983; Documentation Française, 1985; Boyer, 1986), although the rate

and extent of change has been different in the two countries¹. In Britain the total hours worked by the entire labour force have fallen by 20% since World War II and in France average annual hours worked per employee have fallen by a similar proportion over the same period (Lawson, 1983; Problèmes Economiques, 1984a). These reductions reflect, in particular, the trends towards longer paid holidays, a shorter working week, and the growth in part-time work.

The reduction in weekly working hours has been a major component of falling annual working hours in the two countries. Over the period 1972-81 working hours for manual workers fell from 45-39.5 hours per week in France (excluding lunch hours and breaks) and from 43-41.3 hours in Britain (including lunch and rest breaks) (Labour Research, 1984). In both countries reductions in weekly working hours have helped reduce the differences in working hours between employees in the service and industrial sectors, albeit to differing degrees, although disparities between working hours in these sectors remain in both Britain and France (Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983; Documentation Française, 1985).

Similarly, a large body of single nation data (notably Sloane, 1975; ANACT, 1980; Blyton, 1985) and of multi-nation surveys (such as OECD, 1973) suggests that Britain and France, in common with many other Western industrialized countries, have followed similar trends in the 1960s and 1970s in the restructuring of working hours. This period was characterized by innovations which have given employees greater choice in their working hours (De Lange, 1986). These innovations included the growth in flexible working hours, part-time work and innovative shift patterns². Nevertheless, it would seem that over this period more extensive changes in the flexibility and organization of working

hours were taking place in Britain compared with France, and notably that part-time work and innovative shift patterns were developing at a different pace in the two countries³.

Although part-time work grew in both countries in the 1960s and 1970s, it developed more rapidly and to a greater extent in Britain over this period⁴. The development of part-time work, which had begun its growth as early as 1951 in Britain, was particularly strong during the 1970s, while in France part-time work only started to grow significantly from 1973 onwards. The dissimilar speeds of growth in the two countries are reflected in part-time levels in the early 1980s. According to national statistics which are not strictly comparable but give some indications of the differences in magnitude in part-time levels (Census of Employment, 1981; Enquête sur l'Emploi, 1981), in 1981 the proportion of employees in Britain working part-time was approximately three times the proportion in France (20.1% compared with 6.37%). Although in both countries most of these jobs were taken by women, in 1981 the proportion of women employees working part-time in Britain was over three times the proportion in France: 41.6% compared with 13.8%. The growth of innovative shift patterns, which was concentrated in the 1970s, also appears to have been more rapid and more extensive in Britain than in France. Over this decade the increased use of shift systems in Britain gave rise to greater concern with the social and health implications of shift patterns. This led to a series of innovations in shift patterns such as changing the patterns and frequency of rotation of shifts, varying the lengths of different shifts, long shifts, personal and time flexibility schemes (McEwan Young, 1978, 1979, 1981). Personal flexibility schemes involve giving shift workers the same sort of discretion regarding start and finish times as flexi-time systems. Time flexibility schemes usually involve

operating within a framework of annual hours and offer concessions to the workforce (often in the form of time off and greater flexibility in working hours) in order to meet the production needs of the enterprise. One of the more widespread innovations in shift patterns during the 1970s was compressed working hours, which has been seen by some authors (such as De Lange, 1986) as offering flexibility in working hours primarily to employers (management-orientated flexibility). In Britain experiments with compressed working weeks became quite common in the 1970s when concepts such as "four days forty hours" gained much publicity (Poor, 1972). The British experience of the three-day week in the 1972-4 energy crises, which increased efficiency in some firms, encouraged them to adopt compressed working hours on a permanent basis. However, both four and four and a half day weeks were relatively widespread during the early 1960s amongst shiftworkers in the engineering industry and, in the latter case, amongst employees in the textile industry (Sloane, 1975). In France, by contrast, restrictive legislation which applied until January 1979 prevented the use of compressed working weeks.

In France the main characteristics of changes in shift patterns in the 1970s was the growth in two shift systems and a reduction in three shift systems (ANACT, 1980). These trends have been explained in terms of employers' reluctance to reorganize working hours, employees' resistance to night work, and the impact of French labour law which discouraged the development of semi-continuous and continuous systems (Doyelle, 1980). These factors probably resulted in few innovations in shift patterns in the 1970s. The main experiments would seem to have been for social reasons, namely the development of fifth crews in continuous operations, and the removal of night shifts (ANACT, 1980).

The 1980s have, in particular, been a time in which the main trend in working hours in Britain and France, in common with many other Western industrialized countries, has been the development of management-orientated flexibility⁵. The 1980s is also the period over which the most significant differences have appeared between the development of patterns of working hours in Britain and France, namely major changes in working hours have occurred in France which have not been paralleled in Britain. The concentration of changes in working hours in the 1980s in France may be explained by the introduction of new working time measures and by the heightened working time debate at the beginning of the decade (as described in full below), and particularly by the reduction in weekly working hours to thirty-nine imposed by the French Government in 1982. The combination of these developments with the problems which came to a head over this period in French industry of ageing machinery and new competitive conditions (Petit, 1987) had the effect of stimulating major changes in working practices (Morville, 1985).

The small body of literature describing patterns of working hours at company and plant level in Britain and France suggests that the concentration of change in the 1980s in France has been related, more extensively than in Britain, to a thorough restructuring of working hours. For example, in a study of thirty-three companies in France from both the industrial and service sectors, which was carried out in 1984, it was found that twenty-two were undergoing a major reorganization in working hours. In Britain, where there has been no such concerted pressure for changes in patterns in working hours over recent years, the extent of restructuring would seem to have been less significant, or, at least, it appears to have been more gradual, as the case studies in retailing, electrical engineering, chemicals, and the

motor vehicles industries show (Lapping, 1983). In France, the reduction in working time to thirty-nine hours in 1982 has encouraged many companies seeking to modernize production to reorganize working hours in conjunction with reductions in working hours:

...une évolution se dessine dans les comportements des entreprises étudiées: semblent devenir prédominantes les stratégies qui associent réduction de la durée du travail à diverses modalités d'aménagement du temps de travail...dans le cadre d'une réorganisation et (ou) d'une modernisation du processus de production (...in the companies studied practices are evolving: strategies which link reductions in working time with various forms of reorganization of working hours seem to be becoming predominant...in the framework of the reorganization and (or) modernization of the production process) (Documentation Française, 1985: 14).

The use of these new strategies linking the reduction and reorganization of working hours has reflected three main objectives: social benefits, prevention of job losses, and improving productive efficiency. In Britain, there is no evidence to suggest that changes linking reductions and reorganization of working hours have taken place to the same extent in Britain as in France (as discussed in more detail in pp 96-7).

Furthermore, the concentration of change, stimulated by the changing socio-economic climate in the early 1980s in France, would also seem to have encouraged experimentation with patterns of working hours to a degree which does not seem to have been paralleled in Britain. The extent of experimentation which has been taking place in recent years has been demonstrated in France by a number of detailed studies (for example, Loos, 1983; Boisard et Vennat, 1984; LEST, 1984; Documentation Française, 1985) as well as press interest in the changes taking place. The increased experimentation with working hours has been encouraged by the introduction from the early 1980s of legislation facilitating the

use of more flexible working hours (as described below) and has been motivated by three main factors. Firstly, the need to increase the use of machinery in industry which has led to the use of more experimental shift patterns than the traditional 2x8, 3x8, and 4x8 systems. The sorts of patterns being introduced in France have included extra shifts, short shifts, weekend shifts, and very complex rolling shifts. Secondly, the need to adjust working hours to variations in demand and output. This has given rise to various weekly, monthly, and annual contracts which embody considerable flexibility in working hours; as well as the use of full and part-time shifts on a more flexible basis. Finally, increased experimentation with working hours in France has resulted from employers' increasing concern for more fully taking into account employees' aspirations with regards to working hours. This concern has given rise to the growth in flexi-time schemes, semi-autonomous teams in which individuals working in teams organize their working hours within budgeted hours for the group, as well as work sharing schemes, and part-time work.

Although there have been innovations in patterns of working hours in Britain during the 1980s there is no evidence to suggest that change of the same magnitude has taken place. Notably, the IMS (1986) survey of flexibility in working patterns since 1980 in the food and drink, engineering and financial services industries and retail distribution found that there had been few developments in the 1980s. For example, there has been some progress in developing time and personal flexibility schemes for shift workers in Britain in the 1980s, although the growth of these schemes does not seem to have been as extensive in Britain as in France over this period (Clutterbuck, 1985; Personnel Management, 1985; EIRR, 1987). However, the use of these schemes still appears to be quite limited in Britain. In a survey of 584 employers

carried out in 1987 only 3% of firms had introduced annual contracts (Labour Research, 1988a). Also, part-time work, which has also grown in Britain over the 1980s and remains a much more important form of work in Britain than in France, has grown considerably more rapidly in relative terms in France over the 1980s than in Britain. In France, between 1981-4 the proportion of employees in employment working part-time has risen from 6.9% to 9.7% (representing a 40% increase on its 1981 level), (Enquête sur l'Emploi) while in Britain, according to the Census of Employment over the slightly shorter period levels rose from 20.1% to 22% (a 9% increase). The relative lack of change in Britain is reflected in the absence of serious studies of changing patterns of working hours compared with France over this period. In Britain detailed work has been confined to assessing the social consequences of the spread of shift-work within industry and the public services in the 1970s (for example Cook et al, 1983; Brown and Charles, 1982), although the growth in flexible working hours has also been discussed quite extensively, especially in the 1970s (see Lee, 1982 for a detailed analysis of research in this field).

Another important aspect of the differences in the development of patterns of working hours in the 1980s in Britain and France, which is reflected in the types of patterns which have developed in the two countries, is that non-work time would seem to have had a greater influence over working time in France than in Britain⁶. This would appear to be related to the generally greater prominence given to working time issues in France compared with Britain, particularly over the last decade, and its closer association with discussion about changing value systems in France.

While in both countries there is evidence of changing attitudes to work and non-work time and changing structures of working time, it has been argued that these changes figure more prominently in the public consciousness (Hantrais et al, 1984) in France than in Britain. The high priority attached to time in France is reflected in the very extensive body of literature about all aspects of working time which has been produced by researchers over recent years (see for example the work of Grossin, 1974, 1981, 1982; Echange et Projets, 1980; Samuel, 1982; Boisard et Vennat, 1984; LEST, 1984) employers' bodies (CODESE, 1980), and government bodies (Giraudet, 1980, Commissariat Général du Plan, 1984, 1985; Cahiers Français, 1987). Much of the French literature discusses the role of working time in relation to changing value systems.

The considerable interest in working time is also reflected in the body of research into specific experiments about working time (see for example Loos, 1983; Boisard et Vennat, 1984; LEST, 1984). Furthermore, a large number of the studies of changing patterns of working hours focus on the restructuring of working hours in relation to changes in value systems. The research carried out by Boisard et Vennat (1984) is typical in this respect: the study investigated how patterns of working hours had been adapted in five different workplaces to the legally imposed reduction in the working week. 200 workers were questioned about the impact of the reduction in their working hours, their non-work activities and their aspirations in terms of patterns of working hours.

In Britain not only is there a much smaller body of literature relating to working time, but in the existing documentary material there has been little attempt to examine working time in the context of changing

value systems (see for example, McEwan Young, 1980, 1981; Employment Gazette, 1982; White, 1982; Clark, 1983; Blyton, 1985). In particular, few detailed studies of new experiments in working time have been carried out (see Sloane's [1975] investigation of organizations' changing patterns of working time and McEwan Young's [1979] case studies of innovations in shift working).

In France, there has also been a much greater concern with identifying peoples' aspirations in relation to working time (see for example Grossin, 1974). A good example of this concern in France is the importance accorded to working time aspirations in the French annual survey called Conditions de Vie et Aspirations des Français (French people's lives and aspirations). The time-related questions, which have no equivalent in similar British publications, seek to assess peoples' aspirations concerning whether they would like reductions in working time or would prefer other benefits (such as pay) and how they would like to see their working hours reduced (shorter working days, shorter working weeks etc).

In France there has also been a much more extensive discussion of working time in relation to other value systems in sociological literature (see for example Samuel 1983, 1984; Dumazadier, 1974; Grossin; 1974) and a more general popularization of issues relating to working time in the media. Whole issues of reviews, particularly in the early 1980s, were devoted to working time and a new review, Temps Libre, was launched in 1981 for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the meaning of time in human activities. The place of working time in relation to other social times has been the focus of research by groups such as the CNRS Equipe de Sociologie du Loisir et

des Modèles Culturelles (the Sociology of Leisure and Cultural Models Team) in Paris.

It would seem that the greater importance attached to working time and to its relationship with changing value systems has been stimulated in part by the debate about working time initiated at the beginning of the 1980s. This was set in train partly by the publication of research by the Echange et Projets Group (Echange et Projets, 1980) which advocated working time options as a project to transform society. The members of the group suggested a policy for adapting working time in a way which would correspond to the aspirations of individuals both as regards their life at work and outside the workplace. This policy was based on the particularly French notion of temps choisi (chosen time) which signifies in relation to work that:

...l'individu va pouvoir choisir sa durée du travail et sa répartition en fonction de ses besoins en revenu, de l'organisation de ses loisirs, de sa vie familiale, de ses activités et de sa participation à la vie sociale en dehors de sa vie professionnelle. (...an individual will be able to choose the number of hours he works and their organization according to his financial needs, the organization of his leisure activities, his family life, his activities, and his participation in public life outside work) (LEST, 1984:8).

At this time temps choisi was widely discussed in relation to the sociology of leisure and the debate about the restructuring of work (Echange et Projets, 1980; Aznar, 1981; Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983). However, the importance of this research must be seen in the context of French society where time has traditionally been treated as a more important policy issue for the French State, trades unions and employers (as shown in the detailed discussion below).

The greater importance attached to working time by the State in France compared with Britain, and to its relationship with changing value systems, was reflected in the moves made by the Socialist Government (1981-6) to increase the flexibility and to reduce the length of working hours. These developments in the early part of the 1980s were made in response to the economic requirements of restructuring, and to a desire for improving the quality of non-work time.

Social aspects of changes in patterns of working hours, as explained above, were central to developments in firms (and in legislation) in the early 1980s. Although it has been suggested that they have become less important, "...the need to give a better response to the workers' aspirations is still in evidence" (Jallade, 1985: 160), and it remains the case that one of the main reasons why employers introduce new patterns of working hours is for social reasons (Bouillaguet-Bernard et al, 1986). This is particularly true for large private and public companies (ie banks and assurance companies).

The high profile of the working time debate in France, particularly in relation to changing value systems, may lead one to hypothesize that employees' working hours preferences will be more readily accommodated by employers in France than in Britain. Hence, as suggested by the Commissariat Général du Plan in their report Changement des Modes de Vie, non-work time may be increasingly influencing working time in France:

Jusqu'à ces dernières années la structuration de la vie sociale par la vie de travail était particulièrement manifeste dans l'organisation du temps en fonction du temps de travail...Ce modèle est remis en question de multiples façons, comme si la vie hors d'entreprise influençait bien davantage la vie de l'entreprise (Until recent years the structuring of social life by work was particularly evident

in the way in which time was organized around working time...this model is now being questioned in a number of ways, it is as if life outside work was increasingly affecting life at work) (quoted in LEST, 1984: 18).

It would seem that this process is more advanced in France than in Britain. However, it may be the case, as Hantrais et al (1984) suggest, that the reduced attention to working time by employers in Britain reflects the tradition of weak bureaucratic control over working hours and the existence of already more flexible and less exacting working schedules than in France, as suggested by the much higher levels of part-time in work in Britain. The degree to which employees' preferences are integrated into their patterns of working hours may in fact be simply more formalized in France than in Britain. In the empirical work in large-scale grocery retailing an attempt was made to find support for the hypothesis that employers would be more aware of non-work issues in France and more likely to take their workers' preferences into consideration in scheduling working hours. In addition an attempt was made to investigate whether workers' preferences in patterns of working hours are not simply integrated into working time in a less formalized way in Britain compared with France and to examine how employees' working hour preferences are included in working time in the two countries. Finally, evidence was also sought in the fieldwork to support the hypothesis that more experimental changes in patterns of working hours have been taking place in France compared with Britain.

The Process of Change

Differences in the extent and nature of changing patterns of working hours have been accompanied by dissimilarities in the process of, and motivations for, change. This section compares and contrasts

successively the role of the State, trades unions, and employers, in the changes in working hours which have taken place in Britain and France. The presentation is organized in an arbitrary order because the differing roles of the three forces in Britain and France do not suggest an obvious order of importance.

The Role of the State

In Britain legislation relating to working hours has been very much more limited than has been the case in France and has been restricted to providing protection for certain categories of workers. Although Britain was first to introduce legislation for working hours (following its earlier industrialization) in 1833, the role of legislation diminished gradually as collectively agreed reductions became the norm. In the twentieth century governments have intervened to legislate only in order to restrict hours in specific areas where workers have been found to be particularly at risk (usually because of long hours) - notably in factories, shops, and the transport and baking industries - and for specific groups of workers, in particular women, young people, and children (Bosworth and Dawkins, 1981; Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983). The area of flexibility in patterns of working hours has also remained almost totally unregulated⁷ and subject almost exclusively to collective agreement. The only measures which governments have taken concerning flexibility in working hours were introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s in order to help combat unemployment: the Job Release Scheme and short-time working compensation scheme introduced in 1979, and the Job Splitting Scheme introduced in 1983 (the operation of these schemes are fully described in Blyton, 1985).

The reluctance to legislate in the area of working hours may reflect partly the operation of the industrial relations structure in Britain,

in which collective bargaining has traditionally been the way in which questions concerning working conditions have been resolved and government intervention has always been resisted⁸. The reluctance to legislate for reductions in working hours in particular may also be explained by the opposition demonstrated by successive governments of all political persuasions and employers' organizations, who fear that shorter hours without improved productivity would merely add to the unit costs of labour, create few jobs, and do little to reduce the high levels of overtime worked in industry (Taylor, 1980). Past experience suggests that these doubts about the effectiveness of reductions in working hours have been justified (Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983; Ward, 1987).

A French view of the British Government's policy towards reductions in working hours is that:

Aucune politique globale de RTT n'est envisagée par le gouvernement britannique qui estime qu'une telle stratégie ne constitue pas une réponse pertinente au problème de l'emploi (No global policy for reductions in working time has been planned by the British government which believes that this type of strategy would not be a suitable response to the employment problem) (Documentation Française, 1985: 108).

Indeed, the State opposition to reductions in the working week culminated in Britain blocking even the EEC recommendation which was to reduce working hours providing unit labour costs were not increased.

It may also be suggested that the lack of legislation with respect to working hours during this century in Britain reflects the lack of interest demonstrated by the State in relation to working time issues. As the focus of debate amongst the State, trades unions, and employers, has changed from productivity to flexibility (Pollert, 1987) since the end of the 1970s, the British government has contributed to the public

discussion about all aspects of labour flexibility in Britain and has, in particular, sought to encourage flexibility in labour costs. In their advocacy of flexibility, working hours have not, until recently, been prominent.

Indeed, the recent plans by the Government to incorporate provisions in the 1989 Employment law to relax the restrictions relating to the working hours of young people and women in factories⁹, should be seen as another measure in the Government's strategy to remove rigidities in the labour market rather than as part of a coherent working time strategy. The Government's plans reflect the dominant trait of British governments' working hours policy: social aspects of working time have been almost totally neglected. There has, however, been an increased realization on the part of Conservative Governments since 1979 that there is a need for a greater flexibility in patterns of work, in which category they include more flexibility in working hours such as job sharing, part-time work, and early retirement (Lawson, 1983).

There are two main differences between Britain and France in the role of the State in changing working hours. Firstly, the French State has intervened much more extensively in the area of working hours than the British State and, secondly, working hours legislation in France has been associated more explicitly with a working time debate than has been the case in Britain. Moreover, in France both reductions in working hours and changes in their flexibility and organization have been used as part of a coherent strategy towards working time.

In France it has been mainly legislation which has been used to change working hours, while collective bargaining, until recent years has taken a secondary role, particularly in relation to the flexibility and

organization of working hours. This is characteristic of the French system in which social legislation has become the main vehicle for resolving employment questions and collective bargaining is still seen as an adjunct to legislation which brings additional benefits to workers and builds on the advantages guaranteed by the law (CIR, 1974). French law relating to working hours also distinguishes itself from the British law by its all-embracing nature: successive laws have related to all workers, while specific laws have given additional protection to shopworkers. The law of 1919 instituting the eight hour day and forty-eight hour week was introduced in France in order to give workers more leisure time, improve productivity, and create employment opportunities (Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983). Subsequent legislation reducing the working week to forty hours was instituted by the law of 21 June 1936 in response to the economic depression, and sought primarily to solve the problem of unemployment. This law introduced a strict framework for the organization of these hours: five eight hour days, six days of six hours and forty minutes, or five and a half days of seven hours and sixteen minutes. This legislation, which stated that working hours should be the same for all employees working in an establishment or in any section of it, combined with measures which prohibited the use of rolling and overlapping shifts, thereby severely limited the flexibility of working hours.

Although changes in legislation relating to working hours took place up to the 1970s, the major landmarks in legislation in this area have taken place in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1950s and 1960s were marked mainly by legislation to increase paid holidays (as shown in Table 2.1). The decade 1968-78 was, above all, one which saw the effects of collective bargaining on working hours: average weekly working hours (excluding lunch and rest breaks) fell from 45.2 in 1968 to 41.8 in

1976 (Documentation Française, 1985). However, it was also characterized by the first measures to provide for greater flexibility in working hours (see Table 2.1). These measures were associated with others designed to institutionalize (a key word in the French context where legislation has traditionally been the main vector of change) flexibility and to respond to the increasing trend towards greater flexibility in employment practices, which became more prominent after 1977 (Petit, 1987).

The most significant changes to the law of 1936 have, however, taken place in the 1980s. The end of the 1970s in France was marked by deteriorating economic conditions associated with the impact of the two oil crises in 1974 and 1980. Difficulties supporting the social security system, increased French spending on imports, and reduced saving and investment levels were accompanied by rising levels of unemployment, with two million unemployed in 1981 (Petit, 1987). The unemployment crisis contributed to the revival of the work sharing debate in France known as the Réduction du Temps de Travail (RTT) - Partage du Travail (Reduction of Working Time - Work Sharing), which was promoted, in particular, by the trades unions who were calling for a thirty-five hour working week (Documentation Française, 1985).

However, attempts to reduce working hours through collective bargaining between 1978-80 were not successful even though the Government had followed the recommendations for negotiations outlined by the 1980 Giraudet report¹⁰. The main stumbling block was the issue of wage compensation, on which neither trades unions nor employers were prepared to make concessions.

Table 2.1 Principal Legislation Affecting Working Hours in
France, 1950-

Date	Explanation
27 March 1956	Third week paid holidays.
16 May 1963	Fourth week paid holidays.
27 December 1973	Flexible working hours can be substituted for collective working hours under certain conditions.
2 January 1979	The forty hour week can be concentrated over four or four and a half days. Other measures to institutionalize flexibility are introduced.
17 January 1982	Reduction of the working week to thirty-nine hours and introduction of fifth week paid holidays.
	Introduction of legal maximum of 130 overtime hours per annum for each worker (for use without the works inspector's agreement, previously all overtime requests were submitted for approval).
	Adjustments in weekly working hours allowed under certain conditions (average working hours/period and shift length).
	Flexibility allowed over the month and year.
	Weekend shifts permitted provided that collective agreements are made at company/plant level.
	Maximum daily shift lengths extended from ten to twelve hours if weekend shift lasts for only two days (provided these workers are paid @ 1.5 times normal rate for the job).
	Flexi-time allowed provided that debit/credit hours do not exceed three from one week to another and the accumulated total does not exceed ten.
13 November 1982	Employers obliged to negotiate salaries and working hours with trades union representatives at least annually at company level and/or below. Agreements allowed which derogate from the conditions established by higher level collective agreements and legal provisions.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Date	Explanation
28 February 1986	Changed the basis for overtime payment for those working flexible working hours from a weekly to an annual basis (while lowering the annual overtime quota to eighty) provided that the flexibility arrangements were accompanied by reductions in weekly working hours. These conditions only allowed for agreements made at industry level.
19 June 1987	Removed the link between the modulation and reduction of working hours and made the company the principal level of negotiation. Also, introduced a wide range of flexibility measures, in particular <u>le travail intermittent</u> ('intermittent' working).

Source: Gilbert (1980), Editions Francis Lefebvre (1986), EIRR (1987), Meurs (1987), Autrand (1988).

The election of a Socialist Government in 1981 made a substantial difference to French policies concerning working time. This was because working time had traditionally been a subject of debate within the party as a means of creating better working conditions, and because the internal working time debate was revitalized by new thinking both within and outside the Socialist Government in the early 1980s about the growing role of non-work values in peoples' lives (as described above). Against this background, the Socialist Government's policy with respect to working time early in its period in office was

...first and foremost a part of a social policy, and *secondarily* (sic) a parameter of the economic life of the enterprises (Jallade, 1985: 159).

This order of priorities stemmed from the Government's concern to reduce unemployment and to respond to workers' aspirations for more free time. The Socialist Government sought, firstly, to encourage negotiations between employers and trades unions in order to reduce the working week, but in the face of only minor advances it took the step in 1982 of legislating for a reduction in the working week to thirty-nine hours with no loss of pay for all workers (and introducing a fifth week's paid holiday) hence encouraging the momentum towards a thirty-five hour working week by 1985 (Jallade, 1985; Bouillaguet-Bernard et al, 1986). At the same time, the Socialist Government, in the context of a range of measures to reduce unemployment (for example Plans Avenir Jeunes [a Future for Young People] and Systèmes de Pre-retraite [Early Retirement Schemes]), introduced other measures which linked reductions of working time with employment. These measures were known as Contrats de Solidarité - Réduction du Temps de Travail (Solidarity Contracts - Reduction in Working Time) and were implemented between 1982 and May 1984 (Documentation Française, 1985). The Government also sought to sustain the momentum of changing working hours at firm level by setting up a section devoted to working time in the early 1980s at the Agence Nationale pour l'Amélioration des Conditions de Travail - ANACT (the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions), whose role is to carry out research and advise companies on how to improve working conditions (Gasparini, 1988). This section published a number of reports which reflected the Government's changing theories and policies on working time (Ravel, 1983; Taddei, 1986).

The measures to reduce the working week were accompanied by changes in legislation to enable employers to introduce more flexible working hours to compensate for the productivity losses absorbed by employers as a result of the imposed reductions in working hours on full pay.

One of the most significant of these was the law of 17 January 1982 which introduced a wide range of flexibility (see Table 2.1). Most importantly, perhaps, legislation was introduced as part of the Auroux laws¹¹ to oblige employers to negotiate about salaries and working hours with representative trades unions at least annually at company level, and to enable agreements to be made (both at company and plant level) which depart from the conditions established by higher level collective agreements and legal provisions. In conjunction with the operation of trades union legislation in France, which gives representative unions (defined in terms of membership, independence, dues, experience, seniority, and "patriotic attitude during the Occupation") the right to recognition in the workplace, the new legislation theoretically puts the French unions in a strong position to negotiate regularly on pay and other working conditions at company level or below. The legislative structure in France, for example, compares favourably with the framework in Britain where there is no legislation to force employers to recognize unions for formal negotiations about pay and other conditions of work.

However, the French Government policy of RTT - Partage du Travail which had stimulated the reduction in weekly working hours to thirty-nine hours proved to be less than a success. An assessment of the impact of the reduction in yearly working hours (resulting from the thirty-nine hour week and five weeks paid leave) carried out in 1982 was calculated using the INSEE macro-economic model. About 110,000 jobs were said to have been created or maintained as a result of the measures for the reduction in working hours, a figure which many commentators have considered exaggerated (Jallade, 1985; Bloch-London, 1987)¹². One reason for the unexpectedly limited effect of the reduction in working hours may have been that the measures introduced to allow for greater

flexibility in working hours were not systematically used, as expected by the Government, in conjunction with the imposed reductions in working hours (Documentation Française, 1985):

...aucune dynamique générale d'ATT ne se développa en liaison avec le passage aux 39 heures. L'ordonnance des 39 heures fut accueillie comme une mesure uniforme imposée par le Gouvernement...les employeurs transformant à la marge les aménagements du temps de travail en vigueur pour compenser la RTT par des gains de productivité. (No general process of change in patterns of working hours developed in conjunction with the move to the 39 hour working week. The edict for 39 hours was accepted as a uniform measure imposed by the Government...the employers marginally altering the existing patterns of working time in order to compensate for the reduction in working time by increasing productivity.)(Documentation Française, 1985: 12).

The conditions under which the reduction in the working week were introduced were felt to undermine the competitiveness of business and negate the benefits which had been meant to flow from the legislative action in terms of the creation of new jobs (Jallade, 1985). The reduction of the working week was carried out, under the Government's direction, without wage moderation, and the few provisions which had been introduced, to enable a lengthening of the operating time of equipment in order to obtain a better return on capital investment, were considered inadequate.

In 1983 employers produced a policy about flexibility in working time (a more detailed discussion is given below) which sought to bargain for reductions in working hours in return for flexibility in working hours. Under this policy, however, reductions in working hours were no longer a response to a demand for free time but a reciprocal measure offered to workers who were willing to change their working hours in ways which might not meet with their personal preferences. In view of the limitations of the Government's earlier policies and the resistance

encountered from employers, the policy direction of the government changed in favour of the employers' "flexibility for reductions in working hours" model (see Jallade, 1985; Bouillaguet-Bernard et al, 1986). After a short period of legislating for further work-sharing measures (such as the Congé Parental [Parental Leave], and Congé Sabbatique [Sabbatical Leave] and measures to increase the use of part-time work), the Government began to introduce legislation which would allow for more individualized patterns of working hours. This legislation explicitly linked reductions with flexibility in working hours (Elbaum et al, 1985).

Increasingly, the Government's principal objective concerning the reduction and restructuring of working hours was no longer primarily social but to enhance productive efficiency in industry:

Les objectifs de création d'emploi et de réduction du chômage ne sont pas abandonnés mais ne constituent plus les objectifs premiers de la réduction du temps de travail. Ils deviennent subordonnés à l'accroissement de l'efficacité productive des entreprises. Ainsi la réussite du partage du travail apparaît désormais comme une résultante de l'amélioration de l'efficacité productive des entreprises. (The objectives of employment creation and reducing unemployment are not abandoned but are no longer the main aim of reducing working time. These objectives are subordinated to the growth in the productive efficiency of companies. Hence the success of work sharing appears henceforth as the result of the improvement in companies' productive efficiency.) (Bouillaguet-Bernard et al, 1986: 21).

The next major law (28 February 1986) to increase the flexibility in patterns of working hours reflected these changing objectives and a response to the calls made by one of the five major multi-industry trades unions¹³, the Socialist CFDT, for negotiated exchanges of reductions in working hours for greater flexibility.

The law of 28 February 1986 introduced a major change relating to overtime payment which removed one of the major barriers limiting greater flexibility in working hours. Provided that companies chose one of the narrow range of flexibility arrangements set out in the law and that the arrangement was introduced through industry-level agreement with trades unions (or through company agreement once an industry-level deal had been made), overtime payments could be calculated on an annual rather than a weekly basis. In exchange for this greater flexibility employers were required to reduce working hours in a proportion which depended on the flexibility they required. This law, however, did not come into effect because it was rapidly superceded by a new bill brought in when the right-wing Chirac Government came into power in 1986. The impact of the Chirac Government, which was more sympathetic to the demands of employers for more flexibility in working hours, shows again the greater impact of changes in government on working hours in France compared with Britain. This bill removed the obligatory link between the modulation of working hours and the reduction of working hours, and made the company the principal level of negotiation. The bill also introduced a wide range of flexibility measures, for example under certain circumstances it removed the ban on night work for women and on Sunday work for all workers. In particular, it created a new form of part-time work on an annual basis known as 'intermittent' working. The main characteristics of this form of work is that employees work a fixed number of hours on an annual basis which may involve periods of working and not working throughout the year. Workers on these contracts cannot, however, be used as if they are 'on call'. Also, the salary is averaged out and paid on a monthly basis. This form of work is voluntary and can be introduced through sectoral, company, or plant level agreements (EIRR, 1987).

Although this piece of legislation was vigorously opposed by the trades unions and encountered procedural obstacles (the President refused to sign the bill, and an attempt to pass the bill through the amendment procedure was rejected by the Conseil Constitutionnel, a group with nine members including ex-Presidents and senior members of the judiciary which oversees the legality of laws), it became law on 19 June 1987. The return of the Socialist Government to power in 1988 has not been accompanied by measures to reverse the flexibility in working time legislation introduced during the Chirac term of office. This reflects a new realism, begun during their first period in government, about the need to improve French industry's productive efficiency.

The Role of Trades Unions

In the context of the heightened role of collective bargaining and of the relatively limited State intervention in the area of working hours in Britain, the trades unions in Britain have played an important role in changing working hours over the post-war period. The active part which the unions have played in Britain is reflected in the considerable reductions in working hours which have taken place in much of British industry over the three periods 1959-60, 1964-6, and 1979-84. Although there is little published evidence charting the trades unions' involvement in the development of new patterns of working hours, it is clear that they have participated in company agreements which allow for the restructuring of working hours. They have, for example, in recent years been involved in agreements concerning flexible rostering in the railways and in shift patterns in the post office (Blyton et al, 1989).

There are a number of important and distinguishing characteristics relating to the British trades unions' involvement with working time

issues. In the first place in the British trades union movement (and among employers) the issue of reductions in working hours is implicitly linked with the question of overtime (Eyraud, 1985). British industry uses much higher levels of overtime than most other European countries (Blyton, 1985). Under conditions of high overtime use British trades unions recognize that reductions in working hours are translated into much greater usage of overtime and hence increases in labour costs (Eyraud, 1985; Ward, 1987). They accept that overtime represents a major hurdle to reductions in working hours (Ward, 1987) but are not in favour of reductions in overtime which, without significant reorganization of work and rises in wage rates, would mean a deterioration in workers' pay and conditions. Indeed, overtime remains at the centre of discussions over working hours in Britain because it is closely linked to the British debates over work reorganization and greater functional flexibility in the workforce (Eyraud, 1985) (see also the role of employers in changing patterns of working hours discussed pp 124-30).

The second distinguishing feature of the British trades unions' involvement with working time issues is that agreements to reduce working hours have been predominantly linked to productivity deals (Documentation Française, 1985), although more recently employer demands for more flexibility have been bargained against reductions in working hours (Lynch, 1985). The third feature is that working time has not been the subject of coherent cross-industry trades union strategies but rather has been the focus of individual unions making agreements in companies and in workplaces¹⁴. The explanation for this difference lies in the traditional structure of collective bargaining in Britain. In contrast with a number of other European countries, and notably France, the British system is based on industry-specific unions

negotiating predominantly at company level. It is also dependent to a much greater extent than in France on the goodwill of employers, because negotiating rights are not guaranteed by law¹⁵. The effect of this collective bargaining system has been a considerable diversity in policies and practices over working time.

Finally, the British trades union movement has barely initiated a debate around questions of working time. The exceptions to this are their adoption of the general aim, shared with other European unions, for a thirty-five hour working week, and their unprecedented move in 1982 (stimulated by rising unemployment and the French example) to issue a discussion document about the case for legislation to limit working time (IRRR, 1982). Moreover, the British trades unions, have not been as vigorous in their claims as other European trades unions, which may be explained partly by their more pragmatic approach to working time issues and the importance of the overtime. In Britain the general working time dimension of employment and lifestyles:

...has been neglected in favour of a more pragmatic approach aimed at reconciling the needs of productivity and conditions of work and pay for the central core of full-time permanent employees (Boulin, 1986: 11).

In contrast with the British trades unions' approach to working time the principal French unions have developed cross-industry strategies. These strategies have led to agreements which have been applied (officially at least) to the entire workforce. The wide-reaching nature of the French agreements reflects the ability for French unions to have collective agreements extended by law. The Act of 11 February 1950 first made the distinction between ordinary and 'extensible' agreements. Ordinary collective agreements are concluded between employers' associations or employers and the most representative trades unions or federations and are only applicable to the level at which

they are negotiated and to the signatory parties. 'Extensible' agreements are agreed at sectoral, industry, or multi-industry level between employers' associations and the most representative trades unions and may be extended by Ministerial Order beyond the level at which they are negotiated. They apply to all employers and employees in an industry even though they or their representatives may not have been signatories to the original agreement. The use of cross-industry working time strategies by the French unions reflects the structure of the French trades unions and collective bargaining machinery, which until recently involved unions representing workers from all industries in inter-professional and industry-level agreements. The changes in the legislation relating to collective bargaining over recent years have enabled more lower level negotiations about working time, and has generated a plethora of company agreements (Documentation Française, 1985; Perucca, 1985). In addition to the use of more cross-industry strategies by the French unions, there is a close link between legislation and union claims in the field of working time (and in other areas) which does not exist in Britain because of the much smaller role of the State in determining working conditions.

One of the most striking distinctions between the French and British trades unions' approach to working time is that it has generally been the focus of more high profile debate in the French trades union movement than in the British (Boulin, 1986). In this context, and in contrast with the British unions, the French unions have traditionally adopted an ideological position of support for reductions in working hours in order to improve working conditions and to respond to workers' increasing demands for more non-work time. They have also traditionally opposed flexibility in, and restructuring of, working hours. As Jallade (1985) points out, legislation concerning the

flexibility of working hours has been much slower to materialize in France than that relating to the reduction of working hours, a fact which can be explained partly in terms of the less clear relationship between employment creation and flexibility in working hours, but also in terms of the much greater resistance of trade unions to these measures. For the trades unions reductions in working hours have, until recently, been the only acceptable employment creation policy, and any other working hours policy has been perceived to be fraught with the risk of fragmenting the workforce and reducing the bargaining power of the unions.

However, the position of the French unions in relation to working time issues has moved from relative unity to disunity as union objectives have changed in response to changing legislation and employers' policies concerning working time, and to changes in the collective bargaining framework. Until the late 1970s, although there were distinctions in different trades union policies¹⁶ the French unions adopted a relatively uniform approach to working time issues: expressing opposition to diversification in patterns of working hours, in particular in the form of part-time work and flexi-time (Boulin, 1986), and support for the European trade unions' objective of the reduction of the working week to thirty-five hours. However, the first signs of disunity occurred between 1977-81 when the trades unions were drawn into discussions with the employers about reductions in the working week, and at which the employers took the initiative by proposing counter-plans for greater flexibility in working hours. In the face of this unexpected initiative, and in the context of a less than total support from workers for reductions in working hours, the trades unions opposed the employers' proposals in different ways, leading to damaging divisive internal arguments (Autrand, 1987, 1988).

Under these circumstances the OGT called for immediate reductions in working hours to improve working conditions and productivity rather than to create employment, and stressed the importance of resisting employers' plans to make pay cuts corresponding with reductions in working hours, and to change the organization of working hours. It rejected any plans to exchange reductions in working hours for greater flexibility. FO sought to continue reducing working hours through negotiated agreements. At the same time it emphasized the importance of obtaining a fifth week paid holiday. This was a method of reducing working hours which had the advantage of not figuring in the employers' forms of reductions for which increased flexibility would be expected in exchange. Finally, the CFDT_n underwent a major change in policy direction from 1979 which was to alter the direction of collective bargaining about working time in the entire union movement. While continuing to assert that its main objective was to create jobs through reducing working hours it accepted a number of the employers' demands for greater flexibility in working hours (and notably the annualization of working hours) provided that this was accompanied by reductions in working hours (Autrand, 1987, 1988).

Despite these differences in stance the unions maintained sufficient agreement in order to oppose a large part of the employer's demands. However, this cohesiveness was short-lived. The draft treaty between the trades unions and employers of July 1981 and the Government's edict of January 1982 which officially sanctioned exchanges of flexibility for reductions in working hours, led to the breakdown of union unity. While FO and CFDT signed the treaty¹⁷, the OGT refused to sign in the hope that its action would cause unrest at the workplace and drive the Government to intervene in its favour. The treaty did, however, represent the first step in a trend towards greater flexibility by the

trades union movement in relation to working time issues (Autrand, 1987, 1988).

During the eighteen months following the draft agreement the strategies of the three main unions continued to diverge. The CFDT was in favour of the decentralization of negotiations and the development of collective bargaining because the union believed this would increase employee control in the workplace. This led the CFDT to welcome the opportunity, presented by the Auroux laws of 1982, to negotiate working hours and to make agreements at industry, and above all at company, level. The union sought initially to negotiate for reductions in working hours to thirty-five hours and employment creation in exchange for partial salary compensation and the reorganization of working hours, although the objective rapidly became the maintenance of employment rather than job creation because its original strategy produced poor results (Autrand, 1987, 1988).

The OGT, after initially withdrawing its claim for a thirty-five hour working week, resumed its traditional demand. Although the OGT was in favour of the emancipation of workers through the decentralization of collective bargaining, the OGT was wary that this would lead to inequalities from one workplace to another, and actively opposed agreements which would make concessions in working conditions of the type being made by the CFDT. It became more concerned with fighting against employers' policies at company level than negotiating for thirty-five hours at inter-industry level. FO, while initially bargaining at branch and inter-professional level in support of reductions in working hours, rapidly joined the OGT in opposing concessionary agreements and the decentralization of negotiations promoted by the CFDT.

In short, the increased flexibility demonstrated by the unions was short-lived because the unions were reluctant to use the provisions for negotiating greater flexibility in working hours at company and at plant level. Subsequently, however, the unions saw fit to adopt more positive strategies towards flexibility in working hours. The unions were faced with a number of circumstances which encouraged them to reconsider their positions. Important among these was the new strategy which employers had developed towards flexibility in working hours in which they proposed the exchange of flexibility for reductions in working hours. In the new legislative environment which favoured negotiations at company and plant level the employers' strategy led to an abundance of agreements at these levels. When the trades unions analysed these agreements they found that employers had shown that they were able to achieve greater flexibility in work organization while at the same time taking into consideration employees' demands for more diverse patterns of working hours. They also found that such agreements revealed that the unions were being excluded from the implementation of new patterns of working hours in firms (Boulin, 1986).

Under these circumstances, and in view of the continuing deterioration of the employment situation and the Government's refusal to legislate for further reductions of working hours, the unions changed their attitudes towards flexibility in working hours and adopted a new conception which coupled :

... the aim of fighting against unemployment with the more efficient use of machinery and the development of a much broader range of work time structures in order to satisfy the varying demands of employees (Boulin, 1986: 9).

This new-found flexibility in attitudes was put to the test in negotiations between employers and the trades unions which opened on 28

May 1984 with the objective of combatting unemployment and encouraging employment. The unions found themselves challenged by the principal employers' union, the CNPF, which proposed deregulating employment and defended this by saying it would help make industry more competitive and hence create employment. The employers sought not to reduce working hours, as the unions demanded, but to develop flexibility in working time.

By December 1984 when a draft treaty was presented by the employers' union, the OGT had already renounced "give and take" negotiations, and set itself apart from the CFDT and FO by insisting on absolute reductions in working hours with full pay along the lines of the German model¹⁸. The draft treaty which proposed changes in legislation, and negotiations at industry level about technical change and flexibility in working hours, was supported at interprofessional level by the CFDT and FO, but was subsequently rejected, as a result of intra-union disputes with regional trades unions' representatives. In recent years there have been periods of both greater unity and greater division in the French trades union movement in relation to issues of working time. It has remained the case, however, that the CFDT has been most flexible about these issues.

The law of 28 February 1986 (known as the Delebarre law after the minister who introduced it) which allowed greater flexibility in exchange for reductions in working hours and was inspired by the CFDT ideology, predictably gained support only from the CFDT which believed it would help reduce the anarchic state of negotiations over working time at that time. Although the OGT had begun to recognize that some changes in working time might be necessary it joined with FO in opposing the law, and argued with it that the annualization of working

hours would have negative effects on wages. The amended version of the Delebarre law, which was given parliamentary approval on 19 June 1987, encountered the unusually united opposition of the three main multi-industry unions. CFDT and FO, in particular, were united in reproaching the Government for legislating without union consultation and for moving away from industry to company level negotiations.

In recent years the unions have become disunited again in the approach to working time issues. The FO and CFDT are campaigning over flexibility at industry level while the OGT is concentrating on mobilizing workers against flexibility agreements made at workplace level. All three unions, however, remain committed to reductions in working hours. It remains to be seen whether the new decentralized framework for collective bargaining will enable this aim to be achieved.

The Role of Employers

In Britain the State, trades unions, and employers, have associated the notion of flexibility to a much greater extent with changing demarcations at work and gaining greater functional flexibility than with working time:

S'il inclut le problème de l'aménagement du temps de travail, il concerne aussi et surtout la flexibilité au travail, c'est à dire, les questions de démarcation entre métiers, de souplesse dans l'organisation du travail, et d'accession au statut d'ouvriers qualifiés" (If it [flexibility] includes the problem of restructuring working time, it also, and above all, concerns flexibility at work, that is to say, the question of demarcations between jobs, of flexibility in the organization of work, and of access to the status of skilled worker) (Eyraud, 1985: 73).

The predominance of this understanding of flexibility in Britain may be explained in part by the craft basis of British unions and the way in

which strict job demarcations have been used by unions to preserve working conditions. Increases in this type of flexibility have frequently been exchanged for salary increases in productivity agreements between employers and trades unions since the 1960s (Eyraud, 1985).

There is evidence to suggest that functional flexibility, rather than flexibility in working hours, still remains at the forefront of British employers' concerns. A number of reports by the employers' representative bodies (CBI, 1985a, 1985b; Institute of Directors, 1985) show that labour flexibility is primarily seen in terms of the development of more flexible forms of work such as short-term contracts, and of functional flexibility. A recent study of employers' views about employment flexibility in Britain and some other European countries confirms this view. It found that flexibility in working hours was of little concern to British employers by comparison with other forms of flexibility such as wage costs and functional flexibility. It found that British employers were relatively satisfied with the existing flexibility in working hours (Elbaum, 1987), a fact which may be explained by the extensive use of part-time work in Britain.

The essential characteristic of the development of flexible patterns of working hours in Britain is that it has not formed part of a coherent and defined strategy promoted by employers' organizations (or for that matter by the State and trades unions)¹⁹. While reductions in working hours have taken place, in collective agreements they have not traditionally been exchanged for flexibility in working hours. More often they have formed part of bargains to improve productivity by reducing dead time and breaks, and intensifying work (Documentation

Française, 1985; Blyton et al, 1989). However, there is evidence that flexibility in working hours and reductions in working hours are increasingly being linked together, and that workers are being asked to exchange more demanding patterns of working hours for a shorter working week (for example Clutterbuck, 1985). This has not, however, formed part of a publicly stated policy by employers' organizations.

Employers in France have responded very differently to working time issues compared with their British counterparts. French employers' have paid greater attention to working time issues and have given working time a central role in their view of labour flexibility. These ideas have helped to change the nature of the debate about the reduction and flexibility of working hours and have encouraged successive governments to pass legislation which employers believe is more beneficial to company efficiency.

After conceding quite passively to the reductions in working hours which took place between 1968-76 their position changed as a result of the new economic conditions engendered by the 1974 oil crisis. In the economic recession the cost of labour and supplies were raised at a time when international competition was increasing, thus reducing companies' profit margins and their ability to make capital investment in machinery. These factors contributed to a fall in the use of machinery and to over-manning in French industry which was reflected in falling labour productivity levels after 1974. Employers saw one of their principal ways of regaining productivity and competitiveness as increasing the use of their machinery through greater flexibility in working hours. They also emphasized the importance of adapting employment levels more closely to company' needs, of modernizing machines and of gaining more flexibility in production notably through

automation (Morville, 1985). Furthermore, they began to resist continued reductions in working hours arguing that it would mean increasing employment to compensate for lost hours, hence increasing labour costs. They also resisted agreements which would not give them the flexibility to raise hours again if production was increased in response to an upturn in demand.

In the face of continuing demands by the French trades unions for shorter working hours at the end of the 1970s, and in the context of a rigid framework of legislation and collective agreements concerning working hours, employers sought instead to find ways of increasing flexibility in working hours. Although they were reluctant at the outset to concede reductions in working hours, many recognized the value of RTT - Flexibilité du Temps de Travail agreements. The demands for more flexible working hours from employers became explicit first at the end of the 1970s when, in the course of discussions with the trades unions about reductions in working hours, the French employers' union the Conseil National du Patronat Français (CNPF) sought to revive an old claim. This was for the revision of the 1936 law, which they argued imposed an over-strict framework on working hours. More specifically, the employers tried to show that reductions in working hours could not have a beneficial effect on employment unless they were exchanged for: individual company-based negotiations on RTT, new ways of counting working hours, and in particular the annualization of working hours, and moderation in demands for salary compensation and for rigidity in the organization of working time (Autrand, 1987, 1988). However, a series of negotiations culminated in failure in 1980 as the trades unions felt they had too much to lose from annual working hour contracts (Morville, 1985).

Negotiations were reopened in 1981, immediately after the election of the Socialist Government. Employers were anxious to participate in the negotiations so that the dangers of an imposed reduction of working hours could be avoided and so that they could promote their new policy of RTT - Flexibilité du Temps de Travail. At this time, the employers' strategy made concessions to French workers' demands for more non-work time and more flexibility in their working hours. The dual concern for satisfying workers demands' and ensuring industrial efficiency is demonstrated in a speech by Yvon Chotard, President of the social committee of the CNPF, in June 1981:

Nous avons donné notre accord pour négocier sur les problèmes de temps de travail. Avec deux objectifs: apporter aux salariés une certaine réduction du temps de travail, plus de libertés et de congés. Simultanément, renforcer l'efficacité des entreprises grâce à une nouvelle organisation du travail. Nous ne pouvons pas séparer ces deux aspects de la guerre économique actuelle. (We have agreed to negotiate about the problems of working time with two objectives in mind: to give workers a reduction in working hours, more freedom, and more holidays. At the same time to reinforce companies' efficiency through new work organization. We cannot separate these two aspects of today's economic war) (Quoted in Morville, 1985: 63)

The negotiations resulted in a number of concessions from both employers and unions to enable a major agreement on the reduction of the working week to thirty-nine hours and the fifth week of paid holiday in exchange for flexibility in working hours agreements. Although the negotiations faltered at industry level, the subsequent legislation introduced by the Socialist Government to enable more widespread collective bargaining about working hours gave rise almost immediately to forty-five industry-level agreements and to numerous other agreements at company level (Morville, 1985).

However, the immediate effect of the reduction in working hours was not to stimulate immediate widespread reorganization in working time as a study carried out by the Ministry of Labour showed (Marchand et al, 1983). Changes came about gradually in conjunction with the employers' development of a coherent working time strategy. After the progress made in negotiations in the early 1980s in exchanging reductions in working hours for greater flexibility, and faced with the imposed reduction in the working week, employers devised a policy for flexibility which formed the basis of subsequent negotiations at firm and plant level. All the experiments and negotiations carried out by French employers were drawn together to form the basis for the policy document.

In September 1983, a working party on behalf of the CNPF presented the new employers' policy entitled the Stratégie du Temps Rémunéré (Strategy for Paid Time)(Daublain et Michaud, 1984). There were six main strands to the policy: to give priority to individual rather than collective demands; to replace the notion of full-time work by the idea of paid working hours; to link reductions in working hours with measures to increase flexibility in working hours; to increase flexibility in working hours in order to extend the operating time of machines; to avoid at all costs reductions in working hours which would lead to an increase in costs for the company; to increase the use of more flexible forms of employment such as short-term contracts and temporary work. This strategy changed the role of working time from being a response to demands for more free time to being a measure exchanged for reductions in working hours. The strategy became linked to a range of employers' policies designed to increase labour flexibility. These included policies relating to redundancy procedures and social security ceilings.

Employers have continued to press for increased flexibility in working hours (and in other aspects of flexibility) arguing its benefits both for industry and for the individual. They have successfully adopted the stance that flexibility in working hours will not only suit employers but also groups of workers whose demands have not, until recently, been represented by the trades unions. In the furthering of its arguments employers have promoted the most innovative type of experiments with working hours (see the list by the CODESE, 1980). In 1984 the CNPF placed its policies for greater flexibility at the top of the agenda in negotiations with the unions aimed at combatting unemployment and creating employment. While the trades unions attempted to make reductions in working hours the central issue, the employers sought to centre the debate on relaxing the procedures for redundancy and developing more flexible forms of employment. On the 16 December 1984, the employers presented their draft strategy which encompassed five main themes: technological change, reductions and flexibility in working hours, redundancy procedures, social security ceilings, and flexible forms of work. The draft policy foresaw modifications in some legislation and negotiation over other areas including the reduction of, and flexibility in, working hours.

When the Socialist Government passed the Delebarre law, which encapsulated the CFDT's demands for reductions in working hours in exchange for greater flexibility, the CNPF's plans were temporarily frustrated. They rejected the law saying it provided a framework for flexibility in working hours which was too rigid, and that it forced them to negotiate for reductions in working hours at industry level which they considered to be too centralized. However, their demands for greater labour flexibility were, to a much greater extent, satisfied under the Chirac Government which passed legislation not only

providing for greater flexibility in working hours (in the form of the law of 19 June 1987) but also for easier redundancy procedures and laws governing the use of more flexible forms of work. Although the new Socialist Government has not introduced laws to allow greater flexibility in working hours, it has, however, adopted what is perceived as being a more realistic approach to working time issues which accepts the employers' argument that flexibility is essential for productive efficiency (although it has reversed some flexibility measures such as the firm's ability to make workers redundant). Consequently, it has not taken any steps to reverse the working time legislation introduced under the Chirac Government. Under these conditions the employers have been prepared to negotiate the restructuring of working hours at national inter-industry level with the trades unions. The agreement resulting from these negotiations (signed on 21 March 1989) allows for flexibility developments in exchange for job protection and improvements in working conditions (Lettre de Matignon, 1989).

In sum, in this review of the process of change in working hours it has been found that in France the State, trades unions, and employers, have been more deeply involved in deliberate working time policies than has been the case in Britain. This difference would seem to reflect the impact of differing socio-economic and political factors in the two countries. In particular, the combination of a Socialist Government and a revitalization of debate about working time within the party at the beginning of the 1980s in France has had a major impact on working time during this decade. The importance of political change in the determination of working time policies in France contrasts strongly with the situation in Britain where there has been no discernable alignment of working time policies along political lines. Furthermore,

the State, trades unions and employers have shown a greater awareness of working time issues in France than in Britain. There has, in particular, been a much greater explicit recognition in France of the impact of reductions in working hours on employment and the link between working hours and changing value systems such as the demand for individuals to exert greater choice over the distribution of their time between work and non-work activities and to have more non-work time. This finding gives some support to the hypothesis that French employers might be expected to be more aware of non-work issues and more likely to take their workers' working time preferences into account. One of the aims of the fieldwork in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France was to seek evidence to substantiate this hypothesis. Another aim was to contrast and compare the roles of the State, trades unions and employers in influencing patterns of working hours in British and French large-scale grocery retailing with specific reference to part-time work in order to investigate whether national differences in their approaches to working time issues, as described in this chapter, were reproduced in this sector.

Footnotes

1. The differences in the rate and extent of change in working hours are summarized in the report by Documentation Française (1985) and by Barou et Rigaudiat (1983). A major feature distinguishing the process of reduction in working hours in the two countries has been the greater role of the State in encouraging reductions in France and the more important role of collective agreements in Britain. This difference also exists with regard to the development of flexible working hours, as shown in the next section.

2. This period was also characterized by changes in the distribution of work, education, and leisure over an individual's life by means of developments such as flexible retirement plans (Blyton, 1985).

3. However, there have been variations in the rate and extent of growth of staggered hours and flexi-time systems. The growth of these new patterns of working hours have been described by many authors including Sloane (1975), ANACT (1980), McEwan Young (1981), LEST (1984), and Blyton (1985).

4. The differing development of part-time work in Britain and France has been fully described by Baroin (1981) and Garnsey (1985), who have focused on the role of the different institutional frameworks and the differing speeds of economic development in the two countries to explain the dissimilar rates of growth of part-time work. A number of authors have also explained the differences in levels of this form of work in terms of the more extensive levels of childcare provision in France (Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Dale and Glover, 1987), and of the different tax systems in the two countries (Dex and Walters, 1988).

5. It has been argued (see for example Boyer, 1986; De Lange, 1986) that the growth in management-orientated working hours has been associated with a growing concern with flexibility in many Western industrialized countries over this period. It has been suggested that the new focus of debate reflects the impact of liberal ideas about the salaried relationship - a move away from collectivism to individualism in all aspects of the salaried relationship (Germe, 1981; Pollert, 1987) - and about labour market flexibility (the need to deregulate the market).

6. Changing attitudes to work and non-work time and their impact on patterns of working time provide some evidence that, contrary to the common belief that working time predominates over family and leisure time, values attached to both family and leisure are increasingly affecting attitudes towards work discipline (Hantrais et al, 1984). This contention challenges what is known as the "work pole thesis" argued most forcefully by Marx (1867) which asserts that employers and technocrats are the major forces structuring the time aspects of work, the family, and free time. A fuller explanation of the theory and a questioning of the continuing validity of the work pole thesis has been provided by Clark (1983) and Hantrais et al (1984).

7. The only impediment is the legislation relating to working hours which applies to specific groups of workers and the law concerning employment contracts which, in principle at least, limits the ability to change elements of employees' contracts arbitrarily without their agreement.

8. For more about the type of collective bargaining systems in the two countries see CIR (1974), Jenkins and Sherman (1977), Kassalow (1982), Eyraud (1985) and Roberts (1985).

9. In particular the bill proposes to remove the legislation regulating working hours for young people in factories, shops, and mines, much of which has been in operation since the 1920s (EIRR, 1989; Labour Research, 1989).

10. M. Giraudet was given the task by the French Government of exploring the possible avenues for agreements between trades unions and employers over the reduction in working time. He produced a report entitled Rapport sur la Durée du Travail, published by the Documentation Française in April 1980.

11. The Auroux laws had four main objectives: to enlarge the rights of workers in the workplace (law of 4 August 1982); to develop a more cohesive workforce (by introducing three edicts); to reduce the use of short-term contracts, temporary workers, and part-timers; to give a greater role to the representative institutions at the workplace (law of 28 October 1982); to encourage the collective bargaining process.

12. The impact of the reduction in working hours from 40.6 in 1981 to 39.2 in 1983 was estimated to have the effect of creating 30,000 jobs according to INSEE and 65,000 according to Frank and Kergoat (1983).

13. For a detailed history of the French trades unions see Caire (1971) and Reynaud (1975).

14. For example in October 1988 the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering launched a campaign to reduce working hours to thirty-five a week for all manual and non-manual engineering workers (Labour Research, 1988b).

15. In Britain two main types of agreements in collective bargaining have developed: representational and negotiating. "A representational agreement is one where the management agrees to allow an individual member, or in a collective representational situation all members, to be represented by either a lay - or a full-time - official of a trade union. Representations are not negotiations, they are more akin to advocacy or consultation and there is no commitment to any action. Negotiating agreements imply an equality between the two parties both of whom have the same ability to influence the outcome" (Jenkins and Sherman, 1977: 28).

16. In the 1950s, and especially in the 1960s, FO was more concerned with obtaining more paid holidays than with reductions in working hours, while the opposite was true of the CFDT and the CGT.

17. Albeit for different reasons, FO saw it as a way of maintaining negotiations, while the CFDT saw it as a way of mobilizing workers at company and at plant level.

18. Metallurgists in one of the German regions had obtained a reduction in weekly working hours to 38.30 with full wage compensation.

19. Indeed, the total lack of concerted working time strategy is reflected in the publication by Lapping (1983) about working time in Germany and Britain. While it was thought appropriate to describe the strategy of the employers' body in Germany, in Britain this was not the case and the description concentrates on the practices of individual employers in certain industries.

20. For example, law no 86-797 of 3 July 1986 relaxed the French redundancy procedures, and the edict no 86-948 relaxed the laws governing the use of short-term contracts and temporary workers.

Chapter 3

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Part-time Working Hours

In this chapter an explicitly comparative and detailed analysis is made of part-timers' patterns of working hours in Britain and France. This analysis focuses specifically on women part-timers who represent the vast majority of the part-time workforce in both countries. It attempts to take into account both supply and demand factors affecting patterns of working hours in the two countries. The findings from this review of national characteristics provide the background for the secondary analysis of patterns of working hours in food retailing in Chapter 4 and for the empirical work presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

The chapter is broken down into four sections. The first three sections compare and contrast the relevant literature about patterns of part-time working hours in Britain and France. Each section deals with one aspect of working hours according to a classification of working hours based on the definition by Bosworth and Dawkins (1981): firstly, weekly hours; secondly, the organization of working hours; thirdly, flexibility in working hours. The final section discusses part-timers' satisfaction with patterns of working hours.

Length of the Working Week

Statistics relating to part-time weekly working hours in Britain and France (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2) are not directly comparable because they are compiled differently (they refer to different years and hours categories vary slightly) and because they are collected by different methods. British statistics are collected for the New Earnings Survey by employers and exclude employees who are not members of PAYE schemes.

Those excluded tend to be employees whose earning fall below the National Insurance (NI) threshold, and it may therefore be expected that part-timers working under sixteen hours a week are under-represented (for a full explanation of the operation of the NI system see p140). The New Earnings Survey estimated that approximately one third of all part-time employees are not covered by the Survey for this reason. Also, the New Earnings Survey excludes female part-timers aged under eighteen and workers who are not paid on adult rates. The French statistics in the Enquête sur L'Emploi are reported from household surveys and include all workers aged fifteen or over working at least one hour per week.

Despite these problems of non-comparability, statistics suggest that at the beginning of the 1980s a larger proportion of part-timers in Britain was working under sixteen hours a week than was the case in France, and a smaller proportion worked over thirty hours.

Table 3.1 Number of Hours Usually Worked by Week by Female Part-timers in Britain in 1980 (Salaried and Self-employed)

Hours	%
Less than 16 hours	37
16 to 30 hours	57
More than 31 hours	6

Source: Martin and Roberts, 1984: 34.

Table 3.2 Number of Hours Usually Worked by Week by Female Part-timers
in France in 1982 (Salaried and Self-employed)

Hours	%
Less than 15 hours	18.7
15 to 29 hours	63.2
30 hours or over	18.0

Source: Enquête sur l'Emploi 1982: 43.

Furthermore, although statistics are again not directly comparable, there would also seem to have been differing trends in the length of females' weekly part-time hours over the last six years (the only years for which series run in both countries) in Britain and France. They suggest (see Table 3.3), that in Britain the proportion of women part-timers working under sixteen hours weekly has increased significantly over the period (from 31.6% to 36%), while the proportion of women working sixteen to thirty hours has fallen. In France (see Table 3.4), by contrast, there has been much more stability in working hours over the last six years. Nevertheless, the trends in part-time hours differ from those in Britain, notably the proportion of those working less than fifteen hours weekly has fallen (from 18.7% in 1982 to 16.3% in 1988). Differences in the definition of part-time work mean that statistics in Britain do not examine the proportion of those working part-time for over thirty hours a week and therefore cannot be compared with French statistics. Nevertheless, the slight increase in the proportion of part-timers working over thirty hours weekly in France suggests that differing trends in the length of weekly hours are occurring in the two countries.

Table 3.3 Weekly Working Hours of Women Aged over Eighteen Working Part-time in Britain on Adult Rates, 1982-87

In %	Hours	
	Under 16	16-30
1982	31.6	68.4
1984	33.5	66.5
1986	35.5	64.5
1987	36.0	64.0

Source: New Earnings Survey, Table 183.

Table 3.4 Weekly Working Hours of Women Working Part-time in France, 1982-88

In %	Hours		
	Under 15	15-29	30 or over
1982	18.7	63.2	18.0
1985	17.8	62.9	19.3
1988	16.3	63.1	20.5

Source: INSEE, Enquête sur l'Emploi, Table PA 07.

One possible explanation for the differences in part-time working hours in Britain and France is the impact of the legislative structures in the two countries. Authors comparing the growth of part-time work in Britain and France from a demand perspective (Garnsey, 1985; Dale and Glover, 1987) have drawn attention to the influence which different legislative frameworks in the two countries have exerted on the growth of part-time work (the legislative frameworks for part-time work over the post-war period are set out in full in Appendices III and IV).

These frameworks have also played an important part in determining the length of part-time hours.

In Britain legislation has encouraged employers to increase the use of part-timers working short weekly hours. The flat rate NI systems of the 1950s and the flat rate and earnings related contribution systems which operated from 1961-75 were only applicable to employees working eight hours or more a week, therefore rendering very short working hours attractive to the employer. In 1975 the system became entirely earnings related with payments by employer (and employee) starting above a minimum weekly wage of £11 a week, hence giving employers a further incentive to offer short part-time working hours. While the level of contributions has changed since 1975, it has remained beneficial to the employer to offer working hours which fall below the level at which contributions are made (Trinder, 1986). From 6 April 1988 the threshold for National Insurance payments was £41.

An additional incentive to employ on a part-time basis for short weekly hours was the Selective Employment Tax (SET) which was levied between 1966-73. This tax was introduced to attempt to improve labour productivity in the services. In manufacturing industries this element of labour costs was rebated while the service sector was left to meet the cost in full. The tax was first applied to all employees and then in 1967 only to full-time employees (defined as all those working over twenty-one hours a week). Between 1967-73 employers were therefore given an incentive to offer part-time jobs of twenty-one hours or less per week. Part-time jobs for less than eight hours a week were made particularly attractive by the operation of the tax as no payments were levied on part-timers working these hours.

An additional incentive to employ part-timers for short working hours may also have come from the employment legislation governing part-timers' employment rights, pay, and conditions of work. The 1975 Employment Protection Consolidated Act (modified and consolidated in 1978) which introduced a wide range of rights for workers (such as the right to a statement of their terms of employment and the ability to claim for unfair dismissal) excludes part-timers working less than eight hours a week or between eight and sixteen hours a week if they have worked for less than five years continuously with the same employer. Hence employers who wish to avoid the responsibilities required by the Act are encouraged to offer short part-time working hours.

In France the operation of the legislative structure has had the opposite effect, and has, until recently, encouraged the development of longer part-time hours. The differing approach towards part-time working hours in France stems from a greater concern over the use of part-time work and part-timers' working conditions, engendered by its much stricter framework of working hours and traditions of full-time working.

The first measure introduced in the post-war period to circumscribe the number of weekly hours part-timers could work was applied to the civil service. In 1970 a law was introduced which amended the edict of 4 February 1959 prohibiting the use of part-time work in the civil service. The law of 19 June 1970 allowed part-time work on a half-time basis only (twenty hours per week) for those fitting into its strict criteria of applicability (for a full description of these see Droulers, 1972).

In 1973 the use of part-time work in French society as a whole was facilitated by the amendment of employers' social security liability for part-time workers, which had until then penalized employers financially for the use of part-timers and deterred employers from using part-time work. The new legislation gave employers the right to reimbursement for the extra security charges which the system placed on the use of part-time work, provided that working hours fell between twenty and thirty hours a week. At the same time the law set out specific conditions under which part-time work could be used. These included an stipulation that part-timers' working hours should fall between a half and two thirds of the legal working week (Code du Travail, Art. L212-4-2). The twenty hours minimum was established so that all part-timers' worked enough hours to be covered by the French social security system (Guillemot, 1983).

It was not until 1981 that measures were taken to allow a wider range of part-time hours to be worked. These measures were introduced in the context of economic recession when part-time work became the focus of debate about how to reduce unemployment (Barou et Rigaudiat, 1983; Perronet, 1982), and the Government sought to encourage the development of part-time work in order to reduce unemployment and to meet the needs of employees - and particularly women - for more flexible working hours. On 28 January 1981 a new law was introduced which included a measure to extend the definition of part-time work to all employment with hours less than the normal working hours in the company or site, hence allowing shorter working hours to be introduced (Guillemot, 1983). This law followed shortly after the relaxation (through the law of 23 December 1980) of the legislation restricting the range of part-time working hours allowed in the civil service.

In 1981 when the Socialist Government came to power unemployment was still a major problem and the Government was anxious to use part-time work both to improve employment levels and develop the increasingly popular concept of temps choisi (as described in Chapter 2). At the same time, the Government was keen to ensure that part-timers' conditions of work were comparable with those of full-timers. These dual objectives led to measures to bolster part-timers' employment rights and to encourage the growth of permanent part-time posts with longer working hours, which were seen as offering relatively good conditions of employment. The new rights for part-timers included changing the means of calculating number of employees in companies (for the purpose of setting up works committees and other representative bodies) so that part-timers working over twenty hours a week were counted as full-time employees (Guillemot, 1983). Previously the calculations of the number of employees in a company or on site for the purpose of setting up representative bodies was calculated by dividing the total working hours of all part-timers and full-timers by the length of the full-time working week (in August 1986 the Chirac Government reversed this legislation). This measure gave employers an incentive for the first time to employ part-timers for less than twenty hours a week. The growth of part-time work was also promoted through two laws introduced in 1984-5. Both laws were subsequently amended to include part-time workers on shorter hours because take-up on the longer hours schemes was low. On 30 May 1984 legislation was introduced to extend the provisions for the Contrat de Solidarité - Réduction du Temps de Travail (as described in Chapter 2) to enable employers to benefit from the Government's incentives for reductions in working hours by replacing full-time by part-time posts (with working hours of over thirty per week). This legislation was amended in March 1985 to enable the incentives to apply to part-time posts where working

time exceeded eighteen hours per week. In June 1984 the first measures were introduced in the form of explicit incentives for employers to develop part-time posts for the unemployed. Initially they applied to new permanent part-time posts with weekly hours in the range twenty-eight to thirty-two hours. In March 1985, the range was extended to between eighteen and thirty-two hours (Documentation Française, 1985).

