Preface: The Rapid Expansion of Remote Working

INTRODUCTION

This handbook explores the multifaceted realities of remote working in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, reflecting on working routines, impacts to worker and organizational performance and well-being, and with a specific focus on the ways in which the developments witnessed since early 2020 will change work in the post-COVID era. Historically, remote working has been more often the domain of the self-employed, for example those engaged in skilled trades and craft-based work, and highly skilled employees who have job autonomy, e.g. managers and professionals, and are able to blur the boundary between work and home (Hardill, 2012; Hardill & Green, 2003; Pyöriä, 2011; Wheatley, 2020). In the latter case, these employees have generally undertaken some work remotely but have not been 100% home-based. With the introduction of policies to combat COVID-19 far greater numbers of employees across the globe – including those with limited job autonomy – encountered significant shifts in their work routines to working remotely all of the time (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020; ILO, 2020; Milasi et al., 2020).

The chapters in this handbook present the latest research from a multidisciplinary and international authorship to reflect on the implications of the rapid expansion of remote working in response to the global pandemic. Contributions are drawn from practitioners and academics across multiple disciplines including economics, economic geography, education, human resource management, law, philosophy, psychology and social policy. As such, the handbook has global reach, providing insights from, and of relevance to, all continents and a diverse range of economies. A particular focus of this edited book is in exploring the practical challenges of maintaining job quality and well-being in the face of the rapid expansion of remote working for organizations, in all sectors of the economy, not fully prepared to operate elements, or all, of their business remotely.

The handbook explores the realities of the observed large-scale expansion of remote working with a particular focus on the impacts of remote working on physical and mental health including for different groups of workers and in differing international contexts. The chapters of the handbook consider the impacts of the expansion of remote working on the nature of work and job design, the physical work environment, notions of productivity, organizational processes and systems, use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) including to manage relationships and trust within teams and organizations. Within the chapters of the handbook we also observe, and reflect upon, a strong gender dimension to the impact of remote working with women workers more adversely affected as they juggle 'work' and 'home' with care roles. The authors draw on the existing evidence base as well as reporting novel findings from the latest empirical studies, to explore both the benefits and challenges faced in the adoption of remote working.

REMOTE WORK IN CONTEXT

Remote working has gained significant traction as a term used to refer to the recent expansion of home-working in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. While remote working can involve paid work taking place within or from the home, it is broader in meaning and has in the past often been defined in reference to paid work that takes place outside of the normal or main workplace (Green, 2017; Pyöriä, 2011). It should, therefore, be acknowledged at the outset of this handbook that the recent use of remote work employed is somewhat of a departure from some existing definitions which focus on mobile forms of work outside of the main workplace. Indeed the home has become the main workplace for many, at least in the short term, and this reflects an evolving understanding of the concept of remote work.

The focus in this handbook is on remote working as work taking place within the home, while acknowledging the broader use of the term in some chapters which touch upon forms of mobile and distributed work. A useful definition of remote working as employed in this handbook is a 'flexible work arrangement that affords employees the ability to periodically, regularly, or exclusively perform work for their employers from home or another remote location that is equipped with the appropriate computer based technology to transfer work to the central organization' (Caillier, 2012, 462). Remote working under this definition can be used interchangeably with other terms including teleworking or telecommuting, both of which are understood as flexible forms of work in which the tasks of employment take place within a range of locations including at home, at client sites, on the move, in hotels, airports, in a co-working location, smart centre or digital work hub (Bentley et al., 2016, 207). Definitions of teleworking describe it as a 'work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections' (Fitzer, 1997, 65), or as 'remote work [that] involves the use of [ICT]' (Sullivan, 2003, 159). As such, a range of other terms can also be used to refer to these notions of remote work such as mobile work, distributed work, distance work and virtual work, all of which are themselves distinct to some degree in their meaning (see Hislop & Axtell, 2009; Pyöriä, 2011, 166; Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Home-based teleworking, as a sub-form of teleworking, is a further term useful in defining remote working as employed in the chapters of this handbook. Home-based teleworking refers to teleworking which takes place within the home and is facilitated by ICTs. It includes workers whose main workplace is the home, but also extends to those whose main workplace is in a standard employer premise and who work at home on a more informal or fluid basis (Mokhtarian et al., 2004; Wheatley, 2020). As per the definitions of both remote work and teleworking more broadly, use of ICTs – broadband internet, wireless technologies, cloud computing, personal computers, tablets and Smartphones – is highlighted as an important component and facilitator of home-based teleworking (Bentley et al., 2016). These technologies enable work to be conducted without geographical limits, providing virtual and location-independent work potential and 24/7 connectivity (Moos & Skaburskis, 2007). The use of these technologies, however, does vary considerably and some workers will employ fairly basic ICTs in their remote working routines.

