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The 'new normal': working time reduction and environmental sustainability

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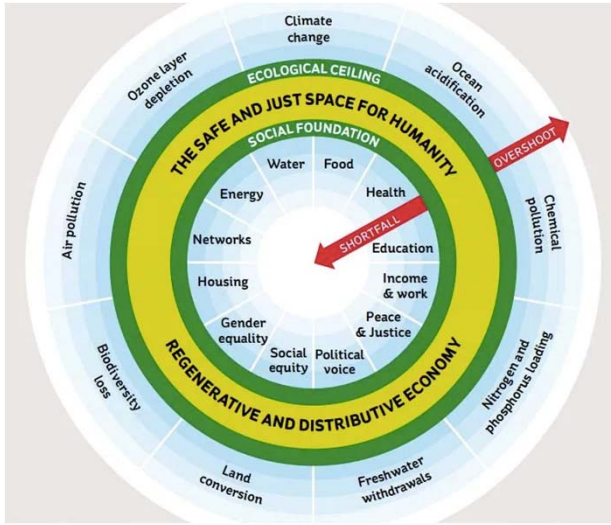
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There is no Planet B

The 'new normal' must be ecologically sustainable and socially just.

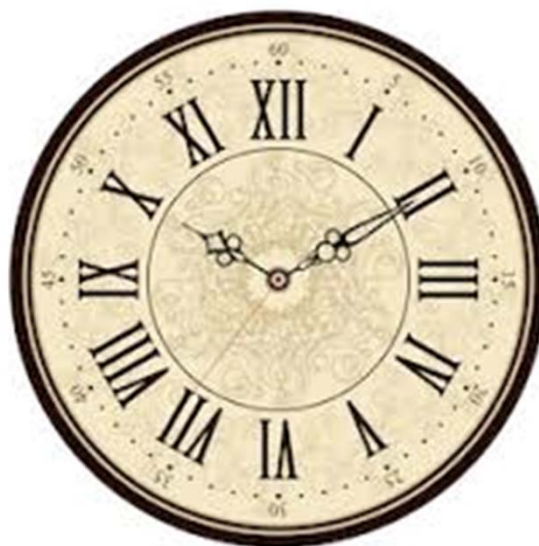
How can working time reduction help to make this happen?



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Long working hours ...

- are linked to
 - higher incomes
- linked to
 - higher levels of consumption
- linked to
 - greater environmental damage



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Time and income

- 'Full-time' jobs pay more than 'part-time'
- Overtime increases income
- Long hours can help promotion
- Linked with senior professional jobs.



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Income and consumption

Households with higher incomes spend more on

- clothing
- furniture
- household appliances
- education
- housing
- hotels
- restaurants
- transport.

Most items are energy and resource intensive



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Reduced working time

Can reduce damage to the environment by

- cutting the volume of consumption
- and
- changing patterns of consumption




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Reduce the volume

Make RWT the 'new normal'

- Trade more time for less extra pay in annual settlements
- Share work and pay to avoid redundancies
- New jobs have shorter hours
- Change norms and expectations about income and consumption
- Measure 'success' differently




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Change the patterns

- More time for relationships and activities, less need to signal social position
- Less pressure for 'convenience' shopping
- More time for 'slow living' - making, repairing, sharing
- Opportunities to reflect and value things differently.



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A broader agenda

- **Support for workers' organisations and collective bargaining**
- **Fair living wage and generous, non-stigmatising income support**
Public policies to support sustainable consumption and activities
- **Integrate RWT into the Green New Deal**



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Thank you

Some useful sources

- Coote, A., Harper, A. and Stirling, A. (2020 forthcoming) *The Case for a Four-Day Week*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- J. Schor (2013), 'The Triple Dividend', in A. Coote and J. Franklin (eds), *Time on Our Side*, London: New Economics Foundation, p.10.
- F-X. Devetter and S. Rousseau (2011), 'Working hours and sustainable development', *Review of Social Economy* 69(3): 333–355.
- J. Fitzgerald et al. (2018), 'Working Hours and Carbon dioxide Emissions in the United States 2007-2013', *Social Forces* 96(4): 1851-1874.

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