In sum, it has been argued that the main explanation for the differing length of part-time working hours in Britain and France lies in the impact of dissimilar legislative frameworks on employers' use of part-time work in the two countries. One objective of the secondary analysis and fieldwork in food retailing is to examine the factors determining employers' use of part-time work, and particularly the scheduling of part-time working hours, to see how demand and supply factors interact.

The Organization of Working Hours

A small amount of statistical data, which is not however, directly comparable, gives some indications about the similarities and differences in the organization of part-time working hours in Britain and France. Data from the Enquête Nationale sur les Conditions de Travail (Cristofari and Bue, 1985) relating to all part-timers (both men and women) in 1984 is compared with the findings from the Women and Employment Survey, which relate to the working hours of female part-timers in 1980 (see Table 3.5). While there are considerable difficulties comparing the data, the comparison of available sources indicates that there are both similarities and differences in the distribution of part-time working hours in the two countries.

This comparison suggests that in both countries the most common numbers of days worked is five and the least common is more than five days. On the other hand, it shows that the four-day week for part-timers is more common in France than in Britain, and that in Britain by contrast it is more usual to work part-time spread over five days or for less than four days. This difference would seem to reflect the common practice amongst French women of taking Wednesdays off work to be with their young children (most of whom have all, or a proportion of, Wednesday free as part of their school timetable). Indeed, it is a reflection of the importance of the use of part-time work for securing free Wednesdays, that the French research relating to patterns of working hours focuses specifically on the extent to which part-timers work on Wednesdays. The 1984 report (Cristofari and Bue, 1985) stated that 25% of part-timers working thirty hours or over had Wednesdays free, compared with 22% of those working 15-30 hours and 45% of those working less than fifteen hours.

Another difference lies in the much higher proportion of part-timers who work over five days in France compared with Britain. This may be explained partly by the larger proportion of women in Britain who work under sixteen hours compared with France.

Information about the range of patterns of working hours which female part-timers work is much more detailed in Britain than in France, because working hours were the focus of a thorough study in the Women and Employment Survey in 1980. In France, the findings from survey material do not distinguish between male and female part-timers and examine only part-timers' starting and finishing times (Cristofari and Bue, 1985).

The main characteristic of part-timers' patterns of working hours in Britain is that part-timers most commonly work in the morning and that over half had finished their work by 1600 hence allowing those with school-aged children to be back at home when their children returned from school (Table 3.6).

Table 3.5 Proportion of Part-timers Working Various Numbers of Days in Britain and France*

Number of Days	Percentage	
	Britain**	France
5 days	54	42
4 days	12	20
Less than 4 days	26	20
More than 5 days	8	16

Source: Cristofari and Bue, 1985:83; Martin and Roberts, 1984: 35.

* Based on part-timers working the same days every week.

** Refers only to female part-timers.

The French statistics are less detailed (see Table 3.7) and are not strictly comparable. However, they do provide some basis for comparison with patterns of working hours in Britain. They show that approximately the same proportion of part-timers stop work in the two countries before 1400 (31% in France compared with 29% in Britain), which suggests that similar proportions of part-timers are working a morning-type shift.

Table 3.6 The Organization of Hours of Work of Female Part-timers with
Youngest Children of Pre-school and School Ages and of All Part-timers (Excluding
Women Whose Organization of Hours was not Known) in Britain

Organization of hours (in %)		Women with youngest children aged			All part- timers
		0-4	5-10	11-15	
Mornings	Starting before 1000				
	Finishing before 1400	17	29	29	29
Short day (Morning)	Starting before 1000				
	Finishing between 1400-1600	7	18	16	13
Standard day	Starting before 1000				
	Finishing between 1600-1800	7	11	13	12
Long day	Starting before 1000				
	Finishing 1800 or later	2	2	2	4
Mid-day	Starting 1000 or later				
	Finishing before 1600	10	16	9	12
Short day (Afternoon)	Starting 1000 or later				
	Finishing between 1600-1800	8	7	11	10
Late day	Starting 1000 or later				
	Finishing 1800 or later	5	3	5	4
Evenings	Starting 1600 or later				
	Finishing before 0000	38	12	10	13
Nights	Starting 1600 or later				
	Finishing 0000 or later	6	2	2	3

Source: Martin and Roberts, 1984: 37, Tables 4.7 and 4.87

Table 3.7 Proportions of Part-timers in France (Male and Female) by
Starting and Finishing Times

Start	Range	%
	Before 0800	14
	0800-1400	69
	Before 1400	17
	(of which before 2000)	1
Finish	Before 1400	31
	1400-2000	61
	Before 2000	8

Source: Cristofari and Bue, 1985:83.

On the other hand, they show that a much larger proportion of part-timers in France than in Britain are working afternoons rather than evenings. In France only 1% of part-timers start work after 2000 and only 8% of part-timers finish after 2000, while in Britain 16% of part-timers start at 1600 or later, and 24% of part-timers finish after 1800, with 13% of part-timers finishing before midnight and 3% finishing after midnight. There is evidence to suggest that these patterns of working hours in Britain and France reflect a more explicit relationship between children's ages and childcare arrangements in Britain than in France. British research has focused explicitly on the link between the age of the youngest child and the organization of hours of work, and found that patterns of working hours tend to be adapted to the age of the youngest child (see Table 3.6). For example when the child is aged under five a large proportion of part-timers work evenings (38%). Indeed, 78% of part-time evening workers were mothers of children under sixteen. Once the youngest child is at school arrangements which appear to fit in with school hours become much more

common, particularly mornings, short days (starting before 1000 and finishing between 1600 and 1800) and mid-day working.

Furthermore, it has also been found that the hours part-timers work in Britain are linked very closely with the type of childcare facility they can find (see Table 3.8). For example, 90% of women working evenings use their husbands for childcare. Indeed, among all forms of working arrangements for women working part-time, husbands represented the major form of childcare.

Table 3.8 Arrangements Made by British Female Part-time Workers for the Care of School Children During Term Time by Pattern of Working Hours

Childcare Arrangements (in %)	Mornings	Short Day (Morning)	Standard Day (Morning)	Short Day (Afternoon)	Evening
Husband	57	35	52	45	90
Child's Grandmother	22	47	23	28	13
Child's Older Brother/Sister	7	6	13	14	8
Other Relative	12	10	19	19	7
Childminder (in home)	2	10	-	3	2
Friend or Neighbour on Exchange Basis	12	6	10	10	4
Other	7	2	3	3	1

Source: Martin and Roberts, 1984: 39.

The interpretation of Tables 3.6 and 3.8 suggests that British part-timers are working patterns of hours which above all enable them and their partners to provide childcare for their children.

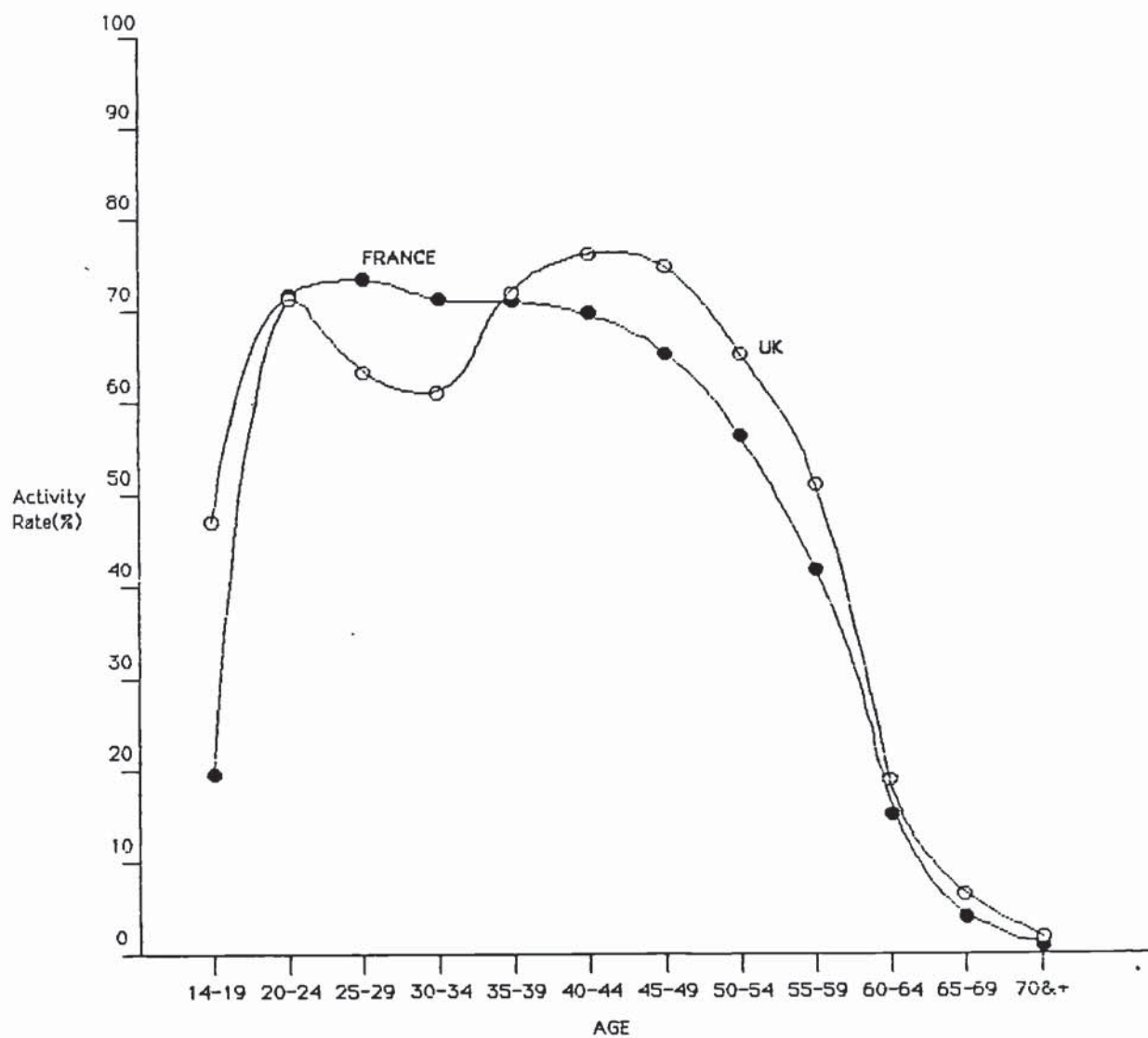
In France, by contrast, research (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985) has shown only how women's working hours have been affected by the size of family (numbers of children) and has not made the distinction between full and part-time workers. This research has shown that French women alter their hours according to their number of children, and that as they increase in number the women tend to start work later in the morning, come home for lunch more often, and return home earlier in the evening. It has also shown that the larger the family the more women take Wednesday off work to be with their children on their day off school (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985)(although the extent they do this depends on their Socio-Occupational Category [SOC]¹). The lack of interest in the relationship between patterns of working hours and both forms of childcare and children's ages, in particular concerning part-timers, suggests that these factors may not be so important in determining patterns of working hours in France as in Britain. One of the objectives of the fieldwork in food retailing was to see whether this is the case for part-timers.

The greater role of childcare in determining patterns of part-time working hours represents only one facet of a generally greater adaptation of women's working lives to the demands of children in Britain. This more extensive adaptation is also reflected in the continuity of women's activity during the family formation stage (defined by Dex, 1984, as the period following on from the initial work phase in which women start their first pregnancy) and the form of their labour force participation. In Britain there is much less continuity

in women's working patterns over the family formation stage. This is revealed by examining women's activity rates by age in the two countries (see Figure 3.1). The peak of women's activity in both Britain and France occurs between the age of twenty and twenty-five, that is to say before the first child is usually born. In Britain there is still a marked fall in activity after this age as women leave the labour force to bring up children: paid work is much more common in France among women in the age group 20-30 than it is in Britain (for a detailed Franco-British comparison of women's continuity of activity see Dex and Walters, 1988).

There is also a disparity in female activity rates in Britain and France over the age of thirty-five. While activity rates are much higher in France during the family formation stage, over the age of thirty-five they are considerably higher in Britain than in France. This difference can be explained in part by the fact that in France an older generation of women dropped out of the labour force while in Britain their counterparts have rejoined it, often on a part-time basis. However, an additional explanation for this disparity is, as highlighted by Garnsey, "...the re-entry of British women into the labour market on a part-time basis after the period when their children are very young" (Garnsey, 1985: 9). In Britain, inextricably linked with the break in activity during the family-formation stage is the tendency of women to return to work on a part-time basis. Part-time work predominantly follows the first break for childbirth in Britain, and three-quarters of all women returning to work at this stage work part-time (Elias and Main, 1982; Martin and Roberts, 1984). In 1981 only 31% of working mothers worked full-time hours, as compared with 69% who worked part-time (General Household Survey).

Figure 3.1 Female Activity Rates by Age Groups for UK and France, 1985



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 1985: 83.

Returning to work part-time after childbirth is the socially accepted way of reconciling childcare with work for women in Britain - only the highly qualified or the financially needy continue to work on a full-time basis with young children (Gowler and Legge, 1982). In France, by contrast, part-time work has always been a much less important form of work for mothers: in 1981 81% of mothers working did so on a full-time (over thirty hours a week) basis (Chapron et al, 1984)².

Despite considerable growth in part-time work in the last few years (Belloc, 1986) part-time work in France today is still seen as the only solution for women who would otherwise be unable to combine work and family life (Hantrais, 1985). As Huet (1982) points out:

Face à la demande des femmes à une pleine intégration dans la vie économique qui se manifeste de plus en plus clairement, la demande de travail à temps partiel apparaît quant à elle moins claire et plus marginale (Against women's demand for full integration into working life which is becoming more and more apparent, the demand for part-time work is less clear and more marginal) (Huet, 1982: 20).

The full extent to which British women adapt their activity to the presence of children is revealed by looking at the relationship between the age of the youngest child and women's patterns of activity. In Britain, the factors "presence of children" and "age of the youngest child" have a more important effect on women's propensity to work than the size of a woman's family. The presence of children causes British women to reduce their participation in the labour force (Joshi, 1984), while at the same time increasing the participation of their partners. However, the depressive effect of children on women's activity is clearly linked to the youngest child's age (Joshi, 1984; Martin and Roberts, 1984), with the most severe effects common when the youngest child is aged up to five years. As the youngest child grows older British women's participation rates increase (see Table 3.9) as schools

take over a large part of mothers' childcare responsibilities. Much of this increased participation is due to their more extensive employment on a part-time basis. Activity rates fall among women whose youngest child is aged under five (84% of childless women work in contrast with only 27% of women who have a youngest child aged four and under) and the majority of these women work part-time³. When children reach junior school age and the burden of childcare responsibilities is lifted from mothers during school hours, activity rates rise, though work remains primarily on a part-time basis. However, after this stage, at which it appears children are considered more able to look after themselves, not only do participation rates rise but also part-time levels drop, suggesting that women with children are increasingly working full-time.

Table 3.9 Estimated Proportions of all British Women Working and Working Part-time by Age of Youngest Child

Age	% Women Working	% of Women Working Part-time
0-4	27	74
5-10	65	75
11-15	76	58
16 or over	65	62

Source: Martin and Roberts, 1984: 14.

Activity rates are lower among women with a youngest child aged over sixteen, reflecting generational differences in activity levels. However, standardized participation figures (which take into account age and marital status) show that participation levels actually continue to rise for women whose youngest child is aged sixteen and that this employment is increasingly on a full-time basis (Martin and Roberts, 1984).

In France, by contrast, the factor "age of the youngest child" has a much less important effect on women's form of activity than family size (Frisch, 1976; Labourie-Racapé et al, 1977; Chapron et al, 1984; Menahem, 1984)⁴. As family size increases women's activity levels fall: in 1981 71% of mothers with one child were active compared with 60% of mothers with two children and 35% of mothers with three children or more (CERC, 1984). When the size of the family is held constant the age of the youngest child, as in Britain, affects women's participation in the labour force, although in France activity levels increase significantly at the age of three when young children can go to the école maternelle (nursery school) and again at the age of six when they go to primary school (this compares with the increases in activity at four and eleven in Britain). The age of the youngest child in France has the most effect on women's activity when the family is large and the age of the youngest child is two or under, this is because other children in the family tend to be young as well (Chapron et al, 1984).

The use of part-time work also increases with the number of children: in 1982 levels rose from 15.6% for mothers with one child to 33.7% for mothers with three children or more (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985), which suggests that women in France are also significantly adapting their activity to their children, although the reasons for this adaptation may be different. In contrast with the situation in Britain, however, French women do not adapt their form of activity to the age of the youngest child: the use of part-time work in France is little affected by the age of the youngest child except in families with three or more children where levels are very high (41.7%) when the youngest child is aged 0-2 years and fall as the youngest child grows older (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985). One explanation for the higher levels of part-time working in larger families is that it becomes less financially viable

to work if childcare expenses must be paid (Lattès, 1981; De Singly, 1982; Chapron et al, 1984; Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985). This explanation gains support from the fact that larger families are most common in lower SOC's in France (with the exception of self-employed professionals and top-level managers) and, although part-time working increases with family size in most SOC's (except top-level managers and self-employed professionals), it increases most with family size in some of the lowest SOC's such as shop and personnel service workers (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985). It is in these SOC's that women have least to gain financially from working when their families are large and most to gain from family allowances which are particularly generous when there are three or more children in the family. This calculation is also reflected in the greater discontinuity of activity in these occupational groups (for a full discussion of the relationship between SOC and women's patterns of activity in France see for example Labourie-Racapé et al, 1977; Lattès, 1981; De Singly, 1982; Villac, 1984, and Chapron et al, 1984). Another explanation for women's greater adaptation to children in these groups is that they are often set in a domestic mould by their families and encouraged to sacrifice training and qualifications for the domestic sphere. Low levels of qualification in turn favour discontinuity in working patterns during family formation and increase the likelihood that these women will take up employment such as part-time work which is frequently unstable and poorly qualified (Barrère-Maurisson et al, 1983). A further explanation for higher levels of part-time working in larger families is that part-time work may be the only way in which these women can gain sufficient flexibility in their working hours to cope with more complicated demands on their time when existing flexibility options in France are quite limited (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985).

Although the correlation between size of family and part-time use in most SOC's, suggests that childcare is the main reason why most other women work part-time in France, this is not born out by research. This has shown that, in contrast with the situation in Britain where part-time work is used above all to adapt to the youngest child's childcare requirements, in France there is a plurality of reasons why women work part-time, and women in differing SOC's are working part-time for different reasons at different stages of their life cycles. A full discussion of the reasons why women from differing SOC's work part-time is provided by Belloc, (1986; 1987) from large-scale statistical analysis, and Corniou (1984), Kergoat (1984), Legay (1984), and Nicole (1984), on the basis of small-scale in-depth analyses of specific groups.

A possible explanation of the generally greater adaptation of women's activity to the presence of children in Britain compared with France in terms of the continuity of employment, of the form of participation they take, and of the organization of part-time working hours they choose, is that under dissimilar socio-economic and demographic conditions governments have formulated differing employment and family policies which have contributed to women developing different attitudes towards work and family in the two countries.

The lack of a positive employment policy for women in Britain, combined with social policies which have reinforced the traditional family model of the husband as breadwinner and wife as homemaker, would seem to have encouraged women to attach greater priority to domestic commitments than to work. In Britain the principal signs of a government policy to encourage women's employment, and particularly the employment of women with children, have been during periods of labour shortage such as

during World War II and the 1960s, when governments of both main political parties have used the provision of childcare facilities to encourage mothers into the labour force. The period of most intense government activity to promote women's work was in the early 1970s when the Labour Government legislated for equal pay and opportunities for women, and in 1973 set up the Equal Opportunities Commission to take up the claims of women who were not receiving equal treatment at work. With the exception of these measures successive governments' policies have had the effect (either intended or not) of discouraging mothers from full-time work. The most clear examples of this have been the post-war reduction in State childcare provisions and the taxation of workplace schemes.

Britain has also been characterized by a lack of explicit family policy over the post-war period. Instead, it has applied a series of social policies, which some authors suggest constitute an underlying family policy (Land and Parker, 1984), based on, and reinforcing, the traditional family model where women's role is that of homemaker. Examples of policies which have contributed to this image include women's ineligibility to claim for dependents in their benefits (for example, sickness and unemployment benefits), while this is the case for men if they have children or a wife at home, and the operation of the tax system (to be changed in 1990) which considers the wife's income as belonging to the husband (although women can currently opt for individual taxation this is only advantageous for high earning couples). These social policies would seem to have contributed to attitudes commonplace in Britain that women's role is primarily in the home, particularly when there are young children:

...it is still assumed that women's work outside the home should not interfere with her domestic responsibilities in caring for her husband and particularly in caring for her

children...(Beechey, 1986: 125).

Indeed, the Women and Employment Survey, which is the most recent large-scale survey of women's attitudes towards work and family found that:

...work is considered by many women to be secondary to home and family and something to be accommodated to domestic demands (Martin and Roberts: 1984).

Moreover, it would seem that these attitudes about women's work are shared by many British men. In one small-scale comparative study (Ferguson, 1987) it was found that 40% of British men held the view that it is impossible for women to have both children and a career.

Another important facet of the family policy of British governments according to Land and Parker (1984) has been not to intervene to help in the care of dependents, except where the model family has not existed, or has not been able to meet its responsibilities. In relation to childcare especially, they suggest that successive policies can be seen as a means of encouraging women to stay at home with young children. With the exception of the war years and short periods in the 1960s, the British State has not developed child-support services for pre-school children with the aim of encouraging women to become fully integrated into the workforce. Rather, they have been developed in conjunction with a model of families, and of women's role in relation to childcare, which has encouraged women to give the priority to family over work and in particular to stay at home to bring up young children.

An important influence over post-war childcare policy was work by authors such as J. Bowlby who stressed that the separation of the child from the mother in the early years of life would do irreparable emotional damage to the child (Sierakowski, 1984). This thinking

became the basis of the immediate post-war policy to close down nurseries for very young children for whom it was thought that care by anyone other than the mother was harmful, and expand nursery schools and classes, which were seen as beneficial for everyone (Tizard et al, 1976; Fonda, 1976). This had the effect of raising the age at which publicly provided care began and, because nursery schools became attached to schools and conventional school hours were introduced, of shortening the hours for which pre-school age children could be cared for outside the home. The introduction of part-time nursery school places by the Government and by the voluntary play group movement in the 1960s further limited women's ability to engage in paid work because it offered no opportunity for full-day support which would enable mothers to work full-time. Furthermore, such was the strength of the "maternity cult" in the post-war period that women returning to work, which was already made difficult by the lack of childcare provisions, were made to feel guilty and viewed as "deviant" by society - attitudes which are still common in the late 1980s (Brannen, 1987). The "mother and baby" school of thought also had an important influence over the policy direction of childcare in the 1960s and 1970s, encouraging the development of only part-time childcare for pre-school children and, with the exception of special cases, no childcare for the under threes. The combination of these policies with low levels of government funding for pre-school provision has meant that British women are forced to mind children at home much more than some of their European counterparts (Moss, 1988). According to Social Trends (CSO, 1984) in 1984 only 45% of children aged from three to four years were in childcare (public or private) for part or all of the day and nearly half of these children received only part-time care. It has been suggested by a number of authors (for example Barrère-Maurisson et al, 1987; Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Dale and Glover, 1987) that the low

level of childcare provisions may help explain why a large proportion of British women work part-time⁵. Indeed, there is evidence that a lack of childcare facilities obliged employers in the "tight" labour market conditions of the 1960s to create part-time jobs in order to attract female labour, and that many employers deliberately created shifts which exactly matched school hours (Tilly and Scott, 1978; Seear, 1982).

In France, by contrast, policies towards women's employment and the family, particularly since 1975, have actively encouraged women to give equal priority to both the work and domestic spheres. In the French context where, among other factors, part-time work has not traditionally been used, and employers have been reluctant to develop it⁶, women have been encouraged to work on a full-time basis. Policies up to the early 1970s reflected the effect of two oppositely-directed forces: on the one hand, the pressures on successive governments to deal with a severe birth rate problem and, on the other hand, the need to find a source of labour to fill the new jobs created in the developing industries, particularly during the labour shortage of the 1960s and early 1970s⁷. Policy relating to women's work reached a turning point in 1975 when it started to be generated by a momentum of its own, independently of labour market conditions. For example 1975 saw the introduction of a law (of 3 January) to give priority in training to single-parent mothers and widows. After 1975 a ministry post was set up deal with women's affairs (Ministère Délégué à la Condition Féminine), and a secretary of state was given the responsibility for the employment of women (Halpern, 1981) culminating in 1981 in the setting up of a ministry of women's rights. The latter half of the 1970s and the 1980s also saw the introduction of numerous measures to promote greater opportunities for women at work⁸.

The policies of the sixth plan (1971-5) in relation to childcare also marked a turning point. They sought not simply to respond to the need for labour at that time but also to encourage more women to become economically active (Fernandez de Espinosa, 1982) while at the same time having a family. The child support policy has advanced on two fronts: nursery schools for three to six year olds (primary school starts at six in France) and day nurseries for two year olds. The expansion of nursery schools in particular had the support from the 1950s of a "...political and professional consensus on the social benefits of universal provision of three to six year olds" (Walters, 1978: 10). The separation of mother from child was not disparaged as it was in Britain in the early 1960s and hence society did not perceive childcare facilities as detrimental to the child, or the use of such facilities as a reason for criticising the mother. Whereas in Britain negative attitudes to extra-family childcare were supported by a family policy based on, and reinforcing, the ideal of a nuclear family, in France more positive attitudes were associated with social measures which treated women as independent. For example, as early as 1965 women were authorized to receive unemployment benefit in their own right, and the tax system has not treated women as men's responsibility⁹.

In France a public childcare service has progressively developed which is not only predominantly free (except after school hours) but also provides for children at lunch times, after school hours, and during the school holidays, thus enabling women to work full-time should they wish. Today 83% of children aged three years are in nursery schooling in France (Desplanques, 1985). Although the development of day nurseries has been more problematical (Walters, 1978) 40% of two year olds are in some form of extra-family care. The childcare policy since

the mid-1970s has been accompanied by more pragmatic policies which have sought to take into consideration women's aspirations to work, while at the same time encouraging them to have larger families. For example, financial measures were introduced (l'Allocation Parentale d'Education [Parents' Childcare Allowance]) in January 1985 (and reformed in 1986) to enable either parent to stay at home to look after three or more children should they choose. At the same time subsidies were introduced (in 1986 in the form of the Allocation de Garde d'Enfant à Domicile [Allowance for Children Minded at Home]) to allow parents to have their children looked after at home while they work. Recent policy has emphasized the importance of giving parents the choice over family size and whether they work. Another example of this was the introduction of parental leave legislation in 1984 by which mothers or fathers can take up to two years unpaid parental leave with full rights for reinstatement at work at the end of the leave period.

The culmination of these family and employment policies in France has been that women's work has come to be seen in different terms compared with Britain. French women have come to see paid employment, not as an option, but as an irreversible fact of life and are often committed to work independently of financial imperatives. As a consequence the domestic sphere is no longer the only source of social identity for women nor are marriage and childrearing their only vocation (Battagliola and Jaspard, 1987). Moreover, these differences in attitudes towards women's work in France also appear to be shared by French men. Ferguson (1987) found that half as many French men than British men (20% compared with 40%) held the view that it was impossible for women to have both children and a career.

Flexibility in Working Hours

There is very little information in either Britain or France about the degree of choice in working hours (once in employment) available to women working part-time, although there are more data in France than in Britain relating to this subject. In Britain the data provide only a general assessment of the flexibility in part-timers' working hours, while the French data make a greater distinction between the types of flexibility available. This difference in level of detail suggests that there may be less formal flexibility in Britain and/or more attention paid to flexibility issues (and working time in general) in France compared with Britain. The main finding from a comparison of the available information (shown in Tables 3.10 and 3.11) is that a much higher proportion of French female part-timers seem to have some choice over their working hours than in Britain (44.1% compared with 19%). This may mean that the heightened awareness of working time in France, identified in Chapter 2, is having an effect on practices regarding flexibility in working time in France. An attempt is made in the review of secondary data and in the fieldwork in large-scale grocery to assess whether this is the case.

The British statistics show that flexibility in working hours is greater for part-timers than for the full-time worker. The French statistics, by contrast, which show the changes in flexibility in working hours over the period 1978-84, suggest that conflicting patterns of change are taking place. On the one hand, flexi-time systems have increased but, on the other, total freedom over working hours has fallen, and more rigid working hours (in terms of more fixed hours, and company-determined flexibility) are more widespread.

Table 3.10 Degree of Choice in Starting and Finishing Times Among
Women Working Full and Part-time in Britain, 1980

	Full-time	Part-time
	In %	
Fixed starting and finishing times	79	72
Can choose starting and finishing times	16	19

Source: Martin and Robert, 1984: 40.

Table 3.11 Proportion of Female Part-timers by Type of Working Hours
in France, 1978 and 1984

	1978	1984
	In %	
Type of hours		
Same every day	11.1	16.1
Different each day determined by the company	21.8	28.5
Flexi-time	7.1	10.9
Of choice	37.9	33.2
Not declared	13.8	19.0

Source: Cristofari and Bue, 1985: 83.

Satisfaction with Working Hours

The French have a framework of legislation which in theory allows for much greater formal intervention by employees and/or their representatives in the area of working hours than is provided in the

British system. In the first place the trades unions in France have a formal right to representation in the workplace and, since 1982, have had their role in discussions about working hours at company and workplace level written in law (as explained in Chapter 2). This legislation theoretically gives French unions a greater ability to intervene on behalf of employees in the area of working hours than exists in Britain.

Secondly, the system of works committees and workers' representatives in France gives employees an additional formal channel for influencing working hours which does not exist in Britain. In common with many other European countries where legislation has traditionally been used to achieve improvements in workers' conditions, France has used the law to ensure both union representation and direct employee participation in the firm or the workplace. Works committees are one form of this representative process. In France they were introduced initially in 1945 to contain the workers' spontaneous establishment of production committees to run factories which had been abandoned by their owners at the time of the Liberation (CIR, 1974). The role of the works committee in France has been developed over the last forty years, and its attributions were most recently extended in 1982 as part of the Auroux laws (for more information about the development of the works committee see Soubie, 1983). Today, a committee must be set up in all companies or workplaces employing fifty or more employees (Code du Travail, Art. L 431.1). It is composed of elected representative(s) of the personnel, unions' representative(s), and the head of the company or workplace. The 1982 law has developed the role of the works committee so that its current aim is to:

...assurer une expression collective des salariés, permettant la prise en compte permanente de leurs intérêts, dans les décisions relatives à la gestion et à l'évolution économique

et financière de l'entreprise, à l'organisation du travail et aux techniques de production...(insure the expression of the collective wishes of employees in order to help take into consideration their interests at all times in decisions relating to the running, and the economic and financial development, of the company, and to work organization and production methods...)(Code du Travail, Art. L. 432.3)

Apart from the increased powers of the works committee to discuss the economic situation of the company, it is now entitled to information about the organization of work and to be consulted more fully about it: the committee must now receive a yearly summary of the changes in status of the personnel - for example the numbers of part-time and full-time employees, and the type and length of employment contracts - on which it may give its views. It must also be consulted on problems of work organization and plans to modify working hours (these plans should also be passed on to the inspecteur du travail (works inspector) before implementation (Code du Travail, Art. L.432-1). In the absence of a works committee its functions should be carried out by the délégué du personnel (employee representative).

In Britain, in contrast with the situation in France and some other European countries, unions and employers have always been wary of participative management. Kassalow (1982) explains this difference by making a distinction between the development of worker representation in Britain and the USA and in other Western European countries. According to this explanation Britain and the USA became industrialized more rapidly than Western European countries such as France and Germany, which lead to earlier worker organization and an earlier development of collective bargaining. In Britain and the USA the unions, while militant, were less ideologically motivated than their European counterparts and more concerned with fighting for their rights effectively on the shop-floor. The lengthy fight for union

recognition from employers and the State and the increasing importance of collective bargaining as the means of achieving improvements in pay and conditions resulted in unions being hostile to any government intervention into the unions' sphere of influence. In Britain, works committees were proposed in the Whitley report in 1917 and met opposition from all quarters: employees saw little use for them because the committees' did not have the power to negotiate pay and conditions, and employers saw them as an unnecessary encumbrance once the tide of working-class militancy after the War had diminished. As a result of the strong attachment to collective bargaining and virulent opposition to worker participation in Britain, works committees have never been used since World War I, and today the concept is alien to much of British industry.

Finally, recent legislation in France has also instituted a second formal means of employee participation in companies and another potential influence on working hours: le droit d'expression des salariés (the employee's right to self expression) (Code du Travail, Art. L. 461-1), for which there is no equivalent in Britain. This law formalizes the employee's right to express him/herself on a number of areas relating to work content, organization, and conditions, and protects the employee from dismissal for exerting this right. The law also stipulates that companies or workplaces with more than fifty employees and a délégué syndical (union representative) must negotiate the means by which the employees' right to self-expression will be fulfilled with the representative unions in the workplace. If no agreement is reached or there is no representative union in the firm/workplace then the employer must consult the works committee or the personnel representative, on the means of self-expression which he/she is unilaterally establishing. Any agreement with unions must

ensure that the freedom of self-expression is exercised through groups, which may be set up for offices, workshops, or work teams (for more detail about the operation of the laws on the employee's right to self-expression see Editions Francis Lefebvre, 1986: 426-29). In these groups employees can exert their right to self-expression on work-related issues and suggest actions to improve their work conditions, the organization and quality of work, without risking dismissal.

The more favourable framework for employee intervention in the area of working hours in France compared with Britain might lead one to expect that because part-timers are likely to be able to influence their working hours more in France they might also be more satisfied with them. However, the small amount of information about satisfaction with working hours available in Britain and France, suggests that the reverse is true. In 1980 94% of part-time working women in Britain were fairly or very satisfied with their hours of work (Martin and Roberts, 1984: 73). In France, although statistics do not relate specifically to part-timers' satisfaction with working hours, there is evidence of greater dissatisfaction with working hours among part-timers. Indeed, in 1986, more than 50% of female part-timers in the private sector were not satisfied in their job, 17% were looking for another job, 33% considered their job as temporary, and 10% were looking for an additional job (Belloc, 1986). This high level of dissatisfaction may, however, be explained partly by the greater proportion of women aged under twenty-five working part-time in France (representing 12% of female part-timers in France compared with 6% in Britain in 1985 [General Household Survey and Enquête sur L'Emploi]).

Corresponding with these differences in levels of satisfaction with part-time work women would seem to be choosing to work part-time to

different degrees in the two countries. In Britain, because part-time work has developed so extensively and has been accepted as the norm for women seeking to reconcile paid work with domestic labour, all part-time work has been assumed to be chosen by women. Such is the strength of this assumption that although general arguments have been presented about whether the development of part-time work in Britain has been demand or supply-led, there have been no attempts to assess whether women have chosen to work part-time. The assumption in Britain that women choose to work part-time is based on women's continued subordination of their working lives to family demands and hence their need to find paid work which can be reconciled with their domestic responsibilities. The importance of this aim is reflected in the fact that "convenient hours of work" are the most important aspect of a job for part-timers. Indeed, it has been shown that even among those who work out of financial necessity convenient hours are an over-riding priority in order to enable them to work at all (Martin and Roberts, 1984).

There is, by contrast, evidence that in France part-time work is not necessarily chosen. This difference is revealed in the interpretation which French researchers have made in relation to part-time work, and for which there is no equivalent in Britain¹⁰. In the French literature about part-time work (for example, Kergoat, 1984; Nicole, 1984; LEST, 1984), a distinction is made between two main types of part-time work: le temps partiel volontaire/choisi (voluntary or chosen part-time work), and le temps partiel imposé/contraint (imposed or constrained part-time work). The distinction between the two is made in terms of the extent to which working part-time is the result of an explicit request by the employee for part-time work (Lehmann, 1985). This understanding of these terms differs from their use in Britain

where involuntary and voluntary part-time work are simply used to express the degree of satisfaction with part-time working hours (Dex, 1988), and where involuntary part-time work means that part-timers would like longer hours, but not necessarily full-time work. In France involuntary part-time work is associated with a lack of choice in the decision to work part-time and implies that the part-timer would prefer full to part-time work; the reverse is true for voluntary part-time work¹¹. Lehmann (1985) found that the majority of part-time work in France was developed at the request of the employer: in 1983 three-quarters of employees (men and women) were working imposed part-time work. The majority of part-time workers were not therefore choosing to work part-time.

There are numerous difficulties involved in carrying out a more detailed comparison of satisfaction with part-time working hours in Britain and France. One problem is that published information only relates to the length of part-time hours and their organization. Another problem is that British research has examined in detail satisfaction with both these facets of part-time working hours for women, while in France the research has been less detailed and has not distinguished between male and female part-timers. Because of these difficulties in the following discussion the findings from each country will be presented separately.

In Britain, women's overall satisfaction with their part-time hours is reflected in their satisfaction with weekly hours. When British women working part-time were asked if they would prefer a job with a different number of hours per week, 83% of women in 1980 stated that they were happy with their present number of hours, although of those dissatisfied nearly twice as many said they would prefer longer (11%)

than shorter hours (6%) (Martin and Roberts, 1984: 41). Dex (1988) has carried out a more detailed analysis of part-timers' satisfaction with working hours based on the Women and Employment Survey and found that as many as 89% of part-timers may be voluntarily working part-time and at least 11% of part-timers involuntarily working part-time.

A more detailed breakdown of part-timers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with weekly working hours found that overall the distribution of weekly working hours is relatively satisfactory for women working part-time, but that women working longer part-time hours tended to be the most satisfied with their hours: nearly 33% of women working less than eight hours wished to work more hours, whereas only 5% of women working between sixteen and thirty hours wanted to work more (Dex, 1988: 131). Part-timers wishing to reduce their hours even though they were already working part-time were, as might be expected, those working between sixteen and thirty hours. No women working less than eight hours wanted to reduce their hours. Dex's analysis of the characteristics of women working involuntary part-time work (taken from the Women and Employment Survey) found that women who were working fewer hours per week than they would wish tended to be older married women (aged between thirty and forty-nine), with at least one child, who could not find suitable jobs and who needed to accommodate their working hours to their husband's job because of relying on his share of childcare.

In France, there has been no research which specifically studies satisfaction with weekly working hours, although some small-scale studies of part-timers such as Kergoat (1984) and Corniou (1984) do give some insights into this area. However, Lehmann's (1985) study of the growth of part-time work in France between 1978-83 gives the most

extensive evidence about satisfaction with part-time working hours. His findings suggest that, as in Britain, there is greater satisfaction with longer working hours in France. However, his research also shows that satisfaction with weekly working hours is related to how part-time work has developed and that this depends on the sector of the economy and on occupation. Lehmann's (1985) findings suggest that there is greater satisfaction in posts where part-timers have obtained this form of work at their own request (voluntary part-time work) which tends to be located in more highly skilled jobs in the public sector and large private institutions. On the other hand there would seem to be less satisfaction with weekly working hours in part-time work which has been created on the initiative of the employer (involuntary or imposed part-time work), posts which are most often found in unskilled and low-skilled occupations in the private sector¹².

Lehmann's findings also show a positive relationship between the type of part-time work (and hence the extent to which part-time work is chosen) and length of working hours. Lehmann's research shows that those part-timers who have obtained this form of work at their own request (male and female) tend to work most often between twenty and thirty-two hours a week (43%), whereas only 33.7% of these part-timers work under twenty hours a week. However, when part-time work has developed on the initiative of the employer, over half (50.6%) work less than twenty hours a week and only 28.4% work between twenty and thirty-two hours. Similarly, a higher proportion of part-timers in voluntary compared with imposed jobs worked between thirty-two and thirty-nine hours a week (12.1% compared with 8.3%) (Lehmann, 1985: 57).

There has been little research carried out in either Britain or France concerning the organization of part-time working hours. The Women and Employment Survey, which has provided the most detailed analysis of women's patterns of working hours to date in Britain, found that there was dissatisfaction with certain arrangements of working hours. Women working part-time on morning and mid-day shifts were most satisfied with their starting and finishing times, while women working a long day (which usually implied working a split shift) and evenings most wanted to change either their starting or finishing times. In France, the limited amount of research about part-time patterns of working hours suggests that, once again, part-timers in jobs where this form of work is imposed are likely to be less satisfied with their arrangements of working hours than part-timers in voluntary part-time posts. This conclusion is based on Lehmann's (1985) evidence that in jobs where part-time work is voluntary part-timers tend to work longer contracts for three or four full days a week, but that in sectors and occupations where part-time work is imposed, part-timers work much shorter contracts over one, two, or six days a week.

In sum, it would seem that despite a more favourable framework for employee intervention in the area of working hours in France, French women working part-time are less satisfied with their hours than their counterparts in Britain. However, the most significant differences in satisfaction with working hours in the two countries appear to be in low-skilled jobs in the private sector. One of the aims of the comparison of patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing carried out through the secondary analysis (Chapter 4) and fieldwork (Chapters 5 and 6), is to examine more closely patterns of part-time working hours and satisfaction with working hours in these jobs where Franco-British differences appear the most significant. An

additional objective, given the differing structures for employee intervention in working hours in the two countries, will be to see to what extent employees can influence their working hours through the trades unions and employee participatory bodies.

Footnotes

1. The frequency with which women work flexi-hours, nights/mornings, and nights/afternoons, also increases with the number of children, and is significantly higher for women with three or more children (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1985).

2. The CERC study of a representative sample of 4000 mothers with at least one dependent child aged under sixteen (Chapron et al, 1984) was carried out in Spring 1981. The General Household Survey also interviews approximately 4000 mothers (although the research brief extends to all men and women) with a dependent child aged under sixteen. The definition of part-time work used in the surveys was similar but not identical: a part-timer in the French study worked less than thirty hours a week, whereas a part-timer in the British study worked thirty hours or less a week.

3. However, not all women work part-time at this stage. The incidence of part-time work during the family formation stage is related to women's attachment to work, defined as "how important it is for them to have a job, why it is important and how committed they are to working" (Martin and Roberts, 1984:60), and how this attachment is expressed in women's activity across their working lives. Women with the most continuous patterns of activity tend to work least frequently on a part-time basis in the family formation stage (Dex, 1984). The working patterns adopted over this stage has been shown to relate to a wide range of factors such as family background (whether women's mothers worked during their childhood), qualification levels, the type of job held by women immediately before childbirth, and the husband's socio-occupational category.

4. The study by Chapron et al (1984) showed that a number of other factors are also related to women's patterns of activities. These include qualification levels, SOC, women's age group, marital status, husband's income, place of residence, and type of childcare facilities used.

5. In their comparison of women's continuity of activity in Britain and France Dex and Walters (1988) have partly attributed the high levels of part-time working in Britain by comparison with France to the financial incentives embodied in its social security and tax systems. In Britain women are encouraged to work part-time by the operation of the national insurance system which enables part-timers with earnings under the threshold from making any contributions, while in France the social security system is applied on a pro rata basis. Also, the operation of the income tax system means that British women working full-time retain much less of their earnings after tax than do French women.

6. It has been argued (Echange et Projets, 1980; Baroin, 1982) that the effect of restrictive legislation in France has been to create a "psychological barrier" to part-time work (Echange et Projets, 1980: 181). Until the late 1970s and early 1980s managers in France were reluctant to use part-time work because they said it not only increased direct costs such as administration and training but was also incompatible with the organization of work (Scientific Management, 1978; Guillemot, 1983).

7. The development of French governments' family and employment policies up to the early 1970s is fully described by Fernandez de Espinosa (1982).

8. For example, under the Socialist Government from 1981 legislation was introduced to encourage special training plans for women workers, and to force employers to analyze the position of women in companies and to consider introducing measures to promote the position of women. Legislation was accompanied by a publicity campaign to encourage women's employment.

9. On the other hand, it was also 1965 before married women were given the right in law to work independently of their husband's opinion about it.

10. This difference is explained in part by the way in which part-time work has developed in France. The marginal nature of part-time work and its recent expansion, has led to it becoming the focus of intense study in terms of the nature of the work which is carried out on a part-time basis, the strategies for the development of part-time work, and particularly - given the currency of the temps choisi concept - in terms of the degree of match/mis-match between individuals' aspirations for part-time work.

11. Corresponding with these types of work are several distinct employer practices relating to the development of part-time work within companies. Lehmann (1985) makes the distinction between the development of part-time work in companies for economic reasons, for social reasons, and for the purpose of minimizing redundancies.

12. These findings are supported by Lucas's (1979) study of part-time work in which he found that it was not those who aspired for more free time through the use of part-time work - those in more qualified occupations - who tended to work part-time, but rather it tended to be those in low-skilled occupations, who most wanted full-time work.

Chapter 4

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing

This chapter compares and contrasts the secondary data about patterns of working hours in large-scale retailing in Britain and France and develops some of the ideas and hypotheses which are respectively investigated and tested in the fieldwork carried out for the thesis. To this end the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first describes the growth of part-time work in food retailing in Britain and France with specific reference to large-scale grocery retailing. It then seeks to explain the similarities and differences in the growth of part-time work in the two countries in terms of sectoral and national trends in order to gain an understanding of the factors which may have a bearing on patterns of working hours in the two countries. The second section describes patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in detail and assesses satisfaction with these patterns.

The Growth of Part-time Work

Before describing the trends in the development of part-time work it is important to explain the inconsistencies in the data from each country and the degree to which sources from the two countries can be compared, so that these factors can be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the findings. In Britain the inconsistencies of the data sets measuring changes in the retail workforce make it difficult to establish long-term continuous series (see Moir, 1982; Sparks, 1984). It is particularly difficult to carry out analyses at outlet level because national statistics of employment in retailing are

collected only at aggregate levels which differ according to the data source and the period in question¹. The exceptions to this situation are monographs of employment at outlet level and information from the Institute of Grocery Distribution which relates to part-time levels in new stores. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, the most consistent statistics at the most detailed level of analysis will be used in conjunction with those available from monographs about employment in large-scale grocery retailing.

In France the main national statistical source tracing the growth of part-time work in food retailing is the Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce (EAEC) which, in contrast with the British sources, provides statistics at outlet level, ie supermarkets, hypermarkets. However, this series began only in 1972 and there are no other statistics relating to the use of part-time work in food retailing before this date. Furthermore, these statistics are not disaggregated by sex. The only other source tracking the growth of part-time work in retailing is the Enquête sur l'Emploi which began in 1971. The Enquête sur l'Emploi compiles findings by occupation and therefore only considers part-time work at the very general level of employés de commerce (employees in distribution). It does, however, disaggregate its findings by sex.

In addition to these problems with national statistical series, there are significant difficulties involved in attempting to compare them. These arise on two levels: non-comparability of classifications, and sampling method. Problems with definitional comparability arise when comparing part-time work, sectors of retailing, and outlets. Firstly, the definition of part-time work used in British and French sources differs: in British censuses and small-scale surveys the definition of

part-time work has consistently remained those working thirty hours or less per week (although the 1971 Census presented working hours data in terms of hours worked and did not compile statistics specifically about part-timers). In France, by contrast, the definition used by the EAEC is each firm's own definition. In the Enquête sur l'Emploi this definition of part-time work has been used since 1982, prior to which the definition was similar to that used in Britain, those working less than thirty hours per week. Secondly, the classifications for food retailing, and for sub-sectors of food retailing differ, and have differed over time, in various statistical sources in Britain and France. For example, the Census of Employment definition of "Retail Distribution of Food and Drink" has included some non-food firms, while in equivalent French definitions this has not been the case. Finally, major differences exist in the definitions of outlet types in Britain and France (ie supermarket, hypermarket etc). In Britain there are several popularly used definitions for outlet types (see Euromonitor, 1986). The most common definition of a supermarket in Britain is of a grocery store with a selling area of greater than 190m², a superstore is usually defined as having a surface area of over 2,322m², and a hypermarket a surface area of over 4,645m² (in Britain the definitions are commonly given in square feet). In superstores and hypermarkets there is no specific product definition but it is assumed that non-food goods take up a large proportion of the selling area. In France, by contrast, a supermarket is defined as a self-service store selling at least two-thirds of its turnover in food goods, and with a surface area of between 400 and 2,500m². A hypermarket is defined as a self-service store selling food and non-food products with a surface area of 2,500m² or more. In France, the term superstore does not exist, but there is, by contrast, another type of smaller outlet called a superette which is

defined as a self-service outlet selling mainly foodstuffs (90-95% of turnover is food), with a surface area of between 120 and 399m².

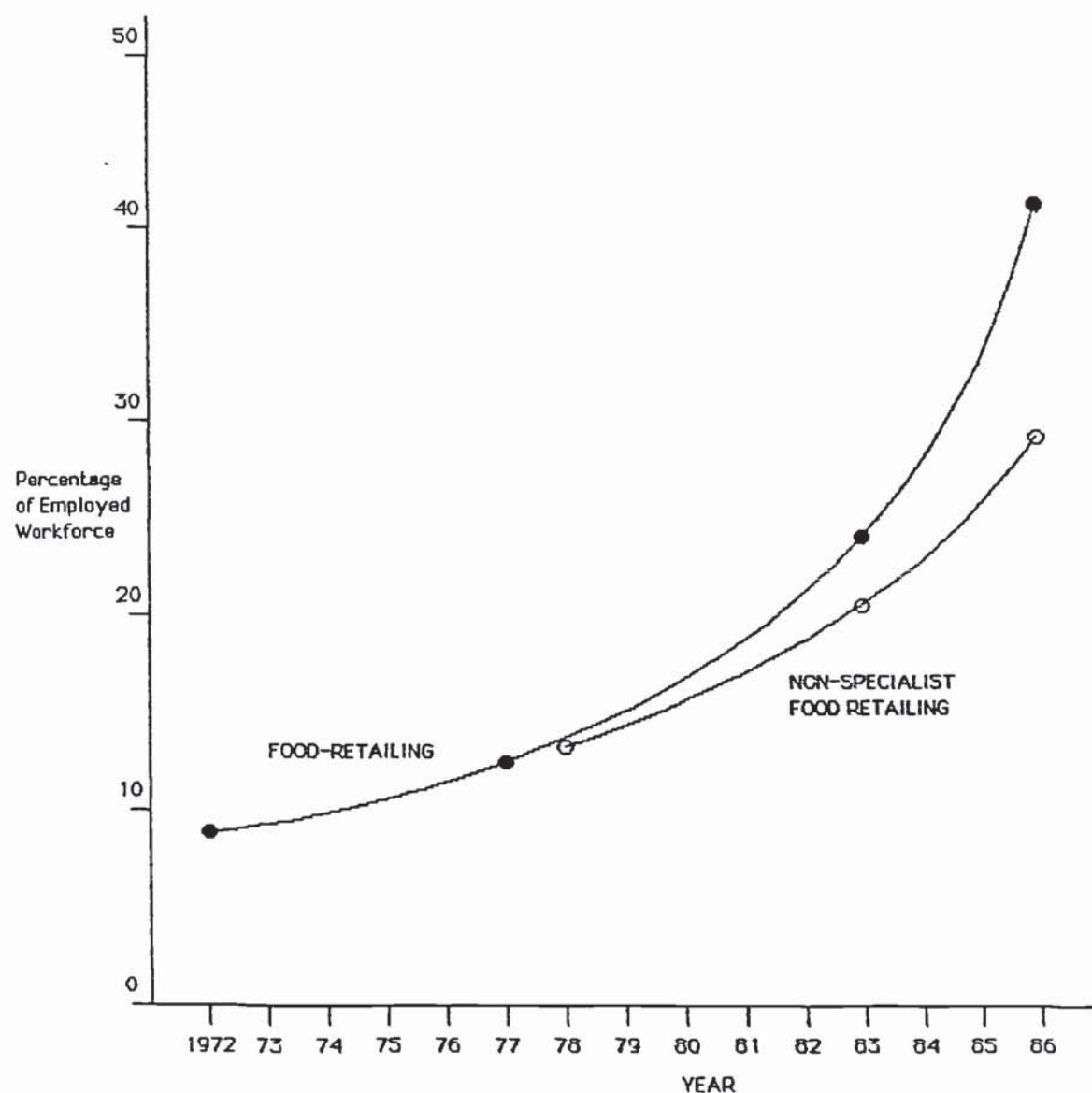
Substantial differences also exist in the sampling base and method for some of the statistical sources in the two countries. For example, in Britain the Census of Distribution is a census of all retail establishments (shops), while the Census of Employment is a census of all firms which are PAYE paypoints and estimates numbers of firms with less than three employees every three years only. Furthermore, the most recent Census of Employment was based on only a partial sample. In contrast with these sources in France the EAEC is a survey of firms (not shops) whose sample base has varied over the years (although it has remained fairly stable since 1979). Two types of sampling are used in the EAEC, exhaustive for firms with more than twenty employees and quota sampling for firms with fewer than twenty. In contrast with the EAEC, the Enquête sur l'Emploi is a stratified household survey.

One of the most significant changes in the workforce and in patterns of working hours in food retailing in Britain and France since the 1960s has been the growth in part-time working. In both countries, retailing, and particularly food retailing, has led the growth of part-time work in the national economies. However, significant disparities exist in the magnitude of the part-time phenomenon in Britain and France and its speed of growth in the two countries. In Britain according to Census of Distribution and Census of Employment estimates, salaried part-time work nearly doubled between 1961 and 1984, rising from approximately 29.9% of the workforce of grocery and provision dealers in 1961 to 48.7% of the food retailing workforce in 1984. The trend has continued over recent years with the proportion of part-timers rising to 55.5% of the food retailing workforce in September

1988 (Employment Gazette, 1989, Table 1.4). In France levels of part-time work in food retailing among salaried employees (male and female) have risen consistently from 1972-86 (see Figure 4.1) and a similar pattern has emerged in the sub-sector of commerce de détail d'alimentation générale comprising all non-specialist food retailers², for which statistics have been compiled for the post 1977 period only. However, levels remained much lower than in Britain for the same period, reflecting the lower use of part-time work in the national economy in France compared with Britain.

Despite the contrasting development of part-time work in food retailing in Britain and France there are two major similarities in its use. Firstly, part-time work in both countries is mainly a female phenomenon. Statistics from the Enquête sur l'Emploi (those provided in the EAEC do not disaggregate by sex) suggest that most part-time work in retailing continues to be carried out by women. Over the period 1982-6, the only period for which statistics are available, women have consistently made up approximately 94% of the part-time workforce among workers in distribution in France (employés de commerce); and the proportion of women workers in distribution working part-time has risen from 14% to 17% over the same period (Enquête sur l'Emploi). Table 4.1 showing the breakdown of employment in small and large-scale grocery outlets belonging to the French employers' union, the Syndicat National des Maisons d'Alimentation à Succursales, Supermarchés, Hypermarchés (MAS) highlights the concentration of women in part-time jobs in 1987. In Britain 83% of part-timers were women in 1984 (Census of Employment) and levels of female part-time work have risen respectively from 24.4% in 1961 among grocery and provision dealers to 40.5% in food retailing in 1984 (see Table 4.2).

Figure 4.1 Levels of Part-time Work (Male and Female Employees) in French Food Retailing and Non-specialist Food Retailing*, 1972-86



Source: INSEE, Enquete Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce, Table 2.2A

*Statistics for non-specialist food retailing are only available for the period 1978-86

Table 4.1 Breakdown of Jobs by Sex and by Job Classification in MAS
Firms*1987

	Men		Women		
	FT	PT	FT	PT	TOTAL
Non-manual workers in non-specialized jobs	25,949	16,471	39,155	46,901	128,476
Non-manual workers in specialized jobs	9,530	408	2,035	1,058	13,031
Manual workers	2,442	70	684	180	3,376
Office workers	1,079	204	4,454	981	6,718
Supervisors and technical workers	11,417	23	3,685	86	15,211
Managers and directors	7,205	13	820	9	8,047
TOTAL	57,622	17,459	50,833	49,215	175,129

Source: Annual Survey by MAS quoted in Clements, 1988: 36.

*MAS's members together cover 8,960 small food retail outlets (under 400m²), 1,034 supermarkets (from 400 to 2,500m²) and 132 hypermarkets (over 2,500m²).

The growth of female part-time work in both Britain and France is reflected in the trends found in both countries towards a feminization of the workforce and, in particular, the growth in the proportions of younger females (especially in the age groups twenty-five to forty-nine in France and thirty-five to forty-four in Britain) working in retailing. These patterns suggest that it is married women with children in both countries who are increasingly being employed in retailing on a part-time basis, although their use seems to be more extensive in France than in Britain, where greater recourse to women in both younger (up to twenty-four) and older (over forty-four) age groups

is made (the statistical evidence demonstrating these trends is provided in Appendix V).

In both countries male part-time work seems to be increasing, although levels are considerably higher in Britain than France. In Britain male part-time work has risen from 3.93% of the paid workforce among grocery and provision dealers in 1961 to 8.25% of the salaried workforce in food retailing in 1984 (Census of Distribution, and Census of Employment). In France over the much shorter period 1982-6 male part-time work has risen from 2.9% to 4% of paid employees in food retailing (Enquête sur l'Emploi).

The second similarity in the growth of part-time work is its concentration in the occupational categories of shop assistants and cashiers. The concentration of part-time work in these categories in Britain is reflected in a number of surveys of employment in food retailing (for example, Sparks, 1982a, 1987; NEDO, 1988) and has been seen as part of a wider trend of polarization of the workforce into a band of highly skilled managers and a mass of low-skilled employees (Sparks, 1982a). In France the most recent national statistics relate to 1977 and show that the vast majority of part-timers in supermarkets and hypermarkets are concentrated in sales personnel, warehouse and shop staff, and among those with no particular job classification (EAEC, 1977, Table 2.3A). More recent studies (see Table 4.1) focusing on large-scale grocery retailing have shown that, as in Britain, part-timers continue to be employed in the least qualified jobs (see also LSA, 1984)³.

Table 4.2 Female Part-time Employment as a Proportion of the
Workforce in British Food Retailing, 1961-88

In %	1961	1966	1971	1975	1981	1984	1987	1988
Grocery and Provision dealers*	24.4	32.6	38.75	-	-	-		
Retail distribution of food and drink**	-	-	30.8	37.7	39.6	-		
Food retailing					39.6	40.5	43.6	44.8

Sources: * Census of Distribution 1961, 1966, 1971.

** Census of Employment 1971, 1975, 1981, 1984.

Employment Gazette, January 1989.

The development of part-time work will now be described in greater detail over shorter periods in order to locate its relationship with wider changes in the retail environment and retail employment. In food retailing in Britain and France the growth of part-time work falls into distinct and different phases. The 1961 Census of Distribution shows that part-time levels for grocery and provision dealers (see Table 4.2) were already very high in comparison with levels in France (see Table 4.4). Over the period 1961-71 the levels of female part-timers among grocery and provision dealers in Britain rose from 24.4% in 1961 to 32.66% in 1966 to 38.75% in 1971 (Table 4.2) and the size of the female part-time workforce increased by 76%. Although this would seem high in comparison with France, these levels were lower than the national figures for all British industries at these dates. Male part-time levels, according to the Census of Distribution varied over this period (See Table 4.3).

The early growth of female part-time work in Britain continued into the 1970s, albeit at a reduced rate, although changes in data sets (from the Census of Distribution to the Census of Employment) make it impossible to compare data directly from the series. On the basis of the Census of Employment data starting in 1971, the proportion of female part-time employment in the retailing of food and drink increased from 30.8% to 37.7% between 1971 and 1975 and the size of the female part-time workforce increased by 25.2% over the period. This growth in the proportion of part-time work closely followed the general speed of growth of part-time work in the national economy. The growth of part-time work in this sector took place against a context of general stability in overall levels of employment during the 1971-5 period.

Table 4.3 Number of Employees in British Food Retailing by Sex and Status (Full or Part-time), 1961-84 (in Thousands)

		Grocery and Provision Dealers	Retail Distribution of Food and Drink	Food Retailing
1961	FT M	106.4		
	FT F	157.8		
	PT M	14.5		
	PT F	90.0		
1966	FT M	91.2		
	FT F	146.7		
	PT M	24.3		
	PT F	126.9		
1971	FT M	76.9	200.2	
	FT F	140.1	176.7	
	PT M	33.6	35.1	
	PT F	158.6	183.5	
1975	FT M		181.5	
	FT F		157.6	
	PT M		40.6	
	FT F		229.9	
1981	FT M		185.0	158.3
	FT F		154.0	145.9
	PT M		46.0	43.3
	PT F		232.0	216.5
1984	FT M			166.1
	FT F			128.0
	PT M			47.4
	PT F			232.6
1988	FT M			152.4
	FT F			120.5
	PT M			57.9
	PT F			268.9

Sources: Census of Distribution 1961, 1966, 1971
Census of Employment 1971, 1975, 1981, 1984.
Employment Gazette, January 1989.

This suggests that the growth in part-time employment was at the expense of full-time employment which declined roughly in proportion to it (see Table 4.3).

Statistics taken from the Census of Employment between 1975 and 1981 show that although female part-time work continued to increase in the retailing of food and drink in Britain, the speed of growth had slowed considerably: female part-time work rose from 37% to 39.6% of the workforce, and the size of the female part-time workforce increased by only 1%, during a period in which total employment remained fairly constant⁴.

Table 4.4 Proportion of Part-timers in French Food Retailing, 1972-86

	1972	1974	1978	1980	1984	1986
Food retailing	8.98	9.89	18.4	22.3	24.13	41.2
All non-specialist food retailers	-	8.49	13.25	17.54	19.6	29.3
Supermarkets and Hypermarkets	6.68	7.77	13.91	17.56	19.5	22.4

Source: INSEE, Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce. 1972-86, Table 2.1A.

However, while the proportion of female part-time work increased over this period this masked a fall in the absolute number of female part-timers (a 5% fall) against a context of falling male and female full-time jobs and rising male part-time employment. In the most recent period in Britain, 1981-4, the growth of female part-time work has resumed some of its earlier speed of growth. Although the proportion of female part-timers in the workforce only increased slightly (from 39.6% to 40.5%), this masked a 7% growth in the female part-time

workforce. The increase in female part-time employment is concealed by a background of rising employment for men on both a full and part-time basis (the percentage of male part-timers rising from 7.9 to 8.2 over the period), falling female full-time employment and rising numbers of employed expressed in absolute terms (see Table 4.3). This pattern of growth of female part-time work is reflected in the statistics collected by the Institute of Grocery Distribution in relation to the use of part-time work in new stores belonging to multiple grocery retailers (retailers with ten or more outlets) in the 1979-83 period. The statistics in Table 4.5 suggest that the use of part-time work fell between 1979-80 to rise again after this date. Growth in the use of part-time work was particularly noticeable after 1982.

Table 4.5 Number of Employees by Status (Full or Part-time) in
New Stores Belonging to British Multiple Retailers
1979-83 (IGD sample)

Status of employee	No. employees per '000 sq ft sales area				
	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Full time	3.23	3.46	3.97	3.00	3.25
Part time	3.59	2.97	3.91	3.90	5.33
Total*	5.01	4.94	5.92	4.96	5.91

Source: IGD, 1984: 49.

* Two part-time employees are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time employee.

In France, by contrast, it appears that most of the growth in part-time work in food retailing has, as in the national economy, taken place after 1974 (see Table 4.4). Also, this growth in part-time work in retailing has taken place in France during a period of continued growth in full-time employment levels (see Table 4.6).

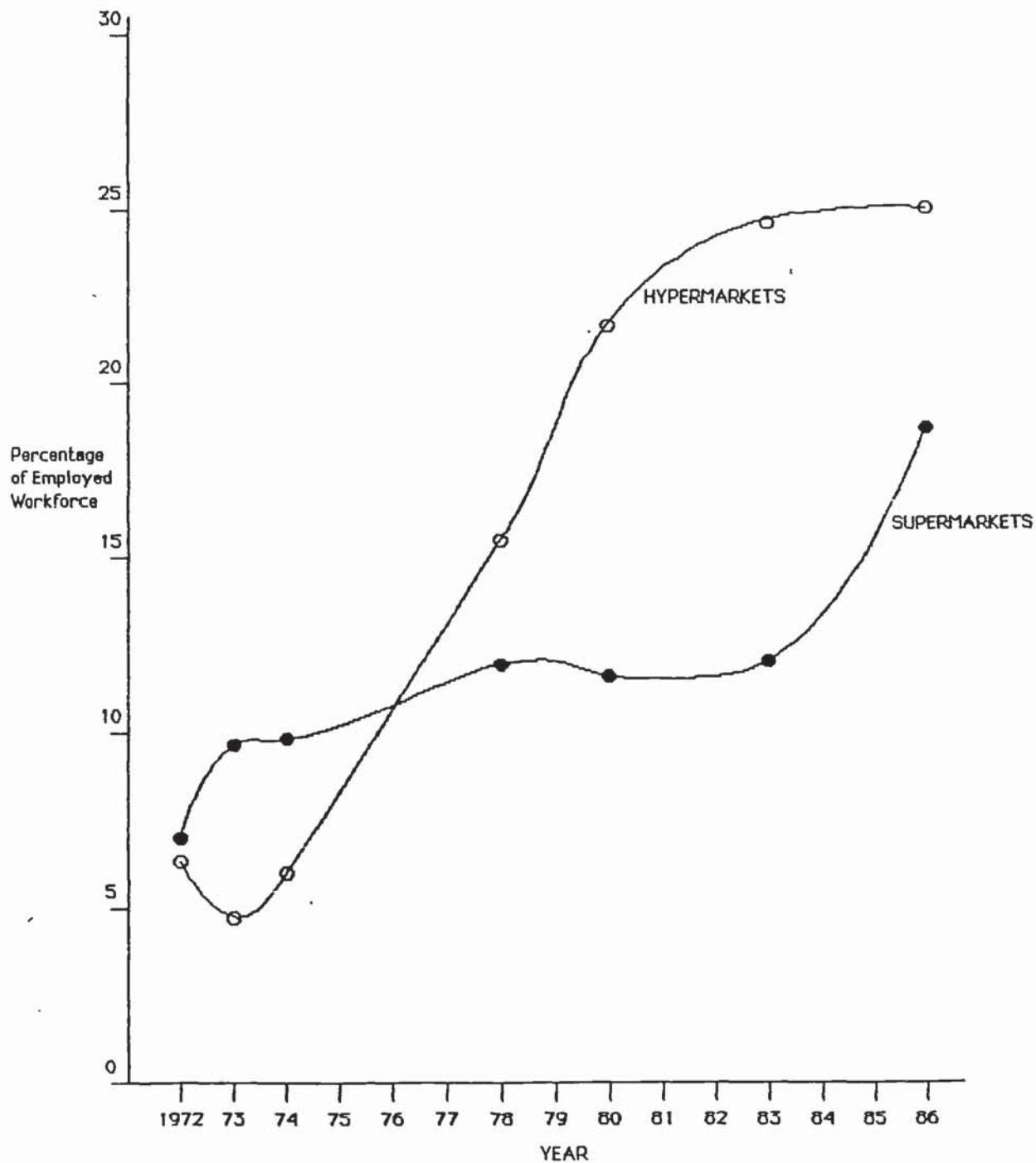
Table 4.6 Numbers of Part and Full-time Employees, and Proportion of Employees Working Part-time in French Food Retailing, 1972-84

	1972	1973	1974	1978	1980	1984
FT	282,546	315,200	355,120	376,987	374,325	388,023
PT	27,898	28,777	39,007	85,085	107,315	123,418
TOTAL	310,444	343,977	394,127	462,072	481,640	511,441
% PT	8.98	9.12	9.89	18.41	22.28	24.13

Source: INSEE, Enquête Annuelle D'Entreprise dans le Commerce, 1972-84, Table 2.1A.

French national statistics, in contrast with those in Britain, provide analysis of employment at outlet level (while the results of firms' annual summary of employment statistics required by law [le bilan social], which are collated in retail journals provide data at the level of the firm). Those relating to employment on a part-time basis in supermarkets and hypermarkets for the 1972-86 period are shown in Figure 4.2. There has been a considerable variation in the growth of part-time work in French hypermarkets as compared with supermarkets over the period and in 1986 levels of part-time work in hypermarkets are significantly higher than those in supermarkets (25.1% compared with 18.7%). In supermarkets part-time employment (as a proportion of total salaried employment) grew intermittently up to 1974 and consistently - though slowly - after 1974. In hypermarkets, growth has been very much more rapid than in supermarkets, particularly after 1974, although the speed of growth in recent years has been slower than in supermarkets.

Figure 4.2 Levels of Part-time Work (Male and Female Employees) in French Supermarkets and Hypermarkets, 1972-86



Source: INSEE, Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce, Table 2.2A

This evidence is supported by data relating to the proportion of the workforce in part-time employment by size of the establishment (expressed as the number of employees) over the period 1972-86. Although the statistics are not directly comparable for the period they also give some indication of the relationship between outlet size and part-time employment. Table 4.7 shows that, although the percentage growth in levels of part-time work has been greatest in smaller outlets over the 1972-7 and 1978-86 periods, levels have remained highest in the larger outlets. It also suggests that in larger outlets, such as supermarkets and hypermarkets, the most rapid growth in part-time work has been in the latter (1978-86) period. However, indications are that these statistics may represent an under-estimation of levels in some stores. The French Union of employers MAS reported considerably higher proportions in 1987 (38% part-time) and a study of part-time employment in 212 supermarkets and forty-nine hypermarkets in 1983 found that already 33.1% of all salaried employees on average worked part-time (LSA, 1984a).