REMOTE WORK IMPACTS: THE EVIDENCE BASE

A substantive international evidence base has developed in recent decades which explores the range of impacts associated with remote working. A number of potential benefits have been identified. One of the most commonly cited potential benefits of working remotely at home is the greater control it enables

workers to have over the timing and structure of the working day (Tietze et al., 2009; Wheatley, 2012). An associated benefit is the removal of the time and financial cost invested in the commute, an outcome that also offers wider societal benefits from reductions in the environmental impacts of cars and other modes of transportation. The commute has been shown to be one of the least appreciated activities among many workers, although this is primarily among those travelling by car (Wheatley & Bickerton, 2016). It should also be noted that the commute does offer an important spatial separation between work and home (life), and this separation is often desirable as it enables workers to prepare for work at the beginning, and equally to switch-off at the end, of the working day (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). An often-argued benefit arising from the other impacts of remote working is that it can result in higher levels of productivity (Bloom et al., 2015). Workers are able to better manage the tasks of employment alongside household responsibilities, and have an improved ability to focus where there are fewer distractions present in the home relative to a workplace (Sander et al., 2019).

Existing research, further, suggests that these impacts can offer well-being benefits that are reflected in subjective well-being i.e. self-reported measures of well-being consisting of emotional responses and experienced feelings which can be both positive and negative (Pavot & Diener, 2013). Remote working, and especially homeworking, have been found to have positive effects on job and leisure satisfaction (Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Morganson et al., 2010; Wheatley, 2012, 2017). However, the extent of these effects may be dependent on the personality type of the individual worker. For example, an individual who is more extroverted may find it difficult be gain satisfaction from work when there is physical distance from the workplace and their colleagues (Virick et al., 2010). The relative benefits may also differ between different occupations and sub-groups of workers. Some of the greatest benefits have been reported by highly skilled homeworkers, whose jobs exhibit a number of qualities of 'good work' and accompanying benefits for levels of satisfaction. In contrast, some part-time and self-employed remote workers report lower quality experiences (Wheatley, 2021). This is highly important given the recent expansion in remote working has included workers in occupations exhibiting lowers levels of job autonomy. Working remotely at home may also be more inclusive as it expands opportunities to engage in paid work, including for workers who may find employment in standard workplace environments challenging, such as individuals with substantive caring responsibilities or a disability (Green, 2017, 1646). A number of the aforementioned benefits not only impact the individual but also the organization. Enhanced productivity is a primary benefit felt by the organizations, as well as cost reduction through the ability to reduce or even close workplace locations (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Moos & Skaburskis, 2008).

While there a range of benefits that can be realised, remote working is not without its challenges. One of the primary difficulties encountered is the loss, or reduction, of face-to-face contact with colleagues and clients. Workers can suffer negative well-being effects arising from the loss of professional and social networks where workers find it difficult to maintain regular contact, and associated feelings of isolation (Bentley et al., 2016; Tietze et al., 2009). Potential negative impacts have also been reported on career development as workers become less visible within the organization as they interact with a smaller pool of colleagues and receive less managerial support (Virick et al., 2010). At the wider team and organizational level associated challenges are faced in coordinating collaborative and team working tasks when teams are physically distant. While many of those working remotely adapt to the use of online platforms for meetings and socialising, relationships can be difficult to maintain virtually. Organizations have to consider these communication difficulties and, moreover, the loss of agglomeration benefits associated with informal knowledge sharing and idea development i.e. water cooler chat.

