



Remote Work and New Employment Models in the Post Covid-19 Era: A Case Study of Greece

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Abstract:

The expansion of teleworking in the workplace raises issues of inequalities and challenges decision makers. The current research is employed to examine the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected local governments in terms of their functions and basic services to the public. It refers to issues of job destruction in the pandemic, expansion of jobs in the pandemic, transformation of employment via telecommunication and telework & analyses the threat of growing inequality and uncertainty of their impact on labour productivity. As methodological approach, a case study is examined via administration of interviews of employees of the

Municipality of Ioannina, Greece, and data are discussed via a qualitative analysis. The results show that introduction of teleworking due to the conditions imposed by the covid-19, is a challenge in the post-covid era. The more widespread use of teleworking will require companies to invest in technological infrastructure, to make extensive changes to the organization of work within their own organization, and all of this will need to be combined with a more general regulatory-institutional framework. The costs of introducing and establishing teleworking will require investment in purchasing, installing equipment and starting up teleworking appears to be considerable, and the return on such an investment should be calculated over the medium term. For this reason, companies should develop a coherent strategy for developing technologies and IT and provide the necessary infrastructure for teleworking.

Keywords: *teleworking, remote work, employment models, workplace, jobs.*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many rapid changes in countries' policies, as it is a health and economic crisis. A wide variety of epidemiological data were noted in big cities. This means that cities have been repositioned as key sites of action to manage the consequences caused by the pandemic, raising hope and concern for their governance during and beyond the pandemic (Solnit, 2020).

A crisis, in general, can be used politically. COVID-19 has certainly exposed the vulnerabilities of cities and local authority strategies, but its emergence has also loosened institutional constraints and policies, leading to an urgent need for diverse changes and a deepening of experimental modes of governance at local and national levels. The 'forced suspensions' of COVID-19 have changed what is reasonable, feasible and socially and politically acceptable. In other words, in licensing social



and institutional change, this shift has opened up spaces where new socio-political arrangements in urban areas shape a new governance (Latour, 2020).

One can therefore expect that this kind of 'forced experiments', could have various implications. Such implications are the disrupt of the institutional forms, relations and practices, reinforce long-term trends towards an innovation that functions as a reconfiguration of the ecosystems of urban governance. The tolerance invoked by the COVID-19 'state of exception' creates an atmosphere in which urban governance ecosystems can be transformed, repertoires of practices can be expanded, state capacity can be revived, much-needed reforms can be promoted, and political and economic agendas can be reset (Rose- Redwood et al., 2020).

The aforementioned changes may offer a deeper "look" at transformative innovations equipped to forge the urban future through the management of more inclusive, collaborative and progressive forms of governance. Alternatively, they could reproduce existing dispositions of governance, forms of power and exclusions shaped by 30 years of neoliberalisation, marketing and individualisation of influence. Either way, the changed governance practices, newly acquired state powers, new roles and relationships tested under the current experimental conditions may last much longer than the crisis and become 'sticky' and now constitute long-term governance changes (Solnit, 2020).

More specifically, the current pandemic has affected the whole spectrum of society and could be seen as the biggest problem or issue ever faced by any organization - public or private. Within this context, job positions and professional roles have been redefined, while distance working has been directly and to a very large extent reinforced and face-to-face interactions have been reduced. This has had the effect of influencing the way organizations operate and equipping technological structures differently to enable organizations to be able to serve citizens/customers at a distance.

Furthermore, these changes involved operations, administrative processes and job positions (Mykytyn, 2020; Fatmi, 2020).

Moreover, one of the most notable changes induced by the pandemic is the widespread adoption of remote work and online education. The shift to remote work became necessary as governments-imposed lockdowns and social distancing measures to curb the spread of the virus (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). Companies and educational institutions adapted by leveraging digital technologies to facilitate communication and collaboration among employees and students. Research indicates that remote work has led to increased productivity, reduced commute times, and improved work-life balance for many individuals (DeFilippis et al., 2020).

In addition, pandemic has also had a significant impact on mental health and well-being. Studies have shown that the pandemic-related stressors, such as job loss, health concerns, and social isolation, have led to increased anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues among individuals (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The need for mental health support has grown, leading to a surge in telehealth and online mental health services (Wind et al., 2020).

In terms of social interactions and relationship, COVID-19 has dramatically altered how people interact with each other, both online and offline. Face-to-face interactions have been largely replaced by virtual communication through video calls and social media platforms (Fauville et al., 2021). This shift has affected social relationships, with some individuals experiencing increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation (Loades et al., 2020). On the other hand, some people have reported strengthening their relationships with family and friends through increased communication and shared experiences during the pandemic (Prime et al., 2020).

Research Questions and Purpose

Based on the above data, the purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected local government in terms of its functions and its

basic services to the public. To serve this purpose, interviews were conducted with employees of the Municipality of Ioannina. The research purpose leads to the following research questions:

- What are the new working conditions created by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- In what ways did workers work throughout the pandemic (digital media, technological equipment, training)?
- When did the new working conditions formed?
- Did the new working conditions and services work successfully for the whole range of services?
- Are the new working conditions and services performing more or less successfully compared to previous ones?

Remote Working

We start by providing an overview of the development of teleworking. Following this, we develop hyporesearch about the relationships between teleworking at home and civil servants' organizational commitment, work engagement and occupational isolation.

Remote working, often referred to as teleworking, is a flexible working arrangement in which employees perform all or a significant part of their work physically separated from their employer's location, using IT for operation and communication.

Interest in telecommuting began in the 1970s, when the term "telecommuting" was used to denote working away from the office, primarily utilizing telephone communication as a substitute for physical proximity. In the 1980s, interest in telecommuting continued to grow, among workers, employers, transportation planners, communities, and the telecommunications industry (Hardill & Green, 2003).

The 1990s saw a proliferation of teleworking and more recent reports have observed that teleworking has become one of the most widespread bases of flexibility programs, with

the expectation that the practice will become even more common in the near future (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2014).

Moreover, census data from the United States and the European Union show that, respectively, 23 and 5 percent of workers work remotely at least a few times a week (Eurostat, 2016).

There are different types of teleworking and scholars provide various classifications such as:

"home-based telecommuting where work is performed at home, telecommuting from remote offices where work is performed in offices that are remote from the main office, and mobile telecommuting where work is performed by individuals whose work typically involves travel and/or dedication of time at client facilities" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

As a trend, even before covid working from locations outside the home was increased, evidence shows that most teleworkers work at home (EFILWC, 2010; Samir and Salomon, 1985). However, several issues arise regarding productivity (Gibbs et al, 2021) and quality of working life (Samir and Salomon, 1985) when people work from home or generally outside the workplace.

The current study, therefore, focuses on teleworking at home as this constitutes the most common and frequently used form.

Effects of Remote Working

Starting with a brief overview of teleworking, we evaluate the relationship between working from home and organizational commitment, work engagement and occupational isolation among civil servants. When examining organizational commitment, we draw on social exchange theory and predict that working from home will exert positive influences on civil servants' organizational commitment (Charalampous, Grant, Tramontano & Michailidis, 2019).

However, we also acknowledge that some studies on telecommuting conclude the opposite: that working from home has negative effects and is not associated with organizational commitment (Bailey and Kurland, 2002;

Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). This contradiction results in the development of two competing hypotheses.

However, with regard to work engagement, the evidence is more consistent and it is expected that working from home will have a positive effect on the work engagement of civil servants. It is also expected that working from home will have a positive relationship with civil servants' perceptions of job isolation (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Organizational commitment and work engagement are conceptually distinct, as organizational commitment constitutes a positive attitude towards the organization, while work engagement emphasizes the assumption of "optimal functioning" at work in terms of well-being. Organizational commitment is further differentiated from work commitment by the fact that it appears to be more dependent on job characteristics than on personal factors, indicating that it has less to do with intrinsic motivation than with external conditions (Symeou, Evstathiou, Charalambous, Kaitelidou & Jelastopulu, 2017).

Organizational commitment is defined as *"the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization"*. Allen & Meyer (1990) argued that there are three types of commitment: necessity-based commitment (continuous commitment), obligation-based commitment (normative commitment) and affective organizational commitment (Charalampous, Grant, Tramontano & Michailidis, 2019).

While these three dimensions of organizational commitment are all highly relevant, this research focuses on affective organizational commitment, as it is seen as the most relevant form when it comes to organizational identification. Emotional commitment refers to feelings of belonging and a sense of attachment to the organisation and may be seen as a 'psychological bond' that connects an employee to the organisation (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

There has been frequent use of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which was derived from

public choice theory and the rule of reciprocity, in the context of teleworking to explain the relationship between teleworking and increased employee commitment to the organisation. Social exchanges are those in which *"the voluntary actions of individuals are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring from others... [with] the exact nature [of the return] never determined in advance, but... left to the discretion of the one who makes it"* (Blau, 1964).

Therefore, this theory supports the view that employees will feel an obligation to reciprocate if they perceive that the organization, they work for has provided them with a favorable benefit.

In this respect, examples of favourable benefits that set reciprocity mechanisms in motion include training and development programs, greater empowerment of employees and participation in decision-making processes. In addition, the possibility of teleworking has also been seen as one of the benefits that boosts payback. This is because telecommuting is seen as an optional benefit and provides help for employees to find a work-life balance.

Thus, teleworkers see their supervisors as providing them with assistance in the part of managing their work-life balance and, therefore, they wish to stay because this constitutes what is expected of them under the rule of reciprocity. Therefore, a key argument is that teleworkers are willing to reciprocate, with higher levels of organisational commitment in return for being provided with greater flexibility and greater control over their work (Richards, King, Reid, Selvaraj, McNicol, Brebner & Godden, 2005). However, to reach these conclusions, engagement was assumed to be a 'stable' construct by the studies and they did not conduct research on potential variations in civil servants' engagement due to day-to-day differences in work location. It is therefore of particular interest whether any increase in engagement has the potential to vary from day to day due to the teleworking patterns of civil servants.

This leads to the hypothesis that working from home will have a positive association with organizational commitment of civil servants when measured on a daily basis. However, as

mentioned earlier, it has also been argued that telecommuting may reduce organizational commitment because there is a magnification of the challenges involved in developing identity and commitment to the organization when one works remotely. For example, Wiesenfeld et al. claimed that traditional organizations make use of relevant tangible evidence regarding the creation of connections between employees and the organization (Charalampous, Grant, Tramontano & Michailidis, 2019).

However, such aspects may be less available and meaningful in virtual settings. Therefore, there is a possibility that psychological ties between an organization and its members may be weakened due to the diffusion that characterizes employment in virtual environments (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Golden et al. 2008). Based on this argument, it is also hypothesized that working from home will be negatively related to organizational commitment of civil servants when measured on a daily basis. Work engagement constitutes a positive, satisfying state of mind related to work characterized by vigor, commitment and absorption.

Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and perseverance even in the face of difficulties (Shirom, 2011). Dedication is characterized by one's intense involvement in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge (Prasad, Mangipudi, Vaidya & Muralidhar, 2020). The third dimension of engagement, absorption, relates to having full concentration and feeling happy in one's work, where time passes quickly, and it is difficult to step away from work.

As a result, dedicated employees are able to cope with the demands of their job. Moreover, they are full of energy and efficiency. In relation to this expected positive relationship between working from home and work engagement, a variety of telecommuting effects have been reported to be expected to increase work engagement. Here, we draw on the emotional events theory, which posits that the experience

of varying work conditions may exert influences on an individual's emotional state.

According to this theory, when employees experience positive events, they will also experience positive emotions. Here, the authors argued how varying aspects of the telecommuting environment may result in a higher rate of positive events, which may then result in more positive emotions (Richards, King, Reid, Selvaraj, McNicol, Brebner & Godden, 2005). For example, telecommuting has been associated with stronger feelings of autonomy because telecommuters have more choice in the location and scheduling of their work tasks, aspects related to well-being.

In addition, teleworkers have the possibility to avoid interruptions at work. Therefore, through the nature and defining characteristics of a teleworking environment (increased autonomy and reduced interruptions) it is suggested that working from home should be linked to an increase in experienced positive events, which will cause an increase in work engagement. In this regard, reference is also made to a study by Ten Brummelhuis et al. which showed how employees' daily flexible working practices were positively mapped to their daily work (Prasad, Mangipudi, Vaidya & Muralidhar, 2020).