Clearly, however, there are significant variations in the use of part-time in French retailing; in a survey of thirty-nine retailing companies and seventy-three outlets in the grande distribution (hypermarkets, supermarkets, and department stores) as defined by Beiganski (1983) showed that levels of part-time work varied, not only according to the type of outlet ie. hypermarket or supermarket, but also between and within retail companies: in companies running hypermarkets levels of part-time work varied between 7.2% and 38.4% of the workforces.

Table 4.7 Proportion of Part-timers in French Food Retailing by Outlet Size (Number of Employees), 1972-86

	Large-scale Food Retailers*		Non-Specialist Food Retailers**	
	% PT		% PT	
No. Employees	1972	1977	1978	1986
20-49	0.10	5.20	5.20	12.56
50-99	5.10	5.20	5.60	12.57
100-199	7.10	7.50	10.19	17.18
200+	6.73	10.96	12.27	22.44

Source: INSEE, Enquête Annuelle d'Entreprise dans le Commerce, 1972, 1977, 1978, 1986, Table 2.1B.

* Large-scale food retailers (grandes surfaces alimentaires) consist of supermarkets, hypermarkets and magasins populaires.

** For definition of non-specialist food retailers see footnote 2.

Moreover, this survey also found - in support of national level data - that levels of part-time work varied considerably with outlet size and, most importantly, that part-time work was very much more common in large rather than small outlets (Bieganski, 1983: 29).

Although, as mentioned above, British statistics do not consider employment at outlet level, some additional information highlighting the contrasting use of part-time work in food retailing in Britain compared with France is available from small-scale studies of employment in retailing in Britain and from information on part-time levels in new stores collected by the Institute of Grocery Distribution. This body of research gives support to the more aggregated statistics which suggest that levels of part-time work are on average higher in Britain than in France. For example, as early as 1973 the EIU's survey of employment in retailing found that part-time

levels were as high as 40% in multiples (defined as those retail organizations with ten or more outlets), and 60% in supermarkets (EIU, 1973). A study of British superstore employment in fifty-three stores in 1978 (Jones, 1978) found that approximately 45% of staff worked on a part-time basis and a survey of seventy-one superstores in 1980s (Sparks 1982a, 1982b, 1983) revealed part-time levels averaging 48%. In a more recent study (dating from 1984) levels of 53% were found in superstores and lower levels (41%) in supermarkets (Sparks, 1987). This body of small-scale studies also revealed that the positive correlation between store size and levels of part-time work found in France was replicated in Britain (see Table 4.8 in relation to employees in new stores belonging to multiples) and that part-time levels varied according to the store operator as they did in France.

It is generally believed that the growth of part-time work has been essentially demand-led in both Britain and France in response to the specific requirements of the industry, although it is recognized that the availability of certain groups of the population (and notably married women) for part-time work has enabled its growth. This demand-side view is supported by the fact that in the 1970s when part-time work was growing spectacularly in food retailing in Britain and in the early 1980s when part-time work increased markedly in France, full-time employment was falling in food retailing and unemployment levels in the economies as a whole were rising in both countries.

Part-time work in both countries has been welcomed by employers for the flexibility in working hours it offers and the opportunities it affords to optimize capital resources given the specific constraints of the industry. These being, in particular, the extension of trading hours beyond the normal working week and fluctuations of trade across the

Table 4.8. Numbers of Employees by Status (Full or Part-time) and Sales Area in British Multiples, 1983 (IGD Sample)

		Sales Area (ft²)						
		<2000	2-3999	4-9999	10-14999	15-19999	20-24999	25000+
Status of Employee	Full-time	-	4.55	3.67	3.64	2.90	3.20	3.25
	Part-time	-	2.93	2.26	4.94	4.34	5.75	6.39
	Total *	-	6.02	4.80	6.11	5.07	6.08	6.44

Source: IGD, 1984: 87.

* Two part-time employees are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time employee

trading week (DTEDC, 1976; ISA, 1984b). Pontarello (1974) in a European context, Mallier and Rosser (1980) in Britain and ISA (1984b) in France all note the contribution of the changing working week and trading hours to employment policy in retailing:

The need for the extensive use of part-time employees reflects a changing demand upon the industry. The extension of opening hours, against the background of shorter "normal" working weeks created new employment opportunities. The need for employers to maintain overheads at low levels caused both rationalisation and specialisation in the distribution of employment. The objective of cost efficiency in its turn created a demand for a flexible part-time labour force (Mallier and Rosser, 1979 quoted in Sparks, 1982: 20).

In addition, there may be direct productivity advantages to be achieved from employing on a part-time basis, as demonstrated by Thurik and Vollebregt (1984) for French retailing and by George (1967) for British retailing. As NEDO's Part-time Employment Group (1986) stated:

Where the work is routine and boring it makes ergonomic sense to employ staff for only a few hours, and where this coincides with discontinuities in customer flow, genuine economic gains can be achieved (lower sickness and labour turnover, and higher productivity per hour) (NEDO, Part-time Employment Group, 1986:1)

The combined objectives of flexibility and productivity have led to the development of sophisticated techniques for scheduling working hours in retailing (RDM, 1980; Bieganski, 1983; IMS, 1986).

Also, there is some support for the argument that part-time work in Britain in particular is welcomed as a way of creating a less stable, or peripheral, workforce which provides for greater numerical flexibility. In addition to the flexibility available through varying part-time hours, it has been suggested that part-timers are an attractive workforce in Britain because, if part-timers' hours fall below those at which employees are covered by employment protection

legislation, then part-timers can be made redundant at will⁵ (Mallier and Rosser, 1980). In France, where protective legislation applies equally to full and part-timers, the use of short-term contracts tends to be the way in which employers can vary the number of staff.

Underpinning similar trends towards the increasing use of female part-time labour in Britain and France are fundamental changes which have taken place over the last two decades within retailing in both countries. Indeed, over the past twenty years retailing in Europe, distribution (retailing and wholesaling) as a whole has undergone dramatic changes in organization and technique (to use Dawson's classification), which have formed part of a "distributive revolution" (Dawson, 1984: 2). Organizational changes in retailing in Europe have included: changing market shares (and notably the decline in independent retailers and the increasing market share of corporate chains); scale economies in organizations (for example through operating larger units and increasing the scale of markets); vertical integration of retail organizations. Changes in retail technique have included: changes in establishment form (ie the decline in the number of independently operated small counter stores, but the increase in the number of hypermarkets); growing polarity in operating scale (ie the growth in large-scale retailing and the renewed interest in specialist retailing); changes in merchandizing policy (ie the development of large units, mass merchandizing and a strict control of goods movement); increasing investment in technology and the trend towards labour substitution (ie. notably via the introduction of EPOS equipment).⁶

It is clear from the retailing literature and especially from the comprehensive comparison of retail developments in Europe provided by

Dawson (1982) that similar trends in retailing, and notably in food retailing, have occurred, and are taking place, in France and Britain, although differences clearly exist between the countries which reflect the varying national rate of change. There is, for example, greater concentration of sales through multiple organizations in Britain compared with France: in 1978 59% of retail sales passed through multiple retailers in Britain (known as le commerce concentré in France) compared with 30.8% in France (Ministère du Commerce de l'Artisanat et du Tourisme, 1984).

Authors describing the massive changes which have taken place in the post-war era in retailing have explained these in terms of factors such as the widespread ownership of cars, the expansion of branding, pre-packaging and refrigeration, higher living standards, greater price consciousness and the trend towards the depopulation of towns (Fulop, 1964; Dawson, 1982; Messerlin, 1982). At the forefront of the pressures for change in retailing in both Britain and France, and indeed in distribution as a whole, has been "...the aim of increased efficiency of operations and cost minimisation" (Dawson, 1984: 4). Although not all the changes carried out in retailing have affected labour use, others such as the development of self-service methods (which have been central to the retail revolution) have had a direct and wide-reaching impact. Self-service methods were adopted first in Europe by the British cooperative societies in the 1950s and by French supermarket retailers in the 1960s (after failed attempts in the 1950s [Messerlin, 1982]) primarily in response to rising labour costs:

Within an analysis of retail costs in all countries in Europe, labour costs have increased more rapidly since the early 1960s than other cost elements. Various attempts have been made to reduce the labour input in the retail trades, but it still remains a labour-intensive industry. The widespread adoption of self-service methods reduced numbers

of staff with, at its simplest level, investment in new store layouts, shop fitments and shoppers' trolleys. (Dawson, 1982: 118)

Self-service methods have enabled retailers to reduce the strength of the service relationship (Smith, 1983), thus permitting reorganization of labour in shops to reduce, but not entirely to eliminate, the customer control of the labour process. The effect of self-service in enabling the division of tasks has stimulated the removal of functions from the retail outlet: for example pre-packaging of products now replaces wrapping by shop assistants (Fulop, 1964; Messerlin, 1982; Smith, 1983)⁷. Self-service methods have also reduced the specialization required previously in a shop assistant's job and has reduced the bulk of the tasks within the larger stores to simple shelf-filling or till operation, a process described by some authors as de-skilling (for example, Fulop, 1964; Braverman, 1974, in a Marxist framework; Faivret et al, 1980, and Smith, 1983)⁸. In both countries it is clear that the use of self-service methods, has encouraged the use of part-time work, as Robinson and Wallace explain:

The de-skilling of the bulk of the retailing labour force has undoubtedly eased the problems of varying labour inputs to match the fluctuating daily and weekly trading levels prevalent in all retail outlets, greater flexibility being attained by the deployment of increasing proportions of part-time workers. (Robinson and Wallace, 1976: 129-30).

In both France and Britain it has primarily been in the larger store that these economies in labour costs have been made. The trend towards larger and more concentrated outlets tending to require fewer specialized and skilled staff has allowed the easier substitution of part-time labour, which has in turn contributed to the increasing polarization of the retail workforce.

Another common trend in the two countries which may be contributing to the increasing use of part-time work in retailing in France and Britain has been the introduction of new technology into retailing⁹. These changes have included the development of stock-room technology, and information technology, to handle ordering, stock control, and the general passage of goods through the store. At store level, the new technology which has had the most impact on labour usage has been the introduction of EPOS systems, which by using an optical scanner at check-outs enable individual good movements to be registered from order provision to goods arrival and storage (European Foundation, 1985). These have been introduced into food retailing in both France and Britain, although the spread of such systems appears much more extensive in France (see IGD, 1984; LSA, 1984c)¹⁰. Although the full impact of the use of new technology in retailing, and notably within large-scale food retailing, has not yet been fully evaluated, it would seem that EPOS can provide, "...important cost savings in the labour-intensive task of price-marking goods...and a twenty per cent increase in labour productivity can result from scanning and point-of-sale automation" (Dawson, 1982: 119). Indeed, it has been suggested that the installation of new technology is likely to result in heightened regulation of staff use and a closer matching of labour to demand through the use of more flexible staff scheduling and part-time work (Cosyns et al, 1981; Dawson, 1983; European Foundation, 1985).

There are three main strands of explanation for the different growth of part-time work in Britain and France which are inter-related and mutually reinforcing: the legislative framework, the retail environment, and attitudes to part-time work. The very rapid growth of part-time work in British retailing over the last twenty-five years has frequently been explained in terms of the changes in the legislative

framework, and particularly of the effect of direct cost incentives to employ on part-time basis (CIR, 1973; Robinson and Wallace, 1974; Trinder, 1986). Despite reports that SET had no quantitative effect on employment in retailing (see Reddaway, 1970) it is now generally accepted that, under increasingly competitive trading conditions in which it was generally impossible to pass on increases in labour costs to the consumer, the tax caused retailers to look more critically at the composition and deployment of their workforce (Robinson and Wallace, 1974; Reynolds, 1985b), had an immediate impact on employment profiles (National Institute Economic Review, 1971; Moir, 1982) and, in particular, led to an increase in the use of part-time work. The NI payment system is also credited with partial responsibility for stimulating the growth of part-time work, and influencing weekly part-time working hours (Robinson and Wallace, 1974, 1976; Pond, 1977; Hurstfield, 1978; Craig and Wilkinson, 1984; NEDO, 1985; Trinder, 1986), although there remains debate about the extent of its effect on the former (see for example Trinder, 1986, who asserts that subjective considerations such as the suitability of the part-time workforce [in terms of age and qualifications] and the ready supply of this labour source may also have had an important effect on employers' decision to use part-time work). It has also been asserted that the introduction of the Employment Protection Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970 in Britain has provided a further economic incentive for the use of part-time work (see in particular Robinson and Wallace, 1974; Pond, 1977; Hurstfield, 1978).

In France little consideration has been given to the reasons for the relatively slow development of part-time work in retailing as a whole. It has been suggested that the extra financial burden placed on part-timers by the social security system until 1982 (this is fully

discussed in Droulers, 1972), impeded the growth of part-time work in French retailing and that employers have also been dissuaded from employing part-timers by the thresholds of numbers of employees over which they are obliged to introduce elected employee representatives (Points de Vente, 1982¹¹). One explanation for its growth over recent years in France has been the introduction of a more favourable framework for part-time work (LSA, 1984a) and the reduction of the full-time weekly working hours to thirty-nine which has created extra working hours which can best be filled with part-timers.

In Britain the growth of part-time work would also seem to have been stimulated by both favourable competitive and labour market conditions. Early works on productivity in retailing in Britain (George, 1967; George and Ward, 1973) suggest that the growth of part-time work in the 1960s was encouraged in part by tight labour market conditions. Its sustained growth in the 1970s and 1980s can be attributed partly to unfavourable competitive conditions which have put pressure on labour costs. The growth of female part-time labour in retailing in the 1970s corresponded with a stagnation in the volume of retail sales, particularly during the economic recession of the late 1970s (Reynolds, 1985a). Retail sales grew continuously in Britain from 1960-73, but after 1973 grew much less rapidly and fell between 1973-7 (Craig and Wilkinson, 1984). Food retailing suffered particularly from the economic recession in the 1970s in the form of lower than average sales: consumer expenditure on food showed no real growth from 1972-82 (CSO, 1983: 29), contrasting with the continual growth in food sales in the 1960s. Moreover, this situation was compounded by high inflation rates (of up to 25%) which severely affected retailers' margins (Reynolds, 1985a), already amongst "...the smallest and most vulnerable margins" (Reynolds, 1985a, para 2.01). These margins were under

increased pressure during this period from the growing price competition between retailers imposed by the new price consciousness of consumers during the 1970s. In response to these pressures and under extremely competitive conditions, despite the high and increasing concentration of the industry in the hands of large multiple retailers¹², retailers "...set out to look for ways to improve the status quo in terms of their existing markets, and to reduce costs." (Reynolds, 1985a, para 2.03). One method of reducing costs was to increase labour productivity and reduce labour costs by developing the use of part-time employment. In the ensuing period during which retail sales (in volume terms) have been on an upward trend food retailers have been operating under less competitive pressure than in the 1970s, a situation which has been further relieved by the lower levels of inflation in the 1980s. However, retailers have continued to find it difficult to maintain their sales volumes (Reynolds, 1985a), which has given them an incentive to persist in following cost-reduction strategies, and in particular, to continue developing part-time work.

In France labour shortages did not generally occur until the late 1960s and 1970s, and the response to this was not to create part-time jobs as it was in Britain (this dissimilarity has been explained in terms of a more unfavourable framework for part-time work in France which engendered more negative attitudes to its use, according to Echange et Projets, 1980, and Baroin, 1981, although it may also be attributed to a greater willingness of French women to work full-time). Also, economic pressures encouraging the use of part-time work did not arise until later than in Britain. Rapid post-war growth in retailing dropped in 1974 - the threshold date for the growth of part-time work - as sales growth (in volume terms) dropped from 5.4% per annum between 1968-74 to 2.4% per annum between 1974-8 (Allain, 1980) and fell

substantially again to 1.3% between 1979-82 (Siwek, 1984: 26), as a consequence of falling household consumption during the economic crisis of the mid-1970s. Although these less favourable sales figures may have given retailers some incentive to begin to use part-time work the fact that retail sales fell less than in Britain and retailers' profit margins were put under less pressure than those of their British counterparts because inflation was much lower in France over the same period, may help explain why the largest growth in part-time work in France (in absolute terms) was concentrated in later years. Between 1979 and 1982, although sales increased, the relatively faster increase in employment in French retailing led to a rise in the ratio of labour costs to value added, and provided an incentive to improve labour productivity via part-time employment (INSEE, 1984). After 1983 sales began to fall again as did the ratio of labour costs to value added, hence creating renewed pressure on labour costs. In non-specialist food retailing, there has been a reduction in profit margins between 1980-5 and increase of 6.6% in the ratio of labour costs to value added (INSEE, 1986: Table III.9). A recent study of fourteen food retailing groups in 1986 (LSA, 1986) gives support to the view that in the 1980s conditions were created which were particularly favourable to the development of part-time work: it found that in these firms sales began to stagnate in the late 1970s and early 1980s and fell from 1983.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest that retailers in the two countries have responded differently to the idea of employing on a part-time basis. Despite an initial resistance to using part-time work (EIU, 1973) British retailers have had been very positive about the use of part-time work (Robinson and Wallace, 1973, 1974; Trinder, 1986). Recently, it has been found that retailers are particularly keen to employ older women on a part-time basis because they tend to be more

mature than younger workers, more reliable, have better social skills, and be better educated (Trinder, 1986). In France, by contrast, there are indications that retailers have been more reluctant to employ part-time than their British counterparts and that their negative attitudes have been influenced by the discouraging legislative framework and by resistance to changing work organization (Points de Vente, 1982). Also, French retailers have been concerned that part-time workers will be less motivated than full-timers and only use it as a stepping stone to full-time work:

Les employeurs aussi (surtout ceux qui ne l'utilisent pas), craignent que les salariés ne considèrent ce type d'emploi que comme un pis-aller, en attendant mieux. Partant, ils appréhendent le manque de motivation au travail de cette catégorie de personnel, des difficultés d'intégration, la constitution de plusieurs types d'employés et un turn-over important. (Employers too [above all those who don't employ part-timers] are afraid that employees will think of this type of employment as a last resort, while waiting for something better. On this basis, they expect that this category of workers will lack motivation, that there will be difficulties integrating them into the workforce, and that their employment will lead to the development of several categories of employees and high labour turnover) (Points de Vente, 1982: 74).

The more positive attitude to part-time work in Britain would seem to correspond with a greater readiness for women to work part-time, which in itself may help explain the more extensive use of part-time work in Britain. While in Britain all the available evidence suggests that women have chosen to fill part-time posts in order to reconcile work with domestic responsibilities (Sparks, 1982a; Trinder, 1986), in France it would seem that recruitment of part-timers may have been hampered by negative attitudes towards part-time work among prospective employees, who associate part-time work with poor working conditions:

Pour le salarié, le premier obstacle (naturellement après le problème du revenu) réside dans son image de travail marginal

et précaire, sous-qualifié, voir sous-rémunéré, sans véritables perspectives de promotion et dans la crainte qu'un tel statut soit irréversible. (For employees, the first barrier, after the problem of income of course, is their view that part-time work is marginal and unstable, under-qualified, even underpaid, without real promotion prospects and the fear that once working part-time they will not be able to return to full-time work (Points de Vente, 1982: 74)

Employees also seem to be concerned that part-time work will force them into accepting variable working hours (Missoffe, 1980).

In sum the differences identified in the use of part-time work in Britain and France and the explanations put forward for them suggest that major dissimilarities in patterns of working hours in the two countries might be expected.

Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing

This section is organized into four parts. The first three parts describe patterns of full and part-time working hours, each one analyzes one facet of working hours: the length of the working week, the organization of working hours, and the flexibility of working hours. The final part examines satisfaction with part-time working hours.

Length of the Working Week

Statistics in Britain and France relating to full-time working hours are not compiled on the same basis and as a result cannot be directly compared. The main problem of comparability is that the New Earnings Survey only includes in its sample women aged over eighteen and men aged over twenty-one, while these exclusions do not exist in the French official statistics. The statistics do however suggest that full-time

employees in food retailing in both countries have benefitted from significant reductions in the working week over the last decade, although the trend seems to have been more erratic in Britain particularly in the early 1970s and early 1980s (see Tables 4.9 and 4.10) and, if male and female weekly hours are averaged, full-time working hours remain significantly higher in Britain than in France (40.56 hours compared with 38.83).

These reductions in the full-time working week reflect the trend towards shorter full-time working hours in Britain and France (outlined in Chapter 2). In France this reduction would seem to have been speeded by the introduction of the thirty-nine hour week in 1981 because the reduction in full-time working hours between 1981-3 was almost as great as over the six previous years (4.5% compared with 4.6%). Against this trend of falling full-time working hours in both Britain and France, there would seem to be major differences in part-time weekly working hours. There are also a number of difficulties involved in comparing the length of the part-time working week in retailing in Britain and France. British statistics only provide data about female part-timers and either consider sections of the retail workforce (workers covered by private sector agreements or wage council directives) or specific occupational categories (for example, female part-time sales assistants and shelf-fillers, and check-out etc operators). The French statistics relate to both men and women employees but are more aggregated than the British data: they are available only at the level of distribution as a whole. Nevertheless, these sources suggest that significant differences exist in the average length of the part-time working week in food retailing in Britain and France.

Table 4.9. Average Full-time Weekly Working Hours by Sex in British Food Retailing 1971-84

	Average weekly hours	
	FT Male	FT Female
1971	45.08	39.62
1972	44.34	39.23
1973	45.20	39.75
1974	44.78	39.28
1975	44.87	38.87
1976	43.97	39.13
1977	44.06	39.31
1978	44.18	39.32
1979	43.64	39.26
1980	43.91	39.40
1981	43.19	39.12
1982	43.21	38.64
1983*	42.61	38.50
1984*	42.36	38.76

* Data not strictly comparable with data for earlier years as a result of a reclassification.

Source: Reynolds, 1985b, Table 9.

Table 4.10 Average Full-time Weekly Working Hours (Men and Women) in French Food Retailing 1974-83.

	Average weekly hours
1974	42.64
1975	42.20
1976	41.66
1977	41.23
1978	40.91
1979	40.73
1980	40.66
1981	40.65
1982	39.15
1983	38.83

Source: 1974-77: Saindon, 1978: 21, Table 4. 1978-83: INSEE, 1984: 35

In Britain 74.7% of female part-time saleswomen, sales assistants and shelf-fillers in retailing, and nearly 83% of part-time check-out operators, were working twenty-one hours or less a week in 1987 (see Table 4.11 and 4.12). Also, 61% of the former group and 56.5% of the latter group were working sixteen hours or less a week. In France, by contrast, in the same year nearly 65.5% of female part-time employees in distribution were working between fifteen and twenty-nine hours a week (see Table 4.15).

Changes in the length of the part-time working week would also seem to be following different patterns in the two countries. Once again statistics relating to the length of the working week are not directly comparable and, in particular, the French statistics cover a very much shorter period than the British. They nevertheless give some indication of the changes underway. In Britain, there has been a shortening of part-time working hours over the the last decade. Tables 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13 show respectively the changing distribution of part-time hours between 1978-88 among female part-timers whose firms adhere to the Retail Multiple Grocery and Provisions Trade Joint Committee agreement (covering many of the major high street large-scale grocery retailers), saleswomen, sales assistants and shelf-fillers (Table 4.12), and check-out operators (Table 4.13). The tables clearly show the trend towards shorter working hours for female part-timers in retailing in Britain. Table 4.11 shows that the percentage of women part-timers in British firms belonging to the Retail Multiple Grocery and Provisions Trade Joint Committee agreement working under sixteen hours a week has nearly doubled between 1971-84, rising from 22.2% to 43.3% of this section of the workforce.

Table 4.11 Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87, Women Part-timers Aged over Eighteen on Adult Rates in Firms Belonging to the Retail Multiple Grocery and Provision Trade Joint Committee Agreement

	Percentage with normal basic hours in range						
	< 8	8-16	16-21	21-24	24-26	26-28	28-30
1978	3.8	18.4	26.1	20.9	13.2	3.0	8.5
1980	2.7	18.2	37.3	16.7	9.1	8.0	8.0
1982	1.3	33.3	27.3	14.0	12.0	6.0	6.0
1984	3.4	32.3	35.0	11.4	8.1	4.0	5.7
1986	5.1	38.9	34.3	10.3	5.1	2.3	4.0
1987	3.5	39.8	35.1	8.9	6.2	3.5	3.1

Source: New Earnings Survey, Table 181.

Table 4.12 Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87 of Women Part-timers Aged over Eighteen on Adult Rates, Sales Women, Shop Assistants and Shelf-Fillers

	Percentage with normal basic hours in range						
	< 8	8-16	16-21	21-24	24-26	26-28	28-30
1978	5.4	19.1	34.4	21.1	7.4	6.7	5.8
1979	6.0	20.3	32.0	29.2	8.5	6.8	6.0
1980	6.2	23.5	32.2	18.1	7.9	5.7	6.4
1981	6.5	25.2	31.9	17.7	7.0	5.7	6.0
1982	8.0	29.3	31.5	15.2	6.7	4.6	4.7
1983	9.1	29.5	31.7	13.7	6.3	4.7	5.0
1984	9.5	32.6	29.9	12.6	5.8	4.8	4.7
1987	8.7	36.9	29.1	11.6	6.0	3.1	4.6

Source: New Earnings Survey, Table 183.

Table 4.13 Distribution of Normal Basic Hours 1978-87 of Women Part-timers
Aged over Eighteen on Adult Rates. Retail Check-out etc Operators

	Percentage with normal basic hours in range						
	<8	8-16	16-21	21-24	24-26	26-28	28-30
1978	4.1	16.5	32.2	18.2	10.7	9.1	9.1
1980	4.3	22.2	34.2	18.8	5.1	6.0	9.4
1982	2.3	32.6	32.6	17.4	8.3	5.0	1.8
1984	2.8	39.2	28.4	16.5	4.5	2.8	5.7
1986	5.2	40.6	32.1	13.3	5.6	2.4	0.8
1987	2.0	44.8	36.0	12.8	2.8	1.2	0.4

Source: New Earnings Survey, Table 183.

Table 4.12 reveals, in particular, that between 1979-87 the proportion of women assistants employed for up to and including sixteen hours weekly rose from 26% to 45.6%. Also, this table shows that there has been a decline over the entire period for those working 16-21 hours weekly and a gradual decline in working hours over the period for those working 26-30 hours. Over the same time the increase in proportion of part-time check-out operators working less than sixteen hours has been even more significant (Table 4.13), although the pattern of change has been very similar in both occupations.

Only one small-scale study has specifically considered the length of part-time working hours in large-scale grocery retailing (Sparks, 1987). This has found that superstores tend to employ equal proportions of the part-time workforce for 8-16 and 16-30 hours weekly while supermarkets employ a larger proportion for 16-30 hours (see Table 4.14). The same survey found that the distribution of weekly working hours in the part-time workforce differed considerably from one retailer to another.

Table 4.14 Proportion of Part-time Employees by Hours Worked and Retail Type in Britain

Hours worked	Superstore	Supermarket
8-16	24	16
16-30	29	25
8-30	53	41

Source: Sparks, 1987, Table 2.

In France statistics relating to working hours are only available for the years 1982-8 (see Table 4.15). These suggest that the length of part-time weekly working hours is following a differing trend in France

compared with Britain. Most female part-time employees work between fifteen and twenty-nine hours, with the next most important weekly number of part-time hours being thirty or more. It is difficult to carry out long-term trend analysis as statistics only relate to the 1980s. These suggest that between 1982-4 there has been a reduction in the proportion of the female part-time workforce in distribution working thirty hours or more and an increase in the proportion working up to twenty-nine hours a week. After 1984 there would appear to have been a reversal in this trend. These national statistics for all female employees in distribution in France can be supplemented by those provided by small-scale studies among large-scale grocery retailers. These found that most part-timers (men and women) worked between twenty and thirty hours per week (LSA 1984a). In one study of employment practices in specific large-scale grocery retailing firms (Bieganski, 1983) it was found that, as in Britain, the distribution of working hours varied by retail operator: the percentage of part-timers working between twenty and thirty hours a week ranged from 62-78.3%. In another study (LSA, 1984a), it was found that 60% of all part-timers in supermarkets and 79% of all part-timers in hypermarkets worked between twenty-one and thirty hours per week. However, the latter study also found significant regional differences in working hours. In the Marne, and Val d'Oise regions in supermarkets and hypermarkets part-timers working less than twenty-one hours per week represented the majority of the part-time personnel, while in Lille and the Bouches du Rhone in both types of outlets part-timers predominantly worked between twenty-one and thirty hours.

There are also Franco-British dissimilarities in trends in part-time working hours. In contrast with the massive growth in the proportion of female part-timers working under sixteen hours in Britain, in France

the proportion of part-timers working for less than fifteen hours has fallen in recent years. Overall, however, there appears to be greater stability in the distribution of part-time working hours in France relative to Britain. The absence of comparative data about factors influencing the length of part-time working hours in France and Britain makes it difficult to explain the differences between them. It is interesting to note that these dissimilarities in the length of part-time working hours reflect the length of part-time working hours and trends in the distribution of working hours over the last decade on a national basis, which would seem to suggest that similar factors may be determining the length of part-time working hours in both cases.

Table 4.15 Distribution of Usual Part-time Working Hours for Female Employees in French Distribution (Employées de Commerce) 1982-88.

In %	Average weekly hours in range		
	less than 15	15-29	30 hours or more
April-May 1982	8.3	67.3	24.4
March 1983	8.1	67.7	24.1
March 1984	8.8	69.5	21.7
March 1985	6.4	68.4	25.2
March 1986	7.0	65.5	27.5
March 1987	7.0	65.2	27.7
March 1988	7.7	64.9	27.4

Source: INSEE, Enquête sur l'Emploi, 1982-6, Table PA03.

However, there are some significant differences between national level and sectoral level statistics relating to part-time working hours in the two countries which are worth highlighting. In France the proportion of female part-timers working less than fifteen hours a week is much lower in distribution than for the nation as a whole, while the proportion of female part-timers working thirty hours or more is higher. Also, over the last six years the upward trend in the proportion of part-timers working thirty hours or more has been more apparent in distribution than nationally. In Britain, by contrast, the proportion of female part-timers working less than sixteen hours a week is higher in retailing than nationally. Also, while both in retailing and nationally the proportion of female part-timers working between sixteen and thirty hours has fallen, the extent of the fall has been much greater in the 16-24 and 28-30 age groups in retailing compared with the nation as a whole. These differences between the distribution of female part-time working hours at national level and in retailing in the two countries suggest that there may also be factors particular to the industry which have an effect on working hours.

The downward pressure on part-time hours in Britain can be explained in part by the NI factor. After 1975 when the minimum threshold for payments was introduced the NI threshold acted at a lower level of earning than the income tax rate (except for 1981-2) with the result that the NI threshold could be expected to have exerted the principal influence over employees' working hours (Trinder, 1986). The operation of the NI system after 1975 has been to directly encourage both employers and employees to shorten hours:

As wage rates have increased, the hours of part-timers have been reduced in order to avoid the higher rate of employers' insurance contributions, often without requiring the engagement of additional staff. Part-timers employed on

shifts, where hours can be cut without loss of operational efficiency, benefit from reductions in their hours rather than from enhanced earnings; the retailer obtains a higher rate of productivity from this section of his part-time labour force, without any addition to the wage bill (Robinson and Wallace, 1974: 46).

Another explanatory factor is the operation of SET between 1967-73 which encouraged retailers to reduce their working hours in order to limit the effects of the tax (Robinson and Wallace, 1974).

In addition, the reduction of part-time working hours in Britain would seem to have stemmed partly from retailers' attempts to develop flexibility in manning which would enable them to match labour requirements against customer demand most effectively. The gradual decrease in hours may be explained by the increasing sophistication of labour scheduling which has developed over the years (for example Forrester, 1974; RDM, 1980; IMS, 1986). It would seem that greatest flexibility in working hours can be obtained from the workforce by employing large numbers of part-timers on shorter contracts. These short weekly hours can then be broken down into the daily shifts which satisfy a number of objectives: high productivity, avoidance of rest breaks and matching customer demand. Shorter weekly hours also afford considerable flexibility in overtime hours at single pay rate before full-time hours are exceeded (and the premium payment must be made) (IMS, 1986).

In the absence of data explaining weekly part-time working hours in French retailing two possible explanations may be advanced for current working hour practices. Firstly, the generally longer weekly part-time hours in French retailing may be attributed to the influence of a union agreement, extending to the whole of general grocery retailing, which

sets minimum weekly part-time hours at sixteen. This limit of minimum weekly hours derives from the operation of the social security system in France. Only students are not included in legislation which excludes individuals who have not, over a fixed period, worked an average of twenty hours a week from social security services. Retailers and unions have agreed this minimum so that if employees work average amounts of overtime they will be taken over the crucial twenty hour a week threshold. The longer average weekly part-time hours in France compared with Britain may also be the result of legislation which has discouraged the employment of part-timers for short hours (as described in Chapter 2).

Secondly, differing lengths of part-time working hours in retailing in Britain and France may also be explained in terms of a different organization of work in the two countries. There is some evidence to suggest that French retailers may be more willing to keep contracts longer (and hence reduce numerical flexibility) by developing multi-skilled employees (which increases functional flexibility) capable of being moved from one area of the shop-floor to another in the course of the working day (Bieganski, 1983; LSA, 1984b):

...le nombre de personnes à temps partiel est un "signe" de l'organisation du travail, mais il n'est pas que cela: son évolution dans un sens ou dans l'autre peut simplement traduire une modification dans la composition du couple gestion des temps/ polyvalence. (...the number of part-timers is a "sign" of the organization of work, but it is more than that: changes in the number of part-timers may simply reflect a modification in the relationship between the organization of working time/multi-skilling.) (LSA, 1984a: 114)

While, in Britain retailers appear to concentrate on developing the most numerically flexible workforce with little regard for developing functional flexibility (IMS, 1986), in France there is evidence of at

least one large retailer bargaining with unions over flexibility and being prepared to exchange longer weekly hours for more functionally flexible workers (ISA, 1984b).

The Organization of Working Hours

There has been little research into the organization of working hours in retailing in either Britain or France. There are a number of reasons for expecting that the organization of working hours will be different in the two countries namely in Britain levels of part-time work are higher, part-time hours are shorter and full-time hours longer, than in France. Also, attitudes towards the use of part-time work appear to be more positive in Britain than in France. Before looking at the evidence about the organization of working hours, the framework of legislation and collective agreements governing working hours will be described.

The regulatory framework relating to working hours is much less extensive in Britain than in France, which suggests that British retailers could have much more freedom in organizing working hours than their French counterparts. The legislative framework for working hours in Britain is provided by the 1950 Shops Act which does no more than establish the conditions for giving employees weekly and daily rest periods. No special provisions are made for part-timers in the Act, perhaps because in 1950 full-timers represented the vast majority of retailing employees (see Table 4.16). The only industry-wide agreement relating to working hours in Britain is the Retail Food and Allied Trade Wages Council. These councils were first set up in 1909 to establish minima for a wide variety of low pay industries and comprise employer and union representatives and independent members. Their remit is, however, limited and the Retail Food and Allied Trade Wages

Council have little direct bearing on working hours with the exception of its recommendations on holidays and overtime rates.

In France there is no equivalent of wage councils and the only industry-wide agreement is the "extensible" Convention Collective Nationale des Magasins de Vente d'Alimentation et d'Approvisionnement Général (the Collective Agreement for Food and General Grocery Stores). This agreement covers a large number of areas ranging from holidays and time off to youth employment. It contrasts strongly with the wages councils' directives in Britain in that it provides a very restrictive framework for the organization of working hours and, in particular, the employment of part-time work (see Table 4.16). This greater concern with questions of working time would seem to reflect the greater interest in working time issues in France and the more extensive body of legislation in this area. The agreement includes some of the minimum conditions relating to working time which have been set out by French labour law and some conditions which enhance the basic legal minima (all collective agreements in France must establish conditions which are at least as good as those set out in law).

In Britain there has been little research into the organization of working hours in food retailing, and particularly in large-scale grocery retailing. It would seem, however, that short daily shifts are widely employed in British food retailing, particularly for part-timers (IMS, 1986; Sparks, 1987). In the only detailed study of patterns of working hours specifically to highlight large-scale grocery retailing Sparks (1987) finds that the majority of full-time shifts are either 2-4 or 4-8 hours long, while the rest are eight hours long.

Table 4.16 The Regulatory Framework for the Organization of Working
Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing in Britain and France

Britain	France
<p>1950 SHOPS ACT</p> <p>One day per week a full-time shop assistant must not be employed after 1330.</p> <p>Sunday is a rest day for all shop assistants (with some exceptions).</p> <p>A shop assistant must be given a break of at least fifteen minutes after six hours continuous work.</p>	<p>CONVENTION COLLECTIVE NATIONALE DES MAGASINS DE VENTE D'ALIMENTATION ET D'APPROVISIONNEMENT GENERAL.</p> <p>Employees can work a maximum of six hours for a half day and twelve hours for a full day, and a maximum of ten hours in the day excluding lunch and tea breaks.</p> <p>Employees must be given at least one quarter of an hour break after five hours continuous work and half an hour after eight hours.</p> <p>An employee must have at least twelve hours rest between working days.</p> <p>Full-timers must receive, in addition to Sunday (or another collectively agreed rest day) one other full day off work or two half days arranged on a rota basis.</p> <p>Part-timers must work at least three hours in the day and should not be called to work more than two shifts in a working day.</p> <p>Part-timers whose working hours are distributed over at least five working days should, unless they agree otherwise, receive the same weekly rest periods as full-timers.</p>

Superstores make greater use of shorter shifts than do supermarkets (see Table 4.17) with 22.6% of all full-time shifts in the 2-4 hours range compared with 13.3% in supermarkets. Part-time hours also tend to be broken down into shifts of between 2-8 hours a day with superstores operating mostly 2-4 hour slots and supermarkets operating mostly 4-8 hours slots, although considerable differences in practices exist between store operators.

Table 4.17 Proportion of Hour Slots Worked by Category (Superstore or Supermarket) and Status (Full or Part-time) and Total Hours Worked

Hours slot	Superstores		Supermarkets	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
2	1.4	1.8	1.6	3.3
2-4	22.6	45.8	13.3	32.1
4-8	33.1	39.1	37.2	52.2
8	42.8	13.2	47.8	12.2

Source: Sparks, 1987, Table 4.

Sparks explains this different distribution in working hours in terms of the differing length of trading hours:

Superstores generally operate extended shopping hours which often coincide with peak customer flows and these have resulted in a more flexible use of part-time employees working for short periods on several days of the week (Sparks, 1987: 6).

Indeed, Sparks (1987) finds, in support of this explanation, that part-timers in superstores tended, on average, to work more days per week than part-timers in supermarkets. It was also found that the differing organization of hours in the two types of stores corresponded with other characteristics in working hours: supermarkets tended to make

less use of part-time work and employ part-timers for longer weekly hours than superstores. The main distinction between full and part-time shifts is that in both superstores and supermarkets eight hour shifts are less frequently used and 2-4 hour shifts more often used for part-timers than full-timers.

In France the combination of longer weekly part-time hours and lower levels of part-time work in food retailing would suggest that French retailers may be organizing working hours differently from their British counterparts. There is little information about patterns of working hours in French retailing to assist in explaining the way work is organized. However, one report (European Foundation, 1981) finds that trading hours are having a major effect on the organization of working hours. In hypermarkets where trading hours are often very long (open up to seventeen hours a day) two shifts of full-time workers are set up in such a way that they overlap at peak periods and are supplemented by part-timers at these times. In shops with shorter trading hours full-timers could not be used in this way and part-timers were used to help cover the opening hours at the end of the full-time working day. Given that working hours in British retailing tend to be shorter than in France (Gregory, 1987), a differing organization of labour might be expected.

Flexibility in Working Hours

The flexibility in full and part-time working hours is likely to be affected by the framework of legislation and collective agreements in Britain and France. As at national level, the limits on both full and part-time flexibility are much more extensive in French than in British retailing, which might lead one to expect that retailers' flexibility in working hours in France will be more constrained than in Britain.

In Britain there are no provisions in the wages councils edicts to limit flexibility in full or part-time working hours (with the exception of overtime payment minima which effect the decision over what form flexibility should take). Indeed, the Multiple Food Trade Joint Committee Agreement between the Multiple Food Retailers' Employers' Association (MFRA) and the Union of Shops and Allied Workers (USDAW), which is the only collective agreement to extend to large sections of the retail grocery industry (although at the time of the research it excluded three of the top eight British multiple food retailers which together employ 100,000 men and women), may be seen as actively encouraging management-orientated flexibility (see Table 4.18). In France, by contrast, retailers are much more limited in the degree of flexibility they can develop in both the full and part-time workforce because they are covered by the industry's collective agreement which incorporates certain minimum legal conditions and enhances others (Table 4.18).

The limited literature in the field of working hours in retailing in Britain and France does not make it possible to assess the impact of the more extensive restrictions over the flexibility in full and part-time working hours in France. National-level findings about the flexibility in working hours suggest that more formal flexibility and greater efforts to take their workers' preferences into consideration might be expected in France than in Britain. The available literature in this relatively new field gives some support to this hypothesis.

In Britain, flexibility in working hours seems to be exclusively management-orientated (see below) and allows for little consideration of employees' preferences in relation to working hours.

Table 4.18 The Regulatory Framework for the Flexibility of Working

Hours in Britain and France

Britain	France
<p>THE MULTIPLE FOOD TRADE JOINT COMMITTEE AGREEMENT.</p> <p>States on the one hand that the working week should be fairly consistent and on the other that it is the manager's prerogative to manage work organization ("The worker's work shall be done on such days and at such times as the employer shall decide").</p>	<p>CONVENTION COLLECTIVE NATIONALE DES MAGASINS DE VENTE D'ALIMENTATION ET D'APPROVISIONNEMENT GENERAL.</p> <p>Allows full-time working hours to be varied in three possible ways: by one hour per week throughout the year; by two hours per week for a maximum of twelve weeks in the year; for three hours per week for a maximum period of eight weeks.</p> <p>Allows the use of 'intermittent' working provided that volunteers are used and management can offer at least 800 hours of work a year, rotate periods worked and non-worked, and pay employees a regular wage evened out across the year.</p> <p>Establishes a maximum quota of 120 overtime hours per worker per year which can only be exceeded with the agreement of the works inspector.</p> <p>Allows part-timers to refuse overtime when their contract is drawn up and states the overtime written into a part-timers' contract must not exceed a third of the contract's weekly or monthly length. Prohibits overtime hours from bringing weekly working hours over the normal length of the full-time working week.</p> <p>Gives part-timers the right to forgo part or all of their contracted overtime hours provided seven days notice is given, and protects employees from dismissal for taking this step. Gives employees the right to refuse occasionally to work contracted overtime provided seven days notice is given to the employer.</p>

Table 4.18 (Continued)

Britain	France
	States that employees must be given seven days notice of overtime requirements, unless he/she agrees otherwise and that an employee's contract must be lengthened (unless the employee objects), if overtime exceeds the contract length by two hours or more on average continuously over ten weeks.

The very extensive use of part-time work in British retailing does not appear to reflect a greater awareness of non-work issues among British employers, rather the outcome of a combination of demand and supply factors which encouraged its growth (as described above), although it may be that the greater use of part-time work in Britain has made retailers more aware of part-timers' non-work commitments than their French counterparts. The available evidence, however, suggests that this is not the case. Although, in the boom of the 1960s, part-time working hours may have been scheduled in order to attract married women into these jobs (see Robinson and Wallace, 1974; Seear, 1982), in recent decades economic requirements have taken precedence over women's preferences in their working hours:

...retailers have altered working hours to meet their own trading objectives rather than to accommodate women's preferences for different work schedules. (Robinson and Wallace, 1974: 48)

Indeed, additional evidence from Bosworth and Dawkins (1982) notes the lack of flexible working hours in retailing compared with other industries where women constitute a similarly high proportion of the workforce. This would seem to suggest that, for women with domestic responsibilities, their working hours may well not offer them the flexibility they require. Furthermore, the only published evidence

about formal flexibility schemes has been of management-orientated systems. Sparks (1987) found that one operator, Tesco, employed a system of recruiting part-timers to work a minimum of sixteen hours a week and a maximum of thirty-two hours a week by which employees' working hours were adapted with a minimum of a week's notice according to changes in demand and turnover. Also, a survey of twenty retailers, five of whom were food retailers (IMS, 1986) found that in some cases flexibility was being obtained through introducing a contractual commitment from part-timers to work hours as required.

In France, the extent to which management-orientated flexibility schemes are used in retailing has not been documented. The introduction of "flexibility agreements" in France would suggest that this sort of flexibility is also developing there. On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that there are more formal flexibility schemes which enable workers' preferences to be more fully taken into consideration than in Britain, giving support to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 2 which suggested that this might be the case. In France there is a small body of literature describing the widespread use of formal schemes which have been introduced on an experimental basis in French food retailing, and which do not seem to have been developed in Britain¹³ (Janus, 1981; Bieganski, 1983; Eliakim, 1983; Intersocial, 1984). These seek to give employees (both full and part-time) greater flexibility in, and control over, their working hours (Appendix VI provides a full description of the growth and operation of these systems in France). Their experimental nature gives some support to the hypothesis formulated in Chapter 2 that more experimental patterns of working hours have been developed in France than in Britain.

One of the major innovations to achieve these flexibility and control objectives has clearly stemmed from the French debate about working time is the development of semi-autonomous teams of part-time check-out women (users of these schemes are almost exclusively women), many of which are being introduced as quality circles (Intersocial, 1981; Personnel Management, 1981; Usine Nouvelle, 1985). Indeed, it is referred to in the literature in the context of time management and incorporates the notion of temps choisi. In these teams the women set their own work schedules around a core number of fixed hours in preference to complete management imposition of hours. Reports indicate that the women respond well to the opportunity for greater control over their working time in order to enable them to achieve a better synchronization of their work and family lives. No published evidence exists in Britain of similar systems or even of comparable attention being paid to the flexibility in working hours in this perspective in retailing.

Finally, there is only published evidence about the use of overtime in retailing in Britain and this is limited because it is drawn from the IMS (1986) survey in which retailing was only one of four sectors under study and because only a small number of food retailers participated in the research. Nevertheless, the findings from the survey suggested that part-time workers were increasingly being used in preference to full-timers to provide overtime hours because their use did not incur overtime premia payable when weekly working time exceeded basic full-time hours. They also found, as mentioned above, that a requirement to work overtime was being written into some part-time contracts.

Satisfaction with Part-time Working Hours

A number of factors might suggest that greater satisfaction with part-time working hours might be expected in France than in Britain. These include the more extensive regulatory network for working hours in France, the greater formal opportunity in France for workers to affect their working hours through trades union intervention, works committees and self-expression groups, and what appears to be a more widespread existence of working hours systems which allow employees greater control over their working hours in France compared with Britain. Furthermore, there appear to be more explicit attempts by French employers to devise working hours which will suit both employers and employees. Notably, the subject of part-time work is described (LSA, 1979, 1984b; Points de Vente, 1982) both in terms of its advantages for flexibility and for meeting the constraints of the divergence between the trading hour and working week and the imperative of introducing part-time work into jobs in such a way as to meet the needs of both employees and employers. Werner summarizes this concern:

L'utilisation du travail à temps partiel est indispensable dans la distribution moderne pour adapter le travail à un rythme irrégulier d'activité; dans la mesure où le travail à temps partiel n'est pas considéré comme un travail sous-évalué, il peut contribuer à répondre à la fois aux besoins des entreprises et à ceux du personnel. (Part-time employment is indispensable in modern day retailing in order to adapt work to an irregular pattern of activity; as long as part-time work is not perceived as a devalued form of work, it can satisfy both employers' and employees' needs.) (LSA, 1979: 94)

Articles by a number of authors (Bleganski, 1983; Eliakim, 1983; Intersocial, 1984; Rigoureau, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c) provide ample evidence of concern for creating systems which will improve job satisfaction and working conditions as well as improving productivity and reducing absenteeism and labour turnover by achieving a better

match between employers' and employees' needs. They also demonstrate a willingness to experiment with working hours in retailing.

However, in general part-timers in retailing seem to be much less satisfied with their working hours in France than in Britain. In large-scale grocery retailing in Britain part-timers are generally satisfied with their working hours. Sparks (1987) found recently that 68% of part-time employees in superstores and 61% of those in supermarkets mentioned hours of work as an advantage of their job. Satisfaction with working hours, however, varied significantly according to the retail operator. On the basis of the findings from the Women and Employment Survey, it might be expected that the majority of female part-timers in retailing are satisfied with both the length of weekly hours and their organization. Indeed, some authors (Trinder, 1986; Sparks, 1987) have suggested that part-time work in retailing suits women with childcare commitments. Furthermore, in large-scale grocery retailing, part-timers are often expected to work for shorter days throughout the working week, exactly the pattern which women part-timers most often work and with which they appear to be satisfied (Martin and Roberts, 1984). Nevertheless, it has been found (Hurstfield, 1978) that because patterns of working hours are so crucial to women because of their domestic commitments, the use of management-orientated flexibility, such as changing working hours and excessive overtime, causes considerable dissatisfaction among part-time retail assistants. In Britain part-timers seem to be least satisfied in firms where management-orientated flexibility is used. For example, in Tesco's where a management-orientated flexibility scheme was introduced few part-timers were satisfied with the scheme and levels of dissatisfaction were higher with this operator than with others employing fixed working hours.

In France part-timers appear to be more dissatisfied with their working hours than their British counterparts both in terms of the length of working hours and their organization. Retailing as a whole is one of the sectors in France in which it seems that part-time work is often involuntary, and that part-timers are working shorter hours than they would like. Small-scale research among sales assistants in a French department store found that most women did not choose to work part-time but had been forced to take part-time work because a long break from the labour force during their family formation stage had made their qualifications redundant (Kergoat, 1984). The profile of part-time work by age for employees in the private sector (Belloc, 1986) gives some support to this explanation because it shows that levels of part-time work in this sector are relatively low in the 25-40 age group and substantially rise over the age of forty. The research carried out among part-timers at Carrefour in France substantiates the view that many part-timers would prefer to work longer hours: it found that 63.7% of part-timers would prefer full-time employment (Bieganski, 1983: 36). Also, Lehmann's (1985) evidence suggests that the organization of working hours often does not suit part-timers in retailing, and Kergoat (1984) found the patterns that women with children were asked to work often did not satisfy women's preferences. In the light of this evidence about satisfaction with working hours in Britain and France another aim of the fieldwork became to examine more closely women's reasons for working part-time and their patterns of working hours in the two countries, to investigate the relationship of these patterns with satisfaction with working hours and, in particular, to test the hypothesis that women with children are more satisfied with their part-time hours (both in terms of their length and their organization) in France than in Britain.

In sum, these Franco-British differences in patterns of working hours (in terms of the length of working hours, their organization and flexibility) in large-scale grocery retailing combined with the dissimilarities in the use of part-time work identified in the two countries lead to the main hypothesis that, despite facing similar constraints, retailers are developing patterns of working hours in significantly different ways in Britain and France. It was also with the aim of testing this hypothesis and unravelling the reasons for different patterns of working hours in the two countries that the fieldwork for the thesis was undertaken.

Footnotes

1. For example the Census of Distribution data series, which records part-time employment at the level of grocers and provision dealers only covers the period 1960-71. The subsequent Retail Inquiries collect details of only the total number of employees in food retailing and do not disaggregate by sex or the status of employment. The Census of Population records levels of part-time work in the retail distribution of grocery and provisions in only 1961 and subsequently carries out its collections at increasingly aggregated levels of analysis. The Census of Employment provides disaggregated statistics (by sex) but only at the level of food retailing and for the period 1971-84.

2. Commerce de détail d'alimentation générale (non-specialist food retailing) comprises supermarkets, hypermarkets, magasins populaires, independent grocery retailers, small independent supermarkets (superettes), grocery outlets, small supermarket outlets, and cooperative grocers.

3. This study also found that the type of part-time employment depended on the sex of the worker. For example, it found that male part-timers tended to be employed mainly in warehousing jobs, while female part-timers were located more often on the shop-floor, and particularly on check-outs.

4. In fact different statistical sources give different views of the changes in total employment. The Census of Employment shows a reduction of total employment of about 50,000 while the Retail Inquiries (see NEDO, 1985) show a gradual decline about a much higher

level during the period. Furthermore, the Retail Inquiries, which give total employment figures for large grocery retailers (defined on a basis of turnover and not surface area), show fluctuations up to 1979 and a fall off in employment between 1979 and 1982.

5. There is considerable discussion about whether part-timers in retailing can be considered as a peripheral workforce. NEDO (1985) seems to consider them to be part of the core workforce and only classifies temporary workers as peripheral. IMS (1986), by contrast, would seem to include part-timers in the peripheral category as they often do not share in the financial and non-financial benefits of core group employees.

6. For a thorough review of the changes which have taken place in distribution see Brosselin (1981) and Dayan (1987) in France and Jefferys (1954), Livesey (1979) and Home Office (1985) in Britain.

7. "...le libre-service permet de séparer les nombreuses opérations entourant le choix du consommateur (manutention, présentation du produit, démonstration, emballage, marquage des références et des prix, paiement, etc.) de l'opération de choix elle-même. Cette séparation offre la possibilité d'introduire les méthodes industrielles de fabrication, avec leur énorme puissance, beaucoup plus systématiquement dans l'acte commercial de vente qu'il n'était possible avant l'invention du libre-service, comme, par exemple, d'emballer et de marquer en usine..." (...self-service makes it possible to separate the numerous tasks which are associated with consumer choice (warehousing, product presentation and demonstration, packaging, product and price marking, payment etc) from the act of choosing itself. This separation enables the more systematic use of industrial production methods, with their enormous power, into the sales process than was possible before the introduction of self-service retailing, through, for example, packaging and labelling products in the factory). (Messerlin, 1982: 22).

8. The introduction of these new jobs in retailing has led to the argument that retail employment has been de-skilled (Braverman, 1974). It may be argued, however, that employment has not necessarily been de-skilled, but rather that old skills have been replaced by new ones.

9. For a more detailed discussion about the impact of new technology into retailing see Dawson (1982, 1983), DT EDC (1982), European Foundation (1985).

10. The explanation for the slow speed of development of information technology in Britain would seem to be that British retailers have preferred to invest in new sites and to wait for the cost of the new technology to fall (IGD, 1984).

11. It is unlikely, however, that this would have dissuaded employers in large-scale grocery retailing for whom numbers of employees often by far exceed fifty per outlet.

12. Reynolds (1985a) makes the point, however, that large-scale grocery retailers were in a better position to absorb price increases by being able to command bulk discounts and absorb price-cuts at the expense of other aspects of the operation.

13. Only one system of this type (in engineering) was found in the IMS's (1986) survey of flexibility in the food and drink, engineering, and financial services industries and retail distribution.

Chapter 5

Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing: Industry Level Findings

The chapter presents the findings from the empirical research at firm level and includes information from the firms whose outlets were the focus of the case-study research, the findings of which are described in Chapter 6. In the present chapter the information obtained from the interviews with trades unions' representatives in the two countries is also analyzed.

The analysis and presentation of the findings in these two chapters is based partly on a framework developed by Lee (1985) to help explain the control of organizational time. There have been two main attempts to produce a framework explaining the factors determining organizational time (Lee, 1985; Clark, 1983). Clark's framework (1983:3) was formulated in the context of debate about organizational times and structuring in organizations and provides a general outline of some of the main factors contributing to organizational timetables as well as their possible consequences for those working within them. The framework is useful in that it is the only one to date to make specific reference to the influence of national societal values and practices on organizational timetables. It also shows how timetables are influenced by the dependency of the organization on suppliers, customers and financiers, and by the strategic choices made in the context of these dependencies. The main components of strategic choice outlined in the framework are: the existence of specialist time departments and temporal inventories (aggregate hours employed in an organization), the degree of logistical tightness of factors of production (time-space flows of men, materials, and capital within the organization), and the

temporal division of labour, including individual time horizons (the period over which actors exercise discretion without being checked by superiors).

However, the framework provided by Lee (1985), based on an earlier model by Lee and McEwan Young (1979), establishes a more practical and detailed operational framework for both analyzing and explaining organizational time. It is for this reason that, although many of the components of organizational timetables as identified by Clark (1983) are described in the research findings, it is Lee's framework for analysis which is drawn on predominantly in the presentation of the results.

Preliminary research by Lee and McEwan Young (1977) showed that hours systems could be described in terms of six components: daily hours (quantity); bandwidth (early start and latest finish time); core periods (the period during which the employees must be present); settlement hours (the number of hours to be worked in each settlement period); settlement period (the time during which a number of hours should be worked); control (the nature of control exerted by management over the employee's choice of working hours). The first five factors, taken together make up what they called the "primary hours system". Clearly, this system will be determined by the sorts of strategic choices over organizational timetabling made in the context of supplier and customer dependencies and national socio-cultural frameworks, as outlined by Clark (1983). The control factor specifies who can use the flexibility built into the system by the other factors. Lee and McEwan Young (1977) also found that the success of a given hours system depended on the organizational profile in terms of company objectives

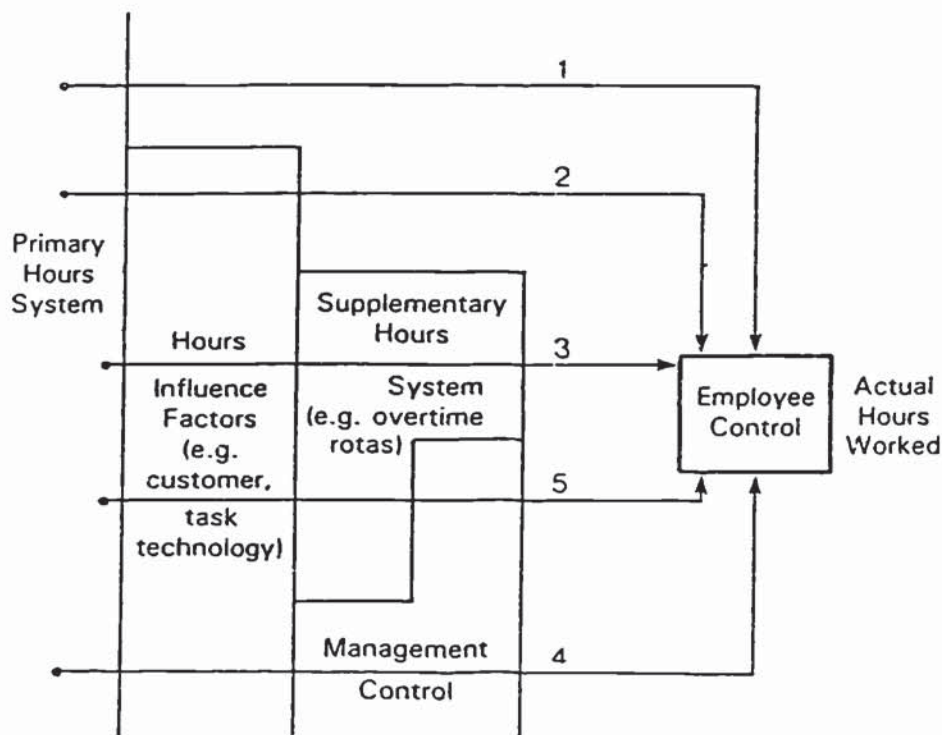
for the system, work situation characteristics and other factors such as payment and appraisal systems.

Lee's more recent research (Lee, 1985) has informed the basic model of hours control by introducing the idea that where the primary hours system is flexible an employee's hours may be influenced by factors related to the task, technology employed or other factors. It also adds to the primary hours system the possibility of a supplementary hours system which may be called upon in times of unpredictable demand. In addition, it indicates that both types of system (primary and supplementary) may be controlled and influenced by management and will be liable to some form of employee mediation (called employee control). The main components of Lee's hours control framework are shown in Figure 5.1. Arrow 1 represents a fixed hours system. Actual hours may still differ from those specified by the primary hours system. In all cases the employee is an important mediator between system and practice. Arrow 2 represents systems in which the customer, tasks, or some other factor, influence the hours which an employee must work. Arrow 3 shows how some systems include supplements to the basic hours system in the form of, for example, overtime and on-call rotas. Arrow 4 represents direct management control of the primary hours system, while arrow 5 represents the situation where management controls the application of the supplementary hours system.

This framework for hours control has been further supplemented by Lee's (1985) research into management-controlled hour systems. These systems give management rights to vary employees' hours and are commonly found in nursing and the police force, although they have also been found in retailing. The research has shown that in such systems where the task environment may cause variable time demands, some form of downward

control on employees may formally be built into the system. It has also been suggested on the basis of this research that various aspects of any system may be divided amongst management or supervisory staff, that the manner in which the system is applied may change its character and that many systems may build in mediating mechanisms to enable employees to reduce the impact of downward control. These mechanisms are understood to mean channels for employees to express choice over, or complain about, working hours.

Figure 5.1 Lee's Hours Control Framework



The three main areas described in Lee's research - hours systems (primary and supplementary), mediating mechanisms, and employee control - form the framework for the presentation of the fieldwork findings in Chapters 5 and 6. In this chapter hours systems and mediating mechanisms in the firms studied are described in detail.

Hours Systems

Hours systems are not described in the research findings along the lines suggested by Lee but in terms of the components of patterns of working hours described by Bosworth and Dawkins (1981) in order to provide cohesion and to enable easier comparison of the findings with the secondary data presented in Chapters 1-4. These categories are broken down into further subjects for analysis (which are not described in this form by Lee [1985]) which allow the actual practices relating to patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing and the rationale behind them to be explained.

The Length of the Working Period

The duration of the working period which is most relevant to an understanding of patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France are the number of hours worked by an individual on a weekly and on a daily basis. Consequently, employers' policies and practices will be contrasted and compared for both these components of the working period.

Weekly Contract Lengths

The following discussion is organized into four areas which describe the main influences on weekly contract lengths revealed by the fieldwork. The first three areas for discussion investigate the factors influencing the choice between employing full or part-timers on the shop-floor. The last area for discussion examines the influences on weekly part-time hours and their relationship with weekly hours. Although these four areas are separated in order to facilitate explanation, in reality, the various components of patterns of working hours and the factors influencing them are inter-related and in the course of the discussion an attempt is made to reveal these inter-relationships.

Attitudes Towards Part-time Work and its Level of Use

In Britain the retailers in the sample were unanimously in favour of using part-time work although it had not developed at the same rate in all firms. In Britain employers appeared to fall into two distinct groups according to the way in which part-time work had developed in their firms. While all retailers appeared to have started using part-time work over the years in response to lengthening trading hours, several (GN3, GN4, GR2) had started to employ part-timers more extensively when legislative changes, beginning with the imposition of SET in the mid-1960s and subsequent changes in the NI system in the mid-1970s had raised the cost of employing full-timers. Other retailers (GN1, GN5, GR1), however, appeared to be more reluctant to radically change their practices until the early 1980s when rising labour costs, increased competition, and a realization that they were less competitive in terms of labour efficiency than others, forced them to undergo a major revision of working hours. In both cases the

development of sophisticated labour productivity systems (which will be discussed in detail below) has played a contributory role in the extension of part-time work.

It is clear that the direct financial advantages of employing part-timers who work (at current NI rates and average wages for retailing) about eighteen hours a week, figure prominently among the reasons why retailers have favoured the use of part-time work. However, the advantage of being able to employ part-timers in order to maximize labour productivity by matching labour requirements to customer demand has evidently been another major attraction for retailers. In addition, part-timers were also unanimously preferred to full-timers because they offered cheap flexibility (extra hours below the full-time working week are paid at single time) to cover for absenteeism and unexpected customer demand. There was no evidence to suggest that the creation of part-time jobs by British retailers over recent years was a social measure stemming from an awareness that there was a demand by women for this form of work. Its use reflected business needs only, although employers were aware that a suitable part-time workforce existed because of women's domestic commitments.

Most British retailers expressed their satisfaction with the part-time retail workforce: the increasing source of married women seeking convenient hours has ideally suited retailers' requirements as part-time work has been extended from evening check-out work to all unskilled jobs throughout the working day. All retailers found in married women a stable and reliable source of labour which they supplemented by varying degrees with students. Labour turnover was considerably higher among students, but it was predictable, and students were easily replaced; it did not, therefore, pose real

problems. Only one retailer (GN5) mentioned problems of high labour turnover in the main body of the part-time workforce in some areas where unemployment was high and youngsters were taking part-time work as a last resort and leaving for better pay in full-time work.

The sample firms, on average, employed approximately 60% of their shop-floor staff part-time, with top levels of about 70% (GN1, GR2, GN6, GN4). The higher than average levels of part-time work in these firms could not be explained by differences in outlet size¹. Most of the British retailers did not plan to increase levels of part-time work which in most cases had, in their view, reached optimum manageable levels. In most cases full-timers were employed only in skilled jobs (for example butchers and bakers) and in management. A minimum core of unskilled jobs were also full-time so that a pool of labour would be available for promotion purposes. Part-timers were not eligible for promotion beyond the lowest grades.

Most British retailers only planned to extend existing productivity systems and to respond to the lengthening of trading hours (particularly with the possible advent of Sunday trading), which may have the knock-on effect of raising levels of part-time work (as explained below). There were exceptions to this trend: in one firm (GS1) shorter contracts for part-timers were being developed, hence increasing numbers of part-timers, and another (GN5), which had started only recently to develop part-time work, was in the process of increasing levels in stores.

Two other retailers, however, were anticipating a return to lower levels of part-time employment. One of these (GN1) felt that part-timers' complex working hours were very difficult to manage and

favoured a return to lower and more easily manageable levels of part-time work. The other (GN4) was changing its patterns of working hours to suit the company's objective of creating the image of a mature and experienced workforce. It was introducing longer part-time shifts in order to attract more mature women into evening and Saturday work normally carried out by students. Longer hours, which are more attractive to mature women who had finished raising their families, were being offered on the condition that evenings and Saturdays would be worked on a rota basis. This is a good example of how a retailer in Britain was aware of women's changing demands in working hours throughout their life cycles and takes advantage of them.

In France the attitudes towards the employment of part-timers and the development of part-time work seems to be more heterogeneous than in Britain. Part-time work appears to be developing in two distinct ways, each pattern of development being closely related to the retailers' attitudes towards, and experience of, part-time work. The first pattern of development is typical of two of the largest employers and most successful retailers in the industry (FN1 and FN2). These retailers do not want to develop part-time work on a large scale in their companies and seek to limit its use to certain jobs in stores. The levels of part-time work in their stores are amongst the lowest in the industry and considerably lower than average levels in Britain (between 25-30% of shop-floor employees work part-time). This was surprising because these stores (particularly FN1) specialized in larger outlets including hypermarkets where, based on secondary data discussed in Chapter 4, higher levels of part-time work might have been expected. Part-timers are employed almost exclusively to cope with peaks in customer flow on check-outs.

In these firms the development of part-time work is largely explained as a response to lengthening trading hours in the out-of-town hypermarkets in which these firms specialize. However, despite their reluctance to use part-time work (as explained below), these firms held the same views of the advantages of part-time work as British retailers. In FN1 where part-timers represented 90% of check-out assistants their productivity benefits were particularly emphasized. In the other firm (FN2) where, by agreement with the unions, part-timers did not represent more than 50% of check-out assistants, their most prized feature was their flexibility to work extra hours on single-time pay.

However, levels of part-time work in these firms were not expected to increase significantly in the future. The firms were opposed to the development of part-time work for several reasons which relate to the type of labour attracted to part-time jobs in this industry in France and to the companies' objectives. Both companies had a high quality product and service image for which an employment policy of attracting and retaining a top-grade workforce had been developed. These employers had found that the type of employee attracted to part-time work did not meet their service standards. In particular, it would seem that even in these firms reputed for their generous staff benefits, part-time work remained unpopular and only the most financially needy were prepared to undertake this work.

The unpopularity of part-time work in retailing has resulted partly from the particularly French reaction to the way in which part-time work has been used in this industry. For example, most firms have used - and some, including these two firms, continue to use - part-timers extensively for working unsocial evening hours only, thereby extending

the working day after full-timers leave work. In the French context where, in contrast with Britain, retailers have been unable to recruit part-timers actively seeking evening work, this has resulted in the further alienation of part-timers from the workforce and the increased unpopularity of part-time work.

These firms have found that part-time employees are less loyal to the firm than full-timers and are much more likely than the latter to leave to find better pay in full-time work, even though these firms' pay levels were almost double those usually offered in the industry. In addition, they have found greater difficulty motivating part-timers in their work, removing their feeling of alienation, and integrating them into the workforce. The net effect of these different problems has been for part-timers to offer much lower levels of customer service than those expected of them by the firms.

Both these firms have been forced to adapt working conditions to help combat the problems associated with their part-time workforce and satisfy their service objectives. One major facet of these adaptations has been to alter patterns of working hours: both have developed rotating shifts and semi-autonomous teams (as described in the discussion about shift patterns) in order to distribute unsocial working hours more fairly among part-timers. But one firm (FN2) has also attempted to build part-timers into the store career structure so that the large numbers of young men and women taking part-time work as a second best to full-time work will be more likely to stay with the company in order to progress up the career ladder.

The combination of problems with the part-time labour force and the influence of specific company objectives has caused these companies not

only to limit their use of part-time work and adapt patterns of working hours to part-timers, but also to introduce other innovations in working hours. In order to achieve their flexibility requirements with low levels of part-time work, these firms have developed an extensive range of flexibility contracts which are unknown in the British retailing scene. The most common were annual part-time and full-time contracts. Other forms of flexibility included monthly part-time contracts and various forms of full-time flexibility (as described below in the discussion about flexibility in working hours). Flexible working hours were complemented by developing multi-skilled full-timers (see pp255-60) so that high labour productivity could be achieved by other methods than from using part-time work.

