European Commission

Study exploring the social, economic and legal context and trends of telework and the right to disconnect, in the context of digitalisation and the future of work, during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

Annex 12 Summaries of selected research projects

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BAuA (2020) BAuA-Arbeitszeitbefragung: Vergleich 2015 – 2017 – 2019, Dortmund.

The report is a comparative analysis of three survey waves (2015, 2017 and 2019) carried out by Germany's Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) using computer-assisted telephone interviews with randomly selected persons in Germany of at least 15 years of age and in gainful employment, who work at least 10 hours per week.

The report found that the overall duration of agreed and real working time has hardly changed, with part-time employees working slightly longer and full-time employees working slightly fewer hours. The duration of agreed working time among part-time workers had increased slightly because the rate of employees in part-time arrangements with longer hours had increased slightly; meanwhile, the rate of part-time workers working shorter hours had decreased. Since men are more likely to be in full-time employment, their average working hours are higher than those of women. An increase of the average weekly time is observed among younger employees.

- In 2019, employees on average worked half an hour less overtime compared with 2015 and 2017, doing an average of 3.4 hours of overtime per week. Overall, this is due to a reduction in overtime among full-time employees, and among male employees. The timing of working hours, i.e. atypical working hours such as shift work or night work and work at weekends, remained unchanged.

- The number of employees affected at least once a month by a reduction in rest time remained stable between 2017 and 2019. In both years, 18% of the employees suffered reduced rest time at least once a week.

- The register of working hours remained constant. The working time of about 20% of employees was not registered. The working time of around half of employees was registered by the company, the remaining employees (32%) registered their working hours themselves.

- The use of working time accounts increased from 61% to 66% during the period from 2015 to 2019. The gap in its use detected in 2015 between part-time and full-time employee had closed by 2019 (65% to 66%). However, this does not apply equally to all groups of employees. Working time accounts were more widespread in larger companies and in industry compared with other sectors.

- Flexibility over working time for some employees has increased in several dimension over recent years across all groups of employees. More employees can decide when to start and finish their work, as well as deciding break times and when to take days off or holidays. The share of employees who can take a few hours off flexibly has remained constant at around 44 per cent.

- Demands for worker flexibility have tended to decrease over recent years. This development was already evident in 2017 in relation to standby duty, on-call duty and on-call work. No further change is evident since then. Frequent changes in working hours and work-related contact outside the working time have declined slightly between 2017 and 2019.

This report employs the German distinction between *Telearbeit* (telework), defined as legally regulated work arrangements, and 'mobile work', which refers to all types of work outside the

company's premises, including (sporadic) work from home (home office), working at the premises of clients or providers, or work on the move.

The extent of home-office and telework has grown steadily. In 2019, around 16% of employees had an agreement to work from home. According to other sources, another 29% worked occasionally from home without a formal agreement. The proportions of men and women teleworking became balanced in 2019, at 16% among women and 17% among men. Alternating between telework and home office work is the most frequent form of flexible working, with home office being the preferred option one day per week or less (72%).

If well designed, a combination of telework and home office work has mostly positive effects on employees. Whether, and to what extent telework and home office work has an impact on employees' health is strongly related to the design of the telework arrangement. Overall, non-agreed home office work is associated with long and inconvenient working hours and, as a consequence, with the dissolution of boundaries between work and other life spheres, and a lack of rest. Also, the extent of telework and home office work appears to play a significant role.

During the pandemic, home office work became a measure to prevent infection and protect occupational safety. Initial analysis of a special survey of the Socio-Economic Panel on the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic (SOEP-CoV Study 16) shows that at the beginning of the pandemic, around one-third of those employed were engaged in home office arrangements. In particular, women who had previously worked exclusively at the premises of their employers now worked in home office arrangements at least occasionally during the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic. Moreover, the extent of home office work increased. Around half of employees with home offices worked entirely from home at least some of the time (ibid.). Employees with higher education and higher income were more likely to be able to work from home compared with employees with a lower socio-economic status. The Hans Böckler Foundation estimates that following the crisis, almost half of workers would like to work in alternating home office arrangements just as often as they did during the pandemic (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2020[1]).

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[1] Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (2020 b). Corona-Krise: 26 Prozent der Erwerbstätigen haben bereits Einkommenseinbußen erlitten, soziale Ungleichheit verschärft sich (Pressemitteilung). Düsseldorf: Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/pm_wsi_2020_07_10.pdf

Existing research into extreme working time regimes has pointed to the existence of an "implementation gap" that prevents organisations from changing established working time regimes, even when they make explicit attempts to change regimes that involve excessive working hours. Whereas most studies point to conflicts with professional identities or social norms that are built around long working hours, this study aims to identify what are the organisational drivers explaining the persistence of extreme working time regimes.

The authors of this article address the question of the emergence and persistence of extreme working hours by drawing on a case study of a large German consulting firm. The study began in 2013 as an attempt to understand the reasons behind the failure of various projects implemented within the company to cope with problems associated with extreme working hours, such as increased difficulties in recruiting and retaining professionals, particularly women.

The study builds on more than a hundred interviews with employees, as well as desk research, to identify different stages and turning points in the company's approach to the temporal structure of consulting project work. The analysis differentiates three distinct phases. Initially (between the years 1970 and1989), the company stuck to a 'normal' working week, with consultants spending more of their time carrying out desk work at the company's premises, and only occasionally visiting clients' offices for one or two days at a time. However, in the late 1980s, the company adopted a new approach based on 'presence projects', which required consultants to work more closely with clients (often working in the clients' offices). As a result, consultants began to spend most of their regular working hours interacting with clients, moving their desk work to evenings and weekends.

This crucial shift in the organisation of project work had two different and mutually reinforcing outcomes. On the one hand, consultants achieved a greater degree of *synchronisation* with clients (they became more available to respond to clients' demands and more efficient at delivering project results). On the other hand, they did so at the expense of working longer hours and *desynchronising* their desk work from the regular working week. Therefore, as the authors note, the more consultants desynchronised their deskwork from the regular working week, the more attractive it became for the firm's management to align further internal activities with the increasingly recognisable pattern of long hours.

The authors identify various processes involved in this *positive feedback* cycle. The firm began to attract and hire young, unmarried consultants by rising initial salaries and other strategies aimed at rewarding long working hours in both formal and informal ways. These resulted in the emergence of a culture that celebrated long working hours as a status symbol. The firm's partners began to calculate project budgets by assuming long working hours for consultants, which also allowed them to reduce prices and increased their chances of selling a project. Increasingly, internal appointments began to be scheduled during the evenings or at night. In this way, the entire company's internal activity became structured around this regime of extreme working hours.

The third phase, which came in the early 2000s at the time of the economic recession, was when the firm experienced a breakdown in the hiring and retention of highly qualified staff, mostly due to health and personal issues that stemmed from this mode of working. The company attempted to address these problems by launching several work-life initiatives to realign internal practices with the standard working week – for instance, by limiting the number of nights consultants had to spent away from home to three per week – or by providing flexible work schemes, such as telework, and childcare support. Between 2012 and 2013, two major initiatives were introduced in two of the company's most important divisions, with new rules imposing clear limits on daily work hours (no more than 12 hours)

and limiting consultants' availability for phone calls and email correspondence at night and during weekends or public holidays.