The prior literature shows that there will be a positive association between working from home and work engagement of civil servants when measured on a daily basis. Moreover, it is expected that working from home will be positively associated with perceived job isolation of civil servants. Diekema et al. (2020) define job isolation as a state of mind or belief that one does not interact with others in the workplace.

Essentially, occupational isolation reflects the belief that there is insufficient connection to critical networks of influence and social contact. Teleworkers are able to sense isolation on a professional and social level. Professionally, workers are created with the fear that working away from the office may cause a reduction in their opportunities for promotion and organizational rewards (Richards, King, King, Reid, Selvaraj, McNicol, Brebner & Godden, 2005).

Socially, the lack of informal interaction between employees and colleagues is highlighted. Since such feelings of isolation generally contain professional and social connection. In this study, occupational isolation is defined as beliefs that include the adequacy of both professional and social contacts.

Indeed, a very frequently cited barrier to workers being able to adopt flexible working practices is fear of isolation. Various studies have suggested that occupational isolation may create in teleworkers a feeling of exclusion with regard to office interactions. For example, many authors have argued that limitations in social interactions between employees may result from virtual work settings (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020).

When it comes to the relationship between working from home and professional isolation on a daily basis, the most important factor is the frequency of telecommuting.

Based on a survey of 261 teleworkers and their managers, it was found that the impact of occupational isolation increased based on the amount of time spent teleworking. In other words, the negative impact of job isolation on job performance was observed to be greater with those who spent more time telecommuting. However, this study did not use a diary design and did not study whether, on a daily basis, working from home results in greater occupational isolation (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020).

Bloom et al. (2015) report results of a WFH experiment at Ctrip, a 16,000-employee, NASDAQ-listed Chinese travel agency, working either from home or in the office for nine months. Remote working led to a 13% performance increase but led to increased working hours. Home workers reported improved work satisfaction, and their attrition rate halved, but their promotion rate conditional on performance fell. The success of the work from home experiment led the company to establish work from home conditions to their employees, and the second year the performance increased by 22%.

Mitigating Impact of the Leader

In addition to the expected main effects of teleworking at home, such as organizational commitment, job commitment and job isolation, it is also expected that these effects will be influenced by leader-member exchange (LMX). It is considered that maintaining a high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationship is of great importance especially when working from home. In this way, there is consistency with other main diary studies that have conducted research regarding the impact on a day-to-day basis of a variety of leadership behaviours. LMX is used to describe the quality of the relationship between a leader and a member (Sullivan, 2012).

According to this theory, effective leadership processes occur when leaders and followers are able to establish mature leadership relationships (partnerships) and thus access the many benefits that result from these relationships (Liden et al., 1997; Sparrowe and Liden, 1997). In general, such relationships are based on social exchange, where each party is required to provide something that the other party finds valuable and each party must perceive the exchange as reasonably fair.

In high quality relationships, such mechanisms of reciprocity and social exchange are highly effective: a relationship of trust is established between the leader and the employee, employees are made to feel valued by their supervisor, and finally, effective working relationships are established (Scandura and Pellegrini, 2008; Bower et al, 2000).

In contrast, exchanges in low-quality relationships are purely conventional. Here, leaders provide followers with the bare necessities to perform their work, and followers behave in the manner required and perform only their intended work (Prasad, Mangipudi, Vaidya & Muralidhar, 2020).

There is only a limited range of studies that have examined the role of LMX as a mediating factor in the relationships between working from home and the aforementioned outcomes, with most studies considering telecommuting itself as a moderator.

This is despite the fact that a variety of leadership studies have suggested that it is mainly the cognitive-psychological dimensions of leadership that play a fundamental role in ensuring employee satisfaction and commitment in a telecommuting environment. Here, Green and Roberts (2010) argue that virtual team leaders in particular are of great importance because these leaders have the potential to reduce perceived loss of connection by performing high quality communications and trust. These above challenges exist in any organizational environment but are extremely important in virtual environments. As such, it would be expected that the presence of a high-quality senior-subordinate relationship would be of great importance to those employees who telecommute frequently (Green and Roberts, 2010).

In a telecommuting environment, the direct support and empathy of colleagues may not be available, and subordinates are likely to need more attentive behavior from their leader. Thus, one would expect that civil servants, on days when they work from home, would be particularly reliant on a high-quality relationship with their supervisor (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020).

Working from home can have benefits for both employees and organisations due to the integration of work and caring responsibilities, increased productivity and increased employee engagement. Although there has been adoption of some flexible working practices, such as part-time work, more widely in recent decades, employers have not shown willingness to make working from home easier due to uncertain benefits and prior to the pandemic uptake was limited (Prasad, Mangipudi, Vaidya & Muralidhar, 2020).

There are differences between the studies mainly in the extent of the increases in organisational performance and productivity, and some question whether the gains outweigh the losses due to difficulties in supervision and communication, employee isolation and reduced commitment (Felstead and Henseke, 2017).

The Australian Public Service (1994) has been a pioneer of working from home, as evidenced by the creation of the Australian Public Service Interim Home-Based Work Award. Despite this initial commitment, uptake and acceptance has been patchy. In 2013, only 10% of Australian Public Service (APS) employees were telecommuting to some extent.

By 2019, over a third of managers (i.e. more senior managers) and very senior managers were working from home to some extent. Less than 15% of lower-level employees worked from home, highlighting that this was not the usual practice for these employees (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020).

Research has found continued widespread resistance from managers to enable lower-level employees to work from home. Through interviews with nearly 300 managers in four state jurisdictions, it was found that uptake of work-from-home was limited by unsupportive work cultures and behaviors, primarily managerial concerns regarding trust, productivity, and underperformance (Franken, Bentley, Shafaei, Farr-Wharton, Onnis & Omari, 2021).

Managers also cited inadequate technology and concerns regarding compliance with industry bodies and occupational health and safety policies as reasons for not facilitating these arrangements.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic first broke out in Wuhan, Hubei province and spread in China from December 2019 to early 2020 and is now spreading to more than 100 countries around the world. Three months into 2020, the world was faced with an existential global health crisis the outbreak of a new respiratory disease caused by COVID-19. On 30 January, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID 19 as a public health emergency of international concern and it was classified as a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020.

As different regions begin to adopt heterogeneous reopening policies - with some opening businesses and relaxing and others remaining closed - it is important to understand

how regional policies affect each other and in terms of the costs to regions of adopting uncoordinated strategies (Jia et al., 2020).

Initially, governments had introduced a variety of non-pharmaceutical interventions to reduce the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome from COVID-19, including social distance policies designed to reduce high crowding interactions between people in a particular region or places. Analyses of the historical spread of disease from COVID-19 suggest that adherence to social distancing was crucial to slowing the spread of the pandemic, especially during the early outbreak period when no vaccine was available.

Local coordination efforts have neglected the possibility that people's behaviours are influenced not only by those in their local communities, but also by those with whom they are geographically distant but socially connected through mobile phones, video conferencing, and social media.

These social media spillovers may be even more relevant to the spread of COVID-19, as they also influence the diverse responses of a country's citizens. In this way, record orders were created using social media and videoconferencing to maintain social ties across geographical distance (Kraemer et al., 2020).

Many countries have relied on an extrapolation of classical infection control and public health measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to those used for SARS in 2003. These range from extreme quarantine measures, such as in China where over 60 million people were isolated in Hubei province, to painstakingly detailed contact tracing with hundreds of contact tracers (e.g. Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea). However, these measures proved not to be fully effective in 2020 in addressing the scale of COVID-19 spread (Jia et al., 2020).

As knowledge of COVID-19 evolves, growing evidence suggests that it appears to be less lethal than initially thought-with a mortality rate of about 2%-although it is notably more contagious-89,779 cases in 70 countries, with more than 3,069 deaths by 2 March 2020. The

impact of COVID-19 will likely be greater than that of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, given globalisation, trade relations and the importance of China in terms of global trade and travel.

Despite the measures taken, the spread of the disease became uncontrollable over the months. In the case of Italy, for example, the spread of the disease and the number of victims indicate, on the one hand, the inertia of social life and structures in the face of sudden changes and, on the other hand, the inability to form modern societies that develop network structures.

Although current scientific knowledge has led to the development of standardized protocols, best practices and policies for pandemic control, countries around the world show different patterns of compliance with these guidelines, thus determining a very different evolution of the disease in each population (Bedford et al., 2020).

Regarding the case of Greece, it appears to have been an insightful case of good performance regarding its COVID-19 policies, while demonstrating that it can manage to keep infected cases and deaths at relatively low levels, based on data up to day 54 of disease spread. Specifically, Greece encountered its first case of infection on 26 February 2020 and just three days later began implementing various policies to control the disease. This early notification and response led Greece to rank last among European countries in terms of COVID-19 infection and mortality rates, setting the stage for its case to be considered a success story in the war against the pandemic (Roser et al., 2020).

Epidemical Impact

To the epidemiological description of COVID-19, as well as the emergency measures taken, is added the impact on society. It should be noted that, especially during the first outbreak period, there was limited public knowledge of the disease. In particular, the overwhelming news related to the pandemic, the cognitive bias of this emergency and other reasons caused public concern, fear and anxiety about something so unprecedented in modern societies.

In addition, increased loneliness and reduced social interaction, as well as uncertainty about the future, may cause or exacerbate sadness or depression, as well as broader anxiety in society. Even a mild illness with symptoms similar to COVID-19, such as the common cold, causes a persistent state of anxiety (Fiorillo & Gorwood, 2020).

For example, the study by Wang et al. (2020) conducted a large-scale nationwide survey of psychological distress in the general population in China during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study received a total of 52,730 valid responses from 36 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, as well as Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

The results show that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a variety of psychological problems, including panic disorder, anxiety, and depression. Another study by Wang et al. (2021) examined the psychological status at the beginning of the pandemic. The results showed that respondents reported moderate to severe psychological impact (more than 50%), anxiety (1/3) and depression (16.5%). Therefore, the psychological state is highly important. Timely provision of appropriate mental health care is essential. To reduce the impact of these negative emotions, the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China issued guidelines for psychological crisis intervention and psychological adjustment during the pandemic.

These guidelines included that the public should monitor developments about the virus by limiting sources of stress - to be informed only in official information and for a limited time; to "break" isolation by strengthening communication with friends, family and loved ones; to maintain a regular schedule alongside physical exercise. These included focusing on the benefits of isolation such as that quarantine protects both themselves and others and seeking help from professional psychiatrists (Fiorillo & Gorwood, 2020).

Additionally, social distancing involves staying away from familiar people - for a long period of time - to prevent the spread and infection of the

virus. It is a new emerging terminology meaning crowd avoidance (Thunström et al., 2020).

This has forced people to work from home and avoid social gatherings and even contact with those close to them (Cetrulo et al., 2020). Essentially, we can talk about a period of social pain, which is related to the discomfort of isolation and the consequences of social distance.

Humans are social animals and social relationships, and social interactions are an integral part of human culture, but, due to the rapid pandemic spread of the virus and the increase in social distancing measures, this network of relationships has been severely affected. Since human existence, these social connections and relationships have become integral to the way of life (Bolisani et al., 2020).

Thus, if there is no such deep meaningful connection, it leads to stressful stressful situations that affect the body as well as the mind. Loneliness, anxiety manifestations, depression, panic states, mental disorders, health risks and many other issues affect the life of the individual and the society (Duan & Zhu, 2020).

The WHO report for China claimed that no one knows the exact incubation period for this virus, but symptoms can appear anywhere from one day to two weeks after exposure. The CDC had issued top-level travel warnings for Italy, Iran, South Korea and China, also advising other countries to restrict travel to these places for now. These were the countries with the largest known cases of coronavirus.

Coronavirus affects the lives of individuals. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the outbreak of Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19) can be stressful for people and societies and not only for those who are infected. In other words, the fear and anxiety about an illness can be overwhelming and cause intense emotions in adults and children. The WHO updated measures to protect people's mental health which included:

- Avoiding watching fear-inducing news

- Seeking information from relevant sources that are relevant to protecting oneself and loved ones
- Taking regular breaks from the media and social media.

