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**WORKING IN A POST-PANDEMIC  
SOCIETY: AN INTERNATIONAL  
PERSPECTIVE**

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# THESIS

## 1. Introduction

### a. Contextualisation of the issue. Justification for its importance.

Aside from the industrial revolution, I and II World War and the two major financial crises, few events in modern history have precipitated such a profound transformation in the workforce like the COVID-19 pandemic. Trickling in our lives in late 2019 before flooding the world, this crisis altered many aspects of how we live and work. While it challenged our traditional paradigms of work, it also catalyzed a seismic shift towards telework and no longer working in the office full-time.

Before the pandemic, telework either held a negative connotation or was a niche option only for jobs based within specific sectors like technology. Even in traditional work environments, where physical office spaces and face-to-face interactions were the standard (education, healthcare or the corporate world) had been forced universally to an abrupt transition to remote working due to the onset of the pandemic. This urgent move not only disrupted the conventional workforce dynamics, but it ushered in an era of introspection regarding the very nature of work and its implications on societal and cultural constructs. The enforced shift to telework has raised pivotal questions about work-life balance, employee well-being, organizational efficiency, and the technological readiness of businesses to handle such a transformative change.

As we stand in early 2024, it is imperative to critically examine and understand the dimensions of this shift. The importance of this study lies in its timeliness and relevance; it explores an issue that is not only contemporary but also crucial in shaping the future of work. By investigating the historical and theoretical frame-work, the cultural and social responses to new workplace measures all around the globe, and the long-term implications on the global employment landscape, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the post-pandemic work environment internationally.

While telework has been heavily debated, it positively opened many doors for the workforce. Terminating the daily commute has allowed more time for employees to work smarter, as well as allow for time with their families or for personal time and well-being. This transition has contributed to a healthier work-life balance, while also leading to a

reduction in transportation-related stress and expenses. Furthermore, remote work has democratized job opportunities, allowing professionals to access roles regardless of geographical constraints and has required companies to adopt more flexible work policies. The shift towards remote work has allowed a culture of trust within the employee and employer, encouraging a focus on productivity and outcomes rather than traditional office hours. Additionally, the environmental impact cannot be overlooked, with decreased commuter traffic leading to a stark reduction in carbon emissions, aiding global sustainability.

While the popularity of telework has great advantages, there are also challenges and setbacks within the new frontier of work. Cybersecurity, data privacy and the pitfalls of adaptation of businesses are all taken more seriously post-pandemic due to our livelihoods and work being a mostly online endeavor. The shift had a trickle-down effect that was felt in all aspects of our daily lives. Understanding their intricacies is crucial in equipping policymakers, organizations, and individuals with insights and strategies to navigate this new normal effectively.

In essence, this thesis is not merely an academic exercise; it is a pertinent inquiry into a phenomenon that has shaped the livelihoods of millions across the globe. Its impacts are not finite, rather they are constantly changing and evolving. It is a step towards understanding and adapting to a world where the boundaries of work have been redrawn, where the traditional office is no longer the epicenter of professional life, and where the future of work is being rewritten in real-time.

**b. Objectives pursued in the research/dissertation and the methodology to be used for it.**

This thesis is guided by a series of interconnected objectives. It begins by contextualizing the pre-pandemic workforce, delving into the dynamics of telework as it was understood and practiced prior to 2020. This sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the shift that followed, providing a crucial baseline against which the pandemic's impacts can be measured. Simultaneously, the research extends to a global analysis of labor laws, capturing the legal adaptations and transformations sparked by the pandemic within the most important legal bodies world-wide.

At the core of this thesis, what drove me to investigate on the topic, is also a keen analysis of the social responses to the changing workplace. Integral to understanding this transformation is an exploration of how multinationals have responded. By examining these adaptations, the research sheds light on the operational shifts within large organizations, providing insights into corporate responses to global challenges. Furthermore, the study will address the nuanced challenges of teleworking, such as cybersecurity, data privacy, and the safeguarding of confidential information in a digital workspace.

Finally, the thesis aims to project the long-term implications for the global employment landscape. This consists of contemplating the direction and permanence of these shifts and what they signify for the future of work. It also pulls from previous seismic events and the workforce's response to adaptation because of them. Whether it is the industrial revolution or a global pandemic, change happens and manifests deeply in the aftermath.

To achieve these objectives, the methodology is rooted in a thorough review of contemporary academic journals, authoritative books, and newly published materials. Given the recency of the subject matter, the focus is on high-quality, recent publications that offer current insights into the rapidly evolving work environment. This approach ensures that the research is not only academically rigorous but also resonates with the realities of a post-pandemic society. In putting together these objectives and methodologies, the thesis aspires to provide a holistic understanding of the post-pandemic work environment, reflecting the complex nature of this global transformation.

### **c. Presentation of the work**

As this introduction draws to a close, it has highlighted the multifaceted landscape of the post-pandemic work environment. The upcoming sections are structured to systematically explore each facet of this transformation. Rather than a mere recount of changes, this thesis attempts to weave together the narratives of individuals, organizations, and societies as they navigate the post-pandemic world. It seeks to provide more than facts; it aims to offer perspectives, analyses, and insights that are both reflective and forward-looking.

Each section plays off the last, creating a narrative that is comprehensive and not only addresses the immediate impacts of the pandemic but also rummages in the deeper societal and cultural shifts that have emerged. I will explore how businesses, large and small, have adapted their strategies and operations, and how employees have renegotiated their

relationship with work. Central to this discussion is an examination of the advantages, challenges and opportunities that teleworking presents, from technological advancements to issues of cybersecurity and data privacy. These chapters will offer a critical analysis of the risks and rewards inherent in our new digital workspaces.

Finally, the thesis will culminate in a discussion on the future of work. This will not be a mere speculation but a grounded projection based on the trends and patterns uncovered through this research. It will showcase a way in which we can view the potential trajectories of our work lives and prepare for the possibilities that lie ahead. It aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about our professional lives in this new era and define and redefine work.

## 2. ANALYSIS FROM A MACRO POINT OF VIEW

### a. Historical and theoretical framework

#### i. Contextualisation of pre-pandemic telework

Prior to COVID-19, telework was rarely spoken about in an overarching way. It was a one-off way of working, as in – maybe you knew one person in your life that had a form of working from home.<sup>1</sup> This use of the term is the earliest we can derive telework as a concept in history, and even still, it is not what we think of today– replacing and shifting any preconceived notions of the workplace.

Yet, technological advances evolved our ideas of telework.<sup>2</sup> Looking back on this article with almost 40 years difference in between, it feels ahead of its time. Not only does the article bring to light this new option of remote work, but it also showcases how our work is interconnected to all other aspects of our lives. Societal complex issues stem from our behaviors as human beings, and in this case, it was about how gasoline could be the thing between us and solving the energy crisis in the 1970s. This echoes the conversations that we had in 2020, and while we thought that 2020 felt revolutionary, it is fascinating to uncover the echoes of our arguments so many years before. Reduced commuting times and a better work-life balance are all important today in our conversations surrounding telework, and in laying out a model for telework, he predicted so many of our futures.

The practical implementation of telework wasn't documented until the late 1990s and early 2000s. Although Schniff's ideas were insightful, they couldn't be realistically applied without technological advances keeping pace with his vision. With the advent of internet-based video conferencing, like Skype, things were made possible. Though, it has advanced far beyond Skype or Facetime. Rather, Slack, Zoom, and Asana were platforms that facilitated<sup>3</sup> this shift to telework, as these platforms made it possible for project management to become manageable from a distance.

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<sup>1</sup> The History of Telecommuting. Allied Telecom. (2018, September 13).  
<https://www.alliedtelecom.net/the-history-of-telecommuting/>

<sup>2</sup> Schiff, F. W. (1979, September 2). Working at Home Can Save Gasoline. The Washington Post.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1979/09/02/working-at-home-can-save-gasoline/ffa475c7-d1a8-476e-8411-8cb53f1f3470/>

<sup>3</sup> Gerson Lehrman Group, Inc. (2023, June 9). Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack have exploded due to the COVID-19 pandemic. can they hold onto this growth?. GLG.  
<https://glginsights.com/articles/zoom-microsoft-teams-and-slack-have-exploded-due-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-can-they-hold-onto-this-growth/>

The dynamic interplay between individuals' economic circumstances and the feasibility of telework for their respective workforces underscores the pivotal role financial considerations play in shaping the landscape of remote work. The landscape of remote work in Europe was nothing compared to the increase it had amidst and post-pandemic. In 2019, around 14% employed people aged 20–64 years in the European Union (EU) usually worked from home. This was not a jump or spike either, as this rate was a constant for 10 years. This can prove for our studies that remote work was a very niche and limited practice before COVID-19. It is fascinating to see how remote work was adopted in different European countries. Countries like Sweden and the Netherlands had more than 37% of their workforce already in remote work, but the countries of Bulgaria and Romania only had 1-2% of their workforce working remotely. If we look in Asia before the pandemic, it was even less accepted in the workforce. There is a trend found between well-established economies and working from home versus countries that are emerging. In India, the majority of the workforce held jobs that did not rely on communication, rather they were needed for a physical presence.<sup>4</sup> This could manifest in retail or in working in fields like agriculture or manufacturing. In work done by Mckinsey, it was found that only about 12% of the workforce could work remotely without a loss in productivity in India. In comparison to more developed countries, this was much lower. This contrasts with countries in Asia that had more of a potential to adopt telework is fascinating. In economies already well established, telework was easier to transition to with sectors like finance and technology paving the way to hybrid modes of working<sup>5</sup>. That being said, cultural norms had more of a pushback in implementing this new frontier of work.