Another of the major challenges faced in the use of remote working is that of workers dividing time and space between work and the rest of their lives. Working in the home results in a blurring of boundaries potentially acting as a source of work-life conflict (Russell et al., 2009). Not all employees will find remote working a stress free experience. Difficulties are faced in combining work with other household responsibilities including childcare, lack of appropriate home space for a workstation, and potential domestic disharmony especially where more than one individual is working at home resulting in distractions or competition for space. These impacts also appear distinct across diversity characteristics including gender and social class, creating some concerns around the inclusivity of remote working, as explored within some of the chapters of this handbook. Overwork, i.e. working longer hours than those contracted, and more intense working patterns are a particular risk faced by many individuals when working remotely (Nätti et al., 2011). Recent analysis performed on the CIPD's 2019 UK Working Lives Survey, for example, identified the potential for significant overwork amongst those working at home (see Wheatley & Gifford, 2019). Expectations around workers always being available and difficulties in separating both time and space between work and home can act as drivers of these behaviours.

The physical remote working environment also poses a number of concerns, including around health and safety. Carrying out health and safety assessments and the obvious invasion of privacy that this could necessitate has historically acted as a considerable barrier to employee interest in working at home (Tietze et al., 2009). Where remote working reflects more of a cost reduction exercise by an organization it effectively shifts onto the worker the costs of workspace (Moos & Skaburskis, 2008, 336), but this could leave the worker with an unsuitable physical work environment and/or significant costs in adapting a workspace within the home. Provision of physical resources by employers including equipment e.g. laptops, Wi-Fi routers, workstations and others, not only provide a more comfortable environment and act as a source of job satisfaction, but can have health and safety implications that impact upon worker productivity (including via sickness absence rates). Investments in physical resources to enable and enhance remote working have to be weighed against relative benefits, but lack of investment can have detrimental impacts for worker and organization, as poor ergonomics and inadequate equipment can lead to health impacts including eyestrain and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) (Brand, 2008). In addition, working at home is often a sedentary activity, and this represents a further dimension with regard to health impacts. Even where resources are available, a range of other concerns may be present including the pressure of multiple people in the home requiring a workspace and/or equipment as already noted, and technical issues such as slow internet connections. The rapid expansion of remote working has tested the capacity of organization systems with regard to both the realities of ICTs being used so widely, but also due to historic lack of investment among some employers who have remained too strongly wedded to traditional work routines. Remote working has seen the repurposing of online tools, including social media for work tasks and the socialisation of remote colleagues (Davison et al., 2018; Forgren & Byström, 2018). Use of some of these tools has been controversial due, for example, to concerns over encryption and security, potential misuse by workers and vulnerabilities associated with contextual collapse (Buglass et al., 2016; Koch et al., 2013).

Fear of the loss of control over workers and malfeasance have acted as an organizational barrier to the application of remote working routines (Allen et al., 2015). Sato (2019) reports on this assertion in the context of the practice of teleworking in Japan where it was found that many, even larger, organizations do not provide formal teleworking opportunities for the majority of employees. Where employers lack trust in their workers, they often engage in high levels of micro-management using monitoring tools

(Wight & Raley, 2009). This can be enacted using technical control systems including software which records and monitors activity and task completion (Callaghan & Thompson, 2001). These systems provide a mechanism for work to be monitored and evaluated and do have the potential to be used effectively to promote task completion and productive work effort among remote workers through targets and deliverables, however this is not always the case.