However, two years after their introduction, these initiatives were widely recognised as having failed. The implementation of these measures faced strong internal resistance to changes in patterns of extreme working. The firm's partners played an ambivalent role: while they supported the initiatives, they also appeared reluctant to change the company's process-oriented mode of temporal structuring, which was greatly appreciated by clients – even if this implied mounting inefficiencies in terms of employee turnover and burnout. In addition, another external factor is price-driven competition in the strategic consulting sector, which directly reinforces the pressure to work long hours.

The objective of this research was to identify unobserved types of employees with regard to extended work availability and the perceived legitimacy of the availability by workers, and relate these with covariates (socio-demographic data from individuals), associating types of employees with satisfaction with work-life balance and well-being.

The literature review carried out for this study highlights that in Germany, the model of the 'male bread-winner' remains very common, with women engaging less in full-time employment, suggesting that the significance of and time investment in paid work is higher among men than among women. Thus, men would be more likely than women to be contacted outside regular work hours. Furthermore, younger employees ('digital natives') would be more used to being constantly online and available. Higher socio-economic status has also been shown to be related to higher availability demands, mainly for ICT knowledge, as well as among leading positions and self-employed persons.

Effect-recovery theory is also considered, and it suggests that recovery processes may remain incomplete in cases of extended work availability. In fact, studies regarding on-call work have found that the mere possibility of being called was associated with impaired well-being. In addition, perceived legitimacy of claims on their availability can have effects on employees' well-being.

The data used in the study comes from the BAuA working time survey 2015, and cover 17,410 employees aged 15 years and older. The study looked at availability expectations, internal work-home interference, as well as covariates (gender, education, gross income, an office job, a leading position, whether they were engaged in dependent employment as opposed to self-employment, and employees' weekly working hours).

Statistical analyses were carried out using Mplus 7.4. To identify unobserved types of employees subject to extended work availability, a latent class analysis was performed, cross-checking with half of the sample. To determine potential antecedents of class membership, multinomial logistic regressions of employees were used. Lastly, to relating class membership with outcome variables, Lanza's method was employed, as implemented in Mplus.

The results show three latent classes:

- 'Illegitimate available', the smallest cluster (3-4%). This is characterised by members with a relatively high probability of frequent contact, all of whom report high expectations regarding their availability.

- 'Legitimate available', the second-largest cluster (12%). This featured a moderate probability of frequent contact, and a relatively high probability of experiencing high expectations regarding their availability. These workers also had a relatively high probability of perceiving their availability as necessary and reasonable.

- 'Rarely available', the largest cluster (84%). Members of this cluster had a low likelihood of scoring on any of the four indicator variables related to availability demands and the perceived legitimacy of their availability.

From the multinomial regression analysis, the following relationships with covariates were found relevant and explained by the authors:

- Women had higher odds than men of being in the 'illegitimate available' class, compared with the 'legitimate available' or 'rarely available' class (they often have a dual burden including

more unpaid work in the household, or taking care of children or elder relatives). The same was true of younger employees compared with older employees, who may be more watchful with regard to threats to their work-life balance.

- Employees with an income above EUR 5,000 per month had lower odds of being in the 'rarely available' class than in the 'legitimate available'-class. However, results were not conclusive for employees with different educational levels.

- Employees with a high income or those in a leading position were less likely to be in the 'rarely available' class, and it may be because their jobs involve high levels of responsibility and a high level of accessibility by their team members. Similarly, self-employed persons had a higher likelihood of being in the 'legitimate available' class probably because they are responsible for their own business success, and many are also responsible for the people they employ.

- Employees in office jobs had a higher probability of being in the 'rarely available'-class.

With regard to satisfaction with work-life balance, significant differences were found between groups:

- The 'rarely available' class showed significantly higher satisfaction with their work-life balance than the 'legitimate available' class and the 'illegitimate available' class.

- The 'legitimate available' class experienced significantly lower internal work-home interference than the 'illegitimate available' class.

The study concluded that extended work availability should be viewed in concert with socio-demographic factors, job characteristics and other aspects of boundary management, to arrive at a more holistic picture of this phenomenon.

In addition, it is relevant to note that work availability often prolongs regular working hours, but it may neither compensate for unregulated extended work availability nor increase its perceived legitimacy.

The 'legitimate available' class also suffered problems in terms of satisfaction with work-life balance and internal work-home interference. In fact, unregulated extended work availability might pose risk to employees' well-being. Employees belonging to availability types with high availability demands showed impairments in work-life balance that were strongest among employees who perceived their availability to be illegitimate. Nonetheless, the results do not warrant the assumption that extended work availability is harmless if it is perceived as legitimate, because the 'legitimate available' class and the 'rarely available'-class could partially be attributed to pre-existing group differences. Thus, regulations should take into account employees' health, strain and work-life balance.

Brussevich, M., Dabla-Norris, M.E., & Khalid, S. (2020). "Who will bear the brunt of lockdown policies? Evidence from tele-workability measures across countries". International Monetary Fund, WP/20/08.

This paper aimed to identify which groups of workers were more exposed to the impact of lockdowns and mobility restrictions adopted around the world to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors elaborate a new index for the feasibility to work from home in 35 countries (including 21 EU Member States) using a task-based approach that allows the feasibility of working from home to be measured at an individual level for a large sample of developed and emerging countries. Their findings show that the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities, since those with low scores of teleworkability are also those in the most vulnerable settings, such as young workers, those with fewer years of education, in non-standard forms of employment, and with lower earnings.

The paper's main contribution lies in its methodology as compared to other common approaches in the literature. Most research on the feasibility of telework from a task-approach perspective builds on the assumption that all jobs within a given occupational group are suitable for telework, thus neglecting differences between individuals and countries within the same occupation. The authors combine the teleworkability index developed by Dingel and Neiman for the US with results from the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) which collects individual-level information for 35 countries. This survey includes the demographic characteristics of workers, in addition to information on their sectors and occupations. In addition, the survey provides detailed information on the nature of work activities such as the physical demands of the work, flexibility in the performance of tasks, or the use of ICT. The combination of these two data sources allows correlation between the teleworkability index for different occupations and the individual and job characteristics of the workers in those occupations, using comparable and representative data for a large set of countries.

The main results of the paper are summarised below:

- Gender: compared with women, men are less likely to be employed in occupations in which telework is feasible. This is due to the fact that women's employment is concentrated in public administration and the education sector. However, this should not obscure the fact that many jobs requiring face-to-face interactions (e.g. personal services), which employ a large share of women, are most at risk of employment losses.

- Age and educational attainment: having a college degree significantly increases the likelihood of working remotely across all age groups. However, older workers (aged 60 and above) with lower levels of education still have higher levels of teleworkability compared with young workers, reflecting their lifecycle effect and progression into more senior-level positions.

- Job characteristics: workers employed in temporary and part-time jobs are less likely to work remotely, compared with those in permanent jobs. Within Europe, temporary contracts account for a sizeable share of total employment in those sectors most affected by lockdowns. Workers in SMEs are less likely to have jobs that are suited to telework compared with workers in larger companies, but these differences in teleworkability scores are less stark in many Eastern European countries.

- Foreign-born workers are less likely to be employed in occupations that are less amenable to teleworking. These differences are more marked in European countries than in the USA.

