

When Mobile Work Creates More Discrimination

Authors : Marie-Therese Claes, Anett Hermann

Abstract : With the advent of the web and information technology since the end of the 20th century, digitalization has revolutionized our everyday life, from shopping and dating to education and transportation. The world of work is one of the areas that has been highly transformed by changing the time and spatial limits of the work. The expansion of the internet, wireless, and easily portable devices such as laptop computers and mobile phones has enabled us to work almost from any place at any time. As a result, telework, which started in the 1950s and elevated in the 1970s, steeply raised to a new level in 21st century. Telework consists of various forms of work done from outside the traditional workplace by using information technologies. The social distancing and lockdown measures that have been taken to reduce the spread of the virus in many countries worldwide resulted in an increasing number of teleworkers and made “working from home” synonymous with telework. Post-COVID-19, the number of teleworkers is still higher than before the pandemic period, and the interest in expanding teleworking has been growing too. Notwithstanding the advantages ushered by telework, it also has a number of drawbacks that negatively affect organizations and employees. The intention of this piece of work is not to indicate a causal relationship between telework and discrimination. Our aim is to indicate some unintended and/or unnoticed deleterious effects of telework in reinforcing discrimination and to instigate discussion on how to mitigate the effects. To do so, this insight indicates how telework reinforces traditional gender roles and how organizational culture towards telework and its access to employees at different levels of the organizational hierarchy opens the room for discrimination.

Keywords : mobile work, discrimination, gender roles, organizational culture

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