The situation in the United States is best mirrored in Asia. In a report by the Pew Research Center, it parallels what the Mckinsey analysis of the telework situation was in Asia, which best asserts that the adoption of telework was socioeconomic. For affluent workers, the transitions could be smooth. But, when you recognize the socioeconomic discrepancies, they become grimmer. Only 7% of workers had the access to transition to telework. Instead, it was the white collar jobs that were higher paid salaried positions that

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<sup>4</sup> Working and learning remotely in Europe: The new normal?. CEDEFOP. (2021, June 17).

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/working-and-learning-remotely-europe-new-normal>

<sup>5</sup> Kumra, G., & Lin, D.-Y. (2022, September 2). The future of (hybrid) work. McKinsey & Company.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-asia/future-of-asia-podcasts/the-future-of-hybrid-work>



went to telework without a problem, other than wifi-connectivity<sup>6</sup>. Of course, this was not all black and white, and it was affected by a person's industry, occupation, and the power of their employer. This report made it clear that it was easier in the private sector as well, rather than in jobs supported by the government. There was 7% of private-industry that had immediate access, and there was only 4% of government workers that were able to immediately adopt it. When discussing telework and this new frontier, it is important to recognize the complexity of the transition.

### **b. International legislation**

As I have stated that each country's adequacy for integrating telework was different, exploring differing international legislation's responses will now be better understood. If we may recognize that each country's economy and worker make up are essentially distinct from others, then legislation would be no different. A country's legal system reflects its workforce and economy— as they are all interconnected. Recognizing this requires understanding that legal frameworks often trail behind societal changes.

By breaking down multiple leading international agreements that emerged out of the pandemic on the topic of telework, this data can showcase a comparative analysis of these regulations. This will be in the United States, the European Union, and in Asia. Each of these regions were creating a legal framework in unprecedented times. From this, one can comprehend and analyze the economic incentives associated with these regions. This will revolve around the impact the legislation has upon the individual work life paradigms and on a larger macroeconomic scale. This is not merely a self-study of laws, rather it is a structured examination of the legal adaptations made in the aftermath of the pandemic to better look into the legal adaptations. But before this, it's important to see what legal precedents regarding telework were derived from. Regardless of unprecedented times, any legal substance that emerged amidst the pandemic or post-pandemic, we must be informed of the origins.

### **i. Relevant international agreements**

Before the pandemic, telework had been documented in international agreements. In fact, looking back to 2002, there is an incredibly important international agreement that

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<sup>6</sup> Desilver, D. (2020, March 20). Before the coronavirus, telework was an optional benefit, mostly for the affluent few. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/03/20/before-the-coronavirus-telework-was-an-optional-benefit-mostly-for-the-affluent-few/>

emerged within multiple countries with a framework on telework. This agreement occurred in Europe, and the major milestone was working hand in hand with countries and European partners.<sup>7</sup> It became a baseline to evolve and adapt from.

If we look ahead to the present, in comparison to past legislation, the EU agreement required adapted and evolved changes for the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of government restrictions on going into the workplace during this time, there was a massive shift from past legislation. The amending of this agreement addressed the necessary barriers society had to overcome within this shift, and it was all encompassing to assure that the EU countries' needs were all reflected within the new write up. While the original framework created good structure, it allowed for an easier shift in the changes to be written. This time it made clear that maintaining employment rights and conditions of workers was a top priority. Following this is data protection, privacy, health and safety, training, and more.

While the agreements above are not technically legally enforceable in each member state, there are other standards and protections that have been put in place to mediate parts of the transition. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) provided multiple minute standards to telework. Some of these include: Health and Safety Standards, which were created to minimize the risk of being sedentary at a computer while working.<sup>8</sup> This is not limited to physical wellness, as it also pertains to mental well-being by mitigating factors like anxiety from burnout. This was a highly debated concern and side effect of telework<sup>9</sup>. Aside from this, the ILO also created guidelines that protected labour rights. This was helpful during the pandemic, as working from home looked different for everyone. It could not be a one-size fits all approach. Rather, there had to be room for ambiguity while still maintaining all benefits and rights as a worker.<sup>10</sup> This could fall under the umbrella of work hours, fair wages, or technical support sent to homes. Similar to protecting rights, this amendment allowed for a social discourse to be had in the “Telework and Social Dialogue,” which allowed for the policies to fit the mold of all workers as well. As for the work itself, what our thesis revolves around, there were productivity and management practices that were recommended within the agreement. This manifested in the final product requirements, rather

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<sup>7</sup> Eurofound (2022), Telework in the EU: Regulatory frameworks and recent updates, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>8</sup> a Silva AB, de Medeiros VRF, de Souza RP, Cabral MAL, Másculo FS. Ergonomics and telework: A systematic review. *Work*. 2020;66(4):777-788. doi: 10.3233/WOR-203224. PMID: 32925139.

<sup>9</sup> Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond : a practical guide ([1st ed.]). (2020). International Labour Organization

<sup>10</sup> ILO Monitor : COVID-19 and the World of Work : Updated Estimates and Analysis. 2020. Geneva: ILO. [https://labordoc.ilo.org/discovery/delivery/41ILO\\_INST:41ILO\\_V2/1269579640002676](https://labordoc.ilo.org/discovery/delivery/41ILO_INST:41ILO_V2/1269579640002676)

than meeting certain hours<sup>11</sup>. One could argue this was a more effective way of allocating duties, rather than saying things must be the way they were, from 9-5 with the same requirements. In a different world, there must be adaptation.

## ii. Comparative analysis legislations around the world

If we look at national legislations around the globe, we can see how the culture around telework and the support and social legitimacy varied. Just North America alone is a fascinating case. While Canada responded in an organized format with amendments to an already previously established labour code, Mexico took an approach to regulating telework through rethinking its Federal Labor Law. This was a legally enforceable plan for the new framework, which revolved around whether it was voluntary or involuntary depending on circumstance, on responsibilities to maintain adequate equipment, and protections on user's data<sup>12</sup>. Now, in contrast, the United States approach is far more individualistic. Because of the process of federalism within the states, they were unable to pass an overarching legislature. The states were required to support their own policies because of this. For example, California drafted a bill called the "Right to Disconnect" bill. It granted proactive and more liberal approaches to the bill. If states were not assisting their workers, there were still existing federal labour laws that could fit into aiding with telework.

The European Union is much more cohesive than North America in their approach to protections on telework. As stated previously, there was already a framework established by the EU in 2002 in regard to telework. This was able to be revised, with more concrete guidelines for each member state. In the EU's agreement, points like health and safety, equality in the workforce, and the voluntary nature of it are all addressed. Then, some countries went one step beyond. These guidelines cover voluntary telework, health and safety, and equal treatment. For example, Germany enacted the "Mobile Work Act," and it allowed more flexibility within the new frontier of working from home<sup>13</sup>. The image

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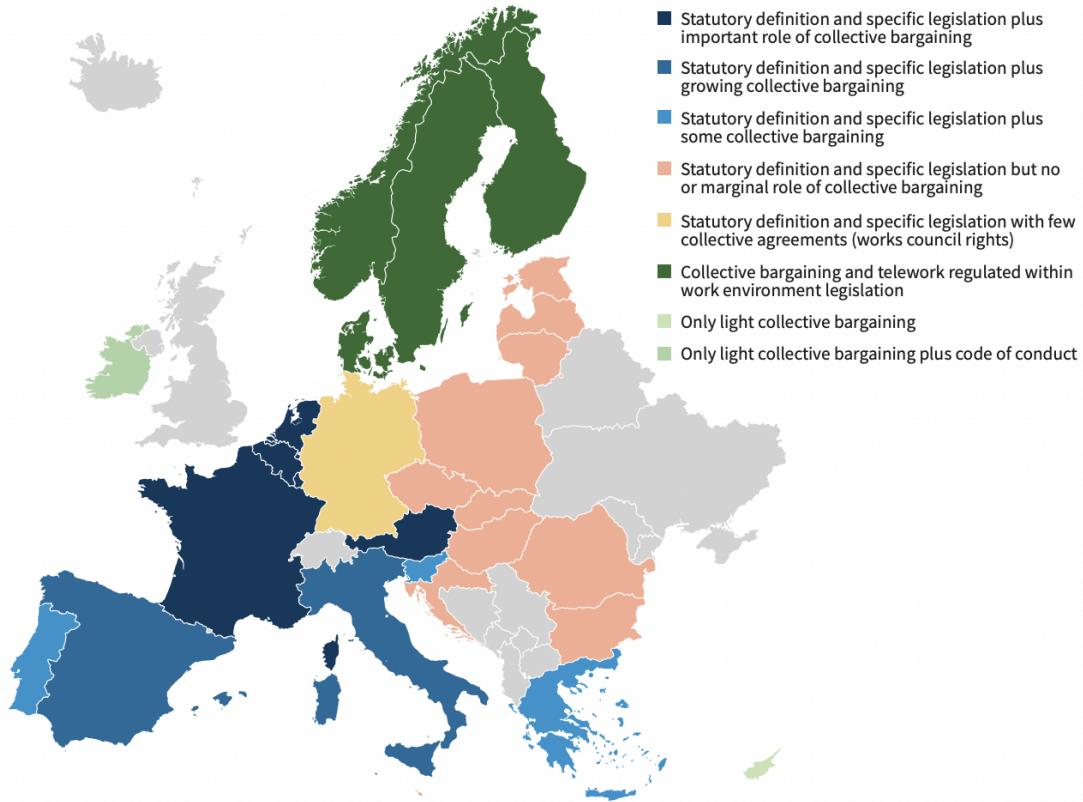
<sup>11</sup> Pyöriä, P. (2011), 'Managing telework: risks, fears and rules'. *Management Research Review*, 34(4)

<sup>12</sup> Treviño, F. U. (2021). Mexico approves reform on telework (Home Office). American Bar Association. Retrieved from [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor\\_law/publications/ilelc\\_newsletters/issue-february-2021/mexico-approves-reform-on-telework/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor_law/publications/ilelc_newsletters/issue-february-2021/mexico-approves-reform-on-telework/)

<sup>13</sup> Boundless. (n.d.). Remote work in Germany. Retrieved from <https://boundlesshq.com/guides/germany/remote-work/#:~:text=As%20of%20January%202021%2C%20the.review%20by%20individual%20federal%20ministries.>

underneath, retrieved from Eurofound's reports<sup>14</sup>, shows how each country in the European Union has reacted legally to telework. This gives a visual of the eclectic approach by each country, while still being united in core values.