- The likelihood of working in an occupation that is suited to telework correlates highly with workers' earnings. Workers in the lowest part of the wage distribution are concentrated in sectors and occupations in which work cannot be carried out remotely.

Chung, H. (2022). The flexibility paradox: Why flexible working leads to (self-) exploitation. Polity Press.

This book focuses on explaining why occurs the so-called 'flexibility paradox', a constructed term used to describe the fact of some workers who are enrolled in flexible working arrangements work longer hours when, in theory, they could choose not to do so.

In the first part, the author starts off by investigating the extent to which flexible working is on the rise. Later, she explores the dual nature of flexible working from both a sociological and a management perspective, and their explanatory power through empirical data. She then analyses productivity, performance and work-life balance outcomes when flexible working, providing results from European data. The second part of the book is devoted, firstly, to providing a theoretical underpinning of the flexibility paradox and the resulting self-exploitation, considering the ideas of previous scholars and empirical data on incidence and passion at work. Later, she provides empirical evidence of the flexibility paradox. In chapter 7, Chung examines the gendered nature of the flexibility paradox using empirical evidence. In the final section of the book, she examines the role of context, in terms of cultural norms and national-level policies. Lastly, she examines the impact of COVID-19. A brief summary of the book's most relevant contributions is presented below:

The key trends that have driven the rise of flexible working are an increase in female employment, the demand for and promotion of better work-life balance, the development of digital technologies, cutting the expenses of commuting and of the office, and the outbreak of COVID-19. It is emphasised that the development of technology has enabled workers to work outside the premises, making possible an 'always-on culture' that has resulted in workers suffering from poor sleep, stress, exhaustion and encroachment into family and leisure time.

Through a study of dual perspectives on the nature of flexible working (performance vs. family-friendliness), the author demonstrates using empirical data that the opportunity to have flexible working arrangements depends more on the relative value the worker has (their performance outcomes) rather than necessity (the family-friendliness of such arrangements). In fact, disadvantaged workers (who may need greater flexibility) have lower access to flexible working arrangements, and flexible working is especially widely used to achieve the performance-enhancing goals of enterprises.

When workers are enabled remain in employment and maintain their working hours by switching to flexible working, they may be more likely to experience conflicts between work and family demands, due to their increased capacity to meet both. This explains why although flexible working is associated with higher levels of conflict, it is also associated with higher work-life balance satisfaction.

From a theoretical perspective, the flexibility paradox derives from a Foucauldian notion of power, in which flexibility and 'freedom' have been moved away from the disciplinary society of yore. Nowadays, workers have internalised capitalistic ideas of productivity, performance and profit, in terms of their own drive and passion. Thus, workers organise their lives in an 'entrepreneurial' manner, managing themselves without the need for direct managerial control. This appears clearer when looking at the implementation of flexible working in enterprises. Using certain mechanisms, some enterprises not only force employees to work more, but also achieve a sense of loyalty and commitment (even gratitude) towards the company on the part of these employees. Due to their ability to work flexibly, they may not feel exploited, despite having intensified their work. Other mechanisms also point in the same direction, such as the use of freedom and autonomy by workers to increase their work intensity as a way to increase their competitiveness to progress further in their careers. As a result, a worker is produced who prioritises work above all else (understanding individuality as a paradoxical coercion, which is a training to individuals), and who tending to work

proportionally harder in line with the autonomy they enjoy, since they views their work as an individual enterprise.

However, the effect of the flexibility paradox on individuals depends on a worker's socio-economic variables and national policies. Thus, based on longitudinal data, many individuals work more hours when they gain access to flexible schedules, but this depends on social variables and on the type of flexible arrangement involved. For instance, there is a gendered pattern in the way the flexibility paradox results in the expansion of work: men tend to feel that work encroaches on their family life, while women tend to increase the amount of 'total necessary work' as much as possible. The flexibility stigma also is gendered, in the sense that men are more likely to hold negative views about flexible workers, while women may be more likely to fear the negative consequences of working flexibly more often. However, this strongly depends on the country involved; it has been noted that in those countries where work is less central and more progressive gender norms prevail, companies provide and workers enjoy better access to flexible working arrangements, while national institutions help to shape the cultural norms surrounding work.

Lastly, the author offers some recommendations for governments, companies and families, while characterising flexible working as an amplifier of contemporary social problems. The author calls for a change in regulation, since the right to request flexible working arrangements provided by EU Work-Life Balance Directive permits managers to reject flexible working requests. Chung also examines other governments, and welcomes the upcoming EU right to disconnect. In addition, she urges governments to tackle the long-hours work culture prevalent in societies by, for instance, reducing the length of the working day.

This study explores the main practices and behaviours relating to digital connectivity, with a view to assessing managers' and employees' awareness of the right to disconnect and its implications for health and well-being. The study assumes that the shift to telework during the pandemic has gone hand-in-hand with a rise in connectivity and extended availability to a point at which it can become a health risk factor.

The research builds on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Here, we summarise the main findings from a survey conducted on a sample of companies based in Catalonia (N=608 respondents from 93 companies).

- Most respondents were managers from medium-sized companies (51-500 employees) working on a full-time basis. Significantly, a large share of respondents (45.6%) stated that they worked on average between 41 and 50 hours per week.

- Most respondents (73%) teleworked frequently (56% on a daily basis). The option to telework was perceived as a sign of companies' commitment to the promotion of employees' work-life-balance.

Connectivity practices and behaviours:

- 52.5% of respondents stated that digital connectivity was a sign of professional commitment and involvement with the company, although perceptions of its contribution to career advancement opportunities was not straightforward, particularly among teleworkers (the share of respondents who thought that being available for work was quite positive for their professional career was higher among those who did not telework (51%) than among teleworkers (41.6%).

- Telework was associated to 'emotional disconnection' with the workplace (49% vs 39.7%) and feelings of professional isolation (39.6% vs 28%).

- Teleworkers were more likely to report having to attend to an excessive number of meetings compared with those who did not telework (43.4% vs 30%)

- Nearly all respondents (95%) stated that they usually responded to messages received outside normal working hours (by phone or e-mail), especially when they concerned an urgent issue, or if they came from a higher-level management (89.4%).

- 78.5% of respondents said they responded to Whatsapp messages outside working hours; however, only 51% said they sent Whatsapp messages outside working hours.

- Similarly, 75% of respondents said they answered phone calls outside normal working hours, while 58.2% stated that they initiate calls during this time.

- 74.5% of respondents said they responded to e-mails received outside normal working hours, while just under two-thirds (61%) said they sent e-mails during this time.

- Overall, the planning of work times was very poor. The share of teleworking respondents who reported having no time scheduled within the working day for checking and replying to emails and Whatsapp messages was 47.7%, compared to 57% among non-teleworkers.

Respondents were asked to rate from 1 to 5 their level of agreement with a number of questions about the relationship between connectivity and productivity. Average scores are as follows:

- Most respondents agreed that digital availability is an issue to be agreed among co-workers, managers and clients (4.19/5)

- The possibility to disconnect from work outside regular working hours is quite valued (3.23/5).

- The option not to respond to messages or communications outside regular working hours is not perceived as harmful to employees' development within the company (2.7/5).

- Likewise, most respondents did not agree with the assumption that greater digital availability contributes to increased productivity (2.3/5).