Furthermore, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention also gave specific instructions to the broad population to wash hands regularly and try not to touch their face. This includes people considering that mobile phones are a source of infection and disinfecting themselves frequently. In addition, the measures that have led to sealed shops have further isolated the public and created a variety of economic problems at national and individual level. Even when shops were open for a certain period, fear of the spread of the virus and the individual measures restricted travel and outings. At the same time, doubt about professional and, by extension, work futures created further anxiety and restrictions on participation in public events and entertainment (Fiorillo & Gorwood, 2020).

Labour and Technological Changes

The different actions taken by each state to contain the spread of the pandemic resulted in economic instability and uncertainty and other uncertainties regarding the social, technological, political and economic environments. The management of businesses were left in the dark, as no one had anticipated the extent of the negative impact on their working and economic environment. This meant that business decisions were changed diametrically to start businesses to be as functional as possible in order to cope with this global crisis (Duan & Zhu, 2020).

It seems that some organizations studied and reviewed their previously constructed business continuity plans and immediately recognized the scarcity of their efforts in the face of a real and significant global crisis. In the broadest sense, all the challenges that businesses had to face revealed the contradiction between traditional business processes and more digitally mature organizations.

This contradiction was also identified in organisational issues. In other words, digitally mature organizations recognized in time that

external change is an ever-present aspect of business and has given them sufficient capacity to respond quickly and strategically (Fletcher & Griffiths, 2020).

The pandemic has highlighted the need for organisational flexibility from the outset, but it is important to recognize that the current situation, albeit a slight variation of it, is not unexpected - at least not in principle in the sense that several countries have been in emergency situations, such as from natural disasters. In other words, digitally mature businesses seek to create internal environments that strive - and are likely capable - of providing stability, certainty, simplicity and accuracy to the employees, customers, clients and partners of the business in question.

The pandemic also led to new categories of employees and revealed the privilege of working from home. Security in their homes, while remaining economically active, has created a sharp divide from those who were laid off or designated as core workers. As the scale of the quarantine period became increasingly apparent, the situation also intensified that digital transformation constitutes a complex and strategic activity that contains the entire organization (Fletcher & Griffiths, 2020).

Digital transformation and increasing the digital maturity of an organization was not completed anytime soon. The most remarkable element identified is the successful transformation through the introduction of brand-new systems, for example, videoconferencing technology into an organization. For many organizations, there is evidence that the sudden introduction of a new technology as a short-term response during a pandemic is exactly the wrong time to conduct this type of work.

For example, the case of the large retail supermarket chains, their capabilities in the midst of a pandemic revealed a very conscious understanding of the particular balance of fragility and resilience. As supermarkets used a variety of customer service methods - appointments, direct online shopping - it became clear that these businesses were more mature to successfully navigate changing environments. However, less digitally mature

organizations are more fragile, and this was one of the main reasons why several countries were slow to implement universal lockdowns (Fletcher & Griffiths, 2020).

Without exception, businesses and organizations needed to mature digitally through the immediate creation and staffing of online stores and online service delivery systems. In simpler terms, they have had to modify their services through the development of digital transformation.

COVID-19 and Digital Transformation

As has already been mentioned, the pandemic has prompted the adoption of new technological equipment and techniques. The professional and global economic development due to COVID-19 seems to have a direct link with a fundamental transformation of the digital infrastructure of companies, since they are required to respond directly to the new data (George et al., 2021).

In particular, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies and cloud applications with respect to the delivery of key business activities. For example, contactless technologies, digital money, cashless payment systems and electronic contact service systems were heavily deployed.

In all sectors, digital transformation is underway at a pace never seen before. These large-scale practices would have the potential to signal fundamental changes in society's behaviors and reflect a renegotiated balance in terms of the role of technology and government in the daily lives of individuals (George et al., 2021).

Throughout the pandemic, public spaces remained closed, and services had to be provided in alternative ways without physical contact. For example, in the case of museums, managers tried to develop the promotion of their services online. As in other cases, social media is a fundamental tool for informing and maintaining communication with the public. An interesting and important change has been the creation of virtual tours and easy access from anywhere in the world (Agostino et al., 2021).

In more detail, with regard to organizations and businesses, the impact of digital transformation

is pervasive across the whole range of services. It is a fact that artificial intelligence, robotics, modern customer service systems indicate great potential in work environments and in some organizations have long since replaced manual repetitive tasks.

However, there is still the question of the human condition, which is called upon to make successful use of all these digital systems. By this is meant that there are human characteristics that cannot be replaced by machines, such as creativity, critical perception, empathy and intuition and problem-solving skills. Consequently, the question arises in what ways it is possible for human resources to utilize modern technologies in an effective way so that they perform successfully (Soto-Acosta, 2020).

For some countries, the use of digital systems and remote working predate the pandemic situation. For example, modems were first implemented in the 1950s, and in the following decades businesses and organizations have always sought easier and more direct ways of team communication in work environments.

More recently, Microsoft Teams was implemented in 2017 and the Zoom platform was created back in 2011. The differences lie in the modes and frequency used today and throughout the pandemic (Mykytyn, 2020).

As mentioned above, leaders are challenged in this current situation to discover ways to train employees according to the new tools that inevitably had to be put into use and which were not widely known to employees. Although several tools were previously available, and although some employees may have used them occasionally, working entirely with them - along with remotely - may not be easy for employees and specialized knowledge may be necessary.

The issue that arises in the midst of a pandemic is the ways in which workers were trained, since physical contact had been limited. To address this issue, companies and organizations made use of online training programs - even through the YouTube website - to educate workers on the new working conditions.

Performance seems to be affected by unskilled manpower both on the production and customer service side. In the same way, customers also have to respond to the new digital ways of communication, since it seems that especially older citizens have a preference for physical contact for any kind of service transaction (Meseguer-Martinez et al., 2020).

Although digital transformation is growing rapidly, there are still problems that workers face such as limited access, huge file sizes, protection of personal data, etc. Another major issue of digital transformation is the width of the network bandwidth, as the workers who have been made to work remotely make up the majority of the workforce.

In other words, it was necessary to configure the internet services offering access due to the number of simultaneous internet connections. In particular, it should be mentioned that the public internet is an unreliable tool for so many millions of connections with the creation of parallel problems such as slow - or inability - to connect; and low-quality networks (Mykytyn, 2020).

The most important issue arising from the above transformations is the provision of security from "hacker" attacks. Especially in situations such as pandemic where the internet is accessed in a massive way, numerous cyber-attacks occur. Digital systems are called upon to protect businesses and organizations as well as employees from such threats. Consequently, individual tools and methods have been developed to protect against the most common types of attacks.

In a more general context, the current situation is shaped in proportion to the way people perceive these changes and work as a whole. By general assumption, and particularly in the pandemic period, workers are being asked to build technical and digital skills in order to maintain productivity. Beyond the pandemic, workers either as employees or managers are committed to continuous learning and professional development in order to serve the social and economic imperatives of the modern

market and economy (Meseguer-Martinez et al., 2020).

Automation is not sufficient to replace all jobs, especially those that require human skills such as specialized knowledge and decision-making. It is important to clarify that unemployment is not inextricably linked to technological development and its adoption, but to business practices and national or international economic crises. This is why the changes made during the pandemic are likely to be sustained.

In the same context, digital development obliges the recruitment of human resources, while, on the contrary, monetary remuneration may decrease. However, technology remains the fundamental tool nowadays for increasing productivity and developing knowledge. Based on these facts and the evolution of the pandemic, jobs as a whole have become more demanding, as through digital transformation employees are required to create new experiences for customers either for attraction or simply for direct service (Soto- Acosta, 2020).

Remote Work During Pandemic

The forced transition to "work from home" created by the pandemic is perhaps one of the most important planning issues for organizations and businesses. It is important to note that while remote working was a feature of multinational corporations and open-source communities among others, the pandemic essentially forced a plethora of organizations and businesses to work in this way, resulting in an effort to adapt to remote collaboration and its subsequent technological infrastructure.

While the data to evaluate the effectiveness of this form of working has not yet been collected, it is known that several assumptions regarding what was possible in a distributed environment have already been falsified. As data accumulates regarding this dramatic regime change, research on the specific combinations of tasks, people, and infrastructure that enable organizations to work in distributed formats is bound to grow and enrich (George et al., 2021).

In this regard, the question arises as to whether working remotely requires a total redefinition of

work. The common intuition is that it does require it, as electronic interaction has low media richness. Therefore, if it is not possible to configure workflows, face-to-face (in-person) coordination becomes necessary according to this logic.

However, a separate approach based on asynchronous contact coordination may be a viable alternative. Therefore, it is expected that asynchronous coordination practices that constitute the backbone of software development, whether open (Linux) or speculative environments (e.g. GitLab), will gain wider interest (Schillebeeckx et al., 2019).

The aforementioned enable the execution of a complex interdependent task in a distributed context, with coordination based not on video calls, but rather on the mutual observability of the work being performed at any given time through code repositories and systemic procedures to ensure compatibility. Coordination of work that relies neither on reducing dependencies through repurposing nor on real-time interaction and communication may have a wider application than previously considered (George et al., 2021).

Furthermore, with remote working the importance of management and control technologies is increasing. In particular, if monitoring is costly, the organization's design principles suggest a shift from behavioral control to results-based control. The digitization of work may make the latter more feasible than ever, enabling employees to be assessed on the basis of results rather than behaviors. At the same time, digital technologies may enable intrusive supervision (Schillebeeckx et al., 2019).

As an aside, since the question arises whether COVID-19 accelerated digital transformation or simply digitization, it must be said that digitization constitutes the process of changing from analogue to digital, without any different kinds of changes in the process itself. Thus, digitization does not need changes in business processes as opposed to digital transformation. Digitization transforms the world of work and has the ability to increase process efficiency at the same time as improving data transparency.

However, it requires employees to acquire new digital skills (Bloomberg, 2018).

Although working remotely seems to be a new concept and an interesting practice for employees, it may bring about many different experiences. Those who were able to work from home still occasionally travelled to meetings and benefited from face-to-face interaction with colleagues, which could help diversify their work experience. For many, however, working from home, especially in a full-time function, was an entirely new experience.

The need for support rather than training would be more important in such cases. On the one hand, simple instructions such as how to connect to corporate systems via VPN might have been necessary. On the other hand, employees may have needed support in creating and improving their home environment to be able to meet such a type of full-time work-from-home requirement.

More specifically, employees of organizations and companies should have been informed about the conduct of these practices and the necessary technological equipment. In addition, some employees may have felt obligated to work long hours to demonstrate that they do not slack off when their management cannot see them in the office. Corporate social media platforms accelerated certain practices because the crisis and remote working encouraged staff to post and share experiences that were not directly related to work.

Policies on homeworking, where available, should have helped determine who is suitable or even able to work from home and who is not, maximizing the former in the current crisis. It should be recognized that it is not easy to transfer all office jobs to each worker's home.

Therefore, forcing them to work remotely could potentially have a negative impact on their productivity and performance, but potentially jeopardizes their wellbeing and long-term career prospects with the organization in question. This implies that the respective leadership decisions should identify their expectations as to how employees are expected to perform while

working remotely, taking into account other policies, which included IT knowledge, privacy and equipment of each employee (Papagiannidis et al., 2020).

Jobs and Workplace Transformation

Among the main consequences of digitalization, the technological substitution of human labour, the transformation of existing occupations and the emergence of new occupations have been identified. There is a large body of literature on the extent of job destruction and the occupations more or less affected by this process, which, depending on the methodology applied, varies widely in the corresponding projections. Although there are questions in this regard, the prevailing view is that - at least in the short and medium term - it is the occupations whose tasks are mainly performed with routine manual actions that are at the highest risk of substitution by digital technologies (Papagiannidis et al., 2020).

In terms of branches of activity, those that concentrate the largest number of these occupations would be the most affected. In Europe, the branches with the highest risk of substitution in the segments of high or medium productivity, also called formal sector, are - in different sequence, depending on the method applied - the agricultural sector, commerce, restaurants and hotels, and manufacturing industry.

Within these segments, it is the occupations requiring low and medium levels of formal education where the highest levels of job substitution would be registered. Consequently, there is a threat that a considerable proportion of people with lower levels of formal education who are forced to insert themselves into low productivity sectors, where informal and, in general, low-quality jobs prevail (Papagiannidis et al., 2020).