Figure 1: Regulation of telework in EU countries and Norway



Asia's legislation on telework was less united than the EU. Each country culturally took differing approaches. Japan<sup>15</sup> and China provided outlines for their businesses, rather than saying this must happen this way. It was in the form of recommendations. South Korea contrasts greatly<sup>16</sup>, as it made amendments to an already established Labor Standards Act. Between all the Asian countries, there were specified guidelines as well as voluntary ideas provided, which represents their individualistic cultural makeup adequately. It also mirrored the economic situations, which translated to their agreements

<sup>14</sup> Eurofound (2022), Telework in the EU: Regulatory frameworks and recent updates, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>15</sup> OECD. (n.d.). Teleworking in the COVID-19 pandemic: Trends and prospects. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/717462ba-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/717462ba-en>

<sup>16</sup> Telework and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: A work-home resources model perspective. *Frontiers in Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1289809>

South America is similar to Asia, as countries were not on a united front about the topic. The cases of Brazil and Argentina are a perfect example for it, as in contrast to Argentina, Brazil's federal response to the pandemic was more relaxed. President Bolsonaro downplayed the severity of the pandemic, labeling it as an exaggeration by the media. Consequently, the federal government implemented relatively few measures to control the virus's spread<sup>17</sup>. This trickled into professional work environments and personal lives.

Oceania's approach towards telework was straight and to the point. It added amendments to their already well-established employment laws. In 2009, they passed The Fair Work Act 2009<sup>18</sup>, and this was added to to assist with pandemic-adjusted needs and approaches. Because of Africa's socioeconomic conditions, varying in extreme ways throughout their continent, there was a much slower roll out of assistance and amendments to worker safety in Africa. While existing labor laws exist, priorities, or shifted a bit in Africa, in comparison to other continents. Countries like South Africa are able to see a more adaptable world within telework, and it is established in many businesses in companies<sup>19</sup>. That being said, there is not much support from the government on protecting workers and that still needs to be fixed.

### **c. National legislation**

#### **i. Analysis and discussion of Spanish national regulation**

While the transformation required legislative responses to telework, being from Spain, I find it pertinent to compare our legal adjustments to the rest of the world. Two laws, Real Decreto-ley 28/2020 of 22nd September on Telework (hereafter referred to as RDL 28/2020) and Law 10/2021 of 9th of July on Telework, which work together represent Spain's beliefs around telework in regards to national labor. Not only does it align with the EU's standards, it also aids all individuals involved. These regulations manifest a caring approach towards employers and workers within a post-pandemic workforce.

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<sup>17</sup> (2020). COVID-19 policy response in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico: Three different national/subnational approaches. Duck of Minerva. Retrieved from <https://www.duckofminerva.com/2020/07/covid-19-policy-response-in-argentina-brazil-and-mexico-three-different-national-subnational-approaches.html>

<sup>18</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission. (n.d.). The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth). Retrieved from <https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/grey-areas-age-barriers-to-work-in-commonwealth-laws-dp-78/2-recruitment-and-employment-law/the-fair-work-act-2009-cth/>

<sup>19</sup> Solidarity Center. (2023). Teleworking in South Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/FINAL-TELEWORKING-IN-SOUTH-AFRICA.pdf>

**Analysis of Royal Decree-Law 28/2020**<sup>20</sup> → RDL 28/2020 is a Spanish labor law that reflects the time in which it was created. Before the law, telework was not in the cultural zeitgeist, other than merely a limited few members of IT departments allowing it. And, any “work from home” employees were not treated differently than those who were in the traditional workforce. But, with the advent of the pandemic, there was a need for more complex labor laws that revolved around the digital landscape. While the law still maintains the basic framework of original labor laws, it adds in the necessary amendments that support workers. One main turning point within the legislation was the understanding of mutual reliance. Telework requires both parties to form an agreement on the work mode. The law is beneficial because of the lack of its rigidity. Rather than setting specific guidelines that were able to be adapted for each work environment, it focused on human principles and protections for all.

Of course, drafting a law does not eliminate all complications. If issues were to arise, RDL 28/2020 has contingency plans and protections. With a new landscape of the workforce, these challenges are all over the place. This includes assistance for the physical and mental toll of working solitary in one's home, as well as outlining the necessity of technological equipment, the required maintenance, and the finances attached to it. Monitoring and close supervision were eliminated within the shift to telework, and this is not taken lightly within the laws put in place. As there are far more opportunities for discrimination and abuse without supervision, the law assures job security is protected and outlines fair working conditions.

**Analysis of Law 10/2021**<sup>21</sup> → Law 10/2021 is derived from RDL 28/2020, as it expands upon more needs associated with telework. It provided specific definitions for different forms of remote work, including telework, and set out clear guidelines for their implementation. The law emphasized a balanced approach, catering to the needs of both employers and employees. It outlined the principles of voluntary and reversible telework, equal treatment in professional conditions, compensation for expenses, and the promotion and training of remote workers. Importantly, Law 10/2021 also addressed the legal treatment of remote

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<sup>20</sup> Spain. (2020). BOE-A-2020-11043. Retrieved from <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-11043>

<sup>21</sup> Spain. (2021). BOE-A-2021-11472. Retrieved from <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2021-11472>

work, advocating for negotiation at the collective bargaining level to tailor the regulation to sector-specific needs. This law also highlighted the importance of telework in combating the demographic challenge of depopulation in rural areas.

## **ii. Regulations' impact on businesses**

The introduction of Royal Decree-law 28/2020 (RDL 28/2020) and Law 10/2021 in Spain adapted the workforce immediately with its requirements. The immediate shift in the workforce was reflected within the legal system of Spain, and as it was mirrored, it was also equally protected. This grew into other sectors of the system, as it pushed over to public policy, to everyday needs, and to operational requirements. If Spanish businesses were resistant to these changes, the laws and their implementation required immediate changes. When it became a legal precedent, it had to be followed, no matter the excuses. This was not just a matter of logistical adaptation but also a legal necessity. Redefining the workforce is not simple, rather it is complex and multilayered. The laws aided as a framework to follow and adhere to.

One of the most important protections required was in regards to data and cybersecurity. It required companies to rethink their practices, and it mandated a protected shift. The importance of this shift was found heavily within fields that base their careers around data, like healthcare and finance. In protecting the health of the company and its employee's data, it also pivoted to the overall health and well-being of workplace environments not being contained within reach. What telework looked like was different for each employee, but employers had to protect workers and provide ample support.

In the public and private sector, the responses varied. In the public sector, evidence from Eurofound's<sup>22</sup> reports shows that both CEOE (Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales) and the trade unions UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores) and CC.OO (Comisiones Obreras) are utterly satisfied with the new and up-to-date regulation. In the private sector, the response was much different by each company. If your field of business was a more technologically savvy practice, there was a smooth transition. In comparison, businesses that relied on human interaction, like retail, suffered in trying to adapt their practices. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) had a whole new world ahead of

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<sup>22</sup> Eurofound (2022), Telework in the EU: Regulatory frameworks and recent updates, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

them, as they had costly shifts as well as managerial. This was due to the requirements in providing technology and new hierarchies of regulations. When a business relies on control, the new world of working from home was something that pushed flexibility and autonomy. This is often more beneficial for the employee versus the employer. That being said, there was more motivation within the work structure and employees' morale. Their complications were within the structure of management amidst freedom, as team-work was not tangible. It had to be developed a bit unnaturally. But, in its overall successes, there were new steps that unraveled. For example, would shifting the finances of handing over office spaces lead to higher pay for employees, or would the revenue go to those above them? These were cultural questions that were uncovered and implemented by all.

#### **d. Conceptualisation**

The concept of telework has been highly debated throughout the years for a variety of reasons. The book “Teleworking: International perspectives”<sup>23</sup> states, “one of the problems of the concept of telework is that its borders are very vague; if one tests the concept empirically, i.e. through specific examples, one repeatedly realises that it is almost impossible to specify what is and what is not telework.” As it takes many different forms, it could be argued that it is a concept that would be difficult to be controlled, whether that is my corporate entities or in the chain of command in teams. This issue was tackled by the book *Telework in the 21st century – An Evolutionary Perspective*,<sup>24</sup> where the author John C. Messenger divides the concept of remote working in three different time periods: a first concept where telework was known as “The Home Office.” The main focus of this inception was founded on the reduction of commuting time, as metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, Paris, or Hong Kong had terrible commuting hours. Employees started adapting their home offices as work places. The second era came when, thanks to the massive development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) mobile devices were already powerful and cheap enough to replace many stationary workplaces. The most worth-mentioning change during this era, as the book states, came with the shift in the way people addressed telework. It was for the first time recognized as a true form of working. This is mirrored in Kurland and Bailey’s study: “The Advantages and Challenges of Working Here, There, Anywhere, and Anytime.” The third

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<sup>23</sup> Jackson, P., & van der Wielen, J. M. M. (1998). *Teleworking: International perspectives*. From telecommunity to the virtual organisation. Routledge.

