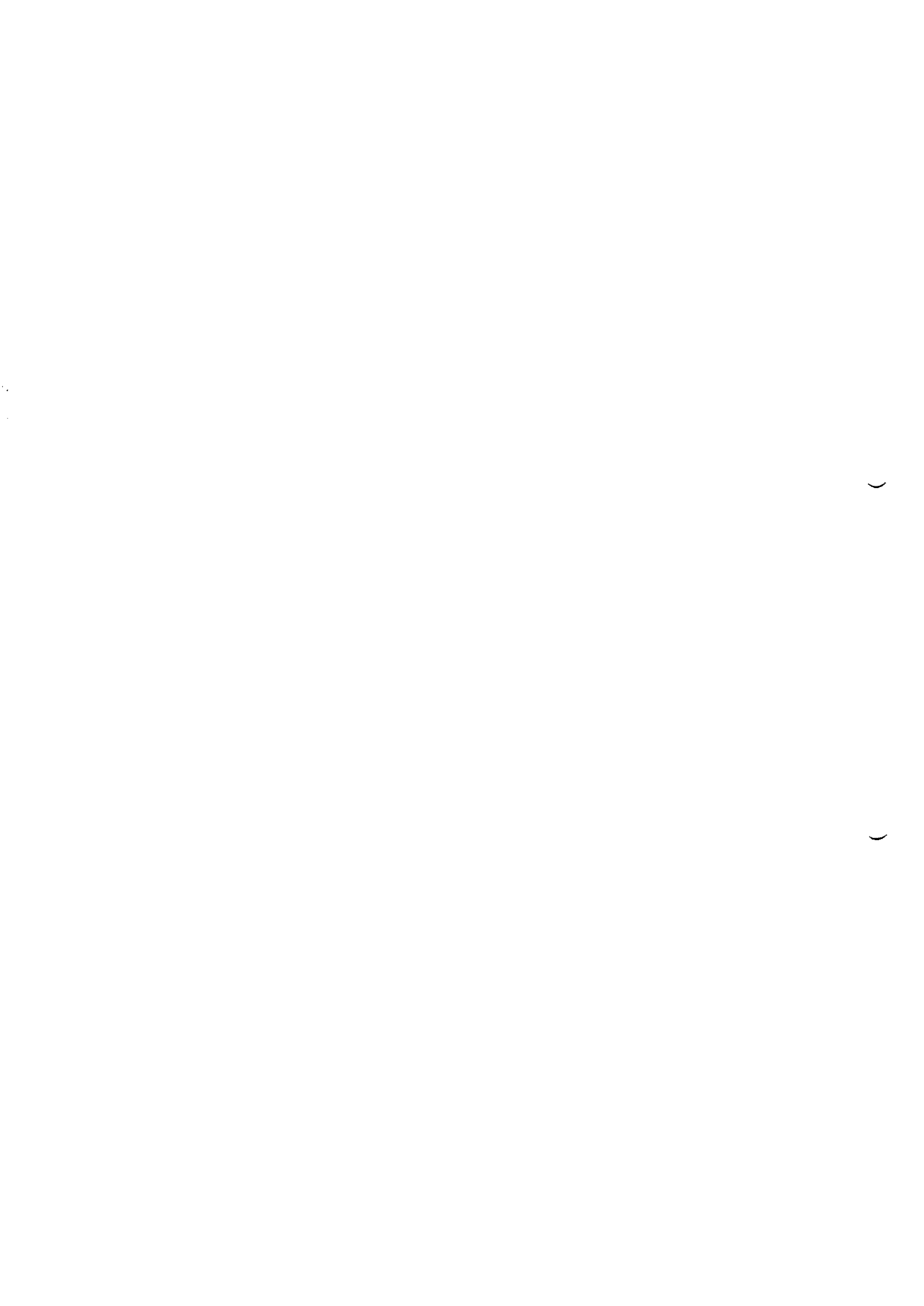


THE END OF THE WORK SOCIETY

Theories and Facts

J.W. Becker
Social and Cultural Planning Office



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theme and problem

In a number of societies that are highly developed economically, the demands paid employment makes on the lives of individuals appear to be diminishing substantially. Participation in education is increasing. The contractual duration of work is decreasing. Unemployment is still higher than at the beginning of the 1970s, and long-term unemployment is substantial. The age of retirement has fallen, and there is a trend towards early retirement. The number of disabled people or people medically incapacitated for work is rising. This is a general impression; naturally the developments vary from country to country.

The situation with regard to paid work or gainful employment as it is sometimes called has given rise to speculation about whether it is losing its dominant social position. Is the work society coming to an end? This question is not new. Many Utopian theories are based on the assumption that in an ideal society work unnecessary for the purpose of subsistence can be kept to a minimum. Many see advantages in this. Individuals would have more opportunity for self-development and for devoting themselves to community tasks. To a greater extent than previously, they would be free to choose their activities, thereby ending the sense of alienation. It would be going too far here to give a complete overview of these ideas, and this paper is instead restricted to the recent past.

In 1965 the study by Jean Fourastié entitled *Les 40.000 heures* was published. Although this is not a recent book, it nevertheless deserves attention since it has had a major influence and because Fourastié dealt with themes which still play a role today in the debate on the place of work (Fourastié, 1965).

Fourastié was impressed by the speed at which science and technology were developing. He believed that it would become increasingly possible for fewer and fewer people to produce more and more goods. He estimated that in the 21st century an individual employee would in all likelihood devote some 40.000 hours of his life to paid employment. He based this estimate on a working life of 35 years, with 40 working weeks of 30 hours in a year (he rounded the result down to arrive at 40,000 hours). When Fourastié made his prediction, "working lives" in France lasted over 80,000 hours.

If the population of a country like France were to devote all of its economic growth to reducing working hours, Fourastié calculated that a working life of 40,000 hours could be achieved in 1995. The standard of living would in that case remain at the 1965 level for thirty years. Fourastié considered this assumption to be unrealistic, since he recognised people's tendency to increase their consumption more and more. The urge to spend kept the work society intact, since increasing material needs made it constantly necessary to increase productive work. However, he believed that a saturation point would be reached if the production of goods and services were to be around five times as high as in 1965. As the population was increasingly well educated, non-material needs would become more important. Indeed, a new and less materialistic type of person might even emerge. Fourastié did not regard this as a Utopia. He pointed out that when French workers improved their material circumstances, they showed more non-material wishes than many of their contemporaries had believed possible.

The saturation point would be reached in the 21st century. Society would then offer greater scope for the development of human potential, although there would also be problems. Leisure facilities would

be overburdened. Even in 1965, if every French citizen had wished to see the Mona Lisa once in his life, the Louvre would have had to issue serial numbers. More free time would only exacerbate the situation. As not everyone would be able to cope with the general increase in the standard of education, a wider range of schooltypes would be necessary. Young people would also have to remain in the educational system for longer than was good for their personal development and for learning practical skills. Fourastié also foresaw that economic production would constitute an increasing danger to the environment.

Would people who only had to devote 40,000 hours of their working life to work be happy? In principle, Fourastié believed that they would be, although he did see one danger that threatened this happiness. In a situation in which material problems were banished, the attention of the individual would be free to concentrate entirely on existential problems. In consequence, people's concern about their own health would grow and there would be a rise in the number of people suffering from mental disturbances.

In the years that followed the publication of Fourastié's book, the evolution of the work society received some attention. This was particularly the case in the sociology concerned with leisure time, in which connection the work of Dumazedier should be mentioned. At the end of the 1970s and in the mid-1980s, the high level of unemployment once again provided a stimulus for the discussion on the position of work in society. When unemployment fell and the prospect of a continuation of economic growth became more realistic, interest waned again. Indeed, at the end of the 1980s there seemed to be more publications advocating the desirability of a greater level of participation in work than about the possible flourishing of a leisure society. Nonetheless, there is every reason to continue devoting attention to the subject. 25 years have passed since Fourastié's prediction. Although a working life of 40,000 hours has by no means yet been achieved, the prediction did not apply until the year 2050. This date is still so far away that much is yet possible. Moreover, the number of working hours is moving in the direction indicated by Fourastié. It should be noted that this is the number of working hours contractually agreed. A single example: a Dutch employee in industry worked 2,150 hours per year in 1965 and 1,748 hours in 1987 - a reduction of almost 20%. If the length of a working life in 1965 is taken to have been 40 years, this produces a total of 86,000 working hours. Taking the average working life in 1987 as 35 years, the number of working hours is just over 60,000. This is a reduction of 30% (SZW 1989: 78).¹

The reduction in the contractual number of working hours could be seen as bearing out Fourastié's prediction, but the question is whether society will change drastically as a result. Above all, will the place of paid work in society really become less important? This problem will be examined by reference to three questions.

First of all, what has been said about a possible decay of the work society? This will involve a survey of the literature, particularly that which appeared in the course of the 1980s. Second, how should developments which are identified in the literature be assessed in the light of recent statistical information obtained from a number of countries? Third, what are the prospects for the future of the work society?

Each study of social phenomena has its limitations. This is also the case here. Subjects such as changes in the nature and organisation of work, democratisation and the development of the trade union movement and the employers' organisations must unfortunately be disregarded.

The change in a type of society and the transition from one type of society to another are complex processes. It is therefore useful to posit a number of desiderata beforehand, especially in order to examine what could be meant by the end of the work society. Unfortunately, there is no fully developed theory of the "work society" which makes it possible to specify definitions and criteria.

The desiderata are therefore also based in part on various outlines of the literature which are dealt with in the next part of this study.

1.2 Desiderata

There is a tendency in the literature to speak about "the end of the work society". Dennis Wrong pointed out that phrases such as "the end of" and "the death of" and the word "post" are often attributed too lightly to social trends (Wrong 1976, pp. 279-285). The change in social systems is so complex and generally proceeds so slowly that it is pointless to label periods. Instead of talking about the end of the work society, it would be better to speak of its decline.

The place of work in society can be regarded from various angles. For example, it may be viewed in the light of changes in the number of hours worked. The extent to which economic growth is desired or projected is important. And the view of the socio-cultural significance of work and leisure play a role.

These elements crop up again and again in the work of the authors concerned, albeit in a rather unsystematic way.

The decline of the work society is always associated with "working less". There are various ways in which this can happen:

- * at the micro-level working less means that the working hours of each individual become shorter;
- * at the macro level working less means that the total number of hours worked in society declines.

These two possibilities need not always coincide. In the case of shorter working hours, the total number of hours worked may rise nonetheless. A baby boom, which has an effect in the long term, can influence the number of hours worked. In such a case, more people go out to work, with the result that the reduction in working hours is more than offset. Immigration may also play a role, causing the number of people immigrating to exceed the number emigrating. Population categories which did not previously have a chance of working may enter the labour market. Married women are an example, in any event in the Netherlands.

Conversely, a reduction in the number of hours worked at the macro level does not have to result in a reduction in working hours for individuals. If the working population shrinks because of ageing, the working hours per individual may remain the same or even increase. If many people in receipt of a benefit are excluded from employment, the same applies. This picture may become even more complex. Generally, working hours are contractually agreed. However, actual working hours may differ from them: they may be shorter because of time spent on unproductive matters or because absenteeism and sick leave are high. They may be longer because of overtime and time spent travelling to and from work.

Authors writing about the work society generally base their assumptions on the decline in the average contractual number of working hours. This average often conceals, however, an uneven division of labour. Part of the working population can work shorter hours, but another part - for example highly qualified specialists - must work longer. It is not too hard to show the difficulties to which the concept of "working less" can give rise. Suppose, for example, that everyone aged between 18 and 65 in a given society has paid work. Suppose also that three quarters of the working population work three days a week and five hours a day and one quarter work five days a week and nine hours a day. It is far from simple to decide whether or not this can still be said to be a work society. Only if the total number of hours actually worked declines and the working hours of each employee are reduced is it clear that the work society is in decline.

The economic growth which an author foresees or desires is important. Is the assumed decline of the work society accompanied by less economic growth or prosperity, by the same economic growth or by stronger economic growth? Here is a connection with the interpretation of the concept "working less". If there is a general reduction in working hours and it is desired to achieve the same level of prosperity as before, more people will have to work. If the total number of hours worked declines and if prosperity must at least remain at the same level, certain categories of the working population will have to work longer. These theories hold good only if labour productivity remains constant or rises at a gentle rate. If it increases sharply in the short term, it is naturally possible to produce the same or an ever greater prosperity with less work. Many authors repose great confidence in such a development.

Authors' views about work are relevant to their views on the decline of the work society. Very broadly speaking, three different views can be identified: work has a social value, work has an economic value, work has no value.

The social position is that work should help the individual to develop as a person. In so far as it fails to do this, it is possible to organise it in such a way that it does fulfil this function. Self-development is more important than the creation of material prosperity. Particularly if material needs can be satisfied at an acceptable level, people are better served by the fulfilment of their non-material desires. In this way, society and culture can be raised to a higher level.

From the economic point of view, work is a production factor and serves economic growth. Some regard almost all productive work as good, while others impose demands on the quality of the work, especially on the necessary level of training.

The argument that work has no value means that no matter what form it takes it is burdensome and alienating. Improvement is impossible and the less work people perform the better. Those who take this view could be called the work cynics. Less disparagingly, this view could be described as negative.

The social and cynical views of work are derived from an intellectual tradition to which authors often refer. The Greeks made a distinction between activity which was required in order to provide the basic necessities on the one hand and leisure on the other. These groups of activities have become known by their Roman descriptions, i.e. *negotium* and *otium*. *Negotium* had to be left to the unfree, *otium* was the prerogative of free citizens. The latter were required to spend their *otium* in governing the State, practising politics, indulging in the arts and sciences and observing nature. In later centuries, the distinction between "free" and "unfree" activities continued to play a role in views on work. Kant, for example, referred to autonomous or self-chosen activities and heteronomous activities which were imposed on the individual by external forces. Marx distinguished between the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity (Lanfant 1972, pp. 23-32; Dahrendorf 1987, pp. 88-91). The supporters of the social and cynical views of work point to the desirability of individual self-determination. The cynics take the most radical line in this respect.

