"Study delivers us from the burden of our leisure" Voltaire

Toward A Better Understanding Of Telework Using The Framework Of The Psychological Contract

Harvey John Lewis Moyne

Declaration of Authorship

I, Harvey John Lewis Moyne hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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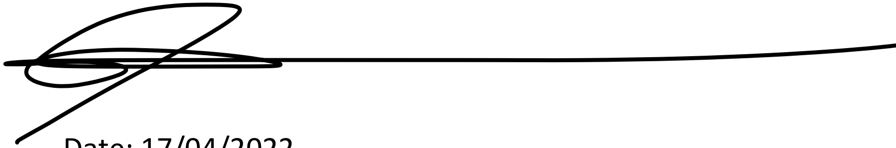

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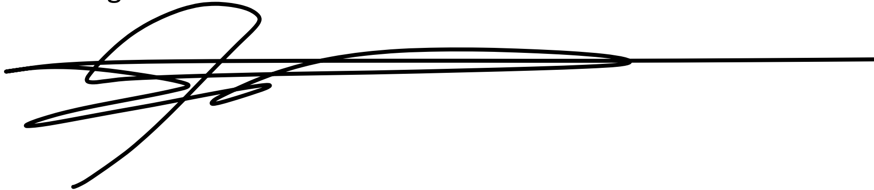

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When I was taking my final exam in my undergraduate course, writing my final answer, I became somewhat stuck. I can't remember the question, but I remember my answer, you are about to read it.

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Abstract

Teleworking continues to grow rapidly; for many organizations this will be a mainstream practice. Views diverge as to the benefits and pitfalls of teleworking. While there is considerable research on teleworking, there is a lack of depth in understanding teleworkers' experience; therefore, a new perspective is needed to illuminate their experience in greater detail. The lens of the psychological contract will be applied within this thesis to explore the complexities of teleworking and teleworker well-being. The psychological contract has previously been utilised to understand the intricate relationship between the organization and employee, through exploring the workings of obligations, expectations and promises. The psychological contracts use in research to understand teleworking is rare, which is surprising as teleworkers have potentially complex dual obligations to uphold in both their work and home life. This thesis is guided by research questions that consider the contents of teleworkers' psychological contracts, whether teleworking can lead to conflicting obligations, how conflicting obligations relate to teleworkers' well-being, how teleworkers manage conflicting obligations, and what role instant access technology has on their experiences. The study uses semi-structured interviews (N = 42) to draw in-depth responses from teleworkers across a wide range of professions, analysed using a thematic template analysis. Findings show that autonomy is a fundamental inducement offered by organizations to teleworkers. In return, teleworkers will invest extensive efforts in terms of productivity and availability to safeguard their autonomy. Conflicting obligations did arise, although teleworkers' autonomy helps them navigate many potential instances of conflicting obligations by drawing on a variety of coping strategies to maintain a reasonable level of well-being. This is achieved despite numerous stressors, including the abundant flow of work demands that are proliferated by hyperconnected modern technologies. Findings are discussed in terms of contributions to telework and psychological contract research, and reflecting on how the findings apply to employee well-being in the future working landscape altered by Covid-19.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

1.0 Introduction to the Thesis

"Technology can be our best friend, and technology can also be the biggest party pooper of our lives. It interrupts our own story, interrupts our ability to have a thought or a daydream, to imagine something wonderful because we're too busy bridging the walk from the cafeteria back to the office on the cell phone." (Spielberg, in Kennedy, 2002).

These words from Steven Spielberg may be over twenty years old, but they remain relevant to the virtues and perils of increased mobility, flexibility and connectedness. Stepping into the scene of Spielberg's quote presents at least some hope for the individual who is so tethered to their work, they may at least have had some down time in a friendly work cafeteria. However, with just 6% of the UK working population now working a strict 9-5 (YouGov, 2018), and millions of the population experiencing working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, peaking at 46.6% of the working population in April 2020 (ONS, 2020a), the modern worker may not share a lunch break with colleagues, or even meet face to face at all.

Teleworkers as a group and teleworking as a phenomenon can be hard to define, but Garrett and Danziger (p. 27, 2007) give a succinct overview: "*Telework occurs when workers' use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) enables them to substitute remote work for work in the same location as their colleagues, employers, or customers."*

By analysing the experience of teleworkers this thesis aims to understand how such flexible working arrangements affect teleworkers' obligations to their organization and to their home-life, when obligations to different parties may conflict and the implications of such a conflict. By approaching the topic of telework through the lens of the psychological contract, with its focus on obligations, the current research will add valuable insight to the area of work-life balance (Boell, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Campbell 2016).

Teleworking practices are shaped by the time in which they exist. Changes in technology, policy, attitude and the wider societal environment all impact on how telework is conducted. Increased connectivity further blurs the boundaries of work and home life, risking conflicts that may cause stress and impact social relationships (Schall and Chen, 2021). It is therefore imperative that further investigation is made to understand the experience of those most exposed to these trends, teleworkers.

1.1 Thesis Overview

Following this introductory chapter, a narrative literature review will be shown. To achieve the goal of a deeper understanding of modern telework, this thesis will undertake an in-depth literary enquiry from early research on teleworking in the 1970s and 1980s to understand the original reasons behind teleworking and its early adopters. Then a range of key definitions of telework will be considered with attention to commonalities and differences across them. The process of untangling telework from other non-traditional working arrangements will then be undertaken. Indeed, the difficulty previous literature has had in finding a distinct definition will lead to discussion upon how this problem can be overcome and even how useful the term telework is in the modern day.

The third chapter will look at the teleworker's experience. While telework has many facets, the scope of the literature review will be to assess how telework impacts upon family life and how modern technologies influence teleworking behaviour. This will cover three main areas. Firstly, characteristics of the teleworker and their home environment, namely the factors that shapes an individual that teleworks, how the teleworker performs their job inside the home environment, how work-life conflict is dealt with and aspects concerning well-being. Secondly, the role modern technology plays in the teleworker's experience, touching on the move from the home office to the smartphone revolution and "always-on" culture. Finally, the role dual obligations between work and home life plays out for the teleworker and how this interplay can be understood and explored. Formally accepted norms and notions of telework will be challenged by reviewing the growing body of research on this topic.

In the fourth chapter, the psychological contract will be introduced. Present in organizational studies for the last 60 years, but reworked and popularised in the late 1980s and 1990s, it provides a means to examine the interactions between managers and employees. Previously used sparingly but effectively in telework research, discussion will be made into how to adapt this framework to understand both work and family spheres of the teleworker's experience and the potential insights application of the psychological contact can yield.

The fifth chapter presents the methodology of the thesis, outlining previous approaches across telework and psychological contract literature to help inform the best choice for the current research. Discussion on ontological and epistemological standpoints inform the selection of appropriate methods and data analysis, the sample and the rationale behind these methods will be explored, and ethical concerns are discussed.

The sixth chapter presents the research findings of the first two research questions on the teleworker's psychological contract contents and the role technology plays in shaping this. Through the use of participant quotation, the importance autonomy holds for teleworker psychological contracts is established, as are the varied ways technology enables and interferes with telework. Following these findings, the seventh chapter addresses the research questions on conflicting obligations, teleworker well-being and finally the coping strategies that teleworkers enact. Again, direct participant quotation is used to infer how conflict for teleworkers can be a subtle process, to display the way in which conflict impacts upon teleworker well-being and provide insight into the distinct methods employed to maintain dual obligations.

Chapter eight discusses how the research contributes, challenges and complements knowledge across the fields of teleworking and the psychological contract, before the thesis is brought to a close with detail on the limitations of the research, recommendations for future research and a conclusion.

1.2 Contributions to Research

This research contributes to a better understanding of teleworkers' experiences, particularly with respect to well-being considerations, and how the teleworkers' experiences can be understood through applying a psychological contract lens. The research also contributes to psychological contract theory by considering how teleworkers' dually-held psychological contracts (work; home) impact their well-being, and by considering in greater depth the felt experience of obligations. Obligations are a pertinent factor for both teleworking and the psychological contract, but as yet there is little understanding of the lived experience of obligations (i.e., how they feel or their subtle motivational qualities).

Even before the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, teleworking popularity had shown a continued upward trend for the past forty years (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Yet findings on its effects, particularly in terms of employee well-being, sway from overtly positive (Hill et al., 2001) to troublingly negative (Hilbrecht et al., 2008). Hilbrecht et al. (2008) call for further exploration of the relationships with other home sharers, such as obligations over childcare, and also the invasive role of work technology into the home sphere. The influence of the increased role of technology in modern life cannot be underestimated for teleworkers (Middleton, 2007, 2008; Fonner and Stache, 2012; Derks et al., 2015) and the current research will look to ascertain how a combination of the spillover effects of dual obligations, powered by the ubiquity of instant communication technology, affects teleworkers at a time when the importance of maintaining well-being at work is considered so valuable (Di Fabio, 2017a, 2017b).

The largest increase in teleworking numbers occurred very recently with the Covid-19 pandemic forcing millions around the globe into working from home due to the closure of communal office spaces. The legacy of the pandemic is still playing out for teleworking, but initial reports suggest that teleworking practices are here to stay for a vastly increased number of employees around the world (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020; Buomprisco et al., 2021). Considering this, it has never been more pressing to understand the well-being effects of sustained teleworking and the effects on employee-employer relationships.

Drawing from Golden's (2009) musings on the future of telework there are a number of developing ideas around the employee-employer relationship, one of the most pertinent being this consideration on managerial action*: "…managers should institutionalize formal telework agreements, so that a set of shared and mutual expectations are developed and commonly understood by both the teleworker and manager, as well as other organizational members. This will help prevent misunderstandings and jealousy from developing. Being explicit about reporting procedures, means and methods to contact individuals, and conflict resolution procedures would help"* (p. 248, Golden, 2009). Golden has presented here many of the key features of the psychological contract. Psychological contract research in telework has long been called upon by Sparrow (2000), particularly in its application to understand relationships within the home and in using qualitative methods: "*We are likely to extend our inquiry to the psychological contracts of all those in the household, not just the teleworker, and will begin to examine the individual work/home life balance behaviour that can avoid this becoming an issue"* (p. 100, Sparrow, 2000). Yet these potentials for psychological contract theory to enrich our understanding of teleworking has rarely been considered in previous research, despite these calls and others (e.g., Morganson *et al.,* 2010). Further psychological contract research has also been recommended recently in the field of technology, exploring how a range of ICT devices impact workers psychological contracts (Obushenkova, Plester and Haworth, 2018).

The current thesis will contribute to these debates and although the primary research to follow occurred before the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the topics addressed will remain pertinent to the newest groups of teleworkers who began the practice post-Covid-19. From a wider societal viewpoint, the burgeoning nature of many new forms of working such as the gig economy and the prevalence of zero hours contracts is out-pacing the speed of research, it is hoped that the more that can be done to raise the awareness and knowledge of how non-traditional working will reflect the quality of many workers lives and the lives of the individuals that are closet to them.

1.3 Summary

In addition to presenting an outline of the current thesis, this chapter has introduced the topic of teleworking, why now is an important time to study the experience of being a teleworker and how the psychological contract presents an applicable and compelling lens through which to understand teleworking.

The potential contributions the current thesis can bring to gaps in knowledge on teleworking, well-being and to the application of the psychological contract will be presented and the research questions of this thesis introduced after consideration of relevant, high-quality and specific literature. The following chapter will now begin to explore teleworking literature in earnest, beginning with an explanation of the literature review method that was employed.

Chapter 2: Introducing Telework - History, Definitions and Incidence

2.0 Introduction

The following three chapters represent the complete literature review for the thesis, covering the central themes of telework, employee well-being and the psychological contract.

This chapter will briefly set out key contributions to the 50-year history of telework research before approaching the many issues surrounding definition. Firstly, overarching non-traditional working definitions will be assessed, before drilling down to telework definitional discussion and suggestion. Finally, the current teleworking landscape is explored and the difficulties in measuring the telework population uncovered.

Before entering into the discussion on the literature, the method used to find, filter and map the literature that features will be examined.

2.1 Literature Reviewing Method

When beginning the literature review the researcher approached the process from a narrative perspective. Choosing between a narrative or systematic literature review poses one of the first decisions that the researcher must make.

In the defence of systematic literature reviews, they provide comprehensive and transparent assessments of any chosen topic (Williams et al., 2021). However, narrative reviews (also known as 'traditional' reviews) prove applicable to literature reviews that

cover multiple topics where the application of other systematic styles of review could become overwhelming. The literature review for this thesis covers five large topic areas and many more tangential offshoots, thus fits well with a narrative approach.

Hart (2018) describes this type of method as 'Scholastic', defining its purpose as *"…to use dialectical reasoning to examine arguments, look for and resolve contradictions, challenge propositions and make inferences through rigorous conceptual analysis"* (p.93). To successfully achieve this Hart (2018) notes that the researcher should have awareness of their research questions before beginning literature review. For the current thesis the researcher had a group of loosely formed research questions which were honed throughout the literature review process when gaps in previous research became apparent.

2.1.1 Ensuring Quality when Conducting Narrative Literature Reviews

When conducting a non-systematic literature review the researcher must put in place fail safes to ensure the material is not only relevant but also of an acceptable standard. To achieve this the researcher will outline how they produced their narrative literature review for this thesis.

The search for literature was made primarily by using Google Scholar. In addition to having a user-friendly interface, recent research from Gusenbauer (2019) estimated nearly 400 million records on the Google Scholar database, making this the largest bibliographic database available at the time. In a recent large-scale test Google Scholar was found to have a citation coverage of 88% This was the highest score of any academic search engine in the sample which included; Microsoft Academic, Scopus, OpenCitations' COCI, Dimensions and Web of Science (Martín-Martín et al., 2021). The researcher also kept a physical library of books and journals to complement their review.

Approaching this literature review the researcher looked to explore each of their five main topics (telework, the psychological contract, well-being, work-life experiences and work technology) by reading broadly before channelling their literature review into specific areas of interest. For example: the psychological contract > psychological contract breach > psychological contract breach in teleworkers. The broadest part of this literature review started with either recommendations from supervisors or by using Google Scholar's citation

count feature of any one paper or book, this way the researcher is given an immediate 'steer' of the research significance. When channelling the review to more specific levels of detail it was expected that the citation count would be lower. When approaching research with a low citation count the researcher asked themselves three questions to adjudicate quality:

- Is the journal the paper is published in well respected?
- Is the paper recently published? (if so it is understandable to have a low citation count)
- Is the topic of the paper particularly niche?

Generally, if the paper passes two of these tests the researcher would consider it for inclusion.

In addition to searching for literature the researcher utilised references within other papers and 'followed the trail' that they had set. The researcher would then recheck these papers with the three quality criteria previously mentioned.

The researcher was also in regular contact with their supervisory team during the literature review process. At the point of upgrade from MPhil to PhD the literature review was well received and it was commented upon that the researcher had done well to distil literature across very broad topics.

This chapter will now present a brief history of how teleworking has been studied and practiced, before considering conceptual overlaps between the term telework and definitions of related concepts (e.g., flexible working). Understanding the key features of teleworking will also be undertaken, before analysing how teleworking could be defined for the modern workplace and how definitions of teleworkers and teleworking interrelate. The chapter concludes by looking at who is teleworking currently and how the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically altered the teleworking landscape – the journey to this landscape begins in the USA, in the middle of the 1970s.

2.2 Telework: A Brief History

In its most simple terms telework is working from afar, *tēle* meaning 'far away' in Ancient Greek. In more modern times, *tele* is used in conjunction with other words, such as television, and more pertinently, telecommunications. Telecommunications were central to Jack Nilles' (1975) early research on non-traditional working and led them to coin the term 'telecommuting', to refer to employees using telephone lines instead of highways to engage with their colleagues. Due to the time in which Nilles was researching, they saw telecommuting as not something done in one's home, but rather in office branches: *"A telecommuting network has computational and telecommunications components which enable employees of large organizations to work in offices close to (but generally not in) their homes, rather than commute long distances to a central office"* (p. 1,143, Nilles, 1975). The 'electronic cottage' (Toffler, 1980) was another early realisation of teleworking and began to look beyond the commuting connotations of Nilles. Toffler (1980) predicted advances in society during the 'third wave' of technological innovation, outlining key drivers which would soon become commonplace in telework research, such as improved home life, increased work efficiency and cost saving.

Kraemer and King (1982) continued in Nilles footsteps by investigating how environmental and political issues, such as the 1973 oil crisis, affected transportation, driving to work was being substituted for telecommunications during the mid-seventies and into the early eighties, with the goal to decrease energy consumption. Kraemer and King identify theoretically that telework and teleconferencing show potential to improve levels of energy usage, however, several factors block this potential. High volumes of business travellers saw their journeys as an acceptable part of work life, the adoption and diffusion of teleconferencing and teleworking technology had been slower than predicted and teleworking was not sufficiently incentivised by governments (Kraemer and King, 1982).