<sup>24</sup> Messenger, J. C., editor. (2019) *Telework in the 21st Century: An Evolutionary Perspective*. [Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing] [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2020719121/>.



generation of telework Professor Messenger talks about is The Virtual Office generation, when working from home, hybrid work and other possibilities became available for lots of us. As it is described in the book, “in this new generation of ICTs, information is stored in clouds and networks and only needs a tiny device to be accessed [...] This enables work away from the employer’s premises within a miniscule time frame.” Work was becoming more of a system rather than a place, due to technological advances. This would ultimately challenge those initially opposed to the idea.

When the idea of working begins to blur lines, there has to be an understanding of what work is and how it can be conducted. In his book "In Work, at Home: Towards an Understanding of Homeworking,"<sup>25</sup> Alan Felstead offers a well-rounded exploration into telework, specifically on the shift towards work being conducted from home. He discusses the autonomy of telework, the work intensity, and the blurring of boundaries between home and work. These concepts are heavily debated now more than ever, more than 20 years later. The research addresses these blurring of boundaries between work and home life, which can be positive in the convenience aspects– like juggling personal duties with the freedom of when and how you work.

But, Felstead points out that there is a duality in the consequences of homework. What can be understood as positives can quickly melt into negatives– as more time at home may become a potential space to be taken advantage of, as you may never be “out of the office.” This duality underscores the increased importance of technology, as it is not only as a platform of telework but also as the mode of consistent communication. Because of this, Felstead advocates for requiring supportive organizational policies and practices that respect work-life boundaries, emphasize equity and inclusion to ensure telework is accessible and suitable for all employees. This research is foundational for companies, employees, and individuals as we enter a new frontier of reshaping employment landscapes. It allows telework to be enhanced and enforceable.

The global perspective and understanding of telework is critical to understand, as working cultures vary and structuring and organization varies with each. In the book, the study “Managing Spatial, Temporal, and Cultural Boundaries” investigates the challenges faced by teleworkers in managing spatial, temporal and cultural boundaries. The study

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<sup>25</sup> Felstead, A., & Jewson, N. (1999). In Work, At Home: Towards an Understanding of Homeworking (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203018965>

reveals that teleworkers face complex boundary management. Their ability to switch between work and personal life is influenced by physical space, time constraints, and cultural expectations, hence why the need for organizations to set up clear guidelines, training, and support for teleworkers.

In navigating the new frontier of working from home, our vocabulary has expanded on the subject. While remote work, telework, hybrid work, working from home, and home based work have been used interchangeably, there are key differences. Eurofound, an EU Agency for the improvement of living and working conditions, has conducted several studies on the field clarifying the true meaning of these concepts.

Telework, together with telecommuting, appear to be the first developed concepts in the field by Jack Niles and Alvin Toffere when telework “*was understood as home-based work carried out by a standard employee*”.<sup>26</sup> Nowadays, the term telework refers to work setups conducted away from the employer's location thanks to information and communication technologies (ICT). The EU, in its Framework Agreement on Telework (2002), provides this definition: “Telework is any form of organising and/or performing work using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, in which work, which could also be performed at the employer’s premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis.” This is in contrast to the other terminology.

A broader concept is remote work. The International Labour Organization (2020) defined it as “any work carried out outside the employer’s premises regardless of the technology used”.<sup>27</sup> The proper ILO links this to the concept Work At Home, which is defined as “taking place fully or partly (at least once in the last four working weeks) within the worker’s own residence or other type of dwelling in which the worker normally resides.” A similar concept, that we shouldn’t confuse with the former, is home-based work, which the International Labour Organization defines as “persons carrying out work whose main place of work is their own home.” Home is the constant in this terminology. It is the control of the work environment.

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<sup>26</sup> Eurofound (2022), Telework in the EU: Regulatory frameworks and recent updates, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>27</sup> International Labour Organization. (April 2021). Teleworking arrangements during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Paper prepared for the 2nd Employment Working Group Meeting under the 2021 Italian Presidency of the G20.

The trendiest of them all is hybrid work. If you look at job descriptions, hybrid-work is the most repeated. Most commonly, this falls on companies trying to make their offers sound more appealing. All in all, this term has become popular in the aftermath of the pandemic. After reviewing literature, the physical and temporal elements are the two most frequently used constants to define hybrid work. However, virtual and social elements cannot be dismissed. Reports from Eurofound (The future of telework and hybrid work) have agreed that it can be thought as an “intersection between telework or remote work and on-site work.”<sup>28</sup> Many twenty-somethings find this terminology appealing, as it alludes to more freedom without being in the office at all time. It also suggests the socialization aspect of work, with requirements to be there during certain times. In its hypothetical definition, it feels like it has it all. Entering a workforce with flexibility and commitment, hybrid-work attempts to give employees both.

### **3. ANALYSIS FROM A MICRO POINT OF VIEW**

#### **a. Multinational companies**

While we have previously established the overarching themes of telework in a macro point of view, a microanalysis of established companies may aid in our understanding of the process of transition, the pros and cons, and the trials and tribulations along the way. For countries that vouched to protect their workers in the global pandemic, companies had strict guidelines to comply with. In large companies with well-established HR departments and countries that created guidelines for working amidst the pandemic, it was easier than smaller businesses without the crisis infrastructure to support it. In my microanalysis, I will highlight three major companies: JPMorgan Chase, Ernst & Young, Fox, representing 3 major sectors that affect and are affected by the economy, and how each of them has reacted within the hybrid work framework. The table below is the starting point for the comparison.

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<sup>28</sup> Eurofound (2023), The future of telework and hybrid work, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<b>Name of company</b>	<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Growth since 2019</b>	<b>Tackling - protocols (Yes/No)</b>
<b>JP Morgan</b>	240,000	Banking	-16,000	Yes
<b>Fox NEWS</b>	10,400	Entertainment	+2,700 <sup>29</sup>	Yes
<b>EY</b>	395.442	Consulting	+149,756 <sup>30</sup>	Yes

In response to the coronavirus outbreak and following the New York governor's request to slow the spread in early March of 2020, JPMorgan Chase & Co. devised a staggered work-from-home strategy for its New York-area employees. This plan split workers into two groups, with one working from home while the other remained in the office. This was before guidance from the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) was available to know if people could be in the same place together. This alternated weekly. This policy applied primarily to corporate employees in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, while it did not include branch and trading personnel. As they facilitated work from home practices and assisted their employees, it should also be said that they utilized their resources to aid other businesses during this time of need. By leveraging their corporate capabilities, this shows how a company in good standing was able to support both their immediate needs and those around them<sup>31</sup>. While this was a good move in public relations, it also assisted the economy, with mutual benefits.

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, as we dissected above, JPMorgan Chase initiated "Project Kennedy,"<sup>32</sup> a pioneering telework pilot program that aimed to disperse its workforce to avoid virus transmission. This effort positioned the bank as one of the first and most effective leaders in the corporate shift towards remote work amidst the pandemic, as the mitigated spreading before the government required it. Despite the initial success and adoption of remote operations, JPMorgan later mandated a return to office for its

<sup>29</sup> Fox Corporation. (2019). Fox Annual Report 2019. Retrieved from [https://media.foxcorporation.com/wp-content/uploads/prod/2019/09/18223214/Fox-Annual-Report-2019\\_Mid.pdf](https://media.foxcorporation.com/wp-content/uploads/prod/2019/09/18223214/Fox-Annual-Report-2019_Mid.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/189247/number-of-employees-of-ernst-young-by-area/>

<sup>31</sup> JPMorgan Chase & Co. (n.d.). COVID-19 Impact. Retrieved from <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/impact/covid19>

<sup>32</sup> Davis M., (2020, March 3). JPMorgan tests U.S. virus plan with thousands working from home. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-03/jpmorgan-tests-u-s-virus-plan-with-thousands-working-from-home>

employees in September of 2020, which they emphasized as the importance of in-person collaboration for productivity, mentorship, and corporate culture. This decision reflects a nuanced approach to telework, balancing the benefits of remote working with the perceived value of onsite interactions, and suggests a broader industry trend towards hybrid work models. But, this return-to-office directive amidst a pandemic showed the challenges and concerns over employee safety, the practicality of maintaining productivity and collaboration in a traditional office setting amidst health risks, and the contrast between the bank's approach and the ongoing trend of remote work. This move highlighted the tensions in the United States at the time, as much of the workforce saw no problem with moving back in the office. The other half of the country found it incredibly dangerous, with no vaccines in place or protections being followed that the CDC was advising. Individual employees' needs were not being met. With children still out of school, this created childcare vulnerabilities. It compromised immunosuppressed employees, and it showcased discrepancies.<sup>33</sup> This showcased a lack of care for the whole worker, not just the usefulness of an employee, but what happens after their 9-5.

Something fascinating I found in my research was the response of JPMorgan Chase to aid the "real economy," as they concentrated on supporting communities, employees, clients, and customers. The firm utilized its resources to provide over \$2.3 trillion in capital and credit, assist over 400,000 small businesses via the PPP program, offer payment relief to millions, and commit \$250 million to global initiatives targeting those hardest hit. This approach reflects JPMorgan's commitment to leveraging its corporate capabilities for broad societal support during an unprecedented global crisis<sup>34</sup>. There must be a dependency on working with the world around them for their success.