With regard to regulation of the right to disconnect:

- There was a high level of agreement with the compulsory inclusion of 'right to disconnect' provisions in collective agreements (4.14/5)

- Respondents agreed to a lesser extent that digital disconnection should be part of individual employment contracts (3.9/5) or should be by voluntary agreement between management and employees.

- The lower score of agreement was for the regulation of the right to disconnect by Law (3/5).

- Also, in most cases, respondents said there was no formal regulation in place regarding the right to disconnect (2.5/5).

Criscuolo, C., Gal, P., Leidecker, L., Losma, F., & Nicoletti, G., (2021). "The role of telework for productivity during and post COVID-19: Results from an OECD survey among managers and workers", OECD Productivity Working Papers, 2021-31, OECD Publishing, Paris.

This paper presents the results of an online survey conducted among a sample of workers and managers (N=3,404 and 1,306 respectively) in 25 countries (16 EU Member States) about their experiences and expectations concerning telework, with a particular focus on productivity and well-being. In line with other recent evidence, the results show an overall preference for a "hybrid" working model to balance the potential benefits of this way of working with drawbacks, although it indicates that further changes are required in the adaptation of work organisation practices by managers.

The authors acknowledge the fact that the experience of enforced telework during the pandemic has contributed to improving perceptions of this work arrangement among both managers and employees, and has reduced the stigma attached to it. However, the long-term implications of telework on the productivity of individuals and companies are still controversial. To gain evidence on this issue, the OECD Global Forum on Productivity (GFP) launched a cross-national survey consisting of two separate questionnaires targeting managers and employees. Respondents came from a wide range of sectors, although larger companies are overrepresented in the sample.

The survey asked managers and workers about the impact telework had during the pandemic, and what expectations they had for the future. Despite the moderate size of the sample, the survey findings are consistent with other recent studies based on larger country-specific samples.

- The results support a significant and positive association between the adoption of telework and company productivity before and during the crisis. In addition, the results support the hypothesis of an 'inverted U-shaped' relationship between telework and productivity, with the peak value occurring at a telework intensity of 1-2 days per week for the typical worker.

- Employers' and employees' overall assessments of their experience with telework from the perspectives of company performance and employee well-being were positive. This correlates with widespread intentions to continue teleworking in the future.

- The survey findings shed light on the factors involved in a positive or negative assessment of telework. Among the enabling factors, the scheduling of regular meetings, company support for office equipment and managerial training are identified as measures easing the adoption of telework at company level.

- More than two-thirds of managers surveyed in the sample agreed that that productivity had increased due to telework, while 57.5% believed that workers tended to work longer due to a reduction in commuting times.

- In addition, more than half of managers pointed to lower office costs and the possibility of hiring new workers from abroad as the most important advantages of telework, especially among managers in the knowledge-intensive services sector.

- By contrast, a large share of managers expressed concerns about the negative impact of high-intensity telework on team coordination (75%), corporate culture (73%) and innovation (60%). Moreover, most managers (70%) thought that training staff is more difficult in a teleworking environment, and that employees learn less on the job.

- From the employees' point of view, savings on commuting are perceived as the key advantage of telework by almost 90% of workers covered in the sample. This is followed by

flexibility over working time and location (75%), and the accommodation of household duties (80%).

- Conversely, more than 80% of employees in the survey agreed that the loss of social interactions and the blurring of boundaries between the domains of work and private life were the main risks of telework, with negative implications for workers' satisfaction. Working for longer hours in uncomfortable spaces was reported as an important disadvantage by a significant share of the sample (70%).

- Another relevant finding from this study is that although differences may exist between managers and workers' plans and expectations regarding the adoption of telework (more workers than managers expect to telework more in the future), both groups agree in considering "hybrid" working arrangements (around 2-3 five days per week) as the most desirable model to balance the potential benefits of telework with its drawbacks. However, further changes are required in the implementation of teleworking arrangements:

- More than half of workers (30% of managers) think that companies should invest more in the provision of ICT equipment. In addition, more than 30% of workers (and 20% of managers) wanted technical training as well as training in the social skills necessary to manage remote teams and in how to work independently from home.

- The effects of telework on productivity vary between genders, sectors and companies, and can exacerbate existing inequalities in these dimensions. Large firms engaged in highly knowledge-intensive services are better prepared to seize the advantages of telework, whereas small and medium-sized companies and low-skilled workers benefit less from these types of work arrangements.

This article constructs a new measure for labour market exposure to COVID-19, and assesses which jobs are most at risk, using data from the 2018 European Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) and other sources. The indices and data employed based on findings from the literature. The criteria employed in this study are as follows:

- The administrative decisions of Italy and the US states of Delaware, Minnesota, and Oklahoma as to whether a job is essential, with jobs classified according to NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes.

- The nature of jobs in terms of the feasibility of home-based work and face-to-face interactions.

The procedure used for the analysis is summarised below:

1. Identification of essential sectors according to NAICS.
2. Computation of the share of essential workers per NACE category from the NAICS share of workers, based on weightings.
3. The share of essential workers in each of the statistical regions within the European Union.
4. Combining the sectors deemed essential in the first steps with the criteria expressed in the previous paragraph to identify those jobs most at risk.
5. Computation of vulnerability in relation to income.

The possible limitations observed in this study are as follows:

- Only jobs that are unanimously deemed essential are considered.

- Social distancing practices which may lead to an allowance to stay open are not considered.

- The analysis is only valid for the countries studied, due to different social and economic structures.

The main results are as follows:

- 58% of all jobs in the EU are in sectors considered essential.

- The share of employment in essential industries tends to increase with income, with substantial variation within countries.

- The feasibility of home-based work correlates with the extent of face-to-face interaction required, although this diverges in manufacturing industries. Information, communication, and technology (ICT) and professional and scientific jobs can more easily be provided from home and require little face-to-face interaction. On the other hand, hospitality, food services, and health and social services are not amenable to home-based work and require extensive face-to-face interactions. However, in certain industries, the two measures diverge

- The measure of which sectors are essential correlates only weakly with home-based work and face-to-face interaction.

- 35% of all jobs in the EU can be carried out at home.

- Jobs in the ICT, finance and education sectors are highly amenable to working from home, whereas jobs in agriculture and hospitality are less so.

- The feasibility of home-based work increases with income across European countries.

- The prevalence of jobs requiring little face-to-face interaction does not necessarily correlate with income.

- 30% of all employment in the EU cannot be performed from home in non-essential industries.

- The share of jobs that are susceptible to losses due to COVID-19 strongly negatively correlates with regional GDP per capita: a 10% increase in regional GDP per capita is associated with a 0.5 percentage point reduction in jobs at risk. This also occurs within countries.

- Regions most susceptible to labour market pain are the ones in which jobs already tend to be more precarious and less protected if considering the share of temporary workers.

- Workers with the lowest pay suffer the greatest vulnerability.

- The probability of being employed in a job that cannot be done from home and is deemed non-essential is significantly greater for workers with low education levels.

- Economic risks are concentrated among the young, and decline with age. Migrants are also more likely to be employed in risky occupations.

The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- In the absence of urgent large-scale action, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to exacerbate pre-existing socio-economic and regional disparities. Young, less-educated workers who are already in less secure and low-paying jobs are likely to bear the brunt of the shock, with lagging regions suffering the worst losses.