On the other hand, a large number of jobs will be transformed by the incorporation of new technologies and the development of the skills required to manage them, and over time new occupations will emerge that are difficult to

project in terms of their number and characteristics.

Job Destruction in the Pandemic

In the context of the COVID-19 containment measures, employment in commerce, restaurants and hotels and manufacturing industry is expected to be among the most affected, while work in the agricultural sector (essential for general subsistence and, generally, with the possibility of maintaining physical distance at work) is at medium-low risk of (temporary) loss (Leduc & Liu, 2020).

However, even in commerce, there are still segments that continue to operate, such as those that sell basic necessities (food, personal hygiene, medicines, etc.), which implies that in areas such as supermarkets and pharmacies, employment has been maintained. Among the different occupational categories, in the context of COVID-19 containment measures, self-employment tends to be more affected than salaried work. This is especially, but not exclusively, true for situations in which this work is carried out as an informal activity.

This is due to the fact that most of this work is carried out in public spaces, which is severely restricted due to mobility restriction measures. This situation may lead to the fact that, contrary to the usual processes in contexts of economic crisis, in the short term the proportion of informal employment in total employment will contract. However, this would be a transitory situation, given that with the gradual revocation of such measures, not only would the people who had to withdraw from their usual activity return to the informal sector, but other groups of workers would possibly enter it (Leduc & Liu, 2020).

This could be the case of formal workers who lost their jobs and young new entrants to the labor market or other household members who need to contribute to the family income. In this way, the threat of an expansion of the informal sector would be deepened. COVID-19 containment measures will affect to a greater or lesser degree, depending on their duration, the

viability of many formal micro and small enterprises.

These companies are already at a structural disadvantage due to the technological gap between companies of different sizes in the context of digitalization, which is why it has been suggested that the promotion of the use of digital technologies in companies should emphasize smaller companies (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

The closure of a considerable number of these companies would not only entail a deepening of concentration processes; it would also permanently eliminate a certain number of formal jobs accessible to people with intermediate levels of formal education, thus intensifying the trend of concentrating the employment of this segment of the workforce in low-productivity sectors and the informal sector. The trends in the restructuring of the international division of labor would also be deepened by the health crisis, both in the short and long term.

As recalled by Rodrik (2020), a key component of globalization, the creation of global value chains had already lost dynamism in recent years. In this context, it has been argued that the relocation of labor-intensive production stages to low-wage countries had already lost momentum, because a large part of these components of value chains had already been relocated, and because of other factors such as the reduction in the cost of capital due to the massification of digital technologies (Leduc & Liu, 2020).

In addition, aspects such as proximity to end markets, which reduce the risk of chain interruption, became more important for investment decisions. Political decisions based on renewed political and economic nationalism stimulated this reorientation. The pandemic has interrupted many of the value chains, as indicated by international trade. On the other hand, in a longer-term view, it has caused concern about the dependence on certain production sites, especially China, for the supply of products, specifically those required to face this crisis. This may strengthen the positions that

call for rethinking the current international distribution of labor, in a way that could reinforce the tendencies to relocate the production of certain products to developed countries (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

In this way, COVID-19 is deepening this trend (partially related to digitalization) of a weakening of globalization, both in the short term, by cutting supply chains, and in the long term, by deepening the questioning of the corresponding benefits and stimulating economic and political measures that partially reverse it. This would obviously affect employment in countries inserted in value chains based on low wages (Leduc & Liu, 2020).

The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that, in different scenarios regarding the duration and depth of the crisis, between 4.4% and 14.8% of formal jobs in the region would be lost. Finally, ECLAC projects that, on average for the year, the unemployment rate will stand at 11.5%, some 3.4 percentage points above the 2019 level, reflecting an increase of some 11.6 million in the number of unemployed people (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

Monthly data (seasonally adjusted) for European countries show a drop in the employment rate of 15.3 percentage points between February and April 2020. Finally, in Europe, between the December 2019 to February 2020 moving quarter and the February to April 2020 moving quarter, this rate fell by 17.2 percentage points. The available information on the labor market in Europe allows for a first impression of the impact on employment, differentiated by sectors, occupation categories, formality (represented by health insurance coverage) and company size (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

It can be seen that, among sectors, employment in the manufacturing industry and construction has been hit harder than in commerce and services. Among the occupational categories, self-employment has contracted the most, indicating that in this crisis, unlike in a common economic crisis, informal work is not a general alternative for generating income in the face of a

reduction in salaried employment. Another expression of the absence of the informal sector as an alternative source of income is that the number of employed persons without health insurance fell by 37.5%, while the number of employed persons with health insurance fell by 22.5%.

The second hardest hit category has been household work, reflecting the restrictions on the mobility of these individuals and, possibly, also the greater financial difficulty of many employer households. Finally, the relatively sharp contraction in unpaid work probably reflects the closure of many family microenterprises, as employment in smaller firms fell much more sharply than in larger firms.

In the longer term, uncertainty about the (re)emergence of this or other pandemics may lead to, for example, physical distancing measures being implemented in one form or another on a permanent basis. This could incentivize greater leveraging of digital technologies to replace human workforce, accelerating the corresponding processes underway (Leduc and Liu, 2020). However, the uncertainty regarding the strength of the economic dynamics, especially the recovery of demand, would represent a brake on the investment required for this acceleration of automation processes.

Furthermore, studies that evaluate the impact of working from home, Fadinger and Schymik (2020) find that working from home is very effective in reducing infection risk. The German regions whose industry structure allows for a larger fraction of work to be done from home experienced much fewer Covid-19 cases and fatalities.

Expanding Jobs in the Pandemic

Even before the health crisis, online shopping had shown a clear upward trend, which in Europe, for example, has led to a restructuring of the retail trade, with a marked decline in the presence of traditional department stores. While this has led to a fall in employment in traditional employment, employment in new occupations has increased, both in the development of

companies that organize e-commerce and in product purchasing and distribution occupations. During the health crisis, purchases through online applications are increasing, both for this type of products and for those that are not basic necessities and for which - depending on the forcefulness of the containment measures - may be the only purchase option (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

Presumably, the trend of increased online purchases will continue beyond the health crisis, possibly reinforced by the uncertainty regarding health safety in a multi-person environment that could continue for a prolonged period of time, at least in parts of the population. For example, by the end of March 2020 in Argentina, 30% of online shoppers did it for the first time, and 73% of them say they would do it again. Something similar could be expected with respect to the meal delivery services that are expanding in the context of COVID-19 containment measures, and which could even affect employment in the longer term, even in restaurants.

An estimate by the Atlanta Federal Reserve based on a survey of businesses between early March and mid-April 2020 finds that they have laid off, permanently or temporarily, 10.9% of staff, with an expected reduction of an additional 4% over the next 4 weeks, and at the same time have hired, or plan to hire, new employees or independent workers (contractors) corresponding to 4% of their payroll (Corredor, Helman, Jara & Wolak, 2020).

The authors of these studies highlight that these results coincide with news about hiring in delivery services, supermarkets, restaurant chains that work with their own delivery service, pharmacies and Amazon as the largest digital platform for product distribution. Teachers are even being hired to offer online classes. Some of these activities increasingly incorporate digital technologies and although the countries of the region do not have adequate measurement instruments, there are clear indications that many of these occupations are in a process of strong expansion.

Van Der Wielen & Barrios Cobos (2020) emphasize the intra- and inter-sectoral

relocation effect of employment that takes place in this context. They argue that this relocation is not transitory, as many changes in consumption patterns and business practices would persist. In this context, they point out that according to their estimates 42% of recent layoffs would lead to permanent job losses. In many countries, health services have probably been forced to hire more people to meet the major challenges that have arisen in the context of the pandemic.

Presumably, at least some of these new jobs will be maintained in the future, in response to a renewed social demand for better quality services. Other jobs with the prospect of expansion are related to entertainment, sports and e-learning activities, which could see a lasting increase in demand (Van Der Wielen & Barrios Cobos, 2020).

Finally, an expanding form of remote work is that performed by people working on global work platforms, i.e., performing tasks for employers anywhere in the world through sites such as freelancers or upwork. It is expected that in the future digital jobs mediated by global digital platforms will expand even more, although currently this type of work would be suffering from the general contraction of economic activity (Van Der Wielen & Barrios Cobos, 2020).

Thus, the Oxford Labour Index, which measures demand on five major digital platforms, shows a sharp increase in this demand from mid-April 2020, reaching in mid-May, in the 28-day moving average, the highest level since the beginning of its measurement. In this context, for certain countries in the region it may be an alternative to attract gig workers from other countries to settle, encouraged by a high health security, an attractive ecosystem and a quality digital infrastructure (Van Der Wielen & Barrios Cobos, 2020).

Transforming Employment: Teleworking and Telecommuting

One of the work transformations facilitated by digitalization is teleworking, which has sometimes been promoted not only for its potential role in the workplace, but also for its

potential contribution to a better work-life balance, decongestion of urban traffic and related decontamination. In Europe, in 2017/2018, 25% of the employed claim to work (partially) from home (Van Der Wielen & Barrios Cobos, 2020).

However, in many cases, these are instances where individuals take home tasks from their regular workplace to progress with them after the regular workday or over a weekend. According to ILO estimates, prior to the health crisis globally 7.9% of the employed worked at home - most of them, however, were not performing as "teleworkers" but in traditional manufacturing and craft occupations. In the context of COVID-19 telework stands out as a modality that mitigates the impact of measures to contain the spread of the virus on the functioning of enterprises and institutions (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

In the context of the health crisis, several countries have taken legal or administrative measures to promote telework. The proportion of work likely to be performed remotely varies between countries for four reasons. First, because of the characteristics of the occupations, many of which require personal presence at the workplace.

Thus, Dingel and Neiman (2020) estimated for the United States that only between 32% and 37% of jobs can be performed remotely through digital technologies. Second, the characteristics of the production structure vary from country to country. For example, countries with a large agricultural sector that requires face-to-face work tend to have a lower proportion of work that can be performed through telework.

Thus, the ILO estimates that, globally, 17% of the employed work in occupations that allow telework and live in countries that have the required infrastructure, ranging from 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa to 30% in Northern, Western and Southern Europe, with 23% in Latin America and the Caribbean (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

According to the consulting firm Telecom Advisory Service (2020), 20.6% of the employed in Europe are engaged in activities officially

considered as a priority and which will be carried out mainly with face-to-face work, while 23% can apply teleworking. Thus, more than half of the employed would be vulnerable to the risk of losing their jobs. Thirdly, the existence of a large informal sector where telework is not a real option means that in the countries concerned the proportion of activities that can be performed remotely is lower.

For example, Guntin (2020) finds for Uruguay that a higher proportion of informal workers find it difficult to perform tasks from home (87% versus 77% for private workers as a whole) and that 27% of them (versus 22% for private workers as a whole) perform jobs that require physical proximity to other people. Fourth, related to the aspects mentioned above, the possibility of teleworking depends on the level of technological infrastructure, access to it and the proportion of workers with the necessary digital skills (Guntin, 2020)

An expression of the structural obstacles to take advantage of telework opportunities, complementary to the occupational characteristics, are the gaps in access to digital technologies. Taking into account this limiting factor, Albrieu (2020) calculates for Argentina that the proportion of jobs for which the technological feasibility of teleworking would exist, estimated at 27-29%, drops to 18% if we exclude those employed who do not have the digital infrastructure required for these purposes in their homes.

Presumably, the experiences of COVID-19 encourage greater use of telework even after overcoming the direct impact of the virus on the economy and labor markets of the countries. Aspects such as maintaining a certain physical distance as a preventive measure and the use of work, family and time saving aspects could lead many companies and workers to seek new combinations of face-to-face and distance work. Indeed, surveys conducted in the USA indicate a high interest in maintaining telework in the future (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

The Threat of Growing Inequality

While the enormous productive potential of digitalization is often recognized, at the same time it raises concerns about a deepening of the great inequality that characterizes labor markets in Europe. This growing inequality would be related both to differences in access to quality digital infrastructure and to the development of the skills and competencies required for its productive use (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

Large gaps in access to digital infrastructure and skills for people of different educational levels, age groups, geographic areas and ethnicities tend to result in unequal use of the potential of new technologies and a new driver of labor market segmentation.

