“Emerging psychosocial hazards: The new world of work”

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What are psychosocial risks?

- Problems with work design, work organisation, work management, and/or social context of work
- Risks lead to work-related stress, burnout, or depression
- Risks include:
    - Excessive psychological or social workload
    - Conflicting demands or lack of clarity
    - Ineffective communication or support
    - Psychological harassment

Four main emerging risks

1. Emergent forms of employment contracts
2. Work intensification
3. High emotional demands at work
4. Issues with work-life balance

1. Emergent forms of employment contracts

- Fall into two categories: precarious work and irregular hours
- PRECARIOUS work: temporary, on-call, outsourced, day-hire, and even self-employment
- IRREGULAR HOURS work: part-time, flexitime, zero-hour contracts, overtime, compressed work week
- Not always risks, sometimes there are employment benefits too

1. Emergent forms of employment contracts

PRECARIOUS work

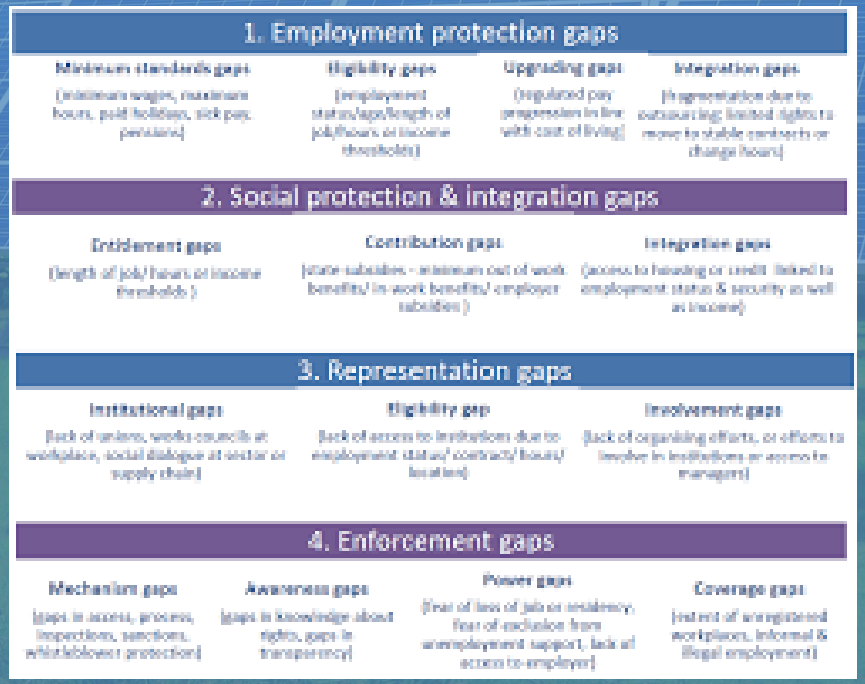
- Work continuity uncertainty
- Low-level control over working conditions, working hours, income
- Low-level social, unemployment, and discrimination protection
- Insufficient remuneration for work demands

- More likely for women; job sectors include retail, education, health, hotels, food services, migrant workers

1. Emergent forms of employment contracts

PRECARIOUS work PREVENTION

- Better legislation to include precarious work
- Better social protections (e.g. unemployment benefits)
- Pressure on organisations to take responsibility



1. Emergent forms of employment contracts

IRREGULAR work HOURS

- Globalised world means greater work availability requirements
- Work hours unpredictability
- High working hours variability & low flexibility for choice

