



Call for Papers

Special Issue

**Working from home: What it means to individuals, leaders,
organizing and human resource practices**

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This Special Issue invites empirical and conceptual papers that examine and theorize the phenomenon of remote work from different perspectives.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic more people than ever are working from home. For many this change has been sudden and far from ideal as some lack technical equipment, find their social interactions digitalized and many have to care for children or older relatives. Some tasks are only partially suitable or are unable to be performed from home which highlights both the possibilities and limits to the spatial reorganization and domestication of work. This real-life experiment has motivated an upsurge in research from colleagues in organizational studies, labor, HR and allied fields. Research on remote work is well established, but it is likely that new findings will emerge that extend our knowledge, both as a product of expanded attention over Covid-19 and because the phenomenon is worldwide in scope. We expect that new research will span individual psychological issues, sociological relationships, leadership challenges, the organization of work and practices of HR management:

First, we know that working from home impacts the individual and the effect varies between individuals. Remote work can help to mitigate work–life conflict by allowing flexible integration of work and private domains (Allen et al., 2013). However, employees react differently depending on their integration or segmentation preferences (Kreiner, 2006). Second, research underlines the role of the individual’s virtual competence as it affects his/her well-being (Wang and Haggerty, 2011), since working from home is often associated with the demanding use of modern communication and information technology (Allen et al., 2015; Schmoll, 2019). Third, multiple studies have highlighted gender-differences in workers’ capacity to draw work-life boundaries and, especially, that men are better able to separate themselves from family life while working at home (Felstead and Jewson 2000). Studies also find that mothers may seek home-based work, especially self-employment, to manage domestic work (Ekinsmyth 2013).

News reports suggest that during the current lockdown of schools and nurseries women find themselves carrying a burden of work, care and even teaching. This is likely to reinforce or exacerbate gender-inequalities and produce stresses and strains at home. Finally, current experience highlights important class differences, reflected in the different spaces available for work (e.g. the availability, or not, of 'spare rooms', garages or home-offices) (Felstead and Jewson 2000; Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995).

Remote work is also a big challenge for leaders required to manage interaction in teams. Virtual leadership changes the demands on managers and employees, interaction via digital media changes collaboration. Phenomena such as the professional isolation of employees are well known (Cooper and Kurland, 2002; Golden et al., 2008), and managers must address this. Remote work has been found to be more successful if supervisor support is available and the corporate culture supports working from home (Allen et al., 2015; Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014; Lautsch et al., 2009). Additionally, remote management increasingly relies on new modes of surveillance, including electronic surveillance. Where surveillance extends across domestic electronic devices (e.g., tablets, phones, trackers) it poses questions about the potential control of employers over workers' wider lives. At the same time, management at a distance can spark worker resistance and galvanize those seeking to organize collective resistance (including Trade Unions).

If it is to spread, companies need to organize their remote work to meet the challenges posed by activities that are not all equally suitable to perform from home given not every employee has a suitable work space. HR will have to adopt new practices for employees who work from home (Illegems and Verbeke, 2004) including changes to working time arrangements (Blagoev et al., 2018), ergonomic design of workplaces, new concepts for training and learning, but also performance evaluation and the design of career paths.

This Special Issue of the *GHRM* aims to shine a light on remote work as it is today. We hope to enrich our knowledge of the phenomenon of working from home more generally, by drawing together different perspectives on the individual such as psychological impacts, sociological influences, leadership, the organization of work and the demands of human resources management.

Contributions could focus on one or more of the following questions:

- How does working from home influence individual well-being, work-life conflict, commitment, and stress?
- How does working from home produce new inequalities or reproduce or exacerbate existing social inequalities – for instance those of gender, disability, ethnicity or class?
- How can greater equality be produced in working from home?
- Where do workers choose to develop boundaries between work and home and how is this consistent between new (Covid-19) home-workers and previous analyses?
- How do employees deal with the phenomenon of professional isolation?
- Which employees show resilience to the negative effects of working at home?
- What role do an affinity for technology and technical skills play?
- How does the leadership of virtual teams working from home and the coordination of work function?
- How do teams find new ways to interact under forced digitalisation?

- To what extent are managers attempting to, or successful in, institutionalising new mechanisms and spaces of surveillance?
- What are the learning effects from managers' and teams' engagement in interactive practices?
- What role does support from superiors or corporate culture play in the feasibility of remote work?
- What impact does working from home have on established HR practices? How can performance be assessed, what working time arrangements are necessary, how are employees and careers developed?
- What new possibilities for individual resistance are identified amongst remote workers?
- How does the organization of collective resistance operate among remote workers?
- What consequences does remote work have for the productivity of workers and teams?
- Are there ways to design work and workplaces so that they are suitable for remote work?
- How are new online routines emerging and how do informal and formal social interactions develop within these routines?
- What is the role of contextual factors that are particularly evident in the Covid-19 pandemic, such as increased caring responsibilities or social isolation?
- What differences do current studies of the Covid-19 as an extreme situation show in comparison to previous studies?
- How do managers and their teams make sense of Covid-19 as an extreme situation and how does their sense-making impact on their work-related involvement?

Submission

To be considered for publication in the Special Issue, full manuscripts (max. 10,000 words) must be submitted by **15 December 2020**.

The manuscripts should be written in English and submitted through <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ghrm>. The submission guidelines are available through <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/gjh>.

The German Journal of Human Resource Management (GHRM)

The *GHRM* is an international journal concerned with advancing the study of HRM. It has a strong reputation as a dedicated academic journal open to high-quality research on all aspects of HRM. The journal is available via its publisher SAGE worldwide through <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/gjh>. It has a high download usage and short production cycles. The *GHRM* is ranked in category 2 by the British ABS journal list and as 'B' in the Australian ABDC ranking.

Editors of the Special Issue:

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