Concerns around malfeasance drive the application of Taylorist 'low discretion' work organization and micro-management and monitoring and surveillance systems (Choi et al., 2008). These measures, though, reflect distrust and inflexibility around task completion which can result in high intensity and potentially demotivating working conditions. Employed in this manner, remote working creates an invasion of privacy and can cause work-related stress (Russell et al., 2009, 89), counteracting a number of the benefits from paid work being performed outside of the traditional workplace. Technical control systems can be exploited by workers as it is possible with the use of some of these systems to take advantage of limitations in the monitoring mechanisms such as asking others to occasionally log activity when not working. More intelligent systems continue to be developed, partly in response to these concerns, including those that incorporate facial recognition software to monitor time spent at the workstation. Concerns of this nature can, therefore, both reflect a risk to productivity and performance or a lack of trust dependent on the worker and other case-specific factors, but either way these concerns act to limit buy-in from some employers (Wight & Raley, 2009) and the realised benefits from remote work.

The existing evidence base reports a range of impacts from remote working, both positive and negative. However, much of the evidence base focuses on work taking place at home or in other locations outside of employer/business premises among workers who work at least some of the time in other locations (a main workplace, client sites etc.). Generating understanding of the specific impacts of the rapid expansion of remote working in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and its longer term effects is, therefore, of high importance, as workers, organizations and policy-makers consider previous and current modes of work and make decisions regarding future application of remote work.

RAPID EXPANSION DURING THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The rapid expansion of the numbers of workers across the globe undertaking paid work at home all of the time or as the main place of work has been unprecedented. Proportions of workers reporting remote or home-based teleworking eclipsed the levels prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic as a result of lockdowns and other social distancing measures employed in many nations throughout 2020 and 2021. Estimates prior to the pandemic suggested a steady growth in workers who reported their home as their main or primary workplace (Wheatley, 2020). For example, across the EU-27 countries a relatively consistent figure was reported between 2009 and 2019 of around one-in-twenty employees usually working from home. More notable growth has occurred in more flexible applications of remote working involving homeworking being combined with time spent at the office, visiting clients or some other, often informal, flexible arrangement. This more hybrid model of remote working was reported across the EU-27 by 5.2% of employees in 2009, but had increased to 9% by 2019 (Milasi et al., 2020). Working from home has historically always been more prominent among the self-employed and recent UK data from 2018 suggests around one-third of the self-employed reported their home as their primary workplace (Wheatley, 2020).

An important distinction present in the rapid expansion of remote working is that it has been imposed in response to the external environment rather than it reflecting a more flexible working arrangement. Government guidance has influenced the short-term prevalence of remote working across a number of nations where workers have been asked to work from home where it is possible. Many employees, as a result, have during at least some of 2020 and 2021 reported the home as the sole location of work. This is reflected in substantive growth in remote working. For example, in the EU-27 and the UK it was estimated that around 40% of those who remained working shifted to homeworking at peak in 2020 (Milasi et al., 2020). In Brazil over one-third (35%) of workers reported working from home in mid-2020 (ILO, 2020). In the US the proportions reporting working remotely on a regular basis peaked at up to half of workers (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). The expansion is, in principle, temporary and rates of homeworking have reduced in some nations from peak, for example to around one-in-three workers reporting exclusively homeworking in the UK and US by Autumn 2020 (Brenan, 2020; Milasi et al., 2020). The changes have, though, prompted wider debate regarding more permanent transformation of working routines toward greater application of remote working. In addition, it has led some high profile businesses to make the decision to close workplace locations and ask their employees to work at home on a permanent basis (Brownlee, 2020).

It is, however, necessary to contextualise the recent growth in remote work. Working at home has continued to reflect somewhat of a privilege that is most widely available in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations, although significant expansion has been reported in associate professional and other occupations such as sales which exhibit lower levels of job autonomy. Some of those unable to work at home, meanwhile, have been subject to furlough schemes or in some cases loss of employment. In addition, estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggest that currently only around 18% of workers globally could work from home. There are significant variations present in current potential for home-based work between high and lower to middle income countries as summarized in Figure 1.1. For a far greater proportion of workers in some regions of the globe homeworking