- Merely relying on whether a sector can be performed from home and/or requires face-to-face interaction is not enough to provide a picture of what jobs are at risk because of COVID-19.

- Manufacturing occupations are less likely to be subject to restrictions due to social distancing practices.

- The COVID-19 crisis is bound to exacerbate inequality, both within and across countries, because workers employed in low-paying jobs and are riskier and more likely to be subject to temporary employment contracts.

Policy recommendations: To support the implementation of policies to counter the economic damage inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic, putting an emphasis on job vulnerability when creating fiscal stimulus packages, cash transfer programmes and social safety nets.

Kelly, E.L., & Moen, P. (2020). *Overload. How good jobs went bad and what we can do about it.* **Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.**

This book deals with the causes and consequences of work intensification and extended work availability among highly qualified employees from an IT division of a large, Fortune 500 company based in the USA. The company partnered with the research team due to concerns about employee burnout and widespread turnover intentions among its professional staff. Top managers acknowledged that the overload arose from downsizing and the need to coordinate with offshore counterparts. Crucially, the book presents the results of a major experiment at the firm, towards the design and implement of which the book's authors contributed through the introduction of new rules and practices on how work is organised and supervised. Yet, this work is also useful for assessing the limitations faced by such approaches to redesigning work flexibility, which are likely to be dropped when managers change.

Over a five-year research period, the authors surveyed 1,000 professionals and managers and conducted 400 in-depth interviews. They gathered evidence of multiple issues related to long hours of work, unpredictable schedules, and always-on availability (burnout, stress, psychological distress and lower levels of job satisfaction). The authors led a randomised field experiment involving the entire IT division (a total 56 teams) to test the effectiveness of a work redesign initiative named STAR – an acronym for 'Support, Transform, Achieve Results' – which aimed to 'change the rules of the game' by tackling the organisational practices at the root of the problem, the workload, and expectations of constant availability for work.

It is worth noting that work redesign initiatives such as STAR differ from common approaches to flexibility as an 'accommodation', in that the focus is not placed on individuals and the need to balance their work with their personal and family demands. On the contrary, it involves a collective process aimed at promoting and changing the institutional context that frames work intensification and overload. The understanding of flexible working arrangements as an optional accommodation for the needs of particular workers entails the risk of deepening social and gender inequalities through the stigmatisation of employees who seek such flexible work options, who risk being perceived as less committed to their work and less suitable for advancement.

STAR is an initiative for organisational change that involves employees and managers searching for ways of working that are effective, sustainable and sane. Drawing on existing research, the aim of the initiative is to promote three key aspects of working conditions:

- When employees have greater control over when, where and how to work, they are less stressed and are more engaged in their work and committed to their job.

- When managers show they care about and support their employees' personal and family lives as well as their professional development, workers feel much better and give their best at work.

- When work is highly demanding, it is essential that managers focus on results rather than time spent in the office or online, while also reducing low-value work as much as possible (e.g. redundant meetings)

The STAR initiative favours bottom-up changes conceived and implemented by employees with structured training. Over the course of several participatory training sessions, teams identified practices and processes that would increase employees' control and autonomy on the job. For instance, teams decided how more flexible schedules and opportunities to work at home could be applied to different jobs. They also decided how to improve communication and coordination, with fewer and more efficient meetings or agreement over availability times, so that team members could avoid chatting and checking emails for several hours each day. Managers learned how to show

support to employees as part of their role. Many participants opted to work from home without asking for permission, and felt less worried about working long hours and immediately responding to calls but focused on getting the work done.

Managers supported these changes by aligning their expectations with those of individuals and groups and evaluating performance accordingly. In sum, the STAR initiative provided IT professionals and managers with the opportunity to redesign work practices to reflect the realities of their lives and the affordances of new technologies and the demands of the work.

The assessment of the effects of participation showed significantly lower levels of burnout, increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions compared with those in the control group, and these improvements were more significant among non-supervisory employees and women. With regard to performance, the research team did not find any significant differences between the STAR and control groups, except for the number of hours that employees reported they were expected to work, which were reduced by an hour per week for those in STAR.

During the study, the company was acquired by another tech firm and the new top executive team of the merged organisation put to an end the STAR initiative, with the announcement that the entire IT division would follow a new, restrictive policy with regard to work schedules and locations. The new company that took control over the firm had a very limited experience with the management of a globally distributed workforce, so it prioritised working together in the same location, and did not feel the need to change their managerial practices, particularly after several relevant participants in the initiative left the company.

The authors consider various explanations for the end of STAR. While the research team had reported evidence of middle manager support for the initiative, the new executives carried out their own survey among frontline managers. The results of this new survey did not provide evidence to justify the ending of STAR, so the executives' explanations centred on 'anecdotes of abuse' and general concerns that new ways of working might be detrimental to team collaboration. Interestingly, the authors identified various examples of many middle managers who found ways to preserve as much STAR's practices as they could after its official demise. But even though telework and flexible schedules still occurred, the right of decision making shifted back to managers (and executives). However, the new rules in place also concerned bonus systems and performance management, so many managers ended up asking their employees to go back to working in the office during regular working hours while also being available 24/7 in case any problem occurred.

Lastly, in order to find out why is it so difficult to sustain such organisational innovations over time, the authors draw on the experience of other large US companies (Hewlett-Packard, Bank of America, Best Buy, Honeywell, Aetna, and IBM), which in recent years have discontinued similar flexibility initiatives. Among their findings are the following:

- Increasing competitive pressures. All of these discontinuations took place in firms exposed to significant challenges due to new technologies, or because smaller tech companies were disrupting traditional business strategies (and in many cases, there was new leadership at the head of the organisation).

- The executives involved in these decisions often point to similar arguments that flexible working practices are harmful for team collaboration and make it harder for companies to innovate, due to reduced face-to-face interactions. However, in many of these companies, professionals and line managers were already spread out across the world.

Lastly, the authors point to another factor that was not stated in official accounts – namely, that many of these companies adopt these decisions in parallel to downsizing and restructuring plans. In this context, the decision to end flexibility policies that are valued highly by employees may contribute to a reduction of the costs involved if some employees opt to leave the organisation voluntarily.

The objective of this study was to make a critical analysis and comparison of pioneering legislation in the right to disconnect, in particular in France (2016) and Spain (2017), and to provide general recommendations on the upcoming regulation on digital disconnection.

The research claims that actual regulation has become unable to deal with the current situation, in which a number of tasks can be performed from anywhere, in real time, via an Internet connection. For this reason, to guarantee existing provisions regarding the right to rest and work-life balance across all Member States in the European Union, new regulation is needed and is actually being discussed.

In France, the right to disconnect was introduced into the Labour Code in 2016 during a modernisation of labour law, and was presented as a guarantee of the right to rest and portrayed in collective bargaining as a criterion relating to the quality of working life. The most intensive debates took place with regard to the threshold in terms of the size of a company's workforce to which the right to disconnect should be applied (this was finally dropped), and its application to employees who were subject to a '*forfait jours'* agreement (employees whose working time is determined according to the number of days worked), who were finally included. Nonetheless, senior executive managers, who are not subject to working time law, are not covered.