The second pattern of development of part-time work was typical of the majority of French retailers in the sample who favoured the increasing use of part-time work and shared the view that part-time work was an important means of raising labour productivity and reducing labour costs (FN3, FN4, FR1, FR2, FR3, FR5). In contrast with the firms which opposed the extensive employment of part-timers, many of these firms had levels of part-time work which were already relatively high (40-60% of the shop-floor workforce), but levels were lower on average than those in British firms. This difference could not be explained in terms of the size of outlets owned by the firms². The highest level was in one firm (FR2) where 80% of the shop-floor workforce in one hypermarket worked part-time. Most of the firms favouring higher levels of part-time work, much like British retailers, had moved from a situation of employing part-timers solely during peak times on check-outs to one of employing them on tills and on the shop-floor throughout the day. The development of part-time work in these firms has, in most cases, formed part of a cost-cutting exercise in a bid to survive in

the face of falling profit margins, rising competition and lengthening trading hours, changes which took place in the early 1980s in France when the economic recession began to bite. Contrary to expectations, changes in the legal structure in 1981 (as discussed in Chapter 4 and in Appendix IV) in order to extend the use of part-time work by employers seem to have had little effect on their decision to increase their use of part-time work. The majority of firms saw no reason why part-time levels in stores should not reach 70-80% of the workforce in low-skilled shop-floor functions and, like the British, envisaged keeping a small core of full-timers in skilled jobs in management where continuity was felt to be indispensable, and in some unskilled shop-floor jobs for promotion reasons. Only one firm (FN3) which ran very high levels of part-time work (70%) and numerous shift patterns was, like two of the British retailers, considering a return to lower part-time levels in order to simplify labour scheduling and improve employee motivation.

However, most French retailers found that employing considerable numbers of part-timers was not without its disadvantages, the most significant of these being the labour turnover and motivation problems noted in companies FN1 and FN2 above. The common intention of the majority of French retailers to increase the use of part-time work concealed wide variations in the attitudes towards how these developments would be achieved and could be reconciled with other company objectives. Two firms particularly concerned with cost-cutting (FN4 and FR5) sought to continue increasing levels of part-time work with little concern for the problems of high labour turnover and the poorer levels of service which they expected to encounter from the part-time work-force. However, the other firms (FR1, FR2, FR3, FR4) were particularly concerned about the problems of maintaining high

service levels and reducing labour turnover while increasing levels of part-time work. These firms sought to achieve these objectives by a series of measures aimed at developing a motivated and satisfied part-time workforce: longer and therefore more lucrative weekly contracts for part-timers; higher pay levels; development of semi-autonomous teams and rotating shifts (as described below).

Although many French retailers were increasing their use of part-time work, the methods they used to achieve this seemed more crude than those used in Britain. The more recent changes in the retail environment in France appear to have caused French employers to look more belatedly at the questions of labour cost targeting and labour productivity than the British. While British retailers have developed sophisticated productivity systems based on work study analysis to enable the systematic calculation of part-time labour requirements, in France only one firm had adopted this type of productivity system. In general, firms were increasing part-time levels simply by replacing full-time employees in low-skilled shop-floor functions with part-timers. This difference in the labour cost targeting and productivity systems used by British and French retailers also contributes to an explanation for the dissimilar extent of part-time use in the two countries (as described below).

Labour Cost and Labour Productivity Targeting

The fieldwork revealed that the use of labour cost and productivity targeting influences patterns of working hours significantly in large-scale grocery outlets. One of the main objectives of labour cost and labour productivity targets is to help outlets and companies to achieve profit objectives. As labour costs constitute a major proportion of total costs in retailing (usually around 50% of all costs) and

retailing is a labour-intensive industry, minimizing labour costs makes a major contribution to profitability.

It was found that in Britain labour cost and labour productivity targeting are closely inter-linked: most major national and regional retail grocers have developed systems for setting labour and productivity targets. The object of these is to match labour hours optimally to customer demand. The labour cost and labour productivity targeting systems developed in the British sample firms were almost all (with the exception of GR2 and GS1) based on work study analysis and imported from the USA. In these systems labour productivity targets are established for different jobs, and labour needs (expressed in hours) are derived from dividing the total work load for a particular job by the labour productivity target for that job. Hence by predicting sales over a year and the impact on work load for that period, departmental and total store labour targets for the year can be established. This can be translated into a cash labour cost target for the store (and at departmental level if desired). Store labour cost targets, derived in this way, are then combined and reconciled with company-level labour cost objectives usually expressed as a percentage of sales. All systems based on work study are adapted to the individual stores and take into consideration factors such as the arrangement of the storage facilities, and the layout of the shop-floor. Productivity measures for individual jobs are regularly adapted to take into account changes in these factors as well as those in work methods and technology, and are used to recalculate labour targets on a regular basis.

In several British firms (GR2, GN1 and GN2), two of which are now turning to work study based methods (GR2 and GN1), setting labour cost

targets as a percentage of sales is still the sole means of setting labour targets at outlet level. This method had been extensively employed as the means of establishing employment levels in most of the British sample firms until more sophisticated techniques were adopted. This percentage sales method has two main implications for patterns of working hours: firstly, it does not encourage investigation into work content in order to establish the optimum mix of full-timers and part-timers; secondly, it can leave a great deal of discretion over patterns of hours to outlet level management.

The "bottom-up" approach to setting labour cost targets also forms a basis for setting weekly and/or monthly labour cost and productivity targets in stores. In one firm (GR1) the store manager is given a monthly target for store working hours by head office and departmental managers devise their own weekly schedules in order to meet these targets. In most other firms weekly hours targets on a departmental basis are set out in advance by head office management so that departmental responsibility is more limited. The labour productivity calculations in most work study based systems are carried out on a weekly and monthly basis and at department and store levels by comparing actual hours worked with targeted hours. These calculations are employed with other measures, such as sales per man hour or items per man hour in a dynamic process to help achieve an optimal match between labour requirements and customer demand.

The importance of these sophisticated systems for working hours is that in some firms (GN5 and GR1 in particular), they have been found to lead to a growth in part-time work. Even in firms which already employed high levels of part-time work the introduction of the system has led to more refined labour scheduling. These types of systems help retailers

to identify objectively areas where part-timers can be more effectively employed than full-timers by breaking down jobs into component parts and accurately predicting customer demand. Hence the introduction of such systems can have a major influence on patterns of working hours.

However, the way in which work study results are translated into patterns of working hours is, to a large extent, influenced by company objectives. For example in some firms (GN6 and GR1) where the priority is to minimize labour costs - by avoiding paying NI, avoiding giving statutory paid breaks, and training employees in one skill only - the tendency appears to be to employ part-timers primarily on very short overlapping daily shifts. In others firms where less priority is given to avoiding breaks, longer daily shifts are possible (GN5). However, the level of labour productivity may drop if shifts are longer and employees are only single-skilled. One firm (GN4) has overcome this by utilizing multi-skilled part-timers who can be moved from one short job to another in the course of the working day.

Despite the fact that the French are turning increasingly to part-time work for its advantages in terms of productivity and flexibility, work study analysis is hardly used. French companies appear to have been slower to develop sophisticated methods for establishing labour requirements and those using more advanced techniques were not the largest firms in the industry. It was surprising to find that despite an apparently greater preoccupation with working time in France, and a more complex regulatory framework for working hours within retailing that most French retailers had also adopted a method of labour cost targeting (a "top down" approach) which resulted in a greater reliance on established norms for the organization of working hours. This apparent contradiction could be explained by the more favourable

economic context for French retailing which had not until recently caused them to try to reduce labour costs.

Most French firms set an annual labour cost target for individual stores as a percentage of sales, on the basis of past trends in employment levels and targeted profit. This yearly budget of labour in money terms is passed down to each of the stores' departments on the basis of past experience, predicted sales for the coming year, and the theoretical requirements for labour (based on precedent and the required sales/man hour objective required to reach store labour cost targets). Labour cost targets tended to be expressed in terms of an accepted percentage of sales or sales per man hour. Labour cost targeting based on the percentage sales approach was carried out in one of two ways: some stores had labour cost targets which were tailored to individual stores, whereas a number used a less precise target generated from norms of hours worked for stores in various ranges of size and sales.

Two firms (FN3 and FR1) targeted labour costs on the basis of sales per man hour, a method which bore some resemblance to the British approach to labour cost targeting. However, the French system was not based on work study and did not appear to question the basis on which patterns of working hours were established. For example, a store of X square metres may be expected on the basis of normal work organization and working hours to have a labour productivity of 1000F per man hour. When predicted sales figures for the store for a given year are divided by this labour productivity rate a total predicted number of man hours Y for the year is calculated. Total predicted store hours Y are then broken down per department as explained above in terms of predicted

sales, previous employment levels and theoretical employment levels. The basic organization of labour is therefore not questioned.

Different methods exist in the way the labour cost target - as a percentage of sales or in terms of sales per man hour - is derived for individual stores. The method used depends to a certain extent on the level at which decisions about patterns of working hours are taken and on the firms' traditions. For example in one firm (FN1), a hypermarket company which gives considerable autonomy to the store manager, targets are negotiated in stores and then progressively upwards with line superiors; in FN4 by contrast, store labour cost targets are passed down to the store manager from the board of directors through successive layers of management.

In France, labour cost targets are, in contrast with Britain, separated from labour productivity targeting and measurement by most retailers, which would seem to reflect, in part, the slower development of part-time work in France. It is often store managers in French large-scale grocery retailing who decide on the level and form of labour productivity measurement to be carried out in his store (FN1, FN2, FR3, FR5). In many cases labour productivity calculations are seen as of secondary importance in an environment where the managers' priority is often to reach labour cost and profit targets by whatever means.

Only three French firms (FN4, FR2, FR4) appeared to have systematic procedures for measuring labour productivity in terms of sales per man hour on a weekly, monthly, and departmental basis, and for using this information to adapt manpower levels. Despite this high level of sophistication, these systems (in FN4 and FR2) were not used to feed into the store labour cost targeting process, as they are in Britain.

These firms still rely predominantly on the percentage sales approach for setting labour cost targets and are therefore subject to the "weaknesses" with respect to patterns of working hours outlined above.

Two of these firms (FN4 and FR2) had set up their systems on the basis of informal work study and set departmental labour targets in terms of working hours. Both also compared reality with objectives and regularly carried out other productivity calculations on a departmental basis. The system which most closely resembles the British type has been developed by a smaller French company (FR4) and has imported British consultants for this purpose. This firm now uses a work study approach for estimating required man hours accurately and for helping decide how work should be distributed between full and part-timers. Labour productivity calculations are also carried out on a regular basis.

Although no other firms have developed similar systems for all store departments, work analysis and productivity calculations are often done for check-outs where matching labour to customer demand is crucial in order to maintain customer service levels. However, the specific patterns emerging from this analysis depend on such variables as the degree of multi-skilling of employees and company policy and objectives.

Multi-skilling

Multi-skilling is another term for functional flexibility. In the empirical work at firm level it was found that multi-skilling contributed significantly to patterns of hours in large-scale grocery outlets.

In both Britain and France there are union agreements which influence the use of multi-skilling. In Britain, according to the Wages Council and the Multiple Food Trade Joint Committee's definition of check-out and stockroom assistants, there is freedom for employees to carry out types of work other than their main activity as part of their duties. In France the job description of check-out assistants and shop-floor assistants set out in the French national collective agreement the Convention Collective Nationale des Magasins de Vente d'Alimentation et d'Approvisionnement Général allows check-out assistants to carry out part of their daily work on the shop-floor while prohibiting shop-floor assistants from working on check-outs. The French national collective agreement also states that employees working continuously on more than one job, one of which is at a higher pay level, should be paid at the higher pay rate if over half of the working time is spent working on the more highly paid job. If less than half of the working time is spent on the more highly paid job, the employee should then be paid at the higher rate in proportion to the number of hours worked (however, the unions are currently negotiating a new method, which is being resisted by employers, of recognizing functional flexibility by which multi-skilled employees would be placed automatically on a higher grade with more pay).

Within this loose framework of union agreements in Britain and France there appears to be a similar diversity in attitudes to, and use of, multi-skilling in retail grocery firms in the two countries. At one extreme are firms (FN4, GR2, GR3) whose priority it is to keep labour costs to an absolute minimum and to avoid the costs associated with training. Rather, they expect full flexibility of employees on the shop-floor and practice "multi-jobbing": that is to say employees are expected to carry out many shop-floor jobs for which they may not have

been trained. These firms had no intention of developing multi-skilling. They seek to maximize labour productivity and minimize labour costs by combining this specialization with short weekly contracts, short daily hours, and demands for maximum flexibility in working hours from employees.

A number of firms (FN1, FR1, FR4, GN1, GN6, GR1) in both countries have a degree of deliberate job flexibility between check-out assistants and shop-floor assistants. Most of these firms, however, have no intention of further developing job flexibility through multi-skilling. Several firms (FN1, FR4, GN1) are concerned that by reducing task specialization through introducing multi-skilling customer service will suffer. One firm (GN6) is prevented from developing multi-skilling by pay structures arising from a union agreement which makes inter-changeability costly and complex. In this firm another union agreement prohibits any inter-changeability of jobs with the exception of that between check-outs and the shop-floor. Only one firm (GR1) was considering extending multi-skilling so that absolute flexibility could be achieved in its stores.

The problem with pay structures in companies is a common barrier to developing multi-skilling in British stores. Several British companies (GN3, GN5, GS1) claim they would like to develop multi-skilling in order to achieve maximum employee flexibility but are unable to do so because of prohibitive pay structures which have been negotiated with unions. As a result single-skilling predominates in these firms and only a limited amount of job inter-changeability takes place. Indeed, British unions appear to be wary of multi-skilling as it is seen as a possible way of removing existing differentials and benefits.

In France similar problems have emerged from the grading scheme agreement on payments for multi-skilling, set out in the industry's collective agreement and, to a lesser extent, from company pay structures. These constraints have limited the use of formal multi-skilling in two companies (FR2 and FR3). One of these has revised its grading structure (illegally) in order to develop multi-skilling in new stores. One other French company (FN3) has remained predominantly single-skilled. Job specialization has been used with high levels of part-time work in order to reach targeted labour productivity levels.

These firms - the single-skilled and the partially multi-skilled - have developed a wide range of policies relating to patterns of working hours. These policies reflect general objectives in terms of cost-cutting and image creation and relate to the degree of task specialization required of the workforce, the daily and weekly lengths of working period, and requirements in terms of flexibility in working hours. For example, in Britain some firms (GN1 and GR2) have sought above all to minimize labour costs and maximize labour flexibility by reducing contract lengths and daily shift lengths (thus avoiding paying NI contributions and giving rest breaks), while another (GN5) has paid less attention to these considerations. A similar range of practices exists among French firms.

At the other extreme, are a small number of companies in France and Britain (GN4, FR2, FN2) which are actively developing multi-skilling. Britain's most developed form of multi-skilling has been in operation in one company (GN4) for over twelve years. Most full and part-time employees are taught two to three jobs so that they can be moved around the store in response to the needs of the business. The aim of this system is to develop several skills in order to both increase the

interest in the job and give the firm greater flexibility. This system does allow for some specialization: some employees work mostly on their preferred departments and some part-timers are only employed for specific hours on tills. The use of multi-skilling has a major influence on patterns of working hours in this store. It enables longer part-time contracts and full-time contracts to be used on the shop-floor without sacrificing labour productivity standards.

Similarly, in a new experimental hypermarket belonging to one French firm (FR2) multi-skilling is being developed as part of a new flexible system for part-timers working twenty-eight hour contracts. The system was introduced in order to resolve the problem of low motivation and high labour turnover found among single-skilled part-timers on short contracts in other stores. In this system part-timers work in groups of fourteen to eighteen and are attached loosely to a department in a store. Within each group every member is entirely multi-skilled and the group works as a semi-autonomous team (as described in Chapter 4) both with regards to choosing their working hours and job tasks. A full profile of this firm's innovative working hours systems is given in Appendix VII.

In one other firm in France (FN2), where the pay structure prohibits conventional multi-skilling, two unusual types of multi-skilling have been developed which have implications for patterns of working hours in stores. This firm was opposed to the extensive development of part-time work and by agreement with the union employed a maximum of only 50% of check-out assistants part-time. This firm's stance towards part-time work has resulted in the use of a number of measures which aim to incorporate both flexibility and productivity targets into patterns of working hours. One of these measures has been in the form

of multi-skilling. For example the firm has introduced a "complete job" scheme which insures that employees who stock shelves also order the products and hence are more involved in the whole process of supplying the goods to the customer. This type of multi-skilling within departments represents a move away from the trend towards more specialization found in other firms. However, according to the firm it enables a largely full-time staff to be more involved in their work and to reach higher productivity levels than would be possible if full-timers were only employed to carry out one task. A second type of multi-skilling involves employees working certain days on the shop-floor and other days on the tills on a regular basis. These two schemes enable this firm to maintain high levels of full-time work and at the same time meet the flexibility and productivity demands of the business.

In both countries employers agreed that multi-skilling was most necessary in small outlets which employ small numbers of staff (usually up to fifteen per outlet). This was the case because the work load and range of goods sold was considered to be insufficient to warrant the type of division of labour seen in large supermarkets and hypermarkets. In these small stores multi-skilling is used in conjunction with a greater use of full-time work. In addition, it was found that in both countries management at outlet level could influence the degree of multi-skilling in stores. However this was more common in France where decision making in companies, and in particular the hypermarket branches of companies, was more often decentralized than in Britain.

Weekly Part-time Contract Lengths

Only part-time contracts are considered here because a greater range of contract lengths have been found among employees on part-time contracts

in low-skilled jobs in grocery retailing in comparison with full-timers in these jobs. Furthermore, part-time contract lengths have been shown to be a major component of working hours which employers in grocery retailing change in order to gain increased flexibility. Variations in full-time contract lengths will be examined when flexibility in working hours is discussed.

In France contract lengths within stores are influenced primarily by the company's and/or store's (depending on whether decisions relating to working hours are centralized or not) policies and traditions with respect to the use of part-time work. The influence of these factors has resulted in considerable diversity in practices towards part-time contract lengths in the French sample firms. Three main practices emerge, however, among the French retailers which demonstrate the effect of differing policies towards part-time work. They do not appear to bear any relationship to the size of outlets owned by the companies. Firstly, two major retailers (FN1, FN2) operated relatively long contracts (25-30 hours). These companies emphasized a high degree of customer service and have limited their use of part-time work to the check-outs because they have found that part-timers do not tend to offer sufficiently high levels of customer service. In particular, they have found that part-timers are less committed to the firm and have high levels of labour turnover. In order to render part-time work financially viable for employees and hence help stabilize the part-time workforce these firms have decided to retain longer part-time contracts. Secondly, several other firms (FR2, FR3, FN3) which have - for reasons of labour productivity, cost reduction, and flexibility - extensively developed single-skilled part-timers on short contracts (16-20 hours) for all types of jobs on the shop-floor, are now returning to longer contracts in order to reduce labour turnover and

improve customer service. One of these in particular (FR2) is experimenting with multi-skilling in order to improve the labour productivity of employees on longer contracts. Finally, in contrast with the first two practices, a third set of firms (FN4, FR5) is developing shorter weekly contracts (16-20 hours) in spite of the associated labour turnover problems. These firms emphasized the cost-cutting advantages of employing single-skilled part-timers on short contracts in all areas of shop-floor work and were less preoccupied with questions of employee satisfaction and motivation.

Most French retailers, however, were in a transition stage - moving from one strategy in contract lengths to another - and, as a result, a wide range of contract lengths were found in stores. In addition, in companies where decisions about working hours were decentralized, part-time contract lengths were often decided by the branch manager with the result that practices within the same firm sometimes varied considerably from outlet to outlet.

In France the only formal influence on the weekly part-time contract length is the national collective agreement which sets the minimum weekly part-time hours at sixteen a week (as described in Chapter 4). This agreement seemed to work very effectively within the industry and provides one explanation for the relatively long contract lengths found in France.

In Britain, part-time contracts seemed to be, on average, shorter than in France, reflecting the differences found in the secondary data described in Chapter 4. This dissimilarity did not seem to be accounted for by the differing ranges of outlet sizes owned by companies in the two samples. For example, when firms with similar

ranges of outlet sizes were compared (notably FN3 with GN6 or GR2) contract lengths still tended to be shorter in the British firms. Also, British retailers, in comparison with the French, appeared to adopt a narrower range of practices with respect to the weekly part-time contract length. This greater homogeneity appeared to be largely a result of the operation of the NI insurance system which renders part-time work, up to a maximum weekly number of hours, financially advantageous to the retailer (and employee). It also seemed to reflect the narrower range of attitudes to the development of part-time work in British retailing.

Most British firms had been reducing contract lengths over the years as part-timers had become the mainstay of most stores' workforces. The most common weekly contract was around 15-16 hours a week. Many retailers cited the financial advantage of avoiding NI contributions by employing part-timers for under sixteen hours a week but emphasized above all that such contracts enable the productivity requirements of short daily shifts to be achieved. It was not possible in most cases to ascertain whether the fact that contracts of below sixteen hours a week also exempt employees from Employment Protection legislation had a bearing on employers' decision to fix contracts at this length (with the exception of firm GR2 where it was stated that this played a part). Although 15-16 hour contracts were the norm a number of firms were developing, or had developed, twelve hour contracts (for example GN4, GN6, GS1). These contracts are particularly advantageous for employers as they enable daily working hours to be short and offer considerable flexibility in overtime hours before the NI payment threshold is reached.

However, in common with the French firms, some diversity in weekly contract hours was found among their British counterparts and this similarity could be explained in terms of the same factors. The first of these was company policy: in Britain policy about cost-cutting (by avoiding NI payments) and about multi-skilling had a major influence on the weekly contract length. For example two companies in particular were paying less attention to the NI threshold in setting contract lengths. One firm (GN4) was considering increasing the part-time contract length in order to attract more mature part-timers into evening work and create a more stable image for customers; the other (GN1) was considering a return to longer contracts in order to alleviate the problems of scheduling large numbers of part-timers (in both cases it is likely that multi-skilling would be employed in order to maintain current productivity levels). The second factor influencing weekly contract lengths was the change in company strategies about part-time working hours which caused variations in contract lengths within firms. However, the rate of change in these strategies appeared to be slower in Britain than in France. Finally, store managers' policies caused some variation in contract lengths although their effect appeared to be more limited in Britain than in France because many more British companies had centralized directives on this question.

Daily Part-time Hours

In grocery retailing in Britain and France full-time daily hours in low-skilled shop-floor jobs tend to be conventional day-time hours (0800-1600 or 0900-1700). It is part-timers who are usually employed at unsocial times and for shorter periods than the normal working day. Consequently, the following discussion focuses on factors influencing

part-timers' daily hours in Britain and France. Variations in full-timers' hours from the conventional format will be described in the discussion about flexibility in working hours.

In Britain the most common daily shift length for part-timers was between three and four hours, up to a maximum of five hours, although shift lengths ranged from two to eight hours a day. Most firms schedule part-time shifts so that only one period of work is carried out per day. Part-timers tend to return to work for a second period only to cover for absenteeism or unforeseen peaks in customer demand.

Shift length was found to depend partly on local labour market conditions. Many firms stated that these conditions sometimes prohibited recruitment for short daily shifts. Shift length also, as suggested in the secondary data presented in Chapter 4, depended partly on outlet size, with larger outlets tending to use shorter daily shift lengths because they enabled them to respond to longer trading hours. However, shift length depended primarily on firms' policies (or store manager's policies where these decisions were made at outlet level). A large number of the firms in the British sample (GN1, GN3, GR1, GR2, GR3), whose policy it was to reduce costs by limiting the weekly contract length - thereby avoiding NI contributions - and by employing mostly single-skilled employees, tended to develop shift lengths of a shorter duration than the threshold over which rest breaks had to be given (as described in Chapter 4). The firms adjusted their daily shifts as far as possible in order not to cross the threshold which was applicable to them. These retailers also emphasized that another important reason for using short shifts was to best meet the labour requirements calculated from the new labour productivity systems. Employees working short daily shifts are overlapped as required during

the working day so the availability of labour optimally matches customer demand. Only two firms (GN4 and GN5) seemed to pay less attention to the break factor. One firm in particular (GN4) had successfully achieved very high productivity levels by combining part-timers working short daily shifts on check-outs with multi-skilled part-timers working longer daily hours on the shop-floor.

All the firms in the sample used all day part-timers in specific jobs and at certain times of the week. These part-timers were rarely employed on check-outs except occasionally on Saturdays where students would work the whole day in some stores. On the shop-floor it was more usual for part-timers to be employed all day to fill in for full-timers on their day off and for students to work Saturdays.

Whereas in Britain practices with respect to daily shift lengths appeared to be relatively homogeneous from one firm to another and between outlets in the same firm, in France a much greater diversity was found on both accounts. This would seem to relate partly to the fact that French firms - and particularly the hypermarket branch of firms - appear to decentralize decisions about working hours more than in Britain. The much greater decentralization of decisions about the organization of working hours made it very difficult to assess whether a distinction in practices relating to shift lengths (as revealed in Britain) also existed between large and smaller outlets in France.

The greater diversity in practices relating to shift lengths in France may also be explained by the wider range of practices relating to rest breaks in France compared with Britain. In France the collectively agreed conditions for giving breaks (after five hours continuous work) would seem to have influenced the scheduling of daily part-time shifts

in some firms. However, several others (for example FN4 and FR3) have signed agreements with the unions operating in their firms which give employees the right to a number of minutes of rest per hour worked. Hourly rest minutes are accumulated and are normally given in a single block during the working period - the agreement prohibits the rest period being given at the beginning or end of this time. Evidently, for these firms there is no advantage in trying to set part-time daily shifts below the five hour limit and there was no attempt to do so.

The combined effect of the greater diversity in agreements governing breaks for employees and the earlier stage of development of part-time work and labour productivity systems would seem to contribute to an explanation for the greater variety in daily shift lengths found in France. In general, however, daily shift lengths appear to be longer in France than in Britain and range from four to eight hours. It was not possible to establish definitively whether this difference reflected the dissimilar size of outlets owned by the companies in the samples because of the greater decentralization of decisions relating to the organization of working hours in France. It seemed, however, that this difference could be attributed to the operation of another clause in the industry's national agreement which sets a minimum length of continuous work for part-timers at three hours (as described in Chapter 4) and to the greater use of longer weekly contract lengths which increases the likelihood of a longer daily shift. Some French retailers (for example, FN1, FN2, and FR3) have overcome the labour productivity problems caused by longer daily shift lengths by developing multi-skilling, while others have tended, in contrast with British retailers, to call part-timers to work two shifts during the working day, often with a long break between the two periods.

The Organization of Working Hours

In the fieldwork it was found that the most relevant periods on which to focus in a discussion about the organization of working hours were those on a daily basis and shift patterns over a longer period. The term "shift" is defined here as "...a situation in which one worker replaces another on the same job within a 24 hour period" (IFF, 1978: ii). A "shift" could not be used to describe the organization of much of the work in large-scale grocery retailing if other definitions were used. For example, a shift has been defined as work outside the hours of the day that are considered to be normal (Walker, 1978: 1). The following discussion examines in turn the organization of working hours on a daily basis and shift patterns in large-scale grocery retailing. While the discussion makes reference to full-timers it concentrates particularly on part-timers because it is their hours which are the main focus of scheduling.

The Organization of Hours on a Daily Basis

In both Britain and France the organization of hours on a daily basis appears to depend to a large extent on the type of job carried out in the store. Jobs in most large-scale outlets belong to two categories: those which are directly responsive to customer demand and those which are more task-determined.

In the first category are jobs on check-outs and at information desks, on fresh food counters, and to a lesser extent in shelf-filling, and on the shop-floor (extra filling is sometimes required at peak times during the day). Many of these jobs are carried out on a part-time basis and daily hours are scheduled in such a way as to meet customer

demand optimally and other criteria set out by the company ie a preference for keeping part-time shifts below the statutory or collectively agreed break thresholds. In these jobs the daily time of work will depend to a large extent on the pattern of customer flow which is a function of cycles in trade, the location of the shop, and the range of goods sold.

In the second category are jobs such as shelf-filling, bread-making, and those in the fresh meat department. In both countries producing bread and fresh meats are skilled jobs, usually carried out on a full-time basis. In these jobs daily hours start early so that a fresh product is available at the shop's opening time, and overlapping shifts may be employed to ensure the presence of skilled staff throughout opening hours. Shelf-filling, by contrast, is often on a part-time basis, and in large shops it is as far as possible scheduled outside opening hours or in slack times in order to avoid disrupting customers.

In both countries there is a requirement to schedule part-time hours to allow for statutorily and/or collectively agreed rest periods (as described in Chapter 4). In France there is a much more complex set of collective agreements establishing full and part-time working hours which play an important role in determining the organization of hours. Their organization on a daily basis, however, is influenced - like all other components of patterns of working hours - by employers' attitudes to the use of full and part-time work and multi-skilling. These attitudes have been shown to vary significantly between firms in Britain and France, reflecting the different way in which part-time work has developed in large-scale grocery retailing in the two countries. They also vary between firms within the two countries, and between outlets in the same firm.

These attitudes can have a wide range of effects on the organization of hours on a daily basis. For example, in both Britain and France most full-timers working on the shop-floor tend to work a conventional week (ie a normal five-day working week) but one company (FR3) in France, in an effort to improve part-timers' satisfaction with their working hours was in the process of introducing more unsocial hours for full-timers and more social hours for part-timers (hence reversing the current situation). Another example of the effect of employers' attitudes (and policies) on the organization of hours on a daily basis is that of the French companies who prefer to use an absolute minimum of part-timers mainly to staff the check-outs in the evenings (FN2 and FR4). In other companies in both Britain and France where there is a more extensive use of part-timers - single-skilled on short contracts, or multi-skilled on longer contracts - part-timers tend to be used throughout the working day.

Shift Patterns

In general full-timers' hours are conventional and are relatively fixed over time. The rationale for this relative stability in full-timers' patterns of working hours and a description of the flexibility which has been found in their hours will be considered in the following section.

In France a clear division can be made between two main types of part-time jobs and their associated shift patterns: check-out and information desk³ assistants, and shelf-fillers. In most large stores where part-timers are the main check-out and information desk workforce and opening hours are long, a system of rotating (also termed rolling) shifts operates (FN1, FN3, FN4, FR3). Some firms have fully developed

rotating teams (FN1, FN4), while others are in the process of introducing this system (FN3, FR3). Rotating shifts have replaced the old system of fixed shifts by which employees worked either mornings, afternoons, or evenings. This type of system has been developed in order to distribute unsocial working hours more fairly among these employees. The introduction of these shifts demonstrates clearly that French employers have an awareness of their employees' working hour preferences (even though they might not always be taken into consideration). The rotating teams system sets different daily hours each week for n weeks. After n weeks the same pattern of hours is repeated. The rotating shift also enables retailers to schedule two consecutive days off at least once a month for part-timers working five days a week or over (as required by the industry's collective agreement).

French retailers introduced rotating shifts among check-out assistants and information desk employees because they found that an insufficient number of employees actively sought late evening work (usually up to 2200 or 2300) in large stores where hours tend to be very long, and that this resulted in problems of high labour turnover and general discontent among these employees. Employers found that a significant proportion of evening part-time check-out assistants were married women who particularly wanted to be with their husbands and families in the evenings. In order to prevent the development of a stigmatized, unpopular, evening shift, these employers found it necessary to distribute unsocial hours among all part-time check-out assistants. Two of the firms in the French sample had not yet adopted the rotating shift system (FR1 and FR4). These firms tended to own smaller stores based in urban areas which had shorter opening hours. Thus the main

cause for discontent with working hours was removed, and these firms saw no reason to alter their fixed shift systems.

A further innovation in French retailing, which also appears to have been developed to help face the problem of discontent engendered by shifts with unsocial hours, is the semi-autonomous check-out team system (as described in Chapter 4). This system had been introduced on an experimental basis in most of the larger French firms (FN1, FN2, FN3, FN4, FR2, FR3) and represents one of the principal formalized methods found in French retailing for taking into account employees' working hours preferences. Employers have found that the semi-autonomous team allows employees to share the unsocial hours of work and has the added advantage that the group develops an identity and a cohesion which prevents the stigmatization which can occur under the fixed shift system in France. Employers also found that the semi-autonomous team gives greater responsibility to the employee, helps reduce absenteeism and labour turnover, and helps create a better working environment (employees' views about the effectiveness of this system and the characteristics of part-timers attracted to semi-autonomous teams are discussed in Chapter 6). A number of these teams have also become quality circles, and in one firm employers have extended the scheme to all shop-floor staff and given them the opportunity to choose their tasks as well (as described in the case study of FR2, Appendix VII).

The other major area where part-timers are employed in French stores is in shelf-filling. In contrast with check-out assistants and information desk workers, their hours tend to be fixed. In hypermarkets and in large supermarkets the majority of shelf-filling takes place in the early morning ie 0600-0900. Retailers said this was

because in France article 24 of the national collective agreement governing large-scale grocery retailing forces them to pay premium rates for all workers employed between 2000 and 0500. It is therefore cheaper for firms to arrange for shelf-filling to take place in the early morning before shops open when premium rates are not payable. In large stores topping up shelf-filling, in preparation for the evening peak in customer demand, also takes place in the early afternoon when shops are quieter. Actual schedules for afternoon filling also depend on the timing of deliveries. In smaller stores with less turnover of stock, a large part of shelf-filling takes place throughout the working day.

In general, part-timers were willing to work these fixed hours shelf-filling in the larger stores, and typically it is women with children, particularly those with pre-school children, who work these shifts. Employers suggested that this was because they satisfied a need expressed by some mothers to be at home most of the day with their children. However, a couple of firms (FN2, and FR3) which had found that early starts were not very popular had also brought in rotating shifts for shelf-filling as well as for till and information desk work.

In Britain, by contrast, it was found that all part-timers worked fixed hours no matter what the size of outlet (although they could change regularly, as described p283), both on check-outs and in shelf-filling. These fixed shifts resembled those worked by part-timers in France before rotating shifts were introduced. On check-outs they tended to be either mornings, lunch-times, afternoons, early evenings, or Saturdays.

British shelf-fillers mainly worked at different times of the day from their French counterparts. In Britain, a clause in the Retail Food and Allied Trades Wages Council Agreement obliges employers to pay premium rates for full-timers employed between 2000-0600 the next morning. As a result most British retailers have developed part-time evening shelf-filling (often up to 2300), for which married women with pre-school children are often employed.

In contrast with their French counterparts British retailers stated that they had few problems recruiting for different shifts and found little discontent with working hours. The generally high levels of satisfaction were attributed to the way in which employees with different preferences in working hours were attracted to the various working schedules which employers offered. The relationship between employees' preferred hours and patterns of working hours will be examined in detail in Chapter 6. At this point it is interesting to consider why employers have not found it necessary to introduce rotating shifts for shelf-filling or check-outs in Britain. This Franco-British difference can be explained in terms of the shorter trading hours in Britain and of the limitations on the times at which most British women can work once they have children. In Britain even large out-of-town stores do not tend to be open as late as in France (they open up to 2100 several times a week in some areas in Britain, in comparison with up to 2200 every day in many large stores in France). Consequently, the only late evening shift in Britain (usually 2000-2300) is in shelf-filling. This later evening work tends to be quite popular among women with pre-school children who can only work when their husbands are home and are able to look after the children (it is debatable however whether retailers would find enough volunteers for late shifts on check-outs as well as in shelf-filling every night of

the week). Similarly, fixed day time shifts are found to suit women with school-age children who seek hours which will enable them to be at home when their children return from school. Employers felt that they had been fortunate to find a labour source willing to work for short periods at the times of day they required.

Flexibility in Working Hours

In this section the degree of formal flexibility in patterns of working hours found in firms and the hours control systems in operation developed by the employer are described. It was impossible to assess the extent to which informal flexibility existed over working hours because there did not seem to be any firm-level policies (with the exception of the case study firm, see Chapter 6) and practices in both countries depended on outlet-level management. The influence of trades unions on flexibility is considered briefly here, and their full role is examined in greater detail later in the chapter.

Flexibility in Part-time Working Hours

In both Britain and France part-time work is now, in most cases, the major vector for flexibility in working hours. Interviews with both trades unions and employers showed that flexibility in part-time working hours in the two countries is derived (albeit it to differing degrees) from the flexibility built into part-time employment contracts and employment law, the new flexibility initiatives undertaken by employers, and finally, the use of overtime.

Flexibilities Embodied in the Employment Contract and in Employment Law

Discussions with the trades unions in particular in Britain and France revealed that employers' use of flexibility in working hours was

enhanced by the way in which working hours are written into the employment contract and by the difficulties which employees face in opposing changes in their working hours through the legal system, a finding which was not apparent from the reading of the secondary literature.

In Britain written terms of employment⁴ must be given to employees after thirteen weeks of employment provided that they work for over sixteen hours a week or have been working for five years for between eight and sixteen hours a week. Part 1 section c) of the EPCA states that the terms and conditions of employment should relate to hours of work. This section is rather vague and has led retailers to interpret it in many ways. At one extreme (for example GR1) employers do not mark any working hours on the employment contract. At the other extreme some employers set out precisely the starting and finishing times per day (GN3, GN4). Most firms, however, mark the total numbers of hours to be worked per week or per day on the contract (respectively GN5 and GR6).

The trades unions argued that when the exact distribution of working hours, or indeed total weekly working hours, is agreed orally employers are given a greater opportunity to vary these hours because oral evidence of an agreement between employer and employee over working hours is likely to be more difficult to prove in the case of dispute⁵. It may therefore be concluded that the majority of British employers have a considerable degree of flexibility in working hours built into the terms and conditions of employment through the omission of precise written terms for working hours.

Although French law relating to information about patterns of working hours in the part-time employment contract is more explicit than in

Britain, considerable freedom to change these patterns is built into it. The greater detail concerning working hours in French law may relate to the stronger tradition of written law and greater preoccupation with working time issues (and particularly with part-time work) in France (as discussed in Chapter 2), as well as to the slower and more difficult development of part-time work.

According to French labour law there are two possible types of contracts for part-time work: the monthly hours contract and the weekly hours contract. The monthly contract should specify the monthly contracted hours and the breakdown of hours per week and per day, and the weekly contract, the weekly contracted hours and the distribution of hours per day (Code du Travail, Art L. 212-4-3). Of these two contracts the monthly contract gives the employer greater freedom to distribute working hours. In the weekly contract, although hours may be unequally distributed across the working week, each week in the month should have the same distribution of hours and in no week should weekly hours exceed thirty-two⁶. The monthly contract, by contrast, allows employers to distribute working hours unequally across the working week and the working month. Employers can ask employees to work over thirty-two hours in any one week providing that over the month hours do not exceed 136, the monthly maximum limit for part-time hours.

Despite the greater freedom to distribute working hours in monthly part-time contracts, in practice most of the retailers studied were found to use weekly contracts. Monthly contracts, which were made law in 1982, have not yet become the norm. Those employers using weekly contracts observed the legal specifications for writing working hours

into employment contracts. Indeed two companies (FN3, and FR4) went into greater detail by writing in exact starting and finishing times.

However, writing working hours into the employment contract by no means prohibits change in France. The ability to change freely the distribution of part-timers' working hours is also part of the law governing part-time employment. Although these changes can only be made on the condition that the employee is notified at least seven days before the change is implemented, at outlet level the notice period is frequently unobserved and the French retailer's ability to change working hours is further strengthened.

Superficially, it appears that French retailers may be at an advantage in having a large degree of flexibility formally admitted by law (governing the employment of part-timers), but in practice it was found that the operation of employment law relating to changes in working hours in both France and Britain is similar, and gives retailers in both countries almost total freedom to change employees' working hours unilaterally.

In Britain employers are not strictly within the law to alter the terms and conditions of the employment contract unilaterally by changing working hours or their distribution⁷. In France employers may unilaterally change working hours if the hours do not constitute what is known as an "essential" part of the employment contract. However in the two countries these apparent constraints on employers' freedom to change working hours are easily evaded. It was clear from discussions with retailers and trades unions in the two countries that this is often achieved by imposing changes on employees who effectively have little means of redress.

According to representatives from USDAW and the TGWU, although British employers are not strictly allowed to change the terms or conditions of employment without obtaining the employees' agreement, it is common for some retailers to carry out changes by assuming their agreement (termed consensual variation). Under these circumstances the employee may be given no prior notice of the change in his/her hours. If the employee refuses to change his/her hours or their distribution then it is current practice in grocery retailing in Britain for a new contract to be offered to the employee and notice to be served on him/her to terminate the old contract. At the end of the notice period the employee is made redundant if he/she does not agree to the changes. Because of the threat to employees' jobs the unions stated that it was rare for employees to resist working hour changes initiated by employers.

In France employers do not have the right to impose changes unilaterally in "essential" parts of the employment contract (Code de Travail, Art L.122-4.4). However, the degree to which working hours is be considered "essential" depends on factors such as how long an employee has been working a particular schedule and the circumstances under which agreement on those hours had been reached (see Code de Travail, Articles L.122-4.7 and 19). The French trades union representatives explained that if, for example, working hours - both the number of daily hours and their precise distribution in the working day - are explicitly set out in an employment contract for a part-time employee, and these hours are specifically arranged so that he/she can, for example, combine work with domestic commitments, then any attempt to change the hours definitively can be refused by the employee. If an employer chooses to dismiss the employee for refusing to accommodate to the change then the employer can be forced to make him/her redundancy

payments. In practice, however, few part-time employment contracts stipulate the precise starting and finishing times employees are expected to work on a daily basis; moreover, few retailers make part-time hours an essential part of the employment contract. As a result, according to the unions, employees in retailing are often not in a position to make claims against employers for changes in their working hours.

In addition, unions' representatives in France and Britain explained that the employee's position for claiming against changes in working hours is further weakened by legislation which enables employers to change the employment contract providing they can provide a business or technical reason for carrying out the change⁸. In both countries, however, the employer's case to make changes may be weakened if no notice period is given to employees before implementing the modifications⁹. Under such conditions in both Britain and France an employee's only real claim for redress may be made through an Industrial Tribunal (IT) or its equivalent (the Conseil de Prud'hommes) in France. However, the trades unions said that very few cases about changes in working hours go to an IT or its equivalent in either country. In France employees may also raise problems over working hours with the employees' representatives and the works' inspector.

In France it is also rare for cases of this type to go to either the employee representative(s) or the works committee. The reluctance of French employees to go to the Conseil de Prud'hommes for grievances about changing working hours was attributed by the French trades unions in part to the operation of the industrial relations system which is based on the observance of agreements and law. It has not until recently been based on negotiations at company and plant level, as in

the British and American systems. In Britain and America the grievance procedure, by which claims made by individuals are negotiated by unions and employers and ultimately go to arbitration, plays an important part in controlling unilateral decisions taken by employers. Outcomes from grievance procedure then change existing agreements between employers and unions. In contrast with the French system, the Anglo-Saxon system gives considerable importance to the individual's role in modifying negotiated agreements at company and plant level and gives the individual a platform for disputing changes in working practices. The French system, by minimizing the role of individual grievances, effectively makes it more difficult for an individual to have recourse against a decision taken by an employer which falls outside the jurisdiction of the law and collective agreements. In fact the employer is given considerable freedom over the loi interne (which is the employer's right in French law to control a number of variables including employment and dismissal, pay levels, and working conditions), in the company, of which working hours forms a part.

The French unions also argued that the individual's ability to resist change is further weakened because the works committee is not used by the unions as a forum for making claims about individual grievances but as a means of achieving the negotiation of unions' national objectives. It is therefore left to the employee representative, who lacks the negotiating strength of a union, to advocate the individual's case. Given the individual's weakness to resist change engendered by the industrial relations system in France (and compounded by the legal framework), it is hardly surprising that few employees can afford to take the risk of losing their jobs by making claims against employers for changes in working hours.

On the basis of the description of the British industrial relations system, greater use of the IT may be expected in Britain compared with France. But the grievance procedure is only operated effectively in Britain in sectors of industry where agreements exist with unions, and where unions have a fairly strong membership. In these areas status quo agreements¹⁰ tend to operate which stipulate that changes in working conditions are only implemented with the prior agreement of the unions. If changes are implemented before negotiations, a grievance procedure is started by the union and the change is halted while negotiations take place. Ultimately the case can be decided at an IT.

However, the British trades unions representative explained that because union membership is low in retailing compared with other industries (see membership levels p296) employers are in a position to refuse to run status quo agreements which they believe would prevent them responding rapidly to changes in the retail environment. Without the high degree of worker support found in sections of industry, unions are reluctant to take grievances about patterns of working hours to an IT because in general this does not induce employers to halt changes in working hours. More importantly, under such conditions employees are likely to lose their jobs even if they win compensation. Moreover, many part-timers in retailing are not eligible to take grievances to an IT, this course of action is open only to those who have been working for sixteen hours or over for two or more years or between eight and sixteen hours for five or more years. Furthermore, if an employee is not a union member cases go to the IT even more rarely. Indeed, the unions stated that many of their own members do not complain about changes in working hours.

The considerable potential for retailers to change working hours in Britain and France, resulting from the flexibility built into part-time employment contracts and the legal difficulties which employees face in resisting changes in working hours, have been reinforced in Britain through the introduction of flexibility clauses in employment contracts (as described in Chapter 4). Although these clauses apply to full-timers as well as to part-timers they tend to be used primarily with part-timers because they provide the major response on the shop-floor to changes in customer shopping patterns. Some of these clauses are far reaching. They insist on absolute and instant flexibility in both the number of weekly hours and their distribution. For example in the firm GR2 the employment contract states the company's right to:

vary these hours (and if part-time the arrangement of hours) as the requirements of the business make necessary or expedient.

Other firms where unions are in a position of greater strength do at least introduce a notice period into their clauses (for which the main shop's union has been arguing):

these hours may be changed provided that I am given the statutory period of notice to which I am entitled by my length of service (GN3)

and :

actual commencing and finishing times... may be subject to reasonable change with reasonable notice (GN5).

In general most retailers in France and Britain used the flexibility available to them by employing hours systems with relatively fixed patterns of work, which they found more simple to manage on a day-to-day basis. For the most part patterns of working hours appear to be system controlled, with changes in working hours being made periodically through direct management control. Fixed systems for

patterns of working hours are set up at company, outlet or departmental level in response to the demands of the task environment and management objectives (see daily hours, contract length etc).

Only one company in each sample from the two countries appeared to employ direct management control over working hours on a day-to-day basis. Both (FN4, GR2) sought absolute flexibility from part-timers and had a deliberate policy of regularly changing working hours in order to prevent rigidity developing in employment practices, and to ensure complete management prerogative over employee flexibility. These companies' flexibility policies were matched with cost minimization priorities and policies.

However, practices with respect to changing working hours depended to a large extent on employers' attitudes and union strength in stores (the unions' ability to influence working hours is discussed in detail below) It is clear that in both countries managers at company and at store level can hold very different expectations of employees' flexibility in working hours. These expectations are reflected in the extent to which they adhere to labour law and collective agreements, and are in turn reflected in employment practices.

Other Methods of Introducing Flexibility

Broadly similar flexibility initiatives for part-timers have been developed in both Britain and France. One major difference between the two countries with respect to flexibility initiatives is the degree to which unions are included in negotiations about these innovations. In France flexibility in working hours proposals (of both full and part-timers) must be negotiated with unions if they are represented at company or at outlet level. In the absence of union representation,

negotiations must be carried out with the employee representative. In Britain, where the legal framework puts employers under no such obligation, retailers tend only to draw unions into negotiations on flexibility initiatives where union membership is strong. Consequently, the majority of flexibility initiatives in Britain are unilaterally introduced by retailers. This difference may partly explain why flexibility schemes are management-orientated more often in Britain than in France.

In Britain there is a strong tradition of management-orientated flexibility in working hours. Its use appears to be sanctioned in the Multiple Food Trade Joint Committee Agreement (described in Chapter 4), and USDAW claims that this sanction is increasingly being used to justify changes in working hours at will by retailers (for example GN1). Also, two main management-orientated initiatives have been introduced into British retailing, in addition to the new flexible contracts described above. One form of flexibility initiative introduced for part-timers in some firms in Britain is the "on call" system (see for example GR2, GR3). These systems give part-timers contracts for a minimum number of hours and call part-timers in to work from home as and when they are required. They are similar to extended overtime systems and may be operated formally or informally. The other type of management-orientated initiative is the flexibility contract which sets minimum and maximum part-time hours and changes hours on a weekly basis (as described in Chapter 4). At the time of the fieldwork this had only been used in one firm (GN5) and had met with resistance from employees involved in the scheme.

In France some management-orientated flexibility schemes were also found, although they appeared to be less widespread than in Britain. One

flexible part-time contract which closely resembled the one at GN5 had been developed by one company (FN1), although this scheme gave employees their patterns of working hours much further in advance than the British one. The contract was introduced in the French firm because it employs relatively few part-timers and wanted to compensate for this by increasing their flexibility in working hours. It is a yearly contract for part-timers working twenty-five hours a week which, although illegal until recently, has been in operation for five years. In this contract weekly hours are set out as part of an annual plan which indicates which weeks will be heavy, medium and light over the year and the hours and days employees will be expected to work for each type of week. Although employees may work under twenty-five hours some weeks and over twenty-five in others, they must work an average of twenty-five hours a week over the year.

An on call type system was found in only one French firm (FN4). Here, a special agreement for daily part-time personnel has been negotiated with the trades unions. Theoretically they are employed to meet unexpected increases in customer demand or for complete jobs of short duration. In practice they have become an over-utilized flexible workforce because their contracts can be renewed verbally on a daily basis.

Overall, the use of employee-orientated flexibility was much more widespread in France than in Britain (in fact no formal scheme of this type was found in Britain). The most notable example of this was the semi-autonomous team (as described in Chapter 4 and in Appendix VI). The use of this system in France, and its absence in Britain, gives some support to the hypotheses advanced in Chapter 2 that more experimental patterns of working hours are being developed in France

than in Britain and that employers are more aware of non-work issues and are more likely to take their workers' preferences into consideration in France.

Overtime - the Supplementary Hours System

In this discussion part-timers' supplementary hours will be called overtime because it was referred to as such in retailing, even though overtime is strictly defined as the hours worked over the standard full-time working week. The discussion relates only to part-timers as they provide most of the overtime in shop-floor jobs in both Britain and France. This is the case because, as suggested in Chapter 4 in relation to British retailing, employers only have to pay part-timers at single time to work hours above their contracted hours.

Despite the more extensive framework of legislation and collective agreements governing overtime in France (as described in Chapter 4), its use seems to be as varied in France as in Britain and French employers did not seem to find the legislation an obstacle to using part-timers to gain flexibility.

In both countries part-timers tend to be expected to work overtime. In France many employers put the right to demand a third of weekly hours in overtime into the employment contract and only offer employment on this basis. Thus they effectively eliminate much of the choice sought in the clauses of the collective agreement. Writing overtime into the contract is very much less common in Britain. Nonetheless, it appears to be no less expected of British part-timers than of their French counterparts.

Overtime in both Britain and France is under direct management control. It is used under two main conditions: firstly, to fill in for employees' absences such as holidays and sickness, and to carry out stock taking; secondly, to respond to unpredicted peaks in customer demand. The first of these forms of overtime can usually be planned ahead. It is under these circumstances that due warning for overtime, as sought in the French collective agreement, can be, and frequently is, given. Employers in both countries talked of offering this type of overtime to those who most wanted to take it, thereby giving employees the choice over working extra hours. The second is usually without any warning and is more often imposed. Trades unions in both countries suggested that part-timers called upon for this type of overtime often do not feel that they can refuse it.

It is clear that some firms rely on overtime more heavily than others (GR2, GR3, and GS1 in Britain and most of the French firms with the exception of FN1 and FN2). This appears on the one hand to relate to the degree of sophistication in predicting customer shopping patterns and labour requirements in firms. For example, two smaller French firms (FR4 and FR5) regularly miscalculated labour requirements and mismanaged overtime in their outlets to such an extent that it was not uncommon for part-timers to break the collective agreement on overtime by working full-time hours. On the other hand heavy use of overtime was a deliberate policy for some firms (FN1, FS1, GR2, and GR3) in order to help minimize labour costs. These firms also adopted a cost minimization stance in other aspects of their employment policies single skilling, short part-time contracts, and management-orientated flexibility initiatives.

Flexibility in Full-time Working Hours

Owing to the more rapid development of part-time work on the shop-floor in British retailing, part-timers have been extensively employed to give the required flexibility in working hours. As a result full-timers on the shop-floor have not been subject to flexibility developments. The most advanced type of full-time flexibility on the shop-floor in Britain would appear to be the rota systems introduced in order to distribute Saturday working and days off among full-timers.

In France, in contrast with Britain, there has been a more widespread development of full-time flexibility which demonstrates French retailers' greater willingness to experiment with patterns of working hours. This flexibility has developed because firms have taken a less homogeneous stance to the use of part-time work and the development of part-time work has in general been slower, and because recent changes in the law relating to working hours have given employers considerably more freedom to modify both full and part-time working hours. This is particularly the case for full-time hours which were previously tightly controlled by law. The employers' ability to introduce flexibility into full and part-time working hours is however tempered by a legal requirement to negotiate proposed changes with unions if they are represented, or, if not, with the employee representative. As a result most forms of full-time flexibility found in the French sample had been negotiated with unions.

There was no evidence to suggest that French retailers were taking advantage of the flexibility in working hours in the specific forms allowed in the industry's collective agreement (as described in Chapter 4). However, two major forms of formalized full-time flexibility were

found in the French sample of retailers, both in firms (FN1 and FN2) which used low levels of part-time work. These were experimental schemes which sought to give employees some control over their working hours and the employers greater flexibility in full-time hours. The schemes in both firms had been negotiated with the trades unions. One of the two companies (FN1) had been operating a full-time flexibility agreement for three years. This agreement allows full-timers to work up to forty-two hours a week or as little as thirty-six provided that over a year working hours average thirty-nine hours a week. Employees are paid the same monthly salary no matter what hours they work and hours exceeding the statutory working week are not paid as overtime. The other company (FN2) had developed a scheme which allowed for even greater employee control of working hours. It had negotiated the right for employees to work up to and including three hours below or above the full-time working week of 35.75 hours. Exact weekly hours must be planned in advance by management after consultations with the works committee. Credit or debit hours are accumulated until twenty four hours of credit or debit hours are obtained. If a deficit of twenty-four hours is accumulated the employee may have the equivalent pay deducted from his/her salary or repay the hours in the course of time. If a surplus of twenty-four hours is accumulated the employee may take three full days paid leave or receive payment for those hours at the rate of time and a quarter.

Both these companies and a number of other French companies have introduced short full-time working weeks expressly in order to provide greater flexibility in full-time working hours ie FN2 (35.75 hours), FN4 (38 hours), FN3 (37 hours). This seemed to be a much less prominent motive among British retailers who had reduced their working hours. As overtime payments are only made when employees work over the

statutory thirty-nine hour working week, the difference in hours between the company's working week and the statutory working week represents the extra flexibility in working hours which employers can use.

Mediating Mechanisms

The empirical research showed that there were two main formal ways in which employees could exert an indirect influence over their working hours: through works committees, self-expression groups and quality circles on the one hand, and via the trades unions on the other.

Work Committees, Self-expression Groups, and Quality Circles

In the empirical work it was found that, as suggested from the secondary data (described in Chapter 3), there are more formal channels in France for employees to express their opinions about working hours. Overall, there was a much more positive attitude in France to employee participation in all its forms than in Britain. Most French firms mentioned a growing awareness over the last five years that employees form an integral part of companies and not merely a cog in the machinery. They spoke of an increasing realization in all French industry that employees can make a useful contribution to the running of the enterprise. This new approach would seem to reflect the Socialist Government's attempts to promote the role of the employee in the workplace, in particular through the Aurox laws¹¹. However, the scope of the channels allowing for employee participation can be limited and their effectiveness also depends on factors such as the attitudes of management towards employee participation and working conditions, and the strength of trades union membership.

For example, according to the major unions in retailing, if the works committee has been elected in such a way that it will fulfil its role in providing an arena for debate¹², then major changes in patterns of working hours and work organization in large-scale grocery outlets may be debated constructively at its meetings. However, its scope for discussion about working hours is limited (as mentioned in the previous section), few individual problems about changing working hours in retailing go to the committee, and it is rarely notified of the regular changes in individual's working hours. Furthermore, the unions suggested that the works committee has only a consultative role and, as a result, the degree to which employees' views are taken into consideration - via the employee representatives or the unions participating in it - depends on the attitudes of management towards employee participation and the strength of unions in the particular outlet.

The French unions claimed that groupes d'expression can provide a more effective way for employees to influence their working hours, and these groups are gradually developing in retailing. In some cases, they take the form of quality circles or other types of productivity groups which, in an atmosphere more conducive to worker participation, have mushroomed in France. Two of the largest hypermarket chains in France (FN1 and FN2) who have been at the forefront of developing employee participatory techniques in retailing had developed a number of groups over the last few years, each group with a different membership and different objectives. For example, FN1 had introduced competitiveness groups which involve a number of workers who come together to resolve a problem which is perceived to be reducing the company's competitiveness. It has also developed quality circles in each shop-floor department which comprise managers and employees who meet to

discuss wider questions of customer service. This company also holds departmental meetings which take place every month and discuss problems relating to the department. Similarly, FN2 has nearly 400 quality circles which are set up at all levels, within teams of check-out assistants (semi-autonomous teams are often used for this purpose), within departments, and at departmental level. FN1 also runs progress groups which are formed in order to resolve a specific problem and are disbanded when the problem is solved. The management of both these firms expressed a willingness to discuss working hours in all these groups provided any changes made would improve the service to the customer.

The quality circle phenomenon is very common in most of large-scale grocery retailing in France and latterly, even FN4, a very large and rather old-fashioned firm, had also begun to experiment with quality circles in its stores. Nevertheless, in some smaller firms only a half-hearted commitment had been made to their development. For example, in two smaller firms the responsibility for introducing formal work committees had been left to store managers and there was consequently little evidence of their widespread development in these firms (FR4 and FR5). As a result, employees in these companies had less formal opportunity to influence their working conditions (and particularly working hours) than others in larger firms. A number of other smaller companies, however, have recently innovated by developing a form of work group (FR1, FR2, FR3). In these cases, resistance from management (who saw discussion with their subordinates as undermining their authority) reduced their effectiveness and limited the ability for employees to affect their working hours.

In Britain, where worker participation is not traditionally practiced or legislated for, there is little evidence of the spontaneous development of mechanisms for employee involvement ie through works committees or quality circle type groups. A regional personnel manager at GN5 summarized the stage of development of participative methods in most of British large-scale grocery retailing by saying "The route of employee involvement is a route they will have to go down in the 1990s, and they will go down it...". Indeed, only two firms in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain (GN4 and GR1) have introduced discussion groups and the objectives of these groups are - at least in part - to provide a means for employee self-expression in the absence of negotiating rights with unions. Although these groups can act as a forum for discussion about working hours, there was no evidence to suggest that they had so far been used for this purpose. The vast majority of the sample firms ran no such groups, and although one large firm (GN4) thought that quality circles would eventually be developed in their company, most had not considered introducing these participative methods. One firm (GR2) was firmly opposed to what it saw as being faddish methods used as a cover for bad management.

The Influence of Trades Unions

The trades unions' influence over working hours in large-scale grocery stemmed from three main sources: collective agreements relating to patterns of working hours in this sector, informal means of influence over working hours, and finally unions' policies relating to working hours.

Collective Agreements Relating to Working Hours

In addition to the Multiple Food Retailers' agreement (described in

Chapter 4), some of the British retailers studied had given unions negotiating rights. For example, the National Union of General and Municipal and Boiler Workers (a union with a very small membership in retailing) has negotiating rights with GN6, and USDAW have the same rights with GN5 and GN3. There are also close ties between GN1 and USDAW and the TGWU, and between USDAW and GN2. However, the union cover is patchy and a significant number of large retailers (GR3, GN4, GR2, and GR1) have given unions only representational rights, which limits their influence over the firm's policies.

Among the firms with negotiating agreements a small number (GN5 and GN1) have introduced written agreements for a notice period to be given to employees before major changes in working hours are introduced. In one of these firms (GN5) an agreement has also been made with the union on the firm's productivity initiative which gives the union the right to consultation on changes arising from the initiative. Other firms which negotiate with trades unions have unwritten agreements on notice periods and union consultation for changes in working hours (for example GS1 has a policy of giving a two-week notice period for changes in working hours and GN3 has a policy of consulting employees and USDAW before changes are made). In both cases these agreements tend to apply only to large-scale changes in working hours.

In France, although company-level agreements have not until recently played a major part in the collective bargaining process in the French economy as a whole, the majority of firms in the sample had improved on the conditions outlined in the industry's collective agreement through firm-specific amendments. In contrast with the British agreements, a wide range of the French amendments relate to the issues of working hours. Some have changed the rules for allowing rest time (FR3, FN4).

Others have, for example, developed more flexible full and part-time contracts (FN1, FN4), or reduced the length of the full-time working week (FN1, FN2, FN3, FN4). There also appears to have been some recent agreements at outlet level. Although this did not seem to be a common practice in the French firms studied, there was some evidence to suggest that where union membership was strong improvements on the national and company agreements could be secured.

The existence of formal collective agreements did not guarantee their application in the workplace, the empirical work showed that the extent to which formal agreements were applied on the shop-floor depended on a range of factors including membership levels, employee-employer relations, conditions in the retail environment and labour market, and employers' policies on working conditions.

Unions in Britain and France stressed that the strength of union membership at shop-floor level was a major determinant of adhesion to collective agreements. In both Britain and France union membership in retailing is very weak relative to other industries. This has been attributed by unions in both countries to the fact that recruitment is more difficult in retailing because of the relative fragmentation of the retail workforce, the relatively small number of employees per retail unit, and the high labour turnover in this industry.

In France, despite relatively conducive conditions for union representation (as described in Chapter 2), the unions have a low membership in relation to other sectors of industry (CIR, 1974). Only one union, the OGT, collated national statistics of membership levels. It suggested that it had 50,000 members in retail distribution (representing 2% of the workforce in 1986), of which about 25% were

part-time. All the unions said they had a higher membership among full-timers than part-timers and attributed this to the proportionally higher costs of joining a union for part-timers. Another reason might be the weaker feeling of involvement in workplace problems experienced by many part-timers. Two unions, the CFDT and the CGT stated that membership among part-timers was increasing and explained this in terms both of the increasing numbers of part-timers in the industry and the growing length of service of these workers¹³.

In Britain union membership in retailing is low compared with some other industries. USDAW claims it has a membership of 250-260,000 in the whole of the Multiple and Co-operative sectors (representing approximately 16% of the workforce in these sectors combined in 1984). No national statistics on membership are available from the TGWU which, according to USDAW sources, has only a small membership in retail outlets. Although the membership in retailing in Britain appears to be higher than in France, the figures cannot be compared because they are compiled on a different basis in the two countries.

Union membership in British and French retailing is not only low overall but also tends to be very localized, and large numbers of stores may have very weak union membership; there was ample evidence of this imbalance in membership across the firms studied. In stores where there is a weak membership unions claimed that many employees did not know either their legal rights or those achieved through collective bargaining, and that under these conditions some employers would exploit the situation by ignoring legislation and collective agreements. Workers in smaller outlets appear to be particularly vulnerable because in many smaller stores in both Britain and France a

family atmosphere and a paternal shop manager make union recruitment very difficult.

In both countries the unions' ability to uphold negotiated agreements relating to working hours also depends on conditions in the retail environment and the labour market. A spokesperson for USDAW pointed out that trades unions in Britain may be torn between protecting the individual and his rights and the long-term prospects of the company as a whole. For example, if new patterns of working hours are being introduced in an effort to become more efficient, then, even if these changes are not implemented in accordance with negotiated agreements, resisting change at local level may cause a company to become less profitable and lead to redundancies in other outlets. Under conditions of rapid change in work organization and working hours in British retailing, as well as high unemployment in the national economy, the unions stated that they could not afford to be inflexible. In France, where unemployment levels were also high a similarly pragmatic stance was taken among all but the most militant of the unions (the CGT).

Unions also adopted this flexible stance and sanctioned moves away from formal agreements on working hours when the relationship between management and workers was two-way. For example, in some stores where industrial relations are good, the flexibility in working hours offered by employees from time to time is reciprocated by favours from the employer and under these circumstances is condoned by the trades unions.

Union spokespeople in both countries also stressed that, given the low levels of unionization in retailing, the degree to which agreements were observed depended above all on employers' policies towards working

conditions. Some outlet managers and some firms are concerned with encouraging better working conditions by adhering to legislation and collective agreements, and this type of policy is often accompanied by others which seek to improve the welfare of employees. On the other hand there are firms whose first priority is cost minimization (as described in previous sections) for whom observing legislation and collective agreements is often less important.

Informal Methods of Influencing Working Hours

In Britain informal agreements between employers and unions at local level over questions relating to working hours are very much more common than formal agreements. This results from the generally non-formalized approach to collective bargaining in Britain and from the tradition in British unions of devolving responsibility to union officers and stewards at local level. It may also be explained by the difficulties of gaining recognition and bargaining rights in Britain, which has been engendered by the operation of the industrial relations system.

According to USDAW sources many informal agreements at store level in large-scale grocery retailing result from previous attempts by shop managers to try to change hours. For example, in one instance a store informed an Area Organizer twenty-four hours before changes in hours were implemented. The organizer then used this opportunity to request more notice for future changes. The Union stated that it may ultimately be necessary to threaten a dispute in order to give weight to demands for more notice, and therefore the strength of union membership is important in negotiating informally.

Another form of influence can derive from explicit statements which USDAW sometimes makes at national level. These relate to issues which the Union disputes and on which Area Officers can act. The working hours issues on which USDAW has made policy statements are that hours should not be changed without the specific agreement of the individual and four weeks notice should be given to employees before this aspect of their employment contract is changed. Once again, the degree to which these explicit statements have an effect in stores depends on the strength of the area and store-level trades union organization.

In France it is more common for unions to exert influence through more formalized channels than in Britain. In addition to the greater formal influence which French unions can exert on working hours through annual statutory negotiations at outlet or company level (as described in Chapter 2), the highly legislative structure of industrial relations in France allows the unions another means of influencing working hours through the works committee. If representative unions are present in a company or outlet, the employer must allow them to participate in a non-voting capacity in the works committee. When union representatives are backed by a relatively strong store membership more importance is usually given to their views in the works committee than otherwise. However, the works committee can also represent a way of by-passing the unions. In one firm (FR2) with a strong union presence in some large outlets, the management presented plans for changes in working hours to the works committee, where employee representatives were more likely to give their consent, rather than negotiating the changes with the union representatives. Agreement from the committee was then presented to the union as a fait accompli.

Although French unions can gain recognition and negotiating rights with greater ease than British unions, and have the right to negotiate yearly at company or outlet level on working time issues, they have as few rights as British unions to be consulted on major changes in working hours and other working time issues. When such changes are planned the employers' responsibility is only to inform the works committee and works inspector. British and French trades unions pointed out, with respect to changes in working hours, that an employer's decision to negotiate changes and the ability for a union to influence the decision, either on a company or a store level, depends ultimately on the employers' attitudes towards employees and the unions. These attitudes are influenced by the level of unionization in stores. Sometimes, however, the reasons for consultation in France over major changes in working hours may be purely practical: one large company (FN2) preferred having an agreement with the union (FO) before introducing changes in working hours, because the union would call the works inspector to study the proposal if it was not consulted and was not in favour of the scheme. Usually the company found that the inspector supported the union and was in a position to prohibit the changes, especially if the proposal related to flexible working hours.

Unions in both Britain and France appeared to have little influence over changes in individuals' working hours (as opposed to large-scale changes). As previously mentioned this lack of influence has resulted from the flexibility in working hours incorporated in the operation of employment law in the two countries. In France this lack of influence may be explained in particular by the functioning of the industrial relations system which alienates the unions from individual grievances. The role of unions in Britain and France in relation to day-to-day changes in working hours, in outlets where they are represented, can,

however, be to bring discontent over working hours to the attention of the management, although in France the union representative's role of expressing worker dissatisfaction can be overshadowed by that of the employee representative whose official role is to transmit workers' grievances to the employer.

However, in both countries unions influence working hours in a more indirect and less deliberate way by limiting multi-skilling (in Britain in GS1, GN3, GN5, and in France in FR3, FR2, and FN2). The limitation on multi-skilling causes employers to adopt a system based predominantly on single-skilling which has significant consequences for patterns of working hours.

Unions' Working Time Policies

In both Britain and France the way in which trades unions influence working hours (both formally and informally) is determined partly by their working time policies. This is particularly the case in France where the organization of the trades unions tends to be more centralized.

In Britain the trades unions in grocery retailing are most concerned about the question of flexibility in working hours, but part-time workers are becoming the focus of renewed interest. Part-time work in Britain has long been the norm in retailing and in the national economy and therefore limitations on the use of part-time work are not an area for union demands. The renewed interest in part-timers would seem to have stemmed from an increasing awareness that they need protection in their pay, conditions of work, and employment rights. It is also related to the unions' belated realization that part-timers must be

recruited to make up for the unions' falling full-time membership levels.

The framework of legislation and collective agreements in Britain has given part-timers very few employment rights by comparison with full-timers. The claims made on behalf of part-timers in retailing by the British trades unions put these rights to the fore and make particular reference to issues of pay and basic working conditions such as pension rights and job security agreements. In Britain, where the framework of legislation and collective agreements has also given rise to considerable flexibility in working hours in retailing, issues of pay have naturally taken precedence over those of working hours, which have not traditionally been a main focus for unions' demands in Britain (see Chapter 2). However, the particular concern of USDAW is currently with the different forms of flexibility in working hours which are being introduced into retailing. USDAW is aware that companies need flexibility but is wary of the form that the flexibility can take.