In regard to the entertainment industry, FOX took an approach different to J.P. Morgan, as outlined in their 2020 Corporate Social Responsibility Report. The company offered flexible work arrangements, allowing eligible employees to work remotely under appropriate circumstances, underscoring their commitment to empowering employees to balance work and personal demands effectively. This initiative was part of a broader strategy

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<sup>33</sup> Kelly, J. (2020, September 14). JPMorgan tells bankers to go back to the office, breaking the work-from-home trend. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2020/09/14/jpmorgan-tells-bankers-to-go-back-to-the-office-breaking-the-work-from-home-trend/?sh=580d967b4bfd>

<sup>34</sup> JPMorgan Chase & Co. (n.d.). COVID-19 Impact. Retrieved from <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/impact/covid19>

to adapt to the modern workforce's needs, as the global pandemic outlined the necessity of meeting the workers where they were.

Moreover, FOX's response to the pandemic<sup>35</sup> included quickly transitioning to a remote work policy for all employees whose job functions allowed it. They led the industry by covering 100% of employee-paid medical insurance premiums for full-time employees in FOX-sponsored plans for six months, waived copays for telemedicine, and provided premium pay for essential employees required to work on-site. These measures underscore FOX's commitment to supporting their workforce's health, safety, and financial well-being during the pandemic's unprecedented challenges.

While J.P Morgan Chase is representative of the banking shift during the pandemic, studying EY's transition felt crucial to understand how consulting was affected. Consulting is a business of being face to face. It is all about communication and the human experience, and without the possibility of meeting together, consulting had to change the way it operated. Hyong Kim, the Global Consulting Deputy Vice Chair of EY disclosed the path forward for consultants during an interview with *Source Global Research*, an online publication at the end of 2020. Consulting is all about clients. If a client's needs are shifting, that means that consulting must shift as well. As businesses themselves needed to adjust how their offices were operating in all levels, EY consulting had to adapt and provide expertise with data-driven insights and create a level of cross-industry learning. It was not just the consultants who needed to adjust, it was the businesses they worked alongside with greater collaboration. This shift towards more inclusive and transparent client connections marked a departure from normal consulting practices<sup>36</sup>. This required a day to day reimagining of consultant roles, stakeholder integration, and technology ecosystem development.

While work no longer looks the same at EY, Hyong Kim explains in his analysis that the consulting industry won't revert to pre-pandemic norms because remote work is becoming a more accepted practice. Before the pandemic, people were skeptical of the effectiveness. EY's adaptation includes leveraging global delivery centers and reevaluating the geographic

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<sup>35</sup> Ananyev, M., Poyker, M., & Tian, Y. (2021). The safest time to fly: pandemic response in the era of Fox News. *Journal of population economics*, 34(3), 775–802.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-021-00847-0>

<sup>36</sup> Kim H. (2020, Dec. 30) *Source Global Research*. Rethinking Consulting in the Wake of COVID-19. Retrieved from

<https://reports.sourceglobalresearch.com/interview/8083/rethinking-consulting-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>

distribution of its workforce, suggesting a long-term transformation towards decentralized staffing and a borderless operational model in consulting. EY decided amidst the pandemic to combat distance between clients with technology-enabled models. EY emphasized the transformation of manual work into automated processes. This approach is part of their "Next Wave" strategy, incorporating innovations like virtual internal auditing and the Supply Chain Intelligence Platform to enhance operational efficiency. The pivot to widespread remote work, facilitated by investments in collaboration technology, was accelerated by COVID-19, expanding their Microsoft Teams user base from 80,000 to 260,000 within a month, showcasing their adaptability and commitment to leveraging technology in client engagements. EY had the resources and accessibility to bend in whatever way was needed for the integrity of their client relationships. Without the foundational achievements made previous to the pandemic, the shift would have been more difficult.

The shift to remote work due to COVID-19 necessitated shifts within the company itself in learning and development strategies, aside from work with what client's businesses required and expected of attached consultants. Previously reliant on in-person training, EY adapted to remote delivery, discovering that online formats can offer interactive learning experiences through tools like real-time Q&A. Feedback indicates a preference for online versions among many participants, which allowed for the training process to be virtual– with a long-term methodology for this integration beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **i. Comparing and Contrasting Companies**

In reflecting more critically on the telework strategies employed by JPMorgan Chase, FOX, and Ernst & Young (EY) during the pandemic, a deeper analysis reveals both distinct divergences and underlying similarities in how these major entities navigated the shift to remote work, illuminating broader industry trends and organizational priorities.

JPMorgan Chase's approach, marked by an early adoption of a staggered work-from-home strategy, contrasts sharply with the immediate and comprehensive remote work policy implemented by FOX. This divergence highlights sector-specific operational constraints and cultural priorities, as each business has its own purpose. JPMorgan's eventual emphasis on returning to the office underscores a banking sector belief in the irreplaceable value of in-person interactions for fostering productivity, mentorship, and a cohesive corporate culture. This perspective deeply contrasts with FOX's more flexible stance, which

seemingly prioritizes employee well-being and safety over traditional workplace norms, reflecting perhaps a greater adaptability inherent to the entertainment industry. While both provide different services, it makes sense that their approaches after the initial surge were different. That being said, employee well-being was affected in different ways due to JPMorgan's priorities lying on in-person interactions rather than the entertainment industry's flexibility.

EY's strategy stands out for its focus on leveraging technology not just as a temporary fix but as a strategic pivot towards a future of decentralized, technology-enhanced consulting. This forward-looking approach sharply contrasts JPMorgan Chase's more traditional view but shares similarities with FOX's adaptive measures. However, EY's emphasis on transforming client engagements and internal operations through digital tools indicates a unique commitment to innovation within the consulting sector, suggesting a more profound reevaluation of how and where work is performed.

While JPMorgan Chase and EY both navigated the balance between remote and in-person work, their strategies reflect different assessments of the value of onsite versus remote engagements. JPMorgan Chase's decision to bring employees back into the office, despite the pandemic's ongoing risks, contrasts with EY's more cautious and client-driven adaptation to remote work. This difference may stem from the banking sector's emphasis on transactional security and regulatory compliance, which necessitates a level of physical presence not as critical in consulting.

That being said, the manner in which these companies supported their broader communities and client bases during the pandemic contrasts in scope and focus. JPMorgan Chase's significant financial contributions and support for small businesses via Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans reflect a broad, community-oriented approach to pandemic relief, emphasizing the role of financial institutions in supporting economic stability. In contrast, EY's strategy focused on operational adaptability and technological investment to maintain client service quality, highlighting the consulting sector's emphasis on maintaining high-touch client relationships in a remote environment.

In summary, the comparison and contrast of these companies' telework strategies reveal a complex landscape of corporate responses to the pandemic, shaped by industry



norms, operational priorities, and differing assessments of the role of physical presence in achieving organizational goals. JPMorgan Chase's approach underscores the banking industry's cautious integration of remote work, prioritizing physical presence for certain key functions. FOX represents the entertainment industry's adaptability and employee-centric policies in crisis response. EY exemplifies the consulting sector's strategic pivot towards digital transformation, anticipating a long-term shift in work modalities. Together, these case studies illuminate the varied paths taken by major industries in adapting to the challenges of the pandemic, offering insights into the evolving nature of work in a post-pandemic world.

#### **b. Advantages of hybrid work**

Hybrid work builds off of the flexibility and autonomy that modern employees desire, which reshapes the traditional workspace into a more dynamic and inclusive environment. This model has not only proven essential for navigating the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic but also stands as a testament to the potential for long-term enhancements in workforce management, employee satisfaction, and organizational productivity. As we can see from the analysis of large corporations, there are many considerations that came with the move to remote work, but all of them required one thing: flexibility. Culturally, hybrid work has acted as a catalyst for reevaluating work-life balance, signaling a shift towards more empathetic and human-centric corporate policies. With the pandemic, personal needs came first. There was no longer a their way or no way attitude in Corporate America. Everyone needed patience and flexibility. While it is not nearly as flexible as it was, remote work has opened doors for the modern worker, to work in areas closer to families, to be on the clock while dropping their kids off at school. It has allowed life to exist, while not taking away from work.

From a legal perspective, as we've seen in previous stages of this thesis, the adoption of hybrid work arrangements has prompted nations worldwide to revisit and revise labor laws. This was to ensure they reflected the nuances of remote work, data protection, and employee rights outside the conventional office setting. Within the healthcare systems, different hurdles had to be addressed, like HIPAA compliance and the facilitation of personal medical history via data protected entities. If these nuances were addressed adequately by countries or entities like the EU, then workers were protected from the get go amidst the pandemic. Depending on the government, policies were differing depending on where you lived and who you reported to.

Multinational corporations implemented innovative strategies to harness the benefits of hybrid work. The ability to do more came from more financial backing, whereas smaller companies faced more complications. These strategies not only facilitate operational continuity in the face of global disruptions but also foster a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability. By embracing a hybrid model, businesses can tap into a broader talent pool, reduce overhead costs, and enhance their agility in responding to market changes.

This section will delve into the advantages of hybrid work through various lenses—legal, cultural, and corporate. It will examine the positive outcomes and opportunities that remote work presents. It will also showcase the crucial role of technology in creating transitions between remote and on-site work simpler, the impact on employee mental health and engagement, and the broader implications for societal norms and economic structures. This work model not only addresses the immediate needs of a post-pandemic society but it also lays the foundation for a more flexible, resilient, and innovative global workforce in the future. In order to make the analysis as structured as possible, it's going to divide into the two sides of the workforce: corporations and employees.