The terms and conditions under which French employees exercise their right to disconnect are defined by collective bargaining that must be initiated by companies with at least one trade union delegate (in a company with 50 employees or more) during annual negotiations on professional equality between women and men and quality of life at work. If such negotiations are unsuccessful, the employer must still implement the right to disconnect, but in the form of a charter for employees and managers, which will cover training and awareness-raising measures on the 'reasonable use' of ICT. Note that there is a penalty for non-compliance with the obligation to negotiate, but the absence of a charter is not penalised. In this way, in absence of a conventional provision, the procedures for the exercise of an employee's right to disconnect are defined by the employer. Even though senior managers are not subject to the laws on working hours and rest, they must respect the right to disconnect. It is up to the employer to ask them to avoid sending emails or using their smartphones for professional purposes: employers are, in fact, subject to an obligation to provide preventive measures.

In an innovative way, this law regulates the right of all employees to be disconnected from work, granting a fundamental role to companies in defining the work environments and working limits through collective agreement or, failing that, by means of a statute as in Spain. It provides a very high level of autonomy.

In Spain, following a normative approach, regulation results primarily from the transposition in 2018 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation, in Organic Law 3/2019 on Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights (LOPDGPGDD), and after from the Law 10/2021 on remote work (LTD).

The employer is obliged to develop an internal policy in which the modalities of the exercise of the right must be defined, which must always be carried out, where appropriate, in collective bargaining. In this way, the company, after hearing legal representation from its employees, prepares an internal policy for workers, including those in managerial positions (since Royal Decree Law 28/2020 on remote work claims that the right to digital disconnect also applies to 'teleworking'). In this policy, it

defines the modalities for exercising the right to disconnect and the training and awareness-raising actions for staff on the reasonable use of technological tools to avoid the risk of 'computer fatigue'.

Even though both French and Spanish legislation relies on collective bargaining, there are important differentiations in terms of effective enforcement:

- The Spanish approach, which explicitly uses the concept of 'computer fatigue' is more linked to the reasonable use of digital services, and therefore to occupational health issues. Meanwhile, French legislators have focused on upholding working time law and supporting rest periods, the latter being a weakness of the French regime.

- In France, senior executives are not covered by working time legislation, while in Spain the coverage is wider due to the LTD.

The author concludes with some **recommendations** on the right to disconnect, both in the two countries concerned, but also with regard to upcoming regulation in Europe:

- France and Spain must better specify their laws and provide more information for workers, detailing the protection mechanisms and the sanctioning regime. In addition, a reversal of the burden of proof should be included, so that if a worker is sanctioned for invoking this right, it is the employer who must prove that it is not at fault.

- The right to disconnect must be understood in terms of the quality of working life and occupational health. It is educational, since it is intended to bring ethics in the workplace, and thus the habits of the staff must be considered.

- The monitoring of working time must be replaced by an assessment of workload, which would also allow better control over the workloads of senior executives.

- It is necessary to define the notion of the workplace, and the delimitation of spaces.

Lund, S., Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., & Smit, S. (2020). "What's next for remote work: An analysis of 2,000 tasks, 800 jobs, and nine countries". *McKinsey Global Institute*, 1-13.

The authors of this report analyse the potential for remote work by identifying the extent of jobs and occupations that do not require inter-personal interaction or physical presence in a range of countries (China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain, the UK and the USA). The study draws on the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) model, which analyses more than 2,000 activities and 800 occupations to identify which activities and occupations have the greatest potential for remote working.

Two main metrics for remote working potential are distinguished: 'maximum potential' covers all activities that can theoretically be carried out remotely without any loss of effectiveness. Meanwhile. 'effective potential' excludes those activities that clearly benefit from being carried out in person. The study shows that the potential for telework varies between countries and sectors. However, the most relevant contribution of this paper is in the provision of estimates of the percentage of workers who could in theory work from home, by number of days per week, in different countries.

The authors' estimation model acknowledges that the feasibility of telework ultimately depends on the mixture of activities involved in each occupation, and on their physical and social context. For most workers, some activities undertaken during the working day can be performed remotely, while other tasks may require physical presence on site. According to estimates based on such a task-based approach to the analysis of teleworkability, nearly a quarter of the total workforce in advanced economies could work remotely for between three and five days a week without potential loss of productivity (ranging between 24% in Germany and 18% in Spain), while less than one-fifth of workers could do so for one or two days a week (15% in Germany and 18% in Spain).

Such patterns of mixed remote and in-person activity in each occupation is the main reason behind the greater potential of "hybrid work" arrangements. According to a McKinsey survey of corporate executives around the world, 38% of respondents expected their remote employees to work for two or more days away from the office, compared with 22% of respondents before the pandemic.

The report also addresses the implications of hybrid work for real estate markets and urban economics. The expected increase in telework is likely to have impacts on office vacancy rates in many cities, since many companies can seize the opportunity to reduce office costs. Moreover, the spread of telework could also have an impact on the residential state market, as it can contribute to the geographical de-concentration of work from large cities towards smaller ones.

The objective of this research is to investigate which individual and structural factors explain why certain people work unsociable hours (i.e. at non-standard times) and others do not, given that the existing literature has so far not addressed certain sectors in which the emergence of the 24/7 economy has had a particularly strong impact. The article takes into consideration the perspective of labour market dualisation theories, which are summarised below, and attends to cross-national institutional differences, such as labour market regulation and collective bargaining, through a quantitative method.

'Dualisation' can be defined as an increasing differentiation between 'insiders' who enjoy (and are able to negotiate) broad welfare rights, entitlements, services, and therefore greater access to family-friendly working-time flexibility, and 'outsiders', who do not have the same access and are more prone to working non-standard hours involuntarily. It is also seen as an outcome of de-industrialisation and the disappearance of relatively well-paid and secure manufacturing jobs, along with the rise of low-skilled employment in the services sector, which has coincided with the feminisation of the labour force. However, dualisation also depends on national politics and their implementation, which means that the 24/7 economy is the result of a deregulation and liberalisation of various aspects of the product and labour markets.

Data for the study come from the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for 2016, and cover 30 countries (Switzerland is excluded), drawing a balanced random representative sample of around 1,000 cases per country (N=30,129) of dependent employees performing at least one hour of work for pay. The dependent variable was a dummy variable from the survey, which determined if the respondent usually worked during unsociable hours.

The independent variables are summarised below:

- A risk-based measure (ISCO-08) for defining insiders and outsiders, which analyses social class as a proxy rather than atypical employment. Workers in 'high general skill' occupations were considered insiders (along with technicians and associate professionals), and 'low general skill' and specific skill occupations were grouped together into a single low-skill outsider category.

- Working on a temporary rather than a permanent contract, and working part-time instead of full-time.

- Control variables at the individual level.

Country-level variables were as follows:

- OECD indicator for economy-wide product market regulation (PMR) for 2013.

- A composite indicator for the strictness of working-time regulation in the country was created using of the CBR Labour Regulation Index, coding whether or not there was legislation.

- The degree of protection for three different variables (ICTWSS dataset 5.1), using the Eurofound classification of regimes for setting working time: mandated, negotiated, unilateral and adjusted mandated regime (under which government-imposed standards can be adjusted through collective bargaining).