Further early discussion from Pratt (1984) identifies key demographic groups who can benefit from telework. Namely, these were mothers with childcare responsibilities who undertook clerical or data entry work, those with physical impairments which make travelling to work difficult and male professionals who value work-life balance over career progression. The greatest benefit noted for employees was increased leisure time; but on

the downside Pratt's research shows early identification of the role which presenteeism plays in the workplace. Although it was not made explicitly clear to the teleworkers from management that their career progression could be stunted, every teleworker interviewed believed that their working arrangement suppressed career advancement, some also suffering from being 'out of the loop'. From the viewpoint of the employer, telework presented an opportunity to access an untapped resource of personnel, and early adoption of telework would place a company in an advantageous position for the future as they could attract a wider pool of employees. This demonstrates the opportunity for telework as a deal that works for all parties, but also showcases the potential pitfalls, as the success of each teleworking arrangement may depend on needs and attitudes of both the employee and the employer aligning in some way.

Nilles et al. (1976) found that as long as fifty years ago 'off the shelf' communication and computing technology was good enough to replace the need to commute. However, concerns for the potential negative effects of telecommuting were soon being assessed. Hamilton (1987) drew positives from productivity and increased time for home responsibilities, however, this must be balanced against isolation, career disadvantage and potential burnout, calling for careful organizational planning. Kraut (1989) also included (not exhaustively): wage differentials, social and emotional degradation, familial poverty and increases of gender disparity. It is plausible that these concerns from an organizational standpoint and other negative teleworking effects such as concerns of performance and teamworking opportunities, contributed to the slower than expected uptake of telecommuting (Cano, Hatar and Zapatero, 1997). Later, Harpaz (2002) would go on to add that there is a danger of creating a society of detached individuals cut-off from interacting in public places.

Despite some dour projections on the uptake of telecommuting, the prevalence of individuals teleworking as a percentage of the workforce continued to increase by the time Di Martino and Wirth examined the phenomenon in 1990. They produced a wide-ranging and well-respected view of the teleworking landscape, exploring both the merits and detractions. In the case for telework, the employer can expect productivity increases ranging from 5% to 30%, as noted from pilot projects in the USA and UK. Employers can also expect improved recruitment and retention of staff as teleworker roles are seen as desirable

to certain employees and can accommodate groups who may otherwise cease working, such as those close to retirement or on maternity leave. Arguably, telework promoted better work-life balance for employees through the enhanced flexibility of working hours and time saved during commuting. (Pratt, 1984; Di Martino and Wirth, 1990). More holistic advantages for society are also noted, namely, furthering opportunities for disabled workers, the integration of rural areas into the modern working world and improving air quality through reduction in commuter traffic. In 1990, downsides for the employer included the novelty of telework and a lack of supervision or control. There was some hesitancy from employees through the fear of the unknown and increased incidents of overworking, although surveys from European samples purported that between 14% to 50% would partake in telework if it were available to them (Di Martino and Wirth, 1990).

Looking to the characteristics of who these teleworkers were, Di Martino and Wirth establish that occupations with extensive use of office technologies are most suited to telework, specifying that women balancing motherhood or family commitments can use teleworking arrangements to their advantage. The popularity of telecommuting for female professionals was confirmed by Yap and Tng (1990), who pinpointed that increased flexibility was most desirable at a time when women had young children, though there were concerns around role conflict and feelings of guilt relating to potentially neglecting the needs of children in this merged setting. Fitting telework into home life was not always simple; Hall and Richter (1988) produced one of the first assessments on conflicting roles for employees who hold obligations at home, suggesting that moves to home-based working could present additional stress by blurring the home and work boundaries. Hill, Hawkins and Miller (1996) also address this dilemma, finding a mixture of successful and unsuccessful attempts to combine work and family life, going on to suggest that 'family life educators' should deliver training specifically related to teleworking.

Further health and safety concerns were also present, namely psychological isolation. Looking at surveys of teleworkers' well-being in the UK in the 1980s shows the early recognition of the detrimental effects of teleworking alongside the first organizational actions to combat this. These measures focused on keeping the teleworker 'in the loop' of office communications and recommended striking a balance between time in the office and at home where possible (Di Martino and Wirth, 1990). The subject of technology and

wellbeing is only touched upon briefly in early research, such as the effect of long periods in front of computer screens (Napier, 1992). Although Di Martino and Wirth (1990) do see technology as a double-edged sword that can be used to monitor efficiency by the keystroke at the cost of trust, or as assistance to help increase trust, loyalty and responsibility via decentralization. However, Di Martino and Wirth do not foresee the possible impact that improvements in technology will have on the intensity and elongation of the teleworkers experience, deemed 'extensification' by Hassard and Morris (2021).

Di Martino and Wirth (1990) concluded that telework has dramatic implications for the working lives of millions across the world, both positively and negatively (See Table 2.1). They called on organizations and unions to ensure that teleworkers are protected from harm in the same way as any other worker and believed the best way to alleviate the problems of isolation was for the teleworker to split their time between the home and office. This final point should be considered key to defining a teleworker, that they do not solely work from home. The extent to which the teleworker's time is divided has implications on how successfully teleworkers can be defined within a measurable group.

Aspect	**Positive**	**Negative**
Employee work experience	Increased flexibility, autonomy and responsibility	Isolation, lack of progression
Employee life experience	Increased leisure and family time	Can jeopardise work-life balance
Employer viewpoint	Increased productivity, cost saving, reduced energy consumption	Loss of company identity, increased technological network complexity
Societal	Reduction in traffic congestion and pollution	Fragmentation of the workforce
Workforce opportunities	New options for mothers and disabled individuals	Increased marginalisation

Table 2.1 Telework implications (adapted from Di Martino and Wirth, 1990)

In 1999, Ellison comprehensively reviewed telework research by neatly dividing them into themes. In each case, previous research was found to be contradictory, including in the themes most relevant to the current research, namely, the boundaries between home and work and the impact teleworking has on the individual and their family. Particularly salient

was the suggestion that teleworking *should* present a harmonious arrangement that benefits the organization, the teleworker and the teleworker's family, but 'spillover' from one sphere into another can devalue the benefits gained.

On the organizational side, the lack of boundaries in a workplace is viewed as a positive way for employees to interact and work in various locations through unspecified timeframes (Baruch, 2000; Ellison, 1999; Picot, Reichwald and Wigand, 1996). However, the encroachment of work in the home or in a period outside of normal working hours could cause the teleworker role conflict. Essentially, multi-tasking or doing one task when those around you expect you to be doing another may put the teleworker in a difficult position. Many theories, examples and coping strategies for this simple but challenging situation will be discussed later in this thesis. For the impact telework has on family life, increased flexibility is the ubiquitous upside for teleworkers with family; this, adjoined to the time saved without having to commute, theoretically boosts family time. However, anyone with 'workaholic' tendencies may find it hard to switch off while at home. Without their co-workers' cues of leaving their desks to go home, many teleworkers struggle to end their working days, essentially eroding any family time gained (Hill, Hawkins and Miller, 1996). Regarding childcare, primary care givers (i.e., a parent that is responsible for school drop-off and pick-up, who regularly cooks meals for a child) who telework regularly report higher stress levels compared to secondary care givers (i.e., a parent that helps out with other childcare tasks such as bath time or play). Predominantly, the former group are doubling their workloads, while the latter are not (Olsen and Primps, 1984). Wheatley (2012) also reports a gender disparity, showing that female teleworkers are unfairly burdened with additional housework beyond just the care of children. However, children and housework are not the only distraction in a teleworker's home. Kelliher, Richardson and Boiarintseva (2019) impress upon the point that the 'life' portion of work-life balance can consist or many and varied things. They go on to discuss part-time education, hobbies, community activities, exercise and religious practices as part of what should be considered 'life' and, in this context, factors that compete for a teleworker's attention. Wells also notes that even four-legged friends and their needs can disrupt work whilst at home (Wells 1997, cited in Ellison, 1999).

Entering the 21st century, the first thrust of the teleworking story had been told and many of the themes that will be discussed in-depth during the following sections of this literature review have emerged. As technologies miniaturised and connections of phones and the internet became more widely spread, the home office and mobile working became commonplace and increased the viability of teleworking. As the growth of telework increased, so did the number of terminologies and definitions for the phenomenon of non-traditional working.

2.3 Definitions: Unpicking Telework from other Terminologies

Ellison (1999) reflects upon the lamentable lack of consensus in understanding the prominence of telework. They note that the scope of telework is vague due to the range of measurements used in telework research, which in itself is a product of the divergence on defining telework. This issue was succinctly summed up previously by Qvortrup: *"Counting teleworkers is like measuring a rubber band. The result depends on how far you stretch your definition."* (p. 21, 1998). Certainly, as time passes and further advances are made in the technological drivers of teleworking Qvortrup's band grows increasingly distended.

To provide a useful definition, teleworking must be separated from similar terms that denote a difference to fixed job roles in a centralised workplace (see Table 2.2 for a breakdown of the most prominent). Flexible working is a term used to denote the ability to alter start and finish times of work, compress the working week, job share or work from home. In the UK all employees have the right to request flexible working arrangements to meet their personal circumstances and although not all requests may be granted, the employer must respond to the request in a fair and reasonable manner (GOV, 2018). Considering its range, flexible working can be seen as an umbrella term which includes teleworking. Telework specifically involves working in both the office and at home or other temporal locations (such as any non-office space or at client sites), although the amount of time spent in any one working location does not need to be strictly apportioned.

Specifying within non-traditional working patterns, telework must first be parted from the term 'home-working'. Bradley et al. uses this definition*: "… home-workers tend to be semi-skilled or unskilled workers and are generally paid on a piece rate basis."* (p. 60, 2000). This

definition makes no mention of location other than the fact the individual is a 'home-worker'. It focuses on the skill of workers and although some skilled workers, for example, artisanal producers or online researchers could still work solely from home (Collins, Cartwright and Hislop, 2013) the definitional emphasis is on manual production employees. This is backed up by Burchielli, Buttigieg and Delaney: *"Homeworker organizations define all homeworkers as falling into two general categories: dependent workers who work for a piece-rate and usually produce for a subcontractor in a subcontracting chain, and independent, 'own-account' workers who produce goods for direct sale.*" (pg. 167, 2008). Regarding their assumed skill sets, these definitions show homeworkers do not fit in with teleworkers who normally have specific skill sets; administrative, technical, managerial, or creative abilities. Moreover, teleworkers are generally more mobile than manual home-workers, being able to work in other locations such as cafes or work centers due to the nature of their work and also their access to mobile technology. The use of information communications technology is another key pillar of telework and creates further distinctions from home-working. While homeworkers, particularly those in manual work, would undertake repetitive tasks without supervision, a teleworker maintains contact with colleagues and managers in real-time to undertake variable tasks and feedback information or ideas. Based on this rationale, manual production homeworkers do not fit with the research questions of this project.

Looking towards location, individuals who are self-employed may also fall into the category of home worker if their working week remains purely in the home domain. However, if they travel to meet clients or to sell their goods, they would transverse into what Wilks and Billsberry (2007) would refer to as a 'home anchored working'. Wilks and Billsberry (2007) also denote that those who are not self-employed and are predominantly office based but travel to meet clients and so forth would be partaking in 'office anchored working'. These phrases show how the level of time a worker spends in one space or another dictates their working status; this suggests that the home or office anchored worker would fit into the scope of a teleworker as they do perform work in both places. Self-employed teleworkers have traditionally only represented a small portion of the UK total (Hotopp, 2002) and although these self-employed workers use of location and telecommunication to work with suppliers and clients makes them a teleworker, in the context of the current research, self-

employed teleworkers lack one crucial aspect seen in those directly employed by an organization – regular collegial interaction.

The line of communication, formally telecommunication between the worker and their managers, colleagues or those they manage is key to the relationship a teleworker builds with managers (Haddon and Brynin, 2005) and vital for the creation of psychological contracts (Conway and Briner, 2005). These types of relations aren't the same as those held with suppliers or customers and thus removes some of the relational interplay that may be found in teleworkers who are employees of their organizations. Therefore, skill level, time spent across numerous locations (including the home) and communications with colleagues differentiates the homeworker, and to some extent the self-employed, from the directly employed teleworker.

Looking toward more modern parlance, E-Work, remote working where job tasks can be performed anywhere at anytime is a term fostered in Europe that encompasses many types of non-traditional worker with a focus on location flexibility (Charalampous et al., 2019). E-Workers are differentiated from teleworkers and particularly telecommuter by acknowledging they do not need to commute to a central workspace at all as their work functions can be completed remotely (Grant, Wallace and Spurgeon, 2013).

Furthermore, the term agile working has gained prominence in the UK and as the name suggests emphasises how mobile technology removes inertia from the working experience, with agile workers able to log in to work wherever and whenever they are required to, or choose to do so. Arguably, agile work is an umbrella term that includes E-Workers (Grant, 2020). Therefore, agile working loosens both the bounds of time, location and definition. The more open ended the definition of non-traditional working becomes it lends its applicability more readily, however at the price of accuracy as the term agile is used to mean other things in different contexts such as in manufacturing (Ameri, et al., 2022; Yusuf, Sarhadi, and Gunasekaran, 1999) or software development (Gren, Goldman and Jacobsson, 2020. This can lead to the term becoming confusing due to its breadth (Walter, 2021).

Table 2.2 shows the most common terms for non-traditional working that have been used (often interchangeably) since the 1970s.

Term	Definitions	Description	Used by whom and when
Homeworking	Bradley et al. (p. 60, 2000) *"…home-workers tend to be semi-skilled or unskilled workers and are generally paid on a piece rate basis"*	Can be used for any work done within the home or home office environment. Includes artisans and piece work manufacturers located at home.	Shamir and Solomon, 1985; Allen, 1987; Baruch and Nicholson,1997; Bradley, 2000
Telecommuting	Cross and Raizman (p. 3, 1986) *"…performing job-related work at a site away from the office, then electronically transferring the results to the office or to another place"* Golden (p. 242, 2009) *Telecommuting… involves working solely out of the home instead of commuting to the office place."*	Used to describe the embryonic stage of non-traditional working. Usage of this term continues in the USA and to a lesser extend Canada. To add to the definition confusion, Golden (2009) defines telecommuting in the same way homeworking was previously defined.	Nilles, 1975; Kraemer, 1982; Cross and Raizman, 1986; Mokhtarian, 1991; Golden, 2009
Teleworking	Garrett and Danziger (p. 27, 2007) "*Telework occurs when workers' use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) enables them to substitute remote work for work in the same location as their colleagues, employers, or customers."*	'Working' replaces 'commuting', signalling a move away from the travel saving origins of non-traditional working. Definitions normally contain reference to communications technology allowing remote work to be undertaken.	Huws, Robinson and Robinson 1990; Baruch, 2000; Daniels, Lamond and Standen, 2001; Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Madsen, 2003; Garrett and Danziger, 2007
Flexible Working	Gov.uk (Online, 2018) *"Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs, e.g. having flexible start and finish times, or working from home."*	An umbrella term which encompasses many non-traditional features. Options include job sharing, compressed hours, teleworking, flexitime and agile working. Used mainly in the UK and some parts of Europe.	Brewster, Mayne and Tregaskis, 1997; Lewis, 2003; Kelliher and Anderson, 2010; Chung and Van der Lippe, 2020; UK government 2022 (GOV.uk)

Table 2.2 Terminologies of non-traditional working

Agile Working	Yusuf; Sarhadi and Gunasekaran (p. 37, 1990)* *"Agility is the successful exploration of competitive bases (speed, flexibility, innovation proactivity, quality and profitability) through the integration of reconfigurable resources…"*	Utilisation of technology, shared resources and a focus on innovation. Can be considered as another umbrella term which encompasses E-Working.	Yusuf, Sarhadi. and Gunasekaran; 1999; Keeling, Clements-Croome, and Roesch, 2015; Grant and Russell, 2020
E-Working	Nilles, 2007 in Grant, Wallace and Spurgeon (p. 529, 2013) *"Any form of substitution of information technologies (such as telecommunications and computers) for work-related travel: moving work to the workers instead of moving workers to the work"*	A recently conceptualised term in the field on non-traditional working focuses on full mobility of knowledge workers.	Nof, 2003; Grant, et al., 2019; Grant, 2020; He et al., 2020
The expression 'agile working' has been used in a number of different contexts, but it is increasingly associated with remote working. An important consequence has been that agile working is now best defined as a new way of working which takes place at any location and at any time, thanks to technology (Grant, 2020).			

Table 2.2 Terminologies of non-traditional working cont.

To understand the current prevalence of these definitions in academic literature, a review of results on Google Scholar for the previously mentioned definitions is presented overleaf in table 2.3.