Utilizing the hybrid work model into the corporate strategy has proven to be a transformative move for many organizations worldwide. This is representative of a new and revolutionary shift in what network is and how it may be conducted in the world after covid. Like the industrial revolution, remote work is a new frontier that is on the horizon for the work world. This evolution towards a more flexible work environment is epitomized by the initiatives of the leading tech giant Facebook, which publicly accepted and implemented remote work policies. In 2021, they decided almost all employees can remain in remote work<sup>37</sup>. While these policies are a huge step for the new normal of working, it also has advantages for the corporate model that are ideal beyond personally, but for the company as a whole. The benefits would be financial reductions in real estates as well as in operational, everyday costs. These savings were once requirements to a functional business. Imagine the redirecting of investment funds, as previously allocating funds can now go to online training

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<sup>37</sup> Porterfield, C. (2021, June 9). Facebook will allow nearly all employees to work remotely post-pandemic. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carlieporterfield/2021/06/09/facebook-will-allow-nearly-all-employees-to-work-remotely-post-pandemic/?sh=45cf8eae26a7>

programs, employee investment, and expansion of the business, but big tech giants may be more inclined to make this shift to remote work due to the nature of their work.

Big Tech companies such as LinkedIn and Facebook have embraced remote work policies largely due to the digital nature of their operations. Their business models revolve around software and online services, which allow employees to perform their tasks effectively from any location. This digital framework supports a flexible work environment, making it feasible for these companies to adopt work-from-home arrangements without compromising productivity or service delivery. Moreover, these organizations often champion innovation, not just in their technological offerings but also in their workplace cultures, viewing remote work as an opportunity to attract global talent, optimize operational costs, and enhance employee satisfaction.

On the other hand, consulting firms tend to resist the shift towards remote work, primarily due to the personal and interactive nature of their business. These firms rely heavily on face-to-face interactions to build trust and understand their clients' needs more deeply. The consultancy model is built around personalized advice and on-site engagements, which are perceived to foster stronger relationships and more effective communication. This emphasis on direct interaction is integral to their value proposition, suggesting that remote work might not fully capture the essence of their service delivery and client engagement strategies.

The divergence in remote work policies between Big Tech and consulting firms reflects broader differences in business models, organizational cultures, and industry expectations. While the tech industry can leverage its digital-first approach to seamlessly integrate remote work, consulting firms face a set of expectations that prioritize physical presence and personal engagement. This contrast highlights the varied paths companies are navigating in the evolving landscape of work, each aligning its policies with its strategic priorities, operational needs, and the unique demands of its clientele.

The shift to hybrid work extends beyond cost savings. When hiring, companies previously had to rely on the talent pool that was around them. With remote work, companies may open an opportunity to a larger employee network, with a potential global workforce. The recruitment process has gotten a lot larger, as there are fewer geographical barriers in the workplace. With more opinions from different backgrounds, diversity drives business. It takes

it to places it would not go before. Having a more global perspective in your workforce aids the corporate culture, as it drives innovation from differing perspectives.

The productivity and efficiency gains associated with flexible hybrid work arrangements have been substantiated by research. Review conducted by Ruth McPhail in *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*<sup>38</sup> underscores the transformative impact of remote and hybrid working on organizational practices and employee productivity in the post-COVID era. The shift to remote and hybrid work disrupted established organizational routines, leading to a reevaluation of performance management and the necessity for increased human capital investment to navigate the pandemic's challenges. Despite initial setbacks, such as increased work hours and the need for more frequent virtual communication, which temporarily reduced uninterrupted work hours, organizations and employees adapted effectively over time. Employees appreciated the flexibility and the time saved by not commuting, reaching levels of productivity comparable to pre-pandemic times. This adaptability was facilitated by managers setting clear expectations for communication practices, which positively impacted job performance.

As the report in the *Journal of Human Resource Management* addresses, hybrid work has had a profound impact on the environment. With less employees commuting every day, the carbon footprint of going to work has significantly decreased. "COVID-19 WFH decreased carbon emissions across the world, and this was particularly evident in the top three greenhouse gas emitting countries and regions—China, the EU, and the US, leading to a range of environmental benefits such as cleaner and clearer air from reduced air and vehicle traffic" (McPhail, 2023). Whether this is with intention or not, the re-education emphasizes the corporate responsibility goals of sustainability, reflecting a commitment to not just corporate growth but also global well-being. As corporations navigate the hurdles of the post-pandemic world, the flexibility and resilience offered by hybrid work models emerge as a constant in shaping a more adaptive, innovative, and inclusive global work environment. This well-rounded approach not only addresses the prominent problems posed by the pandemic but also sets a forward-thinking blueprint for the future of work.

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<sup>38</sup> Ruth McPhail, Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, Robyn May & Adrian Wilkinson (09 Jun 2023): Post-COVID remote working and its impact on people, productivity, and the planet: an exploratory scoping review, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2023.2221385

There is a personal freedom and implicit trust built-in to hybrid models that has created a higher job satisfaction. A study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*<sup>39</sup> on work flexibility and work-related well-being found that employees who have the flexibility to design their work schedules tend to show higher job satisfaction and lower burnout rates. There is a sense of empowerment that comes from this freedom that allows employees to work in a way that best suits their productivity patterns and personal lives.

### **c. Difficulties and challenges of hybrid work**

With advances in technology and industry, there are always setbacks. A company cannot shift to a remote model without complex challenges. This includes cybersecurity, with data from the company and personal employee data being compromised. As the digital workspace continues to expand, hackers and AI scamming has become more prominent. While we have discussed the advantages of mental health with agency in working remotely, there is a delicate balance between working remote and working an overwhelming amount of time beyond working hours. Lines may be blurred between the work and personal life, if employees become too accessible. While technology may continue to advance, human concerns must be raised and honored in understanding the boundaries of this new frontier.

#### **i. Cybersecurity and hackers**

The accelerated transition to remote work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the amplified cybersecurity risks faced by companies, notably through increased vulnerabilities to phishing, malware attacks, and ransomware. The shift to home offices has expanded the attack surface for cybercriminals, exploiting the less secure home networks and devices used by employees. This situation is exacerbated by the need for organizations to rapidly adopt digital communication tools and cloud services without the luxury of time to implement comprehensive cybersecurity measures or to train employees adequately in cyber hygiene practices.

Organizations are challenged to adapt their cybersecurity frameworks to address these heightened risks effectively. The reliance on personal devices for work (Build Your Own

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<sup>39</sup> Ray, T. K., & Pana-Cryan, R. (2021). Work Flexibility and Work-Related Well-Being. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(6), 3254. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18063254>

Device, BYOD, policies) and the diversification of work locations have introduced complexities in managing security controls and ensuring consistent application of cybersecurity policies. Moreover, the human factor plays a critical role, with the pandemic-induced stress and altered working habits contributing to increased susceptibility to cyber threats. Companies must prioritize investment in cybersecurity awareness training, robust security protocols for remote access, and the development of a resilient cyber risk management strategy tailored to the nuances of remote and hybrid work models<sup>40</sup>. This transition to cloud services marked a significant shift in cybersecurity strategies. Companies are increasingly becoming cloud-based, which necessitates a change in attack strategies by cybercriminals and adaptation by cybersecurity experts. Only in 2020, corporations around the world increased their cybersecurity budgets by 39%, which has been increased further and further the following years. Looking at the numbers, this vast increase in capital allocation seems like the most logical strategy to follow, since the global average cost of remediation of a ransomware attack reaches \$761,106 per incident.<sup>41</sup> Thus, companies prioritized and focused on the avoidance of the issue rather than on the repairance of it. This marks a shift in response, as it is not a reaction. Rather, companies are putting policies in place to eliminate the issue before it manifests.

The tackling of cybersecurity threats may take different forms, and experts and researchers recommend tackling the risks through a wide range of approaches. These include ensuring employees have access to IT department contacts and updating business continuity plans to designate substitutes for key responders who may be remote, emphasizing regular testing and employee training to prepare for and mitigate the impact of cyber incidents. Besides, experts highlight the need for effective Security, Education, Training, and Awareness (SETA) programs tailored to the new normal of remote work to prevent risky practices by employees while also emphasizing the importance of implementing robust cybersecurity measures. This may manifest in multi-factor authentication, network access control, or enhanced firewall management, to safeguard against the exploitation of personal devices and

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<sup>40</sup> Atstāja, L., Rūtītis, D., Deruma, S., & Aksjoņenko, E. (2021). Cyber Security Risks And Challenges In Remote Work Under The Covid-19 Pandemic. In M. Ozsahin (Ed.), *New Strategic, Social and Economic Challenges in the Age of Society 5.0 Implications for Sustainability*, vol 121. European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences (pp. 12-22). European Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.12.04.2>

<sup>41</sup> Bispham, Mary and Creese, Sadie and Dutton, William H. and Esteve-González, Patricia and Goldsmith, Michael, *Cybersecurity in Working from Home: An Exploratory Study* (August 1, 2021). TPRC49: The 49th Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3897380>

external parties' access to corporate networks.<sup>42</sup> Without a well-rounded approach, the integrity of companies and employees' data is at risk.