In an assessment of the place of work in society, these views naturally play a role. In reality they are rather less sharply defined than indicated here. Supporters of the social vision recognise the economic value of work, but nevertheless attach great importance to the non-material aspects. Supporters of the economic view do not explicitly deny the social value of work. The self-development of the individual has after all acquired a significant value, which it would be hard to deny. The difference between the social and economic points of view will therefore generally be one of emphasis rather than of absolute principles. However, there is clear distinction between both these viewpoints and the position of the cynics.

The view of leisure remains to be discussed. What will people do with the extra time that is available to them? This question has been dealt with exhaustively in the sociological literature (Lanfant, 1972). The authors are agreed on what people should do, namely use the time usefully. However, when it comes to the practicalities of daily life, views differ. Optimists think that people will as a matter of course - or in any event provided they are encouraged by institutional schemes - undertake community work, play sports or take part in the arts and sciences. Strictly speaking, the optimists cherish the classical notion of *otium* and regard this as a natural way of living. Pessimists, on the other hand, take the view that people will do nothing in their leisure time, in other words they will passively consume what the mass media has to offer them, or they will devote their time to trivial activities of importance only to themselves. In this case, boredom lies in wait and vandalism and other forms of destructive behaviour may be the result.

Various trends may provide an indication of the decline of the work society. A shortening of working hours, a reduction in the total number of hours worked or both together. The expected or desired level of prosperity has a strong influence on accounts of the work society. The views of work and free time are decisive for the extent to which one assesses the decline of the work society positively or negatively. A social or a cynical view of work is more likely to coincide with a positive assessment than the economic viewpoint. An optimistic view of leisure is more likely to produce a positive assessment than a pessimistic one.

NOTES

¹ *The figures for the numbers of hours worked by employees in Dutch industry are derived from an unpublished survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) for 1965 and from the Annual Labour Market Survey of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for 1989. The figure of 35 years seems a reasonable estimate of the duration of a working life in 1987 owing to the increased participation in education, the large number of people disabled for work and the advent of early retirement.*

2. SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

During the 1980s the high level of unemployment caused a revival of the old debate about the place of work in society and particularly about its relationship to leisure. It was observed that so many people were excluded from paid work that there was a prospect of society being riven in two. In the longer term work had lost much of its influence on other aspects of life. Education was no longer exclusively a preparation for a career. Leisure had become much more than the hours allotted to people to rest from their labours and prepare for the next stint of work. The pension had increasingly become a means of abbreviating working life early rather than a reward for working hard and successfully. As benefits became common, paid employment became less important as an instrument of distributing income and people were able to provide for their subsistence without having to take paid employment. As a consequence of these changes, work lost much of its significance as a means of explaining the meaning of individual existence. In their entirety, these developments can perhaps best be described by the sociological concept "loss of function". In response to this loss of function, proposals were made for the alternative organisation of work and even of society as a whole. Some important themes were the redivision of labour, drastic reductions of working hours, guaranteed basic income and producing for one's own needs (the "prosumment").

There was also a current of opinion - mainly among economists and particularly among those working for international organisations - which concentrated on the need for economic growth. Unemployment meant that labour, as a factor of production, was making an inadequate contribution to this growth. Conversely, unduly low economic growth meant that paid employment was available for too few people. The proposals that correspond with this vision could be described as orthodox, namely recovery of economic growth and recovery of full employment.

It is possible to contrast the currents of opinion in various ways. The "orthodox" were convinced that economic growth was desirable, whereas the "unorthodox" were much less convinced, if at all. The former considered that recovery of paid employment was possible and the latter that it was impossible. The orthodox placed great faith in the operation of the current economic system and its capacity for self-regulation, whereas the unorthodox were extremely sceptical about this. In order to do justice to the various shades of opinion, it is useful to take as the starting point the views on paid employment as described in chapter 1. Three categories of view are distinguished:

- * the view that emphasises the positive effect of paid employment on self-development;
- * the view that emphasises the negative effect which paid employment may have on the individual;
- * the view which attaches prime importance to the positive function of paid employment for economic prosperity.

The literature survey will be classified in this way and will be concluded with a summary. The discussion of the various studies will devote rather more space to authors who consider the problem in its entirety than to those who confine themselves to a particular aspect of it. Finally, the emphasis is placed on studies from the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s.

2.2 Self-development

Ralf Dahrendorf

Dahrendorf has devoted a number of essays to changes in the place of paid work in society (Dahrendorf 1980, 1983, 1987 and 1988). He has used a number of rather different starting points. In a brief paper on the *Meliorations Gesellschaft* (the society of higher quality), he concurred with Marx in so far as the latter opposed the specialisation entailed by the division of labour (Dahrendorf 1989, pp. 87-107). The individual was tied to a particular job, and was thus forced to neglect the rest of his or her skills and interests. The passage from *Die deutsche Ideologie* is often quoted. Society must, as it were, enable the individual to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, care for the livestock in the evening and criticise dinner without having to be a hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic (Marx 1964, p. 361). In the other essays, Dahrendorf deals with the structural shortage of paid work and advocates among other things shorter working hours. Here too he quotes Marx, since the latter regarded a shorter working day to be essential for a better organisation of work. However, a report by an OECD committee of experts chaired by Dahrendorf on the introduction of new technology made no mention whatsoever of alternatives to the then system of work (OECD 1988b).

Apart from the last publication, which was not really his work, Dahrendorf's ideas amounted to the following. The work society was in a crisis. The high unemployment showed that too little work was available, and this shortage would only become more acute as time went on. Only a thorough reform of the system could produce a solution. Activities outside the realm of paid employment which the individual would be free to choose should acquire the same status as paid employment. The "Arbeitsgesellschaft" should be replaced by a "Tätigkeitsgesellschaft". The limitation of the concept of work to paid employment or work governed by a contract of employment was an obstacle to this change. Many more people could have work if informal activities such as voluntary work and domestic work were to have the same status as paid employment. The concept of work should be broadened or redefined - a theme which also recurs in the work of other authors.

Dahrendorf also placed the crisis of work in a broader perspective, especially in his essay *Conflict after class*, which was published in *The modern social conflict* (Dahrendorf 1988). The social primacy of work had been weakened. Education, leisure and retirement were no longer exclusively dominated by work but had gained an independent value. Not only had the connection between work and various areas of life become looser. In addition, the number of people required to generate a given quantity of prosperity by paid employment had become smaller. In Germany, for example, employment grew less fast than the national product in the period 1950-1986. The extent of the wage costs was probably the cause of this failure to keep pace. Dahrendorf concluded: "... there are probably not enough jobs at a level of pay which most would associate with a decent standard of living" (Dahrendorf 1988, pp. 145-146). The situation in the United States illustrates the importance of wage costs for the extent of employment. There real wages have fallen since the mid-1970s. In the period 1973-1983 highly skilled work was replaced by lowly skilled work, which was characterised by poor job certainty and also lacked the perks such as health care support. The percentage of households under the poverty line, which had constantly decreased since the 1940s, rose again between 1973 and 1983 (from 11% to 14%). "Persistent poverty is the American equivalent to persistent unemployment in Europe", observed Dahrendorf (Dahrendorf 1988: p. 149). Indeed, an "underclass" of people who were systematically excluded from society appeared in the big cities of the United States (and those of Great Britain). They lacked in fact full citizenship. Much government policy failed to reach them. Unemployment was actually an insufficient reason for the emergence of a category of this kind: "For an underclass to come about, there have to be systematic processes of recruitment, of definition and of behaviour. In American cities these appear to exist." (Dahrendorf 1988, p. 150).

According to Dahrendorf, high unemployment had economic advantages. It was less expensive to pay unemployment benefit than to provide work. As a result of unemployment benefits, the economy was able to function despite the high wages and unemployment thus served a vested interest. Dahrendorf was therefore sceptical about the possibility of change: "the right to work (is) either an empty phrase or a misuse of the word right ... no judge can force employers to hire unemployed people." (Dahrendorf 1988, p. 148). Dahrendorf pressed for a new social contract which would centre around shorter working hours. If full employment were to be promoted by reducing wages, the result would be increasing poverty among large sections of the population. Shorter working hours would, on the other hand, promote full employment and prevent poverty. People would have to use the extra leisure time thus created for community duties.

Financial assistance to the poor should be freed of its restrictive conditions. Here Dahrendorf quoted the original intention of Beveridge: "All citizens are to receive benefits up to subsistence level, as of right and without means tests, so that individuals may build freely on it." (Dahrendorf 1988, p. 177). In this connection Dahrendorf advocated a guaranteed basic income. The question was whether this income should be sufficiently high to enable an individual and his family to exist completely upon it. Dahrendorf gave this impression in *Conflict after class*, but elsewhere he was more cautious since a relatively high basic income would hamper the development of individual initiatives. In his essay *Die Arbeitsgesellschaft in der Krise*, published in *Fragmente eines neuen Liberalismus*, Dahrendorf wrote: "Das garantierte Einkommen braucht indes kein auskömmliches Leben zu sichern; die Verbindung von Grundsicherung und Anreiz zur Eigenleistung ist vielmehr einer entwickelten Staatsbürgergesellschaft durchaus angemessen." (Dahrendorf 1987, p. 169).¹

Dahrendorf was also a proponent of negative income tax - the system whereby every individual whose taxable income was below a certain level should automatically receive a financial supplement. Payments under different schemes would then be rendered unnecessary and the system would be extremely simple to administer. In other essays Dahrendorf also advocated a wider definition of the term work and a guaranteed basic income. He also pointed out that the division of work and leisure time among the various categories of the population had undergone a change. Whereas previously ample leisure time had been a privilege of the more highly placed, a situation had now arisen in which work had to be regarded as a privilege. The leisure class had become a working class, and the former working class had obtained much more free time. Unemployment was concentrated among the least productive members of society. Finally, Dahrendorf advocated a change in the nature of work to make it better suited to the skills and preferences of the employees. He referred to the so-called Volvo model: high quality production, less rigid divisions of work and fairly autonomous production teams.

Claus Offe

In one of his essays in the collection entitled *Disorganised capitalism*, Claus Offe gave a historical review of the place of work and dealt particularly with changes in workethic (Offe 1985). In the course of the 19th century, work was regulated to an increasing extent by employment contracts. A distinction was made between paid work (or gainful employment as it was sometimes called) and domestic work, and production for the purpose of self-sufficiency was largely replaced by production for a market. Paid work became increasingly important and started to influence thinking on morality, the family, social policy and so forth. Paid work became the cause of many social problems.

Around the mid-1980s, this situation underwent a change. Work started to occupy a less central place in people's lives. A number of developments had contributed to this change. Over the years work had become more heterogeneous in terms of qualifications, income, prestige and autonomy.

As a result, it was unlikely that the term work still had a precise and generally accepted meaning for the working population. "The possibility (is) that work has become 'abstract' such that it can only be considered as a descriptive category." (Offe 1985, p. 136). In addition, traditional religious notions started to lose their hold at the same time as the traditional work ethic weakened. In the midst of a "consumer-centred hedonism", there was no longer any place for such a morality. Changes in both education and the nature of work meant that fewer and fewer people had a "Beruf", in other words work of which they could be proud. Education and work became increasingly separated from each other, with the result that people were able to apply in practice less and less of what they had learned. Rationalisation and division of work impoverished the duties of the individual employees. Working hours became shorter. The mass nature of unemployment weakened the stigma that had originally attached to being out of work.

These dissimilar developments (Offe made little attempt to structure his summary) resulted in a situation in which work was one of the things which a person could do in his life but was not necessarily the most important. The function of work as a "touchstone of personal and societal identity" had been relativised. Offe considered this situation to be unchangeable. Work would occupy less and less of a central place among other cultural values. Although it would retain its place among the official values of society, in practice the value of "work" would motivate workers less and less. Social contrasts and conflicts would also be increasingly unrelated to work. Instead, issues such as peace and disarmament, the environment, the division of roles between men and women and human rights would become important. Prosperity would play an ever less important role as an objective of activity. The level of prosperity had become so high that an increase or even some decrease would no longer have any psychological consequences.

In another essay, Offe contrasted two reactions to high unemployment, which he termed orthodoxy and realism. The orthodox reaction relied on the self-regulating power of the economic system to banish the unemployment in due course. All that was needed, therefore, was to continue the normal economic policy. Offe quoted in this context Helmuth Schmidt, who was alleged to have said: "Today's profits are tomorrow's investments and are the jobs of the future." (Offe 1985, p. 82). The firm belief in economic laws was missing in the realistic reaction. According to this view, the objective of full employment was no longer feasible. There were various ways of combating unemployment. One suggestion was shorter working hours. It was also desired to reduce the number of working people by limiting immigration, discouraging married women from seeking employment outside the home and rationing work to one job per family. In addition, the proponents of this view also had a more ambitious objective: to secure recognition of informal work and to have its economic value included in the national product. Offe referred in this connection to the broadening of the term work, in the same way as Dahrendorf was doing.

Offe considered the orthodox view to be unduly simple. The high unemployment was so persistent that he could no longer repose any confidence in social self-regulation. Yet he also had objections to the realistic view. A reduction of the number of people in work was unlikely, since it was precisely in times of economic recession that people wished to safeguard their income and would thus continue to try to find paid work. Offe also considered that the absorptive capacity of informal work was limited. If informal work was to be performed successfully, it was necessary to have work rooms and materials. The new category of workers would lack the requisite qualifications. Even if it were to be made official, informal work would lack the institutional structures which guarantee a minimum level of quality and continuity of production. Offe put it in the following way: "... work cannot be 'invented' individually or autonomously by those people who are then supposed to do it ... Rather people have to be provided with the appropriate institutional and material resources which would enable them to carry out their self-chosen activities." (Offe 1985, p. 95). In short, Offe did not believe that workers would make the transition from formal to informal work automatically.