Term	**Search results for published papers between 2017 and 2022**
Homeworking	4,840
Telecommuting	15,100
Teleworking	16,300
Flexible Working	22,200
Agile Working	3,070
E-Working	7,760

Table 2.3 Non-traditional work terminology Google Scholar search results 2017-2022

We can note from these search results that the 'traditional' terms which use 'tele' are still well used, roughly two times greater in popularity than 'newer' term E-Working and five times greater than agile working, although by using '-ing' this may have reduced results related to older, more technical, conceptions of 'agile work'. Flexible working does appear as the most used term in five-year period stated, however, as noted previously, the

researcher believes this term is too broad to accurately define the target group of employees for the current research.

To adequately assess the research questions posed in this thesis, using the term telecommuting or flexible working would be serviceable, for the former due to its trans-Atlantic commonality with teleworking and the latter due to the situating of the current research within the UK. Furthermore, agile working also provides a feasible option for defining the workforce in this thesis, however, its applicability has drawbacks. As with flexible working the 'stretch' in the definition is too elastic to accurately portray the group characteristics sought for the current research. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to use the term teleworking throughout this thesis for the following reasons:

1. Teleworking is a term found in literature around the world and is not heavily linked with one particular location, this will aid the understanding and distribution of the message within the thesis.

2. Teleworking is not as vague as the terms flexible or agile working; this will aid in positioning the current research within a wide field.

3. The term telecommuting has been almost totally encompassed by teleworking, therefore telecommuting will no longer be referred to and instead replaced by teleworking in this thesis, except when explicitly referencing early definitions.

It should be made clear that reviewing of future literature is not reserved only to research that also uses telework terminology. As seen in the previous analysis, there is a large overlap in definitions of non-traditional working and the choices of terminology by scholars will not impede its inclusion in the literature review of this thesis, withstanding that the content is applicable.

It must also be considered that the terminologies discussed share a lot of common ground and some differences may appear slight, but when extrapolated to a large working population it can have significant effects not only the applicability of literature, but also when considering participants for the thesis sample.

This review will now turn to the specific definitions of telework that have guided previous research.

2.4 Previous Definitions of Telework

Defining exactly what telework is has been well debated by many researchers across the last 40 years, yet, there is still no generally agreed term. However, previous research has helped to differentiate from the other previously mentioned non-traditional working terms. Table 2.4 displays examples of how researchers have tried to encapsulate teleworking.

Definitions of Telework
Huws, Korte and Robinson, 1990 *"Telework is work the location of which is independent of the location of the employer or contractor and can be changed according to the wishes of the individual teleworker and/or the organization for which he or she is working. It is work which relies primarily or to a large extent on the use of electronic equipment, the results of which work are communicated remotely to the employer or contractor. The remote communications link need not be a direct telecommunications link but could include the use or mail or courier services."*
International Labour Organization, 1990 *"Work performed by a person (employee, self-employed, home-worker) mainly or for an important part at (a) location(s) other than the traditional workplace for an employer or a client, involving the use of telecommunications and advanced information technologies as an essential and central feature of the work."*
Daniels, Lamond and Standen, 2001 *"Teleworking is a work practice that entails remote working for at least some of the time."*
Shaw, Andrey and Johnson, 2003 *"Telework, or the chance to do paid work activities away from the corporate office through the use of computerised communications technology"*
Garrett and Danziger, 2007 "*Telework occurs when workers' use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) enables them to substitute remote work for work in the same location as their colleagues, employers, or customers."*
Golden, 2009 *"Although the extent of time that an individual teleworks can vary, it generally involves working from home or another alternate location for a portion of the work week, and spending the remainder of the time in the corporate office. While telework often entails working from home, it also includes working from other remote locations such as a client office, airport, telework center, or hotel… While this technology differs by context, typically it involves computers with job-specific software, phones and other handheld electronic devices, and high-speed remote access to corporate databases."*

Table 2.4 Telework definitions

U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010 *''Work arrangements in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other work sites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee''*
Vilhelmson and Thulin, 2016 *"Performing ordinary work during scheduled working hours at locations other than the regular workplace, for example, but not necessarily, from home sending work between locations via the Internet."*

Table 2.4 Telework definitions cont.

Research on the problematic divergence of telework definitions previously undertaken by Sullivan (2003) and Haddon and Brynin (2005) identify key characteristics found across the wide range of definitions: technology, location, contractual arrangements and time. Looking at the definitions provided, these recurring themes become evident. Technology cuts across the definitions and helps understand the change in attitude towards the equipment requirements, from the need of couriers through to the current internet focused outlook. Location is also prominent across definitions, although often referring to the home, terms like 'at locations other than the regular workplace' help broaden where telework can actually take place. Contractual agreements are referred to by Huws, Korte and Robinson (1990), stating that the terms are agreed on a rolling basis between the needs of the teleworker and the organization; it would appear 'work arrangements' represents the contractual arrangements across most definitions. Each would suggest teleworking is flexible to the individual situation, similar to the concept of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) suggested by Rousseau (2005). Finally, time is a key concept that features in telework definitions. Golden (2009) specifically mentions the sharing of the work week in and out of the office, the other definitions expand greatly the variability of who can be considered a teleworker. From this review on definitions, telework appears like a bowl of spaghetti bolognese; the central themes share some meaty topics, but by pulling on a strand it can stretch a long way from the main dish.

The following sub-sections expand on the themes that have been drawn out of the telework definitions. By undertaking this, the most fundamental elements of what defines a teleworker are explored in more detail.

2.4.1 The Location of the Work

"Information technology makes it possible to free work from the constraints of location and time." These words from Bailyn (p. 149, 1988) over thirty years ago encapsulate two elements still central to modern telework, here we will concentrate of the former, with time discussed later in this chapter. The location in which the work takes place is universally required to define telework, for some part of the employees working routine must be, in part, away from a central office or workplace. Many definitions of telework concern themselves almost entirely with the location of the work, such as this broad American definition: *''work arrangements in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other sites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee''* (p. 10, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010). This description creates a clear picture that the work away from the office is regular and not 'ad hoc', which would be more in line with flexible working. However, this stipulates only the relationship in distance between the employee and the central workplace without mentioning if the employee and employer are linked in other ways. For example, it almost appears like the employee is set 'officially assigned duties' to perform away from the office, then would return to pick-up the next set of duties when back in the office and so on without communicating with the organization whilst away from the office.

Focusing on the 'other sites' mentioned in the previous quote, spatial mobility in telework is examined by Hislop and Axtell (2007) who distinguish mobile teleworkers from their home-based counterparts. They note that although mobile teleworkers are often bundled into the broader term of 'teleworker', their experiences are significantly different. They use a three-dimensional model of teleworking location to help position differing jobs across the teleworking landscape, which in their example are service engineers and human resource consultants.

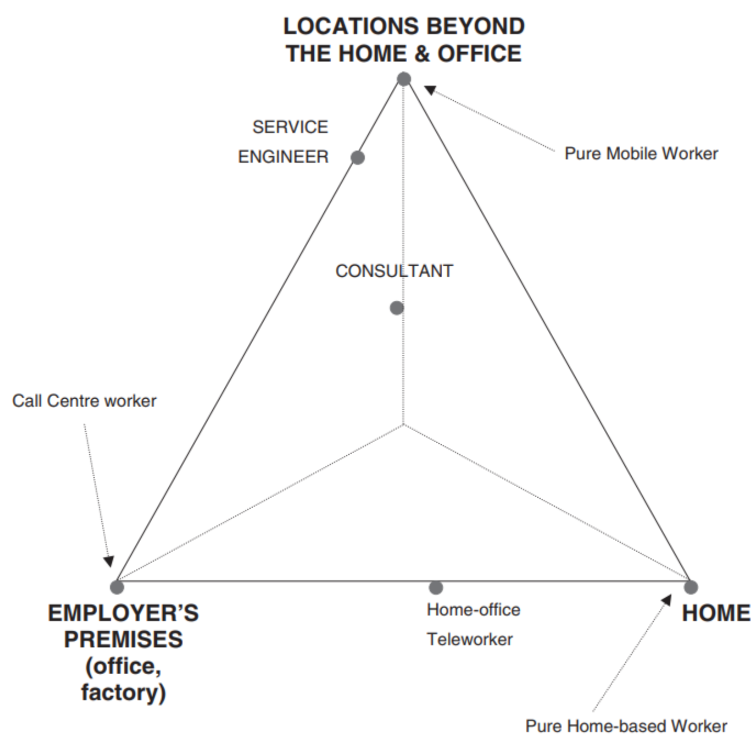


Figure 2.1 A three-dimensional model of teleworking (p. 46, Hislop and Axtel, 2007)

Drilling down to the focus of this thesis and away from more mobile teleworkers, the authors go on to emphasise: "*The importance of accounting for the hybrid nature of home-office teleworking is that few teleworkers are purely home-based, with the vast majority being home-office teleworkers"* (p. 45, Hislop and Axtel, 2007). This reinforces the importance of examining teleworkers that spend time working in both locations as this accounts for the largest proportion of teleworkers.

The continuum on which a teleworker sits is further examined by Wilks and Billsberry (2007) when they tackled the issue of location. They found difficulties in applying a general definition across their whole sample, which in itself was a small one based upon self-employed. This divergence in where the participants worked led to suggesting the terms 'home-anchored' and 'office-anchored' teleworkers. By placing the emphasis on where most time was spent working, some of the ambiguity of previous definitions would be eradicated. With a sharper focus on each type of teleworker, research findings could benefit from increased depth of understanding, although as yet this form of categorisation has not caught on.

From this section we draw out the fact that a teleworker spends time working both at work and at other locations, where in many instances this will be their own home. Further research aimed at understanding the experience of teleworkers that locate themselves across different places is welcomed and will be generated by the current thesis.

2.4.2 The Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The second major element required for an informative definition of telework involves how the teleworker maintains contact with the central workplace and colleagues, namely information and telecommunication systems. Defining these systems is inherently tricky as the pace of technology moves quickly. That being said, this somewhat longwinded definition from Huw, Korte and Robinson (p. 10, 1990) is over thirty years old but adequately outlines the importance of ICT to allow for functioning telework: “Telework is work the location of which is independent of the location of the employer or contractor and can be changed according to the wishes of the individual teleworker and/or the organization for which he or she is working. It is work which relies primarily or to a large extent on the use of electronic equipment, the results *of which work are communicated remotely to the employer or contractor. The remote communications link need not be a direct telecommunications link but could include the use or mail or courier services”.* (Moving Huws, Korte and Robinson’s definition to the modern day, it would be prudent to remove the ambiguity of the last sentence, as communication via mail and courier are fractional in comparison to the early 1990s.) This definition allows for the flexibility and independence that telework brings for employer and employee, and the reliance on technology is prominently featured.

Another instructive and often cited definition comes from Di Martino and Wirth (1990). This definition emphasizes temporal placements, organizational interactions and the use of new communications technologies that enable teleworking: *“work carried out in a location where, remote from central offices or production facilities, the worker has no personal contact with co-workers there, but is able to communicate with them using new technology”* (p. 530, Di Martino and Wirth, 1990). Here the muddling of other flexible working terms is avoided, creating a sharper definition. Garrett and Danziger’s (2007) definition follows a similar theme: “*Telework occurs when workers’ use of information and communication*

technologies (ICTs) enables them to substitute remote work for work in the same location as their colleagues, employers, or customers" (p. 27, Garrett and Danziger, 2007).

The main takeaway point from all these definitions shows that the role of ICT has been fundamental to teleworking as a means to replace the in-person interaction that would normally take place when sharing an office space and surprisingly little has changed in the wording of definitions despite significant changes in technology.

2.4.3 Contractual Agreements

Pyöriä (2011) recommends holding a teleworking contract if telework is carried out regularly. Their draft contract criteria includes the need to define the place and the time that the teleworker will work in and a raft of employee and employer obligations that should be upheld. Formalised teleworking can also increase workload, but may lead to more exposure to dual demands of home and work, particularly for mothers, when compared to ad hoc arrangements (Troup and Rose, 2012). However, how and why the teleworking arrangements are struck varies on a case by case basis.

Organizations have traditionally offered teleworking arrangements to help lower costs, retain staff and improve productivity; while employees seek improved work-life balance, reduction in commuting time and increased flexibility (Baruch, 2000; Boell, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Campbell, 2016). It is the variable nature of these elements that leads to diffused teleworking agreements. The theory most akin to individual contracts is the concept of the aforementioned idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) which are created through individual negotiations between an employee and employer and are of a non-standard nature (Bal and Rousseau, 2016; Rousseau, 2001; Rousseau, Ho and Greenberg, 2006). Part of the growing popularity of i-deals is due to the increase of teleworking. This is due to the differing needs of each telework and how they approach organising their working relationships (Bal and Rousseau, 2016). Therefore, teleworking and i-deals feed off each other, creating an ever-expanding group of individuals. A definition of telework (telecommuting) from an i-deals perspective comes from Gajendran, Harrison and Delaney-Klinger (p. 358, 2015): "*telecommuting is a nonstandard, customizable, and individually negotiated work arrangement"*. With this in mind, the formal contractual elements are likely to vary considerably in terms of hours, days and availability, and there is no real consensus

of a definition to a contract involving telework, bar the fact an agreement exists between the employee and the organization that facilitates at least some work will be undertaken away from the central work location. In the UK context, if an employee requests this it must be considered formally by the organization (GOV.co.uk, 2022).

2.4.4 Time

Time is a key factor in teleworking literature, and later in this thesis discussion on how teleworkers manage elements of time within their working day will be discussed. However, the current issue of time is a definitional one. The key point in understanding time in telework definitions is: how much time away from the office makes someone a teleworker? Previous research from Madsen (2003) and Lapierre et al. (2016) uses intensity as the differentiating term, with low-intensity teleworkers performing 'most' of their work in a central work location, whereas this is reversed for high-intensity teleworkers. Using intensity in the terminology could appear potentially misleading, in that the high-intensity teleworker is almost pre-dispositioned into a conflictual mindset (which incidentally would fit with Lapierre et al's research agenda), rather than simply describing in quantitative terms the amount of time that is spent teleworking. Leading on from this, the amount of time is also unspecified, so exactly what constitutes high and low intensity is vague.

Furthermore, teleworkers can be either full-time or part-time, so long as their time working is still split between a central office space and other environments. To keep things confusing, Biron and Veldhoven (2016) and Muller and Niessen (2019) refer to teleworkers throughout their papers on control and self-leadership respectively, as 'part-time teleworkers'. However, by any of the aforementioned definitions, they are full-time workers who telework. These authors seem to approach every teleworker as a part-time teleworker when an individual splits their work between two locations, despite working full-time hours. This begs the question, how would one define a teleworker that works three days per week, two in the office and one at home? A part-time part-time teleworker? For this misnomer and further issues that could be created from this terminology, this thesis will take these assertions of time in telework as exceptions rather than rules and accept that any regularly planned work away from the central work space constitutes teleworking.

2.4.5 Frameworks used in Telework Definitions

When trying to differentiate the various kinds of teleworking that exist, several explanatory models have been put forward. Daniels, Lamond and Standen (2001) attempt to look beyond technological and rational advancements and to combine social, political and cultural factors into the reasoning of telework adoption.

They propose five distinct elements to examine teleworking:

Location – Time spent therein

ICT Usage – Range of hardware and software used, mobility of devices

Knowledge Intensity – Meaning knowledge necessary to complete tasks, level of autonomy gained

Intra-Organizational Contact – Range and frequency within the organization

Extra-Organizational Contact – Range and frequency outside the organization

This viewpoint is interesting as it bundles previously held fundamentals of telework into a neat framework, emphasising the influence contact levels between the employee and their organization has affects their teleworking categorisation. This demonstrates that while the labelling may change, the fundamental underlying features will remain key to how the organization views the teleworker, or indeed how the teleworker sees themselves.

Further examples of trying to compartmentalise telework have been explored in the past. Moorcroft and Bennett (1995) previously categorised teleworkers into three subgroups based on their out of office workspaces:

< Home-based Neighbourhood work centres Nomadic staff >

Home-based staff are defined as having a home office set-up and they may be self-employed or spend their time between home, clients and the office. The interesting concept of neighbourhood centre telework refers to 'telecottages'. Often shared spaces, these units provided a technologically advanced outpost for those without a home office, and although the terminology and the need for these locations has changed, in recent years there has been a revival in the market for rented working and meeting spaces, although the effect of

the Covid-19 pandemic has added some uncertainty (Dandoy, 2020). The nomadic staff were seen to be able to work anywhere without the need for a hub. Davenport and Pearlson (1998) expand on these groupings by producing a continuum of alternative work arrangements in their research towards the 'virtual office' based on several, large, American conglomerates. Their five-stage gradient is as follows:

Occasional telecommuting > Hoteling > Tethered office > Home-based, some mobility > Fully mobile

On this scale, Davenport and Pearlson refer to telecommuting as the most stationary arrangement, an office-based worker who occasionally works from home. Hoteling, more commonly referred to in recent times as hot-desking, involves having areas which employees share during their turn to be present in the office. Tethered to the office eludes to extra freedom, but somewhere in the building. Home based is largely for lower skilled telesales and service work, and fully mobile refers to sales reps.