Figure 1. Global home-based work potential
Source: data from ILO (2020)
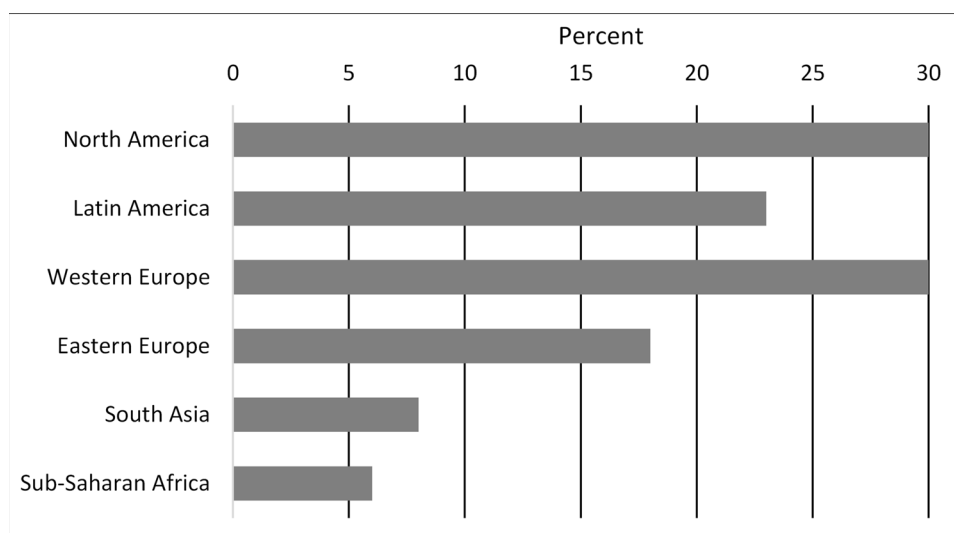
is not feasible due to: (1) the nature of jobs associated with the organization of production i.e. more jobs in primary and secondary sectors; (2) the size of the informal employment sector, and; (3) the limited availability of technology which facilitates work at home.

As such, the evidence identifies that currently there are quite considerable limits to the application of remote working geographically. There are jobs that cannot simply be converted to be performed in the home in their current design, including those involving mass production and highly divided labour, for example, machine operatives and assembly workers. Meanwhile, other occupations are heavily reliant on workers travelling to an employment centre including certain jobs in the hospitality sector. Further expansion of remote working may, therefore, result in significant structural change in the labour market. Returning to the main focus of this handbook, generating an understanding of the impacts of a more permanent application of remote working in those occupations where it can be applied is of significant relevance, both in relation to the well-being of workers and their organizations. Much of the existing evidence focuses on working remotely on a more flexible basis i.e. combining working at home and in the office, where more positive impacts have generally been reported (Wheatley, 2017, 2021). And despite the enforced nature of the expansion of remote working initial evidence has suggested that many workers do show a preference to continue to work at home at least some of the time (Eurofound, 2020).

In the aftermath of the pandemic organizations will need to consider how to manage the phased lifting of social distancing and other health and safety measures, and reorganization of work in potentially more space-limited physical working environments where workplaces have been rationalised. Organizations may choose to adopt hybrid working routines i.e. blending homeworking and office working, as social distancing would not allow all staff to be on site at the same time. As well as obvious impacts on workers, these considerations have implications for human resource management in organizations as challenges will be faced in managing employees where new working routines have been adopted. The impacts of the rapid expansion of remote working, are in many respects, still being revealed and the chapters of this handbook contribute to our understanding in this arena.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook explores a highly important area of recent change in paid work; the rapid expansion of remote working arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic. As such the handbook provides a significant contribution through generating understanding of the impacts, challenges, and opportunities presented by the large-scale move to remote working, including considering how the changes put in place in response to the global pandemic may have lasting impacts on the places and ways in which we work. The handbook is innovative in both its content and approach. It draws together the latest research from academics from across the globe, providing a wide range of contexts and cases to develop an early evidence base on this current and highly important area of research. The contributions in this handbook outline the findings from up-to-the-minute research into the impacts of the rapid expansion of remote working, providing novel evidence as well as setting debates and agendas for continued research. Within the handbook the authors consider a wide range of different dimensions of remote working. These include but are not limited to: how to design and redesign jobs for remote working; the skills essential for effective remote working; how to balance remote working with the rest of our lives; the physical remote working environment; the physical and psychological impacts of working from home; how to maintain relation-

ships with colleagues and clients when working remotely; the role of trust in building and maintaining virtual teams, and; the impacts of remote working on industrial relations and labour market regulation.

