

# Chapter 10

## Teleworking During the Pandemic of COVID–19: Empirical Study of Its Effects

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### ABSTRACT

*This research focuses on the practice of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective is to analyze its effects on employees and companies, in particular the creation of the feeling of blurring between private life and professional life. The chapter begins with a theoretical analysis of telework by borrowing the framework of the theory of social regulation and the theory of conventions. Both make it possible to understand and situate the formation and control of the rules established by telework. Then the authors present their questionnaire survey and its main results.*

### INTRODUCTION

Blurring means the lack of clarity and the inability to distinguish between two spheres. In management, blurring describes the absence of boundaries between private life and professional life. As such, teleworking widely practiced during the Covid-19 crisis is blamed for creating the feeling of blurring among employees. It contributes, in fact, to the loss of the notion of spatio-temporality of work and leads to its encroachment on personal life. The permeability of the boundaries between family and work can generate, according to many studies, negative and counterproductive emotions, including loneliness, anxiety, guilt and irritability (Mann and Holdsworth, 2003).

It should be noted that telework is not a recent organizational innovation. Literature attributes it to cybernetician Norbert Wiener in 1950 who suggested the use of new communication technologies to

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work from home. Later, telecommuting experienced a large boom thanks to the possibilities offered by technological progress.

French law defines telework in article 46 of March 22, 2012 as a form of work organization in which the work which is carried out on the premises of the employer is carried out by an employee outside these premises on a regular basis. and voluntary by using TIC within the framework of an employment contract or an amendment thereto.

The health and economic crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and the physical distancing measures it has made mandatory have forced many companies to urgently switch to teleworking. This mode was, in fact, widely applied during confinement to limit the number of people present in the workplace in accordance with the health protocol. In addition to the preservation of the health of employees, teleworking allows, according to its tenors, to reconcile private life and professional life. It leads to a reduction in the time spent in transport and trips to the workplace and thus improves organizational productivity. Teleworking also allows you to work in a comfortable family environment.

Nevertheless, many studies affirm the existence of harmful effects linked to the distancing mode, including, in particular, blurring and violation of privacy, social isolation, dehumanization of relationships at work and increased mental workload exacerbated by technical problems related to technological tools.

Klein and Ratier (2012, p. 184) explain that although a number of works see in the blurring of private and professional borders a fluidification and a harmonious convergence of uses, most studies focus on the risks that this interference represents for the well-being of employees, both in their life at work and out of work (Jones, 1997).

In an attempt to understand the effects of telework, and the role of teleworking conditions on its perceived effects, we conducted a study with 284 teleworker employees in Morocco and abroad. We then conducted a questionnaire survey to assess the degree of satisfaction of teleworkers and the conditions for exercising remote work.

## **TELEWORKING THEORETICAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK**

To analyze teleworking, we mobilized the theory of social regulation and the theory of conventions. They offer an interesting framework for understanding the mechanisms of formation of work and operating rules in organizations.

### **The Theory of Social Regulation and Teleworking**

According to the theory of social regulation founded by the French sociologist Jean-Daniel Reynaud, social regulation constitutes the activity of producing, preserving or modifying the rules of operation. The theory of social regulation finds its origin in the analysis of professional relations in France at the beginning of the 1960s. interests and logics within organizations.

The author's work highlights the existence of three modes of social regulation to produce formal and informal rules. The first mode is called control regulation; it is a question of imposing disciplines and duties operated in general by the leaders and the managers vis-à-vis the employees.

The second mode is called autonomous regulation which aims to preserve the autonomy of operational staff. It is about adapting, transgressing or inventing new operating rules. Like, for example, the rules created by the employees themselves in the workshops. Autonomous regulation makes the rules of the

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