Offe proposed a third way, which lay between orthodoxy and realism. The attempt to define work more broadly should be abandoned, and people should instead concentrate on instituting a basic income which was not dependent on work. Offe's arguments for this were essentially practical. The basic income would stabilise the expenditure on social security. As a result, there would be a less marked difference between the totals spent on benefits in periods of high and low unemployment. The incentive for employers to allow unproductive employees to become unemployed would be reduced since they would still have to bear the costs of the benefits.

However, Offe was not satisfied with this third path. Probably he later found his own approach to have been too utilitarian. In any event, he wrote that it would not be possible in this way to meet: "the human need for meaningful, useful and purposeful activity" (Offe 1985, p. 99). In the end, however, Offe came down in favour of stimulating informal work, although he argued that it should not become part of paid work but should remain separate from it. Offe wanted what he called "a politically instituted dual economy". As he put it: "... the goal is to institutionally recognise, promote, secure and extend the limited sphere of informal, self-organised independent labour, and at the very least to subject it to the same criteria of social justice which claim validity in the formal sector of society." (Offe 1985, p. 100). It was not clear what Offe meant by this. The reader was more or less forced to conclude that the author had accepted the broader definition of work, which he had rejected only a few paragraphs previously.

Charles Handy

In his study entitled *The future of work*, Charles Handy made use of a wealth of data, reports and research findings into a broad survey (Handy 1984). A number of the identified trends - they occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s - were important to the place of work in society.

- * It was becoming increasingly difficult to achieve full employment.
- * Manual labour was making way for mental labour.
- * Employment in industry was making way for employment in the services sector.
- * Vertical, hierarchical organisations were gradually making way for horizontal, "flat" organisations.
- * Lifetime careers within a particular organisation were increasingly uncommon; more and more employees were switching employers and types of work.
- * The third age of life, i.e. retirement, was becoming more important.
- * The division of roles between men and women was becoming less rigid.
- * In international terms, employment was moving southwards. It was also moving within particular countries and from one country to another.

Handy did not always clearly indicate the consequences of these trends for the place of work in society. He concluded that their combined effect was considerable, and would result in a shortening of working life and a reduction in scale. "Indeed, to our grandchildren the massive organisations of this industrial age may look as bizarre as trench warfare does to today's military commanders. The idea of the 100,000 hours, 47 hours per week for 47 weeks a year for 47 years that everyone used to work, and many still do, may seem as unnatural to them as child labour in the mines does to us, the image of a society built on factories and industrial towns as remote, and perhaps as nostalgic as the old rural villages of the agricultural age." (Handy 1984, p. X).

Handy put forward the following propositions. First, "jobless growth" would occur. Second, industry would continue to discard less productive employees. This would also be desirable. Third, the public sector would be able to absorb only a very small part of the people discarded in this way. Although there would continue to be a need for teachers, nurses and social workers, they would certainly be

no demand for the unskilled. Fourth, neither the private sector nor the public sector would be able to provide work for the new labour market entrants (Handy 1984, pp. 178-179).

According to Handy, there would be a large pool of unused labour for a period of fifteen to twenty years after publication of his book. How would society respond to this? Handy referred to four scenarios, which represented the same number of reactions.

The first was an unemployment scenario. Unemployment was accepted and regarded as the price that had to be paid for a properly functioning economy. For the least productive there would be no jobs available. The economic and above all the social costs of this system were high.

The second was the leisure scenario. Here, a working population of limited size produced so much that the others could fully enjoy their leisure. There was a guaranteed basic income which could be supplemented with work. The leisure scenario could be combined with an optimistic vision: there would be a flourishing of the creative spirit. Pessimism too was possible: an authoritarian meritocracy would be created.

In the employment scenario, paid employment was the only recognised way of working. Full employment could be achieved in various ways:

- * By providing work involving care of the infrastructure: public works and housing.
- * By stimulating the public sector. This could even be taken to the stage of providing remuneration for voluntary work.
- * By consistently allowing overmanning of the production system.
- * By arranging shorter working hours and other ways of redistributing work.

The work scenario - the fourth in the series - amounted to a redefinition of work. All work, paid or otherwise, should be regarded as providing satisfaction and should confer prestige. Handy did not provide any clear indication of how this should be achieved. He observed: "To many people this scenario is just playing with words ... they are wrong if they think that words cannot change things. There are few things more powerful than an idea whose time has come. If that idea changes the way people look at things, then it will ultimately change the way they organise things." (Handy 1984, pp. 184-185).

The scenarios had certain disadvantages. The unemployment scenario was expensive. The leisure scenario envisaged that two diametrically opposed views of work and leisure should co-exist: one among the working elite and the other among the rest of the population. The costs of the employment scenario could be lower than expected if the remuneration for additional jobs was almost the same as the benefit. However, the concept of work would be undermined and a large category of marginal employees would be created; nonetheless, this might be preferable to high unemployment. The disadvantages of redefining work were not specified. This scenario was also favoured by the author.

James Robertson

James Robertson's book *The sane alternative* was above all a general survey of the future, with the emphasis on developments in work (Robertson 1983). Of the studies discussed hitherto, it was the one that was most concerned with achieving ideals and was perhaps also the most ideological.

Robertson based his theory on the constraints on growth which he identified at various levels. He pointed to the finite nature of raw materials. There were also what he termed social limits: the worth of certain goods became smaller as more and more people used them. Robertson also referred to institutional limits, by which he meant that the formal economy was becoming so complicated that

it was no longer susceptible of management.

In addition, individuals were becoming increasingly dependent on institutions and the scale of the social framework was becoming ever larger. This was causing mass alienation, which would in turn show that there were also psychological limits to certain aspects of growth. It followed from these psychological limits that there were also limits on the credibility and acceptance of conventional values such as those of material prosperity.

The limits would cause a transformation of socio-economic thinking which would lead to the emergence of a SHE (Sane Human Ecological) economy. In a SHE economy, production would be characterised by a properly considered use of energy and raw materials. The volume of disposable articles produced would be greatly reduced. Society and its institutions would provide greater scope for the self-development of the individual, for self-activity and for mutual assistance. This would be brought about by the smaller scale and simplification of production. The economy would be more decentralised, and there would to a greater extent be local production for local needs. The production would occur in smaller businesses, which would have a closer link with the local community. Robertson contrasted the SHE economy with the HE (Hyper Expansion) economy. In this economy important work would be done by a comparatively small group of experts. The rest of the population would have a lot of free time and would be kept occupied by the leisure industry.

Some other authors

In addition to the authors who have been discussed at length, many others have dealt with the possible decline of the work society. They too have paid attention to the quantitative developments affecting employment and have expressed views on the desired rate of economic growth, on work and on leisure. As they have generally confined themselves to a limited number of aspects of the problem, their work is mentioned here only briefly. There are various differences of emphasis; one group of authors has followed quite closely the line described above, another group have based their theories on work as a cultural asset, and a third group has concentrated on the worthwhile use of leisure.

The Dutch writers Kwant and Polak predicted a shortage of jobs and wished to expand the definition of work to include informal work. Kwant advocated greater austerity. According to Polak, negative economic growth would occur in the future. Polak also referred to the possibility of a meritocracy (Kwant et al. 1982).

Vignon and Lecomte concentrated on redefining work and proposed a guaranteed basic income (Vignon and Lecomte 1988).

In his study entitled *Die zwei Gesichter der Arbeit*, Huber expressed fairly similar views to those of Dahrendorf and Offe (Huber 1984). He considered that the employment forecasts were unduly pessimistic. Jobless growth would by no means occur in every sector. The possibility of an increase in the number of jobs was certainly present in the public sector: "Journalisten und Forscher kann man zum Beispiel sozusagen grenzenlos beschäftigen, vorausgesetzt sie kosten nicht zuviel und legen nicht alle jederzeit Wert darauf ausführlich gelesen zu werden" (Huber 1984, p. 209).² The author considered, however, that the quantity of paid work would be limited in the future. This was why he wished to promote the informal economy, which would have to form part of "eine besser balancierte Dualwirtschaft unter industrieller Bedingungen" (Huber 1984, p. 216).³ As he put it: "Es geht also gerade in einer besser balancierten Dualwirtschaft darum, allen Erwerbssuchenden zu ermöglichen, Arbeitsplätze zu finden oder sich selbst welche zu schaffen." (Huber 1984, p. 218).⁴ However, work in the informal sector should not be idealised, since here too frustration and subordination was possible.

Huber's views on the dual economy were as follows. Around 65% of the total population would have paid employment. There would be a working week of around 20-25 hours, and people would have a paid working life of around 35,000-55,000 hours. The greatest part of people's income would have to be earned, and a smaller part would be paid in the form of a basic income. Informal work would largely consist of producing for one's own needs. Many different kinds of household and lifestyle would co-exist: one and two-person households, traditional families and communes.

Huet and Nastri wished to put an end to the unbridled satisfaction of material needs. They formulated a social critique à la Marcuse, in which the satisfaction of new needs played a key role in social control. They considered that there was a real possibility of a more austere approach to material prosperity, although they had to concede that in large parts of the world even the most elementary needs could not be adequately satisfied. Nevertheless, extreme materialism had to be prevented in the Third World too. They put it as follows: "Si l'évolution de l'Occident est positive, elle aura une valeur exemplaire pour toute l'histoire à venir. Ceci est un objectif plus ambitieux que le développement du Tiers-Monde, tel qu'il est entendu aujourd'hui, dans un sens essentiellement économique." (Huet and Nastri 1986, p. 122).⁵ Some writers based their views mainly on the high level of unemployment. This was the case with Van Haren, Klose and Muller. They evidently saw the solution to this and other social problems in a "creative" use of technology. "Es gilt heute, die ökonomische Entwicklung und die technischen Gestaltungsspielräume mit der ökologischen, kulturellen und sozialen Erneuerung der Industriegesellschaft zusammen zu führen." (Van Haaren et al. 1986, p. 10).⁶

Van Neuss, Fragnière & Delforge and Lalive d'Épinay and Carcia examined the norms and values relating to work (Van Neuss et al. 1987; Lalive d'Épinay and Carcia 1988). The former three authors analysed quotations from various sources, including the Bible and social and literary works. They identified seven meanings of the term work, six of which could be regarded as traditional. The seventh - universal work - recognised no distinction between paid and unpaid work. This view referred directly to the redefinition of work, of which the authors were advocates.

Lalive d'Épinay and Carcia described the development of the work ethic in the 20th century in Switzerland (Lalive d'Épinay and Carcia 1988). Two forms of work ethic were juxtaposed: the traditional one or "l'ethos de l'accomplissement du devoir et du travail" and the modern one which gave pride of place to self-development, in other words "l'ethos de l'épanouissement personnel et de prise charge de l'individu". The self-development ethic evolved in the period of strong economic growth between 1950 and 1975 and was not yet connected with major cultural complexes. However, the traditional work ethic was connected in this way. It was rooted in the Bible and was part of an entire set of Judaic-Christian tenets. Self-development had not yet therefore gained the upper hand over traditional ways of thinking. However, unemployment and the damage caused to the environment by manufacturing processes would in due course undermine the traditional view. By being redefined, work could be brought into line with the new morality. More activities than simply those that were remunerated would be recognised as work. A "notion générique d'activité" would be necessary. "Par l'activité, l'être humain trouve les moyens de sa survie, établit des rapports avec autrui et recherche son épanouissement." (Lalive d'Épinay and Carcia 1988, p. 152).⁷

The literature on leisure and the leisure society is somewhat beyond the scope of reflections on the future place of work. Although leisure was dealt with in the studies discussed so far, the treatises concentrating solely on this subject are of rather earlier date. In addition, they were for the most part not concerned with the employment problem. They in fact date from the years when the growth of the economy and employment combined with a reduction in working hours. For a survey, reference should be made to Lanfant's study *Les théories du loisir* (Lanfant 1972). Here will be solely dealt with the well-known book by Joffre Dumazedier entitled *Vers une civilisation du loisir* (Dumazedier

1962). Dumazedier assumed that people would have more and more leisure in industrial societies. Rising incomes and the leisure industry were creating more and more leisure pursuits. In this way, free time was becoming such an important social phenomenon that it would in due course determine the character of society. Certain circumstances could delay this development. Even in a society in which there was plenty of leisure it was possible for particular groups to be overburdened with work, and there were still also major differences in prosperity between countries. For the time being, therefore, the leisure society would certainly not become a universal phenomenon.

Dumazedier imposed demands on the use of leisure. He believed that a leisure society pure and simple would be insufficient, he wanted a leisure civilisation. He regarded the American situation as a frightening example. There the mass media provided the means for passive leisure pursuits. A TV civilisation had evolved. It was necessary to avoid this in Europe. For this purpose, institutional structures had to be created which would enable people to enhance the quality of their lives in their leisure hours. The education system should prepare pupils better for the worthwhile use of leisure time and there should also be adult education. "Il faut compléter les politiques scolaires par une large politique à l'égard des institutions de l'oisir récréatif ou instructif pour l'ensemble de la population, jeune et adulte." (Dumazedier 1962, p. 241).⁸ Dumazedier wanted leisure to be used for "la réalisation d'un équilibre optimum librement choisi entre le besoin de repos, de divertissement et de participation à la vie sociale et culturelle." This would result in "une civilisation plus humaine" (Dumazedier 1962, pp. 243-244).⁹

This approach was typical of views on leisure. Developments in paid employment were not analysed, merely assumed. No value judgement was given on work, although a judgement of this kind was given in respect of leisure. The purely passive use of leisure time was rejected; people would instead have to use it to develop their artistic and intellectual talents and to do community work. As this was also considered feasible, there was a certain optimism in these views.