As the handbook contains contributions from multiple disciplines it has relevance to a number of academic fields across the social sciences including economics, economic geography, human resource management, psychology and social policy. The handbook is global in its coverage, offering a comprehensive reference to inform scholars and practitioners of the ways in which remote working can be employed effectively as well as the range of challenges faced in its operation. This handbook draws together the latest research on remote working and its impacts, and as such has a clear relevance to academic audiences. However, the breadth of scope and accessibility of the chapters provide a resource of much wider relevance including for a range of practitioners, e.g. HR professionals, and policy-makers. It also has a wider relevance to workers given the highly relevant nature of the content included in the handbook to the quality of our working lives. The shift to remote working witnessed in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic offers a significant opportunity to critically reflect on labour mark structures and modes of work and this handbook offers an invaluable resource in informing research and practice surrounding remote work and worker well-being in the post-COVID era.

OVERVIEW OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook comprises chapters reflecting on research conducted by the authors into the impacts, challenges, and opportunities presented by the large-scale move to remote working in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Following this introduction in Section 1 of the handbook, Chapters 1 to 6 report on the impacts of remote working in a range of contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Section 2, Chapters 7 to 12 reflect on the structure of remote work in the post-COVID era, including implications for job design, careers, workplace, and the regulation of work. Finally, in Section 3, chapters 13 to 18 turn to consideration of the implications for managing and working remotely in the post COVID-19 era, offering insight into the potential lived realities of the future of work.

Section 1: Understanding the Impacts of Remote Working

In this part of the handbook, we begin with a chapter by Oliver Baumann and Elizabeth Sander, which uses self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) as a foundation to assess the existing literature on the psychological impacts of remote work arrangements and outlines suggestions for future research. The chapter provides a number of important insights including highlighting the importance of autonomy, a key benefit, and social isolation, a key potential negative impact, as factors influencing experiences of remote work.

In Chapter 2, Lygia Sabbag Fares, Ana Luíza Matos de Oliveira and Lilian Nogueira Rolim explore the gender dynamics of remote working under social distancing restrictions in Brazil. They report on the findings of a survey receiving 455 responses, and outline the patterns of domestic and care work, comparing men and women, and remote and non-remote workers. The chapter highlights that remote work tends to be associated with an increase in the time spent on domestic work. This takes place in a continued uneven division of reproductive work and, despite individual improvements when men undertook remote work, the interplay between remote work and domestic and care work has important implications for gender inequality.

Jacqueline Strenio and Joyita Roy Chowdhury present a discussion of how the transition to remote work and increased reliance on ICTs have effected changes in the perpetration of sexual harassment in Chapter 3. Using a comparison of countries from the Global North (US) and Global South (India), they examine the benefits and challenges posed by remote work in combatting sexual harassment. They provide both cautions and policy recommendations and argue, importantly, that remote work provides an opportunity to challenge workplace cultures, to establish guidelines and set examples for an inclusive work environment where all workers can work with security and dignity.

In Chapter 4, Paul Delany offers an in-depth reflection on how the pandemic has affected writers and readers of literary fiction. The chapter uses this case to illustrate the importance of social settings in the production of literary works, how the structure of this market has changed in recent years, and the potential impacts of the pandemic for the future of the sector. While the chapter focuses on a specific case, it has a much broader relevance to sectors that are characterised by what the author describes as a 'winner-takes-all' labour market structure such as professional sports.