The union claims that the clauses in the MFRA relating to work organization are now out-of-date. They were first concluded at a time when working hours and patterns were relatively constant. In the current climate of changing work organization and working hours, in which the Union claims that the clause is being misapplied to justify continual changes in working hours, USDAW has suggested that a more comprehensive agreement is required to take into account all the changes underway in the industry. A spokesperson for USDAW also remarked that employers would most probably reject any restrictive agreement over changes in working hours by arguing that they simply implement the changes required to maintain the efficient operation of

the business. Given the Union's low membership in retailing it is in no position to impose the sort of agreement it would like.

The most effective response by USDAW, in the absence of a comprehensive agreement dealing with all new forms of flexibility in working hours, is to make statements at national level which area organizers and shop stewards can use to help resist or introduce gradual change on the shop-floor. The Union therefore states that it opposes flexi-contracts which it believes can be the source of abuse and against which there is no recourse for the employee. It also campaigns for employees to be given notice for changes in their working hours in line with the guidelines established by dismissal law¹⁴.

In contrast with the limited demands made by the British trades unions in retailing in the area of working hours, the French unions have adopted a more radical stance. A possible explanation for this is the differing union traditions relating to working hours issues (as described in Chapter 2) as well as the dissimilar approaches towards working hours at a national level in the two countries. In France all national unions are represented in large-scale grocery retailing. They attach particular importance in the area of working time to the issues of part-time work and flexibility in working hours. This is the case not only because these issues are particularly relevant to retailing, but because recent changes in legislation concerning flexibility and part-time work have brought these areas to the fore.

Despite a similar preoccupation with certain working time issues the French unions had, at the time of the fieldwork, quite distinct working time policies. The CFDT welcomes the development of part-time work in retailing provided that it is chosen. This is because chosen part-time

work is part of its new working time concept (based on the temps choisi idea) which states that there should be more movement between full and part-time work throughout the working life. At the same time the CFDT has a series of policies on part-time work which seek to maintain part-timers' rights and working conditions. These include: aiming at longer part-time contracts and longer daily periods of work; giving part-timers more training; integrating part-timers into yearly working hours agreements which guarantee a stable monthly salary; premium payments for working unsocial hours; voluntary movement from part-time to full-time jobs. In general, the CFDT is prepared to negotiate about part-time work and flexible working hours provided that agreements are welcomed by, and beneficial to, the worker.

The OGT is more wary of measures to change working schedules and is opposed to employers' initiatives with respect to part-time work and flexibility. It views these policies as a deliberate attempt to destabilize workers' jobs and downgrade working conditions. In the context of retailing the OGT's demands with respect to part-time work are more idealistic than those of the CFDT. They include the following: part-timers should work five hours continuously without major breaks (with the exception of collectively agreed breaks); no breaks in the day should be between two and eight hours long; weekly contracts should be 20-30 hours long; the part-timer should have the right to refuse overtime hours and changes in working hours without being threatened with dismissal; the employment contract should set out exact daily working hours; for each employment category in stores part-timers should not exceed 10% of workers. The OGT is opposed to flexibility in working hours through the development of annual flexibility contracts because they do away with overtime payments and

worsen working conditions, in particular by encouraging less predictable working hours.

The CFTC (which is a Catholic and non-aligned trade union) and FO have a less rigid approach towards part-time work and flexible working hours than the OGT. Both unions believe, like the CFDT, in a flexible response to plans to change working hours. These unions have a less extensive range of demands with respect to part-time work than either the CFDT or the OGT. However, they share in the OGT's wish to see some sort of quota introduced for limiting the use of part-time work and greater precision in the employment contract, so that part-timers have greater stability in their working hours and are protected from changes which are not agreed by the employee. CFTC and FO do not oppose flexibility contracts but are concerned about their use. They particularly want to see details in working hours given to the employee a long time in advance of their date of application. The CFTC, would like to see working hours in annual contracts announced three months in advance through the works committee.

Conclusion

The findings from the empirical work provide evidence to support a number of the hypotheses set out in Chapters 2 and 4. In the first place they give support to the hypothesis that retailers are developing patterns of working hours in significantly different ways in Britain and France. Although there are some similar trends in the development of patterns of working hours in the two countries, notably the growth of part-time work, flexible working hours, shorter weekly contracts and, in conjunction with this, the development of sophisticated labour productivity techniques, there are significant differences in working

hours which cannot be explained in terms of dissimilarities in the size of outlets belonging to the firms under study. Major differences were found in the main components of patterns of working hours: the length of the working period, the organization of hours and the flexibility of working hours. It was also revealed that, as expected on the basis of secondary data, part-time work was used less extensively in France than in Britain, although practices did seem to be converging. The greater use of part-time work in Britain could be explained in part by more positive attitudes towards part-time work as well as the impact of a more favourable legislative framework, and the use of more sophisticated labour productivity systems. It was surprising to find that despite an apparently greater awareness of working time issues and a more restrictive regulatory framework for working hours in France, French retailers used labour productivity schemes which allowed for a less rigorous analysis of working hours than their British counterparts, and these played a less important role in determining patterns of working hours in France than in Britain. The explanation for this apparent contradiction seemed to be that French retailers had until recently been under less economic pressure to reduce labour costs by developing more efficient labour use than their British counterparts.

Part-timers worked longer hours and longer daily shifts in France than in Britain. These differences could be explained partly by the more extensive structure of collective agreements governing part-time working hours in France which had, as contended in Chapter 4, a greater impact on most aspects of patterns of working hours in France than in Britain. In Britain, where there was no equivalent regulatory framework, the NI threshold system exerted a downward pressure on working hours which did not exist in France. Another explanation lies

in the differing levels of the use of part-time work as well as the use of more sophisticated labour productivity systems in Britain. These differences in working hours may also be explained in terms of the dissimilar experience which retailers have had of part-time work in the two countries. Part-time work (as suggested in Chapter 4) appears to be involuntary more often in France than in Britain, and this is reflected in French employers' concern with labour turnover in the part-time workforce, and in their attempts to match working hours more closely to part-timers' needs, notably through the extension of contract lengths. In Britain, by contrast, it appeared that retailers did not have to adapt hours specifically to suit part-timers and were able to take advantage of a workforce which is largely satisfied with the hours which they are offered.

Another major difference found was that full-time flexibility was more developed in France than in Britain to compensate for the lower use of part-time work. Also, there were significant dissimilarities in the forms of flexibility used in the two countries: the British firms were using more management-orientated flexibility while the opposite was true for their French counterparts. This difference gave support to the secondary data presented in Chapter 4 and to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 2 that French employers are more aware of non-work issues in France and are more likely to take their workers' preferences into account. However, the evidence was ambiguous on this point. It was clear from the research that both British and French retailers were aware of part-timers' non-work commitments (and in the French case this was reflected in their knowledge that redistributing unsocial hours through rolling shifts would help reduce dissatisfaction). However, in France there appeared to be greater formal adaptation to employees needs than was found in Britain (for example through semi-autonomous

teams). The more extensive use of part-time work in Britain was not a formal measure introduced specifically to respond to women's needs for this type of work, rather its use was the result of business decisions made by retailers in the context of national socio-economic and political conditions which favoured the development of part-time work. It was not possible to assess whether there was more informal flexibility in Britain than in France (which might help explain why part-timers were more satisfied with their working hours in Britain if this was the case) because there did not seem to be any firm-level policy (except in the case study firm), and practice varied from outlet to outlet. Altogether, the existence of semi-autonomous teams and other innovatory working time systems solely among the French retailers gave support to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 2 that more experimental patterns of working hours are being developed in France than in Britain.

The existence of more formal channels (such as works committees, and self-expression groups) enabling employee intervention in working time issues in France gave workers a greater opportunity to see their preferences integrated into working hours than existed in Britain. However, the extent to which employees could benefit from such channels depended on a range of factors such as the brief of the group or committee, the willingness of employers to allow employee participation, and union strength. Also, French trades unions have a greater formal impact on working hours than their British counterparts. Formal trades unions agreements about working time are more numerous in France than in Britain, and this may be explained in terms of the differing systems of collective bargaining in the two countries and of a greater awareness of working time issues in France. Although unions in both countries are concerned with similar working time issues -

part-time work and flexibility in working hours - this concern takes different forms. In France all the unions represented in retailing have a more radical approach which is more focused on working time questions than the main union in retailing in Britain. These differences may be explained by the differing development of working time issues, especially in relation to part-time work, both nationally and in the trades union movement in the two countries. Although the formal role of the trades unions in relation to working time issues is greater in France than in Britain, the extent to which employees can affect working hours through the unions depends to a large degree on the same factors in the two countries: the level of union membership, employers' attitudes to unions and policies on working conditions, changes in the retail environment, and conditions in the labour market. Overall, it was found that unions in both countries are able to affect major changes in working hours where membership is strong, but they have little direct effect on day-to-day hours changes (independently of membership levels).

Footnotes

1. GN6 is a national firm specializing in large outlets over 2,322 m² while GN1 and GN4 are national firms specializing in outlets which are smaller than 2,322 m².
2. For example if the French national firm FN4 is compared with a similar firm in Britain (GN2) - both firms own a large proportion of small outlets - levels are much higher in Britain than in France (60.5% compared with 49%).
3. An information desk (l'accueil) is common in French hypermarkets and large supermarkets. It is a place where customers may leave any other shopping they have before entering the store. They can also obtain information from employees on the desk.
4. Employers adopt a variety of forms of compliance to the requirements of the 1978 EPCA legislation. These include contracts, statements of particulars, and terms of employment. Among these a contract has the

greatest force in law. However, it is common for written statements of particulars to be taken as the written contract by judges and lawyers, so in reality there may be little distinction between the two in the eyes of the law. For more details about this question see "Statement or Contract", General Note, Subs (1), 1978 Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act (EPCA), Current Law Statutes Annotated, Vol 2, Chapter 44, Sweet and Maxwell Stevens.

5. The General Note to Section 1 of the EPCA entitled "Legalistic analysis of forms of compliance" indicates that this is the case. It states that: "written documents are...given some central role " in a court of law. It points out, however, that this is often used to the employees' disadvantage.

6. According to the definitions of part-time work in France weekly part-time hours are equal or less than 32 hours a week, and monthly part-time hours are equal or less than 136 hours a month.

7. To this effect the General Note to Section 4 of the EPCA entitled "The employee must consent to change" states that "The common law rule is that an employer cannot change terms of employment without the consent of the employee...If he tries to alter rates of pay, hours of work, or the status or grade of the employee, he must obtain the employee's consent before the change can have any legal effect".

8. In Britain the employers' position has been strengthened by Lord Denning's ruling on Section 57 of the 1978 EPCA. The employer's defense "for other substantial reasons" has been broadened by this ruling and allows the employer to defend almost any changes due to economic necessity. For details on the French law in this respect see Editions Francis Lefebvre, 1986, Section 2627.

9. In France if the employer does not give the employee a reasonable notice period for changes and the employee is forced to resign when faced with an abrupt change in his employment contract then it is the employer who is responsible for breaking the employment contract (Cass soc 6-7-61), Editions Francis Lefebvre, 1986, Section 2628. In Britain the position is less clear. The trades unions in retailing are arguing for a notice period based on dismissal law to apply for changes in working hours. If no notice period is given then cases for notice can be argued at an IT, though this is rare.

10. "The status quo clause deals with changes in works procedure or employment conditions and states that when any such changes are to be

made and prior agreement has not been reached the status quo shall prevail whilst negotiations proceed", Jenkins and Sherman, 1977: 30.

11. A more sceptical view of this new appreciation by employers of worker participation has been put forward by Morville (1985), who has suggested that this is an employer strategy for reducing union influence in firms.

12. All the unions told of ways in which employers could manipulate the election of the members of the works committee so that their own collaborators on the staff would be on it. They described the situation on non-unionized sites where anti-union employers found themselves obliged to hold elections for the works committees. In the election for the committee a first round takes place with candidates put forward by the representative unions. In order to achieve this the employer is supposed to contact the union(s) on or off site and involve them in the elections. If the employer does not do this and no union affiliated candidates present themselves for the first round of the elections, then the second round, in which independent non-affiliated candidates can run, will take place. According to unions' spokespeople, anti-union employers do not involve unions in the elections and subsequently put up employees for the second round of elections who will collaborate with them. As a result they comply with the law and obtain a submissive works committee.

13. The weakness in the French unions has also been explained in terms of their ideological divisions, the structure of the workforce (the agricultural sector is still continuing to decline in France leading to an influx of agricultural workers, who have traditionally been difficult to organize, into the workforce) and employer resistance. There is a continuing paternalistic tradition in France, particularly in small firms, which argues in favour of direct communication rather than union representation. It is not insignificant in this respect that only 20,000 of 1,150,000 small and medium sized firms in France have a union section (Perucca, 1985; CIR, 1974).

14. USDAW argues that unilateral changes in working hours by employers are a breach of contract for which notice should be served. The Union's objective in company level negotiations is to try to force employers to give a week's notice for every year worked with a four week minimum. This system of notice originates from dismissal law, is supposed to extend to retailing, as is accepted as a norm by industrial tribunals. However, according to USDAW sources, the targeted minimum notice period for changes in working hours is infrequently observed.

Chapter 6

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours in Large-scale Grocery Retailing: Case Study Findings

As in Chapter 5 the findings in this chapter are explained in terms of the basic hours control framework developed by Lee (1985). The main differences in format between Chapters 5 and 6 are that this chapter is organized into three sections. Not only are mediating mechanisms examined but also employee control of, and satisfaction with, working hours. The discussion about employee control and satisfaction is based on the findings from the interviews with women working part-time in the case study outlets.

Hours Systems

As in Chapter 5 hours systems are described in terms of the three components of working hours used throughout the thesis: the length of working period, the organization of working hours and their flexibility.

The Length of the Working Period

The duration of the working period which is most relevant to an understanding of patterns of working hours at outlet level is also the number of hours worked by an individual on a weekly and a daily basis. Consequently, the research findings are, as in Chapter 5, presented for both these components of the working period.

Weekly Contract Lengths

As in Chapter 5 the discussion about the weekly contract length is organized into four parts: attitudes towards part-time work and its level of use; labour cost and labour productivity targeting, multi-skilling, and weekly part-time hours.

Attitudes Towards Part-time Work and its Level of Use

In common with the majority of British retailers, part-time work in the British parent company and in the case study outlet has been in use for many years. Employment policy in this company is extremely centralized, therefore the policy of encouraging part-time work adopted at head office has been passed down to all outlets. The use and organization of part-time work in this company (as it was in many of the firms studied) is aided by sophisticated labour productivity systems based on work study.

The main advantage of part-time work for company and outlet management is the flexibility and productivity advantages it affords, reductions in NI contributions were not claimed to be an overriding consideration, although a large proportion of part-time contracts are below the NI payment threshold (see below). Levels of part-time work in the company are not as high as in some British retailers (see Table 6.1).

The levels in the case study outlet, however, were among the highest found in the sample of retailers in Britain, with 70.6% working part-time (including management employees). These levels are high by comparison with other outlets belonging to the company under study. Area personnel management said that stores were expected to have at least a third of the store workforce on a full-time basis in order to

give enough continuity for the day-to-day running of the store and to create a pool of labour for promotion. A 2:1 ratio of part-time to full-time work was considered to be the maximum possible for efficient management control. This target was integrated into a series of guides for employment and scheduling which are adapted to each individual outlet. These guides are based on a sophisticated productivity system based on work study (as described below).

As shown in Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 levels of part-time work are considerably higher in the British company and outlet than in their French counterparts (the reasons for this dissimilarity are explained below). The difference is particularly significant at outlet level where a larger surface area in the French outlet might have led one to expect higher levels of part-time work, other things being equal (as argued in Chapter 1). However, while the absolute levels of part-time work are higher in Britain both at company and at outlet level, thus supporting the general evidence drawn from the wider sample of retailers in the two countries, the direction of change in the proportion of the workforce working part-time is different in the two countries.

Table 6.1 Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in British Parent Company, 1982-5

	1982	1983	1984	1985
Part-time*	19330	21180	22910	24548
Full-time	27159	30519	33726	37710
% Part-time	42.3	40.9	40.4	39.4

* Part-time work defined as under 36 hours per week.

Table 6.2 Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time by Sex and Proportion Part-time in British Outlet 1984-6

	1984		1985		1986	
	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT
M	18	24	17	23	19	23
F	118	31	118	33	111	34
Total	136	55	135	56	130	56
% PT	71.2		70.62		69.89	

Table 6.3 Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in French Parent Company, 1982-5

	1982	1983	1984	1985
Part-time*	820	838	869	887
Full time	3453	3473	3438	3407
%Part-time	23.7	24.1	25.3	26.0

* Part-time work defined as 36 hours and under per week.

Table 6.4 Numbers of Employees Working Full and Part-time and Proportion Part-time in French Outlet, 1984-6

	1984		1985		1986	
	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT
M	4	102	2	98	2	87
F	124	67	119	69	130	68
Total	128	169	121	167	132	155
%	43		42		46	

Although the statistics available at company and outlet level in the two countries do not relate to exactly the same periods they suggest that levels are decreasing gradually in the British company and outlet, and increasing in both the French company and outlet.

The French company and outlet have been following the pattern of many French companies. The Personnel Director of the French company explained the increasing use of part-time work in terms of two factors. Firstly, he attributed the development to changing economic circumstances which had caused the whole group to seek ways of improving labour productivity - an explanation which was found among many French retailers studied at industry level. Increasing labour productivity became the thrust of a group directive in the early 1980s.

The Personnel Director pointed out that in the 1970s French stores worked with much larger margins which allowed costs to be higher and employees to work full-time. Increased competition and falling sales had forced the company to reduce margins and improve productivity. In the search for reductions in labour costs which would help them sustain lower profit margins the company had been forced to introduce new forms of work organization. Secondly, he said that the development of part-time work had taken place in recent years because until latterly:

...ce n'était pas dans la culture des gens de pouvoir travailler à temps partiel (...working part-time was not normal)

He explained that in the past the company could not even think of employing on a part-time basis.

At this point it is important to explain the relationship between the French parent company, its group and its outlets. As a general rule the

regional companies belonging to the French group are free to develop their own strategies in all areas of employment and personnel matters (as well as in business strategy) although it is clear that certain directives give a central thrust to the strategies of companies belonging to the group. Companies within the group are increasingly sharing their experiences and developing common employment policies. The relationship between outlets and the parent company in relation to employment depends on the type of outlet. Hypermarket managers are given the greatest autonomy to decide policy (by comparison with the managers of smaller outlets) although they remain constrained by labour cost targets. The way in which target setting operates in this respect is explained in the discussion about labour productivity.

Over the 1980s the French parent company has been encouraging outlets, both directly and through its imposed labour cost targets, to increase levels of part-time work, particularly in large supermarkets and hypermarkets where they are most needed. At the time of the case study - April 1986 - levels of part-time work in hypermarkets varied from 40.2-57.7%. They tend to be highest in the most recently opened stores where the policy of using high levels of part-time work has been implemented from the outset. In older stores, part-time levels are being increased in the way which was found typical of the larger sample of French retailers: full-timers are gradually being replaced with part-timers.

The company is aiming at levels of 60% part-time in all stores. It believes that approximately 40% of the workforce should work full-time so that management posts (which they believe should be full-time for continuity reasons), and a pool of jobs for promotion purposes, can be provided on a full-time basis. Part-timers cannot move into management

or supervisory jobs, they can only obtain promotion through taking a full-time job.

Improving labour productivity has not been the only reason for the policy of developing part-time work in the French outlet; the other main reason has been to increase the flexibility of the workforce. In the past part-timers throughout the company were asked to work on short-term contracts in order provide additional flexibility given the relatively low levels of part-time work. Indeed this company is unusual among the larger sample of firms for its extremely high use of these contracts: in 1985 over 2,000 short-term contracts were used. Throughout the company they have been utilized to match variations in sales. The contracts are two-monthly and, at the time of the fieldwork, could be renewed twice before the employer was legally obliged to terminate it. This use of short-term contracts is, the company admits, probably illegal because French labour law restricts their use to very specific cases, which do not include responding to changing customer demand in shops. The company finds, however, that the use of such high numbers of these contracts is costly to administer and it is therefore changing its policy by encouraging the employment of more part-timers working short weekly hours. In this way the company can gain the flexibility to respond to changing levels of demand in the short-term by using overtime, and in the long-term by extending weekly contracts.

The British parent company and case study outlet, by contrast, have been gradually reducing their levels of part-time work in recent years (this was unusual by comparison with other British retailers). This trend reflects the implementation of a policy, established at company level, which has been developed in response to increasing trading

hours. The policy is to recruit a more stable and mature workforce by means of employing larger numbers of full and part-time workers on longer weekly hours. The fall in part-time levels has not been as great as it might have been because part-time employment has been increased in response to lengthening trading hours and reductions in the full-time working week. The new policy, however, strives to achieve 80% full-time staff on lowest trading days, and 50% full-time on normal trading days (as explained in greater detail below).

In general, the management of the British company at area and outlet level are very satisfied with the part-time workforce and in this respect the findings from the case study outlet and its parent company supported those from the larger sample of British retailers. The satisfaction with the part-time workforce stemmed from the way in which the store and its parent company explicitly sought the employment of married women as part-timers (see Table 6.5 for a breakdown of the workforce by age and sex over 1984-6 period) and achieved a close match between the working hours offered by the store and those sought by the women (the way in which this was effected is described below).

Both store and company management said that, even though it was cheaper to employ students aged under eighteen, married women part-timers - in the mid-30s to mid-40s age group - were preferred because they could offer more experience and maturity, and lower labour turnover rates. In particular, the branch manager found that married women working part-time tended to be happy with their hours of work if they could work at specific times of the day which suited their childcare and domestic commitments.

Table 6.5 Numbers of Workforce (Excluding Management) by Age Group in
British Case Study Outlet, 1984-6.

Age Groups	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	20 and Under %	Over 40 %
	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F		
1984	21 18	2 9	1 25	1 18	0 24	0 26	1 9	2 8	1 8	22.4	31.6
1985	20 17	5 11	1 22	1 22	0 15	0 32	1 11	2 8	0 8	21.0	35.6
1986	20 16	13 1	1 22	1 22	0 14	0 28	1 14	1 6	1 6	20.9	33.1

Discussions with management and workers in the case study outlet showed that in general there was a close correlation between the age of the youngest child and the working hours (for a more detailed discussion about this see pp391-2). Hence, younger women with pre-school age children would most frequently work early evening or late nights when their partners were available to look after their children, while older women with school age children would tend to work during school hours. This correlation is demonstrated to a some extent by Table 6.6 which shows how female part-timers' patterns of working hours vary according to their age, which is taken as an approximate indicator of childrens' ages and women's childcare responsibilities.

Table 6.6 Average Age by Occupation, Female Part-timers in Non-management Occupations in British Case Study Outlet, September 1985

Occupation	Average age
Day Part-timers	44.0
Midday Assistants (11 30 -14 30)	41.8
Evening Display Assistants (18/19 00 - 22/23 00) (and Saturdays)	33.8
Saturdays and Late Night Assistants (excluding students) [17 30 -20 30/18 - 21 00]	29.0
Twilight shift Assistants (17 30 - 20 30)	33.0
Front End Service Assistant (9 30 - 13 35)	41.9

The close match between the management's and part-timers' needs in terms of working hours could be explained by the way in which job applications were made to the store and by the negotiations between management and employees before and after appointment to the post. Candidates applied mainly through the local Job Centre which took details of women's preferred working hours, and held information about the hours available in the store at the time. Candidates tended to apply only if their preferred hours matched fairly closely those offered by the store. Sometimes working hours were negotiated at interview, but more commonly women negotiated changes in their working hours over time and in response to the changing needs of their employer. This informal method of adapting hours may also help explain the high levels of satisfaction with part-time hours claimed by retailers in Britain (as described in Chapter 5). However, the case study store management suggested that their firm was one of only a small number which make special efforts to take their employees changing circumstances into account.

The parent company has initiated a policy to encourage the employment of older women to work longer shifts on days and, in particular, on evenings where students were traditionally employed. This has not yet significantly affected the case study store's workforce (Table 6.5), although there has been a slight fall off in the 16-20 age group and a compensatory increase in the over forty age group.

In the French company, and in the French outlet, it was recognized that part-timers brought with them a number of problems. In common with many other French retailers the company management were dissatisfied with part-timers because they had a very high labour turnover - between 30-40% annually, and up to 110% in some hypermarkets. The French

company's Personnel Director suggested that this problem arose because many women working part-time were only doing so because they could not find full-time work. In his own words:

Dans notre profession c'est pas du temps choisi, c'est du temps subi, il ne faut pas se tromper...ça veut dire que comme ce sont des milieux ouvriers les femmes préféreraient travailler trente-neuf heures et gagner 4800F plutôt que de travailler vingt-quatre heures, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans les assurances ou les banques où, généralement, ce sont les femmes des cadres ou des ouvriers spécialisés qui ont déjà de meilleures rémunérations. Donc elles, cela leur va très bien de faire trente heures ou vingt-cinq heures. C'est pas du tout le cas chez nous, il ne faut pas se tromper. D'ailleurs, dès qu'on demande des heures complémentaires elles acceptent parce qu'elles ont besoin de gagner de l'argent et tout ce qu'elles souhaitent c'est de passer à trente-neuf heures (In our business part-time work is not voluntary, it's involuntary, you mustn't confuse the two...this means that because these women are from a working class background they would prefer to work for thirty-nine hours and earn 4800F rather than to work twenty-four hours, which is not the case in insurance companies or in banks where, in general, better paid jobs are filled by the wives of managers or skilled workers. It suits these women to work thirty or twenty-five hours. That's not at all how it is here, you mustn't confuse the two. Moreover, as soon as we ask for overtime these women agree because they need to earn the money and all they want to do is to get a full-time job).

He added that turnover was also high because many did not want to work at the unsocial times such as evenings and Saturdays when part-timers were most often asked to work.

The evidence from the case study outlet and its parent company give support to the contentions made in Chapters 3 and 4 that there is more involuntary part-time work in France than in Britain in low-skilled jobs such as those in retailing, and that this difference is reflected in lower levels of satisfaction with part-time working hours in France. The French company's dissatisfaction with the part-time workforce has

led it to experiment with part-timers in one new store. Part-timers are being offered longer contracts and times of work of their choice in order to encourage them to stay with the company (as explained in greater detail in subsequent sections).

Partly in response to the problems of married women being forced to work unsocial hours, and partly in order to create a more modern image, the French outlet's management, under direction from its parent company, is increasingly employing young people (the under 30s) in part-time (and full-time) jobs. The policy was inspired by the company's personnel management and was found among a significant proportion of the French retailers in the industry-level research. Consequently, all more recently opened stores, such as that in the case study, have a relatively large proportion of their workforces under thirty years old (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7 Numbers of Shop-floor Workers in the French Case Study Outlet (Excluding Management and Supervisory Staff) by Age Group and Proportion in Each Age Group, 1984-6.

	Age Group					
	16/20 %	21/25 %	26/30 %	31/35 %		
1984	33 (12.5)	93 (35.4)	30 (11.4)	32 (12.2)		
1985	11 (4.3)	104 (40.7)	38 (14.9)	25 (9.8)		
1986	17 (7.4)	84 (36.7)	47 (20.5)	27 (11.8)		

	Age Group				
	36/40 %	41/50 %	51/60 %	60+ %	% < 30
1984	27 (10.3)	40 (15.2)	7 (2.7)	1 (0.3)	59.3
1985	24 (9.4)	41 (16.0)	12 (4.7)	0 -	59.9
1986	26 (11.35)	13 (5.7)	15 (6.5)	0 -	64.6

The strategy of employing young men and women did, however, bring with it the disadvantage of high labour turnover (30% per annum) among the large group of young part-timers. Although turnover has been falling over recent years as unemployment has increased in the region, young single part-timers in particular are, according to the store management, continuing to leave to find full-time work (these findings support recent French statistics [Belloc, 1986; 1987]. which show that part-time work has increased most among in the under twenty-five age group in recent years).

Although only aggregate statistics (full and part-timers) are available for the age breakdown of shop-floor employees, they reveal the general growth in the numbers of employees aged under thirty in the store. However, as Table 6.8 shows the proportion of men aged under thirty has grown the most since 1984, while young women's employment has fallen overall (from 56% of female employees to 53.7% between 1984-6). In 1986 men aged under thirty represented 72.8% of all men employees in the store - an increase from 66.2% in 1984. In the same year 53.7% of all women employees were aged under thirty.

The employment of more males aged under thirty reflects a decision by the company to take advantage of the ready supply of young unemployed males in the labour market for full and part-time jobs. The decline in the proportion of the female workforce aged under thirty masks a pattern which is more ambiguous: the proportion of the female workforce in the 16-20 and 21-25 age groups taken together has fallen (from 44.5% to 36%) between 1984-6, while in the 26-30 age group it has increased from 11.5% to 17.7%.

Table 6.8 Numbers of Shop-floor Workers in French Case Study
Outlet (Excluding Management and Supervisory Staff) by Age Group and
Sex and Proportion in Each Age Group, 1984-6

	Age Group							
	16/20		21/25		26/30		31/35	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
1984	9[11.1]	24(13.2)	36[44.0]	57(31.3)	9[11.1]	21(11.5)	12[14.8]	20(11.0)
1985	3 [3.8]	8 (4.5)	39[50.6]	65(36.5)	14[18.1]	24(13.5)	8 [6.4]	17 (9.5)
1986	5 [7.5]	12 (6.4)	29[43.9]	55(29.6)	14[21.2]	33(17.7)	6 [9.0]	21(11.3)

	Age Group							
	36/40		41/50		51/60		%<30	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M	F
1984	7[8.6]	20(11.0)	5[6.1]	35(19.2)	2[2.4]	6(3.2)	66.2	56.0
1985	5[6.4]	19(10.7)	4[5.1]	37(20.8)	4[5.1]	8(4.5)	72.7	54.3
1986	5[7.5]	21(11.5)	2[3.0]	34(18.3)	5[7.5]	10(5.4)	72.8	53.7

Table 6.8 Numbers of Shop-floor Workers in French Case Study
Outlet (Excluding Management and Supervisory Staff) by Age Group and
Sex and Proportion in Each Age Group, 1984-6

Age Group									
	16/20		21/25		26/30		31/35		
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	
1984	9[11.1]	24(13.2)	36[44.0]	57(31.3)	9[11.1]	21(11.5)	12[14.8]	20(11.0)	
1985	3 [3.8]	8 (4.5)	39[50.6]	65(36.5)	14[18.1]	24(13.5)	8 [6.4]	17 (9.5)	
1986	5 [7.5]	12 (6.4)	29[43.9]	55(29.6)	14[21.2]	33(17.7)	6 [9.0]	21(11.3)	

Age Group									
	36/40		41/50		51/60		%<30		
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M	F	
1984	7[8.6]	20(11.0)	5[6.1]	35(19.2)	2[2.4]	6(3.2)	66.2	56.0	
1985	5[6.4]	19(10.7)	4[5.1]	37(20.8)	4[5.1]	8(4.5)	72.7	54.3	
1986	5[7.5]	21(11.5)	2[3.0]	34(18.3)	5[7.5]	10(5.4)	72.8	53.7	

Table 6.9. Numbers of Female Part-time Workers in French Case Study Outlet by Age and
Main Department, April 1986

Department	Age Group									
	16/20	21/25	26/30	31/35	36/40	41/45	51/60	%<30	%>30	
Grocery	0	3	0	0	2	4	0	33.0	66.0	
Liquids	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	50.0	50.0	
Chemist	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	50.0	50.0	
Check-outs	1	38	9	9	1	6	1	73.8	26.0	
Fresh Foods	2	3	1	1	2	5	0	42.9	57.1	
Mixed Non Food	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	50.0	50.0	
Clothing	1	1	3	3	4	9	2	21.7	78.3	

The store management stated that these statistics reflected the high labour turnover in these groups and the variations in the characteristics of local labour supply. It also emphasized that the objective remained to increase the proportion of women aged under thirty.

The store's policy was to employ increasingly large numbers of young women in the part-time jobs on check-outs which had the most unsocial hours and direct contact with the public. According to the store management, this strategy created higher levels of satisfaction with patterns of working hours because the married women part-timers were employed in store departments in which hours are relatively convenient, particularly for those wishing to look after children in the day time. At the time of the case study, in April 1986 as Table 6.9 shows, this strategy was already well-developed: over 73% of female part-timers on check-outs were aged under thirty, while at least half of the female part-time workforce on store departments were aged over thirty. This distinction between the location and working hours of women part-timers of different ages was fairly typical of the French retailers in the larger sample.

Labour Cost and Labour Productivity Targeting

In the British outlet and parent company labour cost and labour productivity targeting are closely linked, as would appear to be the case among many British retailers. A very sophisticated labour productivity system which incorporates labour cost targets has been in operation for many years. This has not, however, led to the increased use of part-timers, as would seem to have been the case in many other British retailers, because other service and company image policies play an important part in determining the levels of the full and part-time workforces (see discussion about weekly contract length). Nevertheless,

the labour costs and productivity targeting systems play a significant part in determining patterns of working hours.

In the British firm work study is carried out for each job in an outlet in order to enable calculations to be made about the hours required for a particular job to be completed at various levels of productivity. This information is then built into a number of systems in order to assist in labour productivity measurement and to help branch management to control staff numbers and predict manpower requirements for the purposes of scheduling.

The labour productivity targets for each job are compiled for an outlet in order to calculate a productivity factor (PF) for varying levels of item throughput. This PF is based on a standard of 100 which represents 75 BSI¹ and is a performance measure which can be used to compare different outlets. Branches receive predicted monthly PF targets and Items Per Man Hour (IPMH) targets, monthly items targets, and monthly man hour targets based on 100 PF. IPMH is used as a measure of profitability but cannot be used as a means of comparing performance. On a weekly basis outlets are also given advisory IPMH, PF and hours targets in order to help them reach monthly productivity targets. Branch managers are left to predict their own item throughput on a weekly basis. Period and weekly targets are related to the budget and profit objectives for the store. The target IPMH is based on past trends, and the budget and profit objectives. The target PF takes into consideration the specificities of each store and the profit and labour cost objectives of the company. It is compiled for each outlet in such a way as to ensure that the same level of service is offered in stores independently of profit levels.

The combination of weekly hours and productivity targets for a given level of item throughput is used to calculate three weeks in advance the predicted hours required. For example if the standard hours for the store are 4355 for 100 PF, but the outlet is predicted to operate that week at 99 PF, then the predicted hours will be $4355 \times 100/99 = 4399$ hours. Subsequently, actual hours are matched against targeted standard hours (at 100 PF) and the actual productivity factor for that week is measured. Also calculations are carried out relating actual item throughput to actual hours in order to calculate the IPMH for comparison with the targeted value (for a detailed review of these procedures see Figure 6.1). Monthly IPMH, PF and item levels are all compared with labour cost budgets and with labour costs as a percentage of sales, in order to assure a full understanding of, and control over, labour costs. Normally, if the IPMH and PF targets are achieved then the labour costs are being adequately controlled. Departmental productivity levels are also calculated on a sporadic basis.

The information from the work study is also used for work scheduling as it is possible, by relating item throughput to the productivity level for particular jobs, to calculate the man-hour requirements for those jobs at different levels of demand and hence calculate manpower required for the store as a whole by hour throughout the day for different periods. In the British firm this process is carried out using "scheduling sheets" and "branch manning guides" (an example of these is given in Appendix VIII). The "branch manning guide" gives the head count requirements on a half-day basis for all staff except management, and management requirements on a daily basis, for each job description. Branch managers are expected to adapt this general plan to differing sales levels.

Figure. 6.1 Method of Predicting Man-Hour Requirements and Calculating Labour Productivity in British Case Study Outlet

Period 1

Week ending	24/8/85	
Actual item throughput	456101	
Standard hours	4394	
Actual hours	4463	
IPMH target	100	
Actual	98	ie actual hours/ Actual item throughput
Actual productivity	99	ie $4463/4394 = 1\%$ below 100 target

Period 2

Week ending	31/8/85
Predicted item throughput	425000
Predicted hours	3862

Period 3

Week ending	7/9/85
Predicted item throughput	450000
Predicted hours	4399

Period 4

Predicted item throughput	450000
Standard hours	4355
Predicted productivity	99
Predicted hours required	4399

The guides are established regularly between branch management and area productivity management for a given level of item throughput based on

past hours worked. Past hours worked have, in turn, been related to the productivity levels required in a particular job in order to calculate service levels and cost targets. The half-day counts in the "branch manning guides" are themselves based on the scheduling sheets which are worked out between departmental management, the branch manager and the area productivity management for each day of the week for a given level of output based on records of hours worked.

Scheduling sheets estimate the numbers required in each department for each hour of the day and allow for staff to move from one department to another according to the needs of the business. It is the branch manager's responsibility to adapt these schedules to changing circumstances until the basis for the calculation is formally altered by area productivity managers. Hours are scheduled and individual patterns of working hours are created within these centrally-determined parameters. The work study at the outset has the effect of identifying areas where part-timers could most effectively be employed, and indeed the company has found it most productive to employ single-skilled part-timers for short bursts at certain times of the day: for example, at midday on check-outs, in the late afternoon as a booster shift to replenish stock in larger stores and in the evening to stock shelves. At the same time the area productivity manager of the parent company pointed out that even if it was shown that the company should employ someone between 1015 and 1230 on the shop-floor, the company would not ask a part-timer to come to work solely for those hours. The use of multi-skilling (as described below) enables the workload of full and part-timers to be rearranged so that this peak would still be most efficiently manned in terms of the company's objectives. Indeed, this retailer was unusual by comparison with the other British firms studied in the fieldwork who have used labour productivity

systems to facilitate the development of multiple part-time shifts because it believed that for the sake of the company's image and service to the customer, and in order to facilitate management control of working hours, it was preferable to employ part-timers (excluding those mentioned above), at the very least, in half-day blocks. Part-time levels in fact, as will be explained in the course of this chapter, are determined by a range of factors in addition to the numbers of hours allocated to the store given its item throughput and productivity level. These factors include: company-wide norms in terms of types of patterns of work, preferred weekly contract hours, part-time/full-time target ratios, the use of multi-skilling, and the degree of flexibility for overtime required from part-timers. All these factors, together with the centrally directed man-hour and scheduling targets, determine individual patterns of working hours in the store and ensure that the trading patterns specific to that store (determined by its location, store size and range of goods sold) are optimally manned.

In the French store labour productivity targets and labour cost targets are not only less closely linked but are also established to a large extent without reference to work study methods. The whole system of target setting is less centralized and less sophisticated in the French case study outlet and its parent company by contrast with their British counterparts. The use of less sophisticated methods in the French outlet was a consequence partly of the company policy to leave hypermarket store and departmental management a great deal more autonomy than was allowed in the British company, reflecting the French company's belief that hypermarket managers should be their own bosses. Also, the target-setting system does not, with the exception of check-outs, have a bearing on labour scheduling. An annual labour cost target

for all hypermarkets in the company is negotiated between the branch manager, the Director responsible for hypermarket outlets and his superior, the Commercial Director, who oversees all retailing operations. The target is set as a percentage of sales and is adapted to suit the company's labour cost and profit objectives. The branch manager sets future targets on the basis of past hours worked which automatically includes a notion of past full and part-time levels. Each store department negotiates an hours required/sales and labour cost targets annually on the basis of previous years sales and hours worked. This is subsequently broken down into monthly labour cost targets. On a monthly basis the targets are compared with actual sales and hours worked and the productivity ratio of hours worked/sales is calculated.

The one area in which work study has been carried out is on the check-outs. Predicted numbers of items/basket/hour for a particular week are used by the check-out supervisor (chef de caisses) together with measurements of the average speed of check-out assistants (in terms of average numbers of articles/minute for all check-out assistants) primarily in order to carry out an ex post calculation to see whether the check-outs have been over or under manned. The relationship which has been calculated between the average number of items per basket and the number of clients is expressed as:

$$\frac{60}{N/V + 1.5} = P$$

Where N = Average number of articles/basket

V = Average speed of check-out assistants = 26 articles/minute

1.5 = Average payment time

P = Predicted number of customers /hour

The ideal relationship between N and P is calculated for various numbers of articles per basket. On a weekly basis the ideal P is compared with the actual P derived by dividing the average number of customers/hour (for all check-outs) by the average number of hours worked. Ex post comparisons were also made between predicted and actual hours on check-outs for each hour per day (the way in which this is carried out is shown in Appendix IX). These relationships are used to help calculate manning requirements on check-outs. As the scheduling sheet in Appendix IX shows, the average payment time per customer and the average speed of check-out assistants (number of articles checked per minute) are used along with predictions of numbers of customers and articles (based on past trends) to estimate man hour requirements.

Given that working hours are not systematically calculated (except on check-outs) - by comparing work study findings with customer flow patterns as is the case in the British outlet - the French system seemed to be much less precise and systematic than the British one. Because the French system is not, with the exception of check-outs, based on an objective measure of the number of labour hours required for differing levels of demand, its use may result in under or over staffing and the replication of inefficient labour use from one year to another. The use of sales in a productivity measure may also distort calculations if their variation over time is not taken fully into consideration: a sales based productivity measure does not provide a systematic way of calculating labour demand over time and at different levels of item throughput. Comparison of the case study findings with those from the national samples of retailers in the two countries suggests that the differences found at outlet level reflected national dissimilarities in the use of labour productivity and cost targeting

systems, which seem to exist independently of factors such as the size of firm. In the absence of the widespread application of work study methods working hours requirements in the French outlet are therefore established on the basis of observation and past patterns of trade and working hours. Once these requirements have been determined parent company and store policies on levels of part-time work and the length of part-time contracts influence the development of individual patterns of working time.

Multi-skilling

The use of multi-skilling in the French and British outlets (and parent companies) studied reflects the two forms of use of multi-skilling found in the wider sample of retailers in the two countries. In Chapter 5 it was shown that differences in practices relating to multi-skilling did not seem to vary along national lines but could be explained mainly in terms of dissimilar company employment policies. The examples of the case-study outlets provide a much more detailed insight into the use of these different approaches and their implications for working hours than was available from the firm-level research.

The British parent company was one of the most sophisticated users of multi-skilling in Britain and it had been used for twelve years within the company. The company as a whole has suffered no union restrictions on using multi-skilling because the unions are very weak and there are no national union agreements over grading or pay which might prevent its use. Most shop-floor employees in the company are taught two or more skills as a matter of course. Indeed, promotion to higher paid grades depends on shop assistants learning these skills. While employees may nominally be located on one shop-floor department (they

all have the job title "supermarket assistant") and may develop a specialism in this area, they can be moved around to satisfy changing business needs. Only part-timers called in to work for short shifts such as evening display assistants (shelf-fillers), afternoon shelf-fillers (known as the booster shift), or midday check-out assistants, are single-skilled.

The policy of multi-skilling has been developed throughout the company for a number of reasons. Firstly, it gives the stores the ability to respond to unforeseen peaks in customer flow at check-outs by transferring staff from the store departments to the tills. Check-outs are seen as the most important function in the shop because it is the main point of contact with, and service to, the customer. Secondly, the policy enables the company to satisfy simultaneously the other objectives of service and image and labour productivity by means of its working hours policies. For example, it enables the company to employ most part-timers in half-day blocks which facilitates management control, and to develop three-day part-timers, which might otherwise be less productive than using single-skilled part-timers on short daily shifts. Finally, it also allows the store to satisfy its customer image objectives because the use of longer shifts (such as the three day shift) enables the firm to attract more mature women. The development of a more mature and experienced workforce is central to the firm's marketing policy.

The flexibility of multi-skilling is built into the "scheduling sheets" (showing the number of heads/hour/day at a given level of output) and used on a practical basis to allocate labour in the store. For example, if it is predicted that there will be a peak on check-outs between 1000-1100 hours, the schedule sheet shows a reduction of heads

working on another department and a corresponding increase on check-outs to meet that peak.

The French parent company and the case study outlet are more typical of the companies in the larger sample of retailers described in Chapter 5 which have a very high reliance on single-skilling. The different approach adopted by the French management compared with its British counterpart reflects the dissimilar policy stances adopted by the two firms. The French firm as a whole relies on a number of strategies which have been termed cost-cutting strategies in the discussion about practices in the larger sample of retailers in the two companies. For example, it adopts a strategy with three main components: a large number of short weekly contracts and short daily hours in order to maximize labour productivity; single-skilled employees in order to keep training costs to a minimum; multi-jobbing and flexibility in working hours in order to maximize flexibility of the workforce. This strategy is linked to the company's image and service objectives which emphasize developing a young and dynamic workforce.

In the French parent company and case study outlet all personnel are expected to carry out other jobs on the shop-floor as the demands of the business require, although no extra training or qualifications are given to those carrying out this work. This practice is called multi-jobbing (this concept is described in Chapter 5). Neither the company nor the outlet management have plans to develop multi-skilling as it is used in the British firm and outlet. Currently the firm is encountering problems with the unions, which have a more important role in this firm than in the British company, about the use of multi-jobbing. The French unions, like others in the industry, are trying to

obtain pay and grading improvements for those employees who frequently carry out more than one job in the store.

Weekly Part-time Contract Lengths

In contrast with the findings from the industry-level research in the case study outlets there was some deviation from the thirty-nine hour a week norm for full-timers. In the British outlet and parent company store management are expected to work forty-four hours per week, and employees working as store service assistants (transporting goods around the shop), customer service assistants (stacking trolleys), and as clerks in the office, are expected to work a 42.5 hour working week, 3.5 hours of which are guaranteed overtime and paid at time and a half. Supervisory staff such as the deputy check-out manager, the chief display assistant and the store/cashier instructors work a 41.25 hour working week with 2.5 hours of guaranteed overtime. Because men are employed in the majority of the more physically-demanding jobs, it tends to be the men who benefit from the guaranteed overtime system. Women, by contrast, tend to be concentrated in the low grade shop-floor jobs and supervisory shop-floor positions and consequently do not receive guaranteed overtime payments.

In the French store and parent company, management staff are expected to work the hours required by the job, although the collective agreement relating to large-scale grocery retailing makes provisions for them to be compensated by having two paid days off work every three months. Other full-time shop-floor employees - both men and women - work a normal thirty-nine hour week.

The French outlet belonged to a company which promoted the extensive use of single-skilled part-timers on short contracts for all types of

jobs on the shop-floor. However, the French company management was beginning to revise this strategy in favour of longer part-time contracts. The company's Personnel Director explained that the company had had no explicit policy relating to part-time contract lengths until recently - most had developed in an unplanned way in stores and tended to range from 8-36 hours a week. A wide range of contract lengths was found in the case study store (see Tables 6.10 and 6.11). Two policies are operated under the guidance of the Personnel Director in some of the company's stores. One of these policies is to increase the number of part-timers working on short contracts, and in particular twenty hour contracts. This policy is aimed at giving managers greater flexibility in the organization of working hours, as the company's Personnel Director explains:

Nous cherchons à mettre en place une grande mobilité sur le travail à temps partiel pour pouvoir justement jouer avec les équipes...moins les gens viennent longtemps, plus c'est facile d'organiser le travail...parce que plus les gens viennent longtemps plus vous vous trouvez fixé dans un horaire théorique...vingt-quatre heures c'est six fois quatre heures...(We are trying to develop considerable flexibility with part-time hours in order to be able to be flexible with the shifts...the shorter the time people are at work, the easier it is to organize the work...because the longer people are at work the more you find yourself stuck with a theoretical schedule...twenty-four hours are six lots of four hours).

The trend towards shorter weekly contracts has also been encouraged by an agreement made in February 1985 with the unions that employees can reduce their working week if they wish. The reduction in hours must last a minimum of six months but is renewable, and gives employees the freedom to return to their original contract lengths at the end of the period. The other policy, which is being tested in a new hypermarket is the development of mainly twenty-eight and thirty hour part-time contracts. The reason for this policy, as described in the discussion

about attitudes to part-time work, is that part-time work is often taken by women because they cannot find full-time jobs, and consequently when they are on short weekly hours they leave if they find full-time work. It is hoped that longer part-time contracts combined with convenient working hours will encourage them to stay with the company.

The new policy for introducing shorter contracts initiated by company management has also stemmed from a group policy which aims to increase labour productivity. The branch manager of the case study outlet has followed this policy over recent years because he finds that it is the only way he can reach the labour cost and labour productivity (labour cost/sales) targets he is set by the Hypermarkets Director.

While the changes in other contract lengths are less clear over the 1984-6 period, Tables 6.10 and 6.11 show the recent increase of twenty hour contracts to the detriment of thirty hour contracts in the store. This trend is particularly significant for those on permanent contracts. As Tables 6.10 and 6.11 show, twenty hour contracts are now the single most important contract length in the store, and in 1986 are more common among the temporary rather than permanent part-time workers. However, the distribution of twenty hour contracts is not equal throughout part-time posts on the shop-floor, 60% of all twenty hour contracts were located on check-outs when the first part of the case study was carried out in April 1986. The distribution of part-time contract lengths by store department is shown in Table 6.12 below.

Table 6.10 Proportion of Part-time Temporary Workers by Contract Length in French Case Study Outlet and Total Number of Part-time Temporary Workers, 1984-6

	Dec 1984	Nov 1985	Nov 1986
Contract Length (in hours)		%	
8	0	0	0
20	68.2	14.3	54.5
21	9.0	42.9	9.0
23	0	0	0
24	4.5	0	0
30	14.0	42.9	27.3
36	4.5	0	9.0
Total No. of Workers	22.0	7.0	11.0

Table 6.11 Proportion of Part-time Permanent Workers by Contract Length in French Case Study Outlet and Total Number of Part-time Permanent Workers, 1984-6

	Dec 1984	Nov 1985	Nov 1986
Contract Length (in hours)		%	
8	6.2	7.9	5.0
15	0	0	0.8
20	41.6	41.2	45.8
21	8.0	7.9	7.5
23	0	0.9	0
24	0	0	0
30	42.5	39.5	38.33
36	1.8	2.6	2.5
Total No. of Workers	113 0	114.0	120 0

Table 6.12. Numbers of Part-timers by Contract Length and Shop-floor
Department in French Case Study Outlet, April 1986

Department	Contract length (in hours)					
	8	15	20	21	23	30
Grocery				4		7
Drinks				3		
Chemist				3		
Check-outs		8	1	34	1	18
Fresh Foods				12		5
Non Food			2			
Clothing			8			13
Total No. Part-time	8	1	56	10	1	43

The reason for the high proportion of twenty hour shifts being concentrated on the check-outs is that the store management felt that flexibility in working hours was most useful on check-outs where changing patterns of demand have a direct effect on labour allocation.

The high concentration of twenty hour contracts has resulted in one main problem for the store: high labour turnover on check-outs. This has arisen because the store has recruited many young women into the twenty hour part-time contracts who are often taking part-time work as a last resort. Table 6.13 clearly shows the large proportion of women aged twenty-five among those on twenty hour contracts on the check-outs.

The British company and outlet was typical of the British sample of retailers in that it used a large proportion of short contracts for part-timers (sixteen hours and under). Furthermore, contract lengths in the British outlet were shorter than those in the French one,

reflecting national differences in contract lengths found at industry level. It would seem that the dissimilarity in contract lengths at outlet level cannot be explained in terms of sample bias (ie differing outlet size). When management at outlet level were asked whether store size and trading hours had an effect on contract lengths they said that the contract length was a policy decision which applied to all large-scale grocery outlets and was not affected by this factor.

Table 6.13 Numbers of Female Part-timers by Age and Contract Length on Check-outs, in French Case Study Outlet, April 1986

	Contract lengths (in hours)		
	Under 20	20	30
Age			
25 and under	8	22	9
Over 25	1	12	9

The British company had a policy of aiming at a minimum of twelve hours weekly for part-timers and of limiting 25% of the workforce to these minimum hours, although shorter contracts were not formally prohibited. The twelve hours minimum stems from a belief that twelve is about the minimum number of hours for which travel to work is worthwhile. The 25% maximum working twelve hours weekly has been established at company level for two reasons: because it leads to manageable numbers of part-timers, and because it is believed that the firm will attract a more mature and stable workforce with a greater feeling of belonging to the firm if longer hours are offered to them.

The case study outlet, as Table 6.14 shows, employed more than a 25% minimum of those working twelve hours during the 1984-5 period. This pattern changes considerably in 1986 (with the proportion falling from

30.4% in 1984 in 1985 to 14.3% in 1986) and reflects the implementation of a parent company initiative encouraging more two-day part-timers. During the same period, as the table shows, there was a corresponding increase in the proportion of those working 17-20 hours weekly. Indeed, over the 1984-6 period the proportion of those working sixteen hours or under a week falls from 80-75% (see Table 6.14).

However, the proportion of part-timers working short weekly contracts remains high, and is much higher than in the French outlet where only 7.5% of part-timers worked fifteen hours or less a week. In the British firm only 2.8% of the part-time workforce were employed for thirty hours a week or over in 1984, and this fell to 1.4% in 1986. This compares with over 36% of part-timers in the French outlet in 1986. The greater use of shorter contracts in Britain would seem to reflect the more extensive use of part-time work over a longer period in the British outlet and company (which as led them to a more sophisticated use of part-time work) and the impact of the NI system in Britain. The operation of the NI system has encouraged the company to minimize labour costs through employing part-timers for sixteen hours a week or less for which no employer (or employee) contributions are payable.

The British firm was not typical of the larger sample of retailers (except to the extent that it used mainly short contracts) because it was developing longer part-time contracts. This policy has been motivated by a desire for a more stable and mature workforce (in order to improve customer service) and by the trend towards longer trading hours, and has been integrated into a company employment strategy which promotes multi-skilling and staff training.

Table 6.14. Numbers of Part-timers by Weekly Contract Length in
British Case Study Outlet, 1984-6.

Weekly Hours	1984	1985 Numbers of Part-timers	1986
6	1	0	1
8	1	2	1
9	10	15	6
10	4	5	3
11.5	1	1	1
12	26	23	7
12.25	0	1	0
12.5	11	10	18
12.75	1	0	0
13	8	4	14
13.5	1	0	9
14	1	0	0
14.25	1	1	1
15	5	7	7
15.5	2	4	6
15.75	3	2	1
16	4	4	0
16.25	2	2	1
16.5	14	7	3
17	3	6	5
17.25	0	0	1
17.5	2	8	4
18	0	1	5
18.5	1	0	2
19	1	1	2
19.5	0	1	4
20	0	2	1
21.25	0	0	1
21.5	1	0	0
22	1	0	0
22.25	2	1	0
22.5	0	1	0
22.75	1	1	1
23.25	0	0	1
24	3	3	2
24.5	0	0	1
24.75	1	1	1

Table 6.14 (Continued)

Weekly Hours	1984	1985	1986
25	1	0	1
25.25	0	0	3
25.5	8	9	6
26	12	12	11
26.25	0	0	1
26.5	2	2	1
27	0	0	2
28.5	1	0	0
29.5	0	0	2
29.75	2	0	0
30	1	1	0
31	1	0	0
31.25	0	1	0
31.5	0	0	1
32.5	1	0	0
34.5	0	0	1
34.75	0	2	0
35	1	0	0
Total No. of Part-timers	141	140	140
% part-timers with contracts:	%	%	%
<=12	30.4	32.9	14.3
<=12.5	38.3	40.7	27.1
<=16	80.0	79.0	75.0
17-20	5	13.6	17.1

More specifically, the policy which consisted of encouraging the development of two-day part-timers was initiated in the early 1980s, and has been extended in 1985 for the same reasons to the development of three-day part-timers as a confidential company report explains:

...with longer trading hours less emphasis is to be placed on the two-day worker in favour of three-day working patterns...The three day worker offers maturity and stability

almost equal to that of a full-timer and can offer extra hours when required.

The firm was also attempting to encourage these workers, using financial incentives, to include evening or Saturday work in their schedules. These new patterns of working hours have developed as trading hours have been extended. This is to a large extent how longer working hours in larger out-of-town stores are achieved in the company. The parent company thereby seeks to reduce the proportion of students working evenings and Saturdays to 50% of the total workforce at these times. In the outlet there was little sign of these policies having come into effect over 1985-86, and the store management stated that working hours policies took several years to be followed through owing to slow labour turnover (approximately 16% per annum) in the store.

In the British store, contract lengths were associated with patterns of working hours which depended very much on the specific job function (as discussed below). This contrasts with the situation in the French outlet where the factor determining patterns of working hours was primarily the departmental location of the job (although this was related to the type of job). In the British store each function was associated with a range of possible contract lengths which were suggested by the parent company and given as a guideline to the branch personnel officer. For example, as Table 6.15 shows, students usually worked twelve hours weekly while mid-day assistants on check-outs worked ten hours. A major difference between the British and French outlets is that there is a much wider range of weekly contract lengths in the British outlet than in the French (compare Tables 6.11 and 6.14).

Table 6.15 Job Function and Associated Shift Patterns and
Weekly Contract Lengths (Average Hours for Female Part-timers) in
British Case Study Outlet, September 1985

Job Function	Normal shift patterns	Normal working hours (average hours for female part-timers)
<u>SUPERMARKET ASSISTANTS</u>	Multi-skilled assistants working predominantly on the shop's departments.	
Students	1 or more evening and 1 Saturday. Evenings: 1730 - 2030 or 1800 - 2100 or 1800 - 2000 Saturday: 0815 - 1845 or 0815 - 1745.	12, 12.5, 13, 13.5, 15
Day Part-timers Weekly	5 day weeks, alternative Mondays and Saturdays Wk 1: Mon-Fri Wk 2: Tue-Sat Hours are various combinations of AMs and PMs.	39
Am and Pms	Various combinations of 2, 2.5, and 3 day part-time Am: 0815 - 1230 or 0845 - 1330 Pms: 1230 - 1745 or 1330 - 1815	17.5 - 26 (av=22.7)
Late night and Sats	As students	12 - 15 (av=13.5)
<u>CHECK-OUTS ONLY</u>	Part-timers specialized in only check-out work.	
Midday Assistants	3/4 lunchtimes: 1130 - 1430	9/12 hours
Twilight Shift	3 evenings (Wed, Thur, Fri): 1730 - 2030	9 hours only
<u>FRONT END SERVICE</u>	Multi-skilled part-timers who work mainly as shopping packers	
	5 days, mornings: 0930 - 1335	(av=20.5) Plans for 26 hour shifts
<u>SHELF FILLING</u>	Specialized part-timers who fill shelves	
Booster shift	3/4 days, mornings: 0900 - 1200 Afternoons: 1400 - 1700	9/12 hours
Evening Display	3/4 nights of 6: Mon, Tue: 1800 - 2200; Wed: 1900 - 2300; Thur, Fri: 1830 - 2300; Sat: 1600 - 2000.	12 - 16.5 (av=14.7)

This is the case because in the British store working hours are accrued by adding the same daily pattern of work: for example if a student wishes to increase his/her hours from twelve, he/she would work another three hour shift one evening and thereby increase his/her working hours to fifteen a week. In the French store, by contrast, the employee would be obliged to increase his/her hours, say from eight to fifteen (depending on the department), and the pattern of work could change substantially because patterns of working hours vary according to contract lengths, even within the same department.

Daily Part-time Hours

In both the French and British stores full-time hours did not strictly adhere to the traditional working week (ie 0800-1700 or 0900-1800). This was, however, particularly the case in the French store where full-timers were treated like part-timers with respect to their working hours: they frequently did not work traditional hours, they were expected to share the burden of late night shifts with the part-timers, and they also shared other inconvenient patterns of work such as shifts being broken by long breaks (1-2 hours) outside meal times. In the British firm the hours were more conventional, although on alternate weeks full-time staff were expected to work a half-day including a late night.

Overall, shift lengths were longer in the French store than in the British, although a large number of shifts in both stores ranged from 3-5 hours in length. These differences in daily shift length provide evidence to support the findings from the wider sample of retailers in the two countries, namely that shift lengths tended to be longer in France than in Britain. This dissimilarity at outlet level would seem

to reflect the longer weekly part-time hours found in the French outlet.

In the French store the length of each shift varied considerably according to the length of the weekly contract and the location on the shop-floor (see Appendix XI). Those working on check-outs tended to work the widest range of daily shift lengths, particularly those on thirty hour contracts whose shift lengths could vary from 2-5 hours although the vast majority lay in the 3-4.5 hours range. Attempts were made to give the outlet maximum flexibility by breaking down daily shifts, particularly for those on longer contracts, so that they worked in four hour bursts: some thirty hour part-timers on fixed shifts work from 1030-1430 and then from 1630-2000 on Saturdays. This often led to inconvenient breaks in the working day. For those with shorter weekly contracts on check-outs (ie eight, fifteen, and twenty hours) each shift lasts three or four hours.

These shorter shift periods are also typical of those working twenty-one hours or less on other shop departments, such as grocery, drinks and chemist products. By contrast, those working thirty hours and over on other shop-floor departments tend to work longer shifts than check-out assistants on the same contract lengths, although this also varies by shop-floor department: in the clothing department thirty hour part-timers work four to four and a half hour daily shifts with some longer six hour shifts when they work late nights (up to 2100-2200 hours).

However, those attending to the changing room in the clothing department work much longer shifts: up to nine hours scheduled in one stretch. Here, there is little attempt to break up shifts into short periods because of the type of the work done: someone must be present at all times to ensure that the changing room operates properly, and a

measure of productivity cannot so usefully be applied. In the grocery department thirty hour part-timers work five or six hours while in the drinks and chemist products departments shift lengths are in the range 6.5-7.5 hours daily.

The explanation given by the store for the longer daily shift lengths among those with longer weekly contracts was simply that longer contracts did not facilitate hours being broken down into such small blocks on a daily basis. Also, longer shifts on the shop-floor departments were not seen as problematic because the overlapping of shifts which was required on check-outs was not necessary for shelf-filling, and because productivity could be kept relatively high by expecting workers to carry out multi-jobbing in the course of their shift. For example thirty hour part-timers in the clothing department who work 0700-1100 are expected to spend the first two hours of work filling shelves and the remaining time either arranging stock in the storage area or being present on the shop-floor. In addition it was felt necessary to have some part-timers working longer shifts simply to keep the numbers of part-timers manageable.

In the French store most of the daily shift lengths fell within the bounds of the limits on working periods set by legislation and collective bargaining. However, there were some exceptions to this rule. It seemed that the outlet management sometimes made a fairly loose interpretation of the guidelines in this respect. The collective agreement on breaks had no impact on the scheduling of shift lengths because the firm had made an agreement with the unions by which three minutes rest per hour is accorded to employees during the working period.

In the British store there is a much greater regularity in shift lengths than in the French store, and this reflects the British company's policy of developing patterns of working hours which facilitate management control and optimize labour productivity. They are also, overall, shorter than those in the French store. In the British store a clear distinction can be made between the length of daily shifts for those who are employed in the first instance to fulfil one basic function for a short period (but who are multi-skilled and can be moved around to suit the needs of the business) and tend to be on short weekly contracts, and those who are expected to work for longer daily periods and tend to be on longer weekly contracts. The types of jobs which fall into each category and the type of hours each should work (as well as the maximum number of weekly hours preferred) are set out in guidelines from head office and are adapted to the requirements of each store.

The types of jobs which fall into the first category are: the twilight shift on check-outs which runs from 1750-2030 hours, on which women usually work three nights weekly (nine hours), these evening hours are also commonly carried out by students who tend to work one evening and Saturdays; the mid-day shift on check-outs which is a daily shift of 2.5 hours duration to cover for full timers' lunch hours and to cope with peak-time shopping (maximum weekly hours on this shift are ten hours); the evening shelf-filling shift which involves working three or four nights in shifts of 4-5 hours; a booster shift of shelf-filling involves working four hours an afternoon for three days at the end of the week. These shift patterns are presented in Table 6.15.

It is the shop assistants who work longer weekly hours than the part-timers whose shift patterns are described above who also work longer

daily shift lengths. Part-timers who work on the shop-floor and check-outs tend to be employed for two or more days (with the exception of students who only work a full day on Saturdays) in combinations of half and full days (see Table 6.15). Each half day is 4.5 or 4.75 long, and each full day 8.75-9.5 hours long. Within each period of work, however, employees may spend time working in different departments depending on the needs of the business.

Very few of those employed by the store are eligible for the breaks under the Shops Act, but the company has a policy of giving all employees working five hours or more continuously, a minimum twenty minute break. The timing of the break is decided between the departmental head and the employee. Occasionally, workers are given unplanned breaks if the needs of the business permit. All full-timers are allowed a quarter of an hour break in the morning, the same period in the afternoon, and an hour lunch break and which are counted as part of their working hours.

The Organization of Working Hours

As in Chapter 5 this section is divided into two parts. The first examines the organization of hours on a daily basis, while the second discusses the organization of hours over longer periods, under the heading "shift patterns".

The Organization of Hours on a Daily Basis

The findings in the case study outlets showed, in support of the evidence from the larger sample of retailers, that time of work was dependent on the type of job done. A large proportion of jobs were related to the patterns of customer demand. This was true for all

check-out posts in the French store, and for mid-day and twilight assistants working on check-outs in the British store, as well as employees working in the service areas such as the delicatessen or cheese counters in the French store, and peak-time shelf-fillers in both stores.

Other jobs, mainly shelf-filling posts, had daily hours which were relatively independent of customer patterns and which were a function of the company policy in the British firm and established practice in the French outlet. For example, it was company policy that the majority of shelf-filling in the British firm was carried out in an evening shift after shopping hours. In the French outlet, in the absence of a company directive, early morning shelf-filling shifts had developed. These were found in many French retailing firms for the reasons explained in Chapter 5.

The main differences to emerge between the two outlets in relation to daily times of work were firstly, the British outlet used daily times established by the parent company while the French outlet scheduled the times of work without guidance from the parent company and, secondly, a much wider range of daily times of work existed in the French store by comparison with the British store. This was the case because of the more numerous patterns of working hours in the French outlet which varied according to the contract length, the department, and whether the contract was fixed or rolling. In the British outlet, by contrast, patterns of working hours were limited, particularly because a large number of check-out and shop-floor assistants were employed for the same patterns of working time in day-long and half-day blocks. While their hours were similar, they gave the firm sufficient flexibility by being moved around the store according to the needs of the business.

Shift Patterns

Both shift patterns and the way in which they were established varied greatly in the two outlets. In the French outlet shift patterns (both full and part-time) were established by each departmental head according to the needs of the business and within the financial limits negotiated with the store manager at the beginning of the year. No specific guidance was given from the parent company management about shift patterns. In the case of the check-outs, the head of the check-outs used a work study type technique to predict labour requirements over time and based shift patterns around these predictions. Major revisions were carried out every few months. The majority of patterns were fixed within alternating weekly schedules. Additional working hours which were not adequately covered by the workforce with fixed hours were given to the semi-autonomous team. Their working hours were posted up one week in advance and could vary considerably from one week to another.

The British system for establishing patterns of working hours was very different. It was based on the extensive centralized control of working hours by the company. When a store is opened it is given an "establishment" which is defined as the total number of contracted hours that the company calculates will enable the store manager to have a basic staffing level which will then allow him/her to implement decisions he/she makes as a result of weekly predictions in trading levels. Using these contracted hours the store management in conjunction with departmental managers establish shift patterns according to the number of heads required at different times of the day on different departments for a given level of throughput - this information is provided on the centrally produced "staff scheduling

sheets" and "branch manning guides". The guidelines for times of work associated with different jobs are stipulated by company policy.

Although individuals know their times of work and shift patterns in advance, the location of their work may vary from day to day. At the time of the case study a schedule board was used to distribute employees about the store in accordance with business needs, but a computer system was under development for the purpose of carrying out this function. On the scheduling board, the targeted hours (see discussion about labour productivity) are gradually used up by allocating required hours to the check-out posts first and then distributing available employee hours throughout the store in order of priority. The location of an individual's work is then marked on individual pieces of paper and posted up for the day in question. The computer system developed at area management level was being programmed to calculate the optimal distribution of personnel in order to reach target hours and provide lists of the location of individuals two days in advance.

The discussion of the main types of shift patterns will relate to both full and part-time hours. This is because in both the British and French stores, as already stated, full-time shift patterns were similar to a large number of part-time shift patterns and therefore did not conform rigidly to the 0900-1700 norm found in low-skilled shop-floor jobs in many retailing companies in the two countries.

In the French store there was a much wider range of patterns in working hours than in the British store (compare Table 6.15 with Appendix X) they vary by store department and by length of contract. There was also a much larger proportion of workers, particularly part-timers, on

rolling shifts than in the British store. These differences cannot be explained in terms of dissimilarities in the outlet sizes for the case studies, although the use of rolling shifts was linked to outlet size in the French company. For example, the management of the French store stated that in smaller outlets where the trading hours were usually much shorter (with opening hours up to 1900-2000) rolling shifts are rarely used. However, it was suggested that if a store in their company wanted to use part-timers for evening shelf-filling then, in contrast with the British store, they would almost certainly introduce rolling shifts for these part-timers. When the management of the British store was asked what might be the effect of a larger surface area on shift patterns, the response was that because greater surface area is usually associated with increased trading hours, more part-timers would be required to cover the extra opening hours. However, they did not foresee any change in the centrally decided format for patterns of working hours, or any need for a rolling shift system along the lines of the French model.

In the French store the vast majority of shift patterns were rolling shifts. These types of shifts were introduced from the opening of the shop because previous experience in older stores had shown that fixed shift systems caused immense dissatisfaction among the part-time work force. Indeed, the store manager said that a return to fixed shifts would lead to strikes in the shop. The rotating shifts had been scheduled in such a way that full-timers who had the benefit of longer hours would work more late nights, and those on the shortest hours would suffer least from late nights: for example those working twenty and thirty hour contract have two or three late nights and those working fifteen or eighteen hours tend to work one or two nights (2000 hours or later). The store management felt that many employees were

willing and able to make a trade-off between hours length and their pattern.