A multi-level logistic regression model was carried out, to estimate the effects of individual- and country-level factors on the risk of working unsociable hours. The main results can be summarised as follows:

- Workers with specific skills and low general skills are at substantially higher risk of working unsociable hours. Furthermore, men, immigrants, workers in supervisory roles, workers in larger firms and the youngest workers are generally more likely to work unsociable hours.

- There is no evidence that those on fixed-term contracts are more likely to work unsociable hours than those with a permanent contract, and no statistically significant association between being employed part-time and the likelihood of working unsociable hours.

- Unsociable hours are concentrated in particular sectors in which such hours have become an intrinsic part of the work (shops, restaurants, hotels, social and healthcare).

- Wide variations exist between countries with regard to unsociable working hours. More than one in three employees typically worked unsociable hours (ranging from one in of four in Lithuania to one in two in Greece).

- Differences in the risk of working unsociable hours also existed between countries in terms of the gap between those in low-skilled and high-skilled occupations, with this being smallest in Belgium, Malta and Germany, and largest in Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.

- Product market deregulation (in terms of a lower PMR) does not statistically significantly increase the risk of working unsociable hours for high-skilled workers, but higher PMR resulted in a larger gap in unsociable working hours between low- and high-skilled workers. Note that a high PMR is prevalent in countries with more static and traditional economic sectors, as well as more strictly regulated boundaries between professions.

- In adjusted mandated and negotiated regimes, the risk of working unsociable hours among high-skilled workers is greater than in a mandated regime, but the unsociable-hours gap between low- and high-skilled workers is smaller in the first case. The absolute risk of working unsocial hours among lower-skilled workers is lowest in a negotiated regime. However, a country's trade union density has no significant effect on the overall risk of working unsociable hours.

The report's main conclusions are as follows:

- Working unsociable hours is a structural and long-term risk rather than simply a characteristic of certain jobs, and depends on social variables.

- Unsociable work is usually carried out in evenings and on Saturdays, and those types of unsociable hours with the strongest detrimental effects (shift and night work) were relatively uncommon.

- The gap in the risk of working unsociable hours between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' was largest in many of the EU's newest Member States.

- Collective bargaining can reduce dualisation, and does not increase it. Stricter working-time regulation may help to reduce inequalities, but this depends to a great extent on the parties involved.

- The regulation of working time does not have a statistically significant effect on the overall risk of working unsociable hours in any country, but has a small effect in closing the gap between low- and high-skilled workers, which means that it especially benefits outsiders.

Finally, the limitations encountered in the research are summarised below:

- The EU-LFS suffers from a lack of relevant variables compared with the European Working Conditions Survey.

- Data were static over time.

- The PMR indicator had not previously been tested.

- Deeper analysis is necessary with regard to migrants, and a longitudinal analysis is proposed for studying young adults.

Swedish Agency for Work (2022). Remote work – review of international research on work environment and health, work–life balance and productivity before and after the COVID-19 pandemic with particular consideration for conditions for women and men. https://sawee.se/publications/remote-work-review-of-international-research-on-work-environment-and-health-work-life-balance-and-productivity-before-and-after-the-covid-19-pandemic-with-particular-consideration-f/

The objective of this literature review was to compile and increase knowledge about telework in three areas: a) work environment and health; b) work–life balance; and c) productivity. The report reviews research on mostly voluntary telework prior to the pandemic, and mostly imposed and unexpected telework during the pandemic.

Based on a search of well-known databases, 165 articles were identified covering the period before the pandemic, out of which five were selected for their relevance and quality without overlaps. For the pandemic period, 1,813 original articles were identified, out of which 50 studies were selected. The identified works did not include any Swedish study, and so A manual search was used to identify four Swedish studies.

A review of the five pre-pandemic articles from the period from 2005–2021 in terms of the three areas of interest can be summarised as follows:

- Work environment and health: real autonomy is the main factor behind a positive impact of telework. Negative impacts are associated with reduced and inadequate contact with colleagues and managers. In general, social isolation is the most relevant negative factor, making interpersonal support an important factor in the smooth functioning of telework.

- Work-life balance is addressed in only four studies. In spite of their diverse focus, their results indicate this balance is better under teleworking arrangements, but depending on the concrete condition, telework can also have a negative impact.

- In general, productivity increased in telework arrangements, except where there was a digital skills gap.

The pandemic studies from 2020 to 2021 mainly covered Europe and the US, with some articles referring to other continents. The majority of the reviewed works were retrospective assessments, and only few were longitudinal studies comparing telework before and during the pandemic. These studies were evaluated using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool and a five-point scale.

- Work environment and health: 31 (six at level 4; 13 at level 3; 12 at level 2) addressed this topic, and confirmed that greater autonomy over when, where and how to work had a positive impact. Other positive factors included having access to the necessary work resources and the necessary skills to work autonomously. Conversely, false or delegated autonomy tends to have a negative impact, which takes the form of decreased mental well-being and efficacy. A few studies focused on managers, and indicated that they are highly dependent on their digital workstations and are overburdened by virtual meetings. They perceive a loss of contacts with their employees, as well as difficulties in assessing them and in giving support. Telework increases the risks of insufficient communication between manager and employee, especially in the event of time pressure. This can lead to problems on multiple levels. The review highlights two high-quality studies comparing telework and non-telework, which provided ambiguous results. A Finnish study reported positive effects, while a study in Spain reported negative impacts. Most of the other studies of lower quality reported a negative impact.

- Work-life balance, or conflicts between work and private life, were addressed by 19 studies (one at level 4; 10 at level 3; eight at level 2). This balance is negatively affected in the case of families with young children. Although the initial stress tends to decline over time, the burden on families with children remains high. The situation is even more complicated for single-parent households with young children and without access to care services. The risk of insufficient rest time and accumulated burden are high. Because Sweden did not close its schools or childcare services, its situation was significant different. The Swedish studies selected show that teleworking parents, especially women, perceived telework as positive. In a nutshell, the presence of children at home, especially younger children, is a crucial factor with regard to work-life balance in telework. This is even more evident in situations of high workload, and is more likely to affect women.

- Productivity was addressed by 22 studies (three at level 4; seven at level 3; 12 at level 2). The majority of these indicated increased productivity under telework. The main reason for this was that teleworkers worked more hours from home than they previously had on the company's premises. Other positive conditions include good contact with colleagues, and having real autonomy. However, some studies indicate a negative impact on productivity in the event of a lack of work tasks, insufficient resources at home, and younger children staying at home. No systematic gender differences were observed. The four Swedish studies identified in manual searches consistently demonstrated a more positive picture, compared with international studies. The overall view of the Swedish studies is that for a majority – sometimes a large majority – telework has contributed to higher job satisfaction, the ability to better combine work and family needs, and a feeling of greater productivity and effectiveness. A possible explanation for the differences between Sweden and other countries is that preschools and primary schools remained open in Sweden during the pandemic, which probably led to fewer conflicts over roles at home.

Many studies from different countries repeatedly showed that for individuals to be able to telework successfully, they must obtain or be equipped with adequate resources and the individual competences necessary for independent working.

Another recurring finding was that it is difficult to combine working from home with having small children at home during working hours. Differences in social situation also play a role, but actual autonomy and freedom from caregiving duties during working hours must be viewed as a requisite for telework to function well. This draws attention to the problem of boundary management between different life spheres.