2.3 *Work regarded negatively*

Preliminary remark

Unlike the writers who regarded work as an important means of achieving self-development, others took the view that work was a barrier to self-development. Despite all the improvements in working conditions, work still imposed all too often a heavy physical and - owing to its monotony and restriction of freedom - mental burden. This could not be improved by reorganising work. However, society could not function entirely without paid work. The best solution was to restrict as far as possible the quantity of paid work which had to be done by the individual.

In anticipation of the summary, it should be observed here that these two positions - self-development and negative functions - are diametrically opposed to each other, but that both views in any event favour shorter working hours and a redistribution of labour. Either work was such a great good that as many people as possible should be able to take part in it, or it was of such a negative nature that its burden should be shared among as many people as possible. Hence, in addition to the differences there were also similarities. A number of authors who took this negative view of work are in turn discussed below. The first, André Gorz, is also the best known.

André Gorz

In his work *Adieux au prolétariat*, André Gorz described paid work as being characterised by compulsion and alienation. This also applied to a significant proportion of unpaid work, particularly to the work of housewives, which was subordinated to the work of the breadwinner. In contrast to work, which alienated, there were activities which the individual chose freely and in accordance with his or her own predilection and aptitude (Gorz 1980). However, this alienation did not apply to all employed people. Skilled people, working more or less as craftsmen, could identify with their work and would miss it if they were deprived of it. However, for the majority of employees work was a burden. The improvement of working conditions and the rise of the educational level had not improved this situation. While greater demands were made on intellectual skills than previously, this was so partial that full intellectual development was still impossible. A "non-class" of workers had been created: "Cette non-classe englobe, en fait, l'ensemble des individus qui se trouvent expulsés de la production par le processus d'abolition du travail, ou sous-employés dans leur capacités par l'industrialisation (c'est-à-dire l'automatisation et l'informatisation) du travail intellectuel. Elle englobe l'ensemble des surnuméraires de la production sociale qui sont les chômeurs actuels et virtuels, permanents et temporaires, totaux et partiels. Elle s'étend à presque toutes les couches de la société ... ils s'opposaient à la classe des ouvriers stables, syndiqués, protégés par un contrat de travail et une convention collective." (Gorz 1980, pp. 94-95).¹⁰

The processes which had caused the creation of this non-class were irreversible, and their reversion would also be undesirable. Depersonalisation and standardisation were necessary in order to shorten working hours, which was in turn necessary for a society which provided good opportunities for development to all. If working hours were to be drastically reduced, more people could do paid work and the burden of work could thus be distributed more evenly. There would be more leisure and people would thus have more opportunity to do the things which they actually wanted to do. Gorz therefore advocated a dual economy in which each individual would participate in both sectors.

Gorz defined the area of individually chosen "informal" activities fairly broadly. "Elle est constituée plus profondément d'activités sans but économique ayant leur finalité dans elles-mêmes: la communication, le don, la création et la jouissance esthétique, la production et la reproduction de la vie, la tendresse, l'épanouissement des capacités corporelles, sensorielles et intellectuelles, la création de valeurs d'usage (objets ou services mutuels) ..." (Gorz 1980, p. 113).¹¹ How this dual economy was to be brought about was not clear to him either. The non-class would not organise, as it was too alienated. However, Gorz did repose some confidence in a growing understanding among the population and in planning by a State which had been reformed to a very large degree.

Gorz repeated a number of these arguments in *Métamorphoses du travail*. He regarded employment in France as being divided into segments: 25% of the jobs were secure and protected by good employment contracts; 25% were marginal and provided no guarantees at all; and 50% consisted of all kinds of casual and seasonal work. Gorz identified the advent of a "new menial class", which did poorly paid work in the service sector. Paid work would play a less central role in society, and it was possible to create new forms of work (Gorz 1988, pp. 272-277).

Adret

Adret was the name of a writers' collective which consisted of employees who were active in the French trade union movement and who were assisted by a few researchers (Adret 1977). The authors assumed that paid work formed an almost unbearable burden for many people, and that it would therefore be fair if it were divided among as many people as possible. Many more people would then have to do paid work, but working hours could be drastically reduced. Ideally, people would do two

hours' paid work a day in order to satisfy the necessary collective needs. The rest of the time could be filled with work of one's own choosing, with relaxation and with creativity. This ideal could be attained if the population were to accept a much lower level of prosperity. Production would have to waste fewer raw materials and be geared to the durability of the articles. "Self-care" would have to increase, i.e. people would have to make articles for their own use with the help of small, cheap means of production and semi-manufactures.

Here, Adret touched on the theme of the "prosumment", which had also been dealt with by other writers on the work society including Toffler (Toffler 1980, pp. 282-305). Part of the production should no longer be geared to the market, but should instead be for the satisfaction of people's own needs. As producer and consumer were one and the same person, the word "prosumment" was coined.

Guy Aznar

In *Tous à mi-temps!* Aznar took the same starting point as Adret. However, he was less dismissive of paid work and wanted a less radical form of shorter working hours than the writers' collective (Aznar 1981). According to Aznar, the quality of work would continue to deteriorate in the future. Automation and the introduction of robots would lead to an increase in monotonous work, with which it would be difficult for the employee to identify. If this burden were shared by more people, a 20-hour working week would be possible.

Aznar believed that there were four possible scenarios for France's future. First, renewed full employment as a result of an expansion of world trade. Second, renewed full employment as a result of a policy of protectionism. Third, a "dualisme sectorial", in which French employment would be divided into a sector which could compete on the world market and a sector in which this requirement was no longer imposed. In the latter sector, the work would be less demanding but also less highly paid. Fourth, a division into types of activity. In principle, everyone should divide his time between "travail classique" and self-chosen or autonomous activities, which might or might not be suitable for supplementing income. It would then be possible for more people to have paid work, but they would be working for about half of the normal time.

Aznar considered it unlikely that full employment would be restored, and of the two remaining options he preferred the last - i.e. redistribution of labour. This "scenario bleu" would enable everyone to have the best access to paid work and other activities. Aznar: "Le principe du scénario bleu est simple: puisqu'il faut partager les richesses, les emplois, au lieu de partager entre deux catégories de gens à qui on attribue des fonctions spécifiques ... on partage à l'intérieur de chaque individu grâce au principe du mi-temps pour s'adapter à la société productiviste, un mi-temps pour vivre à son rythme, un mi-temps pour le travail impliqué. Au lieu de définir deux races d'hommes on équilibre deux moitiés de la vie." (Aznar 1981, p. 45).¹² The "scenario bleu" took account of the redistribution of paid work within families, with job-sharing, with the combination of studying and working and with forms of retirement in which the number of hours worked was gradually reduced.

It was not Aznar's intention to leave unused the time thus released. "Le mi-temps dans notre scénario n'est pas un temps 'vide', c'est celui qui permet d'exercer une seconde activité." (Aznar 1981, p. 92).¹³ People would start producing for their own needs, and would swap the products of their small, independent businesses with one another. The danger of an increase in "black" work (i.e. illicit work on which no tax is paid) would have to be averted by replacing income tax as far as possible with indirect taxes.

Roger Sue

In *Vers une société du temps libre*, Roger Sue advocated a drastic redistribution of work in order to avoid an unemployed society (Sue 1982). Sue's views were similar to those of Aznar. Sue too wanted a dual economy in which individuals would alternate between paid and unpaid work. The unpaid work would have to consist partly of production for their own needs or for barter at a local market.

However, Sue added a new element. People should be left as free as possible to determine their own working hours. "Flexible working hours" would enable people to put their leisure to better use. "Quand il est possible de choisir ses périodes de temps libre, il est beaucoup plus facile de les utiliser à plein, de les valoriser au maximum. Le temps libre n'est plus alors octroyé, il ne crée plus une sensation de vide, il est au contraire choisi en fonction d'activités que l'on a organisées à l'avance, en fonction des opportunités qui peuvent se présenter." (Sue 1982, pp. 148-149).¹⁴

2.4 Economic growth

Preliminary remark

The view of paid work as conducive to economic growth contrasted sharply with the two social views. There were few arguments which could be regarded as common to them all. Indeed, the authors made no reference to one another. It seemed as though the two currents of opinion did not know of each other's existence or, more probably, did not wish to know of each other's existence.

Instead of giving an extensive survey of the literature, the documents of two international organisations active in the economic field and other areas will be analysed. The *OECD's Employment Outlook* will be examined in respect of the mid and late 1980s. In addition, attention will be paid to the reports of the Committee for Social Affairs and Employment of the European Parliament for roughly the same period. Various documents of the European Commission will also be considered in passing.

OECD Employment Outlook, 1983-1989

The editors of the *OECD's Employment Outlook* consistently advocated the objective of full employment. They even did so in periods of high unemployment and while recognising the reduction in average working hours which had occurred over a long period, the rise in labour productivity and the introduction of labour-saving technology. While acknowledging the existence of structural unemployment, they did not see this as meaning that individuals would be permanently excluded from the labour market. In their view, there could not be said to be a permanent labour surplus, merely a persistent lack of coordination between supply and demand which could and should be solved. This had to be done by improving the functioning of the labour market and by creating jobs with the help of investment (OECD 1983, p. 7). The importance of paid work for everyone who was able and willing to work was supported by a number of arguments. The editors pointed to the adverse consequences of unemployment, namely the failure to utilise a factor of production, less investment, including investment in human capital (education and training), less technological progress and more expenditure on social security (OECD 1983, p. 7).

In addition, they referred to the adverse psychological effects on the unemployed themselves, especially on young people and the long-term unemployed (OECD 1984, pp. 9-10, OECD 1985, p.

9, OECD 1986, pp. 5-6). The aim of full employment was retained. The phenomenon of jobless growth was viewed with concern although the financing of economic non-activity on the basis of economic growth would be possible (OECD 1984, p. 5). Taking everything into consideration, the editors regarded unemployment as a threat to society: "What is thus at issue is the economic and social health of societies over a run of years." (OECD 1987, p. 7).

In the editorials of the 1980s, the reader found both continuity and a change of emphasis. The continuity was expressed in the greater part of the passages dealing with unemployment. The economy was seen as a system which functioned in an environment. To cope with the problems, it was necessary to adjust the system, i.e. to be flexible. Time and again, the editors emphasised the need for flexibility of the labour market, the capital market and the wage market. In order to combat unemployment effectively, employees had to be trained and, if necessary, retrained. In addition, geographic and vocational mobility had to be increased. Even without high unemployment this would have been necessary because of the internal changes taking place in the system. Jobs were not permanent. In a period of about ten years, all the jobs in an economy were replaced by other ones (OECD 1987, p. 10). Flexibility of the wage market was more or less tantamount to a moderation of real wages. In addition, pay differentiation between businesses and industries according to their level of profitability was advocated occasionally. This would be a signal to employees to leave dying industries for jobs in industries with better prospects. These themes were dealt with and elaborated in each issue of *Employment Outlook*, unlike various subjects which involved a shift of emphasis. These shifts did, however, follow one broad line: namely, participation in the labour market was propagated more and more, even vis-à-vis the high rate of unemployment. The 1986 issue remarked about youth unemployment that "... active manpower policies which at the same time provide some means of support for this age group will in the long run prove more cost effective - in both social and economic terms - than approaches which provide only a basic measure of income support." (OECD 1986, p. 11).

Whereas the 1986 report was still concerned with the desirability of providing a section of the unemployed with work, subsidised or otherwise, instead of unemployment benefit, the authors of the 1987 *Employment Outlook* went much further. Not only should the unemployed be helped to find work, there was also a hidden demand for work which must be met. Part of the motivation for this aim can be regarded as an "argument based on utility". Governments needed to safeguard their incomes, but were unable to raise taxes on earned incomes any higher. The only way in which government revenues could be increased was if more people went to work. There was also a cultural or, if one prefers, socio-psychological motivation of a possibly more fundamental nature. "Overlaying these essentially economic reasons for people wanting jobs is, in many cases, an important desire for work or at least activity in its own right, as a means of social involvement and personal development." (OECD 1987, pp. 8-10). The motto of the 1987 editorial was therefore "activity for all in tomorrow's society".

In 1988 the theme of activation was raised once again in the editorial, on this occasion under the title "*Steps towards an active society*". The authors dealt with various population categories. It is striking that the groups were not defined solely in terms of unemployment. Reference was made to the long-term unemployed, but also to *the young, the old, the employees in dying industries, the women and the heads of one-parent families*. The manifest supply of labour was therefore treated on the same level as the latent supply.

The 1989 *Employment Outlook* formulated a new approach to the concept of full employment, in which much of what had been written previously was repeated and fleshed out with new elements. This was prompted by the strong growth of employment which occurred at that time. Two views of full employment were contrasted. There was the view dating from shortly after the Second World

War: "... its meaning seemed self-evident: all those who wished to find employment at prevailing wage rates (should be) able to do so." (OECD 1989, p. 7). After the early 1970s, this objective was undermined by persistent and high unemployment, especially the consequences of the second oil crisis were drastic. At the outset, governments responded to this mainly by providing benefits. The labour supply was also restricted by measures designed to reduce immigration, promote early retirement and raise the school-leaving age. Moreover, additional employment was created in the public sector and reductions in working hours were encouraged. These remedies failed to have the desired effect either individually or collectively. In the second half of the 1980s, a new approach to the concept of full employment was adopted in a number of OECD countries. This was described in the following way: "This approach welcomes - rather than resists - the entry of new groups into the labour market ... the underlying goal is to enhance the effective productivity of the population as a whole by drawing on previously unused talents and harnessing them in a more effective and comprehensive division of labour." (OECD 1989, p. 9).

In order to achieve maximum labour market participation, institutional impediments in economic life had to be removed. This amounted to further flexibilisation of work, and entailed "the removal of institutional impediments to other 'non-standard' forms of labour force participation. The 'permanent' job as an entitlement to secure income in return for performing the same unchanging tasks is increasingly inappropriate in societies which seek to mobilise their full talents in response to evolving technologies and markets ... it becomes necessary ... to develop avenues of mobility between 'non-standard' forms of participation and full-time regular jobs." (OECD 1989, p. 10). Examples of countries in which this aim had been achieved were Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom. This aim of achieving maximum labour force participation went hand in hand with attention to policy at local level. The unemployed were approached more directly and the foundation of new businesses was encouraged (OECD 1987, pp. 7-9; OECD 1988, pp. 8-9).