For example, people who work in occupations in which routine manual tasks predominate run a high risk of being replaced by new technologies, and if they do not have the digital skills to be able to relocate to an occupation with job prospects, they would be forced to accept a low-productivity, low-income job opportunity, generally informal. Regarding labor inequalities between men and women, although access to the internet, smartphones and computers does not vary much between them, the low participation of women in careers with favorable prospects, specifically STEM careers, is an expression of a new inequality in the sexual division of labor (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

The first available statistics on changes in labor markets during the months of the health crisis indicate an uneven impact on different groups of the containment measures. In the United States, between February and April 2020, seasonally adjusted the employment rate fell by 9.8 percentage points for the working-age population as a whole. However, this rate fell by 10.6 and 13.8 percentage points for the African-American and Latino populations, respectively, 11.4 points for persons without a completed high school education, and 21.9 percentage points for persons born in another country (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

The drop in the employment rate was slightly larger for women (-10.1 pp) than for men (-9.6

pp). At the same time, Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) document for the US, the UK and Germany higher risks of job loss for temporary (vs. permanent), self-employed (vs. salaried), flextime (vs. permanent) and female (vs. male) workers.

Differences in the accessibility of telework as a tool for maintaining production and employment would have contributed to this unequal impact. Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) show that the probability of job loss increases markedly with the proportion of tasks that cannot be performed through telework, while Yassenov (2020) finds for the United States that the possibility of working from home is significantly lower for low-income and low-educated workers, young people, as well as members of ethnic minorities and migrants.

Albrieu (2020) finds for Argentina that there is a very strong positive correlation between household per capita income and the possibility of taking advantage of the telework option. Consequently, the options of maintaining work and the corresponding labor income through telework are distributed very unequally, deepening the gaps previously identified regarding access to and use of digital technologies.

The same author finds for Argentina lower possibilities of teleworking also for women, compared to men. Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) show a similar result for the United States and the United Kingdom, while telework options are similar for men and women in Germany. In contrast, Yassenov (2020) finds for the United States, that telework options are better for women than for men.

While the proportion of women in sectors at high risk of being affected by COVID-19 containment measures has been estimated to be somewhat lower than that of men, estimates of the impact of the health crisis in developed countries show higher risks of job loss for women (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

Specifically, with respect to international labor migration - another trend that has marked the evolution of the international distribution of

labor - the fact that they belong to the groups of workers most affected by the health crisis could stimulate return movements, since many migrants work in informal and precarious jobs and the loss of their employment takes away the basis of their subsistence, especially if they are not covered by social support institutions.

In addition, anti-immigration policies that are increasingly applied, especially in countries with a high degree of political and economic nationalism, are likely to be reinforced. These nationalisms now incorporate into their discourse the fear of the spread of viruses from other countries, criticizing multilateralism and arguing that international migration represents a high risk to the health situation of destination countries (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

Finally, the prevailing patterns of gender division of labor at the household level tend to increase the workload of women who would have to take on additional tasks of caring for older adults (with higher risk of contagion), for minors who must accompany them in the process of distance education or for other dependents.

If teleworking remains a more widely used work modality than before the health crisis, inequalities related to digital technologies and specifically to teleworking would also tend to remain, for example, with respect to the unequal distribution of domestic work. On the other hand, Alon et al. (2020) argue with respect to gender inequality that the current crisis situation also generates longer-term opportunities, by incorporating men in a situation of "confinement" which makes them participate more than previously in care work, which could leave permanent traces in this division of labor.

The permanence of flexible work management arrangements beyond the health crisis could contribute to a reallocation of intra-family responsibilities. First, as already noted, in Europe the level of employment as a whole fell significantly. Second, men and women have been similarly affected by the containment measures. Third, the fall in the number of employed was higher in the younger age group.

And finally, among the educational groups, the most affected were the intermediate levels, while the employed with university studies and the employed with up to primary education registered somewhat smaller drops. In the first case, this is probably due, at least in part, to the better options for teleworking (Alon et al., 2020)

In the case of the group with less formal education, the cause is possibly due to the urgent need of these workers -usually belonging to vulnerable households- to obtain labour income for the subsistence of their household.

Uncertainty About the Impact on Labor Productivity

Labour productivity, both globally and in Europe, has shown a mediocre performance during the last decade. This represents one of the most important enigmas of recent economic evolution, since technological transformations undoubtedly have the potential to generate a significant increase in labour productivity (Alon et al., 2020).

There are different positions on this issue, with some analysts arguing that it is mostly a matter of measurement problems, others that the new technologies transform consumption more than production, and a third position argues that the impact of digitalization will be observed gradually, as a result of learning processes of its best productive application.

COVID-19 containment measures markedly affect both output and employment, as well as average labour productivity. The magnitude of the impact will depend, to a large extent, on the structure of the labour market. Experiences from previous crises and early data on recent developments indicate, for example, a difference between developments in the United States and certain European countries (Alon et al., 2020).

Thus, in the financial crisis of 2007-2009, the ease of dismissal in the United States meant that average labour productivity did not fall, despite a significant contraction in output, while employment protection measures in many European countries meant that the contraction in output was expressed more in a fall in average labour productivity than in employment.

In Europe, the fall in average labour productivity was even more marked, given that - in the absence of unemployment insurance in most countries and of sufficient savings to face the loss of labour income - the destruction of employment in the formal sector led, in addition to an increase in unemployment, to a marked expansion of the informal sector and thus of low-productivity jobs (Alon et al., 2020).

In the current health crisis in the United States, the experience of the aforementioned financial crisis is more than repeating itself. As of the beginning of May, almost some 30 million people out of the approximately 160 million employed people in 2019 have applied for unemployment insurance support, and an additional unknown number of people lost their jobs without access to unemployment insurance (Alon et al., 2020).

With such a sharp drop in employment and a projected fall in GDP of 3.8%, it can be assumed that average labour productivity will not fall on average for the year. In contrast, in many European countries efforts are made to maintain labour relations, for example, with the instrument of reduced working hours that is partially compensated through funds from unemployment insurance (Kurzarbeit) (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). Therefore, it is to be expected that (with a projected fall of 5.7% in Eurozone GDP) average productivity will fall again in this case, just as it did in the financial crisis of 2009.

In Europe, job destruction caused by the interruption of economic activities will have a different immediate impact on unemployment and average labour productivity than in previous crises, mainly due to two factors (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020):

- i) Some of the people who lose their jobs perceive that there are no vacancies available, so they do not look for a new job and leave the economically active population; therefore, in the statistics, they will not be considered as unemployed.
- ii) The generation of labor income in the informal sector is strongly limited by the restrictions imposed on these activities within

the framework of the COVID-19 expansion containment measures. Therefore, there would not be an expansion of the informal sector as in other situations of output contraction.

Consequently, in the short term, the employment rate would fall sharply, but at the same time the participation rate would tend to fall, which would attenuate both the increase in the unemployment rate and the fall in average labor productivity. Initial data already show this phenomenon: in the February to April 2020 moving quarter, Europe's employment rate was about 17.2 percentage points from the level of the December 2019 to February 2020 moving quarter. At the same time, the participation rate fell by 17.5 percentage points (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

Consequently, despite the dramatic drop in employment the unemployment rate rose by only about 1.9 percentage points. Such a sharp drop in employment levels would mean that, in the short term, the health crisis would not have the same impact as what was observed in previous deep economic crises. This short-term impact would influence the longer-term effects when the productive apparatus begins to reactivate.

In a recovery after a "typical" Europe economic crisis, labor productivity tends to increase gradually, as output grows again, and new jobs are created in high and medium productivity sectors. In the recovery from the current health crisis, the participation rate will tend to recover from its previous sharp decline and as mentioned above, informal activities will tend to pick up again (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

Consequently, any increase in average labour productivity would be slow. In addition, the health crisis may have another impact on labour productivity in the long run that is determined by the combination of machinery and technology and the skills and competencies of workers. Under the concept of human capital, a distinction has been made between general human capital and specific human capital. While the former is applicable in any productive context (at least in a given industry), much of the

latter is acquired in a specific job, in a particular company (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

A large part of this human capital cannot be used productively in another context or in another company. If in a deep crisis a large number of companies go bankrupt and disappear, with them also disappears the possibility of using part of the human capital of the workers, related to the jobs in these companies. Therefore, the greater the destruction of enterprises and jobs in the context of the health crisis, the greater the loss of human capital and, therefore, of potential labour productivity (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020).

One expression of this is that, even when these workers manage to subsequently reinsert themselves into the labour market, they would tend to do so with lower productivity and lower incomes. At the same time, the aforementioned inequality related to access to telework during the health crisis that allows avoiding such loss of specific human capital will have a longer-term impact, given that this loss tends to be concentrated in people of lower educational level and age, as well as members of ethnic minorities and immigrants (Yasenov, 2020).

On the other hand, the health crisis could impact an acceleration of the introduction of digital technologies and the corresponding adaptation of production processes and workers' skills. Consequently, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on labour productivity in the medium term is uncertain, since, on the one hand, it stimulates the use of new technologies that tend to accelerate the growth of labour productivity and, on the other, the destruction of human capital tends to slow it down, and it remains to be seen how intense the recovery of investment will be in a context that will be characterized by high levels of uncertainty for a prolonged period of time (Yasenov, 2020).

Methodology

Qualitative Analysis

This study is qualitative research that is following a deductive approach in order to reach the research aim and questions that were previously

set. It follows a mixed method of research via the critical evaluation of secondary findings and research results of the literature review and at the same time it employs a qualitative approach for primary research. The research tool and the sample will be presented on the next chapter.

A company case study will be carried out with interviews of the employer and 5 employees. The case study will be based on qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis is often used in research that seeks to understand human behavior, perceptions, motivations, and social contexts. This type of research is not just about "what" is happening, but also "why" and "how" it is happening.

This research was initially based on the very recent literature on the impact of the pandemic with a focus on its impact on work. Through the literature review, the approach to support across countries with emphasis on Greece was examined, the problems that arose due to the cessation of economic and productive activities and the research that has approached the issue.

Due to the recent nature of the pandemic, there is still a large gap and room for research on the effects of the pandemic on various aspects of economic life and economic and labour issues such as wage labour. The articles used in the literature review were drawn from well-known article and journal databases of major publishers such as Wiley and ScienceDirect and cover mainly the last two years as the pandemic broke out in December 2019 and there has been considerable research since then.

The study of current literature serves to provide specialized information and information around the topic under consideration and to identify gaps. Complementing the theoretical approach, a more direct approach with empirical investigation of the issue was chosen to be followed.

Then the research method used is the qualitative analysis of the interviews conducted with employees regarding the new work patterns that have emerged due to the pandemic. The qualitative analysis stands out as particularly beneficial due to its ability to capture the

complexities and nuances of this rapid transition (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2017). Unlike quantitative methodologies, qualitative analysis does not reduce human behavior and experiences to numerical representations. Instead, it focuses on understanding the contextual richness and depth of phenomena (Bryman, 2016). As the shift to remote work is not just about technology adaptation but also involves deeply rooted personal and professional transformations (Bélanger & Watson-Manheim, 2006; Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying, 2015), qualitative analysis becomes a powerful tool to comprehend these changes. Moreover, the Qualitative research is typically inductive, allowing for the discovery of new concepts and hyporesearch (Maxwell, 2012). With the COVID-19 pandemic being an unprecedented event, this capability is essential. The change to remote work has brought unexpected challenges and opportunities that we might not be able to identify using pre-determined variables in a quantitative study (Kniffin et al., 2021). Furthermore, the pandemic's impact has not been uniform across different socio-economic and demographic groups (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). Therefore, it's crucial to capture the intersectionality of these changes through qualitative analysis, which provides nuanced insights into diverse experiences, enabling more inclusive policy formulation (Crenshaw, 1989). Lastly, the remote work changes are not static; they involve a process of continuous adaptation and learning. Qualitative research is especially good at tracing these dynamic processes over time (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014), capturing the evolution of remote work experiences during the ongoing pandemic. The proposed research focuses on the perceptions and attitudes of individuals towards work after the outbreak of the pandemic and after states have taken measures to support the economy and workers.

Primary Research

Thematic Analysis is a data analysis technique in qualitative research, based on either the deductive method or the inductive method.

The main purpose of thematic analysis is to create an analytical and systematic record of the coding and themes that emerge from interviews or participant observations.