The unusual circumstances that were precipitated by and persisted during the shutdown, from a rapid adjustment to forced full teleworking and social distancing, must be taken into account when interpreting the results of this analysis and planning continued remote working after the pandemic. Many of the problems that emerging under full teleworking during the pandemic will probably disappear or be mitigated in the post-pandemic time, where alternating telework and in-person work appears to have become the main option.

UGICT-CGT (2021). *"Télétravail, je t'aime, moi non plus.* **Rapport d'enquête et dossier de presse", Available at:** **https://ugictcgt.fr/dossier-presse-enquete-teletravail/**

Trade unions are valuable sources of information for analysing working conditions and assessing the implementation of the right to disconnect in the context of the pandemic. The French union UGICT-CGT, which represents engineers, managers and tech workers affiliated to the *Confédération Général du Travail*, conducted a major online survey between May and June 2021 covering 15,000 respondents on their experiences with telework and the right to disconnect during the second year of the pandemic.

The survey was designed by union members employed as statisticians in public research bodies such as DARES. Without claiming to be an exhaustive or fully representative sample, the survey gathered responses from persons with different professional profiles across the country (although civil service is overrepresented) on a wide range of issues (more than 100 questions). Overall, 39% of respondents worked from home on a full-time basis (five days out of five), while 53% alternate work on-site with telework (at least two days per week in most cases).

Overall, telework is viewed positively as an option for freeing up time and improving autonomy at work (71%). Nearly all participants (98%) stated that they wished to continue teleworking after the pandemic, although not on a full-time basis and preferably for two or three days a week (64%). However, the results of the survey results call for attention to be paid to various critical issues:

First, survey results point to longer hours and increased work intensity in connection with telework.

- Working time had increased for 46.8% of respondents (17.9% reported a significant increase) and workload had increased for 46.5% of participants.

- More than half of respondents (52%) stated that they took fewer breaks when working from home.

The respondents reported a blurring of boundaries between the domains of work and personal life:

- 69% of teleworkers reported working at least "occasionally" outside their normal working hours

- Two-thirds of respondents said they were contacted by the employer outside regular hours: for a 25% of all respondents, such requests were regular (one day out of two), while for more than one in ten, this situation occurred all the time.

Notably, the survey confirmed an implementation gap with respect to the 2016 Law on the right to disconnect, which obliges companies to implement measures aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of the right to disconnect.

- 60% did not have the means or mechanisms to guarantee the right to disconnect.

- 55% did not have defined time spans during which teleworkers are available.

- For 75%, the workload and working time of teleworkers was not evaluated.

Another negative aspect revealed by the survey concerns the costs incurred by teleworkers. In most cases, coverage of the business equipment and expenses required to work from home was limited to the company laptop. Few of the teleworkers surveyed received any form of compensation for the additional costs borne when working from home.

- 94% of teleworkers work on a laptop, and in most of the cases (88.9%) it is provided by the employer.

- 42% of respondents were equipped with an external monitor for their laptop, provided by their employer, while a 20% had paid for it out of their own pocket.

- 69% of respondents did not have an ergonomic seat.

- 68.5% of teleworkers did not receive any compensation for telework-related costs.

- 22.5% of respondents received a monthly allowance for working at home, but in most of the cases (80%) this amount was less than EUR 5 a day.

- Among the 9.2% of respondents whose employers paid for telework-related expenses, for a large share this took the form of partial compensation for electricity costs (40%).

Regarding the prevalence of health issues:

- 54% of respondents considered that telework had a negative impact on their level of physical activity, due to increased sedentariness.

- Prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders increases with the intensity of telework: this was reported by 34% of respondents working from home less than one day, compared with 41% among those teleworking four or five days a week.

- 31% reported suffering from migraines or eye problems.

- 61% of teleworkers reported facing difficulties in balancing their work and private lives.

**Work Trend Index (2022). "Great Expectations: Making Hybrid Work Work",
Microsoft WorkLab, Available at:** https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-
index/great-expectations-making-hybrid-work-work

The Work Trend Index Report is an annual publication issued by Microsoft WorkLab. The report
outlines findings from a large global survey of 31,000 people from 31 countries, along with an analysis
of large amounts of information from the Microsoft 365 package. The countries covered in the
European market are the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland,
Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Each market was sampled to be representative of the full-
time workforce across age, gender and region. At least 1,000 full-time employees were surveyed in
each market.

The survey's findings are presented as general trends for the future of work, aimed at raising
awareness among managers and business leaders:

- More than a half of the employees surveyed (57%) stated that they were considering a shift
  to hybrid work arrangements in the next year. The general preference for flexible work
  arrangements is interpreted as a result of shifting priorities regarding work and personal life
  following the experience of the pandemic, particularly among younger generations of workers.

- Meeting new employees' expectations will require managers to show a strong commitment
  towards flexible forms of work organisation. However, a large share of managers surveyed in
  European countries (69%) recognised they lack the influence or the resources needed to
  make changes on behalf of their team. This tension also reflects the intentions of top
  management to get back to "business as usual", as 50% of managers reported that their
  company planned to return to the office on a full-time basis over the next year. Managerial
  concerns about potential productivity losses stemming from prolonged teleworking appear to
  be a factor in this pullback towards on-site work. Significantly, while around 80% of employees
  in Europe who were surveyed stated that felt more productive when working remotely, nearly
  half of business leaders feared that productivity had been negatively impacted by the shift to
  telework (ranging from 61% in the Netherlands to 44% in Spain).

- The survey results also stress the need for working teams to agree on new norms around
  hybrid work, to ensure that team members gather in person with some regularity and to
  optimise hybrid collaboration – for instance, through the redesign and adaptation of meeting
  spaces.

- The report also gives an account of the digital intensity and extended working hours of
  employees working from home over the past two years. Drawing on an analysis of
  collaboration patterns gained through Microsoft 365 tools, the report points to a general trend
  towards the multiplication of virtual meetings and an increase in the average time spent on
  these by users, which was usually spread over longer workdays. The time span between the
  first and last meeting or chat for an average Teams user had increased by more than 13%
  (46 minutes) since March 2020, and after-hours work (after 5pm) and weekend work
  increased by 28% and 14%, respectively.

- However, despite growing risks of digital exhaustion, the findings also show that employees
  are experiencing greater latitude over decisions in their jobs, and making working time more
  flexible on their own. Productivity patterns in Outlook show people are becoming more
  intentional about taking breaks, avoiding double-booking, and establishing meeting-free time
  slots. Between March 2021 and February 2022, anonymised Outlook calendar data showed
  a reduction in the number of overlapping meetings. Teams are also starting meetings later on

Mondays and earlier on Fridays. Meetings are also becoming shorter and more focused (meetings under 15 minutes now constitute the majority of all Teams meetings).

- Lastly, the report focuses on one of the most critical aspects of remote working and its impact on social capital. Unsurprisingly, 45% of surveyed leaders in European countries agreed that team-building is the main challenge in hybrid and remote working. Survey findings show that while many employees engaged in hybrid working succeeded in maintaining their workplace relationships, fully remote employees faced greater difficulties in keeping in touch with co-workers in direct teams or in the organisation more broadly. In addition, employees that had been hired since March 2020 were less likely to feel included in the company and to have weaker relationships with their direct working teams. This calls for managers to take a more active role in fostering closer team bonds and helping employees to expand links with the broader organisation.

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