All in all, networks that may be hacked and the use of personal devices for work purposes expand the possibility for potential hackers. These weak spots are exacerbated by the traditional network architectures, which are often not viable to handle the security requirements of a spread out workforce. For example, many existing networking applications and services still depend on network firewalls and VPNs. These are not designed to suit a decentralized workforce. This requires for a shift towards cloud-based solutions and application modernization. Following a 2020 report from Verizon Business Data Breach Investigations<sup>43</sup>, 67% of all breaches were compromised by phishing and business emails, and a report by Deloitte<sup>44</sup> showed that, in 2020, 47% of the world's population would fall for a phishing cyber-attack. The power of these statistics is so strong because "Virus" was the top COVID-19-related phishing keyword during the first half of 2020, followed by "Corona" and "Quarantine." It absorbed the world, and the shift was felt everywhere.

Moreover, the rise of hybrid work has led to a significant increase in sophisticated cyberattacks, including Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. Only in Switzerland, Deloitte noted that the reported cases of cyber attacks raised from 100-150/month to 350. By March 2021, in the UK, more than £34.5 million had been lost to coronavirus scams<sup>45</sup>. Vulnerable individuals were exploited in high number and capacity, which required companies to change their approach to protect against cybersecurity issues.<sup>46</sup> The attacks were more complex than before, requiring a shift in policy for protections.

These attacks not only affect business operations, causing them to halt, but they also pose a threat to the integrity of corporate data. The data shows an increase in frequency

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<sup>42</sup> Georgescu, T. M. (2021). A Study on how the Pandemic Changed the Cybersecurity Landscape. *Informatica Economica*, 25(1).

<sup>43</sup> Pritam, N. (2020, May 19). 2020 Data Breach Investigations Report. Verizon. Retrieved from <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/verizon-2020-data-breach-investigations-report>

<sup>44</sup> Deloitte Switzerland. (n.d.). The impact of COVID-19 on cybersecurity. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/ch/en/pages/risk/articles/impact-covid-cybersecurity.html>

<sup>45</sup> Brooks, P. (n.d.). COVID-19 cybersecurity statistics. Comparitech. Retrieved from <https://www.comparitech.com/blog/information-security/covid-19-cybersecurity-statistics/>

<sup>46</sup> Harjinder Singh Lallie, Lynsay A. Shepherd, Jason R.C. Nurse, Arnau Erola, Gregory Epiphaniou, Carsten Maple, Xavier Bellekens, Cyber security in the age of COVID-19: A timeline and analysis of cyber-crime and cyber-attacks during the pandemic, *Computers & Security*, Volume 105, 2021, 102248, ISSN 0167-4048, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2021.102248>

and intensity of DDoS attacks, with financial services being the most targeted sector. The adoption of a Zero Trust security model, which assumes the network is always under attack, has become a critical strategy for corporations. This cybersecurity framework operates on the principle "never trust, always verify." It assumes that threats can exist both outside and inside the network, thus requiring strict identity verification for every person and device trying to access resources on a private network, regardless of their location. Specific corporations that have adopted Zero Trust include Google with its [BeyondCorp initiative](#), Microsoft through its [Azure Active Directory](#) and conditional access policies, and IBM with its [Zero Trust](#) approach to cybersecurity, incorporating advanced threat detection, data protection, and identity verification technologies. This model emphasizes the importance of micro-segmentation, least-privilege access, and continuous verification of all users and devices within the network to minimize potential damage from breaches<sup>47</sup>. The intricacies required in the protections are grand, and each layer is as important as the last.

To fight these new challenges, corporations have been investing in new and intricate security solutions that offer control and transparency over their digital environments. This may include threat protection, encryption, data loss prevention, and identity and access management tools. Requiring measures like this, with regular compliance audits and cybersecurity awareness training for employees, is crucial for mitigating the risks associated with hybrid work. EY shows the required nature of addressing these privacy challenges, the risk of cyberattacks, and the need for comprehensive compliance measures in the hybrid work model. The research suggests that organizations must strengthen their cybersecurity postures by utilizing technology and investing in solutions to detect and end threats. This approach is vital for protecting against the increased risk of security breaches and ensuring compliance with evolving regulatory requirements. Besides, another of the Big 4 companies, Deloitte, emphasizes the necessity for organizations to navigate the post-COVID-19 work environment with a robust cybersecurity strategy.<sup>48</sup> It advocates for establishing trust, adopting a "Cyber Everywhere" mindset, fostering a culture of perpetual resilience, and leading with proactive cyber risk management.

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<sup>47</sup> Singh, A., & Godugula, H. (n.d.). How security risks are impacting hybrid work models. EY. Retrieved from [https://www.ey.com/en\\_in/forensic-integrity-services/how-security-risks-are-impacting-hybrid-work-models](https://www.ey.com/en_in/forensic-integrity-services/how-security-risks-are-impacting-hybrid-work-models)

<sup>48</sup> Deloitte. (n.d.). Cybersecurity in a post-pandemic world. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/lu/Documents/risk/lu-cybersecurity-post-pandemic-world.pdf>



## ii. Employee privacy and mental health - where does the working life begin and end?

The hybrid work model's impact on mental health in the post-pandemic era stems from where work begins and where it ends, which shifts our focus to understanding the challenges employees face in the day to day. This next section of the thesis will explore the sense of isolation stemming from reduced in-person interactions, the difficulties in maintaining a distinct work-life balance, the phenomenon of 'Zoom fatigue,' and the resultant increase in stress and anxiety.

Firstly, hybrid work models, which combine remote and in-office work, were initially sold to offer the best of both worlds: the flexibility of remote work with the collaborative benefits of traditional office environments. But, their darker side has come to light—increased employee isolation. A study by European Management Journal<sup>49</sup> highlighted that remote workers often feel less "visible" to their managers and disconnected from their teams, leading to feelings of professional isolation and mistrust towards their organizations. The study concludes that high-quality communication is critical for maintaining trust in remote work environments, particularly between employees and supervisors. It highlights that workplace isolation affects trust in supervisors more than in coworkers, emphasizing the need for effective organizational communication strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of isolation on trust within virtual teams.

The essence of the problem lies in the reduced frequency and quality of social interactions. Research published in the International Journal of Advanced Academic Research underscores the significance of informal interactions for employee engagement and satisfaction, revealing that there exists a significant relationship between workplace informal relationships and employee satisfaction.<sup>50</sup> These spontaneous encounters, from water cooler chats to brainstorming sessions in work rooms, not only foster bonds but facilitate information sharing. If companies want to look at this through a purely business standpoint, better business happens within collaboration. In hybrid environments, the absence of these interactions can lead to a sense of detachment.

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<sup>49</sup> Ward van Zoonen et al., (n.d.) European Management Journal, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2023.04.006>

<sup>50</sup> FUBARA, B.J. and Onuoha, B.C. (2023). Workplace Informal Relationships and Employee Job Satisfaction of Hotels in Rivers State. West African Journal of Interdisciplinary Research, 1(1), 21-40.

The issue of extended work hours in remote and hybrid models is another critical aspect to mental health challenges. Research by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that the average workday lengthened by 48.5 minutes in the post-pandemic shift to remote work<sup>51</sup>. This increase not only indicates more time spent working but also alludes to a potential spilling over of work into time traditionally reserved for personal and family activities. The challenge of disengaging from work responsibilities is exacerbated in environments where the home doubles as the workplace. With fear of being unavailable to bosses or seen as less productive, you always want to be on. A study in the International Science and Engineering Journal found that the use of digital communication tools outside of traditional work hours contributes to an "always-on" culture that hinders employees' ability to disconnect from work<sup>52</sup>. This constant connectivity can prevent individuals from fully engaging in personal, which causes increased stress and diminished personal time.

The idea of exhaustion associated with telework is more prominent after the pandemic, but it has been an ongoing issue associated with one another. This topic was first introduced by Francis Green in 2001 with his book "It's Been a Hard Day's Night: The Concentration and Intensification of Work in the Late Twentieth-Century." In it, he explores the idea of work intensification, where the workload becomes increasingly harder and faster. Green uses survey data to demonstrate that employees were working at a faster pace, with higher workloads, and under tighter deadlines than in previous decades. The study suggests that this increase in work intensity was not accompanied by a commensurate rise in job satisfaction or employee well-being. On the contrary, the intensification of work was linked to increased stress levels among workers, a decrease in job satisfaction, and concerns about work-life balance. He suggests that while increased work intensity might contribute to short-term gains in productivity, it could also have negative long-term consequences on employees' mental health. It is important to recognize the trickle-down effect to mental health, as it becomes a much broader issue with employer turnover or implications on the quality of work life.

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<sup>51</sup> DeFilippis, E., Impink, S. M., Singell, M., Polzer, J. T., & Sadun, R. (2020). Collaborating During Coronavirus: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work (NBER Working Paper No. 27612). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27612>

<sup>52</sup> Keshwani, P., & Patel, S. (2023). The Impact of Technology on Work Life Balance. IRE Journals, 6(12). Retrieved from <https://www.irejournals.com/>.

With the pandemic, the issue was generalized and it was given a new name: “Zoom fatigue”. This term, while colloquially tied to the Zoom platform within the advent of work utilizing it in the pandemic, describes the exhaustion associated with the overuse of virtual communication tools. “Zoom fatigue” results from the demands of virtual interactions, which require higher levels of sustained attention and cognitive processing than face-to-face conversations. Research by René Riedl on the stress potential of videoconferencing examines the psychological impact of prolonged exposure to video conferencing platforms.<sup>53</sup> The study highlights how the overuse of these tools during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased reports of tiredness, anxiety, and stress among users. The phenomenon is attributed to the high cognitive load required to process non-verbal cues in video chats, the strain of continuous focus on screens, and the blurring of work-life boundaries.