Kurland and Bailey (1999) similarly offer four categories for telework:

Home-based telecommuting – Satellite offices – Neighbourhood work centres – Mobile working

The authors stipulate that home-based telecommuters cannot be self-employed as they must have some connection to a central office, must use telecoms as a minimum and it is expected that not every working day is spent at home. Satellite offices are used by a single firm as a spoke of the central office, their purpose to alleviate long commutes. A neighbourhood work centre is similar, but shared between a number of firms. Finally, mobile working is, as in Davenport and Pearlson (1998), a worker constantly on the road or in the air with no working base.

The researchers understood that telework would not remain static for long: "*We can also expect telework to look very different in the next few years"* (p.53, Kurland and Bailey, 1999). They argue less need for hands-on expertise, for example software programmers who can work remotely. When analysing these categorisations in current times one would discount to some extent satellite offices and neighbourhood work centres as places to *do* telework as even regional offices would now take the place as their central office, with the teleworker

then taking work elsewhere. Furthermore, regarding Moorcroft and Bennett (1995), modern teleworking encompasses both home-based and nomadic forms. Regarding Davenport and Pearlson (1998) telecommuting, hoteling and home-based are now rolled into one. Furthermore, in current times, ideas of neighbourhood centres and partitioning levels of mobility are less relevant based on current technologies. Instead, the aforementioned rented meeting facilities have emerged where workers can breakout into temporary office set-ups thanks to their mobility.

Campbell and McDonald (2007) discuss the sectioning of telework by drawing on elements of time and place to create the following categorisation:

Home-based employed Teleworkers who work from home either on a full-time or part-time basis

Home-based self-employed Teleworkers who normally work from a home office

Mobile Teleworkers who spend at least 10 hours per week away from their main workplace

Day extenders who work full-time from a traditional office-based work environment, but occasionally work at home after work hours. (DCITA, 2006 in Campbell and McDonald, 2007)

This format offers clear characteristics, if in slightly unwieldy terms, to the problem of teleworker definition. However, the problem of defining telework may reside in the attempt to pigeon hole teleworkers in a way that makes their experience applicable universally.

Sullivan (2003) looks beyond the static division of teleworking and calls for definitions to be adapted for individual research projects. Sullivan strongly believes that the lack of a singular accepted definition is impeding academic research, as researchers are building a large but disparate body of literature under the term teleworking, with the samples far too diverse in terms of location worked (home, satellite offices or on the road), time spent teleworking and contractual arrangements. Sullivan believes the move towards diverse samples with diverse definitions is inevitable as the number of disciplines involved in telework is so broad. This approach certainly has merit if the project specific definitions are still recognisable within the umbrella term of telework, thus still allowing for comparison in the field.

Finally, one aspect which seems under discussed is splitting self-employed teleworkers and employed teleworkers. Those who are self-employed will undoubtedly display teleworking

characteristics, the main difference being communications from line manager/colleagues will be replaced with clients or suppliers. Adding a categorisation of employed or self-employed telework could clear up this ambiguity. For this research, the term telework will denote an employed teleworker (i.e., a teleworker who is a permanent employee).

As is clear from the previous sections, defining telework is not a simple task. There are many variations and just as many ideas on how the definition can be reformulated to improve the clarity of telework research. Definitional clarity is important to ensure findings from scholars that share commonalties can be easily found in a modern world powered by search engines looking for keywords. Paradoxically the search to streamline definitions can lead to creating more versions.

2.4.6 The Commonalities and Variance Across Definitions

The variation across definitions has shown that while there are considerable differences, there are also some key commonalities to be found. The fact that the employee spends a regular and significant amount of time working away from their employer, managers and colleagues physical locations, although the 'rubber band' problem ((where the number of teleworkers varies depending on how stretched the definition is))prevents precise terms being applied (Qvortrup, 1998).

There is a requirement for information communication technologies to facilitate working relationships. Older definitions may have specified the need for a home office, internet connection or 'terminals'; however in the modern world the compression of these technologies increases the availability and accessibility of teleworking (Pratt, 1984; Vilhelmson and Thulin, 2016).

Moreover, there are several important differences across the definitions:

The agreements on the working pattern (days spent away from the central work location can be set or flexible), time spent in any one location (moving between home, client sites, mobile settings, the central work space) and connectivity (left to one's own devices or in near constant contact or constantly available), are all subject to the individual case.

Variance across definitions dilutes the quality of the research that can be undertaken on teleworking (Sullivan, 2003). Reviewing this section on teleworker definitions, broader definitions have the benefit of being inclusive to a wide range of teleworking individuals, but decrease the effectiveness of research findings. When the category of teleworker is stretched so far and can be applied to such a large population of workers, the samples studied under the umbrella of teleworking can become too disparate. For instance, using Garrett and Danziger's (2007) definition, a manager who spends one day a week out in meetings could fall into the same telework category as an employee that works four days a week working from home, but their experience will be very different. This lack of clarity draws out a key issue which will be discussed in detail further on in this thesis: is there a difference between being a teleworker and an individual that teleworks? Coupled with the issue of a broad teleworking group, many researchers have attempted to split teleworkers into more accurate subgroups, some of which have been discussed above. Moving forward, perhaps the most important point to make is if the term teleworker is useful at all?

2.5 Teleworker or Teleworking?

In the Netherlands you are likely to see many people riding bicycles, but rarely will they refer to themselves as cyclists. In a country with infrastructure and culture that promotes bike riding they are not ushered into a separate group – rather than being labelled as cyclists they are all just, people who cycle. Could the same notion be applied in the telework context? Rather than teleworkers they are just people who telework?

The meaning of telework has evolved and become disparate over time. Through the 1970s and 1980s the complex technology required to telework helped to define its parameters. These boundaries where broadened further through the 1990s and early 2000s. As the ability to telework was opened up through the reduction in technological cost and improvement in capabilities, there was increased digital connectedness which blurred the boundaries of definitions as they became harder to pick apart from one another. In the last fifteen years a combination of continued technological advancement (push emails, smartphones, high-speed broadband), coupled with increased call for work flexibility, rising office rents and social distancing required through the Covid-19 pandemic, has driven the

uptake of teleworking immensely. With the realisation that many more job roles can now be completed from home (Dingel and Neiman, 2020) this leads to perhaps the biggest issue currently affecting the definition of telework - the dilution of who is a teleworker in the modern day.

Previous research may have had the propensity to focus on 'official' teleworkers due to their visibility when approaching organizations for research (Haddon and Brynin, 2005). However, it can be argued that there are a substantial number of unidentified teleworkers currently exhibiting telework without official agreement with their employers; this begs the question of whether it is worth defining the teleworker from the modern worker at all.

For researchers it would appear the most important steps are to clarify their own boundaries for their projects, as suggested by Sullivan (2003), as will be the case in the current research (stipulations can be found in the methods section) and although not the primary purpose of the current thesis, any information garnered that can help towards new and improved definitions will be most welcome.

2.5.1 Toward a New Definition of Telework

To suggest a new definition would be to include the key elements traditionally defined: working across two or more work environments, use of technology to communicate with line mangers and colleagues, but also to narrow the scope of the definition to improve its usefulness.

By reorganising how the definition is presented some issues of muddling could be avoided:

Teleworker – An individual that regularly divides their working days between their company offices, their own home and various other locations, where this is made possible by the continued use of the internet and telecommunications.

Teleworking – A process of working outside of the company offices, made possible by using the internet and telecommunications.

It is hoped these simple, concise and specific definitions can be used in future research on the topic.

2.6 The Current Teleworking Landscape

The current telework landscape is constantly evolving which complicates immensely the processes of quantifying the who, where and why of teleworking. However, the following section will aim to briefly outline the situation with a focus on the UK.

2.6.2 Who is Teleworking?

Ascertaining the prevalence of teleworking is notoriously difficult (Ellison, 1999). The tribulations of pinpointing the number of teleworkers were previously described by Qvortrup (1998) as ‘the rubber band problem’, which shows the problem with measuring those who telework because the number stretches with the parameter of the definition, making comparisons across the field of research problematic. The dilemma is such that weighing up the measurable teleworkers under any one definition is possible, but it is not representative of the true figure, without including all teleworkers and facing unmeasurable results. This being said, Golden (2009) ascertains that by all measures telework is growing in popularity year on year and more recently figures from the ONS (in Felstead and Henseke, 2017) show that as of 2014, 4.2 million workers in the UK spent more than half their working time in their home environment, making up 13.9% of the working population. Felstead and Henseke (2017) go on to produce an in-depth analysis of teleworking trends, primarily sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which provides a more conservative estimate based on its defining criteria and the Skills and Employment Survey (SES), less regular than the LFS, but with criteria that lend to a higher yield of teleworker, or as Felstead and Henseke refers, remote worker.

Figure 2.2 Labour Force Survey estimates (Felstead and Henseke, 2017)

Here we can appreciate the near exponential growth in teleworking in Britain. By 2019 the percentage availing themselves of some form of telework (akin to the higher line on figure 2.2, but without the weighting for age groups of 20-59 year-olds used by Felstead and Henseke) had risen to 26.7% (ONS, 2020B) and in 2020 this had risen to 36.5% (ONS, 2020c). This suggests the prevalence of teleworking has continued to grow steadily, then received a large spike in uptake post-Covid-19 and associated lockdowns.

In terms of the diffusion of job roles, teleworking is highly prevalent in knowledge-based practice, professional services and administration across both the public and private sectors. The Covid-19 pandemic will have caused a tremendous spike in terms of the numbers teleworking and also increased the range of job roles that can be conducted remotely. It is plausible that this will lead to a permanent shift in the amount of individuals regularly teleworking, but scholarly evidence is embryonic (Abdullah, 2020). However, it has undoubtedly been one of the most far reaching, distressing and life-altering events of the last hundred years. With this research taking place pre-pandemic, the scope of this thesis is not to access the many and varied effects of Covid-19 but still needs to take into consideration how it will impact on teleworking practices in the future.

In the UK, teleworking, or due to most lockdown measures that prevented any office-based activities, working from home, became de rigueur for all but key workers who could not undertake tasks from home, but were required to enable functioning society. For example, delivery drivers, supermarket workers, hospital staff. The sudden implementation of lockdown measures forced many organizations that had previously not practiced remote working to shift to embracing remote working and as of the present (2022) many businesses have changed policy entirely to enable continued teleworking or are in negotiations with staff to a phased return to the office (Errichiello and Pianese, 2021; Henry, Le Roux and Parry, 2021; Kane et al., 2021).

The upturn in telework due to the pandemic will have caused a huge spike in the current figures. Only in the next few years after the worst effects of the pandemic have been felt and normal working environments are fully reopened will we be able to ascertain the true impact that Covid-19 will have had on telework adoption. Away from enforced teleworking, the traditional reasons for its adoption will now be discussed.

2.6.3 Why do Individuals Telework?

Teleworking has traditionally been seen as a mutually beneficial arrangement for both employer and employee. For employers, a range of cost saving elements are seen, such as less expenditure on office space, and lower absenteeism (Jackson and van der Wielen, 1998). For the employees there is enhanced levels of flexibility, reduction in travel time and costs, and a widening of the job market for disabled employees (Baruch, 2000; Igeltjørn and Habib, 2020). For wider society, benefits include a reduction in traffic, pollution, energy use and waste (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). However, there has been considerable literature that has questioned the effectiveness of teleworking. Advantages for the employer have been challenged by Gajendran, Harrison and Delaney-Klinger (2015), where teleworking has moved from being a new idea, through a period of feasibility, desirability and now toward mainstream practice, citing several high-profile firms who had recently placed a ban on teleworking practices. Welch and Welch (2007) also argued that a lack of face time with employees prevents managers getting to know their employees, weakening their ability to handle work pressures, negotiations and deadlines. These actions have then been repeated

by some organizations post-Covid-19 when trying to return their workplaces to the previous status quo.

As this thesis is concerned with the experience of the teleworker over organizational or environmental applications, this section will tease out more themes as to why individuals choose to telework and ascertain how it is being conducted.

Reduction in commuting has been extolled as a major reason for teleworking since its inception and shows no signs of abating (Elldér, 2020). Although a simple concept on the surface and one which reduces cost (Morgan, 2004), reutilising the 'dead time' of commuting can act as a gateway to other advantages for the teleworker. Although in some cases, teleworkers have been proven to work longer days (Johnson, Audrey and Shaw, 2007), they are also able to better use commuting time for leisure (Ammons and Markham, 2004) or home activities (Maruyama, Hopkinson, and James, 2009).

The flexibility enacted when working from home is not only reflected at either end of the working day, teleworkers often have increased autonomy in their roles, a positive in itself (Harpaz, 2002), but it also affords them temporal adaptability throughout their working day. Dedicating more time to family is also reflected in the use of teleworking as a transition back to work after maternity or paternity leave (Madsen, 2003). Employees that want to work in more isolated conditions may well prefer to undertake teleworking, but the common goal that many of these factors contribute to is improved work-life balance and active reduction in work-life conflict, be that for oneself or to give more attention to one's family (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). Both of these concepts will be explored in detail in the literature review.

2.6.3 The Employer's Perspective on Telework

From the inception of telework, organizational opinions have been influenced by external factors such as the environment, government policy, oil prices, urban geography, technological advancement and more recently pandemic (Alizadeh, 2009; Contreras, Baykal, and Abid, 2020; Hynes, 2014; Nilles, 1975; Nilles et al., 1976; Yap and Ting, 1990), as well as internal factors such as organizational culture, financial assessment, productivity and employee well-being (Bosua et al., 2017; Elling, 1985; Gani, and Toleman, 2006)

Illegems and Verbeke (2004) assessed the conventional resource-based perspective of telework adoption against a more holistic 'new' perspective. This comparison is shown in figure 2.3.

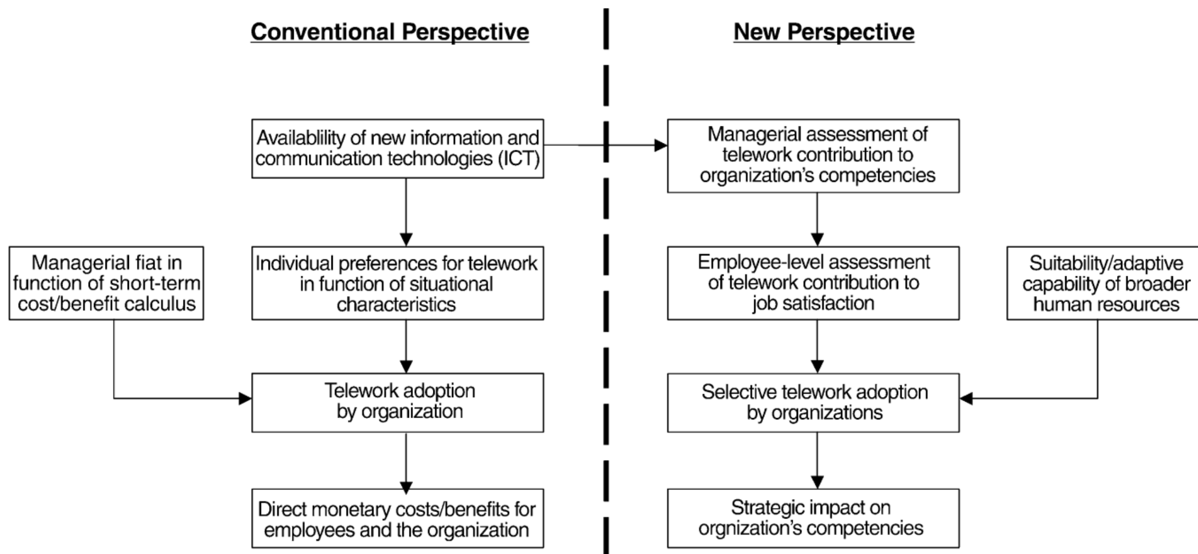


Figure 2.3 Conventional vs new organizational perspectives of teleworking adoption (p. 320, Illegems and Verbeke, 2004)

This suggests progression of organizational thinking around when and how to employ teleworking practices, moving away from a cost based calculative method toward using telework to improve organizational competence.

Illegems and Verbeke (2004) also surveyed managers on their opinion regarding implementation of telework. The sample included both current telework practice adopters and non-adopters. They found that all managers that were already engaged with teleworking practices hoped to expand them, however, managers not yet applying telework to their teams were more reticent to do so. This can be potentially explained by the professional working experience of managers, those in progressively connected industries are able to see potential benefits more clearly, whilst non-adopters were keen to retain traditional methods when managing their staff, such as in-person supervision. This suggests that management of telework programs is a reflexive venture.

Further comparative exploration at supervisor level by Park and Cho (2019) concurs with the idea that having experience of teleworking, in this instance as a teleworking supervisor, increases the perception of telework as a benefit to the organization as a whole.