The largest proportion of workers with the longest period over which hours alternate are on check-outs where patterns vary every week for six weeks, after which the pattern is repeated. A range of patterns exist for rolling shifts: two weeks, three weeks, three weeks the same then one week different, six weeks, and seven weeks. Shorter periods of rotation are found on the shop-floor departments where the requirement of the check-outs - many part-timers working overlapping shift patterns - is often not needed. For example, on fresh foods where there is a need for early morning and afternoon shelf-filling and morning shifts are not very popular (because they start at 0600), a two weekly rolling shift is devised for the thirty hours part-timers: one week they work mornings and the next afternoons.

Rolling shifts are a compromise solution for the part-timers and the store management. They are found to suit some women who work the less complex patterns on store departments where they are also not expected to work unsocial hours. On the other hand, the management was aware that many women with children working on check-outs are dissatisfied with the rolling shifts because they have difficulties finding childcare to fit in with their regularly changing hours and dislike the more frequent unsocial hours on these shifts.

Changing patterns of working hours were also characteristic of the semi-autonomous team operating in the French store (as in many of the French retailing companies). Semi-autonomous teams were introduced into the company for the first time nearly three years ago, and were initiated first in the outlet a year before the case study took place

The aim was to gain more flexibility in working hours on the check-outs but also to experiment with giving employees greater control over their working hours in order to reduce dissatisfaction with unsocial shifts. The system does not offer the flexibility of some of the schemes described in Chapter 5 and Appendix VI, notably management retains a great deal of control over working hours. The shift patterns of members of the semi-autonomous teams are planned around the central hours defined by check-out assistants who do not belong to the teams and take into consideration changes in trading patterns due, for example, to changes in the weather and the time of year. Although working hours change regularly for some workers, the team appeared to be generally very satisfied with the system (see also p385). This may be attributed to the fact that a considerable amount of control over working hours remains in the hands of the workers.

Finally, there were a small number of fixed shifts on some departments. Most of these were for part-timers working twenty hours doing early morning shelf-filling. Although the hours may seem unsocial, management found that they suited a small number of women with very young children. Some of these shifts included a rolling element which enabled part-timers to have a Saturday free from work every four weeks. Other shifts, including early morning shifts, are scheduled on a rolling basis because, as noted above, early morning hours do not suit some part-timers.

The types of shift patterns in the British store were much less numerous than in the French store, reflecting the tighter central control over working hours and patterns in the British store and the importance of the company policy of simplifying management control of working hours and of using multi-skilling. The shifts found in the

store broadly resembled those fairly standard patterns found in the larger sample of British retailers (full days, mornings, afternoons, lunchtimes, evenings). In contrast with the French outlet shifts were also almost exclusively fixed in its British counterpart. The only alternating shift in the British store was for full-timers who worked Monday to Friday one week and Tuesday to Saturdays the next, in a 4.5 day working week. All the other shifts are fixed. These are: two, three and four-day part-time shifts which include some combination of full-days (0815-1815) and half-days (0815-1230 or 0845-1330 and 1330-1815 or 1230-1745). These part-timers are increasingly expected to work Saturdays as part of their shift patterns. Patterns of working hours in various shop-floor jobs are presented in Table 6.15.

Overall, there seemed to be greater satisfaction with working hours in the British than in the French outlet. This gave some support to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 4 which contended that part-timers in large-scale grocery retailing would be more satisfied with their working hours in Britain. The satisfaction among part-timers claimed by the management of the British store was related to the fact that there was, as identified in the larger sample of retailers, a strong correlation between the characteristics of part-timers in terms of their age, and childrens' ages, and the type of shift pattern followed. The main difficulty for the personnel manager was to get women to work Saturdays and extra hours in the evening because (with the exception of those who were desperate to work for financial reasons) most women liked to keep as much time free to be with their families as possible.

Flexibility in Working Hours

In both the French and British outlets part-timers were the main vehicle for flexibility in patterns of working hours and the discussion

will therefore be devoted principally to the part-time workforce. Nevertheless, an attempt is also made to explore the extent and nature of full-time flexibility.

Flexibility in Part-time Working Hours

This section describes the main ways in which flexibility was achieved in the case study outlets: flexibility written into part-timers' employment contracts, other flexibility measures, and overtime (also referred to as the supplementary hours system).

Flexibility Embodied in the Employment Contract

Flexibility was built into employment contracts in both outlets to enable general changes in working hours and overtime use. In this discussion only the provisions for the former are described, those for overtime are described later.

In both the French and British outlets employment contracts are given to all employees at the start of work in the store. The British firm, in common with several retailers in the British sample, marked precisely on the contract the total contracted hours and the distribution of weekly hours across the working week. This practice stemmed from the firm's priority of giving employees security in employment and good conditions of work. Although the precision relating to patterns in working hours might appear to give employees greater security with respect to these conditions of employment, the employment contract also indicated that changes to the contract could be made "in accordance with the appropriate procedure", and this implied that the company had the right to change working hours provided that the generally agreed notice period for changes was given (as

described in Chapter 5). The outlet had therefore in no way restricted its ability to change patterns of working hours.

The French firm, by contrast, in common with a large proportion of French retailers, had a more flexible approach in relation to the way in which patterns of working hours were written into the employment contract. Although the firm had not taken advantage of the more flexible monthly contracts allowed in French law, the flexibility options with the weekly contracts were optimized by omitting to stipulate the precise distribution of working hours. Employees working fixed working hours received a contract with the total number of daily hours and weekly hours specified whereas those working rolling working hours only had their total hours stipulated and the patterns of working hours were decided informally with department heads. In both cases a great deal of potential flexibility was left in the hands of the outlet management.

Despite the flexibility built into the employment contracts in the two outlets, managers in both outlets claimed that they tended to rely on fixed patterns of working hours with occasional changes in order to adapt to changes in customer shopping behaviour (and this was substantiated by employees, see p394). In both outlets patterns of working hours were system controlled: once patterns had been established by management, the existing system was followed until new patterns were scheduled. However, while patterns of working hours remained fairly fixed, overtime was frequently used in both outlets as the main way of gaining flexibility and hence caused regular disruptions in working hours.

However, the outlets are good examples of how different employer policies can influence patterns of working hours. In the French outlet regular changes in patterns were made every two to three months, while in the British outlet changes were less regular, and usually as a result of major policy decisions, ie a move from two to three-day working.

Indeed, there was evidence of greater informal flexibility in working hours in the British store. The British store management was aware that part-timers' preferences in terms of working hours varied according to their domestic commitments (and particularly their childcare situation) and claimed that it tried to cater for part-timers' changing needs. Interviews with part-timers (as described in the final section to this chapter) gave support to the view that changes in working hours would be granted to them provided that they suited the outlet's business needs. The British store and company seemed to be unusual in their apparent willingness to take into account their employees' personal situations, for example a deliberate effort was made to cause as little disruption as possible to part-timers' patterns of working hours, as one policy document describing the move from two to three-day part-time working suggested:

...obviously some existing staff will be willing to change their working patterns, but no one should be put under pressure to do so.

In both outlets there was very little union membership, so any changes in patterns of working hours met with little organized resistance. In both stores management stated that the main expression of dissatisfaction with patterns of working time was absenteeism and part-timers leaving the firm.

Other Methods of Introducing Flexibility

Neither the British nor French firms extensively employed other methods for developing flexibility in part-time working hours. In both stores there was a feeling that adequate flexibility was gained from current methods and that fairly accurate predictions of trade enabled fixed patterns of working hours to be achieved.

The British store had been informed of company level plans to develop an "on call" system, by which employees who were in favour of the idea would volunteer to come in to work overtime on the request of the store. In the French outlet no similar scheme was formally operated (or was planned), although there were indications that the management sometimes called part-timers in from home to work overtime hours if trading was unexpectedly strong. This difference in approaches to flexibility by the British and French outlets would seem to reflect the findings in the secondary data and from empirical work at firm level that management-orientated flexibility schemes seem to be developed more extensively in Britain than in France.

The other major difference in the development of flexibility in the two outlets was the use of semi-autonomous teams in the French store. This gave support to the evidence found at industry level (described in Chapter 5) which suggested that more formal employee-controlled flexibility was used in France compared with Britain. Its use in France also gave support to the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 that French employers are more aware of non-work issues and are more likely to take their employees' working hours preferences into account and that they are developing more experimental working time systems. This difference at outlet level could not be explained by the dissimilarity in outlet sizes: no such schemes were used in any of the British firms

outlets. Indeed they had never even been heard of by the management of the British firm.

Overtime - The Supplementary Hours System

In common with the majority of retailers in the larger sample in the two countries, the French and British outlets (and their parent companies) relied primarily on part-timers for overtime, because part-timers would work over their contracted hours at single time pay. In the British store, however, as mentioned above, it was company practice to include a guaranteed overtime component in the hours of full-timers working in supervisory grades and carrying out heavy work.

In both outlets an expectation that part-timers would carry out "normal" amounts of overtime were written into the employment contracts and as such enabled employers to maximize its use. In the French outlet it was common practice to expect part-timers to work the maximum legal amount of overtime, and this was usually written into the contract in such a way as to eliminate the individual's legal right to choose to work overtime. In the British firm, in the absence of legal limits on overtime, a very flexible catch-all provision for overtime was incorporated into the company's employee handbook stating that:

Owing to the special nature of the retailing industry there may be occasions when staff are required to work additional time beyond their normal contractual hours for short periods.

Overtime in both outlets, as in the larger sample of retailers, was under direct management control and was used under the same two main conditions: to fill in for employee absences, ie holidays and sickness, and to carry out stock taking (termed predictable overtime in Chapter 5); to respond to unpredicted peaks in customer demand (termed impromptu or last minute overtime in Chapter 5).

Not only were the features of overtime similar in the two outlets but also the way it was used shared some similarities. In both cases when overtime was predictable part-timers were asked to work extra hours some time in advance (usually between one to three weeks). All part-timers in both stores were expected to work overtime in order to help with stock-taking. Also, in both firms this predictable overtime appeared to be voluntary. In the British outlet overtime hours (with the exception of overtime for stock-taking) were posted up on a staff notice board and part-timers were asked to volunteer; whereas in the French outlet part-timers were asked to work overtime by word of mouth.

Last minute overtime was fairly common in the two outlets. The British firm's sophisticated methods for calculating manpower requirements minimized this type of overtime, whereas in the French store less precise methods led to its more frequent use. A basic difference in philosophy distinguished the use of last minute overtime in the two stores: in the British store overtime was seen as a last resort for dealing with inaccuracies in the prediction of customer flow; in the French store it formed part of a policy for gaining maximum flexibility at minimum cost and was associated with practices such as short part-time contracts and single-skilling. In both stores, however, it was claimed that attempts were made to ensure that last minute overtime was voluntary: in general managers asked for overtime first from part-timers who made it known they were willing to work overtime.

In the French store the one exception to the general way in which part-timers were asked to work overtime was for members of the semi-autonomous team. Weekly overtime was scheduled into their weekly time sheets like normal working hours. If women did not want to work the overtime they were allowed to refuse the hours. Clearly, this caused

disruption for the store management and consequently many of these part-timers felt an obligation to work overtime.

Flexibility in Full-time Working Hours

The French outlet had developed full-time flexibility more extensively than its British counterpart, reflecting differences found among retailers at industry level in the two countries. This dissimilarity could not be explained in terms of sample bias because it reflected policy differences which were applied independently of factors such as outlet size and trading hours.

In the French outlet flexibility in full-time working hours was being developed under the direction of the parent company. This measure was introduced to help increase all vectors of flexibility in working hours, but was also developed as part of the company's plans for changing the working conditions of full and part-timers in stores. According to the plans full-timers would be expected to offer greater flexibility (in terms of the number of hours worked and their distribution) in return for the privilege of working a full week.

At the time of the case study the main form of flexibility was the use of rolling shifts. Another form of full (and part-time) flexibility had recently been agreed between the company management and the unions CFDT and FO. It was not, however, approved by the other two unions CFTC and OGT who felt the measure undermined current gains in working conditions. This agreement allowed three minutes rest per hour for all employees. The measure was agreed on the basis that the total of 120 minutes rest time in a thirty-nine hour working week (and the proportionately shorter period for part-timers) would not be treated as

working time. Thus, for full timers the working week effectively becomes thirty-seven hours and the firm is given an additional two hours overtime which it can ask full-timers to work at single-time pay before the threshold of the legal full-time working week (thirty-nine hours) is reached and overtime payments must be made.

Another form of full-time flexibility was being negotiated with the unions at the time of the case study, although this was planned in the first instance to apply only to warehouse employees. This agreement was an amendment to the industry's collective agreement which would allow flexibility in the full-time working week on an annual basis.

In Britain, the company and outlet had, in common with most British retailers, developed little full-time flexibility. The only provision for this at the time of the case study was for full-timers to work alternate Mondays and Saturdays. In 1988, however, the company had introduced more flexibility for management working full-time hours. Their working week was reduced from forty-four to thirty-nine hours in exchange for an acceptance of alternating shift working. This was not the case for full-timers working on the shop-floor whose guaranteed overtime was treated as normal scheduled working hours.

Mediating Mechanisms

In this section the findings are presented in the same format as in Chapter 5: a first section examines to what extent works committees self-expression groups and quality circles exist in the two outlets and assesses how far they enable employees to influence their working hours, while a second section describes the role of the trades unions

Works Committees, Self-expression Groups, and Quality Circles

Practices relating to the use of works committees in the two outlets were typical of those in the larger sample of retailers in the two countries: in the British outlet there was no works committee while in the French outlet, in accordance with French law, the reverse was true. However, the presence of the works committee, whose role (as defined by law) is to be notified about changes relating to work organization and to make comments on proposed changes, seemed to have no effect on patterns of working hours in the French store either on a departmental or an individual basis. In fact the works committee was concerned primarily with the social activities and facilities in the French outlet.

Another forum in which there was an opportunity to debate working hours in the French outlet was in its quality circles. The development of quality circles in the French company as a whole was the result of the combined effect of changes in legislation under the Socialist government in 1981 which introduced a requirement to set up a means for worker self-expression in companies (for a discussion of this see Chapter 2) and a group-level policy directive encouraging participative management which had included developing measures such as quality circles. The group and the parent company began to encourage participative management as part of the new ethos (developed under the Socialist Government) that workers were a valuable part of the firm.

The parent company began to encourage participative management in the early 1980s by introducing regular meetings between employees and their supervisors in order to provide workers with information about all aspects of the retail operation and particularly to develop a dialogue about ways of improving working conditions. Another innovation was the

introduction, in some stores, of groups made up of workers and their superiors, who met regularly to study and resolve problems of work organization. The objectives of this type of group were extended for members of quality circles which began their formal development in 1984. In these circles workers and their superiors were given the tasks of analyzing and solving all problems affecting their daily work. These sorts of policies for improving employee participation and dialogue have been accompanied by others designed to improve circulation of information in the company.

At the time of the case study there were already twenty-two quality circles in the French parent company as a whole which had, with the agreement of the unions, been substituted for the self-expression groups required by law. In the outlet four quality circles were introduced in 1984. They consisted of approximately seven volunteers and their superiors from a number of departments who came together to resolve the store's problems. However, the circles had not been very successful because cross-departmental friction arose as a result of allowing members of some departments to criticize, and attempt to resolve, the problems in neighbouring shop-floor areas. A new approach was planned for future meetings so that groups would be formed on a departmental basis and only problems from that department would be discussed. It was within the scope of the groups' brief to discuss working hours and work organization with a view to finding more effective systems for workers and customers. However, at the time of the case study working hours had not been discussed.

In the British outlet the only collective forum of debate about working hours was the Job Improvement Committee (JIC). The British parent company was one of the very few firms in Britain which had approached

participative management. It was clear that the firm had initiated this approach both from a concern with involving workers in their jobs and improving working conditions and as a way of circumventing union penetration in the stores. It had achieved this, firstly, by developing effective communication and appraisal systems between workers and their superiors and, secondly, by introducing JICs on an experimental basis in some stores. The JICs were pioneered in this company in 1981 and were developed in the British outlet in 1984. The JIC consisted of elected representatives (a maximum of seven) from all electoral constituencies (ie one would be the shop-floor, evening shifts, all display workers, trade assistants, freezer centre), a representative from the store management team, the Branch Personnel Officer and the Branch Manager. The brief of the team was to:

...establish a formal two way consultation channel through which branch and management staff can discuss matters which affect our day-to-day working lives...The Committee will have responsibility for preparing jointly any proposed revisions which are considered to be appropriate. It is obviously intended that any such revision will have the dual purpose of increasing the job interest for the staff concerned while at the same time maintaining the company's operational needs.

Although working hours fell within the brief of the branch JIC, as they did in the scope of the French store's quality circles, they had not been discussed within the group either by the time of the study and no changes of this type had yet been implemented. Indeed, it appeared that the JIC was not successful for by 1988 it had fallen into disuse.

The Influence of Trades Unions

The unions were weak in both companies and outlets, but their negotiating position was very much weaker in the British case than in the French as a result of the way in which industrial relations law operates in the two countries. Because French law automatically given

unions rights to representation and negotiation even if there is low union membership in a company the French parent company was obliged to negotiate with four of the representative unions present in the company (CGC,FO,CFDT,CGT), even though the company was not heavily unionized. At company level these unions had negotiated a number of agreements relating to working hours which applied to all company employees. They were:

- * Art. 24. The ability for an individual to reduce working hours for a minimum period of six months with guaranteed return to original working hours at the end of the period.

- * Art. 20. Special conditions for pregnant women: preventing their working after 2000 hours, and reducing the working day by half an hour after the fifth month of pregnancy.

- *Art 10a. The ability for an individual to take parental leave in the form of reduced working hours for a given period, and to take sabbatical leave for a period of no less than three months.

- * Art. 21. Special conditions for mothers (or single fathers) of children aged under eighteen giving all mothers paid leave equivalent to the length of their weekly contracts to be used as they choose throughout the year to look after, or arrange for the care of, their children if they are ill.

- * Art. 25. Paid rest periods of three minutes every hour to be given during the working period.

- * Art.26. Two consecutive days off for all workers at least every twelve weeks initially, but the period of eligibility will gradually be reduced to four weeks.

- * Art. 22. In application of the law, agreement as to the nature and extent of discussion in the works committee at outlet and company level about work organization and its planning.

The wide-ranging nature of these agreements with the unions in the French company would seem to show a strong awareness of working time

issues. Indeed, some of the agreements had been stimulated directly by working time legislation introduced in France: for example, the relatively sophisticated provisions for parental and sabbatical leave, and the ability to reduce working hours and to return to the original contract length.

In the French store the only union representative was a member of FO, one of the most politically moderate unions, and only ten members of staff belonged to this union (2.8% of the total store workforce). This union representative was also the employee representative and the union representative at the works committees meetings. He was therefore in a position of some strength (he could call in the works inspector in his capacity as the employee representative if he saw fit), although union membership was low. He saw his role as raising questions about work reorganization and checking that the law and the collective agreements were followed, while at the same time adopting a flexible position about changes in working hours which may be required by the management.

In the British company no conditions of work were directly negotiated with the unions, although pay and conditions were based on the Wages Councils minimum rates (in which tripartite committees included union representatives). It is significant that the provisions, which were unilaterally decided by the management, make little reference to working time issues, and this would seem to reflect the general lack of interest in this area in Britain compared with France. The low level of union intervention in this company was fairly typical of the British large-scale grocery industry, and reflects the very different legal framework for unions in the two countries. In the British company membership was high in selected outlets and on the basis of this membership the unions attempted to put pressure on the branch and

company management for improvements in working conditions. However, the main issues for the unions concerned were first and foremost grading structures and pay, and typically working time was not seen as an urgent priority. The company, however, believed its working conditions were already very good and that the unions' claims were groundless. In the British case study outlet there were no union members and therefore no union intervention in relation to working hours.

Employee Control and Satisfaction with Working Hours

This section presents the findings derived from the research carried out with samples of female part-timers with children taken from the case study outlets in Britain and France. The results are presented under this heading because they describe the extent to which these part-timers can influence their working hours and assess the degree of satisfaction with part-time hours. In particular, evidence is presented in support of the hypothesis made in Chapter 4 that part-timers are more likely to be satisfied with their working hours (both in terms of their number and their organization) in Britain than in France. Also, the section examines the relationship between the length of working hours and their organization and reasons for working part-time in the two countries. Given the relationships identified in Chapters 3 and 4 between women's continuity of activity, reasons for working part-time, and patterns of hours in France, continuity of activity is one of the axes of analysis used in the Franco-British comparison of patterns of working hours in retailing.

Weekly Contract Lengths

There appeared to be a very different degree of importance attached to

the contract length in the British and French outlets: in France it was crucial to part-timers whereas in Britain it appeared to take second place to preferences for certain shift patterns. Furthermore, over half of the French sample did not want to work part-time, whereas almost all of the women in the British sample sought this form of work. These findings gave support to those obtained from secondary data (discussed in Chapter 4) and from empirical research with employers at firm level (described in Chapter 5).

In the French sample of twenty-two part-timers a clear distinction appeared between those who chose to work part-time and those who would have preferred to work full-time: only six had actively sought part-time work, another twelve had sought full-time work. Four of the women were prepared to work any hours when they applied to the firm, but three of them had a slight preference for part-time work and one for full-time work (see Table 6.16).

It was found that most of the women who had chosen part-time work were satisfied with their working hours, only two (Monique and Natalie) would, for financial reasons prefer longer (though not full-time) working hours. The main reason for the satisfaction with working hours was because reduced weekly hours left time for family activities and domestic commitments.

The women who had chosen to work part-time could be broken down into two main groups (see Table 6.16). The first was made up of older women (aged thirty-five or over) who had relatively large families (two or more children) and very discontinuous working patterns, and were returning to work part-time after a long break from the workforce for raising children. These women held traditional attitudes towards work

and the family. Two of the women (Camille and Monique) would not have worked at all until their children left home had it not been for financial necessity. These women chose to work part-time to enable them to look after (or service) their relatively adult children (the age of the youngest child ranged from seven to thirteen) and to look after their homes:

...ça va comme ça...il y a du travail à la maison...j'ai quand même un petit apport pour le budget familial...(these hours are okay... there's work to do at home...I've got some money to put into the family budget...) Camille, youngest child aged thirteen.

[Je voulais travailler à temps partiel]...pour pouvoir m'occuper de ma maison, pour pouvoir m'occuper de mes enfants ([I wanted part-time work] in order to be able to look after my house, and look after my children) Sophie, youngest child aged nine.

The second group of women were younger (aged between twenty-five and thirty-one years) with fewer and younger children (all aged under eight) and all had chosen to work part-time in order to bring up their children themselves during their pre-school years:

Je cherchais quelque chose à mi-temps justement pour m'occuper quand même de mes enfants (I was looking for something on a half time basis so that I could at least look after my children) Josette, youngest child aged 2 years, 6 months.

Justement à cause de ma fille...quand on est mère de famille, il faut faire un choix, soit la vie professionnelle soit la vie familiale (Because of my daughter...when you are a mother you have to make a choice to have either a working life or a family life) Micheline, only child aged 3 years 6 months.

These women had more continuous working patterns than the older women (reflecting generational differences in patterns of activity) and a greater commitment to work which was reflected in their intention to work full-time when their youngest child went to primary school.

Table 6.16 Part-timers' Weekly Contract Length by Age, Children's Ages and Type of Working Pattern in French Case Study Outlet

Name	Age	Children's Ages	Type of working pattern [†]	Weekly Hours
<u>Chosen part-time work</u>				
GROUP 1				
Sophie	35	17,15,9	Returns after all births	30
Chantal	35	15,6mths,14,13,10	Returns after all births	30
Monique*	37	10,7	Returns after all births	20
Camille*	45	(25,22),13	Returns between births	21
GROUP 2				
Yvette	29	6,4	Returns after all births	30
Josette	26	5yrs,6mths, 2yrs,6mths	Returns after all births	30
Micheline	31	3yrs,6mths	Returns after one birth	21
Simone	25	5,2yrs,6mths	Works after every birth	21
Natalie*	25	8,2	Works after every birth	20
<u>Imposed part-time work</u>				
GROUP 1				
Suzanne	51	20,24	Returns after all births	20
Marie-Claude	41	17,14	Works after every birth	30
Marie-Pierre	38	18,16	Returns after all births	20
Arlette	49	17yrs,6mths, 15,12	Returns after all births	30
Marie-Aude	45	(25,22)	Works after every birth	30
Marie-Thérèse	41	(19)	Continuous	20
Margaret	41	(22,21),20 14yrs,6mths	Returns after all births	20
GROUP 2				
Jeanne	21	1	Returns after one birth	20
Sylvie	30	9yrs, 6mths	Continuous	20
Eva	29	11,7	Continuous	20
Jeanette	28	11yrs, 6mths 9yrs, 6mths	Returns after all births	20
Babette	23	18 months	Continuous	30
Denise**	31	12,6,2yrs, 6 mths	Works after every birth	30

* Part-timers who would have worked any hours but who marginally preferred to work part-time.

** Part-timers who would have worked any hours but who marginally preferred full-time work.

[†] Women's patterns of working are defined according to Dex's (1984) categorization².

NB Children whose ages are in brackets have left home and names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

All these women were satisfied with their hours, although some would have liked longer, though not full-time, hours. Among the women who had sought full-time work most were dissatisfied with their working hours. The women who had sought full-time work could also be divided into two main groups (see Table 6.16). Imposed part-time work, as suggested in Chapter 4, was particularly characteristic of older women returning to the labour force after a long break for children and the first group of women comprised seven older women (aged 38-51 years) who had older children (the age of the youngest child in the group was twelve), four of whom had returned after a long break from the labour force. The remaining women had quite continuous working patterns which very clearly had been determined by financial hardship. All of the older women would have preferred full-time work for financial reasons:

Je fais ça parce que je n'ai pas autre chose...il n'y a pas de moyens à augmenter les horaires...autrement, bien sûr, j'aurai 3000 francs par mois, cela m'arrangerait (I do these hours because there is nothing else... there's no way of increasing my hours...otherwise, of course, I'd like 3000 francs a month, that would suit me) Marie-Pierre, youngest child aged sixteen.

Imposed part-time work was not confined to older women, the second group comprised six younger women (aged 26-30 years) who had younger children (with youngest children aged between 1 year 6 months and 9 years 6 months). These women had relatively continuous working patterns (either returning between births or working continuously) and demonstrated a strong commitment to work. The majority of these women had started to work again when their children were very young and had taken part-time work in the store after a period of unemployment. It was clear that, although these women stated they worked partly because they needed social contact outside the home, financial motives were very important in their decision to seek full-time work. Most of these

younger women were, for financial reasons, trying to increase their weekly hours.

Altogether four of the thirteen women who were involuntary part-timers had asked for longer working hours and another three said that they had not asked for but would accept full-time work. The remaining women were not very willing to work longer hours because they had become used to their childcare arrangements and/or because they found that full-time hours in the store were not suitable if they wanted to have some sort of family life:

...je ne pourrais pas à trente-neuf heures coïncider avec les heures de mon mari, c'est pas possible (...I couldn't synchronize my working hours with my husband's if I worked thirty-nine hours, it's not possible) Eva, youngest child aged seven.

...peut-être dans une autre gestion mais pas en caisse...parce qu'il y a des horaires de coupure, ça faut venir...ou alors les nocturnes...à trente-neuf heures on est toujours là et on ne les voit [les enfants] jamais (...perhaps in another department but not on the check-outs...because there are breaks in the day, which make you come in...or there's the evening work...when you work thirty-nine hours you are always there and never see them [your children]) Bernadette, youngest child aged eighteen months.

The opportunities to increase working hours were very limited in the store. All the requests for full-time work had been turned down although there was some informal flexibility in contract lengths and a number of women had been able to increase their hours.

In Britain when women applied for jobs with the case study firm they did not (with one exception) express their preferences for certain working hours in terms of the contract length. In marked contrast with the women in the French sample almost all the women implicitly asked

for part-time work by informing the store management of the times in the day they could work given their domestic, and in particular childcare, commitments. Choosing part-time work did not appear to be related to women's working patterns because women with all types of patterns had chosen to work part-time (as shown in Table 6.17).

The store management played a crucial role in determining the exact length of women's working hours by offering fixed contract lengths to match different shift patterns. Occasionally there was some choice in contract lengths but usually it involved choosing between different patterns of working hours.

The lack of attention paid to contract lengths by these women seemed to reflect the fact that the main priority for the majority of women was for patterns of working hours which would fit in with their domestic, and particularly childcare, commitments³. In the British store many women could not work at all, owing to a lack of childcare facilities, if they could not fit their working hours around their children (and particularly the care of the youngest child). Even the most financially needy women in the British store sought hours which fitted in with their childcare commitments. There were some indications, however, that the British part-timers were less financially disadvantaged than their French counterparts. This observation was made on the basis of questions about how the women spent their money, their husbands/partners' incomes, and the conditions under which they took the job in the store.

Table 6.17 Weekly Contract Lengths, Age, Children's Ages and Working Pattern by Type of Shift in British Case Study Outlet

Shift type*	Name	Age	Children' Ages	Working pattern**	Hours
TWILIGHT	Patricia	28	2	Returns after all births	16
	Victoria	26	4,3	Returns after all births	16.5
	Teresa	27	4yrs, 6mths,		
			2	Works after every birth	12.5
	Sharon	38	16,10	Works after every birth	16.5
EVENINGS & SATURDAYS	Jill	29	5	Returns after one birth	12.5
	Anne-Marie	32	9,7	Works after every birth	10
	Dot	28	4,1	Works after every birth	9
	Loretta	38	12,9	Returns after all births	15
	Lindy	24	6	Continuous	9
	Tracey	27	2yrs, 6mths		
				Returns after one birth	15
	Johanna	32	12,10	Returns after all births	9
	Mary	28	5,2	Returns after all births	16
	Carolyn	37	13,11,3	Returns after all births	12
	May	34	7,5	Returns after all births	13
LUNCHTIMES	Paula	39	17,9	Returns after all births	12
	Jasmine	24	4	Returns after one birth	12
	Elaine	42	16,14,11,7	Returns after all births	7.5
	Flora	58	(33,32,30)	Continuous	7.5
	Doreen	45	10	Continuous	10
DAY PART-TIME	Jackie	45	25,18	Returns between births	36
	Brenda	33	13	Returns after one birth	28.5
	Janette	41	14,11	Returns after all births	25

* The sorts of patterns the women were expected to work were typical of those set out earlier in this chapter, see Tables 6.5 and 6.14.

** Working patterns were defined according to Dex's (1984) categorization.

In the British sample all the women had accepted the contract lengths they were offered and, in contrast with the French part-timers, the majority were satisfied with their weekly working hours. This finding gives some support to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 4. Women with pre-school age children who tended to work relatively short hours (about twelve per week - see Table 6.17), shelf-filling in the late evening, were particularly satisfied with these hours. There was less satisfaction among women with school-age children. These women worked a wider range of hours than the women with pre-school age children: women on lunchtime shifts worked nine or ten hours a week only, those working lunchtimes and Saturdays worked about sixteen hours a week, and women on the day-time shifts worked much longer hours from 26-30 hours a week. There was less satisfaction with working hours among these women because some of them (Lindy, Elaine, Paula, Doreen) wanted to work longer hours during the school day now their children had reached school age.

The importance of matching working hours to childcare requirements in determining weekly contract length is reflected in women's responses to questions about the hours they would like to work in the future. The majority of women did not answer in terms of how many hours they would like to work a week, as was the case in the French sample, but in terms of how many hours they could work given their domestic commitments and, in particular, their childcare requirements. In general as the youngest child grew older women were prepared to work longer hours provided that they involved changes in their patterns of working hours to adapt to their children's needs⁴:

...well I couldn't increase my hours not until my little ones are at school really, because it would be difficult, 'cos well I wouldn't have anyone to have them for a start. Dot, youngest child aged one year.

I asked whether I could change my hours as my children are getting older now and I'd rather work in the week. Loretta, youngest child aged nine.

...my mother-in-law works as well in the day so until my little girl goes to playschool I'm restricted for day hours, but I could do night hours, that's no problem at all. Tracey, youngest child aged 2 years 6 months.

Overall, young British women (under thirty-five) were not prepared to return to full-time work until their children had reached senior school age. Many British women did not think it was right to have "latchkey" children, and felt that up to the age of eleven or twelve, children needed someone at home when they returned from school. This contrasted with the young French women many of whom were prepared to return to full-time work when their children went into full-time schooling at the age of six. This difference suggests that British women may be less attached to work and may have a more traditional view of their role in the family than their French counterparts. It may also reflect the greater availability of after-school childcare and longer school hours in France.

Also, two women with older children (Brenda and Janette) working respectively 28.5 and twenty-five hours per week were slightly dissatisfied because they felt their hours were too long, even though their children were now older and able to look after themselves.

Shift Patterns

French part-timers, in contrast with their British counterparts, were less concerned about their shift patterns than their working hours, reflecting the different reasons why many women working part-time in the two countries. Although many women were dissatisfied with their shift patterns, no women (with the exception of those in the semi-

autonomous team) had attempted to obtain more convenient shift patterns. For most women the over-riding priority was to obtain longer contracts and hence more pay.

Most women in the French outlet did not have a choice over their working hours. When they applied for a job with the firm the length of the contract, and not the pattern of hours, was the basis on which the job was offered and women sought employment. Once women had accepted a contract they were allocated shift patterns which depended on the type of work they were doing (as described earlier).

Four women in the sample worked in a semi-autonomous team (see Table 6.18). Although three of the four women would have preferred full-time hours when they applied for the job, these women were now the most satisfied with their patterns of working hours (defined by them in terms of the extent to which their preferred working hours matched their actual working hours). All the women had specifically asked to join the team in order to benefit from its considerable flexibility in working hours. Three of the four women on the semi-autonomous team (Natalie, Jeanette, Eva) had explicitly chosen hours that would coincide with their husband's and/or school hours, so that childcare would be available without using paid facilities. Indeed, part-time work was only worthwhile for these women provided they did not have to pay for childcare.

For example, Eva said she joined the semi-autonomous team because:

...ça m'évite de faire garder les enfants parce que vingt heures on ne gagne pas tellement pour les faire garder (...it means that I don't have to have the children minded because working only twenty hours you don't earn enough to have them minded) Eva, youngest child aged seven.

Table 6.18 Shift Patterns and Length of Weekly Contract by Age

Numbers and Ages of Children in French Case Study Outlet

Name	Age	Numbers and ages of children	Weekly contract length	Shift pattern
CHECK-OUTS AND INFORMATION DESK				
Sophie	35	17,15,9	30	*Information desk, rolling over 6 weeks
Chantal	35	15yrs, 6mths, 14,13,10	30	Information desk, rolling over 6 weeks
Denise	31	12,6, 2yrs, 6mths	30	Information desk, rolling over 6 weeks
Marie-Claude	41	17,14	30	Information desk, rolling over 6 weeks
Yvette	29	6,4	30	Continually changing every 2 weeks**
Josette	26	5yrs, 6mths	30	Continually changing every 2 weeks**
Suzanne	51	24,20	20	Check-outs, rolling over 6 weeks
Jeanne	21	1	20	Check-outs, rolling over 6 weeks
SEMI-AUTONOMOUS TEAM				
Natalie	25	8,2	20	Flexi-hours
Jeanette	28	11yrs, 6mths	20	Flexi-hours
Eva	29	9yrs, 5mths	20	Flexi-hours
Babette	23	11,7	20	Flexi-hours
Babette	23	18 months	30	Flexi-hours
FIXED HOURS				
Monique	37	10,7	20	† Fresh foods, rolling over 3 weeks
Micheline	31	3yrs, 6mths	21	Perfume department, 0600-0930 x 6 days (1 Sat in 4 free)
Simone	25	5,2yrs 6mths	21	Grocery department, 0600-09 30 x 6 days (1 Sat in 4 free)
Camille	45	(25,22), 13	21	Liquids department, 0600-09 30 x 6 days (1 Sat in 4 free)
Arllette	49	17yrs, 6mths	30	Grocery department, 0600-11 00 x 6 days
Marie-Aude	45	(25,22)	30	Grocery department, 0600-1100 x 6 days
Marie-Thérèse	41	(19)	20	Clothing department, 0800-1200 x 5 days
Margaret	41	(22,21), 29 14yrs 6mths	30	Fresh foods department, 0600-1000 x 5 days + 1500-18 00 Saturdays.
Marie-Pierre	38	18,16	20	Clothing department, 0800-1200 x 5 days
Sylvie	30	9yrs 6mths	20	Clothing department, 0800-12 00 x 5 days.

* These part-timers worked the same shift patterns as the check-out assistants on rolling shifts in the sample (see Appendix X).

** These women were training on the check-outs and were working particularly irregular hours.

† Although this shift pattern did include a rolling element in it, it was included with the other fixed shifts because its patterns were much less irregular than those on the check-outs and information desk.

This attitude towards childcare was characteristic of the sample as a whole and gave support to the findings presented in Chapter 3, that women on very low incomes cannot afford to work if they have to make any payments for childcare. In the French sample the example of Chantal who worked on the information desk is typical:

Je n'ai jamais eu de problème de garde d'enfants...d'ailleurs c'est pour cette raison que j'ai travaillé sinon je pense pas que j'aurais pu le faire...si c'est pour payer une nourrice je ne vois pas la nécessité de travailler (I have never had childcare problems...moreover that's why I've worked, otherwise I don't think I could have done so...if you've got to pay a child-minder I can't see the point in working)
Chantal, youngest child aged ten.

However, it was common for women to use some type of paid childcare from time to time. Natalie, for example, who worked on the semi-autonomous team, had two children (aged eight and two) and used a child-minder when she worked mornings, the rest of the time she shared childcare with her husband. Bernadette used the semi-autonomous team to adapt her hours around a friend who drove her to work. As a result she used a licensed child-minder throughout the day until her husband could pick her baby up after work. Sylvie, who worked early morning shifts, took her 9 years 6 months old son to a child-minder before school started.

The second most popular shift in the French outlet was the fixed shift pattern. Ten of the women in the sample worked some type of fixed shift pattern (see Table 6.18). Although six of these women would have preferred full-time work, most of them claimed to be relatively satisfied with their shift patterns. The older women who worked fixed shifts had more traditional attitudes towards family and work and claimed to be satisfied with their working hours because they enabled them to return at lunchtime to cook for their older children, and to

spend a large part of the day looking after their homes:

J'aime autant le matin, comme ça, ça me permet d'être tranquille l'après-midi pour faire mes ménages (Mornings suit me alright so that I am free in the afternoon to do my housework) Marie-Pierre, youngest child aged sixteen.

On a nos après-midi pour faire la maison...c'est valable. Pour une femme c'est l'idéal (We have our afternoons to do the house...for a woman it's ideal) Marie-Aude, all children left home.

...les horaires sont bien pour les enfants...pour le midi...que je sois là pour faire le manger...il y a une cantine mais je préfère que ça soit moi (...the hours are suitable for the children's lunchtime...so that I am there to make the meal...there is a canteen but I prefer to do it myself) Camille, youngest child aged thirteen.

The women with younger children (Micheline, Simone) were fairly satisfied with the hours because they enabled them to spend most of the day with their children. In contrast with many of the women in the British sample, these women had deliberately chosen to work part-time in order to spend more time with their children rather than to resolve childcare problems. Indeed, Micheline used paid childcare in order to be able to work.

The most unpopular shift patterns were the rolling shifts on check-outs and on the information desk (eight women). One of the major complaints made particularly by the younger women who had children aged under five was that it was inconvenient to work Saturdays and late nights because they could not be with their families:

...j'aimerais terminer tôt, les six heures le soir, pour être en famille quoi...et puis pas travailler le samedi, surtout ça (...I would prefer to finish early around six o'clock in the evening in order to be together as a family...and not to work on Saturdays, above all that) Natelie, youngest child aged eighteen months.

Indeed, most women did not like working the late nights on rolling shifts because the hours were unsocial and because they could not see their children. A number of the women on the rolling shifts would like hours which would enable them to see more of their children:

J'essaierais d'avoir le mercredi pour être avec mes enfants...essayer au moins d'avoir le samedi après-midi ou matin parce que, bon ben, on travaille tout le temps...mais j'essaierais de travailler quand les enfants sont à l'école (I would try to have Wednesday off to be with my children...at the very least I'd try to have Saturday afternoon or morning because well you are working all the time...but I would try to work when the children are at school) Denise, youngest child aged 2 years 6 months.

There was also some evidence that women did not like to work at unsocial times because their partners were reluctant to share the responsibility for childcare.

The other major complaint with the shift patterns on tills and the information desk was that there were long breaks in the middle of the working day, and these were thought to be particularly inconvenient on Saturdays when women wanted to spend the maximum amount of time with their husbands and children. Overall, there seemed to be a greater unwillingness to work at family times among women in the French sample, and a greater commitment to being available for the family, but this may simply have been a reflection of women's ability to work a wider range of times (due to the greater use of extra-family childcare facilities) than their British counterparts.

In Britain, by contrast, the majority of women in the sample were satisfied with their patterns of working hours, and this finding gave additional support to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 4. Satisfaction with patterns of working hours was expressed less in terms

of being able to spend time with their families (as seemed to be the case in France) than in terms of hours which would enable them to work because they fitted in with their domestic, and particularly childcare, commitments.

British women's attitudes towards paid childcare outside the home seemed to be very different from those of the French women. In France even mothers with traditional attitudes to family or seeking part-time work in order to spend more time with their children were prepared to use paid childcare in order to work, although they tried to avoid this because part-time work was barely worthwhile financially if childcare expenses had to be paid. In Britain, by contrast, there seemed to be a much greater reluctance to extend childcare outside family and close friends:

I was offered two jobs, one on check-outs starting too early, it would have meant my husband wasn't home from work and I wasn't prepared to leave Simon with just anyone. Patricia, youngest child aged two years.

If you have children you may as well have them and bring them up yourself. I don't see the point in having them and then sort of getting a child-minder, you miss all the best bits of them really. Dot, youngest child aged one year.

Also, the high cost of paying to send a child to a private nursery was seen as another good reason for women to stay at home until their children are old enough to fend for themselves:

At the moment you've got to pay a private nursery unless you are lucky enough to live in an area where there are nurseries available that, sort of, would take children during school holidays, well where I live there aren't any, you know. By the time you've paid out, sort of, to have your children looked after during the holidays and what not, there's no point coming is there? It just goes back to sort of, you've either got to stay at home and look after your children until they are old enough to be left, sort of, you know, I'm talking about twelve or thirteen before I'd even consider

leaving them for a few hours a day on their own...or as I say you've got to pay. Mary, youngest child aged two.

Only the single mother (Lindy) in the British sample was using paid extra family childcare in order to work part-time.

In Britain it seemed that the combination of a reluctance to extend childcare beyond the immediate family and a lack of inexpensive childcare facilities had resulted in women seeking shift patterns which would fit in with the childcare provisions available ie partners and close relations:

Hours are an important part of this job, if it wasn't convenient I wouldn't do it. Paula, youngest child aged nine.

(Why did you choose this job?) ...the hours mainly, so they coincide with my husband...he finished early on Friday night anyway and Saturdays are no trouble at all, so he could look after my little girl. Tracey, youngest child aged 2 years 6 months.

It's the only thing really that could, like, fit in...so the kids wouldn't be suffering...it had to be night work...it's no good during the day, it just times well. Teresa, youngest child aged two.

Women's preferences for certain patterns of working hours were clearly related to the age of the youngest child and to the childcare facilities available at that age. Hence women with pre-school children tended to seek evening work so they could hand over childcare to their partners, and women with school-age children sought working hours in the day which enabled them to be at home when their children came home from school. Indeed, several women noted that they were forced into shop work because it was the one of the only types of work to offer evening hours:

...you can't get office jobs with nights and Saturdays, there's only shop work you can do really. Tracey, youngest child aged 2 years 6 months.

I must admit you've got to have something to fit in sort of with your routine, and sort of everything else with it, I mean generally things like office work, which I did before, tends to be during the day, the only jobs you can get in the evenings is, sort of, telephone canvassing and shop work. Mary, youngest child aged two.

So crucial were patterns of work to the British women that almost all had stated their preferences in working hours solely in terms of patterns of working hours on the application forms for the job with the supermarket. There was relatively close match between the age of the youngest child and the type of shift pattern they worked in the British sample. This relationship appeared to be much closer than in the French sample and revealed clearly the importance of convenient patterns of working hours for British women.

The closer match also seems to suggest that patterns of working hours may have developed differently because of dissimilar national needs: in Britain retailers would seem to have recognized a stable source of labour in women seeking to work only at certain times of the day and have consequently taken advantage of this cheap flexible group. In France it appears that as a result of the different way in which part-time work and women's work have developed women in retailing are not seeking specific patterns of working hours as a function of their childcare responsibilities but prefer hours which allow them to maximize time with their families. Under these circumstances different patterns of working hours such as rolling shifts have been developed in response to the dissimilar needs of the workforce.

Seven of the eight women with a youngest child aged under five in the British sample worked evenings (1700-2000) and/or all day Saturday on tills or twilight shifts shelf-filling (2000-2300) in order to fit in with their partner's working hours. Overall, there seemed to be a greater willingness among the British women to work evenings and to hand over childcare to their partners, as well as a greater preparedness by British partners to accept this responsibility.

The majority of women with a youngest child aged between five and eleven also worked on the twilight and or evening shift on the tills. The main reason for this was that although women could work in the day during term time they could not find anyone to look after their children during the holidays:

It's the only type of job which would fit in...cos even when she's at school there's too many hols for me to find any other kind of job in the day. Jill, youngest child aged five has just started school.

These women often worked during the day when they were able. Two older women (Sharon, Johanna) with school-age children who had particularly traditional attitudes towards their role in the family had decided to stay on evening work in order to give them time to do housework in the day, and to be available for their children:

I like it because I've got the day to myself and I can do what I want to do and the housework and everything is done and then I can come out to work. Sharon, youngest child aged ten.

I like to be home when they come from school and when they go off to school, and I like to see them off, and make sure they have proper food - so they all come home from school Johanna, youngest child aged ten.

Although seven of the twenty-two women were not given the exact patterns of work they had sought when they first worked part-time in

the store, over time most had been able to find the hours which most suited them, and this reflected the store's policy of offering informal flexibility in working hours provided that it suited operational requirements.

At the time of the case study only a few women were dissatisfied with their patterns of hours. Two women who were working evening (Loretta and Lindy) whose youngest children were at primary school, would have preferred day-time hours during the school day, while one woman (Jasmine) who had a four year old child and worked lunchtimes would have preferred to work evenings. Another two women (Paula and Doreen) who were also working lunchtimes were satisfied with their hours but expressed a preference for working two full-days between school hours in order to free three days of the week from work.

Flexibility in Working Hours

Women in the British and French stores were found to have similar degrees of flexibility in their working hours, although the form this took differed. In both stores women were able to change their working hours on an informal basis through discussions with management, although this seemed to be more common in Britain than in France. In the British store, however, changes in hours related almost exclusively to patterns in working hours, as women tried to adapt hours to their changing childcare commitments⁵, while in the French store changes in hours related to the length of the contract only. In the French store, however, women who belonged to the semi-autonomous team benefitted from greater formal flexibility to change their hours on a weekly basis than existed in the British store.

In both stores the management did not make regular changes in women's working hours, and altered hours only in response to long-term changes in shopping patterns or company policy. Day-to-day flexibility was obtained from overtime. Changes in working hours caused inconvenience for a small number of women in both stores who had been in service over a long period.

Employers and employees gained flexibility in working hours from overtime. The part-timers confirmed that employers in both outlets tried to give overtime hours first and foremost to women who most wanted them:

On me demande parce qu'elle sait que moi personnellement je veux faire des heures...parce que vingt ne fait pas assez, quoi (She asks me because she knows that personally I want to work extra hours...because twenty hours isn't enough you see) Monique, youngest child aged seven.

When overtime was offered me as the children grew up I did as much overtime as they gave me, I ended up doing overtime in a permanent way. Jackie, youngest child aged eighteen years.

About half of all the women in the French sample were prepared to do overtime, and almost all the women in the British sample. Among the women who wanted to work overtime it was seen as a convenient way of earning extra money. Several women in the British store said they only worked overtime if it did not mean paying NI contributions and/or tax. Women in Britain, in particular, said that working overtime was subject to it fitting in with their domestic commitments, although part-timers in both countries said that notice periods for overtime was usually long enough to make the necessary arrangements. The system of giving overtime to women who wanted to work extra hours meant that some women in both stores were working overtime on a permanent basis (as Jackie

describes above). This practice seemed to be particularly widespread in the French store.

Conclusion

In this chapter a number of Franco-British similarities and differences have been found in patterns of working hours which have given support to the industry-level findings presented in Chapter 5, and to the hypotheses made in Chapters 2 and 4. The different size of the outlets under study has been taken into account in the analysis of the findings.

There was evidence to support the hypothesis presented in Chapter 4 that retailers are developing patterns of working hours very differently in the two countries. Part-time levels were found to be much higher in Britain than in France, although practices were converging, and part-time work was being used (and patterns of hours established) with the aid of much more sophisticated productivity systems in Britain than in France. The differing use of part-time work seemed to stem from the dissimilar economic climates in retailing and national contexts for the use of part-time work. Also in support of the industry-level findings, weekly part-time contracts and daily shift lengths were found to be longer in France than in Britain, differences which could be explained in part by the dissimilar legislative frameworks in the two countries and the differing use of productivity systems. Shift patterns were significantly different in the two countries as well, and rolling shifts in particular were much more extensively used in France than in Britain.

Nevertheless, a number of similarities were found in the development of patterns of working hours in the retail outlets: namely French patterns were moving close to the British ones through the increasing use of part-time work, shorter weekly contracts, and shorter daily shifts. These similarities suggest that, although cultural differences may result in the different pace of development of patterns of working hours, ultimately similar patterns may emerge.

The outlets were not typical of the firms in the industry-level research to the extent that few schemes had been introduced to increase the flexibility in working hours. But there were significant differences in the type of flexibility which had been developed which reflected industry-level findings: the British outlet was introducing more management-orientated flexibility while the opposite was true in its French counterpart. This dissimilarity gave support to the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 and to the hypothesis advanced in Chapter 2 that employers are more aware of non-work issues in France and more likely to take their workers' preferences into consideration. The use of the semi-autonomous team in the French outlet also gave support to the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 that employers are developing more experimental patterns of working hours in France than in Britain. The French retailer's awareness of their part-timers' non-work commitments was also reflected in the introduction of rolling shifts in the store and in their recognition that women disliked working at family times. However, there was also evidence to suggest that British employers were aware of their part-timers' hours preferences and non-work commitments: this was, in particular, reflected in their choice of married women for part-time work, and in the use of their knowledge about women's changing working hour requirements across their life cycle to recruit part-timers for longer working hours.

Overall, the findings suggested that the main difference between the outlets was that the French retailer was using more formal methods for taking into account part-timers' working hour preferences (ie the use of the semi-autonomous team) while the opposite seemed to be true in the British outlet. The greater use of part-time work in the British store was not the reflection of a deeper awareness of non-work issues because it was not a formal measure introduced for the benefit of part-timers but the effect of business decisions made in the context of socio-economic conditions which have favoured the use of part-time work.

Although workers preferences in patterns of working hours seemed to be integrated more informally into working time in the British store than the French one, informal channels allowed employees to influence their working hours to some extent in both outlets, particularly in relation to overtime. However, it is not possible to make generalizations about the informal ways in which employees' working hours preferences are taken into account in the two countries on the basis of this small-scale research, because there was little information about this from the industry-level findings and because the British company seemed to be unusual (and indeed thought itself unusual) in its willingness to take employees' changing domestic circumstances into account.

Formal channels such as works committees and the trades unions gave employees in France a greater opportunity for employee control of working hours than existed in Britain, and this finding also supported the industry-level results. Futhermore, it was found that even under conditions of low union membership the French collective bargaining system allowed for greater intervention in the area of working time than existed in Britain. Also, a greater awareness of working time

issues in the French trades union movement was translated into more agreements relating to working time than in Britain.

In support of the industry-level findings, discussions with outlet management in the two countries suggested that British part-timers were more satisfied with their working hours than their counterparts in France. The dissatisfaction in the French outlet (and parent company) had led management to change their policy on employing part-timers and on their patterns of working hours. The comparison of samples of part-timers in the two outlets substantiated the managements' views about their part-time workforces and gave support to the hypothesis made in Chapter 4 that part-timers in large-scale grocery retailing would be more satisfied with working hours (in terms of both their length and their arrangement) in Britain than in France. This difference at outlet level was explicated in terms of the dissimilar reasons why women were working part-time in Britain and France, namely that most British part-timers were choosing to work part-time in order to fit their working hours around their childcare commitments, while this was much less the case in France where many women, who were not limited in the times of day they could work by their childcare responsibilities, were working part-time because they could not find full-time work.

The research with part-timers revealed that when women of similar ages were compared, British women seemed both less committed to work than their French counterparts, and more reluctant to use extra-family childcare facilities. However, the findings were based on very small samples, and therefore need to be substantiated using larger-scale research. The results suggested that the adaption of British part-timers' working hours to their childcare commitments, and particularly to the care provided by their partners, could be explained primarily by

their traditional view of their role in the family and their reluctance to use extra-family childcare facilities as well as by the lack of inexpensive childcare provisions. They also suggested that French women's less traditional view of their role in the family and greater willingness to use extra-family childcare facilities, combined with the greater availability of inexpensive public childcare provision, helped explain why they were adapting their working hours to their childcare requirements to a much lesser extent than British women. French women (with the exception of those belonging to very low-income families) were not obliged to adapt working hours around childcare needs in order to work and were using paid, extra-family childcare facilities to a much greater extent than British women.

It was also found that although patterns of working hours were of less importance to French women overall by comparison with the number of hours they could work (although this depended on family income levels), French women showed a greater preference than British women for hours which enabled them to be available at family times (ie evenings and Saturdays) and to spend as much time as possible with their children (although the management of the British store noted a reluctance for women to commit more hours on a permanent basis to work on Saturdays and evenings over and above their normal hours). The greater priority attached to family time in France could be explained partly by an apparently more widespread reluctance among French partners to share childcare responsibilities.

The comparison of the groups of part-timers also indicated that shift patterns have been adapted to specific national needs. For example, in Britain it seems that retailers have been able to take advantage of a workforce which is willing to work at the times preferred by employers.

On the other hand in France, where there is no natural labour supply for evening shifts, as is the case in Britain, rolling shifts have been introduced which are more acceptable to a workforce which places a high priority on being available at family times.

Footnotes

1. The British Standards Institution measures are established in order to provide a yardstick for industry. The BSI measurement used by the French store is of a standard level of productivity based on work study calculations.

2. The "returns after all births" pattern is one in which women have all their children during the first same period of not working and eventually return to work after their child bearing and early rearing is complete. The "returns between births" pattern is one where women return to work between childbirth experiences but not after every childbirth. The "works after every birth" pattern arises when women return to work after every childbirth experience, given that they had more than one childbirth experience. The "returns after one birth" pattern is distinctive because the woman has only one child and returns to work after a period of not working.

3. With one exception (May) women in the sample did not take into consideration such factors as NI and tax levels when they applied for or accepted the job. Some other women had become conscious of the impact of the NI system on their wages only through working overtime.

4. However, there were exceptions to this rule. In particular, three women who had a youngest child of school age and very discontinuous working patterns did not want to increase their hours significantly as their children grew older and did not aim to work full-time in the long term. Two of the women wanted to leave time for domestic duties and the third for leisure activities.

5. In the British store five of the women in the sample had changed, or were changing, their hours so that they fitted in better with their childcare commitments (Brenda, Jasmine, Johanna, Victoria, Mary). For example Mary who was asked to work 0815-1300 one day a week and Friday and Saturday evenings when she first started the store asked to change to working two evenings and all day Saturday while she had a two year old child and she wanted to be at home all day in the week with it.

Not all the women achieved the exact hours they wanted: Victoria, for example, was working evenings on four nights (Wednesday to Saturday), and while she wanted to stop working Saturday night she was only allowed to drop Wednesday night instead.

Conclusions

In this final chapter the principal findings are drawn together and presented in two initial sections, the first dealing with patterns of working hours in general the second examining specifically the structuring of part-timers' working hours. In the third section the policy implications of the findings are examined, and in the fourth the limitations of the findings are discussed. Finally, suggestions are made about areas for further research.

A Franco-British Comparison of Patterns of Working Hours

The research carried out for this thesis has contributed to knowledge about patterns of working hours in Britain and France and enabled a better understanding to be gained of differences in patterns of working hours, both at national level and within large-scale grocery retailing. The principal finding is that, although patterns of working hours are converging in the two countries, significant differences exist in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France and these can be attributed to dissimilar socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts in Britain and France.

In the Franco-British comparison of changing patterns of working hours carried out at national level, evidence was found to support the small body of existing comparative literature about working hours. This comparison showed that broadly similar changes in patterns of working hours had taken place in Britain and France over the post-war period. They had taken the form of reductions in annual and weekly working hours, and changes in the flexibility of working hours such as the growth of flexi-time and part-time work (employee-orientated

flexibility), compressed and annual working hours (management-orientated flexibility).

Significant differences were identified in the rate and extent of change in working hours, the role of working time in relation to changing value systems and in the process by which change had taken place in the two countries. The national level comparison found that changes in working hours had been more concentrated over the last decade in France than in Britain. This difference seemed to stem from a number of factors: a more extensive legislative framework in France which, particularly up to the early 1980s, had limited the flexibility in working hours to a greater extent than in Britain; a combination of working time legislation and debate in the early 1980s in France which was not paralleled in Britain and which, under conditions of greater international competition, stimulated wider changes in practices in working hours. The comparison of patterns of working hours at national level also suggested that under these conditions more experimental patterns were being developed in France compared with Britain. This was one of the hypotheses tested by the fieldwork.

The Franco-British comparison of national data also revealed that non-work values had played a more important role in bringing about changes in working hours in French society than in Britain. It was suggested that this difference could be explained by the greater importance which the State, trades unions, and employers in France have accorded to the non-work dimensions of working time. The more important role of non-work values in changing working time in France suggested that employers might be more aware of non-work issues and more likely to take their workers' preferences into consideration in France compared with Britain (although the greater use of part-time work in Britain indicated that

this concern may simply be more formalized in France). This became the second hypothesis to be tested by the fieldwork. It gained some support from the secondary analysis of flexibility in part-time working hours which found that French part-timers had much more formal choice over their hours than their British counterparts. Another objective of the empirical work was to investigate how employees' working hour preferences were included in working time in the two countries in order to assess whether workers' preferences in patterns of hours were not simply integrated into working time in a less formalized way in Britain compared with France.

Major differences between Britain and France were also revealed in the data at national level in the roles of the State, trades unions, and employers in relation to working time. It was found that these bodies had been more heavily involved in working time issues in France than in Britain, and in particular that they had shown a more explicit recognition of the link between working time and changing value systems in France. It was shown that these differences stemmed from dissimilar socio-economic and political contexts in the two countries, and especially from a combination of more heightened debate about working time issues in France and greater intervention by French government at the workplace. The fieldwork also sought to assess the roles of the State, trades unions, and employers in influencing working hours in large-scale grocery retailing and to investigate whether national differences in their approaches to working time issues were reproduced in this sector.

A detailed analysis of patterns of working hours was carried out in large-scale grocery retailing, firstly using available secondary data, and subsequently by means of empirical work. A small body of secondary

data provided evidence to suggest that, in parallel with national trends, patterns of working hours had developed, and were developing, in very different ways in the two countries and this became the principal hypothesis to be tested in the fieldwork. Although some similarities in working hours were identified, namely in the reduction in full-time weekly hours and in the growth in the use of part-time work, significant differences were found.

An important dissimilarity revealed by the comparative analysis was the much more extensive use of part-time work in Britain compared with France. This was explained partly in terms of the differing legislative frameworks in the two countries which, it was suggested, had also contributed to the more extensive use of part-time work at national level in Britain. The impact of dissimilar retail environments (competitive and labour market conditions) and attitudes to part-time work found in the two countries provided an additional explanation for its differing levels of use in Britain and France. Comparison of secondary data relating to the use of part-time work in retailing indicated that both employers and employees in France were more reluctant to use part-time work than their British counterparts. It showed that in British large-scale grocery retailing employers' demand for part-time work, which had been stimulated by conditions more favourable to the development of this form of work, was matched by a demand for part-time work from women seeking to reconcile paid work with domestic responsibilities. On the other hand in France, employers had been dissuaded from employing on a part-time basis. This was partly because economic conditions had been less favourable to its use, and partly because employers envisaged problems from a workforce of which a large proportion was, in contrast with its British counterpart, only taking part-time work because full-time work could not be found.

Overall, the differences identified in the use of part-time work, and the explanations found for them, suggested that patterns of working hours would be very dissimilar in the two countries.

Comparison of the small body of secondary data relating to working hours in large-scale grocery retailing also revealed that there were differences in the number of weekly part-time hours worked in the two countries, as well as dissimilarities in the organization of part-time working hours and their flexibility. In particular, shorter part-time hours were found in British large-scale grocery retailing than in France, reflecting patterns of hours found at national level. It was proposed that this difference in weekly hours could be explained primarily in terms of the legislative structures in the two countries. Also, the secondary data suggested that there was greater experimentation with working time in France than in Britain and that the type of experimentation found demonstrated both that French employers paid more attention to non-work issues than their British counterparts and were taking their employees' preferences more fully into account than in Britain. For example, working time systems referred to as semi-autonomous teams have been extensively introduced in France which are based on the temps choisi concept and provide a formal means for employees' preferences to be more fully expressed.

Overall, the secondary research suggested that the existence of a larger body of legislation and collective agreements regulating working time in French large-scale grocery retailing, and particularly part-time working hours, was likely to have a greater impact on patterns of working hours than in Britain where employers appeared to have greater freedom to control working hours, and this was born out by the empirical research. The greater regulation of working hours in France

was explained in terms of an apparently greater preoccupation with working time, and especially with part-time work, which had been identified at national level.

These findings from secondary sources were substantiated by the comparative empirical work carried out at industry and at outlet level in large-scale grocery retailing, which also provided detailed information about factors determining patterns of working hours in Britain and France. In most cases the outlet-level findings gave support to those from the industry-level research, although there were some disparities which demonstrated the diversity between policies and practices at outlet level found in the national sample. The main result of the empirical research was that despite some similarities in trends in working hours in Britain and France, significant differences remained which gave support to the secondary documentary material suggesting that patterns of working hours had developed in dissimilar ways in the two countries.

As anticipated from the secondary data, levels of part-time work at both firm and outlet level were found to be much higher in Britain than in France. This could be explained mainly by the more rapid development of part-time work in Britain in general (encouraged by the existence of a less restrictive legislative framework and conducive socio-economic conditions) which in retailing had been accompanied by the use of more sophisticated labour cost targeting and labour productivity systems, as well as the existence of more positive attitudes by employers towards part-time work.

Although levels of part-time work were increasing in France, the use of part-time work varied more significantly within the industry than it

did in Britain, and depended mainly on employers' attitudes to it and experience of it. The relative homogeneity of British practices in the use of part-time work seemed to reflect the effect of a narrower range in attitudes towards its use (all retailers were in favour of part-time work) which could be explained by their satisfaction with the nature, cost, and productivity benefits of the part-time workforce.

The empirical work supported the finding from secondary data that French retailers faced greater problems with their part-time workforce (in terms of labour turnover, lack of motivation, and difficulties in their integration) because, unlike their British counterparts, many were working part-time only because they could not find full-time work. The problems with the part-time workforce had a direct impact on the level of use of part-time work in France causing some retailers to limit this form of work. They also contributed to some of the other differences found in patterns of working hours between Britain and France.

As expected on the basis of secondary data, weekly part-time hours and daily part-time shifts were longer in France than in Britain. An important explanatory factor for the longer hours in France was the body of working hours regulations which encouraged longer weekly hours and daily shifts. In Britain where there is no equivalent legislation governing working hours the existence of shorter working hours was explained by two main factors. The first and more important of these was the operation of the NI threshold which exerted a downward pressure on weekly hours. The second was the more rapid development of part-time work in Britain which had been accompanied by the use of more sophisticated productivity systems which tended to encourage the most effective use of labour and the development of shorter daily shifts

(although these systems did not necessarily imply the use of short shifts, other factors such as employers' attitudes to giving rest breaks and to developing a multi-skilled workforce also played an important role in determining shift lengths). An additional factor contributing to the differences in daily and weekly part-time hours found in Britain and France was employers' dissimilar experience of part-time work in the two countries. In France, where retailers had more severe problems with the part-time workforce (in terms of labour turnover for example) one solution for firms concerned about these difficulties was to lengthen weekly working hours (and hence offer part-timers more pay). This, in turn, had a knock-on effect for daily shift lengths and for the degree of job mobility expected from part-timers. The empirical work provided detailed information about the organization of working hours which was absent from existing secondary sources. It also identified significant differences between the two countries in this respect. Although the relationship between the organization of hours on a daily basis and the type of job carried out seemed to be similar in the two countries, there were dissimilarities in the types of shift patterns worked. These patterns stemmed from the dissimilar reasons why part-timers were taking this form of work. The main difference found was the much more extensive use of rolling shifts for part-timers in France compared with Britain where fixed shifts were the norm.

The empirical work also involved an in-depth comparison of experiments with patterns of working time in large-scale grocery retailing in the two countries. As anticipated on the basis of the secondary data, much more experimentation was found in France than in Britain. This took the form of semi-autonomous teams, personal flexibility in working

hours, combined with flexibility of functions, and full and part-time flexibility on an annual basis. It was found that these experimental forms of working hours all provided formalized procedures which enabled employees' preferences regarding working hours to be more fully taken into consideration (although the extent to which this was the case varied from one system to another). Additional formal acknowledgement of women's non-work commitments and preferred working hours was demonstrated by the introduction of rolling shifts by French employers. This finding gave support to the evidence provided in documentary material from both national and industry levels that employers' were more aware of non-work issues in France than in Britain. The more extensive use of part-time work in Britain compared with France did not reflect a greater formal awareness of non-work issues in Britain because, with the exception of the 1960s, part-time work was not introduced as a measure for the benefit of women. Retailers in both Britain and France have created part-time work to suit their business requirements and have primarily used women to fill these posts (giving support to the theories of labour market segmentation which argue this). The more widespread use of part-time work in British retailing reflects the more favourable socio-economic, political and cultural circumstances for its growth in Britain, from which employers have taken full advantage.

However, there was some ambiguity in the findings about employers' awareness of non-work issues because the research at firm and outlet level showed that in Britain employers were conscious of the circumstances which made women available and willing to work at particular times of the day (as were French employers who used this knowledge to introduce rolling shifts). It is concluded therefore that French employers act on their awareness of employees' working hour

preferences in a more formal way than British employers. In Britain where part-time work is so well established it may be that non-work factors are automatically taken into account (and that informal channels operate better, as suggested below) and do not have to be dealt with formally as would seem to be the case in France.

The empirical research provided ambiguous findings about the degree to which employees' working hours preferences are informally taken into consideration in Britain and France. At industry level the findings were inconclusive suggesting that there were different demands placed on employers in terms of working hours by the part-time workforce because of their differing levels of satisfaction with part-time hours but that there did not seem to be specific firm-level policies about adapting to employees' needs, and practices depended on outlet management in both countries. At outlet level however it was found that informal channels seemed to be a more effective mechanism for matching employers' and employees' preferences in working hours in Britain (a characteristic which could be explained by the greater use of part-time work over a longer period in the British outlet), although these channels existed in both Britain and France and the British outlet may have been unusual in its willingness to adapt working hours (and indeed it thought itself rather unusual in this respect).

It was also found that the existence of more formal channels such as works committees and self-expression groups in France gave French employees a greater opportunity to influence their working hours than existed in Britain, although the extent to which employees could benefit from such channels depended on a range of factors such as the scope of the group or committee, the degree to which employers allowed employee participation, and union strength. Trades Unions also had a

greater formal impact on working hours in France than in Britain, a difference which could be explained in terms of the dissimilar systems of collective bargaining in the two countries and of the greater awareness of working time issues in France generally and in the trades union movement in particular. The greater concern with working time issues in the French trades union movement, especially in relation to part-time work, was reflected in their more radical working time policies (although the level of concern varied among the unions and was greatest in the Communist OGT). Despite a greater formal role for the trades unions in France, the extent to which employees can affect working hours depends on similar factors in the two countries, for example the level of union membership, employers' attitudes to union representation and working conditions, and changes in the retail environment and labour market. 'In general the unions' ability to shape working hours in both countries was greatest when membership was strong, and major changes were being undertaken, but least in the day-to-day modifications of working hours (independently of membership levels).

In addition to these findings, the research carried out for the thesis has highlighted the important role of multi-skilling and labour cost and productivity targeting in the development of patterns of working hours, which was not fully apparent in the secondary data. It has been shown, for example, that employers can reach productivity targets by varying the balance between the level of skilling and levels of part-time work, and that skilling levels have an important role in employment policy (hence the distinction found in both countries between "cost cutting" firms using a combination of single-skilling, part-time work, short weekly contracts and daily hours, and those

willing to use more multi-skilled employees, and a range of other less cost-conscious policies).