The Interview is one of the most basic tools of Field research and, at the same time, of the Qualitative Research Method. It involves interaction and communication between persons, guided by the researcher with the aim of eliciting information relevant to the subject of the research. In other words, it aims to form a 'mental content', to reveal aspects of personality and to identify behaviors of individuals (Delitheou & Maraki, 2010).

The information collected represents the views and "beliefs" of the respondents and helps to find answers to the questions posed by the researcher. The types of interviews are divided in terms of structure, immediacy, repetition, depth and clinical application.

In any case, the interview is the main tool for implementing qualitative research and enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of people's attitudes and opinions on a particular issue. At the same time, it cannot be overemphasized that the interview promotes dialogue and through this it better approximates reality (Delitheou & Maraki, 2010).

Instrumentation

The questionnaire that has been developed, is having eight questions for the sample. These questions are open – type in order the sample freely state its reply with no constraints. The questions are focused on the changes in workplace. The sample is asked about the changes the pandemic brought in workplace, the future of work, the employee's adaptation, their judgment about them, their company adaptation, the new conditions description, the problems that may be created by the new conditions and the impact on labor market. As the questionnaire has been formed, an interview has been accomplished by each member of the sample.

Sample

The qualitative research is focused on employees of the Municipality of Ioannina. The sample is

accessed at the times of working from distance and an interview has been arranged. The population of the research was every employee of the Municipality of Ioannina. The sample has been formulated by those who responded more immediately in order to accomplish the research in the scheduled time frame. The final sample is consisted by six respondents (five employees and one manager) of the Municipality of Ioannina.

Results

The First Question was About the Changes Brought About by the Pandemic in the Workplace will Remain After the Pandemic.

The majority of the employees stated their will to return to the previous situation after the pandemic. The majority of them feel more familiar to the workplace than working from home. One out of five employees stated that she preferred home than her office in order to respond to the household needs more accurately, doing things at the same time. Despite their will, all of them expressed their evaluation that these changes will not remain after the pandemic for the case of the Municipality of Ioannina because the system in their case is not ready for that change. Additionally, they responded that their job needs physical contact with the people who come to their office for a number of cases and cannot serve them through internet and distance working.

What do you Think will be the Future of Work?

This question is concerning the future of work in General, not the case of Municipality of Ioannina. The majority of the respondents (4/5) stated that the changes will remain in some cases for the private sector employees but not for employees in state. One characteristic reply was that:

"is pandemic may be the chance to enforce greater changes in the workplace that are beneficial for the businesses but not for the employees. It is a test period now; we will see..."

One of the respondent forecasted that these changes will not last after the pandemic in the long-term as it is not beneficial for the businesses. Some of the respondents (2) expressed their fear about this perspective that may cause problems to the employees and organizations in general.

What should Workers, Companies and Countries Do to Adapt to Future Working Conditions?

The sample replied that the state must ensure that skills are developed but also that citizens are retrained and that the needs of those without digital skills are met. However, technology is not an end in itself. It is the means, and a means that mitigates inequalities. In itself, technology is neutral, but the way we use it is deeply political. Technology must be used as a tool to empower citizens, workers, businesses. This is how we can live, work and create in a safe and friendly country that is pioneering and changing. At the same time, they stated that the businesses must create an institutional framework around the issue of teleworking for the proper functioning and protection of workers and businesses/entities in the private and public sectors. Businesses should look very carefully at the structures of the new operating model. They conclude that a number of employees will work remotely and - in general - more frequent changes, the priority of having employees assimilate the values of the organization and also interact to consider employees' beliefs is reinforced. Full use must be made of the modern methods provided by information technology and information technology. The use of the potential modern tools will simplify the processes. They should be used to reduce travel, in order to protect the environment, reduce pollutants and reduce printing. Reduce physical presence in workplaces for health reasons - avoid overcrowding.

How do you Judge the New Models of Work that have Emerged?

The sample has replied that the pandemic brought many changes at all levels of the everyday life, including work. The sample has been evaluated positive and negative points on

this process. Most of them replied that the new models are more time-saving and flexible for their lives and their schedule with family members. One replied that:

“I will mention that the flexibility offered by this way of working provides efficiency, speed, reduces costs and gives access to the labour market to people who did not have it before”.

While others appointed the negative aspects of these changes, which have to do with the difficulty in managing at a distance, the feeling of isolation, the barriers to communication and the reduced sense of belonging to a team. The future of work will be based on technology and new forms of work are here to stay. We will certainly need to consider the ways in which we manage the future to capitalize on the advantages and address the barriers.

How have You in Your Company Dealt with the New Situation that has Emerged?

The sample replied that its company closed for a specific period of time, during lockdowns. During that period of time, only a little amount workload could be done, as the services were closed. Some employees and managers have a little amount of work to do while others were not working at all. After the lockdown period, the employees worked a short period of time from their home but still, they have a very low workload compared to the needs of the organization. They had to handle some electronic applications of the citizens of Ioannina, but this was not a great work to do. After that time, they all returned to their offices, at the previous work models.

Can you Describe the New Working Conditions?

The sample replied to this question, not only for their case but generally for the working conditions within pandemic. The majority mentioned that new labor reality has led workers, companies, and entire countries to rethink practices, policies, procedures and even the very concepts of "work" and "career". One employee specifically said that:

“Employees need to recognize flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to manage change as

necessary skills to successfully navigate the new, volatile, work environment.”

The sample concluded that they must constantly strive to strengthen their skills (digital, technological, personal, etc.) as a key prerequisite for aligning themselves with new requirements, roles, tools and work platforms.

As for the companies, the sample replied that they must constantly keep up to date with new market developments and the new needs of candidates and employees in this new globalised environment, where remote working is a requirement and employer branding a prerequisite for attracting talent.

Do you Think that the New Working Models will Help or Hurt the Labour Market?

The majority of the sample expressed that in future, will arise health, environmental and other crises, additionally to technological development, which will also affect the labor market. It is no coincidence that, on the basis of guidelines from the European Commission, a Strategic Forecasting Group has recently been set up in our country, under the Prime Minister, precisely so that they can see what is coming in good time and produce proposals and alternative scenarios. To reduce the chances of being unprepared for the next major upheaval.

Some of them expressed that countries seem to be preparing for the new reality. Similarly, to respond to future working conditions, businesses will need to accelerate digital transformation by investing in training their workforce in digital skills. They also appointed that the access to digital technologies is a key factor in increasing the demand for digital skills even in middle and low-skilled occupations. However, many enterprises, especially micro and/or small ones, cannot afford to invest in digital technologies and in many cases are not fully aware of the importance of such investments in order to prioritize them.

All of them stated that the governments should develop mechanisms to promote and support access to digital technologies, such as subsidies, tax breaks, etc. are needed. Workers should also look to digital skills, with the main aim of

training them. It seems to be a one-way street if they are to be able to respond to the new conditions that will emerge in the workplace in the coming day.

Changes in labor map, employee opportunities in different sectors, non-fixed jobs, highly or low skilled jobs (depending on the sector) and other changes are also mentioned as new situation in the labor market. This shift of the workforce to fields that are more specialized, more digital, and more volatile requires vigilance and proper preparation on the part of both companies and societies. Skilling, reskilling and upskilling must be part of the culture and priorities of companies.

Do You Identify Any Problems in the New Working Models?

Some of the respondents (2) told that we are still in a transitional period even though it has been almost 2 years since we as a society and market realized that we have to change our habits, we don't know what the final situation will be.

It is true that for the service workers the biggest change has definitely been the transition to the era of working from home.

One employee stated that:

“In different markets and countries teleworking was implemented to a certain extent but there was always a stigma. With the pandemic that stigma went away, companies realized that many locations can be based at the employee's home rather than an office. The way of management changed, it's different techniques and tactics to organize groups of people scattered across a city or country.”

As the sample responded, pandemic brought radical changes in the world of work. These are the new work models, ways and tools of communication and collaboration, new roles and required skills, new standards of work environment and culture, come to define today and the next day of the market for employers, employees, and candidates. The most important changes that constitute the new norm in terms of work, defining its future are:

- Hybrid work models, mentioned by 4 respondents: Remote working seems to be universally accepted by employers and employees alike, with some including it to a greater or lesser extent in the widely offered post-pandemic work model, and others even considering it a prerequisite for staying with an employer and a criterion for selecting a new one.
- Emphasis on protecting the health and safety of employees, mentioned by 2 respondents: It goes without saying that employers should ensure that strict health and safety protocols are in place in workplaces, meetings, and company events, and that they should offer support programmes to their employees, helping them to cope with the negative effects of the social withdrawal and distancing brought about by the pandemic.
- The digital transformation of businesses, mentioned by all respondents, which has proven to be a one-way street for their survival in the midst of a pandemic, is also the one that will be a key requirement for their growth after the coronavirus crisis. The digital skills needed to navigate candidates and employees in the new work environment will also be their ticket to new roles that are emerging as a result of the shift of businesses and individuals to the internet to conduct commercial and other transactions.

Findings

Before lockdown Harari (2020) stated that after the end of pandemic, some changes and the policies adopted will remain. One of these changes is teleworking, as we see. Furthermore, the digital transformation of the country that took place within the period of pandemic has been seen that was a necessity. The state centralized its first 501 digital services on gov.gr, added the "popular" authorization signature and affidavit services, and designed and implemented new services with a citizen-centric approach. The pandemic brought changes in all aspects of our lives, including professional. Teleworking and teleconferencing are among those having a high probability of remaining. Obviously, their degree of 'prevalence' depends

on the industry in which the company operates and the employee's job. Among the elements that will stay is the need to manage change that occurs at a faster pace.

One of the issues that emerged during the pandemic is the desire/aspiration of workers to have better working conditions, hence the international phenomenon of the Great Resignation. Organizations and businesses are looking for processes and a new operating model to respond. Some sectors (e.g. Banks) find it not easy to adopt except to a small extent, while in other sectors (e.g. digital services) it is easier to operate, at least in some parts of the business. Pandemic brought huge changes to workplace and has resulted in a rapid adaptation of employers and employees. Three key changes are expected to accompany us in the post-pandemic era. All three relate to trends that were pre-existing and accelerated significantly during the health crisis. The first concerns hybrid work. Teleworking provided an immediate solution to the problem of business productivity and contributed to the viability of businesses, while helping to protect workers. In the next few years, we will see more and more organizations adopting a hybrid work model, offering more flexibility to their employees, who now have different criteria for assessing the quality of their working environment. The second change relates to automation and the wider application of technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics. Businesses that had invested in the digitisation of their processes have withstood the constant changes and interruptions in economic activity during the crisis period.

The pandemic crisis caused major shifts in the way and place of work. As a result, teleworking was adopted on a large scale for those workers who could perform their tasks remotely. There is an opportunity for Greece to attract the 'international executive nomads' as permanent residents due to its excellent climate, residential infrastructure in beautiful locations, and excellent air connectivity with dozens of active airports throughout the country. What is needed are some simple attraction incentives, a flexible institutional framework for remote working especially for overseas based organizations,

comprehensive relocation services and smart branding of the country.

In a teleworking regime there is no possibility to supervise in person the proper performance of workers' tasks. Thus, essential issues of remote management, such as how management effectively supervises employees, evaluates their performance at work based on results rather than presence at the workplace, and fairly remunerates the work provided by them, will have to be addressed. Due to the inability to directly interface between employees, supervisors and partners in organizations, issues related to productivity such as how to perform employees' tasks properly and efficiently, and how to create and transfer the organizational culture of each company especially for new entrants should be addressed.

In order to make the use of the many digital tools for remote working feasible and efficient, technological issues relating to digital access for employees must be addressed. These relate to access to the infrastructure at sufficient speeds, the security of communications via teleworking tools, but also to addressing the lack of digital knowledge of employees and the non-existent procedures for using corporate teleworking infrastructures.

In addition, the risk of disruption to the work-life balance should be addressed, including issues such as respect for employees' employment rights, in particular their working hours, the security of personal data and privacy of communications, isolation from colleagues and lack of opportunities for development and promotion due to physical absence.