Pyöriä's 2011 review of managing telework ascertains a slower than expected growth due in part to three factors effecting the management of telework. Firstly, external regional policies stifle the adoption of telework. For example, multi-national corporations must follow regional labour force policies, restricting their ability to offer the same teleworking arrangement across their diffused organizations. Secondly, without an established contractual framework internal teleworking contracts remain ad hoc and underdefined, causing additional uncertainty for management as to how to implement teleworking. Finally, traditional management culture has left managers struggling to relinquish power to their employees by giving them the autonomy to telework.

Although this thesis will look at the experience of telework from the employee's viewpoint, it remains important to consider the organization and managerial perception of telework and teleworkers, as this will have a powerful impact on the employee experience.

Whilst Illegems and Verbeke (2004) discuss telework as a choice and Pyöriä bemoans the managerial trait of retaining proximal power over employees, the Covid-19 pandemic brought enforced teleworking and a new set of associated challenges for organizations and managers.

Raghavan, Demircioglu and Orazgaliyev, (2021) applied the emergency-learning-institutionalization-new normal (ELIN) framework which uses the progress of the Covid-19 pandemic timeline to access trends in the management of telework toward the 'new normal'. They found that organizations that already had some teleworking practices in place found it easier to transition to entirely remote working, whilst those without had to adapt quickly. This accelerated implementation of teleworking did however expunge previous held hesitancies around the ability to give employees autonomy to perform their jobs with reduced supervision. Raghavan, Demircioglu and Orazgaliyev, (2021) foresee the legacy of the pandemic telework transition to increase the adoption of telework and hybrid working models whilst concurrently reaffirming to organizations the importance of employee well-being.

2.7 Summary and Rationale

This chapter began with a brief history of early teleworking, or indeed telecommuting at that time, before progressing through the murky waters of defining telework. Through this thorough exploration of previous definitions, a new definition is suggested that attempts to address certain shortcomings in previous definitions of telework. The chapter concluded with an assessment of the current incidence of teleworking and popular reasons why individuals telework.

The aforementioned research shows a clear gap around the definitional problems associated with non-traditional working. This issue goes on to create uncertainty around how many non-traditional workers there are in any given country, profession or industry. To this end, a new suggested definition based upon a review of definitional literature has already been mooted in this thesis.

The following chapter will explore further the experience of teleworking, beginning with the role of work-life balance in the modern teleworking landscape and the key role this area of research has for the current thesis.

Chapter 3: The Teleworking Experience: Work-Life Balance, Work-Life Conflict, Well-Being and Technology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter of literature review, the researcher aims to cover three distinct, but overlapping topics; work-life balance/conflict, employee well-being and work technology. To the researcher, these topics represent cornerstones of the teleworking experience.

The process of balancing work and home life are key points of discussion in telework literature and once this concept has been defined, the place telework inhabits within home life and parenthood will be assessed.

Well-being issues particularly pertinent to teleworkers will also be evaluated, before the key teleworking facet of technology will be explored to see how the progress of faster and more mobile computing impacts the teleworking experience. The chapter will be rounded off by approaching the concept of obligations in telework.

3.1 Introducing the Experience of Teleworking

Teleworking research broadly falls into two categories, which look at the effects of business performance and employee well-being. The focus of this thesis is on employee well-being and therefore less reference to work performance and the effects on the employer will be made.

One of the early papers to analyse teleworker well-being came from Shamir and Solomon (1985) who concentrated on how working from home affected work life quality across a number of aspects that still apply to the present day, namely social isolation, role conflict, the pros and cons of commuting, overspill of work and home obligations, misconceptions of slacking off, and the role of autonomy. Shamir and Solomon (1985) collated early telework and work from home literature and by cross-referencing them against well respected employee motivation and satisfaction theory created a template which included, amongst others, autonomy, social relations and job stress – these concepts would go on to reflect much of the next thirty years of teleworker well-being research.

In that time, the literature on telework and work-life balance has become vast. Research ranges from seeing telework as the panacea to the shortcomings of traditional 9-5 regime to the negative well-being outcomes such as work stress, burnout and work-family conflict. This review chapter will summarise the main studies relevant to the current research questions.

3.2 Defining Work-Life Balance

As reviewed in the previous chapter the most prominent reason for teleworking from an employee's perspective was to improve work-life balance. Although, often the extent to which telework improves work-life balance constitutes a few hours saved on commuting or the ability to engage in childcare. Work-life balance literature tends to focus on individuals with a family, which often represent the 'life' part of the deal, and to a lesser extent an individual's personal time for leisure activities (Abdel Hadi, Bakker and Häusser, 2021). The 'work' side is often represented by an office-based role, although most professions have been covered to some degree. Whilst there are many concepts used to explain work-life balance (segmentation, spillover, compensation, instrumentation and conflict to name some of the most popular) the crux of work-life balance literature focuses on how certain elements of job roles detract or enhance the employee's ability to enjoy their life outside of work, creating a balance (Guest, 2002).

A recent effort from Kelliher, Richardson and Boiarintseva (2018) to reconceptualize work-life balance away from traditional research categorisation of 'life' being care giving and

‘work’ being office based and full-time. They urge further research to be conducted in investigating new forms of work and exploring ‘life’ in the form of hobbies, culture and religion to name but a few alternate measures. This also holds importance for organizations and policy makers as to how to proliferate teleworking in a beneficial way, with less ‘requirements’, such as childcare, needing to be approved to telework and cultivate better balance.

Balance does not have a precise definition and consensus is lacking, however, Kalliath and Brough (p. 326, 2008) do collate the key elements of previous conceptualisations to provide their own definition: “*Work–life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities.”* The focus of this definition is on two key pillars. Firstly, work-life balance is an individual’s perception and therefore difficult to evaluate from the outside, and, secondly that what is important to create this balance changes over time. For example, on this second note, the freedom to take time off at short notice for impulsive trips may be replaced with a regular flexibility that allows the individual to pick their children up from school. The definition provided by Kalliath and Brough (2008) represents how work-life balance is defined within this thesis.

Work-life balance has been a cornerstone of telework literature for decades and is expected to gather pace in shaping teleworking job design and discussion as current trends extol the need for further flexibility and fairness in the workplace (Woetzel, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2016, Yi and Baggott, 2016).

3.3 Telework and Home Life

Research into how teleworking impacts employees’ personal and family experiences emerged after early research that tends to focus on telework as a solution to societal pressures, such as road congestion (Nilles, 1975, 1988; Kramer and King, 1982; Salomon, 1984) or business solutions such as cost cutting and freeing up office space (Becker and Steele, 1995; Davenport and Pearlson, 1998).

When considering teleworkers' experience *en masse*, results tend to be favourable. Maruyama, Hopkinson and James (2009) surveyed 1,566 teleworkers and found overwhelmingly positive results in terms of preferred work location, shortening of commute, work-life balance and better relations with household members – all of these measures were reported as good or very good or the equivalent in 72% to 86% of the respondents. On a negative slant, working much longer hours rated at 61%, less able to control working hours at 26% and increased family conflict at 7%. The whole picture represents a positive outlook, but it is worth noting that even the smallest negative report, family conflict at 7.3% represents 114 individuals. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, many employees would have experienced their first taste of teleworking as part of a return to work scheme, particularly pertinent to new mothers, and this will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.1 Return to Work and Parenthood

Telework has been heralded as the solution for mothers to get back into work with the minimum of maternity penance (Bevan et al., 1999), but there are contradictory schools of thought into how effective, if at all, telework is for mothers. One school of thought argues that the task of taking care of one's family is alleviated by the flexibility of working hours and location (Huws, 1996). A second school assumes that the other parental figure in the family will also increase their childcare involvement (Silverstone, 1993). If the second party's involvement is not increased, it is argued that exploitation takes hold. In the case of the latter it is seen as a continuation of gender inequality practices, the roles of the mother are doubled or tripled, with responsibilities of childcare, household chores and work to be compressed into the working day (Haddon and Silverstone, 1993).

Howard et al. (2021) re-examined spillover and crossover during the Covid-19 pandemic. They identify three main forces in work-life conflict; time, strain and behaviour-based conflict. Akin to previous spillover and boundary management literature they appreciate the fact that stressors from one domain effect the relationships in the other. When dual earners are teleworking together there is a crossover similar to imagining two spheres merging into a Venn diagram and sufficient flexibility is required from all parties to prevent this crossover developing into conflict.

One study to highlight this was undertaken by Hilbrecht et al. (2008) where the sample consisted of eighteen married Canadian mothers with school age children. Interestingly, this sample purported positive impacts on time management when teleworking and valued the ability to fit work around childcare commitments, such as the school run. However, the impact on the participants' personal well-being was less well understood due to their dual roles as workers and caregivers, where any time freed up by flexible working arrangements was consumed by caregiving. This point echoes previous Canadian research from Tremblay (2002) who reflects upon potential areas of conflict in the home, as caregivers attempt to meet the demands of their family during working hours. Staying in Canada, Shaw, Andrey and Johnson (2003) took fifteen in-depth interviews with women, nine of whom were mothers living with children at home, and investigated how teleworking fits within family and leisure time. Findings show that teleworking increased the control and autonomy that the individuals had over their working lives, which in turn allowed mothers to be there for their children, allowing time for more structured family activities, albeit at the cost of their own personal leisure time.

More uniformly positive findings were presented by Hill, Ferris, and Märtinson (2003), using a very large sample (traditional office, n = 4316, virtual office, n = 767, and home office, n = 441) from IBM in America to report levels of perceived positive work-family balance were significantly higher in flexible workers (including teleworking individuals) than those who were office bound. The employer also received a benefit, as it was found that flexible employees worked longer hours before family commitments interfered with work. For female teleworkers, productivity scores were significantly higher than males, with the paper calling for more research into why flexible work may increase women's productivity. Beasley, Lomo-David and Seubert (2001) did find women rated the three highest motivational factors for teleworking (more time spent with children, greater flexibility and more time spent with a spouse) significantly higher than men, although actual working ability was not measured.

Summarising, more positive outcomes appear to be yielded from quantitative research methods, while more negative outcomes tend to be reported from qualitative studies. This could be caused by the way the data has been presented, for instance the negative aspects in Maruyama, Hopkinson and James (2009) are hidden somewhat under the positive

‘headlines’, in the same way negative verbatim quotes can be very impactful for qualitative research (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006).

The following sections will examine further the effects teleworking has upon the well-being of those that undertake it.

3.3.2 Well-Being Factors

Wellbeing has been simply defined as “*the condition of being contented, healthy, or successful”* (Collins Dictionary, 2018) and is a very broad umbrella term to describe an individual’s state. Dodge et al. (2012) tussle with defining the term which has come to increased prominence, particularly in managerial literature, in recent times. The authors reflect on previous descriptions and definitions dating back as far as Aristotle. They discuss the tendency of previous scholars to focus on dimensions over definition and thus present their own definition as *“…wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge”* (p. 230, Dodge, et al., 2012). With Lunde et al’s 2022 review paper showing a large gap in the actual health impacts of teleworking, the need to bring the definition of well-being into the realm of the current study is to understand that teleworkers need a set of coping mechanisms to counter the adverse experiences that they may encounter during their teleworking experience.

Looking towards wellbeing in the field of telework, there is much conjecture on an organization creating an ideal teleworking experience (Choi, 2018; Fenson and Hill, 2003; Groen et al., 2018; Mello, 2007). Kossek, Lautsch and Eaton (2009) question some of the beliefs that telework can be applied as a ‘cure all’ to employee well-being. They demonstrate that improved autonomy over teleworking arrangements can improve well-being elements such as work-family conflict, but can also lead to additional expectations from friends and family and a tendency to overwork, causing strain. Anderson, Kaplan and Vega (2015) also investigated the affective outcomes of teleworking on employees, finding both a modest decrease in negative emotion and a modest increase in positive emotion; however, the authors found these emotions differ greatly depending on the individual’s personality traits. Treating telework arrangements through an idiosyncratic deals perspective is considered by Hornung, Rousseau, and Glaser (2008) who ascertain the

circumstances around the creation and type of teleworking arrangement will affect the teleworking experience in somewhat paradoxical ways. Although teleworkers were often allowed increased flexibility, those that already had high autonomy, such as field accountants, reported less flexibility than office-based counterparts following their negotiated i-deals.

Charalampous et al. (2017) conducted a systematic well-being review on teleworkers (referred to as e-workers) across a range of qualitative and quantitative means. Findings exemplify a key issue in well-being research, their affective state rather than deeper, psychosomatic, felt experiences. Results go on to show positive sentiment toward e-working, but drawbacks remain. It is worth noting here that largely positive experiences in a very large sample size still result in many individuals suffering negative emotions.

Autonomy is one of five well-being signifiers identified by Charalampous et al. (2017) and this dimension provided negative connotations for e-workers. The temporal autonomy afforded led to work intensification which in turn caused work and home 'spheres' to collide, as suggested by Howard et al. (2021) as an antecedent to crossover. True autonomy was also threatened by work day 'exstensification' due to the ubiquitous presence of instant access devices.

Research recommendations from Charalampous et al. (2017) included investigating the possibility of protecting well-being whilst being constantly contactable on communication devices, focusing studies on a greater range of e-workers and understanding the role of personality traits more deeply and how these variabilities effect the experience of remote working.

The satisfaction of a teleworker can be influenced by a number a personal traits and characteristics, as found by Golden (2009) who calls for the role of a teleworker to be specific to the fit of the individual's personality, stating those inclined to solitude should seek a teleworking role, whereas extroverts who enjoy face-to-face interaction should think twice. Golden refers back to Hackman and Oldham's 1974 job characteristics model and Edwards' 1991 job fit ideas, postulating that revisiting these theories to serve the suitability of individuals for teleworking would help to progress the experience and effectiveness of

the method. Further ideas upon how job design can affect teleworker well-being will now be discussed.

3.3.3 Job Design

Although job design may often be seen as a top down strategy under many of its approaches (e.g., the JCM Hackman & Oldham model, 1974), perhaps most pertinent to teleworkers is the notion of job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argue that workers' motivation to job craft is moderated by their perceived opportunity to do so, alongside their motivational and work orientations, such as whether they see their work as a job, career or calling. Job crafting in telework often saw teleworkers strive for increased flexibility within their roles across spatial-temporal boundaries, providing an opportunity for increased job satisfaction, although how successful the outcome is likely to be determined by the employee's home situation and personality traits (Liu, Wan and Fan, 2021; Wessels et al, 2019).

The employee's responsibility to their boundary management is exemplified by Basile and Beauregard (2021). Their research on agile workers showed the paradoxical part ICT plays for teleworkers. Again, autonomy is given, then challenged by these devices and their ability to allow agile work, then catch the teleworker in a spiral of responsiveness if their boundary management is not strong. Basile and Beauregard (2021) challenge the organization to provide better support in employee boundary management through sympathetic, autonomous job design, supporting an employee's segmentation (high boundary) or integration (low boundary) preferences (Park, Fritz, and Jex, 2011) and increasing the lamentable lack of training provided on ICT usage. They also identify the importance of the line manager as the representative of the organization and how their own segmentation or integration preferences influence the experience of teleworking for their employees.

Whether the job has been designed top down or through elements of job crafting, the notion of increased flexibility is ubiquitous to telework research. Looking at that through the lens of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Hackman and Oldham, 1975), increasing flexibility could be seen as a version of autonomy, a core job characteristic in the model and to the field of job design research more generally. Increased autonomy for the teleworker will lead them to feel more responsible for their work, which theoretically in turn will result

in higher motivation and satisfaction. Teleworker motivation arising from exercising autonomy can also be explained using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2012). Intrinsic motivation arises when employees exercise autonomy, and can also be created if the employee's values align with the organization (referred to as integrated and identified forms of autonomous motivation under SDT), of which the process of teleworking could play a role through reflecting the importance placed on autonomy, flexibility and responsibility (Brunelle and Fortin, 2021). Though the positives are clear, the increased flexibility of the teleworker may also lead to more time spent working alone. The effects of working in isolation will now be assessed.

3.3.4 Isolation

The type of isolation found at work is termed as 'social isolation' and has been connected to the human state of loneliness since Robert Weiss' work in 1973. Weiss sees social isolation as a contributing factor to why one would become lonely alongside social pain, emptiness, a lack of confidants and feelings of unimportance and worthlessness. Later quantitative analysis from Hawley, Browne and Cacioppo (2005) breaks social isolation into three dimensions: intimate attachments, face-to-face relations and social identities. In a work context, intimate attachment pertains to romantic or nurturing relationships (likely to be relevant to relationships with home sharers). The second dimension relates to face-to-face interactions with friends and family, in an organizational context this has some bearing as work colleagues can easily become friends (Weiss, 1973). The third dimension of social identity refers to the place an individual holds with in a team. In the case of an organization it could be a small working group, line managers or simply those with whom one shares an office. When a teleworker is physically absent from the other members of their 'team' this lack of social interaction can trigger feelings of isolation, even if contactable via email or phone, as part of the teleworker's social identity is removed.