The thesis gives the first detailed comparative account of labour productivity systems in Britain and France in large-scale grocery retailing. It has shown that despite a context of greater awareness of working time issues French employers have carried out less rigorous analysis of working time than their British counterparts. In Britain labour productivity and cost targeting systems were mostly based on work study analysis and were fed into manpower scheduling systems. In France, by contrast, a less sophisticated approach was used which, in most cases did not involve detailed labour productivity and cost analysis and did not use any calculations made to schedule working hours. The different approaches seemed to lead to a more precise assessment of working hour requirements (and control of working hours) in Britain. One possible explanation for this derived from the interviews with employers is that in Britain competitive pressures were stronger at an earlier date causing the more widespread introduction of part-time work and more detailed analysis of labour costs and use.

Patterns of Part-time Working Hours

The comparative research carried out for the thesis has contributed to knowledge about patterns of part-time working hours in Britain and France and enabled a better understanding to be gained of differences in part-time hours, both at national level and within large-scale grocery retailing. Significant differences were found in the patterns of hours of female part-time workers in Britain and France when a comparison was carried out on the basis of available literature at national level. One of the principal differences was that in Britain

part-time hours were shorter than in France, a finding which was substantiated by the secondary work within large-scale grocery retailing. This dissimilarity was explained in terms of the differing legislative frameworks in the two countries which, because of the dissimilar socio-economic and political contexts for working time in the two countries, had favoured the development of part-time work for short hours in Britain and had operated in the opposite direction in France.

The other major difference was that part-time hours were organized in dissimilar ways in the two countries. Although it seemed that women in both countries were attempting to adapt their hours to fit in with their children, this appeared to be much more explicit in Britain than in France. Also, British women seemed to be adapting their patterns of work explicitly with reference to the age of their youngest child and to the childcare arrangements available for that child, while this did not seem to be the case in France. The main exception to these patterns was where French women with large families on very low incomes worked part-time in order to adapt their working hours to their children because it was not economical for them to use childcare facilities in order to work full-time. The secondary literature relating to large-scale grocery retailing provided little evidence about the factors determining the organization of working hours except to the extent that part-time work was said to suit women with domestic commitments in Britain.

The dissimilarity in the organization of working hours was explained by examining women's patterns of paid activity in the two countries. It was shown that overall British women adapt their activity to the presence of children to a much greater extent than their French

counterparts and that this is reflected in levels of use of part-time work in Britain and their relative lack of continuity of activity over the family formation period. These general differences in patterns of activity were explained in terms of the effect of dissimilar family and employment policies since the Second World War in the two countries which, it was suggested, resulted in women having different views of their roles at work and in the family, and differing degrees of commitment to work. These factors were also thought to contribute to an explanation of the dissimilar patterns of part-time working hours found in the two countries. The British pattern of adapting working hours to the age of the youngest child and to the childcare provided by family and friends was explained by British women's more traditional attitudes towards work and family combined with the relative lack of inexpensive publicly-provided childcare facilities. On the other hand, in France less traditional attitudes towards women's work and a greater availability of inexpensive childcare facilities helps explain why patterns of part-time hours are not explicitly correlated with the age of the youngest child and why average hours are longer than in Britain.

The comparison of national secondary data about satisfaction with part-time working hours found that in France levels of satisfaction seemed to vary according to the sector of the economy and the type of job done, with dissatisfaction greatest in low-skilled jobs in the private sector. Associated with these differing levels of satisfaction were dissimilar patterns of working hours (in terms of the length of hours and their organization) for part-timers. In contrast in Britain there seemed to be widespread satisfaction with working hours. The explanation advanced for this difference observed from the secondary data was that in Britain female part-timers seemed to be choosing this form of work to fit in with their domestic commitments, while in France

many women were only taking these jobs because they could not find full-time work. The study of secondary literature about satisfaction with working hours in large-scale grocery retailing suggested that these differences in reasons for working part-time and in satisfaction with working hours also existed among part-timers in low-skilled jobs in this industry. This led to the hypothesis that women with children (who constitute the majority of part-timers in the industry in both countries) were more satisfied with their working hours (in terms of their length and their organization) in Britain than in France. This was tested in the fieldwork and an attempt was made to unravel the relationship between the reasons why women with children work part-time in large-scale grocery retailing, their patterns of hours, and their satisfaction with them.

The comparison of samples of female part-timers with children in large-scale grocery outlets in France and Britain gave some support to the findings obtained from secondary sources about the women's reasons for working part-time in low-skilled occupations and their satisfaction with part-time work and hours. It also provided some insights into women's commitment to work and attitudes to their roles at work and in the home.

It was found that women in the British outlet were more satisfied with their working hours both in terms of the organization of hours and their number. This difference was explained to a large extent in terms of the reasons why women were working part-time in the two outlets. The British part-timers were, as expected, choosing to work part-time in order to fit their working hours around their childcare commitments, while in France many more women were working part-time because they could not find full-time work. In the British outlet women could only

work part-time if hours suited them. Hence, most women were very satisfied with the organization of their hours. The importance of convenient hours was attributed primarily to their traditional view of their role in the family and their unwillingness to use extra-family childcare, as well as to the lack of inexpensive childcare facilities. In France convenient patterns of hours were less important in enabling women to work (although in low-income families avoiding payment of childcare expenses did encourage the adaptation of working hours to children). This was explained mainly by their less traditional view of their role in the family and their greater willingness to use extra-family facilities in comparison with British women, as well as by the wider availability of inexpensive childcare provisions. Because, with the help of paid childcare facilities, most women were able to take paid work at any time of the day, many accepted employment at times which were not necessarily convenient, with the result that more were dissatisfied with their hours.

Indeed, preferences in patterns of hours were found to be different in the two countries. In Britain, as expected, women sought hours which fitted in with their childcare requirements which in turn depended on the age of the youngest child. They mainly shared the responsibility for childcare with their partners who seemed, on the whole, willing to help out in this way. In France, where cheap childcare facilities were in greater abundance, the mothers' first priority was to seek working hours which would enable them to maximize time with their families. Hence, in Britain mothers with pre-school children would actively seek part-time hours working evenings in order to fulfil the childcare role during the day, whereas in France women would tend to use paid childcare facilities, if they were necessary and could be afforded, in order to work during the day and keep evenings free for family

activities. French women's preference to be at home at these times might also be explained by what appeared to be a greater reluctance among their partners to undertake childcare responsibilities.

The findings at outlet level were supported by those from the research with employers in that both showed that these different preferences with respect to patterns of working hours had a major bearing on the organization of hours in large-scale grocery retailing. Insufficient numbers of part-timers could be found in France who wanted to work at unsocial times, particularly evenings. Consequently, French employers created rolling shifts and semi-autonomous teams in order to distribute the unsocial shifts more fairly among part-timers. In Britain, by contrast, it was found that employers tended to take advantage of the ready supply of part-timers at different times of the day to match their own preferred construction of patterns of working hours.

Satisfaction with working hours also reflected reasons for working part-time in the two outlets. British women tended to be satisfied with their hours once the condition of convenient hours was met. On the other hand in France, where patterns of hours were less important, women were more concerned with the number of hours they worked, particularly because many of them would have preferred to work on a full-time basis.

The Interest of the Findings

The comparative research carried out for this thesis has contributed to knowledge about patterns of working hours, and particularly about part-time hours, at national level and in retailing in Britain and France.

For this reason it may be of interest to comparative and single-nation researchers working in these areas.

The research findings may have a bearing on policy making in a number of ways. Firstly, they have revealed the importance of State intervention in working hours. The findings have reinforced the existing knowledge about the importance of the NI system for working hours in Britain, and provided new evidence about the role of legislation in determining working hours in France. Also, by comparing Britain and France at national level and in retailing, the research has shown how two different systems determining working hours, one based on written law and the other on collective bargaining, operate and shape working hours. The findings suggest that in order to provide a system which offers some degree of flexibility in working hours to the employer and some protection against employers' excesses to workers, a legislative framework between the two extremes (of almost total employer flexibility in Britain and very restrictive controls over working hours in France) might be preferable. This would seem to be the direction being taken by the French with the introduction of laws enabling some freedom at company level from the legal framework for working hours. From the point of view of an employee in retailing, there seems to be little to be gained from adopting a more restrictive legislative framework in Britain because it does not seem that in practice the French system is much more beneficial to the employee than the British one where the trades unions are weak. A strengthening of the legislative framework for working hours in Britain would be likely to reduce the flexibility in labour use currently enjoyed by employers and could result in an increase in labour costs (if for example minimum periods of work were introduced which were not as productive as those used by the employer). Such changes would therefore be unlikely to be

welcomed by employers. Perhaps the most significant way of changing working hours legislation in Britain to the advantage of workers and to the least disadvantage of employers would be to lift the current hours limits on employment rights. However, in sectors such as retailing, where there is little unionization of the workforce, the main way in which better working conditions, including working hours, are likely to be achieved is through greater union representation.

Secondly, the research findings have highlighted the differences in the role of the State in Britain and France in enabling formal intervention by employees and employee representatives in the area of working hours (and working conditions as a whole). The findings revealed that even though the practical impact of works committees and self-expression groups in France depended on a range of factors (for example, union strength and the employer's commitment to employee participation and improving working conditions), their existence was beneficial to employees because they give workers an increased opportunity to enter into dialogue about their working conditions and, in particular, their working hours. For this reason the introduction of formal systems of this type in Britain might be advantageous to employees, provided that they are not used to replace normal collective bargaining channels. It is probable that any attempts to develop these systems would be resisted by employers in particular (trades unions are showing less opposition to the idea of works committees of late), because they have already expressed their reluctance to accept the European Commission's proposals to introduce works committees into all EEC member countries. It is possible, however, that works committees will eventually be introduced into Britain, particularly because policy statements by the parliamentary opposition suggest that if there was a

change in government it would be willing to promote greater worker participation in companies by this means.

In addition the research has shown, in connection with women's patterns of activity, that there are grounds, for equality reasons and in view of the anticipated labour shortage expected in the 1990s, for the British Government to adopt employment policies for women similar to those used by the French. These would seek to encourage a more equitable division of family and employment responsibilities and to give women a greater opportunity to combine full-time work with childcare. These policies could encompass a number of social measures such as greater childcare provision for pre-school and school-age children, and the introduction of paternity leave and more generous conditions for maternity leave. This is another policy area which may eventually be affected by Britain's membership of the EEC because Britain's currently low levels of childcare provisions have been interpreted by the Commission as an impediment to women's equality of opportunity. Although the introduction of legislation to encourage women's employment would be likely to stimulate changes in attitudes to women's role in the family, women's subordination to family responsibilities in Britain (as expressed in terms of the adaptation of their paid work to their childcare obligations) is unlikely to be reduced significantly until there are also widespread changes in attitudes to the gender division of family and employment roles.

Fourthly, the research findings have highlighted the role of trades unions in changes in working time on a national basis, at the level of large-scale grocery retailing, and at workplace level. In particular, they have shown how differing structures for collective bargaining and for employee participation influence patterns of working hours at the

workplace. The findings have not suggested that the French legislative structure for collective bargaining and for union intervention in working time issues was a panacea, because the unions' ability to shape working hours in practice in France, as in Britain, was affected by a similar range of factors (such as membership levels and labour market conditions). Nevertheless, the research findings suggested that the French system offered some benefits to the extent that it gave employees a greater formal opportunity to be represented and to intervene in working time issues, even if union membership levels were low. Policy statements suggest that it is probable that the union representation at the workplace would be facilitated if there was a change of government in Britain. However, it is unlikely given the current climate of opinion about the role of trades unions and the traditions of collective bargaining in Britain, that a future government would introduce legislation to guarantee the role of the trades unions in regular negotiations over working hours.

The findings may also be of interest to decision makers among employers and trade unions in retailing for a number of reasons. They have highlighted the importance of the service relationship to patterns of working hours in both countries and the way in which national factors affect the impact of the service relationship on patterns of working hours. They have provided detailed information, which is not currently available from secondary sources, about how patterns of working hours are being constructed in their own and neighbouring countries.

The research findings also provide valuable insights into how different patterns of working hours relate to employee satisfaction and labour productivity in their own and neighbouring countries. For example, the trend towards shorter weekly part-time contracts and shorter daily

working hours, identified in both Britain and France, leads to higher labour productivity in both countries, but to greater employee dissatisfaction, and associated effects such as high labour turnover, in France compared with Britain. This is because more part-timers are involuntarily working part-time in France than in Britain. Also, rolling shifts result in greater satisfaction with working hours in France, while fixed shifts are more popular in Britain. This dissimilarity stems from national differences in the factors determining women's priorities in working hours as described above. The research findings suggested that French retailers would have nothing to gain from introducing the British model of shift patterns because it was the problems encountered from the use of fixed shifts in France which caused French retailers to introduce rolling shifts. Similarly, British retailers would be unlikely to benefit from introducing rolling shifts for part-timers because employees are satisfied with these patterns of hours in Britain.

The findings have demonstrated the usefulness of the comparative research method. Single-nation studies of patterns of working hours for Britain or France would not have enabled national specificity to be highlighted as it was through cross-national comparison. For example, if only Britain had been studied it might have been assumed to be "normal" for part-time work to be extensively used in Western industrialized countries, for working hours to be organized in a particular way, or for the State, employers, and trades unions to adopt a certain level of intervention in working time issues. By highlighting both similarities and differences in patterns of working hours the use of the comparative research method has enabled a contribution to be made to the argument about universalism versus culturalism: the findings reinforce the view that while there are

universal trends (such as the growing use of part-time work in retailing) the representation of these trends differs from one culture to another.

However, the research has, in particular, highlighted the value of using the safari and comparative approaches. The use of these approaches has enabled the formulation, analysis and evaluation of comparative theory in societal terms which would not have been possible had the descriptive and juxtaposition approaches been used, since they do not usually enable detailed analysis and explanation in these terms. Comparative theory generated from using the safari approach formed the starting point for fieldwork designed to enable the comparison of theory with practice. The research findings show that in some areas practice has supported the theory (ie the hypotheses made about the degree of experimentation with working hours, and about part-timers' satisfaction with working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France), but in others the findings have been more ambiguous or have not supported the relevant theory. For example, it was hypothesized that because of an apparently greater awareness of working time issues, and in particular of non-work issues in France than in Britain, French employers would be more likely to take into account employees' preferences in working hours than their British counterparts. The research findings suggested, however, that this may not be the case and that, while the French may be making more formal attempts to take into account employees' preferences in working hours, this may be taking place to a greater extent on an informal basis in Britain. It was also found that despite an apparently greater awareness of working time issues in France (as well as a much stricter regulatory framework for working hours in retailing) the analysis of working hours was much more detailed in Britain, and that despite the

existence of more formal channels for employees to determine their working hours in France (works committees, trades union representation etc) this did not necessarily mean they had a greater impact in practice. It may be suggested that the ability to highlight differences of this type justifies using the safari and comparative approaches.

Finally, the advantage of a single researcher carrying out cross-national comparative research has also been demonstrated by the research. Using a single researcher has meant that a number of the difficulties often encountered by multi-national teams because of the cultural boundaries between researchers have been overcome. For example, because one person with detailed knowledge of the countries under study carried out the research the problems of determining conceptions, definitions and research methods, which are increased when large numbers of researchers from differing cultures do cross-national research, were limited. Also, the use of the single researcher facilitated the making of standardized observations and the collection of standardized data, which are facets of the research process often made more difficult when the research is carried out by different teams of researchers in different countries. On the otherhand, the use of the single researcher (particularly within the financial and time constraints of a doctoral project) for the research has had the drawback that the scope of the study has been more limited than might have been the case if it had been carried out by multi-national teams, with all the resources implied by that type of project.

The research findings may be of particular interest in the context of changing working patterns in Western industrialized countries because the research has highlighted the specificity of Britain and France with

respect to working time, despite the overall similarity in the changes in working patterns taking place in Western industrialized countries as a whole. The findings obtained from the detailed research in retail organizations in the two countries contribute to the relatively small body of work involving cross-national comparisons of organizations which shows the importance of cultural factors for understanding organizations and the behaviour of people working in them.

The Limitations of the Research

The empirical research for the thesis was designed as far as possible to be comparable. In order to achieve maximum comparability attempts were made to carry out standardized case comparison at both industry and outlet levels. Practical problems involved in the research have meant, however, that there were a number of limitations in the fieldwork which should be taken into account in the interpretation of the findings. In the following discussion these limitations are assessed, firstly, in relation to the industry-level research and then in relation to the case study work.

While the financial and time limitations of the research prevented an exhaustive study of large-scale grocery retailers in Britain and France, it was possible to sample a large number of these retailers in the two countries. However, this was more difficult in France where the industry was less concentrated than in Britain. The greater representativeness of the British sample should be taken into account in the interpretation of the research findings.

Differences in the structure of the large-scale grocery industry in Britain and France meant that firms in the British sample were larger

(in terms of numbers employed) and owned outlets of greater average size than companies in the French sample. It was argued that differing ranges of outlet size might introduce bias into the findings, but that this would be unlikely to be the case as far as firm size is concerned. Attempts were made in the analysis of the research to compare firms with similar ranges of outlet sizes and to take into account differences in outlet size in the interpretation of the research findings. As a consequence, it has been suggested that the adjusted results of the industry-level research accurately reflect similarities and differences in patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France.

The limitations of time and finances within which the research was carried out meant that it was only possible for quite general information to be collected about patterns of working hours in the major large-scale grocery retailers in the two countries. Further research would be worthwhile at industry level in order to investigate further the similarities and differences identified from the research in this thesis.

While the case study provided more detailed information about patterns of working hours and the structuring of working hours in relation to the role of women in the workforce in large-scale grocery retailing, there were a number of methodological problems which limited the conclusions which could be drawn from the case study. The problems which arose included the difficulty encountered in obtaining outlets of similar size located in areas with comparable labour market conditions and stages of service sector development in both Britain and France. This was not easy to achieve given the problems of gaining access to companies and the differing characteristics of the retail industry in

Birmingham and Lyons. In inner-city Lyons, where a case study outlet was sought for comparison with the store in the suburbs of Birmingham, the outlets were much smaller than the subject of the British case study, while on the outskirts of Lyons they were much larger. Both these factors were expected to introduce bias into the research findings. Consequently, an attempt was made, firstly, to identify the possible effect of outlet size and labour market conditions in carrying out the research, and secondly to take into account these factors in the interpretation of the research findings.

Practical difficulties involved in carrying out the research also made it impossible to gain samples of women from the outlets which were representative of women with children working part-time on all the main shift patterns. Nevertheless, it was felt that provided that these limitations were taken into consideration in the interpretation of the research findings, it would be possible to gain some insights into the relationship between patterns of working hours, reasons for working part-time, and satisfaction with patterns of working hours.

Furthermore, by definition case study analysis considers only one case in detail, which may not be fully representative of the phenomena under study. This is why the case study findings, although providing useful additional information about patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing, must be interpreted in the context of the industry-wide empirical work and the national-level secondary data analysis. Hence, an attempt has been made to describe the case study findings in terms of this context.

Particular caution should be shown in making generalizations on the basis of the comparison of part-time workers in the case study analysis

given the small size of the sample in the two countries. While the information provided by the research reinforces the hypotheses made in the body of the thesis on the basis of secondary data and is, to some extent, corroborated from the industry-wide studies, wider extrapolation is not possible. This is one area in which further research, by means of multiple case studies or of studies of larger samples of part-timers, would be valuable.

On the basis of the empirical work an attempt has been made in the thesis to draw together all the factors influencing patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing. The findings reveal their enormous complexity and show that this stems from the intersection of national-level characteristics, such as legislative frameworks attitudes, company objectives and company level trade union strength, individual outlet characteristics, such as location and trading hours, as well as outlet policies, trade union strength, and employee characteristics. Given the complexity of the factors relating to patterns of working hours, the research findings cannot highlight the uniqueness of each individual company and outlet situation. Inevitably, in attempting to draw out general trends from the complexity of patterns found, the description of findings at industry level neglects to depict fully the diversity in practices within and between organizations. The case study analysis represents an attempt to counterbalance this limitation by highlighting the individuality of certain aspects of individual company and outlet situations.

Areas for Further Research

The research carried out in this thesis has highlighted a number of areas which would be of interest for further research. One would

be to examine in greater detail Franco-British similarities and differences in any one aspect of patterns of working hours identified in large-scale grocery retailing. For example, contract lengths in Britain and France could be studied further through research with larger numbers of retailers in the two countries.

Secondly, the ambiguity of the findings about the extent to which employers adapt working hours to suit employees reveals the scope for more empirical research in this area, both in retailing and in other sectors of the British and French economies. It would be particularly useful to carry out this research at outlet level in large-scale grocery retailing where it appears that the degree of informal flexibility allowed by employers can best be assessed.

Cross-national comparative empirical research could also be carried out in order to assess the degree of, and type of, experimentation with working hours which has taken place in Britain and France over recent years. This could focus on retailing or include a number of other sectors in both the British and French economies. Another area in which it may be of interest to research in greater depth is the role which trades unions, in firms and at outlet level in the two countries, play in influencing patterns of working hours, given that French legislation allows for the trades unions to have a greater impact than their British counterparts. This research could be extended to other sectors of the economy in the two countries and to compare, for example, industries where union membership is high in both countries with others, such as retailing, where it is low, in order to see whether one system is more effective than another under these differing conditions.

Fourthly, the findings from the relatively small-scale research with part-timers could be used as the basis for more detailed study. For example, larger samples of part-timers working in large-scale grocery retailing (or in other low-skilled occupations in the private sector) could be used to study satisfaction with working hours. A worthwhile piece of research might be to examine the preferred working hours of women with children who work part-time, to see if the differences identified in this thesis (for example, giving priority to family time in France and adapting hours to childcare commitments in Britain) are found in larger samples of part-timers, and in differing sectors of the economy in the two countries. The recent comparison of two national large-scale studies (the Women and Employment Survey in Britain and the CERC study in France) has addressed some of these areas, but there may be scope for further analysis of these data bases. Another topic for further study is the relationship between socio-occupational categories and reasons for working part-time among women with children. Also, the research carried out for this thesis found some evidence of a greater attachment to work, a less traditional view of their role in the family, and a greater willingness to use extra-family childcare facilities among women in France compared with Britain (particularly among younger age groups), as well as a greater reluctance among French fathers to undertake childcare responsibilities. These differences could provide additional interesting avenues for further study.

In sum, the research in this thesis has shown that there are significant differences in patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing in Britain and France, in terms of the length, organization, and flexibility of working hours, and that these differences can be attributed to dissimilar socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts in the two countries. This research has made a

contribution to the body of knowledge about patterns of working hours in Britain and France, and about patterns of part-time hours, both at national level and in large-scale grocery retailing. Its findings may be relevant to researchers and policy makers in the area of working hours at both levels, and provide the basis for further research in a number of areas.

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APPENDIX I
EXAMPLES OF LETTERS REQUESTING INTERVIEWS WITH BRITISH AND
FRENCH TRADES UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND EMPLOYERS

Store Operations Director,

17th October 1985.

Dear Mr

Over the past year I have been carrying out doctoral research at Aston University as part of the ESRC sponsored Anglo-French programme. My thesis will be an Anglo-French comparison of working patterns and conditions in the retail sector with particular reference to their impact on women employees in large scale self-service outlets. My work not only has theoretical relevance but a number of practical and policy applications especially given the different institutional and legislative framework and what appear to be very different systems of work organisation in France and Britain. It would seem that little or no published research has been carried out in this area.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you, however briefly, the working patterns of your staff and other related aspects of my work. I am hoping to obtain comparable information from France during the forthcoming year.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Abigail Anderson.

Mme Jacqueline Hutin,
Fédération des personnels du commerce
la distribution et des services CGT,
265 rue de Paris,
93514 Montreuil Cedex,
FRANCE.

39 Heaton Grove
Bradford 9.

Le 20 Novembre 1985.

Madame,

Je suis en deuxième année d'étude pour un doctorat de troisième cycle à l'Université d'Aston à Birmingham. Ma thèse consiste en une comparaison franco-britannique de l'organisation du travail et des conditions de travail dans la grande distribution. Peut-être vous souvenez-vous de notre entretien en Décembre 1984, où je n'avais pas encore décidé sur quel secteur j'allais centrer mes recherches. Actuellement, je m'intéresse surtout à l'utilisation du travail à temps partiel dans les supermarchés et les hypermarchés.

Il est dans ce contexte que je me permets de vous écrire afin de vous demander un bref entretien lors de mon prochain séjour à Paris entre le 2 et le 10 Décembre.

Au cours de mes recherches, j'ai essayé de repérer la position prise des différents syndicats, dans les deux pays, envers l'utilisation du travail à temps partiel ainsi que leur impact sur ce dernier, et je voudrais vous poser des questions à cet égard. Ensuite, étant donné le contact très proche de vos représentants avec le personnel dans ces magasins, je voudrais également vous demander les impressions qu'ils en ont tiré concernant, par exemple, les attitudes des travailleurs à temps partiel et à temps plein envers le travail à temps partiel; et les préférences des travailleurs à temps partiel pour certains horaires de travail. Pour terminer, je voudrais vous demander en dernier ressort si vous pourriez me mettre en contact avec vos homologues dans les sections du personnel de commerce d'autres syndicats. Vous êtes, en effet, le seul responsable de cet section parmi tous les syndicats, qui a répondu à ma première demande d'entretien. A l'étape actuelle de mes recherches, il m'est très important de discuter avec tous les syndicats.

Voulez-vous bien m'excuser de vous demander un entretien dans un délai assez court, mais un séjour à Paris s'est avéré très nécessaire au dernier moment. S'il ne vous sera pas possible de m'accorder un bref entretien pendant mon séjour, auriez-vous la gentillesse de m'envoyer de la documentation concernant les questions mentionnées ci-dessus. Voulez-vous bien me répondre à mon adresse parisien: Chez Mlle Tinland, 16 Avenue Karl Marx, 93000 Bobigny.

Dans l'attente d'une réponse favorable de votre part, veuillez agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués,

Mlle Abigail Anderson.

Mme Clair Beauville,
Secrétaire Générale,
CFDT,
5, rue Cadet,
75009 PARIS,
FRANCE.

39 Heaton Grove,
Bradford 9

Le 9 Novembre 1985.

Madame,

Dr Jolyon Howorth, ancien professeur à l'Université d'Aston à Birmingham m'a conseillé de prendre contact avec vous. Je fais une thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle à l'Université d'Aston avec le soutien du CNRS et de l'ESRC. Ma thèse consiste en une comparaison franco-britannique de l'organisation du travail et des conditions de travail dans la grande distribution. Je m'intéresse surtout à l'utilisation du temps partiel dans les supermarchés et les hypermarchés. Je viens de commencer mon deuxième année d'étude.

Il m'est nécessaire de discuter des problèmes d'organisation de travail et des conditions de travail avec tous les partenaires sociaux et il est dans ce but que j'ai essayé plusieurs fois de me mettre en rapport avec la section des personnels du commerce de la distribution et des services de la CFDT afin de demander un entretien avec le responsable concerné. Or, je n'ai pas reçu de réponse à mes demandes de la part de la CFDT (comme pour FO, CFTC et CGC) et il est dans ces circonstances-là que Jolyon m'a conseillé de vous écrire pour vous demander les coordonnées d'un responsable de la CFDT avec qui je pourrais discuter.

Je serai à Paris la semaine du 2 au 9 Décembre, vous serait-il possible de m'accorder un entretien afin de discuter de ces problèmes? Auriez-vous la gentillesse de me répondre à mon adresse parisien: Chez Mlle Tinland, 16 Avenue Karl Marx, Appt 52, 93000, Bobigny. Je vous téléphonerai afin de confirmer la date qui vous convient lors de mon arrivée à Paris.

Dans l'attente, veuillez agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués,

Mlle Abigail Anderson.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ET/Tel: 021.359 3611 Ex

Mme Saint Leger
Syndicat National des Maisons
d'Alimentation a Succursales
supermarchés, hypermarchés
21, rue Lord Byron
75008 PARIS
FRANCE

Department of Modern Languages

Professor of Modern Languages: D E Ager BA, PhD

Professor of Language: F Knowles MA, MSc

Reader in the History of European Universities: J M Fletcher MA, DPhil

Birmingham, le 17 Juin 1985.

Madame,

Monsieur Tixier, Directeur des Affaires Sociales, Société Doc François à Bordeaux m'a donné vos coordonnées. J'ai eu l'occasion de travailler pendant un an dans cette société, ce stage étant partie intégrante de ma licence de gestion et de français. Depuis, j'ai entamé une thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle à l'université d'Aston avec le soutien du CNRS et de l'ESRC (l'organisation anglaise équivalente). Ma thèse consiste en une comparaison franco-britannique des conditions et de l'organisation du travail dans la grande distribution. Je m'intéresse en particulier à la situation des employés à temps partiel dans les grandes surfaces de vente alimentaire. Grâce à mes contacts avec la Société Doc François je pense pouvoir accéder à une société dans le même groupe à Lyon afin de mener la partie française de mon étude de cas; la partie anglaise se déroulant à Birmingham.

Je vous écris afin de m'enquérir sur d'éventuelles études portant sur la gestion de la main d'oeuvre et l'organisation du travail effectuées au sein de votre organisation ou dans d'autres organisations dont vous avez connaissance. Comme vous pourrez le remarquer, le domaine de mon étude est très vaste. Tout ce qui porte sur l'organisation du travail m'intéresse par exemple l'impact de la nouvelle technologie, la législation concernant l'utilisation des formes particulières d'emploi, les règles de commerce déterminant les plages d'ouverture des magasins, le rôle des Syndicats dans l'organisation et les conditions de travail etc.

Est-ce qu'il vous serait possible de m'expédier de la documentation en rapport avec mes recherches?

/2

En dernier lieu, vous serait-il possible de m'accorder un entretien lors de mon stage d'étude à Paris à partir d'octobre afin de parler de mon projet de recherche avec vous et de consulter votre documentation?

Dans l'attente, veuillez agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués,



Mlle Abigail Anderson.

Mr W.J Connor,
National Officer(Retail Multiple Food Trades)
USDAW,
188 Wilmslow Road,
MANCHESTER M14 6LJ.

39 Heaton Grove,
Bradford 9.

19th January 1986.

Dear Mr Connor,

I am in my second year of doctoral research at Aston University sponsored by the ESRC-CNRS Anglo-French programme. My research consists of an Anglo-French comparison of working patterns in large scale grocery retailing. I have therefore been concerned with evaluating the differences and similarities in the impact of for example, employers, employees, legislation, trade unions and labour market conditions on working patterns in the two countries. I am particularly interested in the hours of part-time workers in supermarkets and hypermarkets. I have found a number of significant differences between the two countries in particular regarding the role of legislation and trade unions and which I believe could have important policy implications for unions, employers and Government alike.

I am hoping to talk to union representatives in the two countries in order to establish their standpoint as far as working patterns are concerned and the sort of influence they exert, and would like to exert, in this area. Therefore, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you. I have discussed working patterns with personnel officers from a number of large retail multiples and would value your comments on the range of responses I have received. I will be carrying out a study period in France between the end of February and the end of March but would be free to visit you from April onwards.

I look forward to hearing from you,

yours sincerely,

Abigail Anderson.

Le Directeur du Personnel,

39 Heaton Grove,
Bradford 9.

Le 8 janvier 1986.

Monsieur,

Je fais une thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle à l'Université d'Aston avec le soutien du CNRS et de l'organisation anglaise équivalente. Ma thèse consiste en une comparaison franco-britannique de l'organisation du travail dans la grande distribution. Je m'applique à cerner les différentes forces en présence déterminant le planning des horaires de travail dans les hypermarchés et les supermarchés. Mes recherches ont non seulement une validité théorique mais aussi une portée pratique au niveau du planning des horaires et de l'organisation du travail.

En Angleterre les responsables des Affaires Sociales dans de nombreuses sociétés de grandes surfaces m'ont aidé énormément en m'expliquant en toute confiance leur système d'horaires de travail et les différentes influences jouant sur ce système. Dans une très grande société de supermarchés britannique j'ai également fait une petite étude sur des femmes travaillant à temps partiel afin de repérer les facteurs déterminant leurs horaires de travail préférés et les horaires réalisés. Je souhaite actuellement lancer le côté français de mon étude et dans ce but je me permets de vous écrire afin de demander votre aide.

Je serai en France entre fin Février et fin Mars 1986, vous serait-il possible, soit de m'accorder un court entretien, soit de me mettre en contact avec un responsable dans votre société qui pourrait m'aider. Auriez-vous la gentillesse de me répondre à l'adresse en tête ou à mon adresse parisien: chez Mlle Tinland, 16 Avenue Karl Marx, Appt 52, 93 000 Bobigny. Tél: 48 31 05 77.

Dans l'attente d'une réponse favorable de votre part, veuillez agréer Monsieur, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées,

Mlle Abigail Anderson.

APPENDIX II
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULES AND OUTLINES OF QUESTION
AREAS FOR EMPLOYERS, UNIONS AND PART-TIMERS IN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Patterns of working hours in large-scale grocery retailing

Areas for discussion.

1) **Part-time work:** how and why part-time employment has developed in the firm and in the multiple retail grocery business as a whole, the future of part-time work in the short and long term; the levels of part-time work in outlets and shop departments and how these levels are decided; the average weekly number of hours for which part-timers are employed and the rationale for this; the characteristics of the firm's part-time work force in terms of age, sex, marital status, and qualifications.

2) **Patterns of working hours in stores:** the way in which part and full-time working hours interact; typical patterns of working hours on the shop-floor; typical patterns for different groups of employees ie check-out assistants, shelf-fillers etc; the responsibility for determining patterns of working hours in stores; the degree of employee choice in working hours; length of daily part-time shifts and the reasons for this duration; the organisation of overtime in stores and the circumstances under which it is requested of full and part-time employees; ease of recruitment for various shifts; future changes in patterns of working hours; the role of unions and other employee representative groups (for example workers committees and quality circles) in determining patterns of working hours.

3) **Labour productivity and labour cost targeting:** the level of labour productivity analysis ie store, departmental, job; the measure for labour productivity, the rationale for using this measure, and the way in which it is calculated; the way in which labour productivity calculations are employed by management; the way in which labour cost targets are determined and used.

4) **Multi-skilling:** the extent of multi-skilling in stores and plans for the development of multi-skilling.

Abigail Anderson, 1985.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGEMENT: WORKING PATTERNS IN LARGE-SCALE GROCERY
RETAILING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PART-TIME WORK.

1.0 Levels of part-time work: factors influencing these levels.

Looking at your stores can you tell me in general terms in what proportions part-time and full-time workers are employed in your stores?

What definition are you using for part-time work?

What proportion of these part-timers would you call "permanent" part-time workers ie. those who are not on a short-term contract?

What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of employing part-time workers?

Can you tell me how store employment levels are determined and in particular how the proportion of part-timers is determined in your stores?

Is guidance on levels of part-time and full-time work for store managers provided at your head office or for example at group management level or is it entirely the store manager's responsibility to decide these levels for himself/herself?

IF THE STORE MANAGER FOLLOWS CENTRAL DIRECTIVES

What is the purpose of central guidance and on what basis are these levels calculated?

Are there other factors to be taken into consideration in deciding these levels?

IF STORE MANAGER DECIDES

In this case what sort of factors decide his choice in levels of part-time work and full-time work?

How are levels of full and part-time work established for new shops?

2.0 Productivity questions:[to be asked at appropriate opening in discussion]

Is labour productivity calculated for your stores?

Are these calculations carried out at store level?

Are the calculations broken down by department for example?

In what terms is labour productivity measured?

For what period are the calculations made-every week, month, year?

Are productivity targets set by the store management/head office for the shop as a whole/each department?

How are these targets set?

How long have you been using this system for?

What sort of system were you running before?

3.Characteristics of part-time workers and their work.

Work content.

What sort of work do part-timers normally do?

Do male and female part-timers do the same sort of work?

What do they do?

Does the type of work they carry out during their probationary period differ from their type of work once they become permanent staff?

Characteristics.

What broadly is the qualification level of your part-time work-force?

Do your part-timers fall into any main age groups?

Overall what are their sex and marital status?

Would you say that these characteristics differ in any particular way from those of your full-time work-force?

Could you give me a profile of a typical store in terms of age, sex, hours worked and marital status?

Are you looking for any particular characteristics in terms of age, sex etc from your part-time work-force when you employ part-timers?

IF YES

What are they and why?

How do you obtain candidates for part-time jobs? Do you go through a job centre? If so do you lay down any specifications concerning the applicants characteristics at this stage?

In France part-time work in retailing appears to be very much a last resort for a narrow band of disadvantaged working class women, many with

big families, who cannot find any other work which enables them to be at home for a great part of the time with their children. How do you think this compares with British part-timers?

4.0 Part-time terms and conditions.

a) Probationary periods.

Do part-timers have to work a probationary period?

IF YES

How long is your company's probationary period?

b) Training.

Do you train part-timers?

Can you describe to me what sort of training you give them?

Do you train part-timers during the probationary period?

c) Promotion.

Are part-timers eligible for promotion?

IF YES

What sort of jobs are they promoted into?

In general are part-timers given positions of authority in the stores?

Which ones?

d) Pay.

How are they paid?

Are they given any bonuses, options to participate in profit sharing schemes or incentive schemes for example?

Are they eligible for the same benefits as full timers ie concerning pensions, sick pay etc

e)The employment contract.

4.1 Do part-timers have a written contract?

4.2 Is there a fixed minimum of hours they have to work?

4.3 Are working hours and exact working patterns ie the days on which hours are worked, also written into the contract?

5.Part-time working patterns.

Whose responsibility is it to decide on working patterns in stores?

With regards to part-time working patterns does central management give any direction on shift patterns in stores both in the duration of the shifts or their arrangement across the working day and week, or are patterns established entirely by store management?

Could you tell me something about the way part-time working patterns are developed in stores?

What sort of factors influence working patterns in stores?

Can you tell me whether there are any typical part-time shift patterns in your stores ie. Morning shifts, lunch time shifts, evening shifts?

Can you give me an example of the sorts of part-time patterns you would use in a typical week in a store?

Why are your shifts of this length and sequenced in this way?

How long has this sort of system been operating for?

Can you tell me if your working patterns have changed over time?

IF YES

How have they changed and why?

Has the existing pattern of work met with any problems?

I should like to discuss the characteristics of your part-time workers from a different angle now:

Would you say that the part-timers working on different shifts working at different times of the day have similar or different characteristics? For example if night shift workers were compared with afternoon shift workers would you say that part-timers on each shift shared similar characteristics or not?

IF NO

In what way do they differ?

IF YES

In what way are they similar?

Do you find it easy to recruit for all your shifts or do you have any difficulties on any shifts?

IF DIFFICULTIES

Which ones?

Why do you think some shifts are more popular than others?

Do you think that the present labour market situation has had any effect on your ability to recruit for your shifts?

IF YES

How?

Do you think the present employment climate has any effect on your working patterns in stores?

Or has it affected employment in your stores in any other way which I have not already mentioned?

6.Flexibility of part-time working hours.

Does your company retain the right as part of the part-timer's employment contract to vary the contracted hours and their arrangement across the week?

IF YES

Do you give forewarning of these sorts of variations in working hours? If so how many days in advance is notice given of modifications?

Do you retain the right to increase hours in the contract to cover for such things as sickness, holidays, peak trading and stock-taking?

IF YES

Do you give forewarning of these sorts of variations in working hours?
If so how many days in advance is notice given of modifications?

Should a part-timer be unable to adapt under these circumstances would he/she be breaking his contract and therefore eligible for dismissal?

IF YES

Do you ever have cases where part-timers do not want to or cannot adapt to your requirements and you therefore feel obliged to dismiss them?

When minor changes in working patterns are planned such as changes in the daily starting and finishing times do you negotiate changes before they are introduced?

IF YES

Who do you negotiate them with?

If minor changes in working patterns are planned do you inform individuals or unions in advance of expected changes?

If major changes in working patterns are planned such as the reorganisation of a department's working hours, do you negotiate changes before they are introduced?

IF YES

Who do you negotiate them with?

If major changes in working patterns are planned do you inform individual's or unions in advance of expected changes?

Is there an opportunity for part-timers to increase their hours up to and including full-time hours if they want to?

Conversely, can full-timers move to part-time work if they want to?

7. Semi-autonomous check-out teams.

In France a system exists for part-time check-out assistants whereby groups of between 7 and 15 check-out girls are left together to decide their weekly plan of working hours around a core number of hours for each employee. The system works rather like flexi-time although the girls are not given complete freedom. A week before they must confirm their hours and must at all costs, as a team, cover all the hours the management has set out. In this way these women are given greater flexibility with their domestic obligations and increased autonomy. In France such systems are said to increase employee job satisfaction and reduce absenteeism.

Do you have similar systems in your stores, either on the check-outs or elsewhere in the store?

IF YES

When did you introduce these systems?

Are they in use throughout your chain?

How successful have they been?

With what objectives were they first introduced?

IF NO

Do you think such a system could work in your organisation?

Why/why not?

Are there any other aspects of your working patterns I have omitted to mention and which you think we should discuss?

OTHER INFLUENCES ON WORKING PATTERNS

8. Works committees and working patterns.

In France new legislation has recently bolstered the role of the works committee in the firm, which has been obligatory for firms for some years now. They are now free to discuss working patterns with management in these committees and express their preferences as far as working patterns are concerned.

Do you have works committees, quality circles or any other group of this sort set up in stores?

IF YES

Who participates in these groups?

Is this an arena where working patterns and working patterns changes are discussed?

IF NO What sort of things are discussed?

IF YES Do you find in general that suggestions concerning working patterns emerging from your meetings are incorporated into new working patterns or not?

9. Unionisation and working patterns.

Are part-timers in your stores are unionised?

Approximately what percentage of your part-time work-force is unionised?

What union(s) do they belong to?

What percentage of your full-time employees are unionised?

What union(s) do they belong to?

Does (do) your union(s) try to influence working patterns in your shops?

I have heard that in some chains unions have brought in a "single-skill" agreement by which employees cannot move about the store say for example from the shop floor onto the tills when trade is busy. This has implications for the breakdown of part and full-time work and consequently working patterns. Can you tell me whether a similar agreement exists in your stores with your union(s)?

What is the impact on work organisation in your stores?

In general, do you train your work-force in a number of different jobs to encourage multi-skilling, or do you prefer your employees to specialise in one area?

Do you make any differentiation between full and part-time workers as far as the number of jobs you train them is concerned?

10. Laser Technology.

We often hear of the developments of new technology and in retailing of the development of laser scanning?

Have you introduced laser technology into your stores?

IF YES

Since when?

Has this technology had any impact on working patterns in stores?

Has it had any other effects?

IF NO

Are you planning to bring in laser scanning in the future?

IF YES

What advantages do you hope to gain from it?

IF NO

Why not?

11. Development of part-time work.

We have discussed in some details the characteristics of your part-time work-force, factors determining their working patterns and their conditions and terms of employment. I would like to ask you now:

How you would explain the development of part-time work in retailing as a whole;

and more specifically, how has part-time work has developed over the years in your stores?

What do you see as being the main catalyst(s) for its development in your stores?

How do you see the future development of part-time work in your stores?

12. Future changes and working patterns.

De-regulation of shopping hours and Sunday trading?

There has been a great deal of debate on deregulation of the Shops Laws and the supposed desire to shop on Sundays.

Do you see consumers' demands on shopping hours changing?

Are you finding an increasing proportion of your sales taking place later in the evening?

Is the sort of service they require changing?

How else are their demands changing?

Are these changes having an impact on your a) employment policy as a whole and b) your employment of part-timers and their working patterns

L'Organisation du temps de travail dans les grandes surfaces alimentaires

Les champs principaux de discussion

1) Le travail à temps partiel: comment et pourquoi le travail à temps partiel a développé dans votre société et dans les grandes surfaces alimentaires en France?; comment voyez-vous l'avenir de cette forme de travail à court et à long terme; quels sont les taux de travail à temps partiel dans les magasins et les différentes gestions des magasins, et comment détermine-t-on ces taux; combien d'heures de travail hebdomadaires font les salarié(e)s à temps partiel et pourquoi; quels sont les caractéristiques des salarié(e)s à temps partiel en termes de leur âge, de leur sexe, de leur situation de famille, et de leur diplômes.

2) L'organisation du temps de travail dans les magasins: comment articulent les horaires de travail des salarié(e)s à temps plein et des salarié(e)s à temps partiel?; y a-t-il une organisation typique du temps de travail des salariés dans les magasins?; quelle est l'organisation typique du temps de travail dans les différents emplois dans le magasin, par exemple aux caisses et en rayon?; quelle est la durée journalière moyenne des équipes à temps partiel et quelles sont les raisons pour cette durée?; est-ce que votre société prévoit des aménagements du temps de travail dans vos magasins, et lesquels?; comment organise-t-on les heures complémentaires en magasin et quand est-ce qu'on les demande aux salarié(e)s à temps plein et à temps partiel?; qui détermine les horaires de travail en magasin et comment sont-ils décidés?; dans quelle mesure le salarié/la salariée peut-il/elle choisir ses horaires de travail?; est-ce qu'il est facile de recruter des salarié(e)s pour les différentes équipes en magasin?; quel est le rôle des syndicats, des représentants des salarié(e)s et du comité d'entreprise dans l'organisation du temps de travail dans les magasins?

3) La productivité du travail et l'emploi des objectifs de frais de personnel: faites-vous des calculs de productivité de travail pour chaque magasin, et pour chaque gestion et emploi dans les magasins?; comment calculez-vous la productivité du travail et pourquoi?; comment sont ces calculs utilisés dans les magasins?; employez-vous des objectifs de frais de personnel en magasin et comment sont-ils calculés?.

4) La polyvalence: dans quelle mesure sont vos salarié(e)s polyvalent(e)s en magasin? Avez-vous l'intention de développer la polyvalence?

Abigail Anderson, 1985.

DOMAINES PRINCIPAUX D'ETUDE-RESPONSABLES DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES.

1.0 Niveaux du travail à temps partiel et les facteurs déterminants.

1.1 Si l'on considère les différents types de magasins dans votre société, pouvez-vous me dire en gros quel pourcentage de vos employés dans chaque type de magasin travaille à temps plein et à temps partiel?

1.2 Quel est votre définition du travail à temps partiel?

1.3 Quels sont de votre point de vue, les avantages et les inconvénients du travail à temps partiel?

1.4 Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment sont établis les effectifs et en particulier le pourcentage des effectifs travaillant à temps partiel dans vos magasins?

1.5 Est-ce que le directeur du magasin suit les conseils du siège social, ou d'autres centres administratifs, par exemple au niveau du groupe, lorsqu'il décide le pourcentage des employés à temps partiel dans son magasin; ou est-ce que c'est le directeur tout seul qui décide ce pourcentage?

SI LE DIRECTEUR SUIV DES CONSEILS

1.6 Comment sont calculé les niveaux qui sont appliqués dans les magasins et dans quel but y a-t-il des directives de l'administration centrale?

1.7 Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres facteurs qui entrent en jeu?

SI LE DIRECTEUR DECIDE

1.8 Dans ce cas quels facteurs influencent son choix du pourcentage de personnes travaillant à temps partiel et à temps plein?

1.9 Comment s'établissent les effectifs et le pourcentage de personnes travaillant à temps plein et à temps partiel lorsqu'il s'agit de l'ouverture d'un magasin neuf?

PRODUCTIVITE-VOIR QUESTION 21.

2.0 Caractéristiques des salarié(e)s à temps partiel.

2.1 Est-ce que tous vos emplois à temps partiel sont des emplois à durée déterminée?

2.3 En gros qu'est ce quels diplômes ont vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel?

2.4 Est-ce que vos employés à temps partiel font partie de certains groupes d'âge?

2.5 En gros, quel est leur sexe et leur situation de famille?

2.6 Est-ce que les caractéristiques de vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel se différencient de celles de vos salarié(e)s à temps plein?

2.7 Est-ce que vous cherchez des caractéristiques particulières en termes d'âge, de sexe etc dans vos candidats pour des emplois à temps partiel?

SI OUI

2.71 Lesquels et pourquoi?

2.8 Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner un profil d'un magasin typique en ce qui concerne les horaires de travail, âge, sexe et situation de famille?

2.9 Comment trouvez-vous des candidats pour vos emplois à temps partiel? Est-ce que vous passez par une agence d'emploi, et dans ce cas-là, est-ce que vous demandez des caractéristiques spécifiques de vos candidats à cette étape?

En Angleterre, les travailleurs à temps partiel dans la distribution sont pour la plupart des mères de famille qui travaillent à temps partiel parce-que'elles ne trouvent pas d'autres moyens pour concilier la garde des enfants et l'activité professionnelle.

3.0 De ce point de vue, comment se comparent les salarié(e)s à temps partiel en France dans la distribution à leurs homologues britanniques?

3.01 D'après vous sont-ils/elles incité(e)s à travailler à temps partiel pour les mêmes raisons?

4.0 Le travail à temps partiel, ses termes et ses conditions d'emploi.

4.1 Est-ce que les salarié(e)s à temps partiel ont un contrat écrit?

4.2 Est-ce qu'il y a un minimum d'heures qu'ils sont obligés à travailler?

4.3 Est-ce-que l'horaire de travail et la répartition exacte de cet horaire sur la semaine sont également fixés dans le contrat?

5.0 Souplesse d'horaires.

5.1 Est-ce que votre société garde le droit dans son contrat de travail de modifier l'horaire de travail inscrit dans le contrat de travail et sa répartition sur la semaine?

SI OUI

5.11 Devez-vous donner un préavis lorsque vous voulez faire de telles modifications? De combien de jours?

5.2 Est-ce que vous gardez le droit d'augmenter les horaires pour répondre par exemple aux absences dues aux maladies et aux vacances et aux fluctuations de clientèle ainsi que pour faire l'inventaire?

SI OUI

5.21 Devez-vous donner lorsque vous voulez faire de telles modifications? De combien de jours?

5.22 Si un employé à temps partiel ne veut pas ou ne peut pas répondre à vos demandes est-ce que cela représente une rupture de son contrat et donc vous donne le droit de le licencier?

SI OUI

5.23 Est-ce qu'il vous arrive de vous sentir obligé de licencier un employé à temps partiel qui ne peut pas s'adapter à vos demandes?

SI OUI

5.24 Est-ce que cela vous arrive souvent?

5.3 Est-ce que l'employé à temps partiel a l'occasion de faire augmenter son horaire de travail et, à la limite, de passer au temps plein s'il le souhaite?

5.4 En revanche, est-ce que les employés à temps plein peuvent passer au temps partiel s'ils veulent?

6.0 Périodes d'essai.

6.1 Quand vous embauchez un employé à temps partiel, doit-il faire une période à l'essai?

SI OUI

6.11 Combien de temps dure cette période?

7.0 Formation.

7.1 Est-ce que vous formez les salarié(e)s à temps partiel?

7.2 Pouvez-vous me décrire le genre de formation que vous donnez?

7.21 Comment se compare la formation que vous donnez à vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel à celle que vous donnez à vos salarié(e)s à temps plein?

7.3 Est-ce que vous les formez pendant la période à l'essai?

8.0 Contenu du travail.

8.1 Quels emplois font les salarié(e)s à temps partiel normalement?

8.2 Est-ce que les hommes et les femmes travaillant à temps partiel font les mêmes emplois?

8.4 Est-ce que le travail qu'ils effectuent en période à l'essai se différencie du travail qu'ils effectuent après cette période?

9.0 Promotion.

9.1 Est-ce que les salarié(e)s à temps partiel peuvent monter en grade?

SI OUI

9.2 Quelles voies de promotion sont possibles?

9.3 En général est-ce que les salarié(e)s à temps partiel peuvent avoir des postes de responsabilité dans les magasins ?

9.4 Lesquelles?

10.0 Salaire.

10.1 Comment rémunère-t-on les salarié(e)s à temps partiel?

10.2 Ont-ils/elles le droit d'accéder aux primes, aux systèmes de participation, aux bénéfices de la société ou aux systèmes de primes d'encouragement?

11.0 L'organisation du travail à temps partiel.

11.1 Qui décide l'horaire de différentes équipes au cours de la journée et au cours de la semaine dans les magasins?

11.2 Est-ce que le siège social donne des conseils concernant la durée préférée de l'horaire des équipes ou l'organisation des équipes au cours de la journée et de la semaine; ou au contraire la direction du magasin décide-t-elle ces questions?

11.3 Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment l'organisation de vos équipes est faite?

11.4 Quels facteurs influencent l'organisation du travail et la durée de vos équipes?

11.5 Est-ce qu'il vous arrive de faire de petites ou/et de grandes modifications de l'horaire régulier de travail?

SI OUI

11.51 Qu'est ce que vous entendez par de "petites ou grandes modifications" de l'horaire régulier?

SI PETITES MODIFICATIONS

11.6 Quand vous faites de petites modifications de l'horaire régulier du travail est-ce que vous les négociez?

SI OUI

11.61 Avec qui les négociez-vous?

11.7 Quand vous faites de petites modifications de l'horaire régulier du travail, qui est-ce que vous avisez de ces changements et quand?

SI GRANDES MODIFICATIONS

11.8 Quand vous faites de grandes modifications de l'horaire régulier du travail est-ce que vous les négociez?

SI OUI

11.81 Avec qui les négociez-vous?

11.9 Quand vous faites de grandes modifications de l'horaire régulier du travail, qui est-ce que vous avisez de ces changements et quand?

12.0 Pouvez-vous me dire si vous avez des équipes typiques dans vos magasins, tels que des équipes de soir, de midi, de matin par exemple?

12.1 Vous serait-il possible de me donner un exemple des équipes employés normalement au cours d'une semaine typique dans vos magasins?

12.2 Pourquoi faites-vous des équipes de cette durée et organisez-vous les équipes de cette façon?

12.3 Depuis combien de temps dure ce système d'équipes dans vos magasins?

12.4 Est-ce que vos horaires de travail ont été modifiés au cours des années

SI OUI

12.41 Pourquoi et comment les avez-vous modifiés?

12.5 Est-ce que le système actuel d'horaires pose des problèmes?

13.0 Equipes autonomes.

J'ai entendu parler de la mise en place dans certaines grandes surfaces en France d'un système d'équipes de caissières à temps partiel semi-autonomes?

13.1 Avez-vous mis en place un tel système dans vos magasins?

SI OUI

13.12 Quand est-ce que vous l'avez mis en place?

13.13 Est-ce que vous l'utilisez dans tous vos magasins?

13.14 Est-ce que vous en êtes satisfait? Est-ce que ce système a eu de bons résultats?

13.15 Pourquoi l'avez-vous mis en place en premier lieu?

SI NON

13.2 Pensez-vous qu'un tel système pourrait marcher dans vos magasins?

13.3 Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

14.0 Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres éléments concernant vos horaires de travail et l'organisation de vos équipes auxquels je n'ai pas fait mention?

Je voudrais discuter des caractéristiques des employés à temps partiel sous un autre angle maintenant s'il vous plaît.

15.0 Croyez-vous que les salarié(e)s à temps partiel qui travaillent dans différentes équipes ont des caractéristiques différentes? Par exemple est-ce que ceux qui travaillent la nuit ont les mêmes caractéristiques du point de vue de l'âge, du sexe, et de la situation familiale, par exemple, que ceux qui travaillent le matin?

SI NON

15.01 Comment se différencient-ils?

SI OUI

15.02 Comment se ressemblent-ils?

15.1 Est-ce que vous trouvez facile d'embaucher toutes vos différentes équipes à temps partiel; ou est-ce que certaines équipes vous posent des problèmes au niveau de recrutement?

SI DES PROBLEMES

15.11 Lesquels?

15.12 Pourquoi pensez-vous que certaines équipes sont préférées?

15.2 Pensez-vous que l'état du marché de l'emploi actuel a influencé votre possibilité d'embaucher pour vos équipes?

SI OUI

15.21 Comment l'a-t-il influencé?

15.3 Pensez-vous que l'état du marché de l'emploi à l'heure actuelle influence l'organisation du travail dans vos magasins?

15.31 Ou est-ce qu'il a influencé d'autres dimensions de l'emploi dans vos magasins que je n'ai pas encore mentionnées?

16.0 Groupes d'expression libre et comités d'entreprise.

16.1 Est-ce que vous avez des groupes d'expression libre, des comités d'entreprise ou d'autres groupes de ce type dans vos magasins?

SI OUI

16.11 Qui participe à ces groupes?

16.12 Est-ce qu'on parle des horaires de travail et des modifications d'horaires dans ces groupes?

SI NON-16.121 De quoi parlez-vous?

SI OUI-16.122 Trouvez-vous en règle générale que les propositions des salarié(e)s à l'égard des horaires de travail sortant de vos groupes de travail sont incluses dans le remodelage des horaires et des équipes ou pas?

17.0 Les syndicats et l'organisation du travail.

17.1 Est-ce que vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel sont syndiqué(e)s

17.11 Quel pourcentage à peu près de vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel est syndiqué?

17.12 A quels syndicats appartiennent-ils/elles?

17.2 Quel pourcentage de vos salarié(e)s à temps plein sont syndiqué(e)s?

17.21 A quels syndicats appartiennent-ils?

17.3 Est-ce que les syndicats essaient d'influencer l'aménagement horaires et des équipes de travail?

17.4 Est-ce que les syndicats acceptent la polyvalence de vos employés dans vos magasins?

SI NON

17.41 Quel est leur effet sur l'organisation du travail dans vos magasins?

17.5 En général est-ce que vous encouragez la formation de vos employés dans plusieurs emplois afin de faciliter la polyvalence ou préférez-vous qu'ils se spécialisent dans un emploi?

17.51 Est-ce que cela dépend de leur statut de travail (temps plein ou temps partiel)?

17.6 Je voudrais vérifier que j'ai compris ce que vous m'avez dit tout à l'heure, est-ce que vous négociez avec ou avisez les syndicats pour des petites ou des grandes modifications de l'horaire régulier de travail?

18.0 Développement du travail à temps partiel.

Nous avons discuté en détail des caractéristiques de vos salarié(e)s à temps partiel, des facteurs qui déterminent leur horaires de travail et leurs termes et conditions d'emploi. Je voudrais vous demander maintenant:

18.1 Comment expliqueriez-vous le développement du travail à temps partiel dans la distribution en France?

18.2 Et plus précisément comment s'est développé le travail à temps partiel au cours des années dans vos magasins?

18.3 Est-ce qu'il y a eu un(des) principal(aux) catalyseur(s) de son développement dans vos magasins?

18.4 Comment voyez-vous l'avenir du temps partiel dans vos magasins et dans la distribution en général?

19.0 Changements des horaires d'ouverture des magasins et horaires de travail

19.1 Comment évoluent les demandes des consommateurs en ce qui concernent les horaires d'ouverture des magasins?

19.2 Est-ce-qu'ils préfèrent faire les courses de plus en plus tard le soir comme les consommateurs anglais?

19.3 Comment évoluent les demandes des consommateurs en général?

19.4 Est-ce que la nature de service qu'ils demandent se transforme?

19.5 Est-ce que ces transformations influencent a) votre politique d'emploi, b) l'emploi du travail à temps partiel et leurs horaires de travail?

En Angleterre les sondages d'opinion démontrent que les Anglais souhaitent pouvoir faire leurs achats le dimanche et le gouvernement va bientôt passer un loi pour permettre l'ouverture des magasins le dimanche.

19.6 Pensez-vous que les Français aussi seraient en faveur de l'ouverture des magasins le dimanche?

19.7 D'après vous, est-ce qu'il est probable que l'ouverture du dimanche devienne loi dans le proche avenir?

19.8 Est-ce que vos magasins seraient ouverts le dimanche si vous y aviez droit?

19.9 Quel en serait l'impact sur l'organisation du travail dans vos magasins?

20.0 Le lecteur optique.

On entend souvent parler des développements du lecteur optique dans les supermarchés et les hypermarchés.

20.1 Avez-vous des lecteurs optiques dans vos magasins?

SI OUI

20.11 Depuis quand?

20.12 Est-ce que la mise en place des lecteurs optiques a eu un impact sur l'organisation du travail et les horaires dans vos magasins?

20.13 Est-ce qu'il y a eu d'autres effets?

SI NON

20.2 Est-ce que vous comptez mettre en place de tels systèmes dans vos magasins dans l'avenir?

SI OUI

20.21 Quels sont les avantages que vous pensez en tirer?

SI NON

20.22 Pourquoi pas?

21.0 Est-ce que vous calculez la productivité du travail dans vos magasins?

21.1 Est-ce que ce calcul se fait au niveau des magasins?

21.2 Est-ce que vous faites ces calculs au niveau de chaque gestion dans les magasins?

21.3 Comment calculez-vous la productivité du travail?

21.4 Sur quelle période faites-vous ces calculs de productivité de travail (la semaine, le mois, l'année)?

21.5 Y a-t-il des objectifs de productivité de travail pour le magasin/chaque gestion dans le magasin et qui les détermine (le management du magasin ou le siège social)?

21.6 Comment calcule-t-on ces objectifs?

21.7 Depuis combien de temps utilisez-vous ce système d'objectifs et de calculs de productivité de travail?

21.8 Qu'est ce que vous utilisiez avant de mettre en place ce système?

Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres questions concernant le travail à temps partiel et l'organisation du travail que je n'ai pas posées et dont vous croyez qu'on devrait parler?

QUESTIONS PRINCIPALES-RESPONSABLES SYNDICAUX.

NOMBRE D'ADHERANTS.

1. Quel pourcentage des employés à temps plein et à temps partiel dans la grande distribution, j'entends par là les supermarchés et les hypermarchés, appartiennent à votre syndicat?/aux autres syndicats dans ce secteur?
- 1a. Est-ce que vous avez des statistiques à un niveau plus fin, par exemple au niveau des différents groupes/ magasins?
2. Comment s'est développée la syndicalisation des employés à temps partiel au cours des années?

DEVELOPPEMENT DU TRAVAIL A TEMPS PARTIEL.

3. Comment expliqueriez-vous le développement du travail à temps partiel dans la distribution en France?
4. Est-ce qu'il y a eu un(des) principal(aux) catalyseur(s) de son développement?
5. Suivant les statistiques de L'Enquête dans le Commerce où les statistiques MAS, le pourcentage du travail à temps partiel dans les supers et les hypers est très différent. Pouvez-vous me donner une idée du pourcentage de travail à temps partiel employé dans les hypers et les supers en moyenne?
- 5a. Est-ce que les différents groupes/chaines ont des politiques d'emploi de travail à temps partiel qui se ressemblent ou se différencient ?
- 5b. Est-ce que ces différences/similarités aboutissent à des niveaux d'emploi à temps partiel très différents ou très similaires dans les sociétés de grande distribution?
6. D'après vous quels sont les principaux avantages dont espèrent retirer les employeurs en utilisant le travail à temps partiel?
7. Comment voyez-vous l'avenir du travail à temps partiel dans ces magasins et dans l'économie en général?

LES CARACTERISTIQUES DES TRAVAILLEURS A TEMPS PARTIEL.

8. Quels sont les caractéristiques typiques des employés à temps partiel en termes d'âge, de sexe, de statut matrimonial, de niveaux de diplômes etc?

En Angleterre les travailleurs à temps partiel dans la grande distribution sont pour la plupart des mères de famille appartenant à presque toutes les catégories sociales qui ne trouvent pas d'autre moyen pour garder leurs enfants lorsqu'elles exercent une activité.

9. De ce point de vue, comment se comparent les employes à temps partiel en France dans la distribution à leurs homologues britanniques?

10. D'après vous, est-ce qu'elles sont incitées à travailler à temps partiel pour les mêmes raisons?

11. Croyez-vous que les employés à temps partiel qui travaillent dans différentes équipes à différentes périodes dans la journée ont des caractéristiques différentes? Par exemple est-ce que ceux qui travaillent la nuit ont les mêmes caractéristiques du point de vue de l'âge, du nombre d'enfants, du statut matrimonial, du sexe, par exemple, que ceux qui travaillent le matin?

CONTENU DU TRAVAIL.

12. Quels emplois font les employés à temps partiel normalement?

13. Est-ce que les hommes à temps partiel et les femmes à temps partiel font les mêmes emplois normalement?

LES HORAIRES DE TRAVAIL.

14. Est-ce qu'il y a un nombre d'heures de travail à temps partiel typique dans la distribution?

15. A votre connaissance est-ce que les horaires de travail sont au choix ou imposés?

SI AU CHOIX

15a. Est-ce qu'ils sont le plus souvent au choix et variable ou au choix et fixe?

SI IMPOSE

15b. Est-ce qu'ils sont le plus souvent imposé et fixe ou imposé et variable?

16. Est-ce que des systèmes d'horaires au choix ou imposé mais variable deviennent plus répandus dans la grande distribution? Est-ce que ces systèmes s'appliquent plus souvent aux employés à temps partiel par rapport aux employes à temps plein?

17. En general croyez-vous que les femmes travaillant à temps partiel sont contentes de leurs horaires de travail ou pas?

L'ORGANISATION DU TRAVAIL DANS LES MAGASINS.

18. Quel rôle jouez-vous dans l'organisation du travail dans les magasins, par exemple en ce qui concerne la durée des différentes équipes etc?

19. Trouvez-vous en général que les différents groupes de magasins ont des systèmes centralisés concernant l'organisation du travail dans les magasins ou le directeur du magasin suit les conseils du siège social ou d'autres centres administratifs, ou au contraire décide-t-il l'organisation du travail dans son magasin tout seul? Par exemple suivrait-il des conseils concernant le pourcentage du travail à temps partiel à embaucher dans son magasin?

20. Est-ce que l'employeur avise ou négocie avec votre syndicat lorsqu'il souhaite faire de grandes ou de petites modifications dans les horaires de travail?

20a. Qu'est-ce que vous entendez par de "grandes modifications" ou de "petites modifications" dans les horaires?

20b. À quel niveau et quand avise-t-on / négocie-t-on avec, votre syndicat? Par exemple s'agit-il des négociations au niveau du magasin, du groupe etc?

21. Pouvez-vous me dire si certains groupes de magasins de grande distribution ont des équipes typiques qui caractérisent leur organisation du travail, par exemple des équipes de soir, de midi, de matin?

21a. Sinon, pouvez-vous me donner des exemples des systèmes qui sont en opération dans différents magasins que vous connaissez?

LE SYNDICAT ET LE TRAVAIL A TEMPS PARTIEL.

22. Est-ce que votre syndicat est pour ou contre l'emploi à temps partiel? Pourquoi?

23. Est-ce que votre syndicat a changé son attitude envers le travail à temps partiel au cours des années? Comment et pourquoi?

24. Est-ce que votre syndicat est de l'avis que la législation concernant le travail à temps partiel est suffisamment puissante ou pas? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas? Pensez-vous que les employeurs dans ce secteur observent la loi comme il faut?

25. Est-ce que vous pensez que les mesures concernant le travail à temps partiel dans la Convention Collective pour l'Alimentation Générale sont assez puissantes?

25a. Si l'on considère en particulier les directives dans la Convention concernant

les modifications des horaires de travail, trouvez-vous que les employeurs suivent ces directives en général?

26. Trouvez-vous par exemple qu'on suit le directive concernant le préavis de 7 jours pour modification de l'horaire régulier de travail?

27. Est-ce que votre syndicat est en faveur d'autres mesures concernant le travail à temps partiel? Lesquelles?

28. Est-ce que vous prévoyez des changements de la Convention Collective en ce qui concerne le travail à temps partiel ou les horaires de travail? Pourquoi?

29. J'ai appris qu'on parle d'un assouplissement de la section 6 de la Convention Collective, est-ce que votre syndicat serait en faveur d'un tel assouplissement-pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

POLYVALENCE.

30. Est-ce que le syndicat est pour ou contre la polyvalence de ses adhérents? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

OUVERTURE DE DIMANCHE.

31. Est-ce que votre syndicat est pour ou contre l'ouverture des magasins le dimanche? Pourquoi? Quel en serait, à votre avis, l'impact sur l'organisation du travail dans les grandes surfaces? Verrait-on une croissance de l'emploi à temps partiel le dimanche?

LECTEUR OPTIQUE.

32. Est-ce que votre syndicat a fait des réflexions sur l'impact de la lecteur optique sur l'emploi dans les magasins ou sur l'organisation du travail dans les grandes surfaces?

QUESTIONS GENERALES.

33. D'après vous quelles sont les chaînes de magasins de grandes surfaces avec les meilleures réputations pour les conditions de travail et la politique sociale? Quelles sociétés ont les plus mauvaises réputations à cet égard?

34. Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres éléments que j'ai oublié et dont vous pensez qu'on devrait parler?

Supplementary questions for French unions, August 1986

- 1) Quelle proportion des sociétés de grande distribution a fait des accords d'entreprise concernant les horaires de travail? Pouvez-vous me donner des exemples?
- 2) Est-ce que vous trouvez que le comité d'entreprise au niveau des sociétés et des magasins se sert de lieu de débat entre les syndicats et les employeurs au sujet des horaires de travail et de l'aménagement des horaires de travail?
- 3) Il me semble, à partir de ma lecture de la législation française, que même si les horaires constituent un élément "essentiel" du contrat du travail, s'ils ne sont pas marqués explicitement dans le contrat, il est très facile pour l'employeur de changer les horaires. Est-ce que j'ai bien compris? Quand est-ce que l'employé a droit d'être remboursé par l'employeur s'il ne peut pas s'adapter au nouveaux horaires demandé par l'employeur? Est-ce que cette situation arrive souvent?
- 4) Si, par exemple, un employé a des problèmes parce que l'employeur souhaite aménager ses horaires et les nouveaux horaires ne lui conviennent pas, est-ce qu'il peut demander aux syndicats de lui représenter (contre l'employeur) au Prud'hommes? Sinon, quel est le rôle des syndicats dans ce cas? Est-ce que l'intervention du syndicat est courant?
- 5) Est-ce vrai* que normalement l'employé qui se dispute avec un employeur fait sa réclamation ensuite par l'intermédiaire du délégué du personnel, et que les syndicats ont un rôle assez limité dans ce cas? Est-ce que le délégué du personnel peut faire appel à l'Inspecteur du Travail s'il pense que l'employeur a tort? Dans quels circonstances? Est-ce qu'il arrive de faire appel à l'Inspecteur pour des aménagements d'horaires? Quels types de cas passent par l'Inspecteur (vis-à-vis du Prud'hommes)?
- 6) Est-ce vrai que même s'il y a une section syndicale dans un magasin l'employeur n'est pas obligé à la consulter (sauf au sein du comité d'entreprise) avant d'aménager les horaires de travail dans le magasin?
- 7) D'après vous quels sont les plus gros problèmes concernant les horaires de travail pour les syndicats dans la distribution?
- 8) Est-ce que vous avez terminé les négociations concernant la loi sur la flexibilité des horaires de travail? Quel en était le résultat?