The European Parliament

The Single European Act of 1987, which updated the Treaty of Rome of 1957, specified as an objective that the living standards of European nationals should be continually increased (article 2). The drafters did not mention full employment in as many words, but it is clear from various publications that article 2 has always been interpreted in this way (EC 1989; European Documentation 1990). In addition to this objective, which was formulated at the highest level, the efforts to achieve full employment are clearly reflected in the work of the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The reports of the Social Affairs and Employment Committee of the European Parliament are particularly well-suited for this purpose since they contain fairly extensive reasoning.

In January 1974 the Council of Ministers responded to the economic downturn by producing a programme of action in which the objective of full employment was central. 1980 saw the drawing up of the guidelines for labour market policy in the Community, which were intended among other things to reduce unemployment. In June 1982 the Council pointed to the necessity of combating unemployment by increasing investment.

The report on employment policy prepared on behalf of the Social Affairs and Employment Committee showed that a clear line had been taken. The Committee considered: "... that the scourge of growing unemployment and the accompanying economic and social problems constitute a threat to the continued existence of the European Community and its democratic values." (EP 1982/1983, p. 6). During the 1983/1984 sitting, the European Parliament dealt with youth unemployment, i.e. unemployment among people under the age of 25 years. This was considered to be intolerably high,

and its consequences were regarded as serious. According to the Committee's report on the subject, there was concern about the possible decay of the work ethic and morality in general. "In addition, other aspects also play a role, for example the effect on the attitude towards the state, a limited capacity for solidarity and, in extreme cases, the undermining of the concept of ownership - in short, consequences relating to acceptance of traditional modes of existence and values." (EP 1983/1984, p. 14).

Yet the Committee went further in its assessment of the adverse effects of youth unemployment. It went on to list disillusionment, lethargy, loafing, alcoholism, drug abuse and receptiveness to fascist and racist demagogy. All these dangers could be averted by having a job (EP 1983/1984, p. 15). The Committee therefore emphasised the importance of training, apprenticeships and an active manpower policy. If young people were nonetheless unable to find employment, they should be given the opportunity to do voluntary work or to set up their own business. It would be better, however, to provide school-leavers and young people under the age of 25 with a guarantee of training and work. Such a guarantee also formed part of the Council's programme for 1982-1983, and applied for a period of two years after pupils reached school-leaving age.

After attention had been paid to youth unemployment, interest switched to long-term unemployment. In 1984 the European Commission informed the Council of the current situation. In the 1984-1985 sitting, the Social Affairs and Employment Committee declared that full employment and a European employment programme for young people were to be the priorities of policy. In view of the rather discouraging prospects for a reduction in unemployment, the European Commission was obliged to continue dealing expressly with the employment problem. The Commission recommended the adoption of shorter working hours and a redivision of labour, but at the same time imposed a restriction. These measures should be taken "... without neglecting the fundamental need for a vigorous effort to revive the development of the economy and production in the Community" (EP 1984/1985, p. 6).

The Commission once again emphasised the value of work and the danger of a division in society. "If many people - particularly young people - are obliged to be unemployed for long periods or perhaps for their entire lifetime, we may perhaps be able to give them a sufficient income, but how can we give them a feeling of their own value and a measure of self-confidence? And how can we expect those who do have work to perform well if others lead a life of luxury and doing nothing? Or to put it another way, what remedy do we have against the jealousy of those who are jobless - and who are probably looked down upon - against those privileged "possessors" of a job?" (EP 1984/1985, p. 12). On the subject of the competitive position of the European Community, the Commission again emphasised the importance of professional labour. "Europe in turn lags far behind the Far East as regards labour motivation and work tempo; the Americans are way ahead when it comes to taking risks, adjusting fast to new situations and taking an adventurous approach to new businesses and opportunities. It is a recognised fact that almost no one works to maximum capacity and that this cannot be expected; it has also become clear that working fast does not necessarily require a greater effort than working slowly, provided that people in the immediate vicinity also work at the same pace. This subject deserves further examination." (EP 1984/1985, p. 12).

At the end of 1986, the Council of Ministers drew up a memorandum concerning the efforts to combat long-term unemployment. A year later, the Ministers approved the resolution, in which they asked for successful measures in order to identify this field better. In 1988 the European Commission elaborated its action programme 'Ergo', in which account was taken of the Council's wishes. In its reports, the Social Affairs Committee continued to stress the importance of employment growth, also in order to combat poverty and improve the social integration of the disadvantaged (EP 1986/1987a,b; EP 1988/1989; EP 1989/1990).

A summary of the position of the European Parliament on the employment problem and youth unemployment was contained in *Eurofeiten*, a report surveying the activities of the Parliament. This included the following passage: "The European Parliament (EP) considers the stagnation in the creation of jobs to be the major problem facing the Community and regards the creation of new jobs and the safeguarding of existing jobs to be the main challenge facing the Community. The EP is convinced that solving the problem of youth unemployment is one of the main tasks at present and is a touchstone of the viability of democratically free societies. The EP believes that youth unemployment can be combated only in the context of a general and coherent employment policy containing specific measures for the young unemployed both at Community level and in the various Member States." (EP 1988, III L 4).

The Social Affairs and Employment Committee paid much attention to the flexibilisation of work. In 1986 it noted an increase in the number of special contracts of employment, such as those for work at home and work on call, and of mini/maxi contracts. In principle, flexibilisation could be a means of promoting employment at the micro-economic level. However, there were also disadvantages, since in the case of contracts of this kind the employees were deprived of the protection of labour law, of social security and of the current collective agreements. Flexible contracts also threatened to undermine the solidarity of the employees and weaken the trade union movement. The Committee referred in this connection to the "unnatural consequences" of flexibilisation. Since employees would have been forced by the high unemployment to accept less permanent and less well-paid jobs than they would otherwise have done of their own volition, the disadvantages were regarded as being of even greater importance (EP 1986/1987b: 6, 10-11).

Despite the importance attached to paid work and despite the rejection of unemployment, the European Parliament recognised that there were limits to the efforts to promote employment: the quality of the jobs remained an important criterion. Not only with a view to the protection of the employees. According to Vasso Papandreou, member of the European Commission, the quality of the production depended on the quality of work. "... we know the Community's future depends on the quality of what we produce, but we have been slow to recognise that quality in the market place depends on quality at work. Better jobs = better workers = better products and services. Higher standards - whether they be to do with training, working conditions, or workers' rights - pay off. Jobs do not need to be bought at the expense of working conditions or basic social rights. In this context one can see already some serious mismatching occurring with respect to the demand and supply for highly qualified people." (EC 1989: 4).

2.5 Summary

The literature was divided into three groups classified as work as a means of self-development, work as a burden, and work as a means of economic growth. The first two groups speculated on the possible decline of the work society, but this was certainly not the case with the economic view. The latter assumed that this society would flourish in the future.

What quantitative criterion was used to determine the decline of the work society was not clear. The authors appear to have based themselves on the shortening of individual's working hours and on the shortening of working life. How many people had paid employment was regarded by them as less important, although they pointed to the high number of unemployed. Even if economic growth were to occur, employment would not expand. In such circumstances, the rapid increase in labour productivity would cause jobless growth. In addition, these authors made observations regarding social life in general. Work dominated other areas of life less than in previous eras, and the traditional work ethic had been weakened.

Those who regarded work as important for self-development took a positive view of shorter working hours, but did not accept unemployment. They found work important for people's welfare since they required worthwhile, useful and purposeful activity. They did not, therefore, envisage a society in which doing nothing was a legitimate option. And they also rejected the idea of a meritocracy, in which a small group of experts would do the work.

If too few people could be given paid work, these authors considered that the concept of work should be extended to cover activities that had traditionally been unpaid. For them, the redefinition of work was simply a means of saving the concept of work. The desire for an increase in employment was so great that they were willing to sacrifice a growth in prosperity and pay the price of greater austerity. If necessary, the redefinition would have to be accompanied by a duty to do community service. This notion once again stressed the need for work.

Work was to be redefined with the help of concepts such as shorter working hours, redivision of labour and a guaranteed basic income. The latter was also described as "workless income". This term was misleading since the income was certainly not to be obtained without consideration. Although the income would be guaranteed, there was no assumption of idleness on the part of the individual. Either the individual would undertake a socially useful task voluntarily, or he or she would be compelled to do so.

The new work society would have positive features. The status of work which had hitherto been informal and unpaid would be raised. Freedom of choice and more leisure time would be conducive to self-development. A new work society would arise in which (and this is the main difference with the old situation) the hegemony of the formal labour contract would be broken.

The view of work as a burden was in some ways similar and in other ways dissimilar to the self-development view. The diagnosis was the same: there would be too little paid work in the future. This was regarded as unfortunate only in so far as it would cause unemployment. Unemployment meant that there was a population category formed largely by chance which was placed outside society. Nonetheless, the lack of paid work provided an opportunity for achieving an ideal, namely spreading the burden among a larger number of people. In this way, ideas such as the redivision of labour and shorter working hours were advocated here too. However, these authors wished to apply them in a radical form. Those who regarded work as a means of self-development had envisaged a working week of 35 hours, possibly 30 hours. Those who regarded work as a burden wanted to cut the working week by half or even to reduce it to ten hours.

There were to be two areas of activity: traditional paid work and alternative pursuits. The idea that the most productive employees should perform paid work was rejected. Each individual should participate in both paid and unpaid work. A guaranteed basic income should be introduced, but less emphasis was placed on the payment of informal work than in the case of the self-development view. The individual was given much greater freedom of choice and the element of compulsory community service was absent. A broad view was taken of the alternative activities, which were held to include keeping up friendly contacts. Great trust was placed in creativity. The theme of the "prosumment" was touched upon.

Neither set of views provided an explicit explanation of how the new society was to be achieved. The reader obtained the impression that trust was placed in immanent development or historical necessity.

The view of work as a means of economic growth as expressed by the OECD and the EC was as clear as could be wished for. Work was conducive to economic growth, and only work which helped to raise the national income was worthy of the name. The dislike of unemployment was great.

Unemployment was economic waste. Both the OECD and the EC pointed to the individual suffering caused by unemployment. In the case of the OECD this theme was of secondary importance and the number of references to it was small. Besides the individual psychological difficulties, the EC feared social disintegration, particularly as a result of youth unemployment. In the OECD's *Employment Outlook*, there appeared to be a growing realisation during the 1980s that work could be a good in itself. There were various indications of this view. Jobless growth was rejected: even if prosperity increased people would have to work. The concept of the active society pointed in the same direction; as many individuals as possible had to participate in paid work. The question whether the productive contribution of everyone of these people was necessary for an increase in prosperity was not raised. Possibly, the idea was that individuals should be as economically independent as possible and should not rely on the public purse.

There was a difference between the views of the OECD and the EC. The OECD advocated work in its own right. The reader gains the impression that all work was viewed as good provided it met the elementary requirements of safety and protection of health. On the other hand, the EC expressly imposed training requirements and requirements relating to pay and job certainty. The EC recognised the humanising effect of work as an independent value, whereas the OECD placed less emphasis on this. In addition, the EC also assumed that high quality production could be achieved only with well-trained and well-motivated employees. The OECD recognised that much employment which had been created in the 1980s - particularly in the United States - was of a low quality and could be regarded as little more than a substitute for poverty. Nevertheless, optimism did exist. A person who took such a job could work his or her way up and thus obtain a better job. In addition, employees could - by organising themselves - compel employers to improve employment (Gass 1988, p. 8).

The literature examined thus contained four views of work. First, the view that work is a means of self-development. The proponents of this view in fact favoured a new work society, with the term employment being greatly extended. The second view was that work is a burden. Here, it was desired to create a leisure society. The third view was that work is conducive to economic growth and that as many people as possible should have paid work, irrespective of their productive contribution and irrespective of the quality of their work. It is possible that in this context an independent value was attributed to work. Fourth, there was the view that also emphasised the economic importance of work, but wished for the continuing humanisation of work and pressed for investment in human capital. The first two views can be described as Utopian, the second rather more than the first. The second and third views propagate the traditional work society. The third does this most emphatically and can be regarded as an American viewpoint, associated with "Reaganomics". The fourth view imposes quality requirements and has a more European character.