To consider the possible impact of social isolation at work, one must understand the effects of loneliness, for which social isolation is a trigger. Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton (2010) performed a meta-analysis to understand the impact social relationships have on mortality rates. The average age in the meta-analysis was 64 and the results showed that there was a 45% higher likelihood of death in people who are suffering loneliness than those who are

not. To put those figures into context, the same study showed obesity to have half the effect size and air pollution one-quarter of the effect size (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton, 2010). Although the likelihood of many individuals exhibiting loneliness purely due to work arrangements is somewhat unlikely, particularly as many teleworkers do so to fit in extra family or social time (Hilbrecht, 2013), it is still pertinent to understand the risks.

Ward and Shabha (2001) used a questionnaire study to better understand the socio-psychological effects of teleworking. They identified that for teleworkers to successfully avoid isolation they need to fit a certain personality type, self-motivated and without a need for high-levels of social interaction. However, many employees who enter telework do not fit, or have not considered if they fit these traits, therefore, employers may need to specifically recruit teleworkers based on their personality factors, an idea which does not sit with the general reasoning of implementing teleworking schemes, to provide adapted working for current employees. Furthermore, the research also showed a disparity in attitudes; just 40% of employers thought isolation to be a disadvantage for teleworkers, while 90% the teleworkers themselves expressed this factor as a downside.

Bentley et al. (2016) also used a teleworking sample to test the importance of perceived organizational support (the level to which an employee believes the organizations cares for their well-being and about their work contribution) had on job satisfaction and job strain via the mediator of isolation. They found a lack of organizational support exacerbated isolation, which in turn was a significant contributor to both satisfaction and strain. Curiously, another mediator, teleworker support, which included practical help form the employer to create better working performance from the employee did not affect satisfaction and strain, potentially due to the fact this measure focused on working aspects rather than the teleworkers social well-being. Looking at the effect of isolation across different teleworking sub-groups, Morganson et al. (2010) discovered that teleworkers who are mainly office-based or home-based fare much better in terms of work-life balance support and job satisfaction in comparison to satellite and client-based teleworkers, whilst main office-based employees enjoyed higher levels of workplace inclusion than any teleworking group.

Clearly, for most, the experience of isolation is negative and can decrease mood, induce loneliness and also lead to burnout (Schlichte, Yssel and Merbler, 2005). Another key element to employee burnout is workload, which has received substantial attention from

telework researchers, the following section will enquire as to the effect teleworking has on the employee's workload.

3.3.5 Workload

When examining telework and workload there are several considerations to make. Firstly, in theory, teleworking should ease the workload burden on an individual as they are able to maximise their productivity and fit work more flexibly around their daily routines, whilst also saving commuting time (Nakrošienė, Bučiūnienė and Goštautaitė, 2019). However, in reality it has often been shown that teleworkers work long hours without adequate breaks (Tavares, 2017) and overworking can lead to a decrease in quality of life for the teleworker and their home sharers (Vittersø et al., 2003).

Issues of teleworker overwork are also represented in these three verbatim quotes from Jaakson and Kallaste (p. 205, 2010):

"Responsible employees forget themselves in their work and [in the case of telework] there is no other colleague to say that, hey, let's call it a day" (manager, case D).

"If you give [employees] a chance to work more, they will, as a rule, do it" (manager, case A).

"You suddenly realise some time in the evening that you're working, although it is supposed to be your own time" (employee, case H).

These quotes represent both the lack of social cues from colleagues to signal when the working day is done and also the inherent nature of some employees to overwork. Those who have a personal tendency to overwork will be more likely to engage in overworking when teleworking (Crosbie and Moore, 2004). It is also interesting to consider that two of these overwork quotes come from managers, and despite the well-known dangers of overwork (Nishiyama and Johnson, 1997; Hiyama and Yoshihara, 2008), these managers do not discourage it.

The issues of high workload for teleworkers become more complex when considering Wetzels and Tijden's 2008 analysis which showed that teleworkers do have increased workloads, leading to increased hours that are in excess of office-based counterparts who not afforded teleworking opportunities. However, their workloads are *not* in excess of office-based counterparts that have teleworking opportunities, *but* choose not to enact them. This suggests that teleworking per se is not the cause of overworking, but is due to

the type of knowledge work carried out by teleworkers. This of course discounts any additional spillover of roles that teleworkers encounter that may add to their holistic 'load' rather than just organizational workload (Leung, 2011; Lott, 2020).

The previous sub-sections have attempted to illuminate the vast literature on teleworker well-being. Though not exhaustive, it has helped to inform the direction of the current research. The importance of well-being for teleworkers is set to grow as the demands of technology and global interconnectedness increase. The following section of this literature review will now shed light on the fast-moving role of technology in telework.

3.4 Modern Technology and Telework

The eponymous law devised by Moore (1965) foretold the doubling of transistors in a computer circuit roughly every two years, although now believed to be slowing down according to Eeckhout (2017), it has resulted in both shrinkage of a computer from the size of a room, reserved for the most important government agencies, to the wearable tech of modern-day smartwatches. Along this journey into miniaturisation the personal computer and laptop enabled teleworking to grow at a steady pace, however the smartphone has allowed the boundaries of work-life to blur further and considerably where work has the potential to become ever present (Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates, 2005). Advancements in modern communication technology, which has made the working world a constant finger tap away, is perhaps the most intrusive player in work-family conflict. Turkle (2008) coined the phrase 'the tethered self' to show the reliance that modern society had on technology and a teleworker is no doubt tethered to their devices in order to fulfil their job roles.

Technological intrusion is shown as a choice in Schlachter et al's 2018 review paper on 'voluntary' use of work technology out of hours. Voluntary is defined as outside of contractual obligations. Many obligations felt by employees are exclusive of those set-out in their contracts, this implicit obligation is a key tenant of psychological contract interactions, which will be explored in-depth in the next chapter. The tussle of give and take caused by technological devices is explored as the 'empowerment/enslavement paradox' (Lang and Jarvenpaa, 2005) by Schlachter et al (2018) and although this review is not focus on

teleworkers, ‘traditional’ employees face the same exchange of autonomy for availability as noted by Basile and Beauregard (2021) and Charalampous et al. (2017).

Recommendations from Schlachter et al (2018) sensibly include formal organizational policies that offer support on managing ICT, proposition of enforced restriction of ICT usage and more implicit organizational cultural behaviour – all sharing the same goal, to improve employee well-being.

Though the power of technology to help individuals achieve is not lost on this thesis, much of the following literature will look at how modern technologies impact the experience of telework beyond merely what it becomes possible to do, but rather how it is done.

3.4.1 Mobile Devices, Smartphones and Telework

Focusing on the role played by smartphones, Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates (2005) examined the impact of the Blackberry on workers’ behaviour outside of normal working hours, discovering mixed results. They ascertained that users themselves believe they are in control of the device, acknowledging its usefulness, but also that they expect quicker replies from others and, cyclically, they themselves feel a need to be more responsive to communications they receive. Spouses of users noted the increased detachment from home life via the intrusion of work emails and a perceived need to respond. Middleton’s (2007) study, also on Blackberry users, again found devices are hated by spouses but loved by workers. This was despite the fact the devices were linked to work intensification, workday elongation and increased the localities in which one could work (while traveling, on holiday). Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates and Middleton’s studies both relied on fairly small samples with generally enthusiastic workers at a time when the novelty aspect of the Blackberry may have contributed to masking the detrimental effects on the employee.

After the demise of the Blackberry, Samsung and Apple smartphones dominated the market. While the Blackberry was often seen as a ‘work phone’ the new generations of smart phones encapsulated all the functions needed for working, communicating and playing (Teacher et al. 2015). To track how smartphone usage for work outside of traditional working hours impacted on work-family conflict Derks et al. (2016) conducted a diary study. Respondents’ preference for segmentation in their life was measured via questionnaire to

present a possible mediator between smartphone usage and work-family conflict. Indeed, those who rated a low preference for segmentation (integrators) showed low levels of conflict aided by balancing work and family. Of course, this would be expected from the integrator's viewpoint, however the opinion of their spouse may have differed, was unreported. Surprisingly, the 'segmenters' showed no significant increase in conflict, although this may be due to the individual simply turning their phone off outside of work hours, thus eliminating conflict.

Smartphone communication apps now go beyond the levels of connectivity found by simply emailing and can create a sense of unspoken meaning. WhatsApp uses a tick notification system to inform on message delivery and also if the recipient has read the message, adding a feeling of accountability to reply to friends. Features to show when chat participants were last online can inform a mother that her son is home safe. Notifications to show if someone is currently typing are used by romantic partners to judge the level of interest their partner is showing in them (O'Hara et al. 2014). These and similar behaviours all add up to raised levels of engagement with the system. Church and Oliveira (2013) remark positively on WhatsApp as a communication tool to usurp the text message due to its greater sense of community, while Jonston et al (2015) showed the service helped to flatten out hierarchical communication in a sample of surgeons. However, some used WhatsApp to communicate work issues with employees in one large group, meaning all employees receive messages whether out of work hours or on days off. Beyond this, issues of work surveillance are raised. West and Bowman (2016) discuss the ethics, or lack thereof, in workplace surveillances such as keystroke or website monitoring, all of which need some dedication in implementing, perhaps WhatsApp and its simplicity have gone under the radar as a work surveillance tool for the everyday manager.

Park, Fritz and Jex (2011) found that workers who value segmenting their work and home life benefit from greater psychological detachment from work, in turn benefitting recovery from exhaustion, general health and aiding in avoiding employee 'burnout'. Creating strong 'technology boundaries' by removing the work phone from the home domain mediated the positive holistic health benefits. However, this is easier said than done, Orlikowski (2007) investigates the continued intertwinement of human behaviour and technology, coined as 'sociomateriality'. It is a theory positioned at the intersection of technology, work and the

organization. They believe particularly that technology becomes melded to the individual. For example, case studies denote how one believes they are in control of 'Googling' something when in reality the technology is in control of the process. Even more relevant to the current research is the view that Blackberry technology invaded employees' lives, where members of the studied organization reported "*…a strong obligation to check incoming messages, so as to 'stay in touch' or 'keep in the loop' with what is going on in the firm or their teams"* (p. 1,442, Orlikowski, 2007). The interview extract continues to echo similar themes of increased expectations of availability and accountability, tinged with a knowing kind of acceptance. These individuals understand this behaviour is abnormal, but continue to indulge in it, which at the same time exacerbates the condition around the workplace. Interestingly, after the initial wave of research around Blackberry use, or indeed addiction (Porter and Perry, 2007; Taylor, 2007; Trautschold et al., 2010), research on infiltratory tech declined. Perhaps this is due to a collective blinkering from the effects of this technology as it became commonplace, echoing the findings from the research on Blackberries itself.

3.4.2 Work Applications and Always-On Culture

The ubiquity of instant access technologies and smart devices brings forth a new telecommunication media for working, such as team working applications and ultra-refined video conferencing. Apps can be focused on video conferencing, such as Zoom, work planning and communications, such as Slack, file share and storage, such as Google Drive, or combined, such as with Microsoft Teams. The purpose shared across these platforms is to create interconnectivity within and across organizations and enable more work to be conducted remotely, particularly pertinent for teleworkers (Hallin, 2020). Malhotra and Majchrzak (2014) postulate that finding the correct fit for team working technology in geographically dispersed teams involves understanding the amount of coordination the team requires, thus avoiding perceived drawbacks of virtual teams being either overloaded with information or starved of collaborative connection. However, there is sparse additional research focused on the experience of using these apps when working in virtual teams (Mehta and Shah, 2019), with academic writing more readily attending to the impact these apps have on online teaching (Ismailov and Laurier, 2021; Serhan, 2020).

The ease of undertaking work anywhere anytime has fuelled the freeing of work from the traditional bounds of time and place to a situation where employees are always contactable and always on the job. Academic thought on how to alleviate the pressures associated with this new form of working are embryonic; research from Fosslien and Duffy (2020) and Sarres et al. (2021) on alleviating burnout caused by Zoom calls will no doubt be welcomed as it filters through to the public consciousness. With academia currently energised around new working practices related to the Covid-19 pandemic, research in this area is likely to increase, which is welcomed (Kniffen et al., 2021).

'Always-on culture' has been one of the prominent offshoots in the media around the impact these devices have had on working habits. However, academic research has rarely studied the always-on culture. McDowall and Kinman (2017) lay out a research and practice agenda, showing that currently organizations are not prepared to deal with the effects always-on working has on employees. From the employee's perspective there are examples of poor expectation setting from the organization, even if implicitly, causing employees to feel obligated to remain 'on' for extended periods. More research on how these expectations are handled (explicitly or implicitly) and what effect, if any, formal policies have on always-on culture are called for.

In this thesis, the use of technology by the teleworkers will aid in understanding its role as a mediator between the demands of the office and the obligations felt by the teleworker themselves toward their work and non-work domains. Light will be shed upon how increased accessibility to more complex work technologies in mobile devices affects the ability of the teleworker to manage their workload and how the intrusive nature of mobile communications affects their work-life balance.

3.4.2.1 Virtual Presenteeism

Presenteeism literature has been dominated by the traditional understanding of when one works in an office setting when sick, overworked or exhausted and should actually be recuperating at home (Biron et al., 2006; Johns, 2010; Dew, Keefe and Small, 2005) and has been cited as detrimental to productivity (Johns, 2011). Presenteeism also demands high numbers of hours in return for career progression (Watts, 2009) at the detriment of those who cannot afford this extended working time, most notable working mothers (Simpson, 1998). Virtual presenteeism is a relatively new concept, feeding in from traditional

presenteeism. Features of virtual presenteeism include the ability to exhibit the same sickness behaviour remotely, being constantly interrupted from work tasks by instant communications and the need to flag and appear available constantly, particularly through team working and communication applications (Lordan, 2020; Millard, 2020; Popovici and Popovici, 2020).

Recent propositions that open up the definition of presenteeism are being made (Ruhle et al., 2020). Moving away from defining presenteeism firstly as the act of working when ill and secondly with a loss to productivity. Previous attempts from Gilbreath and Karimi (2012) and Cooper (1996) have drawn presenteeism away from a strict definition of illness; respectively including stress and being 'physically present, but functionally absent'.

The feeling of obligation is one element that can feed into virtual presenteeism and next section of this review will focus on how obligations to work and home life affect the teleworker.

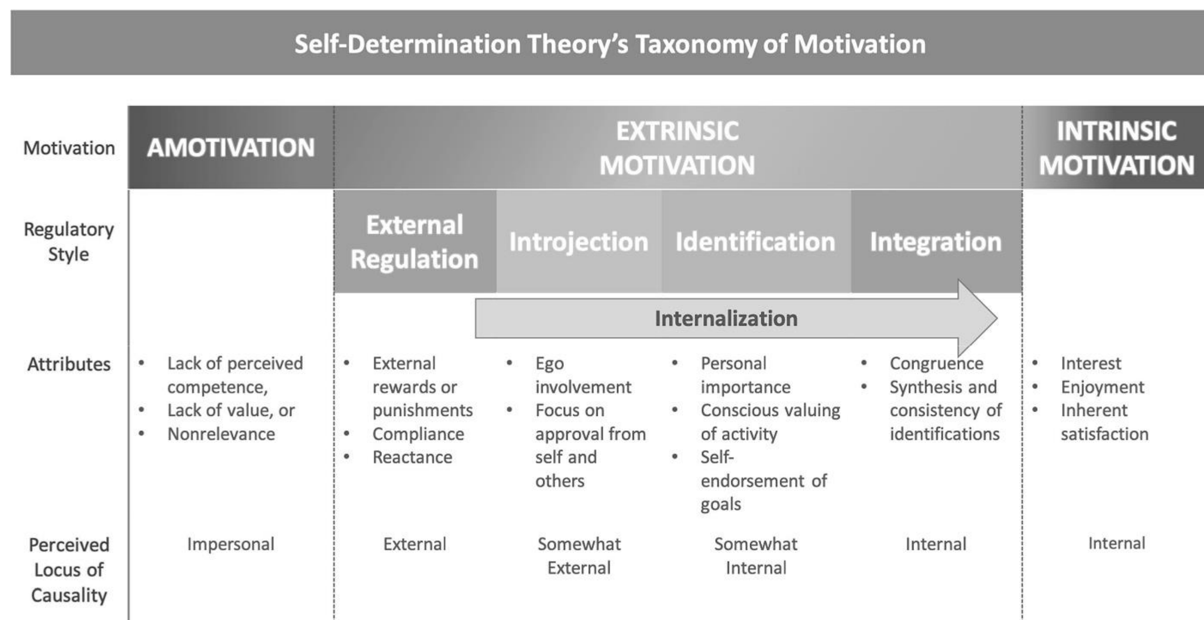
3.5 Telework and Obligations

Central to the theme of this thesis is how telework and obligations to both home and work combine. In addition to holding obligations to perform well at work, teleworkers will also hold obligations to parties in their family and nonwork roles: "*The fulfilment of obligations and expectations stemming from the roles associated with participation in the family domain."* (p. 193, Chen et al*.,* 2014). These additional obligations are likely to lead to family interference with work (Solís, 2017) and increased stress and fatigue (Palumbo, 2020).