PATTERNS OF WORKING HOURS IN BRITISH LARGE-SCALE GROCERY RETAILING

Main areas for discussion with union representatives.

1. Levels of union membership:

Do you have numbers for your membership in this sector?

Are these broken down for full-timers and part-timers separately?

Do you have more detailed statistics on membership per store chain?

Could you give me some idea of how your membership has changed over the years?

Part-time work:

How would you explain the development of part-time work in this sector?

Would you say there had been a major catalyst to the development of part-time work in this sector?

What has been your unions attitude towards part-time work over the years?

NB-PRODUCTIVITY SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT IN MAJOR RETAILERS.

Can you tell me from your knowledge of employment practices in the industry whether you think that the major retail firms have the same attitudes and practices concerning part-time work?

Would you say that the deteriorating labour market conditions have affected these attitudes and practices? In what way?

What do you see as being the main advantages that employers hope to gain from employing part-timers?

I would like to discuss the characteristics of part-time workers with you:

What would you say were the typical characteristics of part-timers in stores?

During a recent piece of French fieldwork I found that while a some part-timers were mothers aged 35-45 as a result of high unemployment there was an increasingly large number were young school-leavers who took part-time work for want of finding a full-time job.

How do you think this situation compares with that in Britain?

I am very interested in the working patterns of part-time employees. In France I found that rolling part-time teams were brought in by employers in order to counteract discontent among part-timers working continually late nights ie 2000-2200. My impressions from part-timers working late night shifts shelf filling was not that there was discontent or unrest but that these hours suited this group of employees and that similarly fixed shifts throughout the day each suited a specific group of employees with their own identifiable characteristics.

Would you say the satisfaction of the part-timers I saw with their working hours is typical and that part-timers working at specific times of the day do indeed have these identifiable characteristics?

Working hours:

Would you say part-time employees have any choice in their working hours?

It appears that whether a part-timer is given a contract of employment /terms and conditions of employment is rather up to the employer and that whether the number of hours to be worked per day are written on the contract is also his choice. Sometimes too it appears that the working hours distribution is orally decided.

If so what rights does the employee have then to refuse later changes in hours and how would this compare with having them written into a statement of terms and conditions/ contract?

How binding is the statement of conditions/contract in law?

I have noted an increasing number of flexibility clauses being introduced by retail firms- ie giving employer right to change number of hours and distribution of hours at his convenience. How widespread would you say this practice was and what is your unions reaction to this? Would you say the deteriorating labour market situation is related to the growth in these forms of contracts?

Overtime: there seem to be no limits on overtime in GB (cf France where legislation allows for another third of contracted hours to be requested by the employer but all those in excess of these can be refused without the threat of dismissal). I have also noted that many contracts state that the employers have the right to request overtime for specific increases in requirements and for which I presume the employee has no right to refusal. French agreements between employers and unions in retailing also requires that 7 days notice for overtime is given (although this is not always respected). Finally the employee can renounce all or part of his agreed overtime hours as long as he gives 7 days notice to the employer.

Could you clarify both the law concerning overtime and your impressions of the way in which overtime is used in British retailing ie would you say the wishes of the employee were taken into account, and would you say practices had changed in any way as a result of the deteriorating employment situation?

In France there is a minimum number of hours which must be worked as a part-timer in retailing without the express agreement of the employee. This is not the case in Britain but what would you say were the norm in working hours for part-timers? Has this changed over the last decade?

Which firms would you say were "good" and "bad" in terms of their working hour practices?

Finally, are there any changes you would like to see in part-timers rights in particular with regards their working patterns?

Flexible working time schedules: ie semi-autonomous teams. Do they exist in British firms? Do you think that such a system could work? do you think employees would appreciate it? Would the union favour such developments?

Negotiations between employers and Unions:

It appears that apart from holidays, breaks and full-time working hours working hours and patterns are barely discussed. Could you comment on this, and do you think there is a likelihood of discussions such matters as : overtime limits, part-timers rights to refuse overtime, restrictions on numbers of breaks between working hour periods in the day etc? How far would you say that it was true to say that the right to organise work is seen as the employer's prerogative?

Productivity circles, quality circles: These are common in France, do you know of their existence in Britain. Is the union in favour of such developments?

Other elements of the employment contract:

I have also noted that in GB law a part-timer only has the right to full-time rights for dismissal, unfair dismissal law etc after working for 16 hours for 2 years or 8 hours or more for 5 years.

Would you say that employers were aware of this law and took advantage of it in constructing their working hours?

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Multi-skilling: how well spread would you say it was in the industry and is your union in favour of its development.

Laser scanning: how well developed would you say it was becoming in the industry; is the union in favour of its development, and what do you see as being its implications for working patterns?

Abigail Anderson, 06/05/86.

Supplementary questions for discussions with British unions.

- 1) The Wages Council: could I have a copy of the most recent decisions of the council. Are working patterns covered by the agreement? In one firm I visited I was told that the Wages Council Agreement did not allow for employers to dismiss employees if they did not agree to adapt to employers' changes in working patterns, is this true? The same personnel officer said that if dismissal did take place the job could not be replaced for a year. Is this correct? Would this be a barrier to dismissal?
- 2) From my reading of Contract Law it is difficult to establish if changes in working hour patterns by employers leading to dismissal could lead to claims by employees at an Industrial Tribunal. Do you know of any such incidents?
- 3) Which companies belong to the Multiple Food Retailing Employers Association? Can members also have special agreements with individual unions?
- 4) Would you say that employers adhered to the clauses on working patterns and work breaks in the agreement? Have you noticed a tendency to alter part-time daily working periods in order to avoid giving breaks?
- 5) How large a membership must the union have to have the right to substantive agreements and representation in stores?
- 6) A number of firms appear to have quite close ties with unions in the industry, would you say that in these firms consultation with unions over working patterns and changes in working patterns are more likely?
- 7) Have you noticed any other similar practices to flexibility clauses in employment contracts developing in British large-scale grocery retailing?
- 8) What in general would you say had been the impact of the deteriorating labour market situation? Some employers mentioned to me in Britain the greater power it gave them to be very specific of employees characteristics.
- 9) Can you tell me whether you can rank employers in anyway in terms of their reputation as good employers with good working conditions or bad employers with correspondingly poor working conditions.

Information request:

1) I should like some information unions in the industry if it is available ie membership levels, membership in different firms, agreements in the industry etc.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN PART-TIMERS.

A. Anderson, 10.08.85.

1. Profile data.

- 1.1. What is your marital status?
- 1.2. What is your date of birth?
- 1.3. What is your nationality?
- 1.4. What are the highest school and trade qualifications you have obtained?
- 1.5. How many children do you have? still living at home?
- 1.6. And how many of these are still living at home? .
- 1.7. Can you tell me for each of your children still living at home:
 - a) Their date of birth?
 - b) What stage in their education are they?
- 1.8. What is your husband's/partners main occupation?

IF UNEMPLOYED

- 1.81. Has your husband already been unemployed?
- 1.82. What was his last job?
- 1.83. How long has he been unemployed for?
- 1.84. When he stopped working, were you already working?

IF YES

- 1.85. Did you start to work because you thought your husband/partner might be made redundant?

IF NO

- 1.86. Did you take this job as a result of your husband/partner being made employed?

2.0 Work histories.

I'd like to talk to you now about the work you've done since you left school(or college).

2.1 What was your first job after school/college? What grade do you enter it at?

2.2 Were you working full-time or part-time?

2.3 How long did you stay in this job for?

2.4 Why did you leave this employer?

2.5 What was your next job?

CONTINUE 2.2-2.5 UNLESS IF HAVING LEFT FOR PREGNANCY/IES OR MARRIAGE AND NEXT JOB OR FIRST JOB AFTER CHILD(REN) IS NOT PRESENT ONE THEN FOLLOW 3.

3.1 When did you go back to work?

3.2 What was your next job and what grade did you enter this job at?

3.3 How old was (were) your child(ren) when you started work (again)?

3.4 What were your main reasons for starting work (again)?

3.51 Did your husband/partner/family have any views about whether or not you should start work again?

3.52 Was he/ were they generally in favour or against you starting work again?

3.53 Why?

3.6 Did you start work with this employer full-time or part-time?

IF PART-TIME

3.61 How many hours a week on average did you work excluding lunch and rest breaks?

3.62 Why did you decide to work part-time?

ALL

3.7 How long did you stay in this job?

3.8 Why did you leave your employer?

3.9 What was your next job?

IF NEXT JOB NOT PRESENT JOB REPEAT QUESTIONS 2.2-2.5

IF HAVING LEFT FOR MARRIAGE OR PREGNANCEY AND NEXT JOB IS PRESENT JOB.

- 4.1 How old was (were) your child(ren) when you started work (again)?
- 4.2 What were your main reasons for starting work (again)?
- 4.31 Did your husband/partner/family have any views about whether or not you should start work again?
- 4.32 Was he/ were they generally in favour or against you starting work again?
- 4.33 Why?
- 4.4 If your husband earned by himself as much as your two salaries combined, would you still go out to work?

FOR ALL WOMEN IN PRESENT JOB INCLUDING THOSE WHO DID NOT LEAVE FOR PREGNANCY OR MARRIAGE (maternity leave is not included as leaving the labour market).

- 5.1 Is your contract in your present job a short-term contract or not?
- 5.2 Is this job your main paid employment?
- IF YES-5.21 Do you have another paid job?
- IF YES-5.22 What is it and 5.23 how long have you had it for?
- 5.3 Have you ever had another paid job during your employment here?
- IF NOT MAIN JOB
- 5.4 What is your main employment?
- 5.5 How did you find this job?
- 5.6 What sort of things did you look for in this job?
- 5.61 Why?
- 5.7 How long do you normally take to get to work?
- 5.8 Was the length of the journey an important factor in choosing this job?
- 5.9 Did you have difficulty finding the sort of job you wanted?
- IF YES
- 5.91 What has made it difficult for you?
- 6.0 Did you start work with this employer full-time or part-time?

IF FULL-TIME

6.1 When did you start working part-time?

6.2 Why did you change to part-time work?

IF PART-TIME AND LAST JOB WAS FULL TIME

6.3 Why did you change from full-time to part-time work at that time?

6.4 Do you pay income tax or National Insurance contributions?

6.5 How long have you been in this job for now?

7.0 Working hours.

7.1 What hours do you usually work per week excluding lunch hours, breaks and overtime?

7.2 On what days of the week are these?

7.3 Thinking about the distribution of your working hours across the week, do you like working the times you work? Why/why not?

7.4 Was your working schedule set out exactly in your work contract when you took this job?

IF YES

7.41 Does your working schedule usually correspond with that agreed in your work contract?

IF NOT

7.41 Why not?

7.5 Do you work the same schedule every week?

7.6 If your working hours changed are you normally given some notice beforehand?

7.7 Have the hours or days you work changed since you started work with this employer?

IF YES

7.71 How have they changed?

7.8 In the past would you have preferred other hours and days in your job or were you happy with those days and times you worked?

7.81 Why?

7.9 Thinking about the number of hours you work now, would you prefer a job where you work more hours per week/ fewer hours per week? Or are you happy with the number of hours you work?

7.91 Why?

8.0 Do you take a part in choosing your starting and finishing times and working days or were you offered specific hours and days to work?

8.01 Can you explain to me how this system works?

8.02 Has this always been the case since you took the job?

IF NOT ALWAYS THE CASE

8.03 What was the system before?

8.04 How long has the present system been in operation for to your knowledge?

8.1 Do you have to start and finish work at a fixed time each day or can you choose your starting and finishing times?

8.11 Can you explain to me how this system works?

8.12 Has this always been the system since you took the job?

8.13 What was the system before?

8.14 How long has the present system been in operation for to your knowledge?

8.5 Are there any special concessions on working hours for mothers with children living at home in your company?

9.0 Overtime.

9.1 Do you work paid overtime?

9.2 Why/why not?

9.3 Do you often work paid overtime?

9.4 How many hours a month paid overtime do you do on average?

9.5 Are the number of overtime hours you work per week, month or year agreed in your employment contract?

9.6 Do your overtime hours often fall at certain hours or on certain days?

IF YES

9.61 Which are these?

9.7 Do you ever refuse to work overtime? Why?

9.8 How do you hear about the availability of overtime work?

9.9 How long before are you told about overtime work?

IF CHILDREN OR OTHER DEPENDENTS LIVING AT HOME

10.0 Do you have to make arrangements for looking after your children/dependents or preparing meals when you work overtime?

IF YES

10.1 What arrangements do you make?

10.2 Do you have any difficulty making these arrangements or not?

IF HUSBANDS/PARTNERS HELP OR DO NOT HELP WITH MEALS etc.

10.3 Thinking about the jobs that need to be done to keep a home running, such as shopping, cooking and cleaning, how much of the work, would you say, is shared between you and your partner?

11.0 Childcare..

11.1 Does anyone look after your children while you are working?

IF YES: FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

11.2 Who?

IF HUSBAND/PARTNER

11.3 What are his normal daily working hours?

IF YES: FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

11.4 Who looks after this child/these children in term time?

11.5 Who looks after this child/these children in the school holidays.

IF NO

11.6 Why don't you need to arrange for anyone else to look after the children?

11.7 Do you have to make any special arrangements to fit in with your working hours for looking after your children or preparing meals for example?

11.71 Have your hours caused you any difficulties in making arrangements?

11.89 Have the arrangements you have made changed during your employment with this employer?

IF YES

11.90 Why? What arrangements have you made in the past?

12.0 Present job.

12.1 Why did you decide to work in a supermarket/superstore?

12.2 How did you find this job?

12.3 What is your job title?

12.4 What grade are you at?

12.5 Can you describe your job to me?

12.6 Do you often do a number of types of work in your job or are you specialized in one or two jobs?

12.7 Are you satisfied with your work?

12.8 What aspects of the job would you say you appreciated the most?

12.9 What aspects of the job would you say you appreciated the least?

13.0 Do you feel that your present job makes full use of your work experience and abilities?

IF NO- 14.1 What are your reasons for doing a job in which you are not making full use of your work experience and abilities?

13.1 Thinking generally, rather than just about the job you are doing at present, how much would you say you like working?

14.0 Future Plans

14.1 Do you think you will have any (more) children in the future?

IF YES

14.2 If you have any more children, do you think you would want to continue working straight after maternity leave, or would you give up work?

IF GIVE UP WORK

14.3 (If you gave up work) do you think you would stop for a few years only or would you give up completely?

IF RETURN TO WORK

14.4 At what stage would you go back to work? Why?

14.5 Do you think you would work full-time or part-time at first? Why?

IF CONTINUE WORK AFTER BIRTH(S)

14.6 Would you work full-time or part-time? Why?

ALL

14.7 Have you been promoted while you've been working for this employer?

14.8 Would you like to be prepared to increase your hours or work full-time if promotion were offered to you?

14.9 Would you like to return to full-time work one day if promotion were offered to you or not?

IF YES

15.0 At what stage do you see this happening and why?

IF NO

15.1 Why not?

16.0 We have discussed your work history, and your present working patterns and future plans in some detail, do you think there are any main areas which I have forgotten and which you feel we ought to talk about?

DOMAINES PRINCIPAUX D'ETUDE-FEMMES A TEMPS PARTIEL.

1.0 Caracteristiques générales.

1.1 Quel est votre statut matrimonial?

1.2 Quelle est votre date de naissance?

1.3 Quelle est votre nationalité?

1.4 Quels sont les diplômes les plus élevés que vous avez obtenus: a) en enseignement général et b) en enseignement professionnel?

1.5 Combien d'enfants avez-vous en tout?

1.6 Et parmi ceux-ci combien sont encore au foyer?

1.7 Pouvez-vous me donner pour chacun des enfants à votre charge:

a) sa date de naissance;

b) son niveau d'études actuel?

1.8 Quelle était la profession principale ?

1.9 Quelle est la profession principale de votre mari/votre partenaire?
Quelle est son grade?

SI AU CHOMAGE- 1.91 votre conjoint/partenaire a-t-il déjà été au chômage?

1.92 Quelle était sa dernière profession?

1.93 Et son grade?

1.94 Depuis quelle date ne travaille-t-il plus?

1.95 Lorsqu'il s'est arrêté de travailler, aviez-vous déjà un emploi?

SI OUI-1.951 Aviez-vous pris cet emploi parce que votre mari risquait de ne plus travailler?

SI NON-1.952 Aviez-vous pris un emploi par la suite parce que votre mari/partenaire ne travaillait plus?

2.0 Trajectoires professionnelles.

Maintenant je voudrais vous poser quelques questions au sujet de votre passé professionnel.

2.1 Quel était votre premier emploi après avoir terminé vos études? A quel niveau avez-vous commencé cet emploi?

2.2 Travailliez-vous à temps plein ou à temps partiel?

2.3 Pendant combien de temps avez-vous travaillé dans cette entreprise-là?

2.4 Pourquoi avez-vous quitté cet emploi?

2.5 Quel emploi avez-vous fait ensuite?

CONTINUER 2.2-2.5 SAUF SI DEPART LIE AUX ENFANTS, AU MARIAGE OU A LA MATERNITE ET L'EMPLOI SUIVANTE N'EST PAS L'EMPLOI ACTUEL
PUIS CONTINUER 3.

3.1 Quand avez-vous repris le travail/commencé de travailler?

3.2 Quel travail avez-vous effectué, à quel avez-vous commencé cet emploi?

3.3 A l'époque où vous avez repris le travail, quel(s) âge(s) avai(en)t votre (vos) enfant(s)?

3.4 Pour quels raisons avez-vous repris le travail/commencé de travailler?

3.51 Est-ce que votre mari/partenaire ou votre famille avaient des opinions sur votre reprise du travail?

3.52 En général étaient-ils pour ou contre votre décision de reprendre/commencer ce travail?

3.53 Pourquoi?

3.6 Avez-vous commencé ce travail à temps plein ou à temps partiel?

SI TEMPS PARTIEL

3.61 Combien d'heures en moyenne avez-vous travaillé par semaine (heures de repos et déjeuner non-compris)?

3.62 Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de travailler à temps partiel?

TOUTES

3.7 Pendant combien de temps à peu près, avez-vous fait ce travail?

3.8 Pourquoi avez-vous quitté cette entreprise?

3.9 Quel emploi avez-vous fait ensuite?

SI PROCHAIN EMPLOI N'EST PAS L'EMPLOI ACTUEL REPETER QUESTION NOS 2.2-2.5

SI PROCHAIN EMPLOI EST L'EMPLOI ACTUEL ET SI L'EMPLOI ACTUEL SUIVIT UN ARRET POUR ENFANTS, MATERNITE ETC.

4.1 A l'époque où vous avez repris le travail, quel(s) âge(s) avai(en)t votre (vos) enfant(s)?

4.2 Pour quelles raisons avez-vous repris le travail/commencé à travailler?

4.3 Est-ce que votre mari/partenaire ou votre famille avaient des opinions sur votre reprise de travail?

4.32 En général étaient-ils pour ou contre votre décision de reprendre/commencer ce travail?

4.33 Pourquoi?

4.4 Si votre mari (ou votre partenaire) gagnait une somme à peu près égale au total de ce que vous gagnez actuellement tous les deux, arrêteriez-vous de travailler?

POUR TOUTES PERSONNES TRAVAILLANT DANS L'EMPLOI ACTUEL MEME S'ILS N'ONT JAMAIS ARRETE DE TRAVAILLER (absence due à maternité ne veut pas dire qu'on quitte le marché de l'emploi.

5.1 Est-ce que votre emploi est à durée déterminée ou à durée indéterminée?

5.2 Est-ce que cet emploi est votre profession principale?

SI OUI- 5.21 Avez-vous une activité professionnelle secondaire?

SI OUI- 5.22 Laquelle?

- 5.23 Depuis combien de temps?

5.3 Est-ce que vous n'avez jamais eu de profession secondaire depuis votre embauche dans cette entreprise?

SI NON- 5.4 Quelle est votre activité principale?

5.5 Comment avez-vous trouvé cet emploi?

5.6 Quelles caractéristiques de cet emploi vous étaient importants?

5.61 Pourquoi?

5.7 Combien de temps mettez-vous habituellement pour vous rendre à votre travail?

5.8 Est-ce que la durée du trajet a joué un rôle important dans votre décision de prendre cet emploi?

5.9 Aviez-vous du mal à trouver le genre du travail que vous cherchiez?

SI OUI- 5.91 Pourquoi?

6.0 Avez-vous commencé votre travail dans cet entreprise à temps plein ou à temps partiel?

SI TEMPS PLEIN

6.1 Quand avez-vous commencé à travailler à temps partiel?

6.2 Pourquoi êtes-vous passé du temps plein au temps partiel?

SI DERNIER EMPLOI ETAIT A TEMPS PLEIN

6.3 Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de prendre un travail à temps partiel à ce moment-là?

6.4 Depuis combien de temps faites-vous cet emploi?

Horaires de travail.

7.1 Combien d'heures travaillez-vous par semaine en moyenne, mis à part les heures de repos, de déjeuner et les heures supplémentaires?

7.2 Comment vos heures de travail sont-elles réparties sur la semaine?

7.3 Est-ce que la répartition de votre horaire de travail vous plaît? Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas?

7.4 Est-ce que votre planning d'horaires était fixé dans votre contrat de travail?

7.41 Est-ce que cet horaire correspond normalement à celui fixé dans votre contrat de travail?

SINON-7.41 Pourquoi pas?

7.5 Faites-vous le même horaire de travail chaque semaine?

7.6 Normalement est-ce que vous recevez un préavis lorsque votre horaire régulier est modifié?

7.7 Est-ce-que votre horaire de travail ou la répartition de votre horaire ont été modifié depuis votre embauche à temps dans cette entreprise?

SI OUI- 7.71 Comment ont-ils changé?

7.8 Antérieurement, est-ce que vous auriez préféré d'autres horaires et d'autres répartitions de vos horaires au cours de la semaine ou est-ce que les deux vous ont plu?

7.81 Pourquoi?

7.9 Actuellement est-ce que vous préféreriez augmenter votre horaire de travail ou diminuer votre horaire de travail? Ou est-ce que votre horaire vous plaît?

7.91 Pourquoi?

8.0 Est-ce que votre horaire de travail est au choix ou imposé?

SI AU CHOIX

8.01 Est-il au choix et variable ou au choix et fixe?

8.02 Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment marche ce système?

SI IMPOSE

8.1 Est-il imposé et fixe ou imposé et variable?

8.11 Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment marche ce système?

8.2 Est-ce que le même système d'horaires est en marche depuis votre embauche dans cet entreprise?

SINON 8.3 Quel système y avait-il antérieurement?

8.4 Depuis combien de temps fonctionnait ce système dans l'entreprise?

8.5 Dans votre entreprise est-ce que des souplesses d'horaires sont accordées aux mères de famille? Est-ce qu'il y a par exemple des souplesses accordées aux mères de famille pour garder leurs enfants lorsqu'ils sont malades?

8.6 Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres aménagements tels que des possibilités d'amener l'enfant sur le lieu de travail, une garderie le mercredi ou une crèche d'entreprise?

9.0 Les heures complémentaires.

9.1 Est-ce que vous faites des heures complémentaires?

9.2 Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

9.3 En faites-vous souvent?

9.4 Combien d'heures complémentaires par mois faites-vous en moyenne?

9.5 Est-ce que le nombre d'heures complémentaires que vous travaillez par semaine/par mois/par an est prévu dans votre contrat de travail?

9.6 Est-ce que vos heures complémentaires tombent toujours les mêmes jours ou les mêmes heures?

SI OUI- 9.61 Lesquelles?

9.7 Est-ce que cela vous arrive de refuser de travailler des heures complémentaires?

9.8 Comment apprenez-vous que l'on cherche des employés pour faire des heures complémentaires?

9.9 Est-ce-que vous recevez un préavis pour les heures complémentaires?

S'IL Y A DES ENFANTS OU D'AUTRES PERSONNES A CHARGE

10.0 Est-ce que vous êtes obligée de vous arranger pour qu'on s'occupe de vos enfants/des personnes à votre charge ou pour qu'on prépare des repas lorsque vous faites des heures complémentaires?

SI OUI

10.1 Comment est-ce que vous vous arrangez?

10.2 Est-ce que cela vous pose des problèmes ou pas?

SI LES MARIS S'OCCUPENT OU NE S'OCCUPENT PAS DES ENFANTS ET DES REPAS

10.3 Si l'on réfléchit pour un instant à tout le travail qu'il faut faire pour s'occuper d'une famille par exemple faire le ménage, la cuisine et les courses, à quel point diriez-vous votre, mari/partenaire partage-t-il ce genre de tâches?

11.0 La garde des enfants.

11.1 Est-ce quelqu'un garde vos enfants lorsque vous travaillez?

SI OUI: POUR ENFANTS PAS ENCORE SCOLARISES

11.2 Qui?

SI MARI

Pour revenir sur la profession principale de votre mari/partenaire:

11.4 Quels sont ses horaires journaliers de travail?

SI OUI POUR ENFANTS QUI VONT A L'ECOLE/LA MATERNELLE

11.5 Qui garde les enfants en dehors des horaires scolaires?

11.6 Qui garde les enfants pendant les vacances?

SI NON

11.7 Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas besoin de vous arranger pour la garde de vos enfants?

11.8 Est-ce que votre horaire de travail actuel vous oblige à prendre des mesures particulières pour assurer la garde de vos enfants ou la préparation des repas par exemple?

11.81 Est-ce que votre horaire de travail vous a posé des problèmes à ce niveau?

11.9 Depuis votre embauche par cette entreprise, est-ce que vous avez dû *changer votre façon de vous organiser*?

SI OUI- 12.0 Pourquoi?

13.0 Votre emploi actuel.

13.1 Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de travailler dans une grande surface?

13.2 Comment avez-vous trouvé votre emploi?

13.3 Quelle est la désignation de votre emploi?

13.4 Quel est le coefficient de votre emploi?

13.5 Pouvez-vous me décrire votre travail?

13.6 Est-ce que vous faites souvent plusieurs catégories d'emplois au cours de la journée ou de la semaine, ou est-ce que vous vous spécialisez sur un ou deux emplois?

13.7 Est-ce que vous êtes satisfaite de votre travail?

13.8 Quels aspects de votre travail vous plaisent-ils le plus?

13.9 Quels aspects de votre travail vous plaisent-ils le moins?

14.0 Est-ce que vous pensez que votre travail actuel se sert au maximum de votre expérience de travail et de vos capacités?

SI NON- 14.1 Pourquoi avez-vous pris un emploi qui n'utilise pas votre expérience de travail et vos capacités au maximum?

14.2 Aimeriez-vous quitter cet emploi de vous-même?

SI OUI- 14.3 Pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

14.4 Si l'on parle du travail en général et pas spécialement de votre travail actuel, pouvez-vous me dire dans quelle mesure vous vous plaisez à travailler?

14.5 Pouvez-vous m'expliquer pourquoi travaillez-vous actuellement?

15.0 Projets

15.1 Avez-vous l'intention d'avoir encore des enfants?

SI OUI

15.2 Quand vous aurez un autre enfant comptez-vous retravailler dès la fin de votre congé de maternité, ou comptez-vous arrêter de travailler?

SI ARRÊTER DE TRAVAILLER

15.3 Comptez-vous arrêter de travailler pendant quelques années seulement ou d'arrêter de travailler totalement?

SI REPRENDRE

15.4 A quel moment pensez-vous reprendre le travail?
Pourquoi?

15.5 Pensez-vous reprendre le travail à ce moment-là à temps plein ou à temps partiel?

SI RETRAVAILLER

15.6 Est-ce que vous pensez reprendre à temps plein ou à temps partiel?
Pourquoi?

TOUTES

15.7 Etes-vous montée en grade depuis votre embauche par cette entreprise?

15.8 Est-ce que vous seriez prêt à augmenter vos horaires ou à travailler à temps plein si l'on vous proposait un emploi à un coefficient plus élevé, c'est-à-dire si l'on voulait vous promouvoir?

15.9 Aimeriez-vous un jour reprendre le travail à temps plein même si l'on ne vous propose pas de monter en grade?

SI OUI

16.0 Quand comptez vous le faire?

SI NON

16.1 Pourquoi pas?

Je viens de vous poser des questions sur votre horaire de travail, la répartition de vos horaires de travail sur la semaine, et les raisons pour lesquelles vous travaillez à temps partiel dans la distribution. Est-ce-que vous pensez que j'ai oublié des éléments importants dont on devrait discuter?

APPENDIX III
THE CHANGING LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR PART-TIME WORK
IN BRITAIN, 1960-

Table III.1 The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work in Britain, 1960-

NATIONAL INSURANCE SYSTEM.	
(i) Flat Rate and Earnings-Related	Only applicable to employees working eight hours or more a week, rendering very short hours attractive to employers.
(ii) Earnings-Related above a Basic Minimum Wage, 1975-	Beneficial to employer (and employee) to employ (and be employed) for hours which fall below the level at which contributions are made, hence encouraging the use of part-time work.
SELECTIVE EMPLOYMENT TAX (SET), 1966-73.	From 1967 applied in full only to employees working over twenty-one hours per week in the service sector. No tax applied to employees working less than eight hours per week. Also made part-time work attractive for employers.
1975 EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT (MODIFIED AND CONSOLIDATED IN 1978).	Introduced a wide range of benefits (unfair dismissal, written reasons for dismissal, maternity pay etc) for part-timers working more than sixteen hours a week or between eight and sixteen hours a week if they had worked for five years or more continuously with the same employer, hence giving employers an additional reason to use part-timers working short hours.
1975 EQUAL PAY ACT.	Has not prevented part-timers being paid at lower rates than full-timers because of the job segregation between men and women. The differential in pay between full and part-timers provides an additional incentive to employ on a part-time basis. The law does not address the question of non-wage benefits so part-timers remain particularly attractive because they do not have equal access to these benefits (such as profit sharing, pension benefits or holiday pay).

Source: NEDO (1979), Mallier and Rosser (1980) Moir (1982), Travail et Emploi (1982), Robinson and Wallace (1984), Trinder (1986).

APPENDIX IV
THE CHANGING LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR PART-TIME WORK
IN FRANCE, 1936-

Table IV.1 The Changing Legislative Framework for Part-time Work
in France, 1936-

<p>DECREES IMPLEMENTING THE LAW OF 21 JUNE 1936 INTRODUCING THE 40 HOUR WEEK.</p>	<p>Stated that working hours should be the same for all employees working in an establishment or in any section of one. Together with the prohibition of rolling and overlapping shifts, severely limited the use of part-time work.</p>
<p>EDICT OF 4 FEBRUARY 1959.</p>	<p>Restricted the use of part-time work in the Civil Service up to 1970.</p>
<p>LAW OF 19 JUNE 1970</p>	<p>Amended the 1950 Law, allowed part-time work on a half time basis (twenty hours per week) and removed some of the barriers to part-time work. Some restrictions remained on the use of part-time work in the Civil Service.</p>
<p>LAW OF 27 DECEMBER 1973</p>	<p>Moved away from the principal of the same working hours for all workers and introduced the concept of individualized working hours, hence enabling the use of part-time work. Relaxed social security legislation, which had deterred the use of part-time work, for part-timers working between twenty and thirty hours a week. Set out a number of new restrictive conditions for the use of part-time work.</p>
<p>LAW OF 23 DECEMBER 1980.</p>	<p>Amended the 1973 Law's provisions for part-time employment in the Civil Service. Allowed experiments lasting two years with a wider range of part-time hours.</p>
<p>LAW OF 28 JANUARY 1981.</p>	<p>Relaxed the constraints over the use of part-time work, gave the employer increased flexibility in its use. At the same time strengthened the relationship between the employer and part-time worker by introducing written contracts. Also, made the final changes in the social security legislation so that employers would not be financially penalized for using part-timers.</p>

Table IV.1 Continued

EDICT OF 26 MARCH 1982	Gave part-timers the same rights as full-timers and set out stricter conditions for employers' use of part-time work such as controls over complementary hours and a responsibility to discuss the use of part-time work at least annually at the works committee. The edict was accompanied by measures to relax the conditions for the use of part-time work in the public services.
DECREE OF 30 MAY 1984.	Extended the provision for the <u>Contrat de Solidarité - Réduction du Temps de Travail</u> so that employers could benefit from the Government's incentives for the reduction of working hours by replacing full-time by part-time posts. Applied initially to part-time posts over thirty hours per week. Reduced in March 1985 to posts over eighteen hours per week.
DECREE OF 27 JULY 1984.	Measures introduced in the form of explicit incentives for employers to develop part-time posts with weekly hours in the range twenty-eight to thirty-two hours. In March 1985, the range was extended to between eighteen and thirty-two hours.

Source: Droulers (1972), Guillemot (1983), Ravel (1983), Bergès and Pépin (1985), Documentation Française (1985).

APPENDIX V
EVIDENCE FOR AGE AND SEX CHANGES IN THE RETAIL WORKFORCE
IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

Figure V.1 Female Participation Rates in British Retailing, 1950-84



NB A discontinuity occurs between 1969 and 1960 due to a major redefinition of the Standard Industrial Classification. The method of counting employees changed between 1970 and 1971 from a "card Count" to a Census.

Source: Reynolds, 1985b, Figure 1.

Figure V.2 Age Profiles of Retail Trade Employees in Britain, 1961-81



Source: Reynolds, 1985b, Figure 6.

Table V.1 Women (Employed and Self-employed) as a Proportion of the Workforce in French Food Retailing, 1962-88

In %	1962	1968	1975	1982	1988
Recensement de la Population	43.5	46.4	48.1	52.8	
Enquête sur l'Emploi			50.8	52.1	52.9

NB These series are not strictly comparable: the Recensement de la Population statistics are based on the economically active population (in and out of work) while the statistics in the Enquête sur l'Emploi relate only to those who are in employment.

Table V.2 Distribution of Workers in French Food Retailing by Age and by Sex, 1975-87

In %	15-24 yrs			25-49 yrs			50+ yrs		
	1975	1980	1987	1975	1980	1987	1975	1980	1987
All	20.6	21.0	21.8	51.7	56.2	61.3	27.7	22.8	17.0
Men	18.1	21.3	21.3	53.7	56.6	61.9	28.2	22.1	16.8
Women	23.0	20.6	22.1	49.7	55.9	60.7	27.3	23.5	17.2

Source: INSEE, Enquête sur l'Emploi, 1975-87, Table PA12.

Table V.3 Distribution of Non-manual and All Hypermarket Employees
by Age in France, 1980-83

Age Group	All Hypermarket Employees					Non-manual Hypermarket Employees			
	1980	1981	1982	1983		1980	1981	1982	1983
Years									
-25	27.8	28.3	28.5	29.1		30.6	31.3	31.5	32.1
25-35	40.0	39.1	38.6	38.3		37.6	36.9	36.6	36.4
35-45	17.0	17.6	18.5	19.1		15.9	16.3	17.2	17.5
45-55	11.3	11.0	11.2	10.9		11.6	11.3	11.5	11.2
55+	3.9	4.0	3.2	2.6		4.3	4.2	3.2	2.8

Source: IOC, 1984: 13,15.

APPENDIX VI
THE USE OF SEMI-AUTONOMOUS TEAMS IN FRENCH RETAILING

The Use of Semi-Autonomous Teams in French Retailing

Semi-autonomous teams now appear to be widely employed in hypermarkets in France, although secondary sources currently only describe their use in a small number of principal French retailers. Auchan and Doc François were the pioneers of the system in the late 1970s (Doc François in 1978, Auchan in 1979). Over the past decade they have spread to most hypermarket retailers in France, although some companies' systems are still in their infancy.

Semi-autonomous teams would seem to have been introduced for a variety of reasons (ANACT, 1984; Eliakim, 1983; Fontana, 1982; Intersocial, 1984; Rigoureux, 1985b, 1985c). They are often developed in order to improve the matching of working hours to customer demand when new, usually computer-based, systems are introduced to enable more accurate predictions of customer flow. A number of French stores have introduced semi-autonomous teams on check-outs in order to improve the work atmosphere, to improve work motivation, and to reduce absenteeism. Another reason seems to relate to a particularly French problem: the lack of motivation among part-timers and their feeling of marginality (by comparison with full-timers). In one Carrefour store semi-autonomous teams were introduced because animosity had developed between full-timers and part-timers on check-outs; the part-timers felt they were the only ones being required to work unsocial hours (Eliakim, 1983).

Semi-autonomous teams have been introduced either by consultants specializing in the management of working time or by firms copying other retailers' experiments. For example, it would appear that Doc François' first use of semi-autonomous teams in 1978 (Fontana, 1982) attracted the interest of a number of retailers who came to observe its operation and who subsequently introduced their own systems (see Rigoureux, 1985b).

The introduction of semi-autonomous teams was not unproblematic. Some retailers encountered resistance from the workforce and unions who were suspicious of management's motives and afraid that their pay and working conditions would be eroded by the new system. Also, some individuals were satisfied with fixed hours and did not want to take responsibility for their working hours (Eliakim, 1983; Fontana, 1982). As a result of these problems, many retailers now prefer to introduce semi-autonomous teams into new outlets, and a large number do so (in both new and old outlets) only with the co-operation of the unions and employees.

Semi-autonomous teams are most commonly operated on the check-outs, although some very innovative firms have begun to develop similar systems on other shop-floor departments (see below). Semi-autonomous teams are normally composed of between 9-20 check-out assistants. In some cases each team is constructed to reflect the characteristics of the check-outs' workforce ie by sex and full or part-time status. The general method of operation is that management works out the planned labour requirement on each check-out by hour for an entire week, x weeks ahead of its date of application. This period may vary between one and three weeks or more. This plan is then to the team whose members can then choose their hours according to their personal preferences. In some stores each individual assistant is given scheduled hours which he/she is then free to change. However, in the vast majority of firms it would appear that there are few constraints over working hours other than the flexibility limitations made in the agreement and the restrictions of legislation and collective agreements in relation to working hours (ie French legislation imposes a limit of a ten-hour working day, and the collective agreement applying to hypermarkets stipulates a minimum period of three hours work at any one time). In return for this flexibility members of the team commit themselves to cover between them the labour requirements set out by management.

The way in which negotiations over working hours between group members is regulated depends on the individual firm/outlet. Usually, the check-out assistants operate a voluntary rota for taking responsibility as head of the group for a given period (Intersocial, 1984). This period varies between two weeks and three months. In at least one outlet there is no formal head of group; the supervisor at check-outs and the individual who informally emerges as the natural leader of the group assist in the negotiations over working hours (Rigoureau, 1985c).

In most cases the nominated group leader takes responsibility for ensuring the efficient operation of the system and, as a general rule, the degree of direct management intervention is deliberately limited in order to give the group members as much autonomy as possible. The degree of responsibility given to the head of the group varies, in some cases he/she just deals with minor difficulties in the negotiations and then hands over to management who carry out a detailed check to ensure that no assistants are abusing the system (Eliakim, 1983). In other cases the head of the group checks for anomalies, records all the assistants' hours over time, deals with problems and helps in the negotiations for the schedules (Rigoureau, 1985b). In these cases the group leader is usually paid a bonus and may receive special training in order to enable him/her to carry out the job effectively.

Most systems include some degree of flexibility in working hours both on a weekly and on a monthly basis, though this varies considerably from one system to another. However, this flexibility is limited in various ways. For example, at one Carrefour hypermarket part-time check-out assistants must ensure that their monthly hours fall within +/- 1 hour of their weekly contracted hours, (full-timers are allowed twenty-four hours leeway), while weekly hours can vary by +/- 6/7 hours (ANACT, 1984b). At a Continent hypermarket the maximum number of weekly hours and the number of monthly flexi-hours depends on the length of the weekly contract ie. workers with a thirty hour weekly contract are allowed a maximum weekly credit of eight hours and a maximum number of twelve monthly flexi-hours, those with a thirty-nine hour contract are allowed respectively five and sixteen hours (Rigoureux, 1985b). At one Mammoth store all check-out assistants are allowed weekly flexi-hours of up to a quarter of their weekly contracted hours and monthly flexi-hours of up to a half of their weekly contracted hours (Rigoureux, 1985c). In most cases the hours in credit at the end of the month are unpaid but can be recouped by taking time off work. In some cases, however, group members can choose to be paid for credit hours or hours exceeding the full-time working week (Intersocial, 1984; Rigoureux, 1985c).

Management generally finds that semi-autonomous teams are advantageous socially and economically. At a social level semi-autonomous teams have been found to give satisfaction to employees, to make employees feel more motivated and responsible about their work, and to create a better work environment (Fontana, 1982). At an economic level management frequently reported that semi-autonomous teams lead to reduced absenteeism and to improved labour productivity at check-outs. The main disadvantage associated with the system is that it requires management to plan working hours thoroughly and, if the system dictates, spend time checking its operation.

Flexi-hours no longer operate only on check-outs. Cases have been reported of similar systems being applied to employees working on shop-floor departments (Eliakim, 1983). Under this type of system management, with the assistance of work study methods, break down each individual group member's work into two parts: tasks which are specialized and tasks which can be carried out by other members of staff (sometimes this involves training employees so that they become multi-skilled). On this basis working hours can be scheduled which are not rigidly fixed over time to particular jobs. Each week a number of schedules are posted up corresponding with the number of members of the group. Each schedule is associated with a specific department on the shop-floor.

Management gives each member of the group an order of priority, based perhaps on alphabetical order. In any given month each member of the team according to his/her position in the priority list chooses his/her preferred schedule from the choice remaining ie in a team of seven members the member with the highest priority for that month can choose from seven schedules, the next on the list from six and so on. The following month the order of priority changes, the member at the top of the list drops to the bottom and everyone else moves one place up the list. For a given week each team member carries out the non-specialised tasks on the department which his/her schedule dictates and the specialized tasks for which he/she is qualified (which may mean returning to his/her own department).

Usually, this type of system does not afford as much flexibility as semi-autonomous teams. It does, however, allow for some variety in the location of jobs and, in some cases (see Eliakim, 1983), the lack of flexibility in working time is compensated to some extent by introducing annual working hours.

As flexibility in working hours becomes more and more popular in France and the strict legislative framework governing working hours is increasingly relaxed in order to permit greater flexibility, there is every likelihood that flexi-time schemes of this sort will become more widespread.

APPENDIX VII
INNOVATIONS IN WORKING HOURS IN FIRM FR2

Innovations in Working Hours in Firm FR2

Innovations of working hours have been introduced in a new hypermarket in Calais which was opened in March 1986. They were developed with the help of Janus consultants, and sponsored partly by the Ministère du Travail et de la Formation Professionnelle (the Ministry of Employment and Training). The unions were not consulted before the new system was implemented in the Calais hypermarket because the company wanted to prove to the major union in its hypermarkets - the CGT - that this type of system could work and would be to the employee's benefit. Previously the CGT had tried to prevent any flexibility measures introduced by the company.

The theoretical objective of the innovations was to find a new form of organization of working time to satisfy clients, company, and employees' needs, satisfying this triangle of needs is the company's new philosophy. The clients' needs are perceived as competitive prices and a good welcome; the company's needs are to have progressive systems in the shop and prove the viability of technological systems. Employees' needs are continually being assessed. The importance of the system introduced by the firm is that it attempts simultaneously and continuously to take into consideration all these factors. The Personnel Manager stressed that no decision affecting one of the components of the triangle is taken without considering the impact on the other two.

The practical application of the theory was to set up homogeneous groups of part-timers working twenty-eight hours (who represent 80-90% of the store's employees). Each group reflects as closely as possible the breakdown of the shop workforce ie if 50% of the workforce are married women each group must be composed of 50% married women. Groups contain 14-18 people which constitute the Unité de Temps Choisi (Chosen Time Unit - UTC). In the Calais hypermarket there are 6 UTC, one for high turnover goods, two for perishable goods, one covering bric-a-brac and clothing, one for the check-outs and one consisting of information desk assistants who work on all departments. While one large UTC for the whole shop was thought ideal for maximum flexibility it was felt that the system would be too complicated to implement given that the store employed over 200 men and women.

Each UTC is allocated a certain amount of work to do in a given period and it is the responsibility of the members of the group to decide the allocation of work. The group also works together as a quality circle. The example of the check-outs is useful because this is where the

system was first developed, although other store departments operate in the same way. The main system is based on choice in working hours, although the company is also beginning to develop task flexibility (by which the management indicates the tasks to be done over a week and leaves the choice up to the employees). The flexibility in working hours operates like a semi-autonomous team: three weeks before the date of application the management produces hours targets (in terms of total number of hours to be used) for each UTC (week -3), at the beginning of the second week the employees in each UTC choose their working hours on a magnetic board (week -2) and negotiate the hours between themselves during the next week (week -1) so that at week 0 there is someone working all the required hours. The system builds in all the legal and conventional guidelines for working hours. The Personnel Manager claimed that the aim of the teams was for the personnel to :

...organiser leur temps de vie non pas à partir du temps de travail mais intégrer le temps de travail dans la notion d'égalité. (...not to organize their time in terms of their working time but to integrate working time into a notion of equality...)

Each employee has a twenty-eight hour contract but can work credit or debit hours of up to and including six per week according to their personal preferences. The employee is paid the same whatever hour they work. Credit hours are put into a chaussette (literally a sock and means a bank of hours), the total hours in excess can never exceed twenty-eight hours but can be used like a bank account ie when under twenty-eight hours a week are worked the number in the chaussette are reduced. The system has been devised to give responsibility to the individual to work as they like which, it is claimed, enables the group to get to know one another and to encourage a feeling of responsibility in the group.

In order for the system to work within a department where the jobs are all different then the notion of mobilité (job mobility) is relied on very heavily: that is to say employees are expected to carry out several tasks of the same value. The Personnel Manager contrasted this with polyvalence which he defined as carrying out several tasks of different value. The company hopes to bring in a system of mobility and polyvalence later. Because the new system is based on job mobility its introduction has involved analyzing all tasks and questioning the old system of task values used in the National Convention governing the industry, in order to make all the tasks of equal value. For example,

doing check-out work or filling shelves is defined within the firm as of equal value, and groups exist in which departmental employees and check-out assistants do these types of work interchangeably. Thirty-five different tasks of equal value have been defined by the company management. The aim of introducing the system is partly to create some diversity in the task and hence make the work more interesting. The company has found that, by giving the employee more responsibility over his/her hours and more interesting work, employees are more motivated and work better, the group works better and the net effect is positive for the company. Diversity in employment means that the promotional avenues are increased whereas in the old system the possibility of promotion was much reduced ie for a check-out assistant it was virtually nil.

The system of mobility has meant that employees are given much more training than in the traditional single-skilled system and that management has a different role. Before the new store was opened each employee was given three months of training. Under the traditional system (which continues to operate in the rest of the company's stores) a departmental head directed the employees in his department each of whom had specialized task knowledge, under the new system a departmental head needs "hours" he employs staff with a normal but not a specialized knowledge of the department, who do not "belong" to his specific department. Under the traditional system the departmental head decided who was working where and at what time on a day-to-day basis whereas the new system requires more forward planning to take into account the man hours required to carry out a particular job. Consequently the demands on the departmental head are heavier. For example, if supplies are expected instead of allowing the goods deliveries man/woman to spend a morning dealing with them the department head decides ahead that the job can be done in half an hour with four part-timers.

The role of the departmental head has been totally modified because the new system calls for departmental solidarity and flexibility. For example if a large delivery of goods cannot be handled by a team in a particular department then the check-out head for example can ask more check-out assistants to come in to help with the delivery. But this does imply that forecasts have not been accurate. Each departmental head is given sales margin and labour cost objectives. If he/she has to ask for extra man hours from another department then his/her objectives have been wrongly calculated. The system is facilitated by the use of EPOS technology. The pressure is very much on the departmental head to be accurate in the man-hour projections. The

advantage for the company is that if the calculations are accurate, personnel are working only when they are needed.

The system is also based on the principal that management must respect the hours the employees have chosen and have no right to modify hours or impose overtime hours. It is possible to offer overtime to employees who are totally within their rights to refuse. But these are paid and are not included in the chaussette. There is "notion de respect d'engagement" (respect for a commitment made) which encourages the feeling of responsibility within the teams.

The system is being developed even further in one of the company's restaurants. In this environment UTC's are based on different hours worked in the day ie one works between 0600-1400, the next 1200-1800 and the last 1600-2200 so that in periods of maximum customer demand shifts are overlapping. The remuneration system is based not only on individual performance but on quality objectives set for each UTC. This type of system might ultimately be brought into the hypermarkets because it encourages pride in group work.

APPENDIX VIII
TYPICAL BRANCH MANNING GUIDE AND SCHEDULING SHEET
IN BRITISH CASE STUDY COMPANY

BRANCH MANNING GUIDE - (MIDDLE RANGE STRUCTURE)

BASIS OF MANNING GUIDE - 669,000 ITEMS

BRANCH

(SHEFFIELD)

REVISION DATE- 31.5.85

~~LAST SCHEDULE DATE - MARCH 85~~

WORK CONT.

			HOURS		
20	STORE MANAGER	1:	DEP. PROVISIONS MANAGER	1:	(20)
21	DEPUTY STORE MANAGER	1:			
22			DEPUTY PRODUCE MANAGER	1:	(30)
23	GROCERY MANAGER	1:	DEPUTY MEAT MANAGER	1:	(30)
24	PROVISIONS MANAGER	1:	DEPUTY BAKERY MANAGER	1:	(30)
25	PRODUCE MANAGER	1:	DEP. W/HSE/RECEPTION MGR.	1:	(20)
26	CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER	1:	OFFICE MANAGER	1:	(20)
27	W/HSE/RECEPTION MANAGER	1:	DEPUTY OFFICE MANAGER	1:	(44)
28	DEP. GROCERY MANAGER	1:			
29	1ST DEP. CUST. SERVICE MGR.	1:	GROCERY SUPERVISOR (FOODS)	1:	(36)
30	ASSISTANT MANAGER	1:	GROCERY SUPERVISOR (N/FOODS)	1:	(36)
31			PRICE CONTROL/GROCERY CLERK	2:	(15)
32	MEAT MANAGER	1:	WAREHOUSE SUPERVISOR	1:	(42)
33	BAKERY MANAGER	1:	DELI SUPERVISOR	1:	(30)
34	B.P.D.	1:	FROZ. FOOD SUP. (S/HKT NO T/C)	1:	(30)
35	2ND DEP. CUST. SERVICE MGR.	1:	FISH SUPERVISOR	0:	(00)
36			CUST. SERVICE SUPERVISOR	1:	(21)
37			RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR	1:	(30)
38	OFF. LICENCE SUPERVISOR	1:	INSTORE INSTRUCTOR	1:	(10)
39	DISPLAY SUPERVISOR	1:	CASHIER INSTRUCTOR	1:	(20)

MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISION TOTAL	1446
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TOTAL WORK CONTENT HOURS (464)

~~revisions~~

STORE SERVICEMEN	: 7: () () ()	COOK	: 1: revisions
MEAT TRADES ASSISTANTS	: 5: () () ()	DOMESTICS	: 222: hours () () ()
SENIOR BAKERY ASSISTANTS	: 4: () () ()	CAR PARK ATTENDANT(as directed)	: 0: hours
		TRAINEE MANAGERS(as directed)	: 1: 1:

1990	1991	1992
1993	1994	1995
1996	1997	1998
1999	2000	2001
2002	2003	2004
2005	2006	2007
2008	2009	2010
2011	2012	2013
2014	2015	2016
2017	2018	2019
2020	2021	2022
2023	2024	2025
2026	2027	2028
2029	2030	2031
2032	2033	2034
2035	2036	2037
2038	2039	2040
2041	2042	2043
2044	2045	2046
2047	2048	2049
2050	2051	2052
2053	2054	2055
2056	2057	2058
2059	2060	2061
2062	2063	2064
2065	2066	2067
2068	2069	2070
2071	2072	2073
2074	2075	2076
2077	2078	2079
2080	2081	2082
2083	2084	2085
2086	2087	2088
2089	2090	2091
2092	2093	2094
2095	2096	2097
2098	2099	2100
2101	2102	2103
2104	2105	2106
2107	2108	2109
2110	2111	2112
2113	2114	2115
2116	2117	2118
2119	2120	2121
2122	2123	2124
2125	2126	2127
2128	2129	2130
2131	2132	2133
2134	2135	2136
2137	2138	2139
2140	2141	2142
2143	2144	2145
2146	2147	2148
2149	2150	2151
2152	2153	2154
2155	2156	2157
2158	2159	2160
2161	2162	2163
2164	2165	2166
2167	2168	2169
2170	2171	2172
2173	2174	2175
2176	2177	2178
2179	2180	2181
2182	2183	2184
2185	2186	2187
2188	2189	2190
2191	2192	2193
2194	2195	2196
2197	2198	2199
2200	2201	2202
2203	2204	2205
2206	2207	2208
2209	2210	2211
2212	2213	2214
2215	2216	2217
2218	2219	2220
2221	2222	2223
2224	2225	2226
2227	2228	2229
2230	2231	2232
2233	2234	2235
2236	2237	2238
2239	2240	2241
2242	2243	2244
2245	2246	2247
2248	2249	2250
2251	2252	2253
2254	2255	2256
2257	2258	2259
2260	2261	2262
2263	2264	2265
2266	2267	2268
2269	2270	2271
2272	2273	2274
2275	2276	2277
2278	2279	2280
2281	2282	2283
2284	2285	2286
2287	2288	2289
2290	2291	2292
2293	2294	2295
2296	2297	2298
2299	2300	2301
2302	2303	2304
2305	2306	2307
2308	2309	2310
2311	2312	2313
2314	2315	2316
2317	2318	2319
2320	2321</	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	revisions	revisions	revisions	revisions	revisions	revisions	
MID-DAY ASSISTANTS	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	3
EVENING DISPLAY ASSISTANTS	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	(1) (1)	6
EVENING DISPLAY ASSISTANTS	22(1) (1)	68(1) (1)	22(1) (1)	128(1) (1)	148(1) (1)	68(1) (1)	561
NON SCHEDULED HOURS TOTAL						2948	
NON SCHEDULED HOURS REVISION						(1) (1) (1)	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY					
OFFICE CLERKS	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	146
CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSISTANTS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	68
GENERAL S/MKT ASSISTANTS	42	38	42	37	40	48	47	46	61	78	3414
TOTAL HEADCOUNT	45	41	51	40	51	51	49	64	81	82	

BRANCH MANNING GUIDE TOTAL HOURS 6559

EXISTING SMART ASSISTANTS : 42: 38: 47: 37: 0: 40: 47: 46: 61: 70: 60: 59: 76: 66: 75: 75: 34:4

REVISION 1 DATE

[illegible]

REVISD BRANCH MANNING GUIDE TOTAL HOURS

REVISION 2 DATE

NEW S'MKT ASSISTANTS	12	2	12	1	2	12	2	12	2	2	12	2	2	12	2	2
NEW TOTAL HEADCOUNT	12	2	12	1	2	12	2	12	2	2	12	2	2	12	2	2

REVISID BRANCH MANNING GUIDE TOTAL HOURS

REVISION 3 -- DATE

NEW S MKT ASSISTANTS	11	1	11	1	1	10	0	1	10	-	0	-	10	-	0	0	1	10
NEW TOTAL HEADCOUNT	11	1	11	1	1	10	0	1	10	-	0	-	10	-	0	0	1	10

REVISSED BRANCH MANNING GUIDE TOTAL HOURS

REVISION 4 -- DATE

[illegible]

REVISID BRANCH MANNING GUIDE-TOTAL HOURS

BRANCH:

DATE:

	Department	8.30	9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30
		9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30	8.30
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	CHECKOUTS												
M	CUSTOMER SERVICE												
O	OFFICE												
N	GROCERY												
D	PROVISIONS												
A	MEAT												
E	PRODUCE												
	BAKERY												
	PETROL STATION												

	Department	8.30	9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30
		9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30	8.30
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	CHECKOUTS												
T	CUSTOMER SERVICE												
C	OFFICE												
S	GROCERY												
S	PROVISIONS												
	MEAT												
A	PRODUCE												
	BAKERY												
	PETROL STATION												

	Department	8.30	9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30
		9.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	1.30	2.30	3.30	4.30	5.30	6.30	7.30	8.30
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	CHECKOUTS												
	CUSTOMER SERVICE												
	OFFICE												
	GROCERY												
	PROVISIONS												
	MEAT												
	PRODUCE												
	BAKERY												
	PETROL STATION												

APPENDIX IX
LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY CALCULATIONS FOR CHECK-OUT
STAFF IN FRENCH CASE STUDY OUTLET

PROGRAMMATION PRINCIPALE JOURNALIERE

1000 KF
10.11.15

date : 27/10/91
gestion : caisses
responsable :

	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
C.A objectif	22000	86000	101000	88000	30000	47000	82000	115000	124000	14200	165000	65000	
poids heure / jour	2.2	8.6	10.7	5.8	3.0	4.7	8.2	11.5	12.1	14.2	12.5	6.5	
CA horaire objectif	28341	36160	106965	69582	47831	45889	96899	113442	130683	121735	112925	52325	
caddie moyen	159	265	224	213	185	183	236	199	204	220	249	236	
prix moyen de l'article	156	233	251	196	155	190	231	242	227	253	259	248	
nombre de clients objectif	1330	1430	1420	1470	1440	1520	1530	1490	1510	1440	1460	1550	
nombre d'articles objectif	178	400	477	327	259	250	410	569	640	554	454	222	
performance articles objectif	141	369	426	295	153	247	355	497	533	561	452	262	
performance clients	1654	1209	8264	5705	3566	7481	7123	8239	9404	9460	8581	4224	
performance articles	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	155	
heures d'encaissement	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	
heures d'enregistrement	4.4	10.1	11.9	8.1	6.4	6.2	10.12	14.2	18.1	13	11.3	5.5	
heures de présence en caisse obj.	1.4	4.6	5.3	3.6	2.7	2.2	4.5	5.2	6.0	14.0	12.1	6.6	
heures de présence en caisse réel	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	
écart en heures	7.4	12.5	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1	
commentaires	5.8	14.6	17.2	11.9	8.6	8.4	14.2	19.4	22.0	19.2	16.8	8.2	

APPENDIX X
PRINCIPAL SHIFT PATTERNS IN FRENCH CASE STUDY OUTLET

Gestion : TEXTILE

Horaires Tournant - ~~Textile~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Poste 304 T	7H	14H	7H		7H		7H		7H		7H	
sans nocturne	11H	* 18H	11H30		11H30		11H30		11H30		11H	
avec nocturne le L.M.H.AUT	7H	14H	7H		7H		15H	* 21H	9H		7H	
	11H	* 18H	11H		11H				13H		11H	
avec nocturne le Vendredi	7H	14H	7H		7H		7H		16H		10H	
	11H	* 18H	11H		11H		11H		(22H)		14H	
avec nocturne le Samedi	7H	* 18H	7H		7H		7H		7H		7H	
avec 18H repos consécutif incluant le Lundi			11H		11H		11H		11H		11H	
avec 18H repos consécutif incluant le Samedi	7H	14H	7H		7H		7H		7H		11H30	
	11H30	* 18H	11H		11H30		11H30		11H30		11H30	
*	Après Midi Tournant											

Gashion : Cabine Textile

Horaire Tournant - ~~Textile~~
Applicable au : M-03-85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	PM	M	PM	M	PM	M	PM	M	PM	M	PM
394 T	10H30		8H30								8H45	
1	17H30		16H30			21H		13H			16H45	
2		13H	10H30		8H30		12H30					
		21H	17H			21H		21H		22H		
	8H30				13H				9H			13H
3	15H30				21H				15H			21H
394 T	8H30				15H30		12H30					
1	14H				21H		17H			22H		
		12H30	8H30			15H30			8H30			13H
2		18H	14H						14H			21H
		15H30			12H30							
3		21H					13H				8H30	
					18H		21H				14H	

Geshion : QLS

Horaire Tournoi ~~2015~~
Applicable au : 08.07.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
2015				17H		14H		14H		14H		14H
1				21H		18H		18H		18H		18H
2				14H		17H		14H		14H		14H
				18H		21H		18H		18H		18H
3				14H		14H		14H		14H		14H
				18H		18H		18H		18H		18H
4				14H		14H		17H		14H		14H
				18H		18H		21H		18H		18H
5				14H		14H		14H		17H		14H
				18H		18H		18H		22H		17H
6				14H		18H		18H		14H		18H
		17H		14H		18H		14H		18H		
7		21H		18H		18H		18H		18H		

Horaire ~~Tout~~ - Fixe
Applicable au : 08.07.85

[illegible]

Gestion : Caisses. (sans lot caisses)

Horaire Tournant - ~~Table~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
304 T 1		16H45	9H30 3	13H30	9H 5	14H30	9H 3	13H 3			12H30 16H 13H 21H	14H 4
2		16H 20H30	9H 2 14H45	12H45 17H			16H30 4 21H	9H30 3 12H30	15H30 4 13H30	9H 3 12H	14H 18H	22H
3			9H30 14H			15H45	9H45	14H45	9H 12H45	12H45	12H45 16H45 21H45	16H 21H
4	9H 14H30	12H45 16H45			16H45	9H45	14H15	21H 12H15	16H45		16H 21H30 12H30	15H 19H30 22H
5	9H 14H30			16H45	9H45	14H15			14H45 18H45 22H15	10H30 14H30	16H30	20H
6	12H45	13H45	16H30	21H	9H30	13H	15H45	9H45	13H45	17H45		

Geshon : CHASSES

Horaire Tournant - ~~Fin~~
Applicable au : 1^{er} decem 602 19

20H	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
20HT												
1	/	/	/	17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	/	15-20 ³⁰	9 ¹⁵ -13 ¹⁵ 4	/	/	9 ³⁰ -12 ³⁰ 3	16-20	320
2	/	17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	9 ¹⁵ -13 ¹⁵	/	/	/	/	/	15-20 ⁴⁵	9 ¹⁵ -12 ¹⁵	15-15 ¹⁵	2
3	9 ¹⁵ -13 ¹⁵	/	/	/	/	/	17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	/	14 ¹⁵ -16 ⁴⁵ 17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	9 ¹⁵ -15 ¹⁵	/	220
4	/	/	/	/	9 ¹⁵ -13 ¹⁵	/	15 ³⁰ -19 ³⁰	/	17 ¹⁵ -22 ¹⁵	/	13 ¹⁵ -16 ⁴⁵ 17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	220
5	/	15 ³⁰ -19 ³⁰	/	15 ³⁰ -19 ³⁰	/	/	/	/	15-20 ¹⁵	10-13 ³⁰	16 ³⁰ -20 ³⁰	220
6	/	17-21	/	/	/	13 ¹⁵ -16 ⁴⁵ 17 ¹⁵ -21 ¹⁵	16-20	9-14 ³⁰	/	/	/	320

Gestion : CaisSES

Horaire Tournant - Fixe
Applicable au :

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
8H											9H45	17H45
8H											13H45	21H15
8H											9H	14H
1											13H	18H
2											12H	16H
											17H	21H
8H											9H	13H
1											12H	18H
2											12H45	15H45
											16H45	21H15

Gestion : DHP. Programme Hygiène Publique

Horaires Tournant - ~~Fin~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Postes 394	SH		SH		SH		SH		SH		SH	
1.2.3	11H30		11H30		11H30		11H30		11H30		11H30	
	SH		SH		SH		SH		SH		SH	
4.	12H30		12H30		12H30		12H30		11H	12H		
Postes 214	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1.2.3	9H30		9H30		9H30		9H30		9H30		9H30	
	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
ou 4 bis	10H30		10H30		10H		9H30		10H30		SH30	
			10H30		10H		GH		GH		10H	

Geshon : Comptabilité

Horaire Tournant - Fixe
Applicable au : 18.01.86

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Poste 1101 T 39 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
1	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45
	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
2	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45
	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
Poste 1102 T 39 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
1	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45
	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
2	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45	12 H	16 H 45
	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
Poste 1103 F 20 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H	8 H	13 H
	12 H	17 H		16 H 45				16 H 45				
Poste 1104 F 20 H	8 H		8 H		8 H		8 H		8 H		8 H	
	12 H		12 H		12 H		12 H		12 H		12 H	

Gestion : BOF - LS.

PRODUITS FODAS.

Horaire Tournant - Fixe
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Poste 304T ♀	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1	14H		14H		14H		14H		14H		14H	
2		13H		13H		13H		13H		13H		13H
Poste 204T ♀	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1	9H		9H		9H		9H		10H		10H	
2		15H		15H		15H		15H		15H		15H
		18H		18H		18H		18H		19H		19H
Poste 204T ♀	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1	9H		9H		9H		9H		10H		10H	

Gestion : 30f. Fromage Coupe

Horaire Tournant - Fixe
Applicable au : 01.07.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Poste 394 T	8H				6H		7H		8H		8H	
1	16H	13H		13H	14H		13H	13H	12H	13H	16H	14H
2		2H		2H				2H		2H		2H
3			9H	16H		12H	9H	8H		8H		
			13H	21H		2H	16H	14H		16H		
Poste 304 H	8H				6H				17H	10H	16H	
Fixe	13H		8H	16H	12H			22H	13H	19H		
Poste 204 H												
Fixe		16H				15H	16H	9H			16H	
		20H				20H	19H	13H				20H

Gestion : Poisson

Horaires Tournant - ~~Fixe~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
39 H T 1	7H30 14H		7H 14H30		7H 14H		6H30 14H		6H 13H		6H30 13H	
2		14H 21H		13H 21H		14H 21H		14H 21H		14H 21H		14H 21H
3	7H 14H30		6H30 15H		6H 14H		6H 15H		5H30 14H		6H 14H	
4												
30 H T 1	6H30		6H 13H		6H 14H		6H 14H		6H 14H		6H 12H	
2	10H30											

Geshon : Fruits et Légumes

Horaire Tournant - Fixe
Applicable au : 21.02.86

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
39HT	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1	14H		14H		14H		12H		15H		15H	
2		15H		15H		15H		14H		14H		14H
		21H		21H		21H		22H		21H		21H
EP 39HT	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
1.2.3	14H		14H		14H		14H		15H		16H	
	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
4.	14H		13H		13H		14H		15H			
20HT	GH				GH		GH		GH		GH	
	10H				10H		10H		10H		10H	
		14H		16H		12H		16H		16H		16H
2.		18H		20H		16H		20H		20H		20H

Géshon : Traiteur.

Horaire Tourant - ~~Fixe~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
394 T Vendusey			7H			13H	9H	15H		12H		18H
	7H		14H		6H	21H	12H	22H	9H	15H		21H
2	15H				13H		15H		14H		12H	21H
	9H	14H					7H		9H		7H	
3	12H	21H					11H	19H	16H		13H	
304 T Vendusey			7H			15H		16H		13H		18H
			12H			20H		21H				
" 2	7H				6H				7H		7H	
	12H				12H			12H		11H		
		15H						14H		17H		
3.		20H						19H		21H		

Gestion : Coffre

Horaires Tournaient - ~~Fin~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
Poses 1 1401-1402 1403-1404 39 H	8H	13H	8H	13H		12H20 17H 18H 21H20		8H	13H	13H30 17H 18H 22H30	10H30 15H 18H30	15H
2		12H20 17H 18H 21H20			8H	13H 17H 21H20	8H	13H	8H	13H	12H30 16H30 21H30	17H30 21H30
3	8H30 13H	14H 18H30		13H30 17H 18H 21H20			13H30 17H 18H 21H20	10H30 15H 16H 19H30	8H	12H40	17H	
4	8H 12H	13H 17H30	9H 13H	14H 18H	9H 13H	14H 18H	9H 13H	14H 18H	9H 13H	14H 16H30		
Poses 1405 1406-1407 1408-1409 39 H	8H 12H30	13H30 18H	9H 13H30		8H30 12H30		9H 13H30			13H 16H 22H30	12H30 15H30 16H30 21H30	
4		12H20 17H 18H 21H20	9H30 14H		8H 12H30		9H 13H30			13H 16H 22H30		

Horaire Tournant - ~~Fin~~
Applicable au : 01-01-88.

-562 -

Gestion : Epicerie

Horaire Tournant - ~~Epicerie~~
Applicable au : 01.01.85

	LUNDI		MARDI		MERCREDI		JEUDI		VENDREDI		SAMEDI	
	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM	M	AM
VRAC 394 T	8H		8H		8H		8H		9H		8H	
1	14H30		14H30		14H30		14H30		15H30		14H30	
2		14H30 11 21H		14H30 21H		14H30 21H		14H30 21H		15H30 22H		14H30 21H
Postes de 304 T. 1 ^{er} 1.2.3	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		GH	
	11H		11H		11H		11H		11H		11H	
4												
	12H		12H		12H		12H		12H			
Postes de 214 T. 2 ^{er} 1.2.3	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH		5H30	
	9H30		9H		5H30		9H30		9H30		9H30	
3 ^{er} 1.2.3	GH		GH		GH		GH		GH			
	10H30		10H		10H		10H		10H30			