Madhavi Venkatesan, in Chapter 5, uses the case of teaching a Principles of Economics course in Higher Education to illustrate a number of the impacts of the adoption of remote working. The chapter considers the impacts on both instructor and learners of the adoption of remote and hybrid models of learning including increasing the inclusivity of Higher Education through offering a potentially more flexible, efficient and personalised approach, but also some of the difficulties associated with reduced human physical contact including social isolation and loss of motivation. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of investment in suitable communication technologies to facilitate remote working and learning arrangements.

Chapter 6, by Francesca Amenduni and colleagues, considers the impact of the move to remote education using the case of teachers in Schools in Italy. The chapter reports the findings from 59 interviews with teachers across levels of education. It reflects on the adoption of smart-working methods and ICTs in education, offering the perspectives of teachers including reflections on how they adapted to the change in their role and delivery of education, and how the experience of teaching in new ways online impacts their professional identity. The chapter reports on the self-efficacy gained from the process of learning-by-doing and having to adapt to new ways of working resulting from the pandemic.

Section 2: The Structure of Remote Work in the Post-COVID Era

This part of the handbook begins, in Chapter 7, with a discussion presented by Peter Holland and Chris Brewster focusing on the ways in which the rapid expansion of remote working can inform job (re)design in the post-pandemic era. Explored in the context of job crafting, they consider the good and not so good aspects of working from home, including relationships, workloads, the role of management, and impacts of technologies being deployed for the purpose of monitoring and surveillance of employees. They also reflect on the potential benefits of the widespread adoption of flexible and hybrid work routines, including those offered by the new Finnish model of flexible work that provides flexibility through recasting working time to focus on the work done, as opposed to the place or space in which it occurs.

Maria Kordowicz, in Chapter 8, reflects on the economic and societal focus on productivity, arguing that the dominant ideology of productivity, in reducing societal progress to a measure of input versus output, is problematic. The chapter highlights how enforced home-based remote working has increased tensions with productivity as workers encounter more intense routines, excessive monitoring, and work-

life blurring, which increase risk of burnout. The chapter argues that through highlighting the problems of the current system, the pandemic provides a platform for social, political and economic change, toward a focus on human values such as the right to rest and secure meaningful employment over profits and the pervasive push for productivity.

In Chapter 9, the authors Navya Kumar and Swati Alok, apply a new cyclical model of career advancement, the Competence Career Advancement Model (CCAM), to consider career advancement in white-collar occupations engaged in working from home. The chapter uses the CCAM model to consider the range of impacts on career development and progression of working from home, and methods for employees to achieve career success, and employers to effectively manage talent when working remotely. They argue the importance of considering the suitability of the job, and support required for the employee (resources, training etc.), when making decisions regarding shifting to work from home. The chapter also highlights the role of communication and relationships in effectively applying work from home.

Chapter 10, by Anne Green and Rebecca Riley, traces the possible short- and medium-term implications for workplaces. Drawing on data for the UK, the chapter considers a number of important dimensions of potential spatial change in work, including: the changing attractiveness of different locations of work and related impacts for city centres, outer urban centres, market towns and rural areas. It also considers the potential implications for geographical segregation and inequalities as different sub-groups face different possibilities for remote working and highlights the importance of place-based policy. They emphasize that agglomeration benefits of centralised economic activity may still be realised, but in a different form, as workers adopting a hybrid home-workplace routine desire social interaction when visiting the workplace requiring offices to evolve to cater for such working patterns.

Elizabeth Sander, Alannah Rafferty then Peter Jordan explore the under-researched aspect of the physical work environment of the home in Chapter 11. It draws on existing understanding of the impacts of the physical work environment of the office and considers the potential impacts of the physical home working environment. The chapter emphasizes the impact of work entering the home in changing the relationship with space, as workers balance potentially conflicting demands and challenges of work and non-work activities. They further highlight the role of the organization both in providing the physical resources to enable work from home, but also in embedding safe working routines including breaks and hours of work.