Managing dual obligations, such as work and childcare, have become common place during the Covid-19 pandemic (Beno, 2021), with some significant negative findings discovered when teleworking is enforced (Rieth and Hagemann, 2021). However, for many years teleworkers have constructed workarounds to facilitate successful obligations to multiple parties (Fonner and Stache, 2012; Hilbrecht et al., 2008), suggesting that when choosing to telework the negative aspects of dual obligations can be mediated.

Obligations that are experienced as more externally regulated (i.e., where something external to the individual drives the motivation) feel more effortful as they require this external motivation – according to the self-determination continuum this would involve the

need of contingencies like pay bonuses or penalties. Under self-determination theory, obligations would be situated as a controlled form of motivation and therefore associated with a lower quality wellbeing and by feeling less energised compared with more autonomous, internal, forms of motivation. However, if obligations are being felt through a sense of gratitude to the organization this would be understood at a different point on the continuum (see Figure 6.2), towards an identified regulation where the importance of the organizational values feel closer to the teleworker's lived experience. By further exploring the actual felt exchange of an obligation, this research continues to deepen the understanding of the psychological contract beyond previous examination which has seen the exchange operating as a more rigid tit-for-tat trade-off.



Note. From the Center for Self-Determination Theory © 2017. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3.1 Self-Determination Theory's Taxonomy of Motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2020)

Theoretically, a framework which uses obligations as a core construct is the psychological contract. Acknowledgement of the interweaving of home and work life obligations has long been accepted (Kanter, 1977) and the emergence and growth of teleworking has increased the proportion of people experiencing work-life crossover and the intensity of the interference (Weinert, Maier and Laumer, 2015). However, findings of the causes and impacts of conflicting obligations for teleworkers are contradictory (Bailey and Kurland, 2002). Despite its applicability, the psychological contract has been seldom utilised to explain how teleworking affects the ability of individuals to oblige two very different and

important spheres of the individual's life. The following chapter will cover in detail the history, mechanics and application to telework of the psychological contract, displaying how it will facilitate the answering of this thesis' research questions.

3.6 Summary and Rationale

Teleworking has demanded considerable attention in managerial research for the last 40 years. During this time its definition and measurement has varied, in part to reflect the development of technologies that facilitate telework. Research on the positive and negative effects of teleworking suggest a majority of favourable reviews that telework does deliver positive results to employers, employees and their families. Nevertheless, there are also significant counter-views, particularly related to the prevalence of ultra-connected technologies (Thulin, Vilhelmson and Johansson, 2019). Furthermore, as postulated by many scholars since the Covid-19 pandemic (Athanasiadou and Theriou, 2021; Bonacini, Gallo and Scicchitano, 2021; Karako, 2020), telework should now be considered the rule rather than the exception, further emphasising the importance to understand its' effects. This thesis will now turn to the framework that will underpin the research – the psychological contract.

The aforementioned research shows gaps in knowledge on several well-being topics which can be categorised into unavoidable situational issues, such as managing family and work-life without compromising well-being, employee led decision making around technology use and lack of organizational support on the same issue. The paradoxes of managing autonomy are of particular importance as this features in a large swathe of the research into telework across the last fifty years. Discovering how autonomy can be successfully managed is a key gap in telework research.

Chapter 4: The Psychological Contract

4.0 Introduction to the Psychological Contract

The psychological contract is a process that uses a set of beliefs and promises, or less commonly expectations and obligations, which are implicitly exchanged between an employee and a representation of the organization, normally a line manager (Conway and Briner, 2005). These interactions can dramatically shape the perception of an organization in the eyes of the employee and broken promises and unfulfilled expectations can cause breach of this implicit agreement, violating trust and potentially leading to a breakdown of the relationship entirely (Conway and Briner, 2005).

The literature required to understand the psychological contract for teleworkers needs to cover the basics of the theory before applying the nuances of the teleworking context, appreciating the importance of maintaining the contract and the consequences of allowing it to perish.

In order to appreciate how this set of implicit interactions became a fundamental theory in organizational psychology, this chapter will begin by outlining the developmental history of the psychological contract.

4.1 The Development of the Psychological Contract

The psychological contract was first introduced by American psychiatrist Karl Menninger (1958) as a process to explain the unspoken relationship between a psychiatrist and their patient. Menninger considered the exchange as one that must satisfy both parties to continue fulfilling a psychological contract, namely how unspoken obligations emerge over the course of the therapist–patient relationship that relate to the (unconscious) needs of both parties and that require fulfilment in order for successful therapy. Argyris (1960) was the first scholar to adapt the term 'psychological contract' to the work environment, just

two years after its inception by Menninger. Argyris focused on the relationship between employees and their managers, discovering that when foremen granted employees autonomy and kept to their end of the bargain (a suitable wage, working conditions, etc.) workers responded by performing well under such conditions, so the contract was mutually beneficial and continued. The development of the concept stalled somewhat from this point, though there were notable works from Levinson et al (1965) on implicit obligations, Schein (1965) who elaborated the importance of finding a match of employee expectations to what the organization can provide, and Kotter's (1973) empirical test of Schein's work. This rather dormant period for psychological contract research came to an end in 1989 when Rousseau re-conceptualised the theory.

Rousseau's research differed from what had come before by altering key concepts of the psychological contract. Rousseau redefined the psychological contract and offered what has now become a largely accepted definition *"an individual's beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organizations*" (p. 9, Rousseau, 1995).

Rousseau reached this new definition by altering previous elements of the psychological contract theory in the following ways. The notion of expectations employees or employers held was replaced with a model based on promises made between the parties, and the parties themselves were identified as individual employees, and on the organization's side, individuals who acted as agents of the organization. The organization would often be represented in psychological contracts by individual line managers who interact on a more personal level with employees. Rousseau believed the context that creates these psychological contracts were based less on deep-set needs, but more on behaviour within the workplace, including observed interactions between the two parties. This interpersonal link is crucial, for the psychological contract consists of both implicit and explicit beliefs. Although the explicit can form the basis of the psychological contract, with explicit referring to promises of a written or verbal tangible quality, the observed back and forth of the exchange is the fuel for implicit promises. For example, an employee observing another employee that works late receives a pay rise, and therefore arriving at an implicit belief that doing the same should result in the same treatment. It is perhaps the fallout from not receiving the same or what is perceived as 'fair' treatment that forms the most important

alteration made by Rousseau, where they moved away from Schein's 'matching' framework and introduced the concept of psychological contract breach. Psychological contract breach refers to where one party perceives the other party to fail to adhere to what was promised, where serious psychological contract breaches amount to what has been termed psychological contract violation (i.e., breach accompanied by feelings of anger, violation, and betrayal).

This seminal reworking by Rousseau and subsequent updates through the 1990s reinvigorated research in the field and made it one in which it was easier to research. By emphasising observable promises over unconscious need-driven expectations, the psychological contract was opened up to traditional research methods (Conway and Briner, 2005). That being said, to the present day, researchers debate certain elements advanced by Rousseau, such as what a promise actually entails and when one is breached. There is often confusion as to whether psychological contract beliefs refer to expectations, promises and/or obligations, with researchers often moving between these terms as if they were the same (Rousseau, 1989). The received view is that a psychological contract obligation is in place only if a promise is made first (e.g., the organization is obliged to allow the employee to telework on Friday because of a perceived agreement that telework is allowed if certain responsibilities are completed by Thursday). Similarly for expectations, expectations should only be considered parts of psychological contracts if they can be attributed back to a promise (e.g., the employee can expect to telework on Friday if they complete their report on Thursday, because of a perceived promise relating to this expectation).

It should be noted that a large proportion of psychological contract research takes place from an employee focus (Zhao et al., 2007) and this is also the case during this thesis. Therefore, during this review many of the aspects will be presented through the employee's eyes or with a focus on the employee. This is not to say the elements of the psychological contract cannot be experienced by the agents representing the organization (i.e., when a manager perceives an employee to breach their side of the psychological contract, Nadin & Williams, 2011), but this thesis will not attempt to over-explore or elaborate the organizations'/managers' side of the psychological contract. What this thesis will examine is the possibility of two previously under researched topics – multiparty psychological contracts and non-work psychological contracts, namely familial and spousal. Within these

psychological contracts the idea of obligations will be central, in particular how individuals manage and prioritise obligations to the key actors across their work and home lives. Further research into psychological contract obligations has been explicitly called upon by Guest (p. 552, 2004) in his paper on the future directions of psychological contract research: "*Much of the psychological contract research has focused on promises; what about obligations? Are these shared and are they more strongly felt? Do these, more than promises, reflect societal values? And if so, what are the consequences if either employer or employee violates them?"*. This thesis represents an opportunity to address this research gap.

4.2 Key Psychological Contract Concepts

This section will cover some key aspects of the psychological contract which are familiar to any study which utilises it and, furthermore, two key concepts central to this particular thesis.

As with any contract, the contents are key. For the psychological contract this essentially means employee perceptions of what they promise to contribute to the deal with their employer and conversely, what they believe is promised in return by their employers. Drilling down, the employee can bring their skills, knowledge, effort, flexibility and so on, while the employer, or the organization, as is the normal parlance in psychological contract literature, bring opportunities for progression and/or training, rates of pay, feedback, respect, and so on (Conway and Briner, 2005). These items are just a selection that have been generated from numerous studies such as those by Hui, Lee and Rousseau (2004) and Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997), of which the latter will be analysed further into this chapter.

Understanding the content of the psychological contract is important because it helps us to elucidate what is reciprocated between the employee and the organization, the contents help to frame the interactions within the psychological contract. The contents of psychological contracts have been arranged under certain types, such as a typology devised by Rousseau (1990) that features transactional and relational contracts being one of the most researched. Transactional contracts are more explicit and tangible, while relational

contracts are built up more slowly and feature more implicit notions and intangible exchanges (Grimmer and Oddy, 2007). It is also important to remember that unlike a normal contract, the psychological contract is based around not what is actually given or received, but rather what the perceptions of the implicit and explicit promises between the parties are (Conway and Briner, 2005).

The next key concept refers to when a party to the psychological contract perceives the promissory exchange to have broken down, known as psychological contract breach. Psychological contract breach is defined by Robinson and Morrison (p. 40, 1997) as *"the cognition that one's organization has failed to fulfil one or more obligations comprising the psychological contract"*. The concept of breach has been seen as central to the reawakening of psychological contract literature, as it brings a focus to the consequences of discrepancies between the promised actions and the apparent reality. Breaking down the root elements that can constitute breach, Morrison and Robinson (1997) identify reneging, when a participant in the contract actively fails to complete some of their obligations, and incongruence, where there are differing understandings about what a particular obligation entails or if it even exists. It is then down to the level of vigilance that the employee pays to their psychological contract that can increase or diminish the chance that breach will be perceived. Breach is also seen as preceding, given certain conditions, a more serious breakdown in the psychological contract, known as psychological contract violation. Violation occurs when employees' perceived psychological contract breach results in strong negative emotional reactions (e.g., anger, betrayal, violation). It is important to understand that not every breach will lead to a violation and that violation occurs only under certain conditions that follow breach (such as when an employee perceives that the breach was an intentional act and affects an important part of the exchange relationship). Therefore, depending on the employee, one can withstand numerous psychological contract breaches before experiencing the severe negative emotional reactions associated with violation. Once violation has occurred there is an increased chance of negative employee attitudes, such as cynicism, decreased levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment and higher intention to leave (Chiang et al., 2012; Knight, and Kennedy, 2005; Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, 2003).

Having outlined two of the key characteristics of general psychological contract theory, this review will now focus on psychological contract features relating to the research questions investigated in this thesis.

4.3 Multi-Foci Psychological Contracts

Multi-party psychological contracts are under researched and refer to where an employee holds more than one psychological contract at a time (e.g., within their organization, this may refer to such psychological contracts with various managers in addition to the organization as a more abstract entity). A few researchers have attempted to examine multi-party psychological contracts. Marks (2001) believes that the employee holds psychological contracts with numerous organizational agents, with the strength of that relationship based on the proximity the agent has to the employee (e.g., with most proximal being in the same small work group). Bligh and Carsten (2005) investigated the bi-directional psychological contract for managers, who may be seen as “the organization” by their direct reports, but themselves also have psychological contracts with more senior managers in the organizational structure. Alcover et al (2017) further extend multi-focal psychological contracts, offering propositions on where different elements of the employee’s psychological contract emanate based on whether they are connected to distal agents (recruiters, senior management, top management) or more proximal agents (direct supervisors and co-workers). These studies all highlight the complexity of considering multiple party psychological contracts.

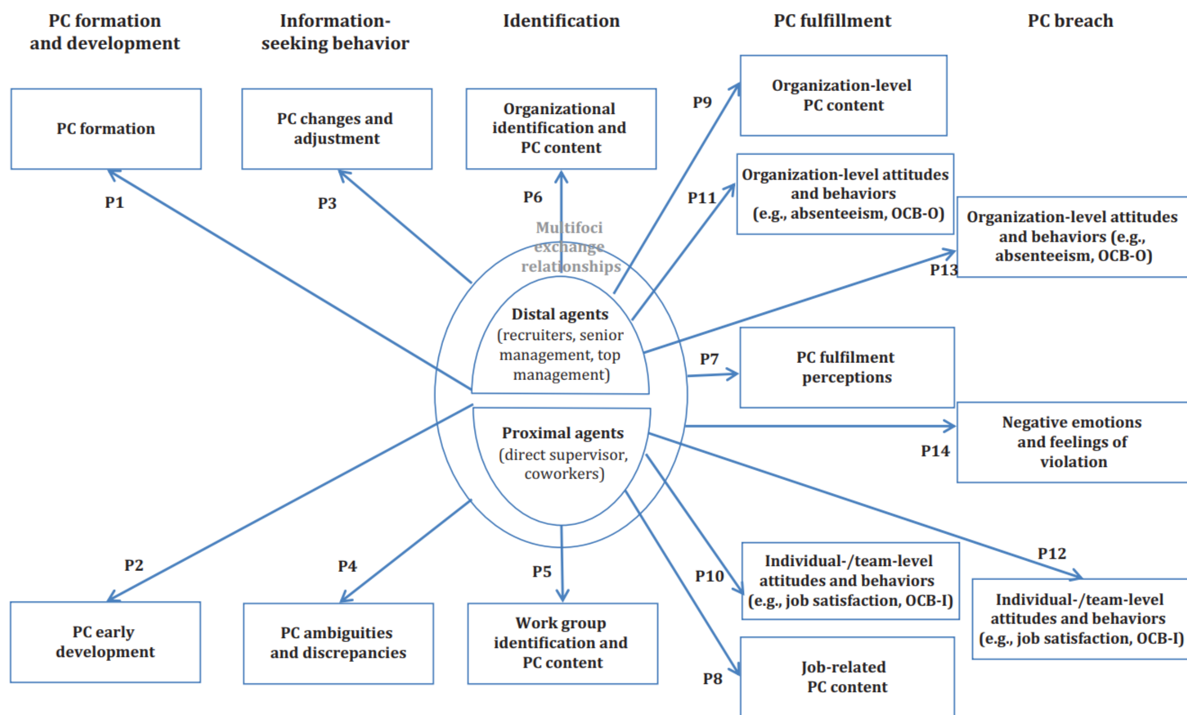


Figure 4.1 Multi-Foci Psychological contracts (p. 10, Alcover et al., 2017)

Alcover et al's (2017) mapping of the various possible parties to multiparty psychological contracts usefully identifies who or what may be involved; however, it does little to explain the implications of multiparty psychological contracts for how psychological contract contents and breach should be managed. We can also see from the figure that Alcover et al (2017) do not consider possible psychological contract parties beyond organizational actors, such as parties in non-work domains, including obligations to second jobs, spouses, children, friends and so on. The next logical step is to understand how multiparty psychological contracts are managed, how they interact, and how holding multiple sets of obligations could conflict with one another. Although Alcover et al. (2017) discuss how obligations are held with more than one party, they do not explore what happens if these obligations clash or conflict with one another.

Conflicting obligations as a term of analysis has previously been discussed in relation to ethical business decisions (Maclagan, 2012) or personal work ethics (Chaffee, 2006), but is conspicuously absent from psychological contract literature. The researcher has chosen to attach this term to the psychological contract, as obligations form a key constituent part of the psychological contract exchange and the notion of psychological contracts, or at least obligations conflicting is plausible for any individual and more likely for teleworkers as they often hold dual sets of obligations to work and home.

The next section will begin to map how psychological contract may apply to teleworkers, based on what is known from previous research. Later findings chapters will seek to advance knowledge in this area.