In the last two years and on a global scale, companies in all industries have faced enormous challenges in terms of survival, transformation and growth. The pandemic acted as an accelerator; we all quickly learned to work in a completely different way, rethinking past practices. We collaborated, innovated, learned to be flexible and adaptive to ever-changing situations, without the physical contact of our employees, developing a multitude of new applications and leveraging the potential of technology. Hybrid working models are here to

stay, which now requires organizations to be flexible in where and how we work.

Hybrid working models, are bringing about major changes in mindset and in the way organizations approach managing and organizing their teams. The biggest change relates to the need to adapt and get comfortable with the reduction of control in scheduling, and in the way work is performed by team members. In the new reality that work can be performed from anywhere and at any time, leaders and organizations will need to place more emphasis on the outcome of the work, rather than the way it is done. Thus, developing trusting relationships within teams, as well as continually training employees to enable them to perform with greater autonomy, emerges as a key factor for success.

At the same time, there is more than ever a need for systematic and targeted communication within teams to keep them connected. At Kotsovolos, systematic 1:1 manager-employee meetings, team weekly check-ins and daily e-stand ups with the whole team are carried out. In all these meetings there is a specific framework and structure that enhances the effectiveness of the teams, the diffusion of knowledge, the cultivation of trusting relationships and the strengthening of engagement, in a now hybrid environment.

Finally, technologies such as mix reality and metaverse, as well as all the digital tools and platforms for collaboration and communication that have recently entered our lives, have facilitated and changed the way we collaborate and interact in a hybrid environment, enabling us to feel that we are next to each other even if we are miles apart. In a short space of time, and without necessarily realizing it, we have all integrated technology into our lives. The development of digital skills is now emerging as a key factor in the workplace, and beyond.

New forms of work call for renewal and improvement of all skills, especially digital skills. New generations have these skills and more mature workers need to improve them through training and development. Organizations over time need to invest in human resources by

developing both digital and management skills in the context of new forms of work.

The role of country policies becomes particularly critical as, for example, investing in networks and offering them to employees, as well as funding skills development programs, is a necessary condition. While all of the above are opportunities, they also pose challenges: working in social isolation can create significant socialization problems and may also lead to a reduction in productivity to the extent that workers feel disconnected from the social group of the organization to which they belong.

The dramatic development of technological infrastructures is changing the way and in some cases the content of work, both in the private and public sector.

Advances in areas such as artificial intelligence and robotics are huge compared to the past, with significant implications for work and jobs. AI and data analytics are accelerating strategic decision making, while robotic RPA systems are automating routine tasks. Also chatbots through AI and machine learning are now able to provide personalized support and solutions to employees and customers. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), by 2025 the new division of labour between humans, machines and algorithms will result in the transformation of 85 million jobs and the creation of 97 million new jobs with new features. Also 85% of the jobs of 2030 have not yet been created. Thus, a very important issue is the skills gap that exists in the labour market. While on the one hand new jobs will be created, on the other hand some other jobs may be replaced

The main concern is therefore to develop structured ways of developing new skills within organizations (academies), and to motivate our people to upgrade their skills and knowledge continuously and continuously through upskilling & reskilling. At the same time, the country's education system should quickly change, including courses and cultivating skills for today's and tomorrow's society. At the same time, we all need to develop our resilience and flexibility to constantly learn and develop new skills, to adapt to changing ways and models of

working, as well as to new technology and digital realities.

The pandemic has largely acted as an accelerator of developments not only at the level of organizations but also at the level of nations and states. In Greece, a typical example is the acceleration of the digital transformation of parts of the public sector, such as the gov.gr services or the introduction of teleworking in many public services. Similar efforts had been made in the past, but the pandemic rapidly accelerated these changes. Similarly, in the workplace, the rapid adoption of teleworking or a flexible or even hybrid working model by a large number of organizations and for many jobs is a typical example, as other commentators will probably mention.

Now even more so than in the past, flexibility of working space/time, the ability to work remotely or with a hybrid model, increased autonomy and also the search for jobs and organizations that show a genuine concern for employees, the environment and society in general, will be valued not just as desirable but as essential for new candidates/graduates. Nuggets of these choices can already be seen in the phenomenon of the "great resignation" and the increased mobility of executives not only abroad but also in Greece and in the great difficulties faced by talent acquisition professionals in finding suitable staff for a large number of jobs.

The pandemic has had a decisive impact on the economy and society, creating new conditions for work. Technological developments have accelerated, changing the way of working for all workers. One of the key changes brought about by the pandemic is flexibility in the way people work at the place/place/place of work (work from anywhere). We are now moving towards a "hybrid" model of work where certain categories of workers - "knowledge workers" / those with computer-based work - are given the opportunity to work both from the office and from wherever they can (hybrid workplace), now having at their disposal more digital tools that allow them to work without necessarily coexisting in the physical space with their colleagues/team. One manifestation of this

phenomenon is the 'digital nomads', i.e. employees who decide to move to a different country, without this affecting their work.

This flexibility can lead to greater productivity and also enables employees to achieve a better work-life balance, which is one of the key issues highlighted in the pandemic, especially for the younger generations (millennials, gen Z, etc.). At the same time, the digitalisation/digitization of our lives (e.g., online ordering, online services) and work has accelerated, which is expected to intensify in the coming years, resulting in a large number of jobs & job sectors being affected (front line workers - e.g. retail).

Workers are required to develop digital skills, while companies will radically overhaul work processes by automating low value-added tasks. This will reduce operational costs for companies while enabling employees to focus on areas that require increased E.Q and skills such as creativity, problem solving etc.

Many companies have utilized such executives and it is an opportunity for countries like Greece to attract competitive human resources from abroad. It is critical to these people and companies not only to give them significant incentives to return (e.g., lower taxes) but also opportunities to utilize their talents in the workplace. Finally, workers will need to develop a range of new skills that are now essential in the day after the pandemic, such as the critical role of soft skills. Employees will also need to cultivate time management and effective remote working skills, with the support and appropriate guidance (and trust) from companies. The new working context of the next day will be very different. We will all need to prepare ourselves but also adapt appropriately to face the new reality.

The sample replies appointed that this global change represents a unique opportunity for countries to claim their own modernization and growth, which will be achieved through: a) the digital transformation of government and business; b) upgrading the skills of the overall population; and c) creating the conditions for attracting investment (and talent) in sectors that promise to rapidly recover their economies.

Moreover, the widespread use of machines in production, the introduction of robotics and the use of artificial intelligence must include not only purely technological skills but also so-called soft skills. Skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, data analysis and decision-making are, according to the World Economic Forum, absolutely essential for today's workers, who will be called upon to manage multiple changes during their working lives.

Governments and businesses must focus on preparing and implementing training and skills acquisition programs so that no worker is left behind in this global revolution. And workers must acquire a culture of ambition, become more flexible and manage stress and difficulties more effectively. According to the World Economic Forum, ambition, resilience to pressure and constant change, and flexibility are essential skills for prosperity and success in a rapidly changing world.

Global trends show that a return to the status quo ante is no longer achievable and adapting to the new situation leaves no room for negotiation for either side. This is how the future of work looks like, in a more flexible form for all.

We are at a turning point as we are called upon to review the status quo and lay the foundations to create a workforce that is resilient to future working conditions and has a flexible way of thinking and a willingness to learn. At the same time, the aim should be to create the conditions for an inclusive future with equal opportunities for all.

The development of technology shows us that a significant number of jobs will either not exist in the future or the way in which they are carried out will change significantly. Companies will be looking for employees who demonstrate flexibility, both in the way they work and in the development of their skills, through the adoption of an 'unlearn-learn-relearn' mindset which will allow them to break free from past practices and expand their 'arsenal' with new skills. Skills such as critical thinking, ease of collaboration, ease of learning, digital literacy and an understanding of data analytics will now be essential.

These skills stem from digitalisation/digitalization, automation of tasks and the broadening of the skills required for each job. In an ever-changing and increasingly competitive environment, businesses face many parallel challenges: keeping up with developments, successfully responding to consumer needs, attracting, and retaining the most competent workforce.

They are therefore called upon to radically rethink their organization, their business model and their leadership model through specific policies and action programs that they adopt, as the L'Oreal Group has done with its L'Oreal For the Future sustainable development program, for example. Countries are called upon to ensure that changes in work do not reinforce economic and social inequalities.

They are called upon to review the education system at all levels of education to ensure that the skills acquired by pupils/students keep pace with the emerging needs of the economy and society. At the same time, support the workforce to enter or re-enter the labour market with the necessary new skills (digital/sustainability green), with special provision for vulnerable groups (women, young people, unskilled staff) and to ensure equal opportunities for employment. Define a legislative framework that takes account of digitalization, ensuring that it protects companies and workers at the same time.

As the sample evaluated, the most important change that has emerged from the pandemic is the various models of remote working that have been adopted and are now taken for granted. The market seems unlikely to return to the previous status quo. Already in many European countries the 'home office' is the norm. These changes are both at the operational and skills level. But it will take some time for the system to equilibrate. In the first phase at least, a hybrid model will prevail, with some days working remotely and some days working physically. This is also important until the new balance is found. Remote working does not mean 'transferring the way of working at home'. We are talking about a new model, so we need workers with an

increased degree of individual responsibility, with self-motivation. With the ability to organize and plan personally. The ability to communicate digitally. A culture of focus on both results and measurement. However, the new working model is also bringing about changes in the way companies operate and in their economic model. The environmental footprint appears to be positive, by reducing travel and unnecessary business travel. Workers in this context will have better control over their personal time - and here it is important to define both in legislation and at the level of each company the framework for remote working.

Discussion

It is now well known that, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking has been established as a key form of work for millions of workers in the EU and worldwide. Already at the beginning of the pandemic, a number of initial estimates such as that of Eurofound, according to which almost 40% of EU workers started working full-time in this form of work, were published (George, Merrill & Schillebeeckx, 2021).

A more recent study by the European Commission's Joint Research Center (JRC) estimates that around 25% of workers in sectors and occupations where teleworking is possible (teleworkable sectors) are already working full-time in this form of employment. If, on the other hand, account is taken of the fact that before the outbreak of the pandemic crisis, the proportion of workers employed by teleworking (not on a permanent but on a periodic basis) did not exceed 15 % of the total number of employees on average at EU level. and with wide variations between Member States, it is understandable that an extremely large number of workers were suddenly and abruptly required by the pandemic to change their way of working (especially those with no previous experience of teleworking), facing a number of problems and difficulties (George, Merrill & Schillebeeckx, 2021).

Against this background, this thematic information bulletin of the HESR attempts to

record and analyze the developments concerning the introduction of teleworking as a form of work which, although it existed before, seems to be evolving (and transforming itself) in the context of the pandemic crisis and, above all, is becoming established in a more generalized and/or still dominant way in the field of industrial relations (Meseguer-Martinez, Popa & Soto-Acosta, 2020).

It also attempts, on the basis of existing trends in the EU and the Member States, to formulate the problems and new challenges that this development poses for national governments, workers and employers alike. Clearly, everyone is called upon to adapt the functioning of the economy and work in new extraordinary circumstances and to transform the way work is delivered: from the workplace to the home.

As noted above, the introduction of teleworking does not concern the whole economy: it concerns sectors and professions in which its generalized introduction is possible. However, as the tertiary sector of the economy and the service sectors in general now account for a large, if not the largest, share of GDP and employment in the EU countries, the importance and role of teleworking, its impact and prospects, particularly in a changing globalized economy, where the digital revolution is (among other things) transforming the very nature of work, as it is a transformation that has wider social, economic and cultural implications (Meseguer-Martinez, Popa & Soto-Acosta, 2020).

Flexible forms of work are widely used in the work environment. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed the work normality and workers had to adapt as quickly as possible to working from home where it was analyzed in more detail as businesses had to remain closed. In this new reality, the workforce had to remain productive and cope with the work demands.

For a large proportion of workers, implementing some form of flexible working is desirable as it offers a better work-life balance. Teleworking was one of the forms where it was particularly prominent during this period, and it appeared

that despite the difficulties faced by businesses and workers it nevertheless had positive results. In particular, the model where employees prefer to keep up is the hybrid model. That is, the combination of face-to-face work and remote working. Also, it is considered very important for telework to be implemented that there are consolidated procedures, policies and approaches as well as with more frequent updates and communication (Meseguer-Martinez, Popa & Soto-Acosta, 2020).