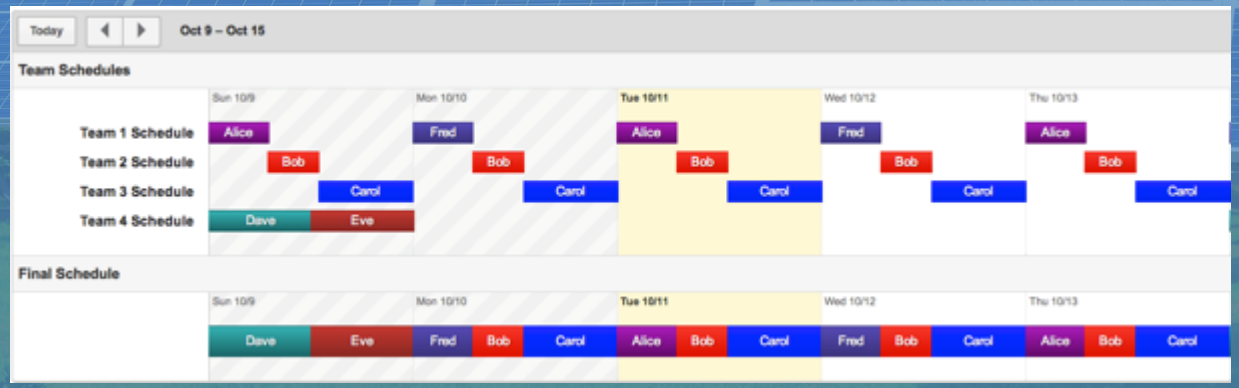
- More likely for men and younger people; job sectors include retail, construction, health & emergency services, hotels & restaurant services, transport

THE #ZeroHours HALL OF SHAME
Domino's Pizza
20,000
3,600
cineworld
SUBWAY
600*
TATE
200
McDonald's
82,800
16,000
Spirit
PUB COMPANY
Boots
4,000
TURNING POINT
2,600
BURGER KING
J·D·WETHERSPOON
24,000
20,000
SPORTS DIRECT.com
20,000
Total number of workers on zero hours contracts
ONE MILLION UK WORKERS ARE ON #ZeroHours CONTRACTS
DELIVER QUALITY JOBS | END PRECARIOUS WORK
unite
*100 Made to Order Franchises

1. Emergent forms of employment contracts

IRREGULAR work HOURS PREVENTION

- Better planning and scheduling
- Greater regularity
- Work design to account for variability in work intensity