4.4 Telework and the Psychological Contract

In previous telework research the use of the psychological contract is sparse. This is surprising as the psychological contract helps to illuminate the relationship between line managers and staff (Rousseau, 1989), a relationship which is integral to the success of teleworking (Baruch, 2000). In some cases, elements from the psychological contract do register in research on telework, for example, in this quote from Golden (p. 248, 2009) who appears to suggest a method to set mutual expectations (cf. psychological contract contents) and avoid breaching the psychological contract of a teleworker: *"…managers should institutionalize formal telework agreements, so that a set of shared and mutual expectations are developed and commonly understood by both the teleworker and manager, as well as other organizational members. This will help prevent misunderstandings and jealousy from developing. Being explicit about reporting procedures, means and methods to contact individuals, and conflict resolution procedures would help"*.

However, formalised teleworking agreements are still patchy in their uptake and more informal, ad hoc and variable forms of teleworking are coming to the fore (López-Igual and Rodríguez-Modroño, 2020). This could suggest even more reliance on interactions between individuals that represent the organization (such a line managers) and the teleworker, strengthening the importance of maintaining psychological contracts between them.

Although originating in a clinical psychology context, the main body of psychological contract research has been undertaken in a traditional working setting. Sparrow (2000) touched upon the need for further research into how the psychological contract applies to teleworkers in the home environment, and with the blurring of work-life boundaries, teleworkers will reasonably develop psychological contracts with family members/members of their non-work domain (as essentially any relationship that involves obligations, give-and-take, can be regarded as involving psychological contracts). Despite Sparrow's suggestion,

little research has taken place since, this however does not make the process unfeasible. Firstly, an exploration into what the teleworker's psychological contract contains is needed.

4.4.1 Preliminary Considerations of a Teleworker's Psychological Contract Contents

Looking toward differentiating the teleworker's psychological contract from more traditional office-based workers, Jaakson and Kallaste (2010) see the teleworker as having a distinct type of psychological contract from a purely office-based worker. The employers in their study provided teleworking arrangements to employees they see having a long-term future with their firms, while their output performance is measured closely by management. Using Rousseau's 1995 derivations, this would put teleworkers from the sample into balanced psychological contracts. Key characteristics of balanced psychological contracts include transactional items such as expectation of performance goals and performance-based rewards that are dynamic (Rousseau, 2001) and relational items such as career advancement (Ntalianis and Dyer, 2021), which have been shown to increase work engagement (Soares and Mosquera, 2019). When assessing the contents of the teleworkers' psychological contract it is prudent not only to understand the type of psychological contract present, but also how the altering of temporal and spatial boundaries affects the nature of the employee/employer dynamic.

Certain common elements of transactional psychological contracts such as pay and benefits would appear to apply equally well to teleworkers as office-based counterparts. However, there are benefits to creating relational contracts for teleworkers, as Lombardo and Mierzwa (2011) discuss. They found relational contracts driven by increased autonomy, team-building activities and face-to-face interactions are seen as precursors to inducing organizational commitment from teleworkers, although some of these activities are inherently 'un-telework'. That being said, given recent technology, it is easier to manage activities such as face to face interaction via video conferencing. New technologies of human resource management, referred to by Raeder (2021) as HRM 4.0, that automate many functions of a traditional HR department lead Raeder to reiterate the importance of relational contracts with line managers as they represent one of the only human parties an employee will engage with, particularly for teleworkers.

As there is little exploration of psychological contract contents specifically for teleworkers, one would look to assume the content elements would resemble traditional workers (though this often differs by the context of individual working arrangements). On the other hand, there are many reasons to assume that the teleworker psychological contract differs to wholly office-based workers. For instance, the operation of trust is likely to differ markedly for teleworkers. Trust – defined as: *"undertaking of a risky course of action on the confident expectation that all persons involved in the action will act competently and dutifully"* (p. 971, Lewis and Weigert,1985) – plays an important role in successful teleworking (Kowalski and Swanson, 2005) and within the workings of the psychological contract. Promises are made, and if they are not kept (i.e., psychological contract breach) mistrust of the other party can develop. With teleworkers more distanced, at least physically, from their organizations and line managers, the strength of the organizational support a teleworker receives can be questioned. Will this remote arrangement be more likely to incur breach or will the additional trust and autonomy afforded to teleworkers by their organizations to work away from the office offset this?

4.4.2 Psychological Contact Breach

When Sparrow (2000) explored the feasibility of introducing the psychological contact to teleworking literature, he felt the main concern in applying psychological contract frameworks to the teleworker was the disconnection and more clinical communications (i.e. clipped emails, short phone calls) the teleworker would engage in with their manager would risk regular psychological contract breach when compared to more social interaction within the office setting. Byron (2008) theorises that emotion is poorly communicated via email, with messages often interpreted by the recipient in a colder, more negative way than intentioned, which could certainly impede the formation of relational psychological contracts. However, it must be noted that in the modern era e-communications constitutes much more of work-related discourse than in 2000s, and the richness of e-communications has also increased. Riordan (2017) notes that emojis enhance the feelings of happiness conveyed in any given message, although the frequency of emoji use in workplace emails is less well understood. Furthermore, the adoption of real-time team-working applications and

video conferencing software creates a far more replicable experience of working with colleagues and managers remotely in comparison to twenty years prior.

Assuming the method of communication does allow for the creation of an operational psychological contract, Sparrow (2000) goes on the state what he believes will be new forms of psychological contract violations arising from teleworking. Firstly, *Failure to Cooperate* – it is implied that norms of good faith are weakened by lack of face to face contact. Secondly, *Opportunism* – self-serving behaviour will increase as teleworkers 'drop' work, supposedly easier to do without high-levels of supervision, or filter emails as they see fit to enhance their own standing. Finally, *Negligence* – more autonomy could lead to increased negligence of work, whether purposeful or due to overload of information. This suggests that breach could occur via opportunistic means generated by some of the core principles of teleworking. Secondly, the conclusions drawn upon from these possible breaches is that the teleworker (and their managers or colleagues) will become distrustful as a consequence of the teleworker's autonomy, although this may discount the fact that a strong trusting relationship may have been formed in the lead up to a teleworking arrangement. Furthermore, Sparrow seems to take the position that teleworkers spend the entirety of their working time physically disconnected from their colleagues and managers, where often a teleworker splits time evenly, or more so in the office environment. In this case, the formation and maintenance of the psychological contract is only partially undertaken through e-communication and therefore maybe stronger than Sparrow supposes. Sparrow also omits the potential effects that presenteeism can have in a teleworking context.

4.4.3 Psychological Contract Obligations Outside the Organization

To further assess the potential of the psychological contract to explain home relationships, we can attempt to transpose the psychological contract processes normally seen in the realm of work into home scenario. For instance, in this excerpt, where the participant is explaining that despite having his psychological contract breached, they continues to work hard in his job: *"When you cool down a little bit, you need to look at the overall situation, what you want, what you get, and is it still interesting? Last year, what gave me the kick again is that we acquired these two companies, it's more challenge, but at the same time it's something new and interesting for me to try"* (p. 1,471, Perera, Chew and Nielson, 2018).

One could imagine how this example could be adapted to the teleworker's personal life. The 'cooling down' period could relate to a time after an argument with the teleworker's spouse, and this person is considering if their future happiness lies in the relationship. The key aspect that keeps the individual in the relationship is the exciting but challenging additions that came last year, which in a relationship could represent children. 'Staying together for the kids' is a common term for this situation, though how often this proves to be true is less clear. In the UK in 2013 48% of divorcees had a child under the age of 16 living with them in the home (ONS, 2018). Applying a psychological contract lens onto relationships in the home domain, some commonalities and similarities may be found. Approaching the psychological contract as a tripartite relationship across home and work could create a more holistic understanding of the teleworker's lived experience.

Continuing with the idea of multiple psychological contracts and drawing from the earlier review on general multi-party, or multi-foci, psychological contracts, all the foci were still within the organization, here we extend beyond organizations to consider the non-work domain. As mentioned earlier, any relationship that involves exchange and obligations can be considered as having a psychological contact, and previous psychological contract research has considered psychological contracts as they apply to doctors–patients, teachers–students, and service providers–customers (Conway & Briner, 2005). Teleworkers and their home relationships, such as with partners, will clearly have obligations to each other and various exchanges. Therefore, the psychological contract applies in personal spheres. Once this area of research is opened it invites a richer understanding of the teleworking dynamic, such as better understanding how conflicting obligations arise and are dealt with.

For the teleworker, obligations form a key part of their working and home life. The teleworker will have received at least some modicum of trust from their employer which allows them to work without direct supervision, therefore an immediate obligatory relationship is struck – in return of being freed from the office, the teleworker agrees to work at an equal standard at home as they would in the office. The teleworker also has obligations to their home sharers, both when they are teleworking and beyond (Fonner and Stache, 2012; Hilbrecht et al., 2008). Interestingly, despite the acceptance that obligations

exist between teleworkers and both their employer and home sharers, no psychological contract research has taken place to assess this.

One study that does support the value of examining teleworkers' psychological contracts is by Bordia et al. (2017), where they use social exchange theory to show obligations from home can deplete the resources of a teleworker, and in turn increases the likelihood that they will breach the psychological contract with their employer. Beyond the aforementioned study, similar conceptualisations come from the area of conflicting role obligations (De Clercq, Sun and Belausteguigoitia, 2021), although this study does not include obligations external to the organization and such as those experienced by teleworkers. Sturges and Guest (2004) do consider these external effects, looking at work-life conflict through the psychological contract lens, but do not focus on obligations, choosing instead traditional measures based upon expectations and promises. Therefore, one must postulate how potential conflicting obligations can be drawn out from existing categories of psychological contract obligations and transposed into a teleworking scenario.

Literature that categorises obligations comes from Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997). They find twelve organizational obligations and seven employee obligations using critical incidence technique, and despite the passing of over twenty years, these categorisations remain relevant today.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of incidents falling into twelve categories of organization obligation for both groups

	Employee group		Organization group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Training	25	9.62	24	8.36
Fairness	28	10.8	37	12.9
Needs	15	5.77	14	4.88
Consult	14	5.38	14	4.88
Discretion	14	5.38	6	2.09
Humanity	19	7.31	41	14.3
Recognition	11	4.23	31	10.8
Environment	39	15.0	25	8.71
Justice	14	5.38	12	4.18
Pay	31	11.9	18	6.27
Benefits	25	9.62	47	16.4
Security	25	9.62	18	6.27

Table 4.1 Organizational obligations (taken from p. 156, Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997)

Table 4. Frequency and percentage of incidents falling into seven categories of employee obligation for both groups

	Employee group		Organization group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Hours	76	32.1	68	28.1
Work	46	19.4	54	22.3
Honesty	36	15.2	41	16.9
Loyalty	10	4.22	28	11.6
Property	20	8.44	9	3.72
Self-presentation	25	10.5	14	5.79
Flexibility	24	10.1	28	11.6

Table 4.2 Employee obligations (taken from p. 156, Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997)

Reviewing Herriot, Manning and Kidd's (1997) categorisations of obligations, one can speculate as to which may have at least some relevance in the home environment of a teleworker. Certain items are clearly not transferable, such as pay and training, but others may be far more plausible, such as treating parties in the non-work domain with fairness, recognition and acknowledging their important needs. Fairness, referred to as equity, has previously been used to understand romantic relationship power balance (Felmlee, 1994). Recognition is broken down by Honneth (in van den Brink and Owen, 2007) into three modes of recognition; emotional support, cognitive respect and social esteem. For the application to the spouse/family, emotional support is the best fit as this form of recognition is evident in friendships and romantic relationships. For needs, Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) categorised needs as any type of personal of family need that requires time away for work, therefore, to take needs into the realm of a spousal or familial relationship, needs would perhaps be required to be reversed to the need to take time away from family to engage in unscheduled work.

For employee obligations, to some extent each category could be relevant within the home environment. Honestly, loyalty and self-presentation are all quite apparent in the maintenance of personal relationships. For the remaining categories some further inspection is required to show their out of work application.

Hours can simply represent the length of time an individual spends engaged in activities with a spouse of family members. Put into the context of a teleworking household this could represent the trade-off in attention the teleworker has when working from home, whether

they engage in additional work or family time, or if their work encroaches on traditional family time, such as evenings or weekends. Golden (2012) examined the latter, showing higher reports of exhaustion and work-family conflict in those working in traditional 'family-time'.

Work, defined by Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) as the quality and quantity of action undertaken in a job, can be compared to effort put into a relationship. Similarly, property, which could concern maintenance of the shared living space, is simply compared against the lines of the workplace definition of treating organizational property carefully. Flexibility in work-life conflict literature has almost always situated within the side of work (Staines and Pleck, 1986; Wallace, 2003), the work becomes flexible, allowing it to mould around family commitments, however, the family and other non-work parties' flexibility is also applicable.

Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) approach the psychological contract and its categorisations as bi-lateral (from the perspective of employer and employee), while the scope of this project is unilateral, in terms of only collecting data from the employee's perspective. The unilateral approach can be seen as reasonable, due to the fact the contract is purely psychological and best encapsulated in a single mind.

Looking back to Alcover et al. (2017) as an example of scholars that accept multi-foci obligations, they do not explore the potential of obligations beyond the workplace. Therefore, as previous research on the psychological contract between family/spouses is scant, the current research will bring new light to its potential application outside of the workplace.

4.5 Summary and Rationale

The current review has covered the rudimental features of the psychological contract and seeks to discover where new in-roads to knowledge can be made. In doing so, this has revealed several large research gaps. Firstly, there are few studies that explore the teleworking exchange through the lens of the psychological contract, despite the potential it has to unlock the complex trust relationships involved in teleworking. Secondly, despite its apparent applicability, there is little previous research on psychological contracts held with

parties outside of the work setting. Thirdly, there is a growing, under-explored notion that the psychological contract is multi-foci or multi-party. This multi-focal research has been entirely intra-organizational and as yet there has been no research on an individual holding psychological contracts across home and work lives. This final gap presents the opportunity to understand teleworkers who may have conflicting obligations and what outcomes develop in these situations.

4.6 Research Gaps

This section looks to explicitly state the main gaps in previous research that have been noted across the previous chapters of literature review. The gaps in current knowledge will help to inform the research questions for the thesis.

There has been very little research using the psychological contract to understand telework, despite calls from prominent scholars noting the applicability of the psychological contract to teleworking for further research (e.g., Sparrow, 2000). In the last twenty years only a handful of studies consider the issue, such as, Harris (2003), Jaakson and Kallaste (2010) and Peters, Dulk and Ruijter (2010), none of which used the psychological contract as the prime framework for understanding. Perhaps the nearest attempt came from Obushenkova, Plester and Haworth (2018), though the focus was more on technology rather than strictly teleworking. The lack of response following the calls for research is puzzling for two reasons. Firstly, previous literature is in disagreement over the effects of teleworking, suggesting the frameworks currently in place are potentially lacking. Secondly, the psychological contract is best viewed as a process between two individuals. However, people can be party to multiple psychological contracts that intersect (Conway and Briner, 2005), which fits well with the connections teleworkers have with their line managers, organizations, and home sharers. Furthermore, this thesis researches the psychological contract using qualitative methods, thereby complimenting the process of investigation (semi-structured interviews) with the experience of teleworking as a nuanced process.

The need for this research comes as the number of teleworkers continues to rise due to organizations striving to reduce costs (Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Lazar, Osoian and Ratiu, 2010; Ozcelik, 2010), individuals seeking a better work-life balance (Smith, 2010), the

ubiquitous presence of information communication technology (Middleton, 2008; Messenger and Gschwind, 2016) and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic (Tokarchuk, Gabriele and Neglia, 2021). Concurrently, stress in the modern workplace continues to put an increasing burden on organizations, the individual and global health services (Blyton et al., 2017; Sonnentag and Fritz, 2015). Coupled with the rise in 'always-on' culture (Derks et al., 2015), teleworkers are at particular risk of negative work experience and further research to understand how these negative effects of telework can be negated is urgent and currently under researched.

The aforementioned psychological contract research shows gaps in knowledge most prominently in its application to telework. By creating one of the few in-depth studies that combine telework with such an under-utilised, yet fitting theoretical framework, presents an opportunity to fill a large gap. Multi-Foci psychological contracts are also under-researched. Again, telework provides an opportunity to explore as there are several key actors within teleworker psychological contracts – organizational line managers and those whom share the teleworker's home. Additionally, knowledge of teleworker psychological contracts is scant, as is understanding of their beliefs, expectations and obligations.

With the literature review complete and research gaps acknowledged, the research questions for this thesis will be presented.

4.6.1 Research Questions

Based on the review of previous literature, which are covered across chapters 2-4, the following research questions have been formulated to improve the understanding of telework and the well-being of teleworkers:

1. What are the key content elements of a teleworker's psychological contract?
2. Does teleworking lead to conflicting obligations between work and home life?
3. What role does modern technology play in teleworking?
4. What impact do conflicting obligations have on the well-being of teleworkers?
5. How do teleworkers resolve conflicting obligations?

With the research questions for this thesis set out, attention turns to the methodological construction applied to extract and analyse the data needed to answer them.