NOTES

- ¹ *The guaranteed income need not be sufficient to cover the cost of life. The combination of a certain minimum of social security and a stimulus for the individual's own activity is much more indicated for a highly developed society whose members are responsible citizens.*
- ² *"Journalists and researchers can be employed unlimitedly provided they don't earn too much and don't expect their reports to be read very intensively."*
- ³ *"a better balanced dual economy under industrial conditions"*
- ⁴ *"it is just the point of a better balanced dual economy to enable all people searching for work to find it or to create it by their own effort".*
- ⁵ *"If the development of the West is positive, this development will be an example for the whole of the future. It concerns here a far more ambitious objective than the development of the Third World as it is understood today, in a strictly economic sense".*
- ⁶ *"Nowadays it is necessary to harmonize economic development and technical possibilities with the environmental, cultural and social renewal of industrial society".*
- ⁷ *"Through activity the human being finds the means for its survival, it establishes contacts with others and it pursues its self development."*
- ⁸ *"Educational policy should be supplemented with an extensive policy creating a set of institutions concerned with leisure and recurrent education for the whole population, be it young or old."*
- ⁹ *"the realisation of a freely chosen balance between the need for rest, for entertainment and for participation in social and cultural life."*
- ¹⁰ *"This non-class contains in reality the people laid off from work by labour saving technology, or underemployed with regard to their qualifications by industrialisation (which means automation and the use information technology) of intellectual work. It also consists of the redundancy workers of the public sector, who are the actually or covertly unemployed and whose unemployment is temporary or definitive, total or partial. The non-class in to be found everywhere in society... It stands in opposition to the class of the permanently employed, who are organised and who are protected by the labour contract and other results of collective bargaining."*
- ¹¹ *"It consists primarily of activities without an economic goal, but that are meaningful by themselves: social communication, the gift, the creation and enjoyment of esthetic values, living life and reproducing it, tenderness, the realisation of corporal and intellectual possibilities, the development of the senses, the creation of goods (goods and services that can be exchanged...)."*
- ¹² *"The principle of the "scenario bleu" is not complicated: wealth and employment should not be divided between two groups of people with specific functions... instead every individual should be able to share in both owing to the 'half-time-principle'. The individual should spend half of its time in living according to its own insights and in performing informal work. Instead of creating to races of people one should create two ways of living."*
- ¹³ *"The half-time in our scenario is not an 'empty' time, it creates the possibility of a second activity."*
- ¹⁴ *"If periods of leisure can be freely chosen there are better possibilities of using them to the full extent. Leisure is no longer strictly regulated, nor does it create a feeling of emptiness. On the contrary, people can use their leisure for activities that are planned in advance but they can also profit from unexpected possibilities for meaningful activities."*

3. SOME QUANTITATIVE DATA

3.1 Introduction

How have the matters discussed in the previous chapter actually turned out in practice? Is paid work indeed on the retreat both as regards the length of time worked by individuals and as regards the number of people in employment? Is labour productivity indeed rising so strongly that fewer people can find jobs? Is part-time work increasing strongly? In order to answer these and other questions, a limited survey of international statistical data has been compiled. For the most part, the survey relates to the countries of the European Community and to the United States and Japan.

Statistics have their limitations, particularly when it comes to international comparisons. For example, who is counted as unemployed and who is not differs from country to country (SCP 1990, pp. 402-403). This problem has been partially solved here by drawing the data on a particular subject as far as possible from the same source so that differences in definition and in registration procedures are always corrected in the same way.

Another defect is, however, harder to remedy. However conscientiously the statisticians do their job, the user is sometimes bound to find that a particular item of information which he thinks he needs is not available. For example, the contractual duration of work in hours per year is available for a number of countries. However, since the average number of years worked by an employee is not known, it is not possible to calculate the average duration of a working life in hours. Hence, it is not possible to work out in which country the situation has approached most closely to 40,000 hours - the length of a working life in the future as predicted by Fourastié. Gaps will therefore continue to exist in the statistical description.

The data can be divided into the following categories:

- * employment, labour participation and demography;
- * work duration and part-time work;
- * unemployment (total and long-term);
- * labour productivity.

3.2 Employment, labour participation and demography

The level of employment remained more or less constant in the European Community between 1970 and 1987. People were counted as having work if they did paid work for at least one hour a week in a given period. The self-employed, people working from home and employees with unusual employment contracts were included. Military personnel were excluded for the purpose of determining civilian employment (Eurostat 1988b).

Total employment in the Europe of the Ten rose between 1970 and 1987 by 3% (the index number for that period is 103). The rise in the Europe of the Twelve was just over 1%. Employment fell in Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany and remained roughly constant in Belgium, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom. In other countries, employment rose. Employment rose just about as strongly in Japan as in Denmark, Greece and the Netherlands. The situation in the United States differed radically from that in the European Community and Japan since employment rose strongly, namely by 43% (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Civil employment in the countries of the European Community, the United States and Japan (1970-1987) (x1,000 persons)^a

	EC 12	EC 10	B	D	FRG	G	S	F
1970	:	104930*	3603	2315	26169	3134*	12433	20328
1975	121859*	105444*	3695	2332	25285	3198*	12692	20864
1980	123657	108238	3706	2460	25797	3356	11495	21334
1981	122335	107211	3627	2508	25610	3529	11156	21203
1982	121153	106151	3578	2476	25177	3501	11043	21240
1983	120539	105412	3542	2500	24793	3539	10988	21168
1984	120543	105793	3546	2497	24839	3551	10674	20981
1985	121188	106564	3573	2556	25010	3589	10567	20914
1986	122155	107278	3608	2633	25265	3601	10814	20962
1987	123589*	108037*	3621	2663	25440	3597	11383	20976
1970-1987 ^b	101	103	100	115	97	115	92	103

	IRL	I	LUX	NL	P	UK	USA	J
1970	1045	19218	139,5	4597*	:	24381	78627	50940
1975	1061	19491	158,8	4645	3724	24716	85846	52230
1980	1141	20313	157,5	<u>4970</u>	3924	25004	99303	55630
1981	1131	20361	158,0	5072	3969	24012	:	:
1982	1131	20297	<u>157,6</u>	5009	<u>3959</u>	23584	:	:
1983	1110	20350	157,1	<u>4965</u>	4139	23288	:	:
1984	1089	20418	158,0	4980	4076	23734	:	:
1985	1062	20508	160,2	5076	4057	24116	:	:
1986	1068	20614	164,4	5155	4063	24208	:	:
1987	1067	20584	168,9	5251*	4169	24669	112440	59110
1970-1987 ^b	102	107	121	114	112	101	143	116

* Excluding military personnel

^b Index numbers (1970 = 100).

* = estimate by Eurostat

:

(underlining) = break in trend

Source: Eurostat (1989: 103)

Table 3.2 shows employment as a percentage of the total population. In general, the level of participation remained roughly the same or rose between 1970 and 1987. In the Europe of the Twelve, the number of people in employment rose by 6%. The rises in Denmark and the Netherlands were high. In Japan, the percentage of people in employment remained approximately the same. In the United States, the number rose by 22%.

The decline in the percentage of young people and the increase in the number of elderly people is an international phenomenon. Table 3.3 shows that the proportion of people in the age category 0-14 years will decline in the Europe of the Twelve between 1985 and 2020, particularly in Italy, France, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Table 3.2 The percentage of people in work in the countries of the European Community, The United States and Japan (1970-1987)^a

	EC 12	EC 10	B	D	FRG	G	S	F
1970	:	42.3*	39.7	48.3	44.2	39.0*	38.6	42.2
1975	41.8*	42.1*	40.8	49.1	43.5	38.0*	38.7	42.4
1980	42.5	43.3	42.2	<u>52.0</u>	44.2	<u>37.7</u>	36.0	43.4
1985	43.5*	44.4*	42.6	55.4	45.6	41.1*	36.2	43.4
1986	43.7*	44.6*	42.7	56.2	45.9	40.9*	36.6	43.3
1987	44.0*	44.7*	42.9	56.7	46.1	40.7*	37.8	43.3
1970-1987 ^b	105	106	108	117	104	104	98	103

	IR	IT	L	N	P	UK	USA	J
1970	37.9	38.8	40.0	36.8	:	45.5	40.4	50.0
1975	36.4	38.3	41.7	36.5	45.4	46.1	44.4	47.7
1980	36.7	39.8	<u>41.8</u>	<u>38.1</u>	<u>46.2</u>	47.6	47.9	48.5
1985	36.9	41.1	42.6	40.1	46.9	48.8	49.2	49.4
1986	36.9	41.7	42.5	40.4	46.5	48.9	49.5	49.6
1987	37.0	41.9	42.9	40.6*	46.9	49.0		
1970-1987 ^b	98	108	107	110	103	108	122	99

^a Total employment as a percentage of the total population.

^b Index numbers (1970 = 100).

* = estimat by Eurostat

: = no data available

(underlining) = break in trend

Source: Eurostat (1989: 99)

Table 3.3 The population of the European Community aged 0-14 years and 65 and over, 1985-2020 (in percentages of the total population)

	percentage 0-14 years ^a				1985-2020 ^b
	1985	1990	2000	2020	
Belgium	18.6	13.1	13.3	17.7	95
Denmark	17.9	17.1	17.6	15.4	86
FRG	15.4	14.7	14.7	11.1	72
Greece	22.0	20.2	19.8	:	90
Spain	23.1	20.6	19.1	18.2	79
France	21.3	20.0	19.0	16.7	78
Ireland	29.3	:	:	:	
Italy	19.6	17.0	16.0	13.2	67
Luxembourg	17.7	18.2	13.9	16.8	95
Netherlands	18.3	18.6	18.8	14.8	81
Portugal	23.3	21.0	19.4	:	83
UK	19.1	19.0	20.3	18.2	95

	percentage 65 years and over ^a				1985-2020 ^b
	1985	1990	2000	2020	
Belgium	14.0	15.0	16.8	20.9	149
Denmark	15.3	15.5	15.2	20.5	134
FRG	14.7	15.6	17.3	23.0	156
Greece	12.4	12.7	15.0	:	121
Spain	12.0	13.1	15.1	15.2	127
France	12.8	13.9	15.7	19.7	154
Ireland	10.8	:	:	:	
Italy	12.7	14.3	16.6	20.0	157
Luxembourg	12.7	12.6	13.8	14.4 ^c	113
Netherlands	12.8	13.2	13.5	19.0	148
Portugal	11.7	12.5	13.7	:	117
UK	15.2	15.6	15.6	17.9	118

^a The years specified differ in a number of cases from the years at the head of the table.

^b Index numbers (1970 = 100)

^c Luxembourg: last year is 2010.

: = no data available

Source: Eurostat (1988a)

The demographic trend in the latter country has become unclear as a result of the unification with what was formerly the GDR. This decline in the percentage of young people has been accompanied over the same period by a substantial ageing of the population. In a few countries - Belgium, the Federal Republic, France, Italy and the Netherlands - the proportion of the age group 65 and over is rising by as much as 50%.

3.3 Work duration and part-time work

As is common knowledge, the duration of work is decreasing in the long term. Table 3.4 covers the period back to 1870. Over a more limited period (1973-1986), the reduction in the number of hours worked per person and per year varies from 4% in the United States to 14% in the Netherlands. The figures in question are numbers of hours, from which holidays and public holidays have been deducted. Since the period in question is fairly long, the rate at which working hours have declined is not very rapid in a number of countries.

Table 3.4 Hours worked per person per year in a number of countries, 1870-1986

	F	FRG	J	N	UK	USA
1870	2945	2941 [*]	2945	2964	2984	2964
1890	2770	2765 [*]	2770	2789	2807	2789
1913	2588	2584	2588	2605	2624	2605
1929	2297	2284	2364	2260	2286	2342
1938	1848	2316	2391	2244	2267	2062
1950	1989	2315	2289	2208	1958	1867
1960	1948	2081	2430	2214	1877	1835
1973	1771	1904	2195	1805	1688	1754
1986	1533	1627	2099 ^a	1555	1518 ^b	1683

^{*} The Federal Republic of Germany did not exist at the time.

^a 1985.

^b 1984.

Source: OECD (1988a: 59)

Table 3.5 also shows that the trend towards shorter working hours has slowed recently. The figures are derived from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Holidays, public holidays and special types of leave such as maternity leave have been deducted. The figures relate to industry and are reproduced in index numbers with 1985 as the starting point. The overall reduction in working hours in all the countries examined was 7% in 25 years. In the European countries the reduction was 15% and in Japan 3%. In the United States there was a rise of 2%. In Europe the main reduction occurred prior to 1975. According to the ILO, the number of hours worked in industry differs hardly at all from the number worked in other sectors, with the possible exception of agriculture for which no figures are available.

The overall picture of the reduction in working hours is therefore clear: a substantial reduction when viewed over a longer period and a rather less impressive reduction when looked at in the more recent past, especially since 1975.

Table 3.5 Change in the number of hours worked in industry in a number of countries, 1960-1986 (index numbers, 1985 = 100)

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1986
Austria	130	116	113	102	101	100	98.7
Belgium	125	123	115	105	101	100	99.7
Finland	137	136	119	105	103	100	98.8
France	118	118	116	108	105	100	100
FRG ^a	112	108	108	99	102	100	99.3
Ireland	110	107	98	101	100	100	100.2
Netherlands ^a	121	114	110	101	101	100	-
Norway	102	100	92	99	100	100	100
Portugal	111	118	118	110	102	100	-
Spain	119	122	122	117	106	100	101.1
Switzerland ^a	107	105	104	104	102	100	99.3
Sweden	123	119	111	100	98	100	100
United Kingdom	110	107	104	99	97	100	99.3
Australia	-	117	118	102	102	100	100.8
New Zealand	100	101	100	101	99	100	98.3
Japan	103	96	97	97	100	100	99.6
Canada ^a	104	106	103	99	99	100	99.7
United States ^a	98	101	99	97	98	100	100.2
average in Europa ^b	115	113	110	103	102	100	99.6
average outside Europa ^b	100	100	98	97	99	100	99.9
average all lands ^b	107	105	104	100	100	100	98.8

^a Hours for which pay received.

^b Weighted to take account of employment in industry.

Source: ILO (1989: 12)

Data about overtime deserve a separate mention (table 3.6). In so far as it is known, overtime has shown an upward trend, especially since 1982. It should be noted that overtime was included in the figures in table 3.5.

Table 3.6 Hours worked as a percentage of the total number of hours worked in a number of countries, 1975-1986

	1975	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
FRG	4.7	4.8	4.1	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9	4.0
Italy ^a	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.7	-
Japan	6.2	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.7	8.1	8.4	8.2
Norway ^b	3.0	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.8	4.2	4.3
New Zealand	6.8	4.7	4.9	5.2	5.6	6.6	6.6	6.2
Poland	4.2	4.1	4.4	6.2	6.7	7.4	8.3	-
Sweden	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.9	3.0	3.2
United Kingdom ^c	9.3	9.4	7.4	7.9	7.7	8.4	8.8	8.8
United States ^d	6.6	7.1	7.0	5.9	7.5	8.4	8.1	8.6

^a Manual workers.

^b Men with adult wage in mining and industry.

^c Full-time male employees.