Chapter 12, by Kantha Dayaram and John Burgess, considers the regulatory implications of the expansion of remote work using the case of Australia. Drawing on qualitative data collected during the pandemic through semi-structured interviews with human resource and industrial relations professionals, they argue that continued extensive use of remote working requires regulatory change. This includes revisiting/designing legislation regarding the right to request flexible working arrangements, the right to disconnect, associated monitoring of incidence of long hours and work intensification, employee privacy associated with monitoring and surveillance systems, and support for physical and psychological health and safety. They also highlight the complexities faced in providing appropriate regulation of casual workers, including gig workers.

Section 3: Informing the Future of Remote Work

The final section of the book considers how the rapid expansion of remote working will influence the future of work. We begin this part of the handbook with Chapter 13, by Luisa Errichiello and Tommasina Pianese, who draw on a case study of an IT multinational in Italy to explore how different forms of

(perceived) organizational support – supervisor/manager, employee/co-worker, and technology-related – can facilitate the effective implementation of remote working. They categorize under seven themes the specific features that, individually and collectively, contribute to positively shaping employee perception of support through a set of recommended institutionalized practices and ICT tools. Importantly, the chapter notes that while these tools and practices facilitate effective remote work, too much emphasis on embedding a fully remote culture could result in an undervaluing of organizational support for hybrid (remote and office-based) routines.

In Chapter 14, Julia Ayache and colleagues, reflect on the role played by the workplace as a collective social space and in building a sense of belonging and the challenges faced in replicating these characteristics in virtual workspaces. Reviewing existing contributions, they suggest that media richness, co-temporality and visibility are key factors which can be employed to nurture the sense of social presence, build emotional connections and provide a sense of proximity and shared identity among virtual teams. They argue the benefits of the provision of virtual spaces that encourage informal congregations and casual conversations, and explore the potential use of virtual reality in enhancing virtual interactions.

Chapter 15, by Colin Hughes and Mark Saunders, explores the role of trust in virtual teams. As well as emphasizing the challenges faced in building trust when working remotely, the chapter highlights the behaviours of leaders that can both demonstrate their own trustworthiness to, and of, virtual team members. The evidence from an empirical study, which reveals the behaviours which signal a leader's own trustworthiness to virtual team members and their trust of team members, is used to develop a member-centric framework for enabling high trust virtual team leadership.

In Chapter 16, Vinita Seshadri and Elangovan N. consider factors affecting, and methods for effectively managing, geographically distributed teams (GDTs). Using data collected pre-pandemic in India they explore the challenges faced in GDTs associated with social distance i.e. 'us' vs 'them' attitudes where teams are geographically dispersed and there is status inequality. They outline a number of potential methods to enhance team effectiveness including alignment of tasks with, and increased awareness of, higher level objectives; increasing shared identity, creation of a more inclusiveness working environment, and increasing understanding around the context in which different teams work.

Tatjana Byrne and Rosa Martins de Oliveira, in Chapter 17, consider the implications of the rapid expansion of remote working for worker representation and worker rights using evidence from an empirical study of a multi-national financial organization in the EU. They consider the impacts of remote operation of meetings and consultations, relationships between workers, worker representatives and leaders, and how the learning from the pandemic may inform the future of worker representation. They argue that alternatives to existing forms of consultation and co-determination, in the form of adaptive governance, are necessary to ensure continued worker representation in the changing work environment. They also highlight the importance of re-instituting worker representation into decision making, following its loss where organizations responded to the short-term challenges faced by the pandemic.

In the final chapter of the handbook, author Phil Lord reflects on the impacts of the growth of remote work on our individual and collective identities. The chapter provides important insight into the tension between the expanded flexibility offered by homeworking and the lived reality in which greater flexibility in paid work can result in work and life competing at all times. The chapter also considers how remote working may challenge the gendered household division of labour. The chapter ends by proposing that the structural changes witnessed in relation to the growth in remote work will in turn likely lead to a long-term change in our identities, driving a positive transformation of gender roles and of the household which will make the spouses closer to equal partners.

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