2. Work intensification

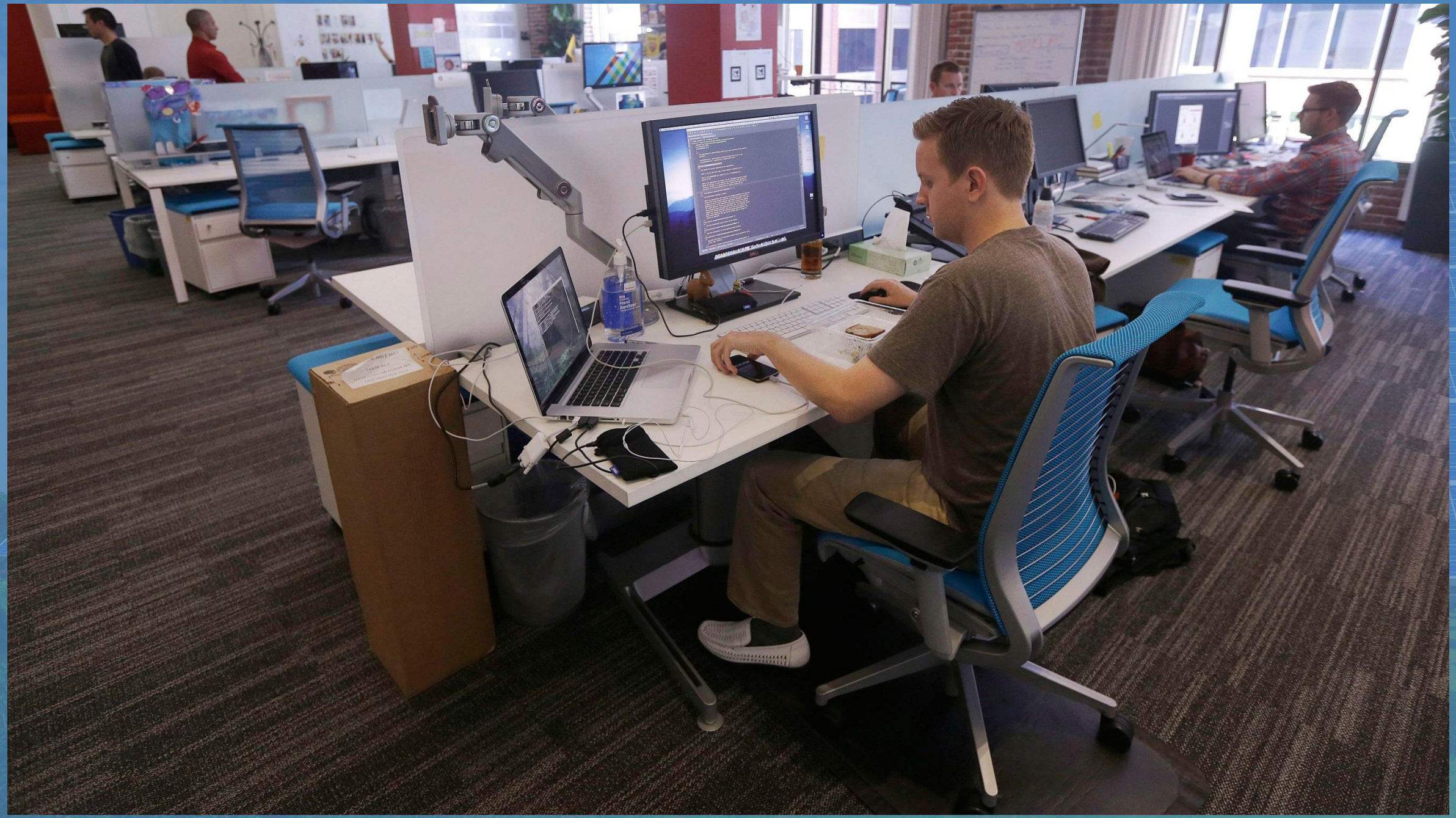
- Three forms: quantitative, qualitative, emotional
- QUANTITATIVE: increased amount (cognitive/psychological workload), increased time requirements
- QUALITATIVE: increased complexity
- EMOTIONAL: increased need for emotional regulation

- Why?: Employer demands for productivity efficiency, performance management, customer demands for immediacy

2. Work intensification

- Technology expectations, mechanisation & automation
- Globalisation and global competitiveness
- Deadlines & reaction times shorten, demand for flexibility & diversity (in solutions and in the organisation) increases
- Greater worker isolation as they spend more time working and less time interacting

- Job sectors include education, retail, service industries, mental health industries, finance



2. Work intensification

WORK INTENSIFICATION INTERVENTIONS

- Better work design to match work demands to work resources
- Matching imagined (by managers) workload to actual and perceived workload
- Greater control to workers to manage work rhythm (when to take breaks)
- Greater flexibility about work execution and decision-making latitude

3. Emotional work

- Requires the production of a desired emotional state in another person
- Display emotional reactions that meet the needs of clients, colleagues, or managers (often requires control of own emotions)
- Face-to-face and voice-to-voice contexts
- Emotional dissonance when own emotions don’t match desired emotions

- Job sectors include: call centres, service industries, health industries

3. Emotional work

EMOTIONAL work INTERVENTIONS

- Job design to allow part of working time to express own emotions (e.g. “time outs”)
- Social support (team meetings, third party interventions by counsellors or therapists)
- Training in handling emotional work and transference
- Careful selection for emotional containment attributes

4. Home-work interference

- Where work challenges spill over into non-work activities
- Enabled by mobile technologies
- Exacerbated for dual-income families, single-parent families, migrant workers, workers with long commutes to work, workers who have to travel

- Job sectors include: most service industries, most sales industries, most technical support industries

4. Home-work interference

HOME-WORK INTERFERENCE INTERVENTIONS

- Childcare support facilities
- Working-hour policies; ICT after-hours policies
- Facilities that support non-work activities: gym, commuting assistance, shops, medical and dental facilities, restaurants, etc.