^d Industry

Source: ILO (1989: 16)

The data in tables 3.4 to 3.6 relate to people working full time. Table 3.7 indicates what percentage of the total working population worked part-time in the years 1975 and 1986. Strictly speaking, the figures are not comparable since the number of hours taken as the limit for part-time work is not the same in all countries. Sometimes the figures are even based on particulars supplied by respondents in a labour market survey in answer to questions as to whether or not they considered that they worked part time. Despite this limitation, it is possible to draw a conclusion. Part-time work has increased considerably in a period of just over 10 years, and the majority of the index numbers are well over 100. The increase in the Netherlands is striking.

Table 3.7 Part-time employees as a percentage of the total working population

	women		men		total		1975-1986 ^a
	1975	1986	1975	1986	1975	1986	
Australia	11.0	15.4	2.6	4.0	13.6	19.4	142
Belgium	4.2	7.4	0.7	1.2	4.9	8.6	175
Canada	7.4	11.1	3.2	4.5	10.6	15.6	147
Denmark	13.4	19.7	2.8	4.6	21.2	24.3	115
France	6.3	9.8	1.3	2.0	8.1	11.8	146
FRG	10.7	12.3	1.2	1.4	11.9	13.7	115
Italy	2.3	2.9	1.7	1.6	4.0	4.5	113
Japan	5.5	8.1	4.4	3.5	9.9	11.6	117
Netherlands	7.7	17.6	1.8	5.1	9.5	22.7	239
New Zealand	10.5	12.2	3.6	3.3	14.1	15.5	110
Norway	15.1	18.7	3.7	4.4	18.8	23.1	123
Sweden	17.5	20.4	2.4	3.1	19.9	23.5	118
United Kingdom	15.6	18.6	1.5	2.5	17.1	21.2	124
United States	9.6	11.7	4.7	5.7	14.3	17.4	122

^a Index numbers (1975 = 100).

Source: ILO (1989: 20)

3.4 Unemployment

Unemployment has risen substantially in the European Community, Japan and the United States since 1970. With the exception of the United States, this rise was particularly marked between 1975 and 1985. The data for 1985 and 1986 indicate that a slight fall occurred in the majority of countries.

Table 3.8 shows the unemployment percentages and table 3.9 contains the absolute figures.

Table 3.8 Registered unemployment as a percentage of the civilian working population in the countries of the European Community, the United States and Japan, 1970-1986^a

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1986
Belgium	2.2	5.1	9.1	13.6	12.5
Denmark	1.0	5.0	6.7	8.7	7.4
FRG	0.6	4.1	3.4	8.4	8.1
Greece	:	:	:	7.8	7.4
Spain	:	:	:	22.1	21.2
France	1.3	3.9	6.4	10.5	10.7
Ireland	5.3	8.4	8.2	7.9	18.3
Italy	4.4	5.3	7.2	12.9	13.7
Luxembourg	0.0	0.2	0.7	1.7	1.5
Netherlands	:	5.3	6.2	13.3	12.4
Portugal	:	:	:	8.6	8.8
United Kingdom	2.5	4.2	6.0	12.0	12.0
EC 9	2.0	:	:	:	:
EC 10	:	4.2	:	:	:
EC 12	:	:	6.1	11.6	11.7
United States	4.9	8.5	7.0	7.1	6.9
Japan	1.1	1.9	2.0	2.6	2.8

^a Based on the number of registered unemployed at the national employment exchanges. The data have been standardised where possible. The figures for the different countries cannot be compared with one another.
: no data available

Source: Eurostat (1988 and earlier years)

Table 3.9 Registered unemployment in the countries of the European Community, the United States and Japan, 1970-1988 (x1,000 persons)

	EC 12	B	D	FRG	G	S	F	IR
1970	2287*	80*	25*	148	49	146	262	59
1975	5018*	201*	122*	1086	35	257	840	96
1980	8093*	369	176	899	37	1277	1451	101
1985	15856	557	242	2305	85	2642	2458	231
1986	16122	517	212	2223	108	2759	2517	236
1987	16130	501	216	2233	110	2924	2622	247
1988	15909*	459	240	2237	109	2858	2563	241

^a Based on the number of registered unemployment at the national employment exchanges. The data have been standardised where possible. The figures for the different countries cannot be compared with one another.

: = no data available

Source: Eurostat (1989: 184)

Table 3.10 shows the latest trend in the European Community. Use has been made of the Community labour market survey, which enables the unemployment percentages in the various countries to be compared. There is clearly a gradual downward trend, except in France and Italy.

Table 3.10 Unemployment percentages in the countries of the European Communities, capable of mutual comparison, 1985-1988*

	EC 12	B	D	FRG	G	S	F
1985	10.9	11.7	7.6	7.3	8.7	21.9	10.3
1986	10.8	11.8	5.8	6.5	8.2	21.2	10.4
1987	10.6	11.6	5.8	6.4	7.9	20.5	10.6
1988	10.3	10.8	6.4	6.4	7.9	19.8	10.4

	IR	IT	L	N	P	UK
1985	18.5	9.4	3.0	10.5	8.5	11.5
1986	18.3	10.6	2.6	10.2	8.2	11.5
1987	18.0	11.0	2.7	10.0	6.8	10.6
1988	17.6	12.4	2.5	10.0	5.9	8.7

* Based on the Community labour market survey of the European Community. Persons were treated as unemployed if they were "without work, were immediately available for work and in search of work". The unemployment percentage is based on the civilian working population.

Source: Eurostat (1989: 182)

The figures on how many people have been unemployed for longer than two years are available for a limited number of countries (table 3.11). Everywhere there appears to be a hard core of long-term unemployed, who are forming an ever larger proportion of the total number of unemployed. The growth of this proportion is due in part to the fall in total unemployment. People who have been out of work for a short period find work more easily than the long-term unemployed.

Table 3.11 Registered long-term unemployment in various countries of the European Communities (x1,000 persons and as a percentage)^a

	1982		1985		1988	
	(x1,000)	in %	(x1,000)	in %	(x1000)	in %
Belgium	190.4	33.3	234.4	42.4	194.0	42.2
FRG	110.9	6.1	303.3	14.1	346.5	16.5
France	192.8	8.8	301.3	11.7	353.0	13.3
Ireland ^b	49.8	30.2	98.8	43.8	108.8	46.6
Italy	:	:	898.0	29.7	:	:
Netherlands	:	:	258.7	34.8	214.3	31.6
United Kingdom	:	:	822.5	25.1	595.4	28.1

^a As a percentage of the total number of registered unemployed. Long-term means out of work for longer than 2 years.

^b For Ireland unemployed for one of two years.

: = no data available

Source: Eurostat (1989: 188-191)

3.5 Labour productivity

Data about labour productivity are important in the context of conjectures about the work society. The majority of authors assume that labour productivity is rising or will rise so rapidly that there will be less and less opportunity for people to find work. In doing so, they base their arguments on a tautology, which can be represented as follows:

number of working people x production per working person (labour productivity) = national product.

Only if the production per working person increases faster than the national product will the number of people in work decline. A simple example may clarify this supposition. Suppose that 1,000 employees each produce 100 units of a good. In such a case, national income totals 100,000 units. Suppose that national income increases by 5% to 105,000 and that labour productivity rises by 10% to 110. In order to produce 105,000 units, around 955 employees are required. Naturally, this is on the assumption that all other things remain equal. If, for example, product innovation stimulates demand for goods, this reasoning no longer applies.

Table 13.2 compares the rise in labour productivity and the rise in national product for a number of countries over a long period. The greatest increase in labour productivity occurred in the period 1950-1973, but even then the overall rise in national product was greater. In the period 1973-1984, labour productivity rose less fast, but the rise in national product generally exceeded it. There is therefore no reason to suppose that the rise in labour productivity has had a marked effect on the size of the working population.

Table 3.12 Total factorproductivity and national income in OECD-countries, 1913-1984 (yearly mutations in mean percentages)*

	productivity			national income		
	1913-1950	1950-1973	1973-1984	1913-1950	1950-1973	1973-1984
France	1.42	4.02	1.84	1.06	5.13	2.18
FRG	0.86	4.32	1.55	1.30	5.92	1.68
Japan	1.10	5.79	1.21	2.24	9.37	3.78
Netherlands	1.25	3.35	0.31	2.43	4.70	1.58
United Kingdom	1.15	2.14	1.22	1.29	3.02	1.06
United States	1.99	1.85	0.52	2.78	3.72	2.32
average	1.30	3.58	1.19	1.85	5.31	2.10

* Part of the growth in productivity attributable to a more efficient use of labour and capital.

Source: OECD (1988a: 177)

3.6 Summary

In general, the statistical data do not provide clear evidence of a decline in the work society. It is true that only in the United States has there been a significant increase in employment since 1970 and that this growth has been much slower or even absent altogether in other countries. The participation level also rose in the same period, albeit at a seemingly slow rate. Here too the United States was an exception. Part-time work increased. However, varying interpretations are possible. It may be assumed that the newcomers to the labour market will be especially inclined to accept part-time work. The majority of them are married women. This may be an indication that work is popular: people prefer to have a partial job rather than no job at all.

On the other hand, the number of people who combine a relatively small amount of paid work with a relatively large amount of leisure time and informal work is increasing. It is this combination which is often cited as evidence of the decline of the work society.

On the strength of these indications, it might be concluded that there is no convincing evidence of the decline of the work society. There are more indications in this direction. These are to be found in areas to which those who see such a decline attach much importance, namely working hours,

unemployment and labour productivity. To this must be added the demographic trend, a factor which is generally overlooked in the literature.

Viewed over a long period, working hours have declined considerably. Over a shorter period - since 1960 - the decline has been much smaller than before. Moreover, the decline that is perceivable occurred before 1975. The figures relate to contractual working hours, less holidays, other paid leave and public holidays.

Overtime is showing a tendency to increase. This too hardly points to a decline in the work society. However, it is indicative of a growing disparity in the division of labour. Since 1970 unemployment has increased substantially, but more recently - since 1985 - it has fallen gradually, leaving a hard core of long-term unemployed. The extent of unemployment differs from country to country.

Labour productivity increased strongly, particularly in the period 1950-1973. However, the growth has been smaller than that of the national product - even since 1973. As argued above, this certainly does not suggest a decline of the work society.

The demographic trend is important. In the future (the period generally taken is up to 2020), the population will age. The first signs are already identifiable. However, ageing will be a stimulus for the work society rather than a brake on it. It may be assumed that there will be a desire to sustain national income. This will necessitate a greater effort on the part of those in work. In addition, the pensions of the elderly will have to be paid and they will require care.

4. FINAL REMARKS

Complex societies in which varying intellectual traditions have evolved over time always cherish a range of views on social institutions. Marriage can be seen as a romantic undertaking or as a contractual agreement. Education can be viewed as a preparation for work or as a means of building character. Government may be regarded as the master or the servant of the people. The fact that there are differing views of paid work was seen in chapter 2.

"Work serves individual self-development", is one argument. "Not true", runs the counter argument, "work actually hampers self-development". "The individual psychological dimension is not so important", is the third view. "Work is in the public interest because it generates prosperity." "Agreed", says a fourth speaker, "but it is essential that work meets certain requirements. In my view, not all work is worth doing."

These four theories coincide with the four views of work: the social view, the negative view, the prosperity view and the conditional prosperity view. These views will not be summarised again here, but will merely be commented upon.

None of the four views satisfies the reader completely. The notion of a society with a large degree of freedom - perhaps even absolute freedom - to choose between paid and unpaid work, and with a guaranteed basic income and voluntarily accepted austerity is extremely Utopian. Moreover, the expression of such views is in itself a luxury. A society must be very far advanced economically even to be able to think of such things. Ideas of this kind are out of place in East European countries and in those of the Third World, where the economies must be thoroughly reconstituted or are still in need of development. The vigorous stimulation of paid work also gives rise to difficulties. Not everyone is suited to doing paid work, particularly now that ever higher demands are being made of the employees. The usefulness of some of the work that is created may justifiably be queried. Does society really stand to gain, for example, from having a larger number of MacDonal'd restaurants or other fast-food chains? And, finally, what is the point of continuing economic growth in societies which already provide their citizens with a high standard of living? In such a situation, a high growth figure is a narrow basis for mobilising people. Concepts such as self-development and mutual service in the interests of the community then have a greater appeal.

Despite the fact that none of the four theories is fully convincing in intellectual terms, they have all impressed their stamp on the structure of the highly developed, prosperous societies. A number of these structural characteristics are of a general nature, others are peculiar to a given society. Leisure policy, education other than for purely vocational purposes and humanisation of work are fairly general phenomena. This also applies to the measures to promote paid work, but here major differences can be identified. In countries with a high percentage of people in work, the minimum wage is often very low or even absent altogether. This does not mean that the wage costs are high. It does mean, however, that the spread of earned income is great, as it is possible to pay both extremely high and extremely low wages. A low wage may force the other members of an employee's family to go out to work too. In addition, scope is created for the creation of employment at the foot of the "earnings pyramid". Although benefits exist, they are low, which limits the possibility of obtaining an income without working. In these cases, people are clearly encouraged to work. The United States and Sweden are examples of countries where such a situation exists (SCR 1990, pp. 83-85; WRR 1991).

The Netherlands is an example of a country where the percentage of people in work is low. The minimum wage is relatively high and the differences between incomes are relatively small. Benefits are high and fairly easy to obtain compared to other countries. The system of benefits, particularly disablement benefit, makes it possible to lay off the less productive employees while softening the adverse economic consequences for the individual as far as possible. The existence of this possibility for laying off employees - it is not in fact the only one - is probably the basis for the high labour productivity recorded in the Netherlands. Unpleasant work is seldom imposed compulsorily, even on the long-term unemployed. It is preferred instead to recruit foreigners for this purpose. "Not all work is worth doing, at least not by us", could be the motto. In the Netherlands the "conditional prosperity" view of work seems to have a strong influence. The absence of pressure to perform unpleasant work is perhaps evidence that the negative view of work also has some importance.