When it comes to onboarding companies, there is a dilemma in how companies can still have a communal experience without being in person. Reevaluating the onboarding process requires companies to create new strategies that integrate new hires. While there are the logistical problems for equipment and company resources, there are also much more nuances issues with building relationships. While work is not solely in charge of someone's mental health, it is important to feel connected to your peers for the sake of the integrity of the work. Companies like Walmart or Amazon have made an intentional effort to enhance remote onboarding strategies that not only facilitate the immediate integration of employees but also makes this effort the standard and not the exception to the rule.

Specifically, Walmart's efforts to enhance remote onboarding and training for its employees<sup>54</sup> are quite innovative, particularly leveraging technology and structured programs to ensure a smooth integration of new hires into its corporate culture and operational procedures. One of the key initiatives includes the use of Virtual Reality (VR) training across its Walmart Academies to simulate real-world scenarios that employees might face on the job, such as managing Black Friday crowds or dealing with customer service challenges. This approach allows for a hands-on learning experience in a controlled environment, without disrupting store operations or customer experience.

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<sup>53</sup> Riedl R. (2022). On the stress potential of videoconferencing: definition and root causes of Zoom fatigue. *Electronic markets*, 32(1), 153–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-021-00501-3>

<sup>54</sup> Lewis, N. (2019, July 22). Walmart revolutionizes its training with virtual reality. SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/technology/walmart-revolutionizes-training-virtual-reality>

### iii. Tackling these issues

In assisting with the mental health challenges created or worsened by the shift to remote and hybrid models—including increased isolation, blurred work-life boundaries, and 'Zoom fatigue'—a comprehensive and multifaceted approach is required by these companies. Organizations and employees must work together to develop strategies that prioritize mental health. In creating and maintaining strict work-life boundaries, employees may allow themselves to feel disconnected and not constantly on the clock. Supporting employees to stay within regular work hours can create a clear separation between work and personal life. Advocating for a dedicated workspace at home, which can be "closed" at the end of the workday, can also aid in mentally detaching from work responsibilities.<sup>55</sup> There must be a clear separation between work and home for mental health benefits.

Encouraging regular breaks from the digital work environment is another vital strategy to combat this online fatigue. Creating policies that encourage breaks from the computer and requiring certain days as meeting-free, may reduce mental fatigue, which improves focus and the quality of the work. This may manifest in finding alternatives to video conferencing, like phone calls or messaging communication, which may reduce reliance on virtual meetings and alleviate the cognitive dissonance.

By adopting these strategies within a well-organized framework, organizations can create a supportive and adaptive work environment that acknowledges and actively addresses the mental health challenges associated with remote work. This approach is proactive and on the front-end, which benefits employees by enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction and contributes to the overall health and resilience of the organization, ensuring its capacity to navigate future challenges effectively.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND TRENDS

Once considered a temporary solution, remote work has transcended COVID-19, standing as a foundational element to the modern workforce. As reflected in this thesis, the evidence gathered from across the globe, spanning various industries and cultural contexts, underscores the major shift that has rooted remote work as not merely an alternative, but as

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<sup>55</sup> Tsipursky, G. (2023, January). The hybrid work revolution. Psychology Today. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/intentional-insights/202301/the-hybrid-work-revolution>

an integral component of our working lives. Despite the hurdles faced within the transition, it prevailed through new perspectives on the workforce and beyond.

After analyzing diverse legislative frameworks across countries, the comprehensive policies set in place highlighted the overall need for remote work, just taking different forms. In each country, there was a unique approach to tackling the pandemic with remote work. From that, policies were put in place that solidified the critical need for unified, future-proof regulations that address the nuances of telework and safeguarded both workers rights and organizational interests.

Beyond countries and governments approaches, organizations like multinationals and small and medium-sized enterprises were forced to take adaptive measures supporting working from home. While this was a time of major disruption, it served as a catalyst for this new frontier. It was a catalyst of innovation and reevaluating organizational structures and our daily life. Through this, companies rethought what work was, how to increase productivity, collaboration, and employee-well being in and out of work. As the barriers diminished, the shift to teleworks has changed the traditional notions of a workplace while embracing humanity and flexibility. With this resilience and adaptability, telework remained.

As work life shifted dramatically, cultural and societal shifts accompanied this. With the blurring of lines in work-life balance, new challenges in employees' lives were brought to light. Mental health, social connectivity, and the challenges of maintaining clear distinctions between professional and personal spaces were now taking precedent in the cultural conversations of remote work. This recalibration of our work-life dynamic poses both positive opportunities for enhanced work-life balance and challenges that need careful navigation on an organizational level. This support should be supplied by the organizations.

#### **a. Conclusions for policymakers**

It's necessary for policymakers to recognize the transformative impact of telework in a post-pandemic society and the consequent need for flexible legislation. The rapid shift to remote work underscores the limitations of traditional labor laws. Thus, legislation must evolve to address the diversifying needs of the workforce, ensuring inclusivity, fairness, and adaptability in employment practices. This includes adjusting labor laws to support remote work, uphold workers' rights, and protect data privacy, all while facilitating continuous

stakeholder dialogue to adapt to future work environment changes financially and structurally. The advancement of telework presents an opportunity to reimagine labor policies, making them more dynamic and responsive to the evolving nature of work, thereby fostering a resilient workforce in the face of global transformations, beyond 2020.

As the landscape of remote work erases geographical boundaries, there is a pressing need for international agreements and collaboration to establish common standards and practices. Such unified frameworks may ensure that workers enjoy consistent protections and rights, irrespective of their location, fostering a more equitable and harmonious global work environment. This approach not only enhances worker protections but also facilitates smoother operations for multinational corporations navigating diverse legal landscapes. Therefore, advocating for a concerted global effort towards the standardization of telework policies becomes paramount in ensuring a resilient, inclusive, and efficient future for the international workforce.

Policymakers have an indispensable role in supporting digital infrastructure. The necessity for robust digital infrastructure, including comprehensive cybersecurity measures, has been highlighted throughout the thesis. Policymakers play a crucial role in facilitating this by prioritizing investments in digital infrastructure to bridge the digital divide, thus enabling equitable participation in the telework economy. This investment is not only about access but also about ensuring the security and reliability of digital workspaces, which are fundamental to the productivity of remote work. By fostering a well-developed digital infrastructure, policymakers can significantly contribute to creating a more inclusive, secure, and efficient telework environment that empowers all regions to thrive in the digital era.

#### **b. Conclusions for companies**

Companies are encouraged to prioritize the well-being and job satisfaction of their employees by implementing flexible work arrangements that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of their workforce. By fostering an environment that values employee agency and supports a healthy work-life balance, corporations can not only enhance the effectiveness of telework but also attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive global job market. Honoring the humanity of telework ensures that the transition to remote and hybrid work models is beneficial and sustainable for both employees and the organization.

Additionally, it's crucial for companies to focus on developing clear telework policies. These policies should comprehensively address critical areas such as work hours, communication norms, and cybersecurity practices, ensuring that all employees are on the same page and fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in the telework environment. By doing so, companies can mitigate misunderstandings, enhance productivity, and protect both their assets and their workforce. Clear telework policies not only serve as a guide for current employees but also act as a framework for onboarding new staff, ensuring that the transition to remote work is seamless and well-supported for everyone involved.

Finally, companies should focus on implementing robust cybersecurity measures. Companies should honor the cybersecurity rules and regulations set in place by policymakers. Though, if these measures are not already set in place or accessible in certain countries due to legislation, the responsibility must fall on the companies to protect their employees and the organization. In the era of widespread telework, the necessity for advanced cybersecurity protocols has to be addressed. Protecting corporate data and ensuring the privacy of employee information are vital to maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of remote work environments. Companies must commit to regularly reviewing and updating their security practices to counteract emerging threats, employing state-of-the-art technology to safeguard against cyberattacks, data breaches, and other vulnerabilities, while also committing to arming employees with the knowledge necessary to protect their data. Through this comprehensive approach—melding robust cybersecurity measures with targeted investments in technology and training—companies can fortify their defenses against cyber threats while fostering a secure and efficient telework infrastructure.

Telework is here to stay. It is no longer a temporary adaptation, rather it marks a new frontier of work and our culture. As our culture moves into this new normal, the resilience, innovation, and humanity we exhibit as employees, employers, and policymakers will shape the future workplace. Embracing the complexities and opportunities that telework presents, we are at the threshold of redefining what work is. From necessity to the norm, telework may have its challenges, but it must be embraced for a more flexible future, aiding the needs for a better, brighter global workforce.

## **Declaración de Uso de Herramientas de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa en Trabajos Fin de Grado**

Por la presente, yo, Jaime Ruiz Sáez, estudiante de Derecho y ADE de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas al presentar mi Trabajo Fin de Grado titulado "WORKING IN A POST-PANDEMIC SOCIETY: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE", declaro que he utilizado la herramienta de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa ChatGPT u otras similares de IAG de código sólo en el contexto de las actividades descritas a continuación:

1. Referencias: Usado conjuntamente con otras herramientas, como Science, para identificar referencias preliminares que luego he contrastado y validado.
2. Traductor: Para traducir textos de un lenguaje a otro.

Afirmo que toda la información y contenido presentados en este trabajo son producto de mi investigación y esfuerzo individual, excepto donde se ha indicado lo contrario y se han dado los créditos correspondientes (he incluido las referencias adecuadas en el TFG y he explicitado para que se ha usado ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares). Soy consciente de las implicaciones académicas y éticas de presentar un trabajo no original y acepto las consecuencias de cualquier violación a esta declaración.

Fecha: 20/03/2024

Firma: Jaime Ruiz Sáez



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