Another model, which is not very widespread as it has been implemented by a few companies, but which causes very positive results, particularly in terms of productivity, is the four-day working week. This model of flexible employment helps particularly in terms of job performance as well as job satisfaction of employees. The main advantage is that employees manage their time more effectively (Mykytyn, 2020).

Remote working as well as hybrid working models in the midst of the pandemic have overcome the technological barriers that existed in the past and were a barrier to the implementation of remote models. Technology has given rise to a new era in work where both artisan intelligence and the automation offered by technology makes this intersectional change possible.

This change in terms of workers more than 20% of workers prefer three to five times to work remotely without changing anything in the efficiency of the workforce. However, despite the advantages where flexible forms of work as mentioned if not implemented under proper conditions can cause reverse effects such as stress, exhaustion (Mykytyn, 2020).

Teleworking overall, both on an occasional basis ("sometimes") and on a more regular basis ("usually") seems to be growing steadily (although not dramatically) over the last decade in the EU as the following Graph shows: from 12.4% in 2009 to 16.1% in 2019. In particular, occasional teleworking is increasing from 7.8% in 2009 to 10.8%, and fixed teleworking is increasing over the same period from 4.6% to 5.3%.

Greece has one of the lowest rates of teleworking in the EU. In particular, in our country, teleworking overall was estimated at 4.3% in 2009 and 5.3% in 2019. Teleworking on an occasional basis was 2.4% in 2009, only to increase by one percentage point in 2019 to 3.4%. And fixed teleworking in both 2009 and 2019 does not exceed 2% of total employment (1.9% to be precise) (Lamprinou, Tasoulis & Kravariti, 2021).

However, the application of telework is directly related to sectors and occupations in which it can be practically applied. It goes without saying that teleworking is very difficult or impossible to implement in the predominantly productive sectors of the primary and secondary production sector, as well as in primary or secondary occupations or specializations related to the production line. It goes without saying that office occupations in general are those which can be carried out by teleworking, regardless of the sector.

Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home was commonplace for a large category of self-employed people. Working from home is not exactly the same as teleworking and the use of technology, as some professions do not require the use of technology (e.g., handicraft manufacturing), while others are fully identified with it (e.g., designers, engineers, architects, programmers, etc.) (Lamprinou, Tasoulis & Kravariti, 2021).

Nevertheless, given the growth and proliferation of ICT-using professions, it is to be expected that self-employed and freelance workers will be largely teleworkers, although there are significant differences from country to country. The question that arises, is whether, after the pandemic, businesses will 'hire' teleworking freelancers, i.e., contract out work rather than employing employees on a salaried basis.

It goes without saying that workers with existing high digital skills are in a better position to secure their employment after the pandemic outbreak and the increased need for teleworking. The issue of digital skills for workers (and citizens in general) is one of the most important issues

currently being discussed at European and national level, is at the heart of current European policies and is the subject of many programs implemented with Community funds (Lamprinou, Tasoulis & Kravariti, 2021).

An important component of the problem is the large differences between the individual EU countries in terms of the level of digital skills, as these are extremely critical at economic, social, and cultural level, hence the need for the EU's 'digital convergence'. The issue of digital skills has taken on a new importance and criticality since the pandemic broke out, as the economy and work in all EU countries are forced to introduce and generalize teleworking forms of employment more rapidly.

The so-called 'digital divide' varies from one EU country to another, but an important component highlighted by EU statistics is the high proportion of workers in non-manual occupations. That is, in clerical occupations, who either have no or very low digital skills and for whom no vocational training is offered, as for example in Bulgaria and Romania (almost 40%) compared to around 20% of the EU average

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a near-universal (except for vital services) lockdown of economic activity and then a series of restrictive measures, was a turning point for teleworking. This is because businesses, in a now generalized way and within a short period of time, were forced and tried to introduce/introduce teleworking as a response to their efforts to operate as smoothly as possible while safeguarding the health and safety of their employees (Vasic, 2020).

The first record during the initial wave of the pandemic was made in a pan-European survey conducted by Eurofound (2020), the main finding of which is that more than 1/3 (37%) of EU-27 workers, previously employed face-to-face at their workplace, went into teleworking due to the COVID19 crisis. The highest percentages were recorded in the Nordic and Benelux countries, while lower percentages were recorded in Romania, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria. However, the comparison with the pre-

COVID era is striking in terms of the significant increase in distance work (Bedford, Enria, Giesecke, Heymann, Ihekweazu, Kobinger & Wieler, 2020).

In this context and in order to assess the dynamics of teleworking as a result of the pandemic a number of scientific assessments and scenarios are beginning to see the light of day, which (as mentioned above), distinguishing sectors and occupations, find that a more generalized use of teleworking where it is operationally, technically and economically feasible, is already underway and is expected to show significant growth in the near future. The focus of the research is mainly on the so-called "teleworkable sectors" (i.e., sectors and occupations where teleworking is feasible on a more generalized basis). In a more recent study, the Joint Research Center (JRC) of the EU estimates that around 25% of employees in the so-called "teleworkable" sectors are already working remotely on a relatively stable basis (compared to around 15% before the pandemic).

In exactly the same context, in a second, also very recent study by the JRC of the EU, a distinction is made first of all between occupations which require for the most part the physical presence of the employee during the performance of his/her duties and are considered to be non-teleworkable jobs, occupations which can be partially teleworked (partly teleworkable) and occupations which are considered to be technically 100% teleworkable (teleworkable jobs) (Bedford, Enria, Giesecke, Heymann, Ihekweazu, Kobinger, ... & Wieler, 2020).

Based on the above classification, it is estimated that 37% of paid dependent work in the EU can technically be performed remotely, an estimate which is close to the Eurofound pan-European questionnaire survey (see above). As the graph below shows, the percentage of workers who can be teleworked ranges between 35% - 41% in 2/3 of the EU Member States.

The highest rates of potential teleworking are recorded in the Benelux and Nordic countries, which are expectedly related to the already high rates of applied teleworking before the pandemic

in the same countries. The lowest rates are recorded in Eastern European countries and in large Southern European countries (Italy, Spain).

Greece (and perhaps not unexpectedly) ranks quite high in countries where potential teleworking approaches 40% of all employed workers. These figures, and as far as our country is concerned, are also confirmed by a very recent study by the Institute of Labour Economics (IZA) according to which in total employment (employees and self-employed), it shows that up to 25% of the employed (around 500,000 people) could be fully teleworked (fully teleworkable) with an additional 12% (+ 250,000- 300,000 people) working in jobs with high teleworking potential (Bedford, Enria, Giesecke, Heymann, Ihekweazu, Kobinger, ... & Wieler, 2020).

Conclusions

From the description and analysis of the preceding data it is relatively clear that teleworking can potentially be implemented as a relatively stable/regular form of work and in a rotating way, in 35%-40% of the workforce in EU countries depending on the structure of the economy of each country, in specific sectors and occupations considered as "teleworkable" and in combination with a number of factors noted below. In the coming period there will be a significant increase and introduction of teleworking due to the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the already existing relatively low rates of teleworking in the EU - which vary from country to country (Eurofound, 2020). This is first of all to be found in sectors and professions where it was already technically feasible and already used with a certain degree of stability and regularity.

The expansion of teleworking will be further noted in office and administrative occupations where the use of computers is the main working tool, in the sense that teleworking is expected to involve a larger number of low or medium paid categories of workers, compared to the pre-pandemic situation, where teleworking was more relevant for managers and senior administrative,

financial or technical staff of companies with a high degree of autonomy in terms of organization and working time. The introduction of teleworking raises important issues of inequalities (wage, educational, gender, etc.), which should be addressed institutionally (Eurofound, 2020).

The more widespread use of teleworking will require companies to invest in technological infrastructure, to make extensive changes to the organization of work within their own organization, and all of this will need to be combined with a more general regulatory-institutional framework at European and national level. The costs of introducing and establishing teleworking will require careful study, as the initial investment in purchasing, installing equipment and starting up teleworking appears to be considerable, and the return on such an investment should be calculated over the medium term according to Bailey and Kurland (2002). For this reason, companies should develop a coherent strategy for developing technologies and IT and provide the necessary infrastructure for teleworking.

Before employing teleworkers, the undertaking should provide multi-faceted and multi-dimensional training to prospective teleworkers. The training should include innovative modules in addition to the job-related training, such as techniques for managing working time at home, stress management techniques, techniques for avoiding work-life confusion, etc. In order to introduce and establish teleworking, it is essential to inform staff about its benefits and its negative aspects, while ensuring that employees' labour, social security and social rights in general are safeguarded and that teleworking does not constitute a 'vehicle' leading to wage or other discrimination (e.g., career development opportunities, participation in vocational training programs, etc.). Workers' participation in teleworking should be free and voluntary, based on proper information and information and chosen on the basis of the personal, family or other needs (e.g., health) of the worker. The selection of teleworkers should be made in a transparent manner and based on the requirements of the specific position and the

ability to perform the work effectively at a distance.

Limitations

In this section of the research, we propose specific limitations that the current research has. A common criticism of qualitative research is its subjectivity. The interpretation of the data is heavily influenced by the researcher's own bias, perceptions, and experiences. This may impact the study's validity, particularly when exploring a multifaceted phenomenon like the shift to remote work during a global crisis. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies typically employ smaller, non-random samples. While this allows for a detailed exploration of individual experiences, it also limits the study's generalizability. Findings from one context or group may not apply to other contexts or groups, limiting the ability to make broad claims about remote work patterns during the pandemic. Moreover, the time of the research is crucial to the results. We conduct this research right after the pandemic, where most of the businesses may be still influenced by the work models that they followed within the pandemic. Lastly, qualitative research excels at exploring perceptions, experiences, and meanings, but it often struggles to establish causality. Identifying direct cause-and-effect relationships in the shift to remote work during the pandemic might be more challenging within the frame of qualitative research.

Recommendations

In the current section we provide recommendations for practitioners and researchers. In light of the changes in work models towards remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following recommendations can be provided to practitioners. Leveraging digital tools and technology for effective remote work is crucial. Practitioners need to adapt to tools for project management, virtual meetings, and collaborative work. Training and technical support should be provided to facilitate the digital transition. Also,

effective and clear communication is critical in a remote setting. Regular check-ins, updates, and feedback sessions should be encouraged to maintain a cohesive work environment and ensure everyone is on the same page. In addition, it is crucial to have a work – life balance. Several research has shown that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is more challenging in a remote work setting. Practitioners should promote flexible working hours, encourage breaks, and respect personal time to prevent burnout. Moreover, the transition to remote work, coupled with the stress of the pandemic, can have a significant impact on mental health. Employers should provide support services, such as counseling and stress management resources, and foster a supportive culture that acknowledges these challenges. Furthermore, remote work may not be equally feasible for everyone due to diverse circumstances. Practitioners should consider issues of accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that all employees have the necessary resources to work remotely effectively.

At the same time, researchers must focus on a variety of issues. The transition to remote work amid COVID-19 is a complex issue that spans various domains such as business, technology, psychology, sociology, and public health. Researchers should embrace an interdisciplinary approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of this transition. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods can provide a more robust and comprehensive analysis of the shift to remote work. While qualitative research can provide deep insights into the experiences and challenges of remote work, quantitative research can provide broad patterns and correlations that might be missed by qualitative research alone. Furthermore, the impacts of the shift to remote work may evolve over time. Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects and implications of this shift. Moreover, the experiences of remote work can vary significantly based on factors such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, and disability. Researchers should ensure diverse and inclusive samples to provide a more representative

understanding of the transition to remote work (Milner & George, 2020). In addition, to ensure the relevance and applicability of their research, academics should work closely with practitioners. Such collaboration can provide practical insights and help to shape research questions and methods. Lastly, given the shift to remote work and the corresponding online research methods, researchers must be aware of and adhere to ethical considerations related to online data collection, consent, and privacy

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

- 1) Which of the changes brought about by the pandemic in the workplace will remain after the pandemic?
- 2) What do you think will be the future of work?
- 3) What should workers, companies and countries do to adapt to future working conditions?
- 4) How do you judge the new models of work that have emerged?
- 5) How have you in your company dealt with the new situation that has emerged?
- 6) Can you describe the new working conditions?
- 7) Do you think that the new working models will help or hurt the labour market?
- 8) Do you identify any problems in the new working models?