The above shows how the different views on work are structurally anchored in society. Needless to say, much more analysis is needed in order to establish a clear picture. In any event, it is evident that the views, including the Utopian ones, do have a social basis.

Is the work society in its declining years and are there trends which indicate the emergence of a leisure society? These questions must be answered in the negative. The statistical data from the third chapter show somewhat diverging trends but do not on the whole suggest a decline in the work society. The number of hours worked by each individual is decreasing, but the rate of decrease is slower than might be expected and has slowed further since 1975. There is a hard core of long-term unemployed, but total unemployment has fallen since 1985. The total number of hours worked, as calculated on the basis of the labour volume, has remained constant since the first half of the 1970s or is still increasing slightly. Labour productivity is rising, but less fast than formerly. Since the rise is also slower than that of the national product, it is unlikely that the working population will be reduced as a result of the increase in productivity. In fact, only the growth in the number of part-time employees is in keeping with the views on the leisure society, since part-timers combine a relatively small number of hours of paid work with a relatively large amount of informal work and leisure time.

The majority of authors who advocate a leisure society presuppose the introduction of a guaranteed basic income and austerity. There is no evidence whatsoever of the latter development, and it is unlikely that this will change. At the global level, the East European countries and the countries of the Third World wish to reach the same economic level as the highly developed nations. They have every reason to do so. In the economically advanced countries, each economic boom leads to new wage demands. New products which seem to meet even relatively weak needs for example the CD player, sell like hot cakes. All things considered, therefore, the traditional economic assumption that human needs are infinite seems to be more realistic than the assumption that these needs will in due course become satiated.

If this is correct, there is little prospect of a guaranteed basic income. If the satisfaction of needs were to remain at a given level, a corresponding basic income would certainly be conceivable. If the level of material wants continually increases, however, the basic income would also have to be continually raised. And if these wants rise faster than the ability to satisfy them (as will generally be the case), the basic income will never be high enough to provide sufficient for people's subsistence. In consequence, it will lose its social significance.

A number of social trends and factors acquire a special significance if they are regarded in the light of the constant efforts to increase prosperity. These are the growing proportion of the elderly, the environmental movement and the exhaustion of raw materials. The last two factors are cited as causes of the alleged decline of the work society. However, in combination with the efforts to achieve prosperity, they act instead as a stimulus for the work society. Production processes which spare the

environment are in general more expensive than those which do not. If society wishes to use them and maintain or even raise its standard of living, its members will have to work harder. If raw materials become scarce, their price rises and the same reasoning applies again. In theories on the work society, demographic developments are ignored. This is understandable, since the trend has become visible only recently. Nonetheless, it is of great significance. If the number of people able to have a job declines and it is desired to maintain the standard of living, work must be intensified. An increase in labour productivity could make the need for this less urgent, but would not render it unnecessary. It follows, therefore, that there are problems both now and in the future which can be solved only by intensification of work.

Leisure time itself should also be considered. First of all, more leisure time for one person generates work for another. The leisure industry is already of a significant size. Leisure goods of very varied kinds such as angling gear and photographic, cine and video equipment must be produced. Employment in travel agencies, outdoor amenities, museums, restaurants and so forth is stimulated, partly because they have to stay open for longer.

Second, more leisure time is not in itself a sufficient reason for talking of a leisure society. This type of society presupposes that leisure is used in a creative and worthwhile fashion. Numerous studies indicate that pessimism is justified on this score, and that individuals today tend to act mainly as consumers in their leisure time. The study carried out by the Social and Cultural Planning Office entitled *From vaudeville to video* describes and explains the use which Dutch people have made of their leisure since the 1950s (Knulst 1989). It is unlikely that the trends in other highly developed countries will differ markedly from those in the Netherlands.

The author W.P. Knulst identifies a number of trends which occurred between 1955 and 1985.

- * The total number of leisure hours rose by 30%.
- * Watching television increased by 250%. Since television was introduced and perfected in that period, the extent of this change is understandable.
- * 75% less time was spent on listening attentively to the radio and music recordings.
- * 40% less time was spent reading books and newspapers. Only magazines achieved a higher figure than before.
- * Visits to places of entertainment increased by 90%. The Dutch visited cultural events and the cinema less frequently and catering establishments, particularly restaurants, more frequently.

Information on the use of leisure time drawn from other studies by the Social and Cultural Planning Office can also be quoted. Participation in and the time spent on voluntary work did not change between 1975 and 1985 (SCP 1988a: 22). The same applies to the time that was spent on amateur participation in the arts during the same period (Knulst & Van Beek, yet to be published). Active participation in sports increased between 1979 and 1983 and stabilised between 1983 and 1987 (SCP 1988b: 231); this was because older people did more sports while the proportion of young people (traditionally the most active category in sports) in the population declined. Membership of societies and clubs, including political parties, remained roughly constant between 1963 and 1987, with the exception of sports clubs, which saw their membership rise (especially between 1963 and 1980) (SCP 1988b: 234).

Needless to say, these data hardly suggest that the increase in leisure time is creating a leisure culture. With the exception of active participation in sport, there was no increase in activities associated with leisure culture. On the other hand, more time was spent watching television and going out. Much leisure time was also spent on sleeping late and doing the shopping. Knulst's extensive comments on the data in his study also offer little hope that leisure time will be put to better use. In his view, modern man behaves in his leisure time like a shopper in a supermarket who buys a relatively small

amount of lot of different articles. Over the years, the number of leisure pursuits per individual has increased, but the average time spent on each activity has decreased. As an individual has only a limited amount of leisure, this is understandable. The fragmentation of interests is, however, a reason for doubting the advent of the leisure culture.

Another remark must be made about the use of leisure time. The proponents of the leisure society generally assume that as a result of the rise in the average educational level, an increasing number of people will have the skills required to use their leisure time in a culturally worthwhile way. This view is known in leisure research as the competence hypothesis. Knulst considers that it has not been proved. Between 1955 and 1985 - when participation in education rose sharply in the Netherlands - reading books and newspapers and visiting cultural events decreased. Interest in the higher forms of culture is probably fostered in the parental home. Participation in a higher form of education does not increase this interest, with the result that literature, plays, concerts and so forth are ultimately always enjoyed by a small elite only. Indeed, the competition from other forms of entertainment may reduce the size of this group still further.

Taking the population as a whole, there seems little reason to expect the advent of a leisure society. But are there small groups within society which attach little value to paid work and material gain and use their leisure in a creative way? In the 1970s, a post-materialist movement of the kind referred to by various writers including Inglehart did occur in a number of countries. This movement was not, however, sustained. The next question, therefore, is whether innovation can be expected from those who have been excluded from paid work, especially from the unemployed. Research among the unemployed has shown above all that unemployment demoralises and deactivates its victims and encourages apathy. A few points should be made in this connection. On the basis of a secondary analysis of a large-scale Dutch survey conducted among the employed, unemployed and disabled in 1982, Becker came to the conclusion that six out of ten unemployed people were clearly work-oriented (Becker 1989). This was less than the researcher had expected. He also concluded that the duration of unemployment, the amount of the benefit and so forth do not affect views on work. On the contrary, the unemployed expressed the same views that had held while they were still in work. Unemployment does in itself therefore have much effect on people's views on work. The growth of unemployment is therefore unlikely to result in an increase in the number of people who have a low opinion of work. One out of ten unemployed took a decidedly positive view of unemployment, used his or her leisure time actively, for example by doing a substantial amount of voluntary work, and was content with a low benefit. This proportion is low.

In view of the quantitative data, there is no reason to assume that the work society is in decline. Moreover, a number of ancillary considerations - especially those relating to the efforts to achieve prosperity - mean that it is unlikely that such a development will occur in the near future. And developments in the area of leisure make it unlikely that a leisure culture will soon evolve.

Does this mean that no changes whatever are occurring in this field? Although some changes can certainly be identified, those who criticise the work society have not recognised a number of them, and it is also doubtful whether their interpretation of the changes they have identified is correct in all respects. Work is probably playing a less central role in the perception of individuals, among other things as a result of the shorter working hours. In addition, the influence of work in a number of areas of life is diminishing. And another factor is also worth mentioning. In general work has become less onerous. Demanding physical work and monotonous work are becoming less and less common owing to automation and mechanisation. Although the intellectual demands of jobs may have become heavier, it is possible that this is conducive to self-development. At present, work is no longer the means whereby individuals provide for their subsistence and that of their dependents at the expense of a great physical effort. It stands to reason that the work ethic has changed as a result: it is difficult

to derive a large measure of self-respect from a "soft job", and many jobs nowadays qualify for this description.

To this extent, it is quite possible to concur with what writers such as Dahrendorf and Offe have said on this subject. However, other developments too are taking place. Whatever objections can be made against work in certain trades and businesses, the nature of the majority of work has improved over the years. People expect a lot from their work, and in most cases they will not be seriously disappointed.

It may be assumed that the obligatory nature of work has weakened over the years. Benefits have enabled people to obtain an income without doing paid work, even though this income is relatively low. The majority of developed countries have fairly strict rules providing protection against dismissal. As a result, attitudes to paid work have become more relaxed. People still want to have a paid job, but once they have obtained it they have less compunction about reporting sick, about spending odd moments unproductively, about coming late and leaving early, and about changing jobs if their work no longer suits them. It seems as though the freedom which is seen as characteristic of leisure time has in some ways become part of working life. Opinion research provides some support for this view.

Little international comparative research has been done into views about work. The international differences in views on work as reported in the European Values Study do not provide a particularly clear picture (Halman et al. 1987; Harding et al 1986). Of the countries researched, expectations of work are the lowest in France and the highest in West Germany. The appreciation of work is the most positive in Denmark, Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Netherlands, and is significantly lower in France, West Germany and Italy.

The results of the research by Opaschowski (Opaschowski 1989) are striking. He examined the appreciation of work and leisure among a sample of 400 working people in West Germany aged between 16 and 59 years in 1981 and 1989 using the same questionnaire. He concluded that views on work had become more positive in 1989, and that views on work and leisure had thus to some extent grown closer together in the course of the eight years. It should be noted that all the questions used by Opaschowski were formulated positively, which detracts from the value of his conclusions.

Finally, these developments did not bring about any change in the principle of the employment contract with its rigid distinction between paid and unpaid work. Where the rules differ from the customary model, they still usually relate to a contract: part-time work is also performed on the basis of an employment contract. Where the contract is vague, the trade unions press for clear provisions to protect the employee.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the authors who objected to the work society may have assessed work unduly negatively. Naturally, everyone who does paid work is subject to rules and regulations, but this does not necessarily preclude self-development, certainly not in the present situation. Moreover, the principle of the employment contract seems to have survived intact. The proponents of the "active society" have in turn perhaps overlooked rather too easily the fact that employees have started to see work in perspective, even though participation in work is increasing. The work and leisure societies are thus starting to resemble each other more closely than the proponents of either view had envisaged.

Modern societies do not seem to be evolving clearly in the direction of either a work society or a leisure society. It may be assumed that the changes are taking place in an area between the two types and that they will result in societies which take a fairly relaxed view of work. Naturally, the extent

to which such views are held will differ from country to country. It depends on the duration of the work, the generosity of the system of benefits, the extent to which government subsidies are available to supplement family income, and the relation between incomes and prices.

In principle, it would be possible to classify countries according to the extent to which work is viewed in a relaxed way. However, this would require extensive study and would be beyond the scope of this survey. It could be inferred from the quantitative data in chapter 3 on the duration of work and work participation that there is little evidence of a relaxed view in the United States. On the other hand, a country such as the Netherlands with relatively short working hours, low work participation, high benefits and fairly extensive government subsidies would seem pre-eminently suited to qualify as a relaxed society.

There will be a distinction in every society, whether it takes a relaxed view of work or otherwise, between those who have to work hard and those who have to work less hard. Such a distinction can be made between industries, occupational groups and even between departments within the same organisation. If work becomes concentrated in the hands of the most productive the society could be classified as a meritocracy, i.e. a society in which there is work and the concomitant rights for an elite and much leisure time for the rest. Owing to the lack of statistical material, it is hard to make any pronouncements about the growth of a meritocracy in a large number of countries. In the Netherlands, a time-use survey that was carried out in 1975 was repeated in 1980 and 1985. The participants in the research, who formed a representative sample, recorded what they were doing every quarter of an hour for a full week. Data are also available internationally (Gershuny & Jones 1986), but they are less detailed than the Dutch statistics.

If the educational level is taken in the Dutch research as an indication of productivity, the picture as regards labour participation is unclear. The better educated were more likely to have paid work than the poorly educated in both 1975 and 1985, but the extent to which this was the case did not change. Nor was there any evidence of an increase in the percentage of people with long working hours, i.e. 40 hours or over per week. However, changes did occur in the hours actually worked by a number of sub-groups between 1975 and 1985. Working hours were longer in the agricultural sector and the more skilled occupations, and among the self-employed and manual workers. Middle-ranking and low-ranking employees actually worked shorter hours (Knulst & Van Beek 1991, pp. 37-47). The fact that the self-employed worked longer hours can possibly be attributed to the unfavourable economic situation, which meant that the owners of a business had to make an extra effort to keep their businesses afloat. The other trends may perhaps be indicative of a meritocracy. The agricultural sector is extremely productive in the Netherlands and accounts for a large share of the country's exports. Industry is shrinking, as it is in almost all countries. It seems reasonable to assume that the businesses with the best opportunities will survive and that those who are best suited to work will find employment with these firms. The fact that the more highly skilled occupations reserve work for themselves is in keeping with the nature of a meritocracy. Lower and middle-ranking employees form a substantial category of white-collar workers whose productivity is difficult to measure. In a number of cases, their functions are vaguely defined and are not strictly necessary for the production process. It is conceivable that this group will be among the first to be excluded from work in a meritocracy. All things considered, the Netherlands could be characterised as a relaxed society in which a degree of "meritocratisation" occurs. Whether a similar combination exists in other countries is